



Dreamsome

Carmenica Diaz

Peaceful time, cease your mind, Dreamsome

from the song **Dreamsome**, sang by Shelby Lynne (written by Shelby Lynne, Dorothy Overstreet and Jay Joyce)

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Dreamsome

(written by Shelby Lynne, Dorothy Overstreet and Jay Joyce)

*In the dark I can hear you whisper
shadows still, move across the distance*

*What did you say, it's okay
Did you miss me
Did you miss me*

*Make it mine, takin' time, forgotten
speak for me, silent plea, surrender*

*What did you say, it's okay
Did you miss me
Did you miss me*

*You know at times I wondered
if you ever thought of me
and I wondered if you wanted to be free
like me, and I needed to feel you and
I wondered did you miss me baby, oh yeah*

*Turn to gray, bluer shade, when the sun comes
Peaceful time, cease your mind, Dreamsome*

*What did you say, it's okay, oh baby
Did you miss me
Did you miss me
Did you miss me
Did you miss me*

01: (Superman) It's Not Easy

*Wish that I could cry
Fall upon my knees
Find a way to lie
About a home I'll never see*

John Ondrasik¹

1.

Everyone else had left for the day so the office, as well as the *bullpen*, was completely deserted, *exactly* the way I like it.

It's not that I'm anti-social; I'm not, but the blokes I work with don't really include me in their cliques. In fact, they work at excluding me.

Although it is not alluded to, they have their reasons. I was the first employee hired and I am a friend of the owner so they see me as a quasi boss, or worse, a potential squealer.

It boils down to one inescapable fact; they don't really trust me as one of the boys.

That's life, I suppose, *my* life.

The *bullpen* is a special room where we tested the game, *Dark Secret*, we were building and was a series of linked computers with the latest version of *Dark Secret* running.

Dark Secret is a multilevel game with many worlds and characters. My job is to design and build the worlds while other designers worked on the characters and monsters.

¹ Sung by Five For Fighting

They claimed they had the fun job but I really liked worked on the trees, castles, interiors and forests. It reminded me of drawing which was a long forgotten hobby of mine, one I no longer pursued. Why draw with pencils when PC's can do just as well? Anyway, I loved the act of creation and time just flew when I was working.

A door opened and Gordon, another designer walked through, struggling into his coat. For some reason, Gordon and I disliked each other, although we both attempted to hide it.

'That's it for me, Porky,' he said fake cheer almost verging on a sneer. 'I'm off to the pub. You the last here?'

I think so,' I said without looking up.

'Dale's still in his office,' Gordon supplied, 'must be catching up after his mini-break.'

I didn't answer and watched the PC screen, waiting until Gordon left.

Dale Robertson owned *Dark Secret Design* (DSD) and was our boss. He was also my friend.

We had met at university, he was studying architecture, I design, and something drew us together.

Anyway, he had this dream and a workable concept and when his grandmother lent him the funds to begin his game design company, I was his first employee. For a while, I was the *only* employee.

His parents, both wealthy, had refused to help him with the company, calling it a foolish hobby so Dale had asked his grandmother.

Although she didn't have a clue about online gaming, she loved her grandson and lent him the cash.

I heard all of this from Dale as I had never met his parents and Dale had never met mine. It was, I guessed, best for both of us that we did not.

We launched the company with a small modified gaming engine which did really well and enabled Dale to pay his grandmother back as well as expanding the business. He even began to pay me, which was handy!

Dale's parents were always trying to persuade him to give up his business and return to architecture like his father. They were, I knew, also always setting him up with young women.

However, none of the relationships ever lasted. Dale usually brought them into DSD to show them around and I knew the other blokes ran bets on how long each one would last.

'What was wrong with Caroline?' I asked just before Dale left for the country with his parents, grandmother, brother and sister-in-law. Dale's parents lived in a large country house and they liked the family to stay there once a month.

'Nothing,' Dale mumbled, scrutinising the lines of code on the screen, 'there was nothing wrong with her.'

'Methinks you doth lie.'

'I'm not,' he protested.

'Why did you dump her?'

'I didn't *dump* her, Fred,' Dale had snapped.

One of the things I liked about Dale was that he was the only person who actually used my real name instead of the hated *Porky*!

I didn't bother to correct people now or even tell them that I hated the nickname. What was the point? If someone like Gordon knew I hated the nickname, he would use it even more, just to rub it in!

'I just pointed out to Caroline we had nothing in common,' Dale explained further.

I had met her once and, although I never said anything to anyone, had her pegged as a social climbing bitch with a nasty streak a mile wide.

I never said anything to Dale; it wasn't my place.

'Caroline was sensational,' I had said, 'easily the best of the last lot. Long blonde hair, well built...'

'I'm not crazy about blondes,' Dale had murmured. 'Look, Fred, she didn't know a thing about games! She couldn't even turn on a PC! And, Caroline aligned herself with my parents, nagged me about moving to the country and opening an architects office. And to be bloody frank, the sex was lousy! Talk about lying back and thinking of England! Caroline thought her body was enough.'

'Would have been for me,' I had murmured and Dale had laughed.

Strangely, I was glad that Dale had twigged her and had dumped the Sloane Ranger Bitch!

I hadn't seen Dale since his return from his parents country estate but I expected his parents had

tried to set him up with another Caroline immediately. They did seem to have a ready supply on hand.

The office door opened and Dale walked in.

‘Hi, Fred,’ he called and I nodded, scrolling through the game, critically examining the forest and the approach to the Temple.

‘Taking the new version for a spin?’ Dale asked, sitting beside me to peer at the screen.

‘Just walking through the Ancient Forest to see what the Temple of Lars looks like.’

Dale moved closer.

‘The trees look fantastic!’

‘Thanks.’

‘And the sky! It’s fantastic! You’re a genius.’

‘If you say so,’ I said, embarrassed.

I looked at his face.

‘How was the mini-break?’

‘Brilliant. Unbelievable, really.’

‘Aha!’ I grinned.

I knew the signs!

‘You met someone, yeah?’

Dale grinned at me.

‘You *could* say that. Fancy a drink?’

‘At the Rose and Thorn?’

‘Why not. Come on, I’ll tell you all about my hols.’

‘I’m not looking at your horrible holiday snaps,’ I joked as I logged out of the beta version of *Dark Secret*.

‘No snaps, mate, just an unbelievable yarn. Come on, I’m keen for a pint!’

2.

Everybody else from Dark Secret Design was at the Rose and Thorn and, as usual, they crowded around Dale but ignored me.

DSD was a male stronghold, all were in the mid to late twenties and they viewed Dale Robertson as something akin to a god. He was, after all, their age and owned his own company, a company that was making money!

After Dale had chatted and drank a pint or two with them, while I hovered on the edge, Dale led the way to a small table while the others played a rowdy game of darts.

They never asked me to play which was a shame, as I was actually bloody good at darts! Maybe they knew and didn't want to be defeated by *Porky*, the fat quiet bloke who is a friend of the boss!

'That Gordon is a sneaky bloke,' Dale said suddenly as he sat, 'he's bloody good at his job but I don't trust him.'

'Don't tell me stuff like that, Dale,' I protested. 'The blokes don't trust me now because they think I'm your eyes and ears. I'm an employee here as well, you know.'

'You're more than that, Fred, don't you remember when we started, I drew up that...'

'Yeah, yeah. Tell me about your mini-break. I don't know many people with parents that have a country

estate. Did your Mum and Dad drive you bonkers? What bird did you meet? How did you meet her?’

Dale shook his head.

‘No bird,’ he said quietly.

‘I thought you said you met someone?’

‘No, *you* said that! And you’re right, I *did* meet someone but *not* a woman.’

‘A bloke?’ I swigged my lager. ‘You’re not going poncey on me, mate, are you?’ I joked.

Dale looked at me carefully and then looked around the Rose and Thorn.

‘Fred, let’s go somewhere else. I’ve got an *unbelievable* yarn to tell you.’

‘What’s wrong with here? It’s bloody cold out.’

‘Too many ears. Come on. Let’s duck down to the Albatross.’