

Laura's Dream

Another idea I had, which then went into my vampire book. This is the final version of Laura's dream.

From Festina Lente – About 1,400 words

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Laura knew that strange recurring dreams were part of being a vampire. Simon had his dreams of battles fought by men in armour, wielding brutal weapons. Clara too, had hinted at her own recurring and mildly disturbing nightmares. Details were something neither of them would give her, so she wasn't looking forward to her own starting. That night, when she'd taken her new SUV for a long drive around North London and Hertfordshire, the first dark vampire dream arrived. She was happy, not a care in the world, so why choose then to cause turmoil in her sleeping unconscious? She knew she was dreaming, but that didn't help to make it any less disturbing.

Laura was high up on some kind of structure or building. Details were difficult to see, as they are in most dreams. No vivid colours, she was dreaming of a vast city during the hours of darkness. An ancient city of stone buildings, with little light to lift the darkness. The dream version of her looked up and saw a sky full of stars, though she had no idea what constellations she was looking at. This wasn't too bad after all! If this was the extent of her recurring dreams, it was a small price to pay for her new strength and longevity.

Boom..... Boom.....

The sound of drums, people running through the streets below her. Panic below her, she felt it, knew that it had come to claim its tribute. Fires being lit now, large pits of fire at each major crossroads. The truth occurred to her, it was a game, a tournament to find the one to be his tribute. Shouts from the people running, in a language either unknown to her, or long forgotten. She was still human, still a woman, though there was no way of checking her facial appearance. The dream version of her, ran her fingers over her face, finding higher cheekbones than she was used to and a longer nose. It was her but not her, which she found oddly exciting. Now she understood the words coming up from the streets, the chanting now had meaning.

“Q'uq'umatz, Q'uq'umatz, Q'uq'umatz comes!”

Laura had no concern about what was going on below, she was high above it all, right at the top of a large stone pyramid. Not the only such structure she could see, but by far the largest. She was alone and in total darkness, feeling completely removed from the excited panic in the streets below. Did they want to be caught and suffer a slow and agonising death, or escape? She knew how they'd be feeling, the contradiction of fear and the wish to be the one. The chosen, the one out of the tens of thousands, to be consumed by the great feathered serpent.

Boom..... Boom..... Boom.

He was there, just visible by the light of a fire pit, still a long way off. He was in their city, Q'uq'umatz, the great God who was their creator. Other Gods had aided him in the task, but it was Q'uq'umatz who the people loved the most. A single life once a year, was little to ask in return for the creation of their world and every living thing it contained.

“Q'uq'umatz, Q'uq'umatz, Q'uq'umatz.”

Chanting from below, his name now, spoken not as a warning, but in homage. She watched as the huge serpent God, moved ever closer. No rush, he made the occasional swipe with his massive

claws, at those who came too near. It was half hearted though, the real tournament hadn't started yet.

Boom..... Boom..... Boom. The constant thump of drums.

Q'uq'umatz walked low on four legs, his belly almost touching the ground. A long creature, who filled the street. A ruffle of white feathers round his throat, but otherwise his skin looked green and reptilian. A dragon rather than a serpent, at least to her eyes. Even horns at the back of his head, a living embodiment of the dragons she'd seen at Chinese celebrations in London.

"You're no serpent." The dream Laura muttered. "You're a dragon !"

He'd heard her ! Out of all the thousands of screaming and shouting voices and above the constant thump of the drums, he'd heard her muttered words. His head turned towards her, his large yellow eyes staring right at her. He turned and began to climb up the side of the pyramid, his eyes never leaving hers. She could have run, down the other side and away into the night. No, if he wanted her, she'd go willingly. It was a great honour to be chosen, her family would rise high in the local hierarchy, her siblings would be honoured. Instead of running, she moved two steps down on the great pyramid and waited for him.

Boom..... Boom..... Boom.

He was large and hardly designed for climbing. Q'uq'umatz put one giant claw in front of the other and ever so slowly, moved towards her.

"I am yours Q'uq'umatz !" She shouted. "Mighty serpent, who spewed forth our world."

The crowd below weren't happy, their God wasn't following the age old traditions of the tournament. They shouted for his attention, a few even threw stones at his long reptilian tail. It did no good, their God had chosen his own offering. Laura still had no idea of a name for the dream version of herself, but she was certain of one thing..... It wasn't a dream. It was a history, a part of the past that was now carved into the stone of time. Nothing could be done to save that version of herself, nothing at all.

Boom..... Boom..... Boom.

So slow, yet his approach was inexorable. The serpent God opened his mouth and roared at her, a deep earthy roar, which seemed to shake the mighty pyramid to its foundations.

Boom..... Boom..... Boom.

He lunged at her, one of his teeth actually scratching the side of her face, as he attempted to swallow her whole.

"Q'uq'umatz, Q'uq'umatz, Q'uq'umatz."

"Stop it Laura, wake up !" Shouted Clara. "You just had a bad dream, snap out of it."

She was sat upright in her own bed, in her room in the house in Wood Green. Oh, how much she loved that room and the feeling of security it brought.

"It was so real, I can still smell his breath, feel his teeth." She said.

Clara was sat on her bed, nodding at her. Simon was still by the door, as if deciding if it was a make some coffee incident or just a minor drama, before going back to bed.

"Was it Mayan Gods, all claws and yellow eyes ?" Asked Clara.

"Yes, exactly that..... He was going to eat me. I was some sort of offering."

"I don't get those." Said Simon. "I think you need to be a girl. I used to get dreams about primitive tribes in Africa. Now those were brutal !"

"How do I get these dreams out of my head ?" She asked.

"You don't." Said Clara. "Daniel says they're a proof that we've been around long before the guy in Romania showed up, the one the religious nuts think was the first. The girl in the Mayan city was one of us and the serpent God knew it."

"A better offering than one of the locals." Added Simon. "So, is it coffee in the kitchen, or shall I get three glasses and a bottle of wine?"

Her hands were still shaking, the thought of going back to sleep.....

"Coffee in the kitchen." Said Clara. "I'll get her dressed and bring her down."

Simon vanished, leaving them alone. Clara hugged her, as though she was a younger sister.

"You'll be fine Laura. Simon and I went through this alone, but you have us."

"Do the dreams ever stop?"

"No ! You'll get your own recurring dreams, but the old ancient dreams will keep resurfacing, constantly causing you to wake in a sweat. The feelings of fear do become easier to control though, with the passing of time."

"He ate her didn't her ? Q'uq'umatz I mean."

"Yes, I believe he did."

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