

THE DREAMVISIONER – CHAPTER SEVEN

By S. Leigh Young

After his meeting with Senator Weston, Jake headed to his office and heard the phone ringing inside so he fumbled to quickly unlock it. It was Regina Powell, the woman from the car accident. After a very friendly greeting, she repeated her deep regret over what had happened and insisted that she be allowed to buy him a drink that evening. At first Jake said he couldn't make it, but thought about it a little longer and finally relented. After all, she was about the most beautiful woman he'd ever seen and she seemed extremely intelligent. Why not? It couldn't hurt, could it?

He realized he was working too much and needed to think about having a social life again, but wasn't sure he was ready. There had been no women since Maggie and he hadn't even thought about dating. Was his mind clear enough to be in a relationship again? Could he handle all the baggage that other people usually brought with them? Over the past two years he'd found a way to survive by keeping to himself, but hiding in a cave was no way to live. Eventually, he'd have to come out and try again. It might as well be now, he thought.

They met at a cozy little bar downtown called Oozy's. It was a dark, quiet spot where two people could talk in private. At a small table near the back Jake waited as he watched for her arrival. When he saw her approaching, his heart skipped a beat and he stood up to greet her.

"Hello," he said nervously, extending his hand.

"Hi Jake," she said. "I would shake your hand but I had something else in mind."

Before he knew what was happening she was giving him a soft kiss on the cheek. Flushed and embarrassed, he led her to the table and took his seat on the other side.

"Why, Jake," she said coyly, "I think you're shy."

He cleared his throat, swallowed hard, and smiled. “Yeah, I guess you could say that.”

“Do I make you nervous?”

“Uh, no. Not really,” he stuttered. “I...well, I...oh, never mind.”

Regina laughed lightheartedly, causing her dark green eyes to sparkle, placed her hand on his and smiled that smile. “Jake, I’m afraid I wasn’t exactly honest about my reasons for wanting to buy you a drink.”

“Oh?”

“It’s true. I really just wanted to see you again. I find you very attractive,” she told him.

“You do?”

“Of course! Why wouldn’t I?”

“Uh, I don’t know. I guess it just didn’t occur to me,” he muttered. He thought what a jerk he must sound like – stammering and stuttering as if he’d never been with a woman. Inside he felt as if he must be dreaming. He wasn’t a bad looking guy but never dreamed a woman like Regina would give him a second look. He thought of himself as rather average and Regina was definitely not average!

After the waiter took their orders she must have sensed his inability to hold a coherent conversation so she started the ball rolling.

“So, tell me about yourself, Jake. I want to know more about you.”

“Well, there isn’t much to tell,” he replied. “I’m just a pencil-pusher. I work at the Capitol Building as an economics expert. Not very exciting, I’m afraid.”

“Economics expert? Well, that sounds interesting to me. I have a degree in business so we probably have a lot in common.”

“What do you do?” he asked, with genuine interest.

“Let’s talk about you first,” she said. “I want to know everything about you. Do you have a family?”

He told her about Carey and his wife who had died two years earlier, explaining that he and his daughter were very close.

“Now, see? That wasn’t so hard, was it?”

Jake smiled and squirmed a bit. “No. Sorry, I haven’t had much of a social life since my wife’s death.”

“That’s perfectly understandable, Jake,” Regina offered. “Two years is not that long to heal from something like that.”

“You think so? Most people tell me I should get back out there....that I’m living in a cave or something.”

“Everyone’s different, Jake. I’m sure you’re doing the best you can.”

What was it about this woman that intrigued him so much? Was she really so understanding or was she just pretending? But why would she want to pretend with someone like him? He was still having a difficult time figuring out what she saw in him. She obviously wasn’t attracted to him for his money. She probably had a lot more of it than he did! Was his self esteem so low that he didn’t think he was worthy of someone

like her? Suddenly it occurred to him that he really didn't know himself anymore. When a person lives in a cave, how could they?

As the next hour flew by Regina was able to coax more information out of him. She learned more about his work, about his high degree of respect for Senator Weston and his general political attitudes. He was, however, very careful not to mention the project he was working on.

"It's interesting that you work for a politician," Regina said. "I'm quite intrigued with politics. It always fascinated me. All that double talk and maneuvering they're so good at – and pulling the wool over our eyes!"

"Yeah," he said, chuckling. "A lot of them are pretty good at that. But Senator Weston's not like that. She's pretty genuine."

"Is she? Well, that must make it a lot easier to work for her. I can see you're pretty genuine yourself, Jake."

Slightly embarrassed, he stuttered again. "Thanks. I try."

Again, Regina reached for his hand. When she touched him, Jake felt a slight shiver run up his arm. Talking with her seemed so easy and he was actually beginning to feel comfortable with her.

"So, now I want to know more about you," he said.

"What would you like to know?"

"Everything."

"Okay," she replied. "I'm thirty one years old, never been married and have no children. I was born in Jamaica and I moved here when I was five. My father was a

jeweler and he had a little shop before he passed away. I have no brothers or sisters and my mother died many years ago.”

“So you’re all alone?”

“Pretty much,” she replied. “I sold my father’s business and real estate after his death and my only living relative is an aunt in Jamaica that I haven’t seen in years.”

“Well....do you have a job?”

“I did for a while,” she replied. “I worked for a large consulting firm in Boston but I got tired of it and quit. I came back to Washington about two years ago.”

“And how do you spend your time?”

Regina smiled and pulled her hand away, reaching for her glass. She told him she had been engaged to be married until six months earlier, explaining that during that relationship and since she hasn’t worked. “I was too busy trying to keep up with him and I guess I just didn’t feel like working after we broke it off.”

“What happened?”

“Oh, it just didn’t work out. We both decided to go our separate ways. His job involved a lot of travel and I was tired of it. After you’ve seen Europe, Japan and Australia a few times, that’s enough. I guess I just wanted to have some place to call home. I’m still in the transition phase...not sure what I’m going to do next.”

She looked at him and smiled the most beautiful smile he had ever seen -- straight, very white teeth framed by luscious red lips. Was she trying to tell him something?

“Jake. To be very honest, I’d like to settle down. I’m sick of wandering and being alone.”

“Yeah?” He didn’t know what else to say.

“Maybe that’s why I’m so attracted to you,” she said. “You seem so stable and settled down. I really like that.”

“Hmmm,” he muttered. “I suppose it does sound appealing to some. I never thought much about it.”

Reaching for his hand again, she looked directly into his eyes. “Jake. Do you want to take a chance again?”

He didn’t answer right away. His thoughts were somewhat jumbled and confused. He had so much on his plate right now. She was obviously looking for something more than just a fling. Could he handle that?

“I don’t know Regina. I’m so busy with my work and other things, I’m not sure about it.”

“It’s okay, Jake. I understand. But I hope you’ll think about it. I know this is pretty sudden and I don’t want to come on too strong. But I can’t help myself. There’s just something about you – I can’t explain it. I just feel really good when I’m with you or when I think about you.”

“But you barely know me,” he said.

“I feel like I’ve known you forever!”

He had to admit that he felt pretty good with her too. Maybe it was meant to be. Why did he feel this way? Should he take a chance?

After another drink he was beginning to relax and didn't realize that he may not be thinking clearly. For some reason, he heard the words come out of his mouth, but he didn't know why he said them.

“Regina, I think you're the most beautiful, sexy woman I've ever met. I'm very attracted to you too. Maybe it is time to come out of my cave.”

She beamed and grabbed his hands again. “I'm glad, Jake. I think we'd be good for each other, I really do.”

Whether she was right about that or not, he didn't really care at that moment. All he was thinking about was how wonderful he felt being with her. As the evening wore on they talked on a more intimate level and he asked himself if she was the one he could finally open up to. Perhaps she was.

At just before midnight Regina said she was getting sleepy so Jake walked her to the car. She unlocked the door and turned around, facing him. She was so close that he could feel her breathe on his cheek and before he knew it, she was kissing him sensuously. He responded immediately and didn't want to let her go – ever!

Finally, they parted and Regina drove off as Jake stood there staring at her car until it disappeared into the night. Was this really happening? Was Regina for real? Or was she another phantom coming into his life to cause more confusion? Unsure of the answer, he decided the only way to find out was to move forward. He told her he'd phone her the following day and they would make some plans to see each other again soon. When he arrived home Carey was in the kitchen making a lot of noise.

“Well, there you are!” she blurted, as he entered the room.

“How come you're still up?” he asked.

“I couldn't sleep. You've never been out this late before.”

“I’m sorry, Cupcake. I should have called you.”

“Yes, you should have,” she retorted. “Were you with that woman all this time?”

Jake wasn’t sure how to respond so he decided to be somewhat vague for the time being. “Yes, but it wasn’t anything you should worry about. She wasn’t a vampire who sucked all the blood out of me!”

“Dad! Don’t be that way. I was just worried, that’s all.”

“I know, Cupcake. It’s late and I think we should both get some sleep.”

“Not until I know more about this mysterious woman,” Carey prodded. “What’s her name?”

“Regina,” he replied. “What else do you want to know?”

“Who is she? What does she look like?”

He finally relented and gave her a quick summary of his new friend. “She lives here in Washington. She was born in Jamaica and came here as a child. Her parents are dead and she lives alone. Is that enough information for you?”

Taking his hand, she led him into the family room and gently pushed him down on the sofa. “Now just sit there for a minute, dad. What does this Regina look like?”

“Why do you want to know?”

“Because she must be pretty special if she kept you out this late,” Carey replied.

Jake smiled and stared at the ceiling for a moment. “Yeah, she’s pretty special, Cupcake. She just might be the best thing that’s happened to me in a long time.”

Carey gazed at her father with a loving smile. “Good. Finally!”

“What?” Jake was surprised at Carey’s response.

“I’m glad! It’s about time you started dating. I’ve been worried about you.”

“Well, you can stop worrying. I’m gonna’ see her again this weekend. Does that make you feel better?”

“Yes,” she replied as she gave him a kiss on the forehead. “Now you can go to bed. Good night.” She walked off toward the stairs and disappeared before he had a chance to respond.

Mulling the conversation over in his mind, he smiled to himself and realized how lucky he was to have such a caring daughter. Finally he went to bed with luscious thoughts of Regina instead of all the worries that had haunted him for so long. It was his best night’s sleep in months.