

Editor's Question: Great story. Two questions for Jake: 1) I can't verify his father's title. Was he an under secretary or a deputy secretary? Can he give us the exact title and the years of service? 2) I rewrote his last sentence but it still has the same meaning. Can he explain how in his dreams his wife watches over him when they apart? I don't understand that.

Dream Girl

You know you're in love when you can't fall asleep because reality is finally better than your dreams.

~Author Unknown

The dreams started when I was a senior at Berkeley High School in 1974. About a month before I graduated, I fell asleep in a physics class after lunch and had the first dream:

A beautiful Asian woman was standing next to me, talking in a strange language. She was stunning—the most beautiful girl I had ever seen. She was in her early twenties, with long black hair, and piercing black eyes. She had the look of royalty. She looked at me and then disappeared, beamed out of my dream like in Star Trek. I fell out of my chair screaming, "Who are you?" She did not answer.

About a month went by, and then I started having the dream repeatedly. Always the same pattern.

Early morning, she would stand next to me talking. I would ask who she was, and she would disappear. She was the most beautiful, alluring woman I had ever seen.

I was struck speechless every time I had the dream.

I had the dream every month during the eight years during which I went to college and served in the Peace Corps. In fact, when I joined the Peace Corps, I had to decide whether to go Korea or Thailand. The night before I had to submit my decision, I had the dream again and it made me sure that she was in Korea waiting for me.

After the Peace Corps, I still hadn't met my dream woman. I got a job working for the U.S. Army as an instructor and stayed in Korea. I kept having the dream, until I had the very last one: *She was standing next to me, speaking to me in Korean, but I finally understood her. She said, "Don't worry, we will be together soon."*

Why was that the last time I had the dream? Because the very next night, the girl in my dream got off the bus in front of me. She went on to the base with an acquaintance of mine, a fellow teacher, and they went to see a movie. I saw her and found the courage to speak with her. We exchanged phone numbers and agreed to meet that weekend.

The next night, she was waiting for me as I entered the Army base to teach a class. She told me she was a college senior and she had something to tell me. I signed her on to the base and left her at the library to study while I taught, and then we went out for coffee after class. She told me she was madly in love with me, and that I was the man for her. I told her not to worry as I felt the same.

That weekend, we met Saturday and Sunday and hung out all day. On Sunday night, I proposed to her. It was only three days after we had met, but for me it felt like we had met eight years ago. I had been waiting all my life for her to walk out of my dreams and into my life, and here she was.

Her mother did not want her to marry a foreigner. One day, about a month after we met, she invited me to meet her parents. I brought a bottle of Jack Daniels for her father and drank the

entire bottle with him. He approved of me, but her mother still had reservations. After a Buddhist priest told her my future wife and I were a perfect astrological combination, she agreed, and we planned our wedding.

The wedding was a media sensation in South Korea. My wife explained it to me years later. At the time, I was overwhelmed just by the fact that we were getting married and I didn't fully understand how unusual this was. My wife was of the old royal clan, distant relatives to the former kings of Korea. In the clan's history, only two people had ever married foreigners: my wife, and Rhee Syngman, who was the the first President of South Korea. My father, who was a former Undersecretary of Labor, came out for the wedding, which fueled even more media interest. Our marriage defied the stereotypical Korean-foreign marriage where the women married some hapless GI just to escape poverty and immigrate to the U.S. We were the first foreign/Korean couple to get married at a Korean Army base. Over 1,000 people came to the wedding, and my father was interviewed on the morning news programs.

This all happened thirty-five years ago, and I am still married to the girl in my dreams. Now in my dreams she watches over me when we are apart.

~Jake Cosmos Aller