



Dream, Recurring

By Mark Canniff

Free Sample

"Only the dead know these secrets."

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Chapter 1

The meandering road became a spectacular vision of hills covered in trees, a river off to the side and mountains far in the distance. Where am I? Lucy had a profound sense of being lost. The car kept moving, knowing the path it took. She shook her head in bewilderment. Wow. The stunning scenery was unlike anything she'd ever seen on the island. Before too long, she caught sight of a peculiar vision forming off to one side. As she turned her eyes widened in amazement, jolting her out of bed.

'Oh, my gosh, not again! That's the second day now!' She uttered. This dream was unusual for her. She had a strange feeling that something wasn't right. Lucy shrugged it aside. Time to get ready. She went to the bathroom and began her usual morning ritual. Her room, small for a master but fit everything she wanted. The queen-size bed encompassed most of the space, besides the typical dresser and closet. Her house was cute and practical. Clean and well kept. There was one other bedroom. With two bathrooms, it was just big enough for a single person or a young couple to live in modest comfort. Happily, she could afford the home. Coming back to her hometown, she knew was right. Her clothes picked up and put away, except for her favorite baseball cap. The hat hung on the bedpost, making it easy for her to grab and go. It had the logo she created for her business, she wore it everywhere. Lucy didn't receive much after the divorce. The marriage happened when she was young and stupid. Other words came out of her mouth, never again or I couldn't believe it when she and her best friend talked about that period of her life. The pain, even now, was raw. At least her mortgage payment and expenses were modest enough for her to live in comfort.

Lucy Blakely is 5'7", thirty-four, brunette hair, and green eyes. She is a wedding photographer. When she is not shooting weddings, she is a landscape photographer. Lucy likes the contrast from the high pressure of the marriage ceremony to the very relaxed and peaceful pace that only nature can offer. Lucy doesn't have time for male companionship; she's a workaholic, much to Sam's chagrin. Lucy believes that it's easier to keep

occupied than to find someone to love because they will disappoint her, anyway.

As one gazed around the living room, there were stunning photos of folks and landscapes. Each had at the bottom right-hand corner: "Lucy Blakely," followed by the year she photographed it. On the mantel sat an 8x10 picture of a husband, wife, and daughter, a portrait style family photo with a beautiful backdrop. Though the image looked dated. The area she lived in was distant from the big cities, and nothing of interest happened there. They had tourists, several discovering the history even though it's a small town, the singular thing the community had plenty of transpired long ago. She loved it. There's nowhere else she wanted to be. This community brought many sightseers, and couples. The locality became a hotspot for people. The allure of the local population, natural to perceive once the visitors viewed the surrounding countryside and ocean. There was an eerie quality that lingered.

Lucy grew up where she lives now, in a town called Island River. This town was so named after the settlers discovered a tributary nearby. The history dates back to the late eighteen hundred's. Those bygone times created a rich goldmine of ghost stories. Urban legends sometimes, which folks desired to discuss. This established one more reason a few tourists arrived. That was another motive why she stayed. She loved the paranormal, even though, she wanted to debunk it first. Samantha, her best friend and she had teamed up to document the area, from a mystical point of view. They balance each other out, she the skeptic and Samantha the believer.

Since Lucy was the photographer, she ran the cameras, and Samantha Howard, or Sam as her friends know her, has blonde, mousy color hair, blue eyes and is thirty-four. She is 5'4" and is the more "free-spirited" one; she brings balance to Lucy. Sam and Lucy love each other like sisters. She is a skilled Psychic/Medium, but she prefers the term "Sensitive", this describes her better, anyway. Sam's gifts came from her grandmother, Mary, who guided Sam. Mary encouraged Sam's parents to help their daughter, which they did without hesitation. But it took time before Sam accepted her abilities; once she did, she realized that she enjoyed helping people.

Because of that, Sam began her business as a Psychic/Medium about a year ago.

They worked well together. Between the two, they uncovered most of the past of Island River.

Spirits didn't scare them; instead, both ladies were hungry for this work. So much so, the pair of them sensed as if they had reached their "calling" in Life, but they wondered where this was leading. They loved it. Something was driving Lucy and Sam in that direction. Time sometimes has a way of uncovering the mystery...

Lucy came out of the bathroom, refreshed from her shower, ready to start the day. Dressing never took long for her. As she walked into the living room, she stopped by the family photo, grabbing it and sat on the sofa.

'Hi, mom, dad. I miss you guys.' She moved her hand over the image, a tear formed. She remembered the accident. At first, she only heard the sirens as the emergency crews arrived on the scene. Nine-year-old Lucy opened her eyes. It was blurry but what she had seen was the back and side view of her mother in the driver's seat. Blood as it trailed, descending the surface of her mom's face. She couldn't perceive her dad because she was sitting behind him. Neither were moving.

She moaned as one paramedic came to her aid. 'It's all right Miss. Stay still, we'll have you out of there in a moment.'

Suddenly, the phone rang. It snapped Lucy out of her trans-like state.

'Hello?'

'Hi, Lucy, it's me. Ready for our next client?'

'How do you do, Sam? Yep, I am just putting my clothes on now.'

'Okay, great. Shall we meet at the coffee shop?'

'Sure.'

'Are you okay?'

'Yeah. I'm fine.'

'Don't lie. I can tell when you've been crying. And you're upset. Have you had another flashback?'

'Yes.'

'I'm sorry maybe we can talk more when we get there. Would you like that?'

'Not really. I have to shake it off, but I'll be all right, Sam.'

'Are you sure?'

'Yes. Please don't question me again. If I need you, I'll ask.'

Hesitating, because Sam wanted Lucy to discover the healing Lucy deserved but knew she couldn't discuss it further because Lucy just shut her out, again. 'Okay, Lucy. No problem. I'll see you in a few minutes.'

'Yup, see you soon.' Lucy went back to business.

As Lucy made her way to her car, a man shouted. 'Hi, Lucy!'

'Hello!'

'Have you caught any ghosts today?' He asked grinning from ear to ear.

Lucy smirked, 'Not yet but we may have a new case soon.' 'Oh wow, that's awesome! Well, have a great day!' The guy waved, smiling as he continued walking.

'You too!' Lucy didn't know who that was, but it didn't matter.

This town looked at the two women as their own personal celebrities, and Lucy and Sam enjoyed the attention. So many there were just plain friendly. It's another reason she loved it here. She had no intention of leaving a place where most of the townsfolk appreciated her being part of Island River. Instead of driving off, she thought it was nice to walk meet up with Sam. The weather was beautiful, and it wasn't very far. As she turned the corner, she bumped into the town's Pastor.

John McNab was a third-generation man of the cloth. Both John's grandfather and his father were Methodist. While Pastor John followed the family business towards a life of service, John's calling has led him to a Non-Denominational Faith. This had caused enormous friction between his grandpa, dad and himself. However, he understood the path he took was the correct one because he asked for guidance and a sign came. It was while he was talking to friends of his they brought up Non-Denominational Faith. He had never heard of that teaching, so he researched into it. The more he explored, the more he felt at home and a strong urge to adopt the cause. This was his Knowing. Once the door was in front of him, he walked through it. Much to his family's dismay.

Ever since then, he had seen a real pleasure in the work he does. After serving his church for five years as Pastor in another state, they asked him to come to Island River. He has a talent for uniting others who might not consider his faith and brought them together under one roof. This ability lead Catholics, Methodists, Lutheran, etc. Merging many Christians. They enjoyed his sermons and found a great balance in his style of worship.

'Hi, Lucy.'

'Hello, Pastor John.'

'Are you coming to church this Sunday?'

'Ah well, you know, God and I aren't on speaking terms.'

Pastor John smiled. 'I noticed. Just thought I'd ask.'

Lucy grinned back. He was the only person allowed, in her book, to inquire about that question. Even Sam knew and accepted Lucy for who she was. A skeptic. 'Thank you, Pastor John. Maybe one day.'

'Perhaps.'

They parted ways, and Lucy continued walking towards the local coffeehouse. A little while later, Sam and Lucy met over a cup of coffee to discuss their latest case. Sam began. 'So, this family has been having trouble for months. There are the parents and two children. The wife called me because the paranormal activity has escalated and the kids are now in danger.'

Lucy pondered a moment. 'Before you say something, let's view the physical evidence first. Just making sure they have a problem, and it's not "in their head."'

'I know, Lucy. You say that every time.'

'Well, that's because as of what we've come across. I've been able to find a reason it happened.'

Sam rolled her eyes.

Lucy snapped. 'See there you go again. I need to make sure what we are collecting is genuine and not manufactured because someone thinks it's cool if we investigate so they can earn money from it.'

'I understand. I don't want us to be announcing haunted places in town when they aren't.'

Lucy grinned. 'That's why we balance each other out you are my yin to my yang.'

'You're right, as always.'

It's as if she still brought her past to each of these cases. Although, Sam noticed there were more times Lucy was discovering she couldn't explain away.

'Are you ready to hear the case?'

That was another thing Sam understood. She had to let her talk first. Allowing Lucy to just "get that off her chest" so she could settle into an open discussion.

'I'm ready, sorry Sam. I recognize I need to allow you to introduce the case before I say something, it's hard for me to break that habit. I'm working on it.' She recognized what she was saying. 'I'm here to listen, you know I am. Thank you.'

Sam introduced the family, one by one. She started with the person who contacted her, the wife. Obvious to Sam that Liz was at the end of her rope. So, for their privacy, as per Lucy and Sam's operating procedures, they assign aliases so they could record or discuss it in public with no one knowing who the clients were. The names were on was a scrap piece of paper. Once memorized, they burned it. They protected the identity because they learned firsthand what happens in a small town when a minority caught wind of who the real characters were ridiculing them.

Their first case had become so bad that the young couple left because several people pushed them out. In this quaint community, there were those that didn't care what paranormal events happened, yet others did. The majority thought made for great business and loved hearing the current news. However, a small group perceived if the town became known for these hauntings, it'll push the tourists away. Even though that's already transpired. In their minds, Island River was a peaceful, beautiful place to live, popular with the sightseers and couples who want to marry. To them, nothing supernatural happens there. They lived in a bubble while the rest of the townsfolk either don't mind or love listening to the latest stories.

'The names I am giving them are Liz, Peter and the children Luke and Tina. Luke is ten and Tina eight.' Sam stated.

'Okay, Sam. Please continue.'

'So, the events started two months after they moved in...'

Liz was the first to experience occurrences. It materialized when the kids were at school and Peter at work. To begin with, she heard commotions coming from other rooms. Footsteps, knock on walls and even thumps from the ceiling. When she looked, the sounds ceased. She shrugged her shoulders and went back to doing whatever she was doing. Over time, episodes became more frequent, and other things happened. She noticed that the sound of running water came from the bathroom which stopped once she reached it. Lights flickered, then she glimpsed a female figure at the end of the hallway. Before she realized it, the ghostly image disappeared. That sighting meant an increase in instances, which soon included the children. Liz talked to Peter referring to what was happening, but he experienced nothing. Peter often stated, "It's a new home for us. There will be sounds the house makes that are part of the place." She understood the difference between the vibrations of the house and the haunting events but couldn't

share in them because, at first, it only appeared to her. Nightfall changed how they all felt.

It began when the kids settled in for the night. Luke and Tina laid down on their beds, the parents kissed them goodnight, closing the door behind them. The room was dark. Tina drifted off, but, restless, Luke stared at the corner of the bedroom by the closet. Certain he visualized something. A shadow formed there. It was black, and he wasn't sure he viewed it but as he continued to look; the shape moved towards him. At first, it seemed like he saw things, it floated closer, taking the form of the woman that Liz had perceived earlier. Reaching a point, halfway from the wall to the edge of the bed-frame and stopped. Scared by this time, Luke, frozen with fear, unable to convey anything. It stood, watching him for several minutes. It charged up to his face and peered into his eyes.

He examined every detail of her. Pale in complexion, nothing left, just skin and bones, no eyeballs, merely dark sockets. It took everything in his power to scream. As he did that, Tina woke up and became terrified of what she saw. Liz and Peter rushed in to experience what happened. That's when they both seen it too. The father shouted, 'Out of my house!'. The ghost disappeared, vanishing without a trace as the bedroom lights lit the room.

Sam sighed. This was troubling. 'That was the last time they set foot in their home. No one returned, and that was three months ago. They tried everything and everyone, nobody has helped them. We are their final hope. Liz and Peter agreed to come with us to do the investigation. Their children are at her mom's house.'

Lucy sat back and thought a moment. Could it be possible that what they presume is paranormal has an actual explanation for it? Lucy's skepticism moved to curiosity, and she nodded to her best friend. 'Let's look.'

Sam grinned. Both Lucy and Sam discovered they needed to be in complete agreement before they investigated. 'Awesome! Thank you, Lucy, you'll enjoy this.'

'Well, wait and see.'

'So, Liz has agreed to meet us there if you're ready.' Sam was excited to see what they might discover. Maybe there was a reason the ghost had contacted them, plus the children became so terrified that they needed to resolve it if they were able. Otherwise, the family would move out.

'Do you have the gear?'

'I walked, so if you don't mind giving me a ride back, I'll grab our stuff, and we can head over there.'

'Well, it's a nice day, so I guess it's okay if I give you a lift.'

'Yeah yeah, whatever! You know you love me.' Lucy fluttered her eyes.

A moment later they burst out laughing.

'Hahaha. Come on, let's go.' Sam giggled.

Their equipment comprising eight HD camcorders, which had night vision ability, a full spectrum, plus a thermal camera. They had a K2, an EMF meter, and six digital recorders. At Lucy's house, she had set up her office, her second bedroom, as a place to edit and review the evidence. Lucy and Sam took a few years where they could assemble what they needed but found that their quality of investigation has jumped by leaps and bounds. They've seen and heard things through those mediums which validated much of what Sam has conveyed through her own gifts as a "sensitive."

Lucy and Sam used just one vehicle to the house, it was more comfortable that way. So they moved to Lucy's car. It wasn't too long before they arrived at Liz's home, she was standing there waiting. It was the middle of the day. The sun was shining.

'Hello Liz, so nice to meet you again.' Sam mentioned as they shook hands.

When they gave their clientele names, Sam and Lucy informed them this was what they will call their clients, for their protection and privacy.

Grateful, Liz welcomed them with open arms. 'Hi, Sam, same here.'

'My name is Lucy.' Greeting Liz in the same way.

'Welcome, so you're the skeptic?'

'Why yes, I am.'

'Well, I figured after you two are done here, you won't be.' Liz stated.

Lucy didn't want to upset Liz any more than she was. She has seen so much over the years and remained open to other possibilities; first, she often found it desirable to smile and nod, saying nothing for a while.

'We'll do our best to give you an answer to what is happening.'

'Thank you, Lucy, I'm sure you will, but my husband and I are trusting that you might make it leave so we can move back in as a family.' Liz spoke in frustration.

Lucy looked towards the pavement, not wanting to disappoint, hoping Sam didn't over-promise again. Turning to Sam, her eyes voiced, "What did you tell her?"

Sam responded, 'We will do our best Liz. Shall we go ahead?'

Liz nodded. Opening the entrance, there was a musty odor to the residence. It had sat empty a while, appearing frozen in time as the living room looked disheveled, the dishes washed and put away. They had seen mail on the kitchen table. Indoors wasn't that cluttered. Liz prided herself on running a neat household. Even the smallest eyesore was too much.

Turning to Sam and Lucy, Liz uttered, 'Sorry about the mess, we left in a hurry.'

'Don't be. We aren't here to judge how clean your home is, we're here for you.'

'Thank you, Lucy. That makes me feel better.' Liz had a small sense of relief.

Sam wanted to put Liz at ease. 'Listen, we understand that you abandoned this place. It's okay.'

Liz stopped in her tracks. Stunned by what Sam said as if she read her mind. Liz looked downward. 'I'm sorry, I hate it when guests arrive, and they see a clutter.' Liz's issues were coming out, unable to move past them. She was stressing out.

Lucy grabbed Liz's shoulders. 'Let's focus on WHY we are here, okay?'

Liz, terrified, couldn't convey what might happen. So, she gave a short nod. A tear rolled down her face, she needed this thing gone. She wanted her family back.

Lucy hugged her. 'It's all right. We're here now.'

Liz didn't return the hug she sensed relief from but was still too scared. She gathered her strength up so they may continue with the investigation. Inhaling a deep breath, she gave the tour. As they walked around the house, Liz had shown the areas that events took place. Lucy was writing them on her notepad while considering where to locate the static cameras. The locations they pinpointed were the hallway, the children's bedroom, the spare bathroom, and the attic. Noted by her so she could refer to it during evidence review.

Sam was giving impressions of what she was perceiving while the tour was taking place. They took half an hour to move through the house, Sam, kept reassuring her they did their best. Once finished with the viewing, Liz, Peter, Sam, and Lucy returned to the living room.

'So, what we'll do is set up cameras in the rooms you've shown us as the hotspots.' Sam articulated.

'If you don't mind, we'd like to use the living room as the base-camp. It seems to be the quietest. Also, our other equipment will run too seeing if we can find reasons behind these events.' Lucy added.

'Such as what?'

'Well, for instance, there's an EMF meter which is an instrument that detects electromagnetic frequencies. The strength of the reading depends on the frequency. There might be high EMF signals in the house. Those readings may affect you and your family, thinking something is there, sensing a presence when one doesn't exist. If that's the case, we'll show why, so you can bring someone to fix it. For example, grounding your home, helping it go away. It'd be unhealthy if not addressed. Also, we believe that it can measure where the presence of a ghost might be as it tries to manifest. Basically, the stronger the signal, the more likely an event might take place. Another instrument we use is a full-spectrum camera. The camera operates in the infrared, visible, and near-ultraviolet light. This helps us detect things that our eyes and/or our regular equipment can't necessarily see. Using this tool increases the possibility of capturing a ghost on our recording devices.'

Liz nodded. 'Oh, I see. That's fascinating about the camera, I had no idea we had such things. As far as the meter goes, I don't believe it's a grounding issue.'

Sam was optimistic. 'Hopefully, we will connect with the woman that has frightened your family so much. We'll decide if we can help her crossover.'

'That would amaze me if you could.'

'How about if we agree to meet back here say at four o'clock, so we might set up the equipment? That'll give us the time we need before it goes dark.' Sam inquired.

Liz nodded. 'Sounds great. Did you need my husband here?'

'Yes. The two of you may have to force it to leave, and we wish you both here for that.' Lucy responded.

'Okay, that makes sense. I'm so glad you're here. I have a good feeling about this.'

'We make no guarantees, but we'll do our best.' Lucy didn't want Liz's expectations too high because they might fail.

Liz nodded, 'I understand.'

Four o'clock came round, Liz, and Peter was waiting in their car. Lucy and Sam proceeded straight to work. Unloading Lucy's vehicle, setting up the camera locations and base-camp. It took an hour to set up photographic equipment. Sam was the one that always did the aiming while Lucy was at the computer telling her the directions she needed them moved. Adjusted, the five static cameras were rolling.

'Great job Sam! I think we're ready.' Lucy voiced.

'Awesome.'

Liz and Peter looked on as they watched this unfold.

'Okay, so here's what we need...' Lucy began.

Peter nudged Liz, turning to Lucy, so they kept their attention on her.

'While we do this, stay put and view those cameras for us. There is a digital recorder in there too if you're inspired to ask questions.'

He nodded. 'Will do.'

Rotating to her friend, 'Okay Sam, we're ready to begin.'

The sun had set, and twilight was upon them. The last rays of sunlight disappeared over the horizon as Lucy switched the lights off, the house went dark.

'Here we go.' Sam stated.

They began in the living room since everyone was in there. Lucy and Sam started by asking if anyone was there, pausing for a reaction which they weren't able to pick up with their own ears. Lucy walked around the place with her EMF meter looking for any sign that a fluctuation might happen. None came. She grabbed the full spectrum camera and a digital recorder which she had attached to her vest, so it kept documenting. Sam held onto the K2, a camcorder, plus a matching recording device, adhered in the same way. Every area Sam asked another question, waiting for an answer which they couldn't hear. As they moved through the house from the living room, moving to the kitchen, then into the hallway, into the bedrooms, Sam sensed no entity.

She noticed an observation. 'I think she knows we're here and doesn't want to give away her presence. Are you picking anything up on the full spectrum?'

'No not yet.'

Often when the K2, EMF meter, and cameras aren't capturing evidence, the full spectrum is the first one to spot something. Tonight, the absence of sound was being recorded. The house was eerily quiet.

'Peter, are you seeing any movement?' Sam inquired.

'No, not at all.'

'Hmm, where are you?'

Both Sam and Lucy knew paranormal events happened in waves. Sometimes hours progressed, recording nothing before capturing it at once, then silence for the rest of the night. Other times, the location came alive. When that happens, the investigation was busy. This was not one of those. Lucy kept searching for an explanation, a physical reason behind the haunting, but, she couldn't. Tonight, there may be only a single interpretation.

Hours moved by, both Lucy and Sam recorded, looking for any sign of the woman. Approaching 3 am, both Liz and Peter had fallen asleep on the couch, but, Sam and Lucy were continuing to investigate, they progressed through the night from dusk to dawn before they called it quits. A thump came from the attic. It was the sound of footsteps.

'I thought I completed my sweep up there. Nothing happened.' Lucy recounted.

Sam looked at her. 'I guess not. The static camera is up there.'

Liz and Peter woke up from the noise.

'Oh no, here she comes.' She uttered.

Peter squeezed her hand. 'Lucy and Sam are here, don't worry.'

Liz felt a sense of reassurance but still trembled by an overwhelming perception of fear.

Sam started the questioning. 'Who are you? Can you knock on a wall if you want to communicate? Two knocks for yes, one for no. Do you understand?'

They waited for an answer. A few moments of silence, perceiving if it understood before two blows on a separate wall came. 'Okay, an intelligent response.' Sam noted.

Lucy needed to discern, male or female. 'Are you a woman?'

Again, Lucy and Sam had listened for the sound. Then, two slow thumps.

Lucy looked puzzled. 'Where was that?'

Sam shook her head. 'I don't know.'

Before they asked another question, Lucy heard "hey" whispered in her ear. 'Who was that?'

Sam turned to her. 'What are you talking about, no one mentioned anything?'

'No, someone spoke the word "hey" right beside my-'

'You're what?'

'Shh... I can see something on the full spectrum camera.' Lucy stated.

There, in front of the two women, Lucy had seen a faint shape on the camera's screen. Smaller than they were, it manifested in the form of a female.

'She's here.' Sam voiced.

Liz and Peter were listening to Sam and Lucy. Scared, Liz was having a hard time controlling herself. Peter was doing his best keeping her calm.

'What is your name?' Sam inquired.

Once they knew contact took place, no matter when it was first discovered, the spirit came out of hiding and Sam could begin communications. It's as if they gave permission. She waited for a response.

Sam spoke. 'Hello, Katheryn. Why are you here?'

They paused for a reaction.

'Well, you may adore this family, but they live in fear of you.' She expressed.

Lucy perceived the ghost dart off into a bedroom. 'Where did she go?'

She peered up from the camcorder moving towards the bedroom on the left. When she arrived, she opened the door. The full spectrum camcorder was capturing the images inside the doorway. She wasn't looking at the screen so she couldn't perceive what the camera pictured as they both stepped inward.

'This is the children's room. She's in the corner, over there.' Sam uttered pointing to the right of the bedroom.

Both pointed their cameras to the same location. Lucy detected the EMF meter was going wild, odd to her because the instruments were silent when they first performed their walk-through the house.

'You must leave; this is not your home anymore!' Sam stated.

This upset the spirit. With Lucy holding onto the full spectrum, she had seen what was happening with it. It moved at a quick pace back and forth. Then without warning, it rushed towards Lucy.

'Whoa!'

Observed from the camcorder, was the ghost. Skin and bones, with dark eye sockets, where the eyes once were.

She showed Sam. 'Look at that!'

'Oh yeah, she's pissed.'

Sam knew the best opportunity to remove the spirit from the house was in that instant.

She yelled to the living room. 'Liz, Peter, can you come here, please?'

No sound came.

'Liz?' She called again.

Nothing.

'That's weird.' Lucy looked at Sam.

Sam recognized this was a problem. 'Uh oh.'

They rushed to the living room seeing the spirit standing in front of the husband and wife. Frozen with fear, tears descended Liz's face. Peter, in shock, as he watched in horror at what he was viewing.

Sam stared right at her. 'Liz, instruct the entity to go. Only you can do it because she's connected with you the most.'

Liz was still not saying a word.

'Liz!' Sam was forceful. She needed her to snap out of her fear.

'I... I... I can't.'

'Yes, you can! Now tell her to leave!'

To find out what happens next, click:

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