

# Dream(ed) Life

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Like most people he measured his life in years, and forty-eight had passed. He sometimes thought of using a different scale, one with a secret number that would account for things such as richness and fulfillment, but he knew that number would be too low; in all his life, he had not done much of anything. So years were used, and secret numbers were kept secret.

He often wandered about his house in search of something he might have missed the last time, a photo or a note, anything worth saving, but such items were never found. From room to room, neither closet nor drawer contained any remnant of a pleasant memory. He was like a forty-eight year old newborn. Later that night he chased sleep, but sleep was faster, and left him awake to ponder his life, and he realized the memories he missed would not make themselves. He caught sleep eventually, pinned it down, and slumber settled upon him, along with the feeling his life, forty-eight years after it had begun, was about to begin.

He caught sight of her in a used bookstore. She perused the travel section, and later that day they discussed dream vacations from either side of cappuccino. Three months after that, their first trip abroad was his first trip abroad, ever. There would be many more.

Years slid past faster than he would have liked, but he no longer measured his life in years. Secret numbers, the ones that accounted for richness and fulfillment, were much larger than his age. As an old man, excursion had left him tired. He now preferred to stay home, receive postcards, and reminisce; his closets and drawers brimmed with memories.

At seventy-seven, he slept reflective. The woman who started it all, nearly thirty years before, still took the pillow next to his. He smiled, and closed his eyes. They would never open again.

And that's how a lonesome man of forty-eight died in his sleep. Hours after his life had begun, his heart stopped, but he did

not die the wretched death of someone without a past. He slipped away from this world with a smile on his face, with closets and drawers full of memories.

