


"Dream a Life"

Honors Thesis

by

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Abstract

Recently, writing has become even more of an endeavor for teachers and students. With the rising amount of texting and instant messaging, the idea of writing has been lost. Instead of word choice, ideas, and brainstorming, writing has become a way of saying what is wanted to be said as quickly as possible, at the expense of good English language. In order to exemplify how writing is taught in elementary schools classrooms, I have followed the same writing process I require of students by brainstorming my ideas. Instead of finishing a complete story, I have focused on word choice, detail, and most importantly, character development.

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Author's Statement for "Dream a Life"

In the past four years, I have been shown how I must properly educate students in the elementary school classroom. Students are to work heavily on hands-on activities, have many visual stimuli, and much scaffolding to ensure success. When it comes to writing, students require a lot of attention to beat out the new technology and slang that is arising in the English language. For writing, we try to encourage the use of planning and brainstorming. In this way, students can organize what they want to write about, and then the actual writing becomes easier. Because students learn best by example, I have taken it on myself to teach by example in what I do in my own life and career when it comes to writing.

Whether I find a job in education or not, my passion for writing will be a high priority in my life. I intend to one day write and publish a children's novel, and I assumed that, fresh out of college and education courses, I should attempt this endeavor as soon as possible. Because I recently took my courses in English and Children's Literature, I have a fresher understanding of how students learn in the classroom. I have seen, through student teaching and my practicum that students do, indeed, need that example to help them organize their thoughts. Because I intend to teach my students a certain way, I knew I had to show that through my own writing.

Before my actual writing began, I made a list of the characters I wanted, when and where the story took place, and the overall plot that I wanted to create. While I did not use a graphic organizer that I would use while teaching, the point is that I took the time to organize and brainstorm before I simply began writing on a piece of paper. We use graphic organizer simply as examples and ideas students can use to organize

thoughts, that in the future, they may do this on their own in a different, but just as successful manner. I wanted to show my students that I go about the writing process just as I ask them to do in the classroom.

Along with organizing my thoughts, I did my own research to ask other people in an online forum, what the best practices have been that they have found when writing their own novels. My goal is to cover all of my bases to become the most competent writer that I can be. In this way, my students can look at all the work I put into this, and see from my finished product, how passionate and serious I was about writing.

Today, writing consists of slang such as, "lol," "ttyl," "brb," etc. Students should see and understand the importance of the English language, and the places that it can take a reader when going through a story. I intend with my story to show the development of my characters to make it possible to be transported to the world I've created. In order to do this, it was important to create detail, and add word choice that we, as teachers, so encourage in the classroom. Instead of using quick sentences to get my point across, the goal was to use the English language to my advantage. Too often, society is trying to quickly inform someone of something, and doesn't care the feelings and thought that go into it or come out of it. Therefore, with writing stories and journals, this is the very antithesis. Not only do I want students to learn to write, but also I want them to write well, and to engage a reader with the wonderful ideas they have in their head.

More specifically, I chose the topic for my story based on my life experiences with dreams. Because I have very vivid dreams, I remember quite a bit, and in high school, I began writing down my dreams in detail to read later. They became my own stories. Because my dreams have been a big part of my life, a lot of my ideas for my

story came from the dreams I've had over the past few years. It has become my own way of sharing my crazy dreams with everyone else.

I chose to create a book aimed at the third/fourth grade level in order to create a book that has enough detail and word choice that can be understood by this age. I felt any younger, I would not be able to convey the ideas I had in mind, and too much older requires a length that I never intended for the story. If the story is ever published, I would want my own students to be able to read it, and I intend to teach either third grade. It seemed like it was just the right fit for the whole idea.

This entire idea seemed to be more productive for myself and my college career than the average paper would be, because I would be putting myself in my students' shoes to write a good piece of fiction. This exemplifies what I have been learning in most of my classes over the last four years, and how I plan to teach writing in my own classroom. The connections made can therefore be lifelong.

Dream a Life: Brainstorming

Characters:

Main: Jareth (12 year old boy), Jamison (old wise man, with traits to similar to a wizard), Hannah (5 year old girl to help lead Jareth)

Minor: Jareth's sister, mother, and father: relatively unnamed, schoolchildren
Mrs. Tooney (schoolteacher), the overseers (in the REAL waking world)

Time: present day

Summary/Ideas:

In the dream world, kids show up wandering the forest paths depending on their call to the land or the strength of the call. This determines the age at which the children appear. This is how it's always worked in the real "waking" world. The overseers search through the forest to find the children. They then teach them their ways and help them with their journey from the real dream world to the real waking world.

Parents in the real dream world were just ideas--dust. But they grew power and wanted to keep their children so they bore more and more and fought to keep the children in the real dream world. They tell the children that it's just a dream or a nightmare and they have the children stay with them in bed. Some parents even take them to the doctors or give them medicine to make the "scary dreams" go away.

Usually the children are 13 and younger when they come through. No one enters after 13.

Jamison tells Jareth all of this, wins his trust, and Jareth is able to see these signs with his own family. In this way he can escape them.

Problems:

Jareth's parents try to keep him in the real dream world.

Jareth does not know whom to trust.

Solution:

Jareth realizes his parents aren't real and they disintegrate like decaying bodies.

Realization comes from showdown between Jareth, his parents, and Jamison.

Dream a Life

Jareth hadn't been sleeping well lately. But no one could blame him. While his bedtime was around eight o'clock, he could still hear the pounding on the walls and the screaming between his parents. He wasn't surprised that this was happening; most kids in his class had to go through this too, but Jareth never felt that he could handle everything going on the way that his friends could. They were always happy at school, and a few of them went to talk to somebody about things once a week, but Jareth's family never had the money or the desire to get that kind of help for Jareth.

Instead the boy dreamed an imaginative world with wizards and inns with dancers and singers. He dreamt of a world with trees that waved to him when he passed by and squirrels that bowed to him when he saw them hunting for nuts. Jareth even sometimes imagines himself carrying a satchel with nuts that he, himself, fed to the black squirrels.

Much of what Jareth dreamt seemed, to many people, to be the normal imagination of a ten-year-old boy, but they didn't know that Jareth didn't call these dreams to life when he was asleep. Jareth knew this was the real reason he couldn't sleep anymore. More and more often, as he drifted off to sleep, the same man, named Jamison, would visit Jareth. Jamison reminded Jareth of his grandfather--strong, quick, witty, and intelligent. Jamison began telling Jareth of stories that had never happened in the imagination the ten year old had thought up. His dreams had begun to take on a life of their own. But kids, they all said, dream and make things up, but it never means anything. It is just their way of playing.

"Jareth, some day you have to grow out of this. There are no such things as an invisible friend. You are such a baby," Jareth's sister, Anouk would pester him with.

"I know, but it's the only thing I have," he replied, but Anouk never really understood her little brother. She was always too involved with putting on her make up and shopping with her other teenage friends. To Jareth, he was an orphan just trying to get through school, but more and more he was drawn to his dream world, and wondered what it would be like to live there instead of a silly city in Maine.

That night, when Jareth went to bed, he tossed and turned. More than anything he wanted to go see Jamison, his friend. At the same time, he was scared that he was making everything up, and that he was going crazy. His friends already made fun of him at school. Just today, Maddie McCormack came up to him and pointed her finger at him.

"Jareth. Are you drawing that man again? My mom said that you watch way too much T.V.," she spat at her friend. Jareth looked down on the paper where he was drawing the river and surrounding area that he often saw in his dreams.

"Jareth," Mrs. Tooney called. Jareth hadn't been paying attention. He usually never did. Jareth was no good at history, and because of that, he never wanted to listen. This time was no exception.

"Jareth, what do you think John F. Kennedy meant when he made that famous quote?" Jareth struggled to remember what quote Mrs. Tooney was talking about. This time, he thought that it wasn't his fault. It was Maddie's for trying to talk to him during the lesson. She always tried to get him in trouble. Now what was he supposed to do?

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Tooney. Which quote do you mean, exactly?" The rest of the class snickered. All eyes were on Jareth, and he felt stupid. His dreams were getting him into more trouble than he thought they were. Of course, it wasn't Maddie's fault.

"We were talking about the famous quote, 'There is nothing to fear, except fear itself.' What do you think JFK meant by this?" Mrs. Tooney smiled at Jareth. No matter how often Jareth had problems listening in school, Mrs. Tooney always smiled at him as if to tell him that it was alright. She always gave him a second chance. His face cooled a little bit.

"I...uhh..." The face continued to stare right at Jareth, "I guess I think he was just trying to say that things are fine and that we don't need to worry about anything. We are going to get scared by nothing." Again, Mrs. Tooney smiled at Jareth, and he relaxed at his seat. He put his drawings away hoping he wouldn't get in trouble with it again. But only a few minutes later, his hand crept inside his desk for a pencil and his yellow notepad his mother had bought for him--the notepad he had drawn his second world.

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"Jamison?"

"Hmm?"

"Can I just stay here? I mean, it's not like Maine, but I like it here. It's far more beautiful than home. I don't know what you want me to do here, but I don't mind."

Jareth was walking with the old man by the stream. Fish darted in and out of the water as the violet sunlight spread its rays over the land. Jamison had shared so much

with Jareth over the past few months, he was sure that he was really awake. He finally got up the courage to ask Jamison.

"Jamison?"

"Hmm?"

"I feel like this dream is so real. I know I'm dreaming and I can choose what I do in my dream. But when I wake up in the morning, THAT feels real too. Am I really just dreaming?"

Jamison stopped walking and stared at the fish eating the algae at the bottom of the stream, his face unreadable. He had waited for so long for Jareth to ask him about his dreams. The boy had done so much growing in the past few months, but he couldn't ever say anything. The overseers made him promise to wait to say anything until Jareth asked him about his heritage.

But even now, Jamison didn't really think the boy was ready. Yes, Jareth could wait another week or two. Jamison never did agree with what the overseers did to the children that come here. He also didn't blame them. He knew of no other way to get them to wake up. He knew of no other way to share this information with any of them. Jareth, if he was the child the overseers thought he was, then he believed that he needed to take as much time as he could not to scare the boy. Jareth had to pass so many tests; so many more than what he had to see in that silly school in his dreams. If only Jareth had only had to pass his multiplication tables to move on with his life.

Jamison looked down at Jareth.

"Jareth, I know everything is so confusing to you right now. Everyone has dreams that feel so real, but turn out to be false. I'm not really sure what to tell you. You just need to keep going, and try your best to figure it out."

"That's not very helpful." Jamison laughed.

"I know, Jareth. I know. It's just that some things you have to wait for before you can understand them. I hope one day I will be able to help you with that," the pair wandered along the river watching the frogs hop from one lily pad to the next. Thoughts raced through Jareth's head, but he was exhausted trying to sort everything out. Instead he bent down to pick up a blade of grass. Like in his backyard, Jareth put the piece of grass tight between his thumbs and blew threw the openings creating a high-pitched whistle. The sound made him smile, and he forgot all about his conversation with Jamison.

The sun began to set; the air was cool. Jareth turned toward Jamison.

"It's time for me to go back, isn't it?"

"Yes, Jareth. I hope to see you tomorrow."

With that Jareth laid down and looked up at the sky. Unlike at his house, this sky was a dark red color, and there were no stars to look at. He glanced at Jamison once more and closed his eyes.

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Jareth opened his eyes to the bright dawn peeking through his curtains. He squished his eyes together to hide from it. He then heard what he heard every morning. Though he couldn't quite make out the words, he had a pretty good feeling what was being said.

"There's not enough money to send the kids to camp this year! What do you expect me to do? Money doesn't come flowing in from work. Maybe you could actually do some work around here," his dad would shout.

"I work right here taking care of *your* kids and cleaning your house. I'm doing the best I can, Matthew."

Following this, someone would then be walking out the door or slamming a cupboard.

Jareth ignored whatever was going on outside his room and grabbed his notebook off of his nightstand. He needed to write down everything that happened in his dream. He wanted to remember the red sky, and the bouncing frogs, and the way he felt walking along the river. He couldn't wait to go back that night. He hated waiting. All Jareth wanted to do was get away from the fighting and the jokes at school, and instead, go somewhere he knew people cared about him, like Jamison. He felt so at peace in his dreams. After filling up a few pages, Jareth closed the notebook and got ready for school.

During math, Jareth found himself doodling once again, but he caught himself before anyone else did. It was getting harder and harder, but he didn't know how to stop. Even without realizing it, he would be doodling Jamison's face, or the shapes of the upside down trees. Who needed math anyway? Jareth wanted to be a historian, and he was sure he wouldn't need that much math to do that job.

At recess, Jareth left his notebook at his desk and played with his friends. He figured he needed to be normal at some point in the day. He ran out to catch up with his friend, Simon. The two went to the field and dug up rocks to throw at the trees. The two

giggled while getting dirt all over their hands and pant legs. It was the most normal Jareth had felt in weeks.

"Hey Jareth! Catch!" A rock hurdled through the air at Jareth's head. He backed up, and chucked the rock out of the air seconds before it hit him in the eye. The two friends played catch until the first bell rang signaling that half of recess was over. Simon ran up to Jareth.

"Jareth, are you ok?"

"What do you mean?"

"Oh come on, man. Everyone knows you haven't been paying attention in school. How many cards you have pulled this week already?" Jareth stared at his feet.

"Four."

"Yeah, four. You've only got one more and it's only Wednesday! Mrs. Tooney is having a fit, you know. What's going on?" Simon sat down on a patch of grass, and Jareth followed.

"I can't say, Simon. It's weird. I don't want everyone to think I'm weird or stupid or crazy or something."

"Jareth, I'm your best friend. Come on, and tell me. I promise I won't tell anyone. You know I won't." Jareth looked around the playground to make sure no one else was around. He pulled some grass from the patch they were sitting on and threw it over his shoulder. He picked up another handful.

"I don't know, Simon. I have been having these really weird dreams lately. I feel like they're real, and I keep thinking about them," Simon chuckled, "What is so funny?"

"You aren't paying attention in school and acting weird because you have been having weird dreams? Man, I thought you were worried about your parents, or being picked on by someone, or being ignored by your sister. I thought maybe someone died, but you are just having bad dreams?" Simon got in a few more laughs, and then wiped the slobber from his chin that had flowed down during his laughing spell.

"Maybe I'm having these dreams because of my parents. They are so annoying sometimes. They don't care who hears them yell and slam doors," Jareth took a stick and jammed it in the dirt. After a few moments of silence, the second bell rang. The two boys looked at each other, laughed to forget about their conversation, and raced inside. Simon won and gave his best friend a high-five.

After talking with Simon, Jareth felt a lot better. He was able to focus in class, and he actually raised his hand a few times to answer questions. He thought a few minutes about Jamison, but most of school was spent doing things he knew he was supposed to do.

When Jareth got home, his father had already made him a snack, and went through the same routine that happened every day after school.

"How was your day? Did you get all your homework done? What did you do at school?" Jareth's dad rambled on and on while Jareth chomped on his carrots and looked through his book bag.

"Everything was fine, dad. I have a little bit of homework, and I need you to sign something for Mrs. Tooney," His dad walked over to his son and took the paper that was

in Jareth's hand. He studied the paper for a few minutes, then glanced at his son who was still gnawing on his snack.

"It says you lost a bunch of cards, Jareth. You aren't paying attention in class? I thought you were doing really well."

"I am doing well, dad. I don't know. I told you I wasn't sleeping well."

"I'll talk with your mother about this. We may have to do something about this. Maybe see a doctor," Jareth stopped mid-chew. A doctor? Why would someone see a doctor for too many dreams? He wished he could just go to sleep now and talk to Jamison. Maybe he would know.

"Maybe you are right, dad. I'm actually really tired now since I dream all night and don't sleep well. I think I'm going to go take a nap," with that, Jareth stood up, took his bowl of carrots to the sink, and swiftly jumped up the stairs. Jareth's father stared at him, curious as to what his son was experiencing.

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It didn't take long for Jareth to fall asleep, for he was excited to see his old friend. But when Jareth woke up by the river, Jamison was nowhere to be seen. In his place, he saw a small girl, younger than himself, but seemed so much older. She had bright blue eyes like the sea, and long, ratty, brown hair that flowed in the gentle breeze. She wore a dull red dress that was tied with a bit of rope around her waist. In her hand, she held a long cattail that she was slowly plucking. Her eyes studied Jareth so deeply, that Jareth had to look away first.

Still gazing the opposite way, he asked,

"Where did you come from? Where's Jamison?" She took a step towards him. And put the cattail by his side.

"I came from the forest like everyone else, silly. Jamison isn't here yet," she smiled, and with that smile captivated him. She knew more than he felt he ever would.

"How old are you?" he sat up and reached for the cattail. She giggled.

"I'm six! And I am Hannah!" The girl, Hannah, giggled again. Her age more clearly came out when she spoke this. Jareth stood up and walked towards Hannah. When he had reached her, he looked to his left, then right half expecting Jamison to stride out of the trees.

"Is this your dream, too?" he asked Hannah. She looked at him funny.

"Well, no. It used to be, I guess. Don't you know?" Jareth stared at her with eyes wide open. He had absolutely no idea what this little girl was talking about. He tried to think back at what Jamison had told him, but nothing came to mind.

"No, I guess I don't. What do you mean, you used to be?"

"Everyone here never really started here. Don't you have dreams? And it's so difficult to sleep at night because you are tossing and turning like you are awake?" She was getting riled up with the conversation she hadn't had with anyone for a while.

"Well, yes. But that's all they are. They are just dreams...aren't they?" At this moment, Jamison walked slowly out of the line of trees to the two children. His gray robes were flowing about him and his eyes looked angry enough they could shoot lightning bolts out towards Jareth and Hannah.

"Hannah! Come!" he called in a commanding voice. Hannah's head whipped around to look at Jamison storming at her. She began to tremble, and her age of six years

began, once again, to be quite evident. With her head bowed down, she walked determined to Jamison.

"Hannah, what do you think you are doing?" Jamison grabbed her chin and pulled her gaze to him. She attempted to look away, but again, she felt the fierce jolt as Jamison turned her to him.

"Hannah, I ask you again. What are you doing with Jareth?"

"Jamison! You're hurting me! I didn't do anything. He was asking me where you were! You were supposed to meet him here, so maybe I should ask what *you* are doing!" Her defiance was almost overwhelming to the old man. He had the mind to pull her to the side and smack her across the face. But when the tears began to stream down her dirt-encrusted face, he melted. The things these children must endure to get here. The overseers had to have gotten something wrong over hundreds of years.

"Hannah," he whispered softly, taking her hand, "Jareth does not yet know what you do, my cherub. I have yet to tell him. Like you, there will be a certain time when he is ready to hear," but for Jamison, Jareth had already heard this whispered conversation.

"What don't I know, Jamison? Who is Hannah?" Jareth felt that this time, the dream was just a little too real.

At the same time, Jareth's father was walking into his son's room to talk to him some more. Instead of finding Jareth awake, he saw the boy tossing and turning in his sleep. He kept saying the name, "Jamison," and his hand was hanging over the bed. It looked like it was holding something, but Jareth's father couldn't see the cattail that Jareth was holding in his dream.

"Jamison? I don't think I like these dreams anymore. I have homework to do anyway. I think I am going to go back to sleep here by the river," Hannah's head moved from side to side looking at the two males before her. She licked her lips. She was scared. She didn't want Jareth to leave. She felt something tickling inside her stomach that told her that she needed to help Jareth. Maybe it was the overseers poking her stomach with her mind. She had heard once that they could do something like that. Instinctively, she walked over to her newfound friend and hooked arms with him.

"It's OK, Jareth. Jamison and I will help you. I was really scared too. I don't like dreams, but when you stay here, you'll feel better," this little girl bewildered Jareth. She was only six years old, yet she was trying to take care of him. Where did her courage come from?

Sighing, Jamison knelt down to Jareth's level.

"Jareth, I was going to try and tell you this a few weeks ago, but I just didn't think you, or I, were ready for it. I guess little Miss Hannah," at this, Jamison sent a glare Hannah's way, "started what the overseers wanted done a long time ago. Jareth, come sit with me, please," Jareth took Jamison's outstretched hand and followed him, still arm in arm with Hannah, to the bank of the river. Yellow and violet fish bounced in and out of the water eating water spiders walking on the surface. The breeze grew stronger and Hannah's face was completely covered by her hair. She pushed it out of the way, behind her ears, and then sat next to her new charge.

"Why do you think you have these same dreams every night, Jareth?" asked Jamison.

"I'm a kid. They always tell us that kids make stuff up and pretend. I just thought these dreams were like that."

A fish jumped up, mouth wide open.

"Who tells you that?" Hannah interrupted.

"Well, mostly my parents. And my teacher says that's just kid stuff."

"Even though you have these dreams every night, you think they are just make believe? Aren't dreams supposed to be confusing, and you only remember parts of it?" Jamison was hoping the boy would try to figure this out on his own. He hated trying to explain this over and over to children who can't, or won't accept what is going on.

"Well, I don't know. I guess that's what dreams are. But you're right. I do remember everything that goes on. Plus, I know right now is a dream, and when people actually dream, they don't realize that's what is going on, right?" Jamison nodded, encouraging him to continue.

"But if this isn't a real dream, then what is it? And why doesn't everyone have these dreams?"

"Have you ever thought, Jareth, that perhaps, this world, with our violet sky and our strange clothing, and our whispering trees were real?" Jamison knew the next few minutes could be crucial to the explanation.

"But...that doesn't make sense! How could THIS be the real world? It's just a dream! I'm going to wake up soon, and my mom will be home from work and making supper. I don't like these dreams anymore, Jamison," Jamison closed his eyes and sighed. Why do the overseers keep making him do this? Why can't they find someone else?

Because we know you have the kindness and compassion, Jamison, to lead the children to us, they whispered in the back of his mind.

Surely there is an easier way.

No, Jamison. We have tried for centuries. We tried to take them as babies, but the parents will not let go.

Sigh.

I will do my best.

"Jareth, of course you don't want to believe this. You just started having these dreams a few months ago, right?" Jareth nodded his head, small drops of tears came to the corners of his eyes. Hannah held his hand tight. "And you are asking yourself why they would just now start, and not from the time all of your regular dreams started as a baby?" Another nod.

"I don't quite understand myself, boy. There are overseers in our world, the real world. They know more than I, but few people get to talk to them. Parents were created by the Ancient Ones to birth our children. The adults here cannot bear their own children, so we rely on these parents in the actual dream world. They were created from dust and ash, but were given a small gem of our existence inside to create our children. When the children are old enough to understand, and come willingly to the dreams, as you have done, we meet them in the forest," he tried his hardest to explain.

"That's where they found me too! Sophie found me. She's the one who taught me everything," Hannah quickly added. Jareth's tears were now flowing down freely, and he held tight to the little girl's hand. The cattail was still in his hand, and he dropped the end

"Hannah, why are you here already, though? You said you were six. I didn't start having my dreams until I was twelve!" he exclaimed.

"Like I said, Jareth. You come here willingly when that gem is ready. Hannah was extraordinary. Usually children don't begin visiting until they are at least ten, but Hannah showed up last year when she was only five. She has a strong soul, as I'm sure you've noticed," Jareth nodded. He looked at Hannah who was smiling up at him, crooked, but pearly white teeth shining.

"So my parents raised me just to give me up to you, Jamison?"

"Well, not exactly. Your parents aren't real, Jareth. Whatever love they feel for you, yes, that is real. But they are made of dust. The only compassion they have is what the Ancient Ones gave them when they first created this dream world. But the adults in this world took on a life of their own. Because we gave part of us to them, they have their own free will and thought. They got greedy. And then they didn't want to give you up. They wanted you in the dream world forever. This is why our population here is dwindling. But this is how it's been done for hundreds of years, Jareth."

Jareth lay down in the grass. The dark red sky felt like a warm blanket that would protect him from everything he had just heard. It seemed to make sense. He always thought that this world seemed real enough. The more often he visited, the more a part of something bigger and better he felt. Besides, it didn't really seem like he could do much about it. Still lying down, he asked,

"Well, what now Jamison? Hannah? Everything I've known is wrong. I will be here half of the time, and with my parents half of the time. What has changed?" Hannah giggled.

"What?" Jareth asked her, frowning.

"You come here and stay here. Your parents aren't real. They are your real dreams now, but they can't always be! They will keep trying to fight to keep you with them, and we can't have that here, can we Jamison?" Despite Hannah's outburst, Jamison had to grin. This girl was definitely one of the smartest he had seen come through in years. He straightened his face and nodded Jareth's way.

"So I will never see my parents again? I can't even say goodbye to who, or what raised me for twelve years?" Tears, once again, sprang to his eyes. Jamison rested a hand on the boy's shoulder.

"Jareth, this takes a long time. Yes, you will see your parents again, but you can't see them forever, like Hannah said. We have to train you, help you cross over so that everything you know, and your mind is truly and wholly here. When that happens, you will have to say goodbye to your parents and you must come back with Hannah and myself forever. Now that you know the truth, Jareth, it looks like you definitely need some rest from this world. Stay still there and go to sleep. Think about everything, and we will see you when you wake up. I promise, we will help you with everything you need," he kissed Jareth's forehead, and Hannah squeezed his hand. The two stood up and began walking back to the line of trees. He heard faint whispering from the trees, and it sounded like they might be talking to him. If what Jamison said was real, he hoped he would get to experience those talking trees. He hadn't even met them yet.

Wiping the tears from his face, Jareth turned on his side and fell fast asleep.

Waking up, Jareth was confused where he was. He was in his own bed, but it was light out. He remembered that he had laid down for a nap. And what a nap it was. He remembered, the most vividly yet, exactly what had happened in his dream, and it seemed like so much to swallow. His parents were just dust? The sky was really red and the sun was really purple? And if what the two said were true, then he couldn't even trust his parents, because they would try to keep him prisoner here in this world, the dream world.

Groggy, Jareth got out of bed, and went to the mirror. He actually looked more tired now than when he first went to sleep. His hair stuck out in strange ways, and he patted it down with his hand to make it look acceptable. He could hear pots and pans banging around downstairs, and he assumed his mother was now home and making supper--just like his every day routine. Did he want to change that? He figured it didn't matter much right now. There wasn't a whole lot he could do. Walking away from the mirror, Jareth hit the light switch and went down to supper. He was greeted by his father, mother, and wretched sister Anouk.

"Hey sweetie. How was school today? Did you play with Simon?" his mother asked and immediately, Jareth's worries melted away. He loved his mom, and he knew he could tell her anything.

"School was great! I didn't pull any cards today, and I got to hang out with Simon at recess today. What are we having for supper?"

"Your favorite, of course. Meatloaf! I bought extra ketchup at the store for you today," Jareth's favorite? What was the occasion? Everyone else hated meatloaf, and his mom only made it when it was his birthday, or he had done really well on a test at school.

"I can't believe you eat that junk, Jareth," Anouk gagged at the sight of the pan.

"Haha, Anouk, you whine too much. Why don't you just eat this tasty, tasty meat?" Jareth laughed at his sister.

After everyone had sat down, and had begun eating, Jareth's mother turned to him and gave him a serious look.

"Jareth, honey. Dad called me this afternoon. Have you been feeling alright? He says you haven't been sleeping well because your dreams are getting worse. Is everything okay?" Everyone was staring at him. His parents just *had* to bring this up at supper. *Well, it was now or never*, he thought.

"Mom, I'm fine. Really. I sleep fine, but yeah, I do have lots of dreams. But they are good dreams. There's this old man that talks to me and comes back every night. I never have any problems with sleep," he confessed.

His parents looked at each other. Jareth thought he saw something between them, like they knew what each other was thinking. Anouk just kept shoveling potatoes into her mouth.

"What do you think about going to see Dr. Stein next week? Maybe he can talk to you about what is going on or maybe give you something that will help you concentrate better in class. How about it?" This sounds too familiar, thought Jareth. He was sure that Hannah had just told him something like this would happen. But maybe they were the ones that were against him, trying to make it so he couldn't get better. He'd known his parents his whole life, but he'd only known Hannah a few hours. He didn't know who he wanted, or could, believe. His parents loved him, he was sure. They only wanted the best for him, surely.

"If you think I should. I don't really want to, but I guess we can go," he finally admitted. Anouk hadn't been listening to anything. Strangely, it was as if she hadn't heard anything. When Jareth glanced over at her, she was taking a large gulp of juice. *She probably just doesn't care*, thought Jareth. His parents smiled, happy that their son was following their advice. Nothing else needed to be said. Everyone was happy, or so it seemed.

Jareth felt there was a hole growing inside of him: a tickling in his belly, like someone was trying to tell him something. Dreams are not supposed to be this real. He still could not wrap his mind around everything that was happening. And because of that, Jareth did have trouble sleeping that night. He was tossing and turning thinking about all he had heard throughout the day. Jamison and Hannah were just too kind and helpful to be lying to him. But his parents were his parents. Of course they loved him and he loved them.

"Jareth..." he heard a voice. But no one was in his room. It sounded eerily like Jamison. Maybe he was able to reach across the two worlds now.

"Stop! That can't be true! You're not real!" Jareth shouted into the darkness. This was not fun for him anymore. He only wanted to be a normal kid and hang out with his friends. His friends! If what Jamison said was true, maybe some of his classmates had these dreams too! He would have to talk to Simon tomorrow and figure that out. If he had the same dreams, then he might be able to believe Jamison. If he didn't have any of those dreams, then he would know it was just his imagination.

Jareth felt much better, and he was slowly able to drift off to sleep.

Jamison knew that Jareth was struggling. He knew he didn't want to be here tonight, so he didn't call for him again. Jareth needed a night of full rest without coming to speak with him. He let the boy sleep and decide what he wanted to do.

The next morning, Jareth stretched after a great night's sleep. He was baffled that he did not have any dreams about Hannah and Jamison. He thought maybe that after all that had happened, everyone had given up and left him alone. He almost wanted that to be the situation so he wouldn't have to deal with anything anymore, except for his times tables.

He raced to get dressed and ran down the stairs with a new spring in his step. His parents immediately noticed.

"Hey son! What's gotten into you? You wake up on the *right* side of the bed this morning?" His father chuckled. Jareth grabbed a fresh piece of toast that just popped out of the toaster and smiled at his dad.

"I just had a really good night. Lots of sleep," eyebrows all around the table pricked up.

"No dreams?" his mother asked.

"'Bout time, weirdo," Anouk added. Jareth stuck his tongue out at her. She returned the favor. His parents both let out a sigh at the same time. Again they looked at each other as if trying to share a single thought. Strange. But Jareth shrugged it off and grabbed his bag to make it to the bus on time.

At school, Jareth was the first to be ready for every subject, and the first to raise his hand to answer a question. He wasn't drawing or writing about his friend Jamison. It was as if he had completely forgotten about his two new friends.