



# The Truth We Will Always Know

by Barbara Anderson<sup>1</sup>



**SND**



Vincent held her as she sobbed violently. Her tears were hot on his skin as they fell on his neck. He knew she was dreaming again. She didn't call them nightmares... not all of them anyway. Most of the time... if she remembered them at all... she dubbed them 'bittersweet dreams.' Slowly her breathing became more even, and he could feel her racing heart begin to slow.

Finally waking, she lifted her head and looked into his eyes. "I'm sorry, Vincent," she said remorsefully.

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<sup>1</sup> Images for this story were provided by the author.

Returning her gaze, he wondered if she knew how truly beautiful she was with the soft candlelight reflecting in her tear filled eyes. He reached to tuck her damp hair behind her ear. "Don't be sorry, Catherine. I'm here... I will always be here... *Always.*" He bent to kiss her damp forehead.

"Always..." she repeated thoughtfully. "That's such a father's word... Always." *I've heard those words before*, she thought, but couldn't quite remember where.

"Sometimes our dreams are so... heartbreaking and poignant... and sometimes so..." She stopped speaking mid-sentence as a haunting shadow passed over her.

"...and sometimes so... frightening," he whispered, recalling some of the worst of them.

"Yes." She nodded slightly and tried to smile a little.

He loved her crooked grin and could barely resist the urge to kiss her.

"And sometimes they're pretty wild, aren't they?" she asked trying to lighten the mood.

"Yes," he readily agreed, remembering some of the outlandish dreams he had had over the years. "And sometimes they are very funny," he said with a twinkle in his eyes. "Do you remember that one where you and Devin were arguing and hurling insults at each other using nothing but absurd Shakespearean quotes?"

She laughed through her tears, moisture still glistening on her cheeks, then added, "... and that one you had where you spent an entire day being chased by dogs, hitting your head, and stubbing your toes?"

"And smashing my thumb with a hammer?" He winced and chuckled. "Did you know, I actually felt the pain of that one for days afterward?"

"Oh no!" she exclaimed with a smile. "I didn't know that!" She took his hand in hers and kissed his thumb. "I'm so sorry."

"Do you remember the one when I was a vampire and your love brought me back from the realm of the living dead?" she asked.

He gasped. "I had nearly forgotten about that one," he admitted. "That one definitely qualifies as 'wild.' You made a very attractive vampire, by the way".

"Through the eyes of love, Vincent," she said, smiling wistfully. "Only through the eyes of love."

Silence fell between them as Catherine's eyes clouded over again. She lowered her head attempting to hide her pain from him.

Vincent put his fingers under her chin and lifted her gaze to meet his. "What about tonight, my dearest? What kind of dream did you have tonight?"

"I died, Vincent," she whispered almost imperceptibly, as if she was afraid that giving it voice would make it come true. "I died."

"Yes." He nodded. "You did."

"You already knew?" she asked incredulously. "Did you dream that too?"

"No..." He shook his head. "But I felt you go," he explained. "I *felt* you go." He shuddered, feeling as if he had said those words once before. He tightened his embrace. "I woke up to make sure you were still breathing, and you flew into my arms... sobbing." He paused for a moment, then said, "Tell me, Catherine... tell me about this dream."



Her furrowed brow told him she was attempting to recall the details of the dream. Vincent waited patiently.

"We lived in a beautiful castle..." she began. "... high in the mountains."

"That sounds promising," he said hopefully.

"It was one of the most beautiful places I've ever seen." Then looking at him adoringly, she continued. "We loved, Vincent... *We loved*... and there was a child."

“Jacob?” he asked.

“Yes... I think so.” Then smiling, she said, “He was beautiful.”

She reached to hold his face in her hand. “I knew that I was dying. I could feel myself slipping away and all I wanted to do was to hold you and our baby *one last time.*”

Vincent suddenly felt as if he couldn't breathe.

“You put him into my arms and then took us both in yours.” She paused again, feeling the pain of it all over again.

“Tell me, Catherine,” he begged desperately. “*Please.*”

Fresh tears fell from her eyes as she continued. “I... I looked into your eyes, and I said, *Though lovers be lost... love... shall not...*”

“...and death shall have no dominion,” he said, finishing the lines.

Catherine was astounded. “If you didn't have the dream, then how did you know those lines?” she asked.

“They are from a poem by Dylan Thomas,” he explained. “I have the book around here somewhere. He raised his head and looked around, trying to remember the last place he had seen it.



Then turning back to his love, he reached up to smooth her tousled hair. “Please continue, Catherine... what happened next?”

“I died,” she said simply. “I could feel your tears falling on my face. Then you drew me to you and cradled me close and... and wept as you rocked back and forth holding us close.” She paused, shaken by the memory. “When I woke up you were cradling me in your arms in just the same way. It took me a moment to realize the dream had ended.”

They looked at each other in wonder. The pain of the dream had felt so real to them both.

“Why are we still plagued by these dreams, Vincent?” Catherine asked. “After all this time?”

“I don’t know,” he said, shaking his head.

Catherine chewed her lip as if searching for the answer within herself. “Vincent...” she began tentatively. “Have you ever wondered if...?” She halted mid-sentence, almost afraid to utter the idea aloud.

“What?” Vincent asked. “Have I ever wondered if what?” He could feel she was about to say something important.

“Have you ever wondered if *we*... are the dream?”

“I’m not sure I understand what you mean,” he replied.

“I mean... have you ever wondered if it’s *not us*... that it isn’t *we, you and me*, who are dreaming these dreams... that perhaps someone else is actually dreaming about us? Or even if a lot of other someone’s are dreaming about us? That we only exist because *we* are in *their* dreams? I mean... are we actually dreaming? ...or are *we* the dream? Does that make any sense?”

Vincent was stunned by her question. “The concept has never occurred to me before,” he said, momentarily opening his mind to the strange theory.

*Could it be true?* he wondered, trying to wrap his head around the idea. *Is it possible that I am merely a dream? A figmentation of someone else’s imagination?* he asked himself.

Then shaking his head, he confidently said, “No, Catherine, that *can’t* be the case.”

“Why not?” she asked, still convinced that it was at least a possibility.

“Because *I think*...” he said firmly, “...therefore... *I am*.” Then placing his hand over his heart, he insisted, “*I feel*... therefore *I am*...” Then, recalling the intimacy they had shared only a few short hours earlier, he drew her close and kissed her passionately. Then whispering huskily in her ear, he said, “I love... *therefore*... ***I... definitely... am.***”

Not ready to fully accept his point of view, she argued, “But, Vincent, what if that is all life really is? Nothing more than a dream or a series of dreams.”

Vincent was unruffled by her doubts. Nonetheless, he was willing to entertain the possibility that her theory might be true. “If you *are* a dream, Catherine, then I



don't ever want whoever is dreaming about us to wake up. As long as we are together, Catherine, does it really matter?" he finally asked.

"What do you mean, does it really matter?" she asked insistently. "Of course, it matters if we are *real* or not. How can you think it doesn't?"

"It doesn't matter because we are real to each other... *aren't we?*"

"Well... yes, I... I suppose we are," she hesitantly agreed.

"And once you are real..." he half-quoted.

Catherine chuffed and smiled broadly. "And once you are real, it lasts for *always*."

He smiled softly. "Yes... it lasts for *always*. And just consider the hundreds, possibly thousands of dreams we have had over the years. Don't you think if someone dreamt of us all those times that at least one of those dreams would have been written into a book, or made into a movie, or a play? And if that *has* happened... it's quite possible we are immortal. Just think about it, Catherine... we could live forever."

Catherine considered carefully. "I suppose you could be right," she said slowly, entertaining the thought of being immortal. Then wiggling her eyebrows up and down with a smirk on her face, she said, "Some of those dreams have been pretty amazing, haven't they?" she asked smiling seductively.

Vincent ducked his head down in embarrassment.

She looked at her sweetheart in shock. "Vincent! Are you blushing?"

He couldn't deny it. He tried not to laugh as he said, "I blush... *therefore I am*."

Catherine threw her head back in a full belly laugh and then buried her face in his chest with glee.

He laughed heartily to see her unmitigated joy. *I much prefer to see her laughing than weeping*, he thought, as his heart swelled with love.

They sat quietly together for some time basking in the glow of their love for each other, breathing in unison as if they were truly one.

"Catherine?" Vincent asked quietly, wondering if she had gone to sleep.

"Mmm?" she replied softly as she drifted back to him from the place in between wakefulness and sleep where everything shimmers and floats.

“If you *are* right... if... *if* it is true... that we aren’t actually alive in the literal, corporeal sense... we must always remember one thing.”

Catherine raised her head to look into his brilliant blue eyes. “Yes?”

“We must remember that there is a truth beyond all knowledge, beyond everything we could ever hope to know... the truth we will *always* know.”

*Is that a line from a song... a poem perhaps?* he wondered. *It sounds so... familiar...*

“What truth is that, Vincent?”

“We must remember that though life *is* a precious gift... it isn’t the *most* precious gift.”

“Then what is?”

*“It’s love, Catherine! We must *always* remember that whatever happens... whatever comes... that to love... and to *be* loved in return... **that** is the **greatest** gift of all!”*

Her brow furrowed again as she considered his words.

“And if we *are* merely a dream...” she ventured. “As long as whoever it is that is out there dreaming of *us*... that as long as *they* keep dreaming... as long as someone... anyone... out there keeps the dream alive... they keep *us* alive... and as long as they keep us alive our love will never die.”

Vincent nodded, relieved that she understood what he was trying to say.

“And if the dream I had tonight comes true...?” she asked, biting her lip again. “If our world divides and shatters?”

He could hear the worry in her voice, he could feel it in her heart. “Then our love is where we’ll go,” he assured her as he held her close. “We *will* come back to that love, and we will wake from the dream... just as we always do... just as we did tonight.”

“Here, in each other’s arms?” she asked in earnest.

“Yes, my dearest Catherine... safe... here in each other’s arms.” He brushed her hair away from her eyes, gently kissing her furrowed brow. “How do you feel now? Are you still upset?”

She smiled and said, “No, just so very grateful... for you.”

“We have endured much,” he observed.

“Yes, we have,” she agreed. “And I know, in the deepest part of who I am, that whatever happens, Vincent, we *will* endure. *We will.*”

The hairs on Vincent’s arms and the back of neck stood up. He felt as if he was reliving a moment that he couldn’t quite remember. *Perhaps from another dream*, he concluded.

It wasn’t long before Catherine fell back into a deep sleep, safe and comforted in the arms of the man she loved... and she dreamed.



**Beauty and the Beast**” TV series fan video, by Judith Nolan

“**Til You’re Home**” Sung by Rita Wilson & Sebastian Yatra

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fEO6sFwElxw>







*A Dream Within a Dream*

*Edgar Allan Poe*

*1809 – 1849*

*Take this kiss upon the brow!  
And, in parting from you now,  
Thus much let me avow:  
You are not wrong who deem  
That my days have been a dream;  
Yet if hope has flown away  
In a night, or in a day,  
In a vision, or in none,  
Is it therefore the less gone?  
All that we see or seem  
Is but a dream within a dream.*

*I stand amid the roar  
Of a surf-tormented shore,  
And I hold within my hand  
Grains of the golden sand--  
How few! yet how they creep  
Through my fingers to the deep,  
While I weep--while I weep!  
O God! can I not grasp  
Them with a tighter clasp?  
O God! can I not save  
One from the pitiless wave?  
Is all that we see or seem  
But a dream within a dream?*

*Dreamers by Barbara Anderson*