

WOULD YOU SHAKE HANDS WITH THE MONSTER
THAT LIVES IN YOUR CLOSET?



CLAIRE AMBER
THE BOOGYEMAN

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Dedication

To my dear friends Ozana and Hana.

Introduction

Only one place exists in this world which we are capable of comprehending. It's like a movie or a game in which you're the star and the player. In other words, a far more amusing place than reality, some would say. That includes me. I've always been curious about dreams and enjoy interpreting them and their hidden meanings. I wanted to create a fun adventure where the characters would be able to explore the sleeping mind and the knowledge it has to offer, but also to make the world aware of something I think it has overlooked in past literature. I have named it *The Black Ram*. You'll come to understand who that name represents soon, later, or maybe never. Either way, it's an issue I have been struggling with and I believe I will continue to struggle with for quite some time. Maybe you'll even realize that you yourself are a black ram just like me.

In this story, you'll see horrors of nightmares and beautiful, both simple and lustful pleasures dreams have to offer. Just like in your slumber, some moments will seem strange to you, as if they do not fit in. Remember that dreams are all complex symbolic codes that are left for you to decode and learn from, should you remember what happened after waking up. But fret not. Even if you won't understand a few things, the host of dreams will sometimes aid you with a brief explanation, but it would be best and more rewarding if you came to the conclusions on your own. He will serve you as a guide. He created this dream you are about to enter, after all. It's a special kind of dream. One that exists for the very first time in the vast history of mankind. For someone like you and me, dreams are not something that can be manipulated easily.

It requires practice to be able to experience real lucid dreams. When you're still learning how to wake only your mind during sleep, you are found feeling grounded and unable to see clearly as if an invisible force is not letting you get up and you are forced to struggle just so you could move from one spot to another. But is there anything more? What else can we do with our dreams? The questions that have puzzled the host for quite some time were: "Could it be possible for two or even more souls to be having the same dream at once and at the same time? Would they be able to interact with one another like it were real life and not just figments of each other's imagination?"

The host is many things. One of which is a monster that hides in your closet. He's the one who you were told would eat you if you'd stay up past your bedtime. But that's just a children's tale. He is to be feared if you work against our human morals, yes, but his words of wisdom weigh in gold. Does his heart that is yet to start beating shine as brightly?

The Boogieman / Claire Amber

THE BOOGIEMAN

By Claire Amber

CHAPTER ONE

Sweet Dreams

There is a booming sound of drums that is slowly lifting the mist off the eyes of six women trapped within its breezy claws. They could hear a voice and snickering coming from the distance. A dark, slender and tall figure approached them, lifting their little heads up and clearing their vision.

- Well hello there my unruly little marshmallows! - the figure spoke in a very jolly, masculine, yet a slightly high-pitched voice. - How are you feeling today?

- Disturbed... - the blonde replied.

- Marvelous! Oh, but don't worry, you'll get used to my appearance. You didn't try to hit me with a blunt instrument yet, so I think we'll be able to get along just fine. - the creature grinned and helped the women stand up.

- Who are you? - the beautiful, darker-skinned scientist shuddered and tried to back away from the beast that terrified her.

- It's all right, Giselle. Big daddy won't hurt you unless you misbehave. - he sneered.

- How do you know my name? - she looked around in confusion.

- I know a whole bunch of stuff about you girls. Being the world's genuine Boogiemán has many perks and benefits that come with the title. Including this nifty coffee mug! - the monster exclaimed joyfully and took a big black mug with the white words "Boogie Wonderland" written on it from behind his back.

- I think you're pronouncing the name wrong, guy. - once more did Goldylocks speak as she tried to correct him.

The towering being looked up and made a comeback by answering her question very wittily: - Okay, I'll explain. You people know me as the Bogeyman, but it's actually spelled B-O-O-G-I-E-M-A-N and pronounced as such. I watched this episode of The Powerpuff Girls once and thought: "Doesn't that name sound so much cooler?"

- Sure. If you give us a real name I might not start calling you *twat*. - Natalie flipped her glimmering red hair off her shoulder and crossed her arms carelessly.

- The guys at work call me Jasper. You can use that... I guess. - he rolled his eyes and tilted his head to the side.

- Uhm... Who exactly are you people? - Sarah inquired.

- I second that question. - the blonde added.

- Excellent observation. You see, the six of you are currently experiencing something that has never happened before. For the first time, I have succeeded in making more people dream the same dream and *be* in the same dream. You might have never met nor knew the others existed, but you are all women from planet Earth and have now been brought together in this collaborated dream sequence. - Boogie began to walk around the small group of women as he was explaining. - You see, I got a little bored from my everyday routine of

creating dreams, nightmares and such, so I have decided to choose six humans approximately the same age and all the same sex so I could send them on a journey filled with fun and mind-blowing extravaganza!

- And it just so happens that you chose women, right? - Natalie indicated that this charming personality of his did not amuse her.

- Yes, well, simply because I *do* enjoy gazing at the female beauty. The bond between man and woman is as amazing as the miracles of the universe. - he spoke and approached the young woman with chocolate-colored hair and bronze shine. - Isn't that right, Hellen?

She didn't even answer. She just tried not to look directly into his eyes.

- I know what each one of you desires and I am happy to give each one of you a chance to retrieve it... If you can.

The pearly black-haired lady with the green-blue eyes was eager to suppress her fears and hid skittishly behind the closest young woman.

- You can stop hiding behind Sarah, Lu. I have no intention of harming my new friends just yet.

The pale woman tried to slowly move away and stop feeling anxious even though it was difficult for her.

- Sorry. - she tried to put on a smile and felt embarrassed.

- I appreciate honesty as we all do, my dear. No need to hide our imperfections. This is your dreamland. Here we can be who we want and what we want without any fears or responsibilities to hold us back. - the host laughed and spun around before hooking his arm around poor, frightened Lucille.

Sarah gave him a pretty repulsed look. Natalie was not too happy either. Ten minutes of talking with this guy and she already feels like he needs to be shot between the eyes.

- Could you please move away? You're in my personal space. I'm not very comfortable with this. - Lucille tried to push him away lightly.

- Since you asked so politely... - he obeyed the request and moved away while dangling his tongue close to her face and grinning maliciously. - I hope you won't mind sitting next to me in the car. Now, before we embark on this epic journey, I'm obliged to tell you a little something. Let's call them survival tips.

Their jolly host snapped his fingers and suddenly the room turned into the Amazon jungle in a matter of seconds, following Boogie's change of clothes from his casual attire to a jungle explorer's gear. Unfortunately, his accent decided to embrace the theme as well.

- Alright, listen up! - he shouted in an impressive Australian accent. - If you wanna survive in this bloody dream shaft you gotta have three things jabbed into your blood and bones. You gotta have endurance, balls, good looks and me. If you lose me you are practically throwing yourself down the shithole. In this world I am God, Jesus Christ *and* Virgin Mary!

- I don't remember smoking anything weird recently... - Sarah whispered to Elizabeth who was standing right next to her.

Lucille and Giselle got quite startled by this little performance and sudden change of scenery.

- You said you are going to send us on a journey. I'm a little confused. What exactly are we gonna do and *where* are we gonna go? - Hellen rose her hand lightly and spoke out her question.

- A very good question, mate. Each one of you shall have a domain where you will have to complete an objective and conquer a nightmare. Simple, ain't it?

- And what would our objectives be? - the chocolate-haired girl inquired once again.

- You'll know soon enough. It would be pointless to let you know before we've gotten to

our destination. But even the most pointless things have a point. For example, this jungle. It's pointless. What you don't know is that I created it simply to show off my powers and how easily I can control anything in this realm. Including you. If I wanted to I could turn into a magician and abracadabra all of your clothes off. - Boogie eyed all of them closely with another annoying and perverted grin on his face.

None of the six young women spared their face expressions. They each gave him either a very uncomfortable, frightened look, an awkward smile or glared at him angrily.

- If there are no more questions... - he snapped his fingers and bowed down, still smiling like a happy little Gollum who got to keep his precious ring. - You are welcome to take a seat in my car, ladies.

He laughed for a few seconds and spun. With the snap of his fingers he changed his clothes into a dark red shirt, a pair of denim overalls and black rubber boots with a straw hat that may or may not have had blood stains on it. It might have been just corn syrup. He jumped into the recently appeared pickup truck and couldn't wait for the girls to hop in so he could turn on the radio. With the instrumental version of J. Geils band's "Centerfold" livening up the traveling mood, the girls had no choice but to climb on the back of the truck and hope for the best. It could be worse. At least he didn't play Cotton Eyed Joe.

- Now, a word of advice, ladies. - he tossed a few shotguns to them and turned on the engines. - If ya see Dorothy, aim for the head.

The girls all looked at each other as confused as little lambs. But who cares? At least they got free guns to shoot that annoying, horny son of a bitch if he does something even more stupid. They flew right onto a road in the middle of two empty fields on a hot summer day at full speed. Only a few minutes of driving and Boogie already became bored enough to start opening his mouth again: - You girls excited about our first stop on this here field trip?

- Frightened would be a more appropriate term. - Giselle commented.

- And where *is* this stop? I mean, in case you were meaning to tell us. - Sarah asked.

- Not where, Sarah. When. I'm glad you were the one to ask because this might just be your kind of place. - he spoke. - In that town there's a little pub where they serve the best darn martinis this side of the country.

- I don't drink. - she replied.

- Well that's a darn shame. But it is true, those things will get ya killed. I heard them scientist folk say that 100% of people who drink water die.

The light brown-haired maiden did not even care to comment on yet another of his jokes. Already they find it pointless to try and understand the nature of this alien creature who has no shame or dignity, obviously. But the view of these girls towards the beast might change for better or worse in the future.

- So where are you guys from? - Elizabeth managed to start up a conversation with her new team players.

- Prague. - Hellen answered first.

- Seriously? How come you speak English so fluently without an accent? - Elizabeth asked in surprise.

- I used to watch a lot of cartoons in English as a kid. Plus my mom likes to talk to me in English because she thinks it's fun.

- You? - the blonde turned her head to Giselle.

- I was born in L. A., but I've been living in Boston ever since I graduated from Harvard. I work for a company that makes artificial intelligence systems and programs specifically for robots.

- So are robots really going to become more human as our technology advances? - Hellen smiled at her.

- That is one of the things we wish to achieve. - Giselle smiled back and was calmed down by the friendly response.

- I've lived in Miami all my life, but I can't say I'm very satisfied. You don't get very far as an Archaeologist nowadays.

- Trust me, no one has it easy. - Natalie added. - I work as a first mate on a cruise ship. Most of the crew are men. It's not easy fighting to keep your job when they tell you there are tons of others more capable to do it than you.

- I think some of us can sympathize with that. - Sarah spoke up. - I grew up with 4 older brothers.

- And I kind of feel lucky to be an only child now. - Elizabeth laughed lightly. - So, Hellen, was it? Care to tell us about your trade?

- I'm the CEO of my father's best friend's company.

- A woman in charge. I'm impressed. - Sarah nodded.

The girls chattered away, yet no one paid any attention to poor little Lucille who just sat by herself and lost her way in her thoughts.

- You alright there, Missy? - Boogie shouted out to Lucille.

- I'm fine. - she tried to ignore him.

- I know that, doll, but I was asking about the big frown on your face.

- I told you I was alright. - she kept her eyes on the floor.

- Ya know, out of personal experience, they don't come to blame ya for anything. They come to say goodbye and try to tell ya it's time to let go.

Lucille turned her face away and kept her words to herself. The black-skinned devil continued on whistling for a few more miles until he spotted the big tornado coming their way. Sucking in everything in its path, the twirling giant swept the dust across the field and was slowly closing in on our heroes. The girls all looked to their left to gaze in fear at the monstrosity before them. Suddenly, Boogie stopped the car, resulting in the girls falling from the back of the truck onto the hard concrete. This being a dream, no real pain was felt. Just the fall. Broken bones are bad for business. While they were finished moaning and rubbing their heads from the impact, their host got out of the car all relaxed and awaited their twisterbus to arrive. The girls only had a second to glance at the windy chaos-bringer before they were all sucked in like ants. They looked like little strawberry bits in a milkshake blender while they were spinning around and around and around and around. To some, this adrenalin-packed experience which results from a painless ride in a tornado is rather fun, while the others may suffer from nausea, but nothing serious. It's a mere sensation which will probably not result in induced vomiting. After the free ride on the Tornadocoaster, the heroes were dropped off in front of a bar called "The Flaming Stain" in a little town ingeniously named "Careswho". Mr. B can get a little lazy at times, but we shall pretend we do not notice irrelevant details like that. Our young heroines have to put up with more head-rubbing and moaning in what they think is pain as they try to stand still and not fall flat on their asses once they manage to get up. With the world still looking like a spinning bowl of hot spaghetti alla carbonara, the place suddenly appears to be out of color. Not only that, but now our heroes all look like drunk pedestrians about to get hit by a black Alfa Romeo 1900. Oh, and also their clothes and hairstyles might have degraded back to the fashion sense of the 1950s designers. The car took a sharp turn and because of either poor vision or an inexperienced man behind the wheel, the vehicle nearly crashed into a bookstore. So close. So very very close. Looks like the driver was not so inexperienced after all. He still deserves a proper beating for not creating a spectacular fire show.

- That was so wicked!! - Hellen shouted out while trying to stand still.

- No more... Please... - Giselle holds on to her stomach and feels like she is going to let

out a hunk of stomach acid, but she is not so fortunate.

- Now *that* was something. - Elizabeth laughed and helped the others stand up properly after she recovered.

- I'd love to help, that is if I knew what you dolls were talking about. - Boogie simply stood there and watched their ridiculous little charade with his black tux, white shirt, red suspenders and tilted fedora hat.

- You just drove us into a tornado, jackass. What? You suddenly got amnesia? - Natalie complained about his reckless behavior.

- Whoa, easy on the tongue, little lady. The name's Jack B. Scone. - he offered to help her get up.

Natalie shoved it right back at him and punched him straight into the nose.

- What are you, nuts?! - Boogie fell back, held on to his face as tight as possible and shouted at her after a few seconds of painful moaning.

- You were the one who tried to kill us, pal! - Natalie screamed at him right back.

Just then, in the heat of this little argument, our little helper comes to the rescue. With his Cuban cigar in his mouth, shiny black shoes and a freshly dusted suit, detective Serrim is ready to blow someone's head off for almost wrecking his car. He approached Natalie and Boogie, while they were still arguing and yelling at the top of their lungs, stood in the middle and placed his dirty, dusty-old palms on both of their mouths. He hushed and both of them remained quiet in shock and froze in the spot. Detective Serrim took out a lighter, lighted his cigar, placed the lighter back in his pocket and returned his palms in the position on the mouths of the noisy duo. The silence took over the whole group for almost fifteen seconds until detective Serrim put his hands in his pockets and turned to Boogie. He then proceeded to speak to him in the most gentle and weak voice only a senior cop whose previous career was creating new and innovating coat styles for pooches of all kinds could give you: - Jack. You can't yell at a girl like that. Send her a ballad or something. You'll wake up the neighbor's cat.

- Sorry, Lou, but this one was really bugging me. - Boogie eyed Natalie very carefully and showed her his razor-sharp teeth in a snarling position.

- What are you doing out here anyway? - Lou asked.

- I got this invitation for tonight's bash at the Flaming Stain.

- That makes two of us, Jack.

Lucille noticed a strange paper peeking out of Sarah's jacket. She notified her of it and Sarah immediately began to inspect its contents.

- How did this even get here? - she kept asking herself.

- We're in a dream, remember? - Lucille spoke.

- Oh, right. - Sarah quickly got the idea of what was going on and so did Boogie and detective Serrim.

- Ah, you must be miss Maroon. Sarah, correct? - Lou looked at her.

- Yeah? - Sarah looked back at him puzzled.

- You know this one, Lou? -

- I've read about you in the papers a few times, but I have never gotten the pleasure of meeting you in person, miss Maroon. - he reached out his arm and gave her a firm handshake. - You solved the Albino case. That was some impressive stuff. Louie Serrim, at your service.

- I guess I did. Nice to meet you too. - she still looked a bit unsure about the situation.

- Jack B. Scone. - Boogie added. - *Detective* Jack B. Scone.

- Why do you keep emphasizing the "B.?" - Natalie became annoyed by it.

- You writing a book or somethin'? My name is my business only and I call myself what

I wanna call myself, capiche? - the still quite angry black devil pointed his finger at her and warned her not to be so nosy.

- Scone. Come on. We're gonna be late for the show. Would you and your friends like to join us at the table, miss Maroon? - Lou offered before he turned to the bar.

- Sure? - she replied. - I guess there's no harm in that.

- Anything involving that guy is dangerous. - Natalie added as they all entered the bar together.

Whatever strange people and events our heroes may see in this cozy little pub, there is little we can say about the reasons why two detectives were invited to a pub in a town they barely knew existed. Perhaps there is a very important person there who has heard of their accomplishments and is just dying to meet them.