

DREAM RETREAT

Written by

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INT./EXT. - CAR - HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - DAY

With frantic eyes, RUBY REYES, 20s beautiful and ethereal artist woman, parks in front of an emergency room. In a frenzy, she gets nauseous in the cacophony of city sounds.

RUBY REYES  
It's all over!

Hyperventilating, she has a breakdown, cries into the steering wheel. Phone alert CHIMES. She sobs, reads email.

LILY DUNCAN (TEXT)  
Congrats, Miss Ruby Reyes! You're the recipient of this year's Art Mage Residency! Join us for six epic months at The Dream Retreat!

Ruby stares blankly at the phone. Blinks disbelief.

RUBY REYES  
I... won?

She keeps reading, her eyes brightening.

RUBY REYES (CONT'D)  
Wow guess I'm just getting started!

EXT. CITY HIGHWAY - DAY

Ruby drives away from the city skyline.

EXT. DREAM RETREAT - DUSK

Ruby drives up to the parking lot spot. She gets out of the car nervously. She checks her phone, unsure.

She walks around and finds a circle of five chairs. In alarm, she continues across a bridge, stares into the creek tunnel.

Her trance is cut short by approach of LILY DUNCAN, 60s easygoing woman. She cheers at the sight of Ruby.

LILY DUNCAN  
Blessed spirits! You must be Ruby!  
I'm Lily Duncan, welcome home!  
We're thrilled to have you here!

Ruby gives a pained smile and Lily smiles back.

LILY DUNCAN (CONT'D)

You must be tired. I'll show you to the Gardener's Cottage!

RUBY REYES

Wait, so I'll be the gardener?

LILY DUNCAN

A few chores. You'll feed the furry friends! I'll show you in the morn! Didn't you read about the residency on our website? Or -- in the news?

RUBY REYES

Um. No. I applied while... under the weather. Just saw mention of magic and- I need magic these days.

Lily gestures for Ruby to follow around the house.

LILY DUNCAN

We all do! You'll find the wonders meant for you here. There's your room! It's unlocked. Sweet dreams!

Ruby approaches the door and goes to open it.

RUBY REYES

Thanks again -- for picking me.

Ruby turns but Lily is gone. In her place is FOLEY JONES, 30s pompous journalist, passing, slowing to a grinning stop.

FOLEY JONES

Not sure who you're talking to, but I'd 100% pick you! For something!

Ruby stands awkwardly, unsure of what to say.

RUBY REYES

Um. Okay. Cool. Wait. So who are you? The other volunteer?

FOLEY JONES

Ha! I look like a volunteer? My time is money. I'm not a hippie.

RUBY REYES

Oh, okay. Didn't mean to offend.

FOLEY JONES

I'm no PC crybaby. Can't offend me. Name's Foley Jones. ATL Journalist.

RUBY REYES  
Jeez, OK. Great. What's the news?

FOLEY JONES  
Psychos reported fairies 'n shit  
here. I'm here to clear the record.  
Can't have folks buying that crap!

RUBY REYES  
OK. Love to talk, but gotta work  
tomorrow morning --

FOLEY JONES  
Oh, you mean volunteer? I have to  
*work* tomorrow.

RUBY REYES  
Yes, *volunteer*. My time is *more*  
valuable than money. Both are  
oppressive manmade constructs, but  
I don't expect you to get that.

FOLEY JONES  
Well, on the contrary--

Ruby shuts the door in Foley's face, leaving him there.

INT. GARDENER'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

Ruby puts down her bags and starts exploring the unit,  
getting increasingly comfortable and excited.

RUBY REYES  
Wow! So cute!

She notices a blank canvas and art supplies in the corner.

RUBY REYES (CONT'D)  
My first artist residency! I should  
get started on my masterpiece now!

She tries to visualize but can't. She throws the brush down.

RUBY REYES (CONT'D)  
Who am I kidding? I haven't been  
able to paint in 6 months! Now I'll  
be here 6 more, torturing myself!

Ruby begins to cry loudly, unable to breathe. Suddenly she  
gets a KNOCK at the DOOR.

Standing up and gathering composure, she answers the door. It's SANTO DE TIERRA, 30s male with shaman vibes, smiling warmly and gesturing with a gentle greeting.

SANTO DE TIERRA

Hi, I'm Santo. You're Ruby, right?  
I was gonna have an impromptu fire,  
just thought I'd invite you!

RUBY REYES

Oh, um, sure. Sounds super cool. I  
was just... chillin' actually.

SANTO DE TIERRA

Awesome! Well, do what ya gotta do,  
and meet me out by the fire circle!

Ruby nods as Santo gives a thumbs up and walks off.

EXT. FIRE CIRCLE - NIGHT

Ruby wanders out as Santo gets the fire lit and blows it. He notices and greets her.

SANTO DE TIERRA

Hey there, Ruby! Perfect timing!

RUBY REYES

Yep for once in my life, huh?

SANTO DE TIERRA

Divine timing doesn't always wait  
on us, but sometimes we sync up!

RUBY REYES

Yeah. This is such a cool place.

SANTO DE TIERRA

Yes, it is... a sacred location.

Ruby watches the fire for a moment as Santo tends it.

RUBY REYES

How long have you been here?

SANTO DE TIERRA

Long enough. This is home now.

RUBY REYES

So, all this magic fairy stuff.  
It's not some kinda gimmick?

SANTO DE TIERRA  
The Yunwi Tsunsdi? The Cherokee  
word meaning "Little People".

RUBY REYES  
Are they -- real?

SANTO DE TIERRA  
What do you think?

RUBY REYES  
It's so hard to know what's real  
anymore in this world. I guess for  
lotsa folks, but especially for me.

Santo stares with a serious smile across the fire and nods.

SANTO DE TIERRA  
Always asking what's real. Being  
open to options, no matter how  
"crazy". That's a great start!

RUBY REYES  
But, have you seen *them*?

Santo stares into the fire.

SANTO DE TIERRA  
Can't talk about it. Words don't do  
'em justice. But, we all have our  
own experiences here. Be open to  
anything, but also -- be careful!

Foley wanders up with a bottle of wine.

FOLEY JONES  
Hey party people! Solid fire! Don't  
mind if I invite myself.

SANTO DE TIERRA  
Fire doesn't discriminate like you.

FOLEY JONES  
What? Man, I don't discriminate. I  
merely debunk widespread delusions!

Santo lights a joint, hits it and passes it to Ruby.

SANTO DE TIERRA  
I know you're here, because you  
don't believe in magic. You believe  
in nothing. You want to ruin magic  
for other people. Call them crazy.  
You wanna close our little haven.

FOLEY JONES

Ya got me all wrong, buddy. I'm just a scientist of words. In the world of fake news, I find and report the real reality!

SANTO DE TIERRA

The real reality? That's a joke, right? You have to SEE to BELIEVE? What about all the dimensions you can't see? The atoms you can't see?

FOLEY JONES

Dimensions? Another mass delusion like heaven, hell, God. Atoms? We have proof. Thanks to microscopes.

SANTO DE TIERRA

Man, you may be a lost cause! Your eyes can only see on the visible light spectrum! Some can see more!

FOLEY JONES

Sorry! I call bullshit!

RUBY REYES

I saw-- profound colors and shape-shifting small people, since I was a kid. That stopped when we moved to the city and my mom gave me pills to make it all go away. Going from such a world of life and color, to that black and white world of ghosts? I've been searching for that color again everywhere, in myself. In my art.

(pauses)

You'll never understand what I've seen. Maybe I won't either. I don't care if anyone calls me crazy. The magic, here, everywhere, still exists. I'm going to find it again.

Ruby leaps up and exits.

SANTO DE TIERRA

Way to go, my guy!

FOLEY JONES

Ya can't tell me that wasn't crazy! She's going off into the woods now? What! Isn't there bears and shit?

SANTO DE TIERRA

Night elves are worse than bears.  
You did this. Help me find her.

Foley scoffs at this suggestion.

FOLEY JONES

You're a bit cuckoo yourself, pal.  
I ain't goin' out there. No way.

SANTO DE TIERRA

You said we proved the existence of  
atoms due to microscopes.

(points to forest)

Well, in that case, this place, is  
like a microscope. It's *our* proof.

EXT. DREAM RETREAT - FOREST - NIGHT

Ruby ventures into the dark woods. Wide-eyed, she feels as if she can't breathe. Coming up to the circle of five chairs, she hesitates and moves into the circle. She closes her eyes.

FIREFLY (O.S.)

I wouldn't do that if I were you!

EXT. RIVER PARK - DAY

Ruby opens her eyes wide and hops out of the circle. She scans the darkness looking for the source of the voice.

Upon the bank of the nearby river, sits FIREFLY, ageless fairy woman. Firefly smiles warmly as Ruby walks across the bridge and stops, staring in a daze.

RUBY REYES

Um. Hi there. Do I know you?

FIREFLY

Once upon a time you did.

They hold eye contact for an extended period.

FIREFLY (CONT'D)

Welcome home Ruby. Time to wake up.

INT. GARDENER'S COTTAGE - DAY

Ruby awakens, disoriented in her bed. She sits up, and glances at the brushes and paints laid out for her. Her ALARM RINGS, which she turns off with a smile.



EXT. DREAM RETREAT - FARM - DUSK

Ruby wanders through the farm in a state of bliss. She takes great joy in feeding the animals.

EXT. DREAM RETREAT - RIVER - DUSK

Dazed, she advances, staring into the stream upon the bridge. She looks deep into the tunnel before closing her eyes.

RUBY REYES (O.S.)

Who am I?

EXT. RIVER - NIGHT

Firefly stands and points at Ruby.

FIREFLY

You, are one of us.

RUBY REYES

And who are you?

FIREFLY

We have been given more names than you have time. You can call me: Firefly. You re-entered our home, through the old crystal mountain, our space of limitless imagination.

(points)

Here you are again! In the eternal world, where spirit is born. Where it goes to rest in dreams and death and evolves over eternity. You will be in both worlds, at all times, beyond time. You will LIVE with your true family. Your real family.

(opens arms lovingly)

Long lost daughter! Mankind's monsters hurt you didn't they? Don't worry, baby. You're home now. I'll never let them hurt you again.

Firefly teleports to give Ruby a warm embrace. Ruby flinches in discomfort, but then suddenly returns the hug, smiling.

EXT. DREAM RETREAT - FOREST - SUNRISE

A panicking Santo and an exhausted Foley trudge on at dawn.

SANTO DE TIERRA  
 Ruby! Are you out there? Can you  
 hear me? Ruby! Shit!

FOLEY JONES  
 A troubled girl went missing on  
 your watch! Yikes! But hey! What a  
 story this is gonna make!

Santo nearly snaps, turning back to fight a lagging Foley.

SANTO DE TIERRA  
 Fuck you, Foley! This is real!

RUBY REYES (O.C.)  
 Hey! Guys! No fighting! I'm fine!

In shock, they both run toward her voice in the house.

INT. GARDENER'S COTTAGE - DAY

Ruby awakens on the bed. She hears something outside.

SANTO DE TIERRA (O.C.)  
 Fuck you, Foley! This is real!

RUBY REYES  
 Hey! Guys! No fighting! I'm fine!

She looks out window and frowns, not seeing them.

She shrugs and drifts away smiling, over to the blank canvas.

RUBY REYES (CONT'D)  
 If there's one thing, I believe in,  
 it's magic! Art is *my* magic! Time  
 to finally finish my masterpiece!

Zoom in on her inspired face, applying brushes to the canvas.

Santo and Foley enter out of breath to find the place empty.

A finished painting of a fairy mountain house greets them.

**THE END**