

Icarus
By
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Tuesday

Dad's doing better today. Dr. Shafer came in to check on him. He said he seems the same as usual. I know better. He was laughing a lot more today. I couldn't hear what the two of them were talking about, but I can't remember the last time I'd heard him laugh so much. I think it's a great sign.

I had that dream again last night. It lasted a little longer than usual. I was finally able to see what was in the clouds. It wasn't the sun. It was a person. I didn't get close enough to see any of their features, but I could tell they had long, flowing hair. The only other thing I could tell was that they were beautiful. It was one of the weird things you just know in dreams.

I decided to tell Roy about it. He just laughed at me.

"Are you sure it isn't just that stupid myth stuck in your subconscious?" he asked me.

I laughed back. "Maybe. But it keeps happening."

"Maybe the person is supposed to be someone you know," he said. "Do you have any crushes you haven't told me about?"

"No."

"Not even that doctor's daughter? What's her name? Lily or something?"

"Lace? Gross, no. She's like five years older than me."

He took my word for that one. He kinda sat there for a moment, considering the dream. I'm surprised he took it so seriously. He couldn't think up anything else.

Roy also let me know he might be going to live with some relatives for a few days while things are still tense with his parents. He's pretty sure they've filed for divorce. They're not telling him or his sister anything yet. He says he wants to get out of the house. He'd rather spend time with his grandparents, even if his grandma keeps threatening to cut off his braid in his sleep. Whatever. His grandparents' guest room is probably a lot more comfortable than our couch.

Russ

Saturday

Dr. Shafer was wrong. He was so wrong. I can't believe he could've been so stupid. He's a doctor. Aren't they supposed to be smart? Maybe it's because only the stupid anesthesiologist would come to our house instead of a doctor that actually knows shit about diseases.

Dad got worse today. A lot worse. Dr. Shafer isn't saying anything, but I know he knows it's bad. I don't think he's even going to make it through the night. Roy isn't here and I think I'm going to drive myself crazy if I don't talk to someone about this.

Dr. Shafer told me my dad wanted to talk to me. He looked horrible. Even though he's always been skinny, he's just skin and bones now. His eyes were even sunken into his face. I could barely stand to look at him.

"Son. I need to tell you something," he said.

"What, Dad?"

“It’s about your name. I never got to tell you everything about it.”

“My name? I don’t care.”

“Icarus, listen to me.”

“Don’t call me that! I hate that name.” I regret snapping at him, but I couldn’t help it. He was dying and all he could talk about was my name.

“I know. And that’s why I never got to tell you why.”

“It’s because of that stupid myth. Why’d you have to name me after that arrogant guy? He died. Why would you name me that?”

“It’s because there’s a side of the myth they never tell you in school.” When he said this, he grabbed my arm. I nearly jumped. I didn’t think he had enough strength to grab me as hard as he did.

“When Daedalus gave his son his wings, he warned him not to fly too high, or the sun would melt them. But the part that everyone leaves out is that he warned him not to fly too close to the sea, either. Otherwise, his wings would get wet and would be too heavy to carry him.

“Daedalus didn’t want his son to be arrogant, like you think. But he didn’t want him to not try hard enough, either. He wanted his son to soar like the birds, and to be free. Even though Icarus flew too high, he also was given a more amazing opportunity than any other human being.

“I want you to soar in life, son. I want you to have those wings and to use them wisely. But you can’t get too close to the sea. You can’t let life bring you down. I don’t want you to drown because of me.”

“I’m not going to, Dad. You’re gonna be fine,” I told him.

“You need to take advantage of what life’s given you. I know you still don’t know what you want to do. But you need to promise me you’ll find it.”

“I promise.”

“I mean it, Russ. I know you won’t fly too high. You know your limits. But you need to fly as high as you can. You need to find what’s waiting for you in the sky.”

I told him I would, and I left him to rest. He seemed so upset. I’m still shaken. I can’t stop thinking about my dream, either. I feel like it might be the answer to what he’s talking about.

Russ

Sunday

I was right. He didn’t make it through the night.

I went into his room this morning. I decided I’d tell him about my dream and see what he had to say. He didn’t respond when I tried to wake him. I can’t say I didn’t see it coming, but... I don’t know what to do. I called Dr. Shafer. I’m waiting for him.

Today’s Sunday. I guess that means it’s the day I have to try to fly. For my father. I promised him I would.

I’ll be able to see Roy again today. Maybe he can help me sort all of this out.

Russ