

The Last Dream

nce upon a time there lived an old woman named Elysia. Her life had been long, filled with sorrows and hardships to be sure, but also much joy and love. She had watched the seasons change countless times, and had cared for her loved ones with a heart full of warmth. But now, the days were quieter. Her hair had turned silver, and her hands, once strong and steady, had grown frail. Her hearing and vision faltered. But although her body showed the imprints of age, her spirit remained ever gentle and bright. Yet, there was something new creeping into her life — something that began to pull her away from the world she had known and into a realm of its own.

At first, it was subtle. A fleeting moment, a seeming touch on her shoulder in the middle of the night, the faintest feeling of being surrounded by familiar voices when she closed her eyes. But the moments grew more frequent. It was as if this other world had always been there, just out of reach, waiting for her focus to shift — a gentle tilting of her awareness that brought her into a place that felt more like home than she had ever known. It was almost like a dream — without falling asleep.

Many of her family and friends had long passed, but they were never far from her thoughts. Now, the more she surrendered to them, the more it felt as though she was merging with the dream itself. Her aunt, who had given her music lessons and so much else, embraced her once again. And her husband, a man whose strength and humor had once echoed through their home, stood with her once again, his eyes still shining with the same love they had shared so many years. Her son she had lost so long ago was there too, snuggling into her motherly embrace.

Elysia was not afraid. She was not alone. These people, these faces, had never truly left her — they had been waiting to become visible to her. She smiled in these moments, feeling their love wrap around her like a blanket on a cold night. Sometimes, when she closed her eyes, she didn't know whether she was dreaming or awake

The moments of dream-like enchantment came more often now, almost every day, at seeming random times, each one more vivid, more real than the last. The more she experienced these reveries, the more Elysia realized how little she feared the fading of her waking world. In her enchanted moments, she was not bound by age. Her vision was crystal clear again, her hearing sharp, her body strong again and her heart light. She could move freely, laughing and embracing those she cherished.

Even in her waking hours, the echo of her enchanted moments stayed with her. She would find herself humming old songs, hearing her aunt's voice calling her from somewhere just beyond the horizon, or feeling her husband's hand in hers, as if he had never truly left. These people she loved — who had walked this earth with her — appeared to her in their youth, in their vitality. They did not seem to age, and neither did she.

With each passing day, Elysia felt herself drawn deeper into this peaceful world. Her body grew weaker, but her spirit soared in the dreams. She would close her eyes, and it would be

as though she were in a different world — one where time did not move in the same way, where the rules of the waking world no longer applied.

For Elysia these dreams were not merely fleeting thoughts or figments of her imagination. They were a bridge — a gateway between this world and the next. They were a homecoming. Her loved ones had not truly left her; they were simply waiting for her to join them in a place where time was not an obstacle, where love had no end.

One quiet evening, as the stars began to twinkle softly in the night sky, Elysia closed her eyes for what she knew would be her last dream. She smiled, a gentle, peaceful smile, and let the pull of the enchantment take her. She did not feel fear, only a profound sense of peace, as though she were slipping into the arms of the eternal.

The dream wrapped around her like a soft, warm cocoon. The world of the living faded into the distance, and Elysia knew, deep in her heart, that she was not leaving, but joining — joining the eternal circle of love that would never end. She would never be alone again. Her loved ones would remain with her, in her dreams and beyond, forever and always.

And in this place, time was no more. There was no rushing, no fear, no sorrow, no loss. There was only love, and the eternal dance of togetherness.

Elysia's last dream became her eternal dream, where she would forever live with those she loved in the peaceful radiance of eternity. And so, hand in hand with her husband, surrounded by her loved ones, they all walked gently into the Light.

— *William Zeitler*
2025 January 5

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