

Dreamer

It was a fine morning. Sean just woke up. He had a terrible dream and was relieved to wake up. Sean was a 16-year-old boy. This was his age to roam around the country, have fun, fall in love, and enjoy, but his destiny was not as supportive as he deserved. His father died a year back, and his mother suffered from Schizophrenia. She had difficulty moving, and sometimes, she even forgot Sean. This was his life.

This morning was weird. He felt out of the place. As he was doing his bed, there was a noise, his mother screamed. He ran to her, and saw her out of her wheelchair, crying. Apparently, a baseball broke the window and hit her thigh. He helped his mother get to bed, took the ball, and ran outside to find who threw it. But it was too late, the neighbor's kids would have ran away hearing the scream. Since he could not find anyone, he decided to keep the ball. The ball was discolored and old, it seemed as if it was generations old.

While having breakfast, he switched on the TV. There was news all over the channels, which said, "Asteroid to hit Earth in 2068, Scientists say it could wipe out life!" It was drastic news, but his life was hell even now, and this Armageddon would only hit Earth after 20 years, scientists would surely find some way of preventing it by then. He switched off the TV and went to school. Days passed, and there was still something weird happening to him. Some days he would see people's faces fade away for a moment, sometimes he saw everything stopping momentarily, even his eyesight was impaired. Even with glasses, things farther away seemed blurred and dark. He felt negativity most of the time. Maybe it was the depression he was going through, maybe it was the onset of Schizophrenia. He could not tell the difference. He continued like this for years. The year he got into university; his mother died. She hung herself from the ceiling. He was devastated. Life was already unbearable, now he had no reason to live, but he was a strong kid. He decided to change his

life. At university, he chose to study neurology, the study which could have saved his mother, and the study which could save him, if he inherited schizophrenia.

At university, there was a professor, Dr. Mellisa Staley. A young, bright girl, she did her PhD on the subconscious mind. She had always been fascinated by the power of the subconscious mind as depicted in old books and movies and believed that all the secrets were locked in there.

Dr. Staley met Sean when he was admitted to the hospital claiming to have seen a faceless teacher taking his class. She had found her case study. Even during mental illnesses, only the conscious mind gets affected and the subconscious part remains unharmed. He was the perfect study. With time, they became good friends, she tested him for her studies, and he never objected because she had told him that it was to cure his schizophrenia.

Sean, on the other hand, started liking her. She was the only person he ever talked for so long. Aside from the fact that Sean saw things that were not normal, he was a brilliant person. Even she started liking him, and they started dating.

On their one-year anniversary, he wanted to gift her something extraordinary. Something that was his, and gifting that would show his commitment, so he decided to gift her the ball he had found. It was the only thing of the past that he held close to him. It was also the only link between him and his miserable past. So, he wrapped it up and gifted her.

When Dr. Staley saw the ball, she immediately recognized it. It was the same ball that got lost when she was a kid. But something was different about it. She had this ball so close to her that she knew how it felt to hold it, she knew its touch, its weight. But this ball was heavier. She realized that there was something inside the ball, and so she tore it open. There was a letter. It said,

“Dear Sean,

I hope this letter finds you on time. You have heard of the asteroid going to hit Earth, and if I am correct, you have 10 years, 32 weeks, and 7 days. Just so you know, scientists won't be able to save us this time. Some people will try to inhabit Mars to save themselves, but that would be a waste, because after the impact, the debris from Earth will destroy Mars as well. You are our only hope.

You have all the answers Sean, you just need to find deeper. Love you Sean, Take Care.

Forever Yours

Your love."

They were startled to see this. This ball was with Sean for more than 9 years and it was not possible for anyone to put this letter inside this ball. They had no reason to believe this, but the correctness of dates convinced them to take it seriously. Just after he finished his college, he and Dr. Staley went to research on this. One day they received a package. It said, "Do it." It had a million dollars in it. This was it. Their quest had begun.

When the human's conscious mind sleeps, the subconscious comes into effect. It affects our dreams and shapes them. They decided to build the machine which could talk to the subconscious. They called it "Dreamer".

The machine first induced delta waves and set the person to REM sleep, where most of the dreams occur. It then recorded the brain activity and using electrical impulses from the mind, generated audio, and video of whatever the person was dreaming of. To draw a clear picture, many impulses needed to be recorded and hence, a lot of power was required to run this machine. They thought power was not an issue. They first tried the machine on Dr. Staley. Her dreams were basic, driving a car, jumping off buildings, etc. But when the machine was tried on Sean, it burned out. His dreams were so complex that the power source was not enough. They recognized this problem and went on to create their own power grid. Whenever their money was over, they would immediately get a package saying, "Do it." And money inside it.

This allowed them to see what the mind was thinking, but to make any meaning out of it, they had to talk to the mind. They had a plan. They reverse engineered the pictures that came from the impulses and located the part of the brain from where these dreams came. Next, to talk to the subconscious, they needed an active mind. They would then slide the images of the active mind in between the images of the subconscious and hence the other person could talk and voluntarily get out data. This was a brilliant plan.

Dr Staley's subconscious was calmer than that of Sean. So, she went for the subconscious part, and Sean became the active person. The Dreamer was switched on, and Sean was now in Staley's dream. It seemed as if the subconscious was another person, totally different from Staley. He asked her, "How can I save the Earth?" She said, "You can't! No one can, what is to be done, must be done. You can only save your appearance in this life." It made no sense. This was a puzzle. Subconscious never replied directly. The time inside the dream passed slowly. It was directly proportional to energy provided. The more the energy, the slower time passed, and smoother were the dreams. Years passed; they were nowhere near an answer. The years became months, they were becoming relentless, the news was all over the globe, NASA was trying to save humanity's existence by sending sample species to Mars. Everything was going out of the way. 15 days before the apocalypse, Sean and Dr. Staley received yet another package. It said, "There is a nuclear bomb buried at the coast of an Island, take this map, go there and feed your machine with its power." The package had a map to some unknown place. Before leaving, they needed to make sure that it was correct to do so. They went into the dreamer. Sean asked Staley, "Should we go to the island?", her subconscious replied, "There is no salvation except inside us, be with me." He couldn't understand what she was trying to say, but the time was near, and they had no option. Even the asteroid was visible with naked eyes now, the end was near.

They took a boat, the machine, some food, and followed the map. It took them 13 days to reach the island. It was a weird place, with no one around.

The asteroid was so near that there was light even at night. Dying is not as bad as the fear of dying. There was disaster all around Earth because of the gravitational pull of the asteroid. The high tides caused Tsunamis, there were Earthquakes everywhere.

Nevertheless, they had no choice than to follow the instructions given. After looking for a while, they found the box. It had 10 atomic bombs, and a machine to contain their power. This was all getting too weird, they had no idea how those things got there, neither did they know who was helping them all along.

They hooked on the machine and Staley went into the subconscious state, and Sean became active dreamer. But the machine did not work, they woke up. The power source was not working. There was only an hour left. It seemed as if someone had to control the atomic explosions manually. Staley said, "Your mind is more complex than mine, I don't think I will be able to withstand the energy surge. You should go into the dreamer, and I will be here, controlling the output. Don't worry, I love you Sean." Even though he did not want her to be the one to take the risk, she had a point, he said, "I love you too Mellisa.", and went into the Dreamer. She switched on the bombs, and there was a loud boom. Sean went to dream, but due to the sound of the bomb, he understood that Mellisa was no more and wanted to get up, this contradictory brain state led him into an active subconscious state. Then he passed out."

He woke up. It was a fine morning. He had a terrible dream and was relieved to wake up. He had a dream of an apocalypse, it was horrible. Just as he was doing his bed, his parents called him for breakfast. His father was a Software Engineer, and his mother was an Interior Designer. They switched on the TV, and it said, "An asteroid was heading towards Earth, but due to solar flare, it has changed its course, and will now pass near the Earth." They had heard about the asteroid a few days back; it was a relieving news. Anyway, just when they were watching the news, a ball broke the window glass, and came through. It was discolored and old, it seemed as if it was generations old.

There was a knock on the door. Sean opened the door. There was a girl, she said, "Hello Sir, Ma'am. I am sorry for the window. Me and my sister were playing catch. My name is Mellisa Staley, and we just shifted here." Then she leaned down, and shook hands with Sean, and whispered in his ears, "Love!".

THE END

--*Bidhan Arya*