



Desert
Dreams

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Desert *Dreams*

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Dedicated to All
Who Dream

May Your
Deepest Desires
Become Your Destiny

Desert Dreams

Close to Midnight

The tip of Terra's forefinger dipped lightly upon the crystalline pool. It was similar in size to the ten foot garden pond that once graced her backyard. Terra's fingernails lightly tapped the water until ripples edged outward. An anomaly of nature, this pool stood as a testament to mother earth left somewhat unspoiled, and lost to only a few who had discovered it. Terra was among the few, few being a relative term. Within the folds of this sporadically rocky mesa, tiny gems of this nature were sought. And sometimes found. The front-runners, those pools being the easily noticed, and easily found because of the nearby road access were swarmed with visitors. These back burners, pools off the beaten track and less traveled, were the left over remnants. Pristine, pure and still comparatively untouched, Terra found this particular pond to be truly miraculous. For beholden to her promise, time returned Terra to this spot.

At 51 years old, Terra Termaine was fit, lean, tan, and as feminine as one could be for having hiking legs with calves tight as drums. Strong of stature, Terra's heart matched any hurdle that challenged

her physique. For the last 20 years, she traipsed inside crevasses of earthy spots in search of another natural phenomenon like she first found here. Pools in shades of a color palette. Layers of turquoise and aquamarine. Bubbling cauldrons that funneled to the earth's core. Speck less waters. Algae unpolluted. Quiescent puddles encased in stone frames. Concave cavities that stood virginal by default. Impassioned and driven, Terra hunted each find as if it were the Holy Grail itself. These were the highlights that de-stressed her from her other lifestyle called work.

Today's find was not new to Terra. Crouching, her elbows rested on her knees as her fingers dipped into the pool. Her green eyes turned down into the shallow depths as if seeking a slice of yesterday. Terra's shoulder length dark hair was randomly highlighted by the sun. Close cut bangs fell into loose longer curls around her cheeks and neck. Terra was attractive with strikingly sharp features. Piercing eyes divided by a straight, narrow, and almost long nose ending with curved lips that invited a smile. Cheek bones that were pronounced gave Terra the look of being symmetrically regal. She was not gorgeous, or cute, but rather purposeful and well favored. Built at five foot seven, she was proportionally well endowed in front as well as having a curvaceous derriere. Terra's figure was a classic hourglass design, which was defined by her small waistline. Her legs were firm, well outlined, muscular, and taunt, giving one

the impression she was lean, which she was not. She was well-proportioned with an average size 14 figure. With a dose of confidence and compassion, Terra was nonetheless quite captivating for her years.

Lost in time, Terra reminisced to twenty-two years earlier when she was twenty-nine years old. Strumming the water, she did so as if sounds would emanate where her thoughts were engulfed. She let herself be transported to this long ago time, the same place of intrigue, mystery, and bodily satisfaction. Back when she was twenty-nine, while seeking solace and a new start, Terra had found her way to this identical pool that captured her heart. It was this pool and this place, in a spot of time where two souls met and converged on a journey that lasted a lifetime inside of one week.

Terra's back road trips had never meant to be exciting, but did take a turn on that one occasion. How was she to know that a dark warrior would look into the same pool where she was skinny dipping? Back then, not many knew of this spot and that was what made it appealing to strip down and dip. She reflected on what he had looked like. His hair was black and long to the waist. Part tied over to the side and the remainder rested against his bareback. He had walked with a hiking staff, wooden and carved. He was stout, strong-looking, and the veins in his arms were pronounced.

A dark blue bandanna encircled his head, most likely to hold back his thick hair.

She recalled more about his features: thick black eyebrows, almost as one; a bit close set eyes of coal black; sharp flat nose with pronounced nostrils; high rounded cheek bones, voluptuous soft lips; a dangling earring in the right ear, just one; a small scar across the bottom of his chin; a too obvious Adam's apple; a leather necklace pouch holding what looked like ceremonial beads; full upper arms that pumped iron; stout legs, pronounced calves and massive thighs even for a man; shirtless, the shirt was stuffed into the back of his khakis; hiking boots well-worn on the sides and dirty brown cargo cutoffs, pockets stuffed with gear...

Details were an easy recollection for Terra. Her mind had relived their first eye contact a thousand times. Too many nights since then her body ached when he filled her dreams. A lifetime lived inside of a week. Why did they part as easily as they had met? Two young lovers both in transition believed that was the way it worked. Neither wanted to restrain the other, and yet, Terra had wished he had, time and again. Terra wished it each time she searched into another hot, unyielding, cradle of a hot spring where faith and hope sprang eternal.

Today, Terra found herself reminiscing once again. But this day was different from all the rest. She was touching their very spot that they had left twenty-two years earlier. As each year passed, Terra found an excuse to revisit her youthful journey from twenty-two years ago. She searched for other similar pools inside the foreign lands she traipsed. Her Holy Grail was not aimed at these rare earth formations filled with aqua filled subterranean lime. Rather it was the attainment of wading into these pools until her mind filled, and then released fond memories. And, then, regret. Today would be different. Flicking and circling the water with her index finger, Terra cocked her head as she was lost in memories. Her knees began to ache from squatting and she stopped fingering the pool. The ripples died. The water became a mirror.

Alas, the knees needed to be relieved so Terra braced herself and slowly rose. She stood up erect. She could not take her gaze from the center of the pool. It held the desert sunlight that reflected back hues of blue and fluorescent greens. Looking back from these clear depths was a face. A shadow too familiar etched a chiseled face draping long hair upon the water. For how long this spirit had been observing her, Terra did not know. But then, how would she know being lost in thought? The face stared from the pool back at her. But this could not be. Looking pensive, this reflection approached from beyond Terra's shoulder. No footfalls were heard. He had crept up

behind her. A man from that angle would only see Terra's backside. Not alarmed, she felt encompassed by a multidimensional soul. One that was too familiar. Was he real after all this time? Dare she turn around? Thoughts of possibilities were far more fun to entertain than reality. After all of these years of pining and wishing for another way it could have been, all she had to do was turn around to face her destiny. However, she was frozen.

Ever so slowly, Terra turned. An older man, tanned and weathered yet with an air of a Shaman, stood gently close. With so much space in the vast natural habitat this Native American was standing only three feet away. He stared. Terra did likewise. Neither spoke a word. They just studied one another. They held each other captive. Staring. Looking. Studying. They were both lost to this tiny slice of time. Both seemingly oblivious to personal courtesies such as handshakes or verbal greetings. They almost seemed merged inside an invisible vortex.

For how many minutes had they been holding each other's gazes? How much time had passed was unknown. He took a slight step closer. Instinctively, Terra reached out with her right hand not knowing where it was going to rest. She just knew she had to touch him. As her hand approached, he met her fingers with his own. Together, they curled their fingers and coupled as a train hitch

would. Their grasp increased. Neither one took their eyes from the other. This was all too familiar for Terra, and yet not so. Perhaps she was wishing too hard? Perhaps time distorted reality? This could never happen...even though she begged to the universe too many times for this perfect harmony to emerge. Terra was ripe for another experience. One to carry with her for the next several years. Either way, Terra was primed and here she stood where she wished time had stopped for her twenty two years ago.

Twenty-Two Years Earlier

At twenty-nine years old, Terra hit the road looking for adventure, a bit of solace, but mostly new beginnings. Wind streamed through her hair and practically deafened her left ear. The window was only partially down. Terra cocked her head left, resting it over on the rolled down window. The barren highway stretched before the hood of her Toyota pickup and with no plan the road steered her path. In the back bench seat was a single duffel bag bulging with essentials and a change of clothes for every situation imaginable. Stacked beside the bag were Thinsulate pads, a sleeping bag, a cooler filled with the essentials of water, orange juice, milk, and a chilled bottle of Baileys. Some granola, almonds, apples, avocados, and yogurt, were the munchies that rounded out Terra's quick cuisine.

Terra was a back roads fanatic. Taking route on highways long abandoned by most, she sought pit stops steaming with nostalgia, such as cafes still serving mom and pop specialties. Yesteryear still thrived for those seeking remnants of the past. The leftovers of a fading lifestyle were a cherished relic to Terra, like finding a shiny copper penny in the dirt. From here the Seattle suburb home, actually, make that ex-home, Terra was free to fly the way of the bird. Back roads were just the ticket she sought as she traveled the Canyon Road off I90 East in Washington state and headed south.

There was an independent spirit that laid dormant in Terra. Each time she peeled back another adventure this spirit would burn bright almost taunting Terra into pushing her outer limits even more. She knew something special and manic and untamed lived below the surface of her heart Chakra. Although she had led a life tightly screwed inside the conservative life her parents had planned for her, she silently screamed to be set free. Terra had always been a good girl, even as a teenager. She had never been rebellious as a child, but more of a responsible take charge adult far too soon. Her life thus far she had listened and obeyed when others said things like, 'should' and 'have to'. It was comfortable, correct, and made others happy. It was not that Terra despised her life up to this point. She didn't. She just wanted something more, better, and beyond her limited life expectations.

After a decade as a copy writer in the advertising business, burn out set in. The truth was that Terra was burned out on her whole existence. The job just added fuel to the fire. Her work was doable, yet the writing on the wall said that there would not be any new challenges on the horizon. The last year had quietly begun to kill off her work ethic and drive. No longer did Terra meet each work morning with eagerness.

However, just when Terra fretted over what change to make in her life, it occurred all on its own and out of nowhere. Whiffs of change and cut backs blew through the office one day. It piqued Terra's interest for she welcomed the next unknown step. But most of the people in her department grew anxious. A scant and tidy memo relayed that a reorganization was upon the horizon. Layoffs were inevitable. For those who volunteered to leave then, a generous severance package of four full months' pay, plus a layoff status thereafter guaranteeing unemployment benefits. Terra got in line first.

With one issue resolved, the other, Terra's long term partner relationship, continued to plague her thoughts. Terra had lived with Scott for as long as she could remember. They were inseparable high school sweethearts, the couple everyone coveted to endless envy. Curly blond locks splayed over Scott's brow were his trademark along with his sturdy, solid physique. It didn't hurt that his ice blue eyes made dead on contact when he addressed you. He was sincere, straight forward, and half the high school girls had swooned after him. But he only had eyes for Terra and he pushed a plan she never balked at.

Straight from high school into local colleges they went. Sharing a room, and then later they got an apartment. When they were both

educated, and had their degrees, they easily transitioned into their jobs inside their chosen professions. It was smooth and graceful. All the time, Scott and Terra were like clones of what their parents had wanted, as well as their expectations of each other. No thought crossed their minds of anything different. Life was cozy. Then, as Scott's prosperity grew his dreams of home ownership materialized. Terra didn't mind being Scott's renter, mostly because the home was not her dream, but his.

Terra and Scott never shared the "I do" vows. No particular reason really. It just seemed like it did not fit either of them. Neither of them wanted children and both believed that would be the only basis for getting married. Terra and Scott held separate bank accounts. The house Scott bought was his by default. He wanted it and had the money to purchase it. Terra was ambivalent about home ownership and opted to pay her fair share of the expenses instead. In all their arrangement worked, at least on the logical level.

For the last several years, Terra's thoughts wandered, mostly to other men. Scott, while a decent and kind man, appeared to be stepping away from the idea of 'them'. Where once they had been crazy in love and had a sex life that rivaled the hottest of volcanoes, their way of life had fallen into an abyss. Terra longed for when Scott stood behind her, pushed her hair to one side and breathed deeply,

damply upon the nap of her neck. It was a favorite turn on for both of them. This no longer was a part of their intimacy, for deep sensuality was expelled to their past.

It was not just the sex/love-making that was waning, but the closeness of the long gone intimate chats over morning coffee. Their relationship was languishing on many fronts. When Terra and Scott had first met, they were young with no particular place they had to be. As the years moved forward, they each found who they were separately as individuals. While it was good to be diverse, both Terra and Scott began to live separate lives, with different friends, hobbies, pursuits, and interests. Both became the person they needed to be without the other. While that was okay, even healthy, Terra longed to be with some other man to experience love-making again and to have that banter that only happens between two lovers. The consequence of their two lifestyles was that it left Terra feeling empty, and apparently Scott too.

Yes, the layoff came at the perfect time for Terra. She did not have to make any decision really. Three days prior, as Terra prepared a spaghetti sauce, in walked Scott looking distressed. Terra raised her eyebrows, questioning his expression, as if to say “what?” but nothing fell out of her mouth. Scott leaned his head to the side as if

making an assessment of her. Then as guilty in the gut goes, Scott announced he had another woman in his life. In fact, they had been together for over a year and it *was* serious. He wanted his house back to himself, so that he could share it, of course, with the *other* woman.

Silence fell. Terra lowered her eyes to the spaghetti. The word “Oh” fell out of her mouth and into the tomato sauce. She was not surprised, but rather relieved. Then a silent thought materialized for Terra. She was liberated. Scott just released her from their long-term, commitment to nowhere. Finally, it was freedom and a chance to fly independent.

She said nothing and let Scott blunder all over himself out of guilt. He would not throw her out of the house immediately. “Take some time,” he said, “to figure out where to live. No hurry.”

Terra continued to stir the sauce. She wished she had taken a lover herself over the past few years. She was tired of being empty inside. Well, Scott just freed her up. Should she thank him? Yeah, he was a cheater and could not even be honest with her until the final curtain call. Why was it that relationships continued the status quo until one party has a secured lover? Why can't partners talk about the train wreck before it happens? Would it not be logical to communicate

along the way and agree to move apart? Instead one always drops a bombshell with no fair warning and then the other is supposed to comply. All these logical, nonsensical thought balls flew around inside Terra's mind. Then she said plainly, "Scott, are you hungry? Do you want this dinner I prepared?"

Scott looked ragged, sheepishly, for the news he had just delivered, and then surprised at Terra's collected demeanor. "Sure, I guess so, if it's okay?"

Terra looked at him pensively, thoughtfully. "Well, sit down, it is ready." She dished up a mounding plate of spaghetti and bright red tomato sauce decorated with mushrooms, sausage, bell peppers, seasonings, onions, and more. She approached Scott with the plate. He looked at her suspiciously, and she oddly winked back. Then Terra planted the platter of food on the table right in front of Scott. They were both thinking the same thing — the possibility of Scott wearing the food was quite high right then. But, Terra was always one to take the high road. Just once—and this would have been the once—Terra would have liked to do something way out of her character. Something outlandish to fit the event, such as a plate of sticky, staining sauce, hot from the stove top splattered in his face. But she could not, she reasoned. They both would get over and

beyond this point in their lives, so making a fuss seemed like a waste of energy.

Within less than a week, two major components of Terra's life had been removed to set her free. Scott was gracious, if one would call it that. He let Terra store her things in his garage until she got settled for however long it would take. For now, she had all that she needed inside her truck. If she were to never return for the rest of it then no worries there. The only thing missing in Terra's life was a dog to fill her passenger seat. She had longed for a canine companion. Her family of origin always had one, or two, while she was growing up and she missed this companionship. Since meeting Scott, there never seemed to be an opportunity to have a dog. Both of them worked and the house barely had a yard. This would not be fair for an animal, at least not a large one. Terra had no interest in lap dogs. They just didn't seem like a real dog to her. Someday, a dog would grace her path and one more manifestation would come true.

Road Liberation

The Canyon Road was rough, curvy, and cracked in a nostalgic type of way. The rolling hills held the road captive alongside the river. The locals used this road to go to recreation including: hunting, fishing, and access to the waterway. This stretch of road went south and would bypass highway 97. Terra took maps, but rarely used them. Her motto was to keep off the main routes and take the side roads whenever possible. Over the last half dozen years, she had taken solo trips and scoured the western part of the United States in vain. She knew her way around and maps seemed to just hinder her intuition which guided her. The secondary roads often led to parks and recreation spots with astonishingly beautiful composition.

When Terra first started exploring, she kept detailed maps of routes so she could retrace her steps if she ever wanted to return. It soon became apparent that once traveled, once she had journeyed to a spot, it became sacred with memories set to that spot. After a while, Terra stopped journaling. She had seen so many spots that recording them all seemed almost trite. The good spots she would not forget. Her intuition was excellent and she let that guide her while en route.

It was early morning in the Canyon. Terra let her long hair fly with the wind. She always wanted long hair and managed to grow it

down to the small of her back. It was more to maintain, but Terra liked to feel it fall across her bare shoulders and down her spine. She always figured her hair would be cropped shorter for convenience as she aged. But for now, Terra identified her long locks with her sensuality. It was something Scott had said as he reached around and grabbed her hair, as she rode him. She had many memories that included Scott, which were precious since he was the only man that had been in her life. Their time together was good, really good, but Terra believed really great men waited for her out there somewhere.

There Terra was, blissfully flying down the road with her hair sailing alongside the truck window behind her head, and then it came to visit and was gone again. For the past several months, she had a particular vision of sorts. It was like a snapshot in time. But rather than a passive fleeting vision, Terra was convinced she had remote viewing capabilities. The only thing was that she could not direct this gift in any way, shape, or form. These viewings visited her in their own time and space, often when not being summoned.

As Terra aged, these viewings had become stronger. She just let them happen and remained the outside observer. Her visions now came with clarity. So clear in fact they had a sense of her material reality. Undaunted by this endowment, Terra was more perplexed. On many occasions, these pie chart slices looked into the future and

became reality. Terra regarded the part she could see like a slice out of the whole rest of the pie that she could not see. Whenever she attempted to revisit the dream, it was only that one slice of pie that she could access to 'taste'. Never the pie pieces before or after. Terra often reasoned if she knew more about physics then she might be able to place the pieces of time and space into some continuum that worked in this reality.

One vision was so fleeting, fast, and untraceable. It came fast and imprinted into Terra's psyche. She had seen it just in the last month at her work desk before her job evaporated. These visions occupied but a fraction of this world's time. Yet, the impression left was limitless. At first, these mini movies guarded Terra's thoughts. After a while she gave them acknowledgment and moved on. What was she to do, try to figure out the unknown by obsessing? When the slips of visions did come to pass, Terra was no worse for wear. However, she did learn one thing and that was these time warps sent her a message. Often if Terra glimpsed her future more than twice it meant that what she was being shown was a turning point in her life. Therefore, these visions were significant.

The sun was peeking through the valley now and hitting the pavement. Terra had to squint and did so before reaching for her sun shades. This vision that she had seen, she could not hold close. Yet

as it slipped away, she did see the full moon wedged between two pillars of rock. She was seeing this from a vantage point of warmth, comfort, and stimulation. The raw beauty of the sheer cliffs angled against the sky and suspending the moon between them was awe inspiring. Terra felt swooned inside a cocoon of love and harmony. She was one with nature, chest deep, and submerged. Before her, the reflection of the moon cast itself upon dark depths. Her fingers reached out to touch and ripple the moon's outline. She was restrained though from behind and around her waist. She did not mind. Then nirvana slipped away.

The highway stretched out and soon it would merge back to the main freeway to head south. The roads dictated Terra's travel as her untraceable images faded once again. Road trips were great for fostering daydreams of the unthinkable. Never was there a concern for where Terra would spend her nights. She was pliable. Campgrounds served her well, as she had all the gear and makings for a comfortable night. The more remote and off the beaten path the place was, the better. Situated beside a creek or river was even more heavenly.

Her small pickup had a canopy with a ready-made mattress for a bed. Her gear was in the back of her extended cab, which kept her bed ready and waiting at all times. There was no hassle or fuss in the

morning. It was just get up and go. Terra was set on getting off the road by dusk so she could get a feel for her new surroundings. Some nights she found abandoned construction sites to park. Any weekend travel would be conducive to staying at business back lots.

Typically, the workers would be gone from Friday at 5pm until Monday at 8am. Walmart also offered a well-lit reprieve from parking in unknown places. In the back country, one could always find a motel to clean up, a waterfall along a hike, and other accommodations. Improvising and flexibility were a part of the adventure.

For tonight, twelve hours after she set off, Terra figured she'd stay somewhere in the mountain corridor. Perhaps it'd be Mt. Adams, Mt. St. Helens, or Mt. Hood. There was also the Columbia. It made no difference as she had been to all of these spots before. Between now and then, Terra would drive at an easy pace. She would occasionally stop to get gas. If a roadside fruit stand beckoned her, and they always did, Terra would find herself with bags of fresh fruits to munch on. If an off the beaten track trinket shop caught her eye, again she would stop. Terra was not much for hoarding stuff, but once in a while she would buy a piece of locally made jewelry. She liked to support the local artists even if she only placed a ten dollar bill in their hands. Terra figured a person could stop a dozen

times en route and never get there; wherever there was. Today was one of those days — too much time and too many stops.

By nightfall, Terra had found a back road that headed west. Buried along the back side of a dusk darkened mountain, this gravel ascent would certainly lead to a camp spot. The road was not earmarked well; Terra just smelled it out like a good scout does. No ruts yet. Gravel washed out here and there graced the dimly lit path. Terra's friends always scolded her for her daring feats. Yes, it was probably foolish, even downright stupid, to go off and not let anyone have her travel itinerary. But, oh well, Terra the effervescent rule follower was now daring to bend entrenched patterns. Anyway, people now crawled all over this planet so eventually someone would find her even if she were dead. Comforting thought. Terra was tired of the status quo. This small, thumb your nose at have-to, was just how she felt right then.

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