

A BEAUTIFUL DREAM

Written by
Keith Oxenrider

9/23/2019
Keith Oxenrider
463 Quicksburg Road
Quicksburg, VA 22847
(540) 740-4293
mitakeet@gmail.com

FADE IN:

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Perched on a bench in what looks like an abandoned park, JACK, 20-40 race open, sits, gaunt. Sunken cheeks, unblinking eyes red, filthy. His eyes twitch, staring at formulas that swirl around him.

JACK (V.O.)

Time. Time is the key. Too much. Or not enough. Without time I have none.

The formula Jack's looking at is highlighted as it drifts and swirls around. His eyes follow it, until another catches his attention. Oblivious to the elements, Jack stares, rocking back and forth. In time lapse, the sky's clouds speed by, shadows growing short, then lengthening. They appear as darkness to anyone else, but Jack sees his formulas as if they're illuminated.

THE WOMAN (O.S.)

(quietly, so as not to startle)

Jack, are you thirsty? I have some food for you.

An arm reaches in with a bottle of water. Jack's eyes don't register the presence of THE WOMAN - 20-40 race complementary with Jack's, but his arm reaches out to grasp the offered bottle. He drinks so fast the fluid runs down his chin, leaving clean streaks. With his other hand he grasps the food and brings it to his mouth where it does battle with the bottle.

The formulas start to fade, dwindle. He starts to blink. Slowly, he focuses on The Woman. Her eyes glint red. As he tips forward,

JACK

(mumbles)

Poison. My dreams. What have you done...

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jack is sitting on a couch in a wealthy living room. Staring at a TV, he smiles and laughs. He tosses popcorn and catches some in his mouth, the rest spilling. Tipping his chin down to lower his voice,

JACK

I'll be back.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

A luxurious room built with old-world charm is filled with the same sort of equipment and furniture found in a hospital room. Outside the window is what looks like a park.

Jack is resting in the hospital-like bed, surrounded by high-end medical equipment. Jack's restrained, with IVs plugged into his arm. He's been bathed and lies peacefully.

Entering the room is The Woman. She quietly tiptoes over to the bed, puts her hand on his head. Jack opens his eyes, smiles briefly, then frowns.

THE WOMAN

Jack, are you OK to talk?

He frowns more, shaking his head. His eyes go to a big BRAWNY MAN, 20-30 race open, wearing an expensive suit and standing just inside the room. Brawny Man leans forward menacingly and his eyes briefly glow red.

THE WOMAN

Please? Just for a few minutes?

Still frowning, he shrugs.

The Woman looks over her shoulder toward the door and nods. BAD MAN, 20-40 race complementary to Jack's, walks in, full of bonhomie.

BAD MAN

You gave us quite a fright, Jack.
Just when we thought you were having
a breakthrough, you vanish.

Jack stares at Bad Man, then gives the barest of nods. The Woman holds a drink with a straw to Jack's mouth and he takes a sip unconsciously.

BAD MAN

Did you make progress? You seemed
quite excited last time we chatted.

Jack looks inward, slowly nods.

BAD MAN

Can you tell me anything about it?
Will it extend your earlier work?

Jack stops nodding. He holds up his hands as far as the restraints will allow.

BAD MAN
Soon, Jack. They're there for your
own protection.

Bad Man reaches out to take one of Jack's hands.

BAD MAN
(sternly)
You will tell me what you've been
thinking about.

JACK
(muttering)
Not ready.

Bad Man pats Jack's hand.

BAD MAN
That's fine. Just let me know and
I'll be right over.

Bad Man turns to walk out. Jack jerks at his restraints.
Bad Man looks back as he continues his way out.

BAD MAN
Soon Jack. Recover first.

The Woman pats Jack on the shoulder and hurries after Bad
Man.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Clearly part of a mansion, everything is gleaming
hardwood. Priceless antiques line the luxurious hallway,
crystal adorned lights provide the illumination.

THE WOMAN
Nearly three days this time. I don't
know how much longer he would have
survived.

BAD MAN
(shaking head)
We need better ways of monitoring
him.

THE WOMAN
(nodding)
I'm working on that.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Wearing a hospital gown, Jack walks through the moon-lit
underbrush. The thin cloth in tears and shreds and there
are long scratches on his arms and legs. It's as if he's
following the formulas as they dance around his head,
first one way, then another.

JACK (V.O.)

It's there, almost there. If I could only have more time. Just out of reach.

He stumbles through a stream, totally unaware. His legs begin to turn blue and he starts to shiver - the formulas jumping around to match - but don't stop moving.

At the foot of a large tree, he stares as the formulas urge him to climb. He reaches a large horizontal branch and sits. There he resumes his twitchy staring as the formulas swirl. The time-lapsed fluttering of the leaves cause them to look fuzzy as the sun rises and its beams quickly trace their way across the ground.

In time lapse, several people race back and forth underneath the tree, then, in real time a ladder leans against his branch. The Woman climbs up and wraps a blanket around Jack's shoulders. He takes the offered bottle without thought and is totally unaware as she starts to dab unguent on his scratches.

The formulas start to fade and he becomes aware of her and her glowing red eyes. He swells up in anger,

JACK

You've ruined them!

He slowly starts to collapse and is caught by several BURLY MEN who grab him as he leans back.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jack's face is illuminated by flashing colors. He's bouncing up and down on the couch, a bucket of popcorn in his lap.

JACK

(excited)

Wait for it, wait for it!

Holding his breath, his eyes squint. Then he smiles.

JACK

(shouting)

You can't handle the truth!

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Laying in his hospital bed, Jack looks around with slitted eyes. His eyes drift toward the door where Brawny Man stands. The guy stares at Jack, his eyes smoldering with a deep red glow. Slowly smiling to reveal fangs.

Jack hears someone approach, closes his eyes and assumes an exaggerated pose of sleep.

THE WOMAN

(as she enters the room)
He was in a tree and they walked
under him several times before
anyone noticed.

BAD MAN

(as he follows her into
the room)
How does he keep getting out?

They stand at the foot of the bed looking at Jack.

THE WOMAN

When he's lucid he appears entirely
reasonable and coherent, then he'll
suddenly stop responding. The person
with him thought him catatonic when
they left to get help.

BAD MAN

(half jokingly)
Do we need a leash?

With the long pause, Bad Man turns to study The Woman's
expressionless face.

BAD MAN

I wasn't serious, you know.

THE WOMAN

(looking at Bad Man)
I may be.

She steps forward and reaches out to take Jack's
restrained hand.

THE WOMAN

Jack, dear, we know you're awake.

Jack's eyes fly open. He jerks his hands against the
restraints.

THE WOMAN

I don't know what kept you in that
tree. Must have Velcro sewn into
your butt.

Bad Man smiles as he goes around to the other side of the
bed and takes Jack's other hand.

BAD MAN

You keep giving us such frights.
Can't you do your thinking here?

Jack stares, motionlessly.

The Woman puts a straw to his mouth, but this time he regards it with suspicion.

JACK
Poison. Takes dreams away.

THE WOMAN
(frowning)
It's for your own protection.

Jack refuses the straw.

Bad Man grips Jack's shoulder.

BAD MAN
(menacingly)
It's going in one way or another.
Shouldn't we make it easy?

Jack considers this, then reluctantly takes a sip.

BAD MAN
(quiet conviction)
Can we discuss your thoughts while
you sat in the tree?

Jack shrugs and looks away. Bad Man sighs, then gives Jack's hand a squeeze.

BAD MAN
Later, maybe?

Jack doesn't meet Bad Man's eyes, just shrugs.

The Woman shakes her head, then sets the cup with the straw on a side table. She pats Jack's shoulder and the two walk out.

THE WOMAN
(over her shoulder)
Rest Jack. We'll discuss your dreams
tomorrow.

Jack listens as their footsteps fade away, then leans over and spits out the water. He stares at the big man at the door who stares right back with his red eyes. Jack is first to look away.

FADE OUT.

The End.