



In the Forest of Dreams

I dreamed a dream and in the dream I came upon a tree which spoke to me. It said, in a whisper:

“There is an ancient forest far away in the east of Poland - near a little town called Supraśl - and this is the Forest of All Dreams.

“This is a special place, the place where dreams first came into the world. If you live near this forest, or walk its paths, you will have more dreams than any other living creature. Dreams of all sizes and shapes. Dreams to fit into a suitcase or dreams to fit into your pocket. Dreams that will make tears run down your cheek and dreams that will make you cry with laughter; both happy dreams and scary dreams.

“Now, if you cut wood from this forest and burn it in your fireplace, then the smoke from the fire

will rise up the chimney and shape into dreams that drift in the air. You will need the tallest ladder to catch these particular dreams – unless, of course, you are a bird. But, if you walk down the street, you can smell the lingering fragrance of these dreams.

“These dreams live in the roots of the trees of the forest, deep in the ground. At night, the dreams rise up and glide out of the forest. What do they look like? It is very hard to say. Like a fine mist? A drop of rain? The light from a distant star? They float down the streets of the town, seeping into each and every house, in search of the waiting dreamer.

“What do they find? Well, close your eyes, dreamer. Imagine...

“An old man snoring? Perhaps. A woman reading, not yet in bed? Perhaps. A fireman watching television? Perhaps. Some sleeping children? Ah, yes...

“And so the dreams begin their work. What joys or sorrows will they bring tonight?

“Zosia dreams of a landscape filled with snow and the promise of more snow to come. She feels the bitter cold in her bones.

“Ewa dreams of water, a huge lake of still water under the light of the moon across which slowly moves a paper boat. You can see tiny people on this tiny boat. Using pine needles as oars, they slowly traverse the lake, singing a song in a language unknown to her.

“Rafał is a master of karate in his dream. He has studied the art for many years and performs each move with slow beautiful precision, limbs dancing with one another in the night air.

“Gabriela is walking in her dream through a building which contains an aquarium. She looks at all the fish swimming inside and wonders if they are happy inside this confined space. She taps softly on the glass with her fingertips to get their attention. Fine lines appear in the glass, then it shatters and the water rushes out, carrying her and the fish with it, out of the building and down the street towards the river.

“Mateusz sits in a dark room in his dream. In the corner of the room is a computer screen. He sits down at the computer and plays several games, one after the other, faster and faster, and with the greatest expertise.

“Kacper dreams that he is a well known painter. He is making a painting of a bright blue sky, on a canvas as large as the wall of a house. In the top

right hand corner of the painting a single cloud appears.

“Radosław dreams of finding small, exquisitely sculptured creatures which have been placed under mushrooms in the forest.

“Karolina dreams of climbing a huge tree. At the top of the tree is a small scared dog. How the dog has got there, she does not know. The dog tries to tell her but she does not understand dog language. She knows though it is very afraid of heights. She carefully scoops it up in one hand, holds it close to her, and descends safely to the ground.

“In Daria’s dream, there is a very strange monster. It changes shape and colour, from green to blue, from a snake like shape to a rock like shape. Sometimes it has three eyes and three legs. It bounces up and down like a football. It is not scary, it is funny.

“Radek doesn’t remember what he is dreaming about. He is in a house full of dreams with long corridors. Each time he chooses to walk down one corridor towards a new dream, he changes his mind and walks in the other direction. In this way the dreams always remain just beyond his grasp.

“Paulina dreams of returning home. In her dream she has been on a long journey, climbing

over mountains and crossing roaring rivers, going through desert lands where only wild animals roam. She carries with her the memory of the place where she was born but she no longer has any maps. She is unsure of which direction to take.

“One child has lost her name in her dream and goes in search of it. She journeys across the Pacific ocean to Hawaii. The surf is pounding on the beach, the sun is burning down and she can smell of the palm trees and the salty ocean. She is walking along the sand and finds the letter A washed up. She puts in carefully in her pocket.

“These then are some of the dreams of the dreamers this very night, in their own world of invention and surprise.

“And so, when their work is finally done, as dawn approaches, the dreams yawn. They are very tired and it is time for bed. So, slowly, in groups of two and three, they return to the forest, to rest and - perhaps - to dream new dreams.”

So spoke the tree this last night.