

2023 Creative Writing Contest  
10:10 by Barbe Stevenson  
1<sup>st</sup> Place - Short Fiction

Sara went to bed like every other night at exactly 10:00pm. She got under the covers. She thought about her day and what she could have done better. She thought about tomorrow and what she needed to accomplish. Sara thought about her friends. Most of them were married, had children, owned a home, were successful. Sara was happy for them but wondered when she would be happy. Sara dosed off into a light sleep.

Suddenly Sara was awakened by a very bright, white light coming from her bathroom doorway. Sara half-awake looked towards the light. She saw an alien-like figure standing in the doorway with its right arm raised high.

Sara's body stiffened. She felt her body vibrating. The vibrations intensified. She can feel her soul vibrating to the point where she was terrified that her soul would leave her body lifeless. She couldn't hear anything from the source. But she could feel the source's intent to take her soul. The vibrations continued to get more intense. She started to see her soul being taken from her body.

She tried to scream, "You can not take my soul!" over and over. But nothing came out of her mouth. She felt frozen yet still vibrating at a horrific speed.

All at once, it all stopped.

Sara was now in a dream. Sara started dreaming of a world where she was appreciated for her work. She had a happy family, with a happy life, happy, beautiful, children, in a happy and beautiful home, in her dream job, in a perfect marriage and all was well and perfect.

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Sara dreamed of being successful in her career. She dreamed of the recognition she received and the bonus of wealth. She saw her perfect children doing perfectly in school and in social environments. Sara saw her perfect home and how beautiful her gardens were. She saw her soulmate husband. He catered to her every need and want without being asked. He was perfect.

Sara dreamed she drove her dream car into town. Everyone waved at her. Everyone gave her compliments and was happy to see her. A stranger held the door open for her and paid for her coffee at the gas station. A young woman even paid for her lunch. Everyone told Sara how good she was doing and how much they loved and appreciated her. Sara knew everyone in her dream, but not in real life.

Sara woke up. She was back in her bed. She looked over at her clock to see how much more time she had to sleep. Her alarm clock said it was 10:00pm. Puzzled, she grabbed her cell phone. It said it was 10:00pm as well. Sara closed her eyes and tried to go back to sleep. She couldn't make sense of what happened.

Just as Sara dosed off, the very bright white light emerged from the bathroom doorway again. She didn't want to look but she had to see if the alien-like figure was back too. As soon as she looked, her body stiffened. The vibrations started again and continued to intensify. This time she heard the source in her head.

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It asked her, "Sara, what do you really want?" The voice sounded familiar. It sounded soft and kind. Sara recognized that it was the voice of her grandmother.

Sara replied, "I want to be happy. I want others to be happy. I just want a happy world."

It said, "Sara, you make so many people happy. Now, you must choose to be happy to have a happy world."

Sara was flung off her bed and onto the floor. The room was dark. Sara looked at her alarm clock really hoping it didn't say 10:00pm. She was relieved when it said it was 10:10pm.

Sara woke up to her 6:00am alarm. She was surprised at how well she had slept considering whatever that was that happened last night. She got up and did her normal morning routine.

Sara went to the gas station to get her coffee. As she walked up to the gas station door, a stranger was also approaching the door. He held it open for her. Sara nodded in appreciation. She was happy that they had her favorite blend of coffee that morning, thinking this is going to be a good day.

When she got to the cash register. The stranger, who had opened the door for her said, "I got her coffee."

Sara replied, "Thank you. But why are you getting my coffee?"

The stranger said, "You remind me of my sister. She is waiting in the hospital for a heart transplant. She is always doing nice stuff for people."

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Sara said, "I am sorry to hear about your sister. What is her name?"

The stranger said, "Her name is Ruth."

The stranger held the door for Sara on her way out of the gas station.

Sara said, "Thank you."

The stranger nodded and walked away.

Sara got in her car. She thought to herself, my grandmother's name was Ruth.

Sara got to work and started her day at the law firm.

Her boss, Mr. Smith stopped in to tell her that she needed to have her lunch early today because of an important meeting with a new, promising client. Sara sighed at the thought of eating at 10:00 am instead of noon.

Sara left for lunch and went to the local deli. She grabbed a grilled cheese sandwich and a bowl of tomato soup. At the cash register, a stranger said, "I have her meal."

She turned around to see the young woman willing to buy her lunch.

Sara asked, "Do I know you?"

The young woman replied, "No. But you remind me of my neighbor, Lorianne. Lorianne is always helping us. She was just admitted into the hospital. She has diabetes and needs a kidney transplant."

Sara said, "Thank you. Oh man, I hope she gets it."

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The young woman replied, "You are welcome. I just know that she will. She must get it.

She has three wonderful children, and they need her."

Sara looked down at her watch and saw that it was already 10:10am and she had to hurry to eat and get back to work. As Sara ate, she thought it was strange that the first stranger's sister's name was Ruth, like her grandmother. And now her lunch was paid for because she reminded the lady of her neighbor, Lorianne. Lorianne, was her grandmother's middle name. Sara also thought about how these strangers looked familiar to her. It dawned on her that they were in the dream she had last night. And the fact that her grandmother was in her dream last night.

Sara returned to work feeling a bit shook up.

For the next few months, Sara noticed that good things happened to her at 10:10am/pm and on October 10<sup>th</sup>. Sara got a raise on October 10<sup>th</sup>. She met her fiancé, Scott while out to dinner with ten friends at the "Ten/Ten" Chinese buffet. Sara won her dream car at a casino. She put \$10 in the slot machine, and it was her 10<sup>th</sup> pull. Sara and Scott are looking to buy their dream home and the address is 1010 Sunny Street.

Sara searched the meaning of 10:10 on Google. According to Google, 10:10 is an angel number. It means that your spirit guide is trying to tell you that your hard work and patience are going to pay off. Something positive is coming your way. Love is coming your way. Sara was amazed at how this had been happening since the night of the bright white light. Could this be true? She thought.

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Sara had never told anyone of whatever had happened that night with the bright light. She decided to tell Scott about it. Sara was so wrapped up in telling the story that she hadn't looked at him. She was envisioning that night with the bright light. When Scott did not say anything after she was done telling the story, she felt insecure. Maybe he was thinking she was crazy. When she looked at him, he was fading away. Not as in dying but disappearing. Sara knelt beside him, crying, and begging him not to leave. Scott disappeared completely. Sara stood up and backed away in fear, in horror. She looked around and she saw no evidence that he ever existed. Their pictures were not hung on the wall. His coat and shoes were not at the door. That is when Sara noticed that her car was gone too. She began to wonder if she was crazy.

Sara went to the cupboard and grabbed a bottle of whiskey. She made herself a drink and wondered about who she could even call. Who would believe her. She walked around her house looking for other signs. Anything, to let her know if she was crazy or had any of this been real. Sara concluded that she had to be crazy. She grabbed the bottle of whiskey and drank herself to sleep.

Sara woke up in her bed to a very bright light coming from her bathroom doorway. She looked over and saw the alien-like figure. This time it had its left arm raised high. Her body stiffened. The vibrations started. Sara was able to glance over and see that the time is 10:10am. The vibrations got stronger and stronger. The vibrations were lifting her off the bed because she wasn't fighting it this time. This time she let her soul be taken.

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When Sara woke up, she was lying on a beach, in the sun, by the ocean. She had always wanted to go back to the ocean since her grandmother Ruth had taken her once when she was a child.

Sara sat up and flashes came to her.

Flash, Sara had been driving home from work when she had been struck head on by a big truck trying to pass.

Flash, Sara in an ambulance.

Flash, Sara's sister, Samantha is telling the doctor that she knows her sister would want to donate all her organs.

Flash, the doctors had to bring Sara back to life three times to keep her organs good for transplant.

Flash, Samantha is crying and holding her hand. Samantha tells Sara, "Sis, your kidney is going to a mother of three kids. Your heart is going to another woman who will die without it. I know this is what you would have wanted. I am going to miss you so much. Give grandma Ruth, mom, and dad a big hug."

Flash, sobbing, Samantha tells the doctors that she is ready to let her go.

Flash, Sara's funeral. Sara learned she died on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010, at 10:10pm.

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Sara sees a woman walking towards her. Sara soon realized that it was her grandmother.

Sara notices more people coming. There is her mom and dad holding hands, walking in the water towards her. She got up and ran to her grandmother and gave her a big hug.

Grandmother Ruth asked, "What took you so long, dear?"

Sara replied, "I had more to do before I arrived."