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I Still Dream About You



Par Fannie Flagg
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurMeet Maggie Fortenberry. Her life seems pretty much perfect - she's beautiful, charming and successful, just as you'd expect of a former Miss Alabama. But in fact, Maggie is perfectly miserable. By now she should have been living in an elegant house with an adoring husband and children. Instead, she makes a living selling that dream to others - though her estate agency business has lately been going from bad to worse.So Maggie comes up with the perfect plan to end it all. And that's when strange things start happening. As Maggie finds herself catapulted into one surprising discovery after another, she learns valuable lessons about the nature of friendship, the challenges of modern life and the dangers of impossible dreams. She also learns that everybody, dead or alive, has at least one little secret...ExtraitThe

Big Decision Monday, October 27, 2008 Today was the day Maggie had been thinking about, obsessing about really, for the past five years. But now that it was actually here, she was surprised at how calm she felt: not at all as she had imagined; certainly not as it would have been portrayed in a novel or in a movie. No heightened emotions. No swelling of background music. No beating of breasts. No nothing. Just the normal end of a perfectly normal workday, if anyone ever could consider the real estate business normal. That morning, she had gone to the office, worked on newspaper ads for Sunday's open houses, negotiated a washer and dryer and an ugly monkey chandelier to be included in the sale price in one of her listings (although why her buyers wanted it was a mystery), and made a few phone calls, but nothing out of the ordinary. She had known for some time it was coming, but she wondered why it happened on this particular day, instead of one last month or even next week? Yet not more than two minutes ago, as she drove past the pink neon Park Lane Florists sign, she suddenly knew this was the day. No bells, no whistles, just the sudden realization of a simple fact. She sat and waited for the red light to change and then turned off Highland Avenue and pulled up to the black wrought iron gates, pushed her gate code, and drove into the large cobblestone courtyard. At first glance, seeing the tall, flickering gas lamps lining the sidewalks and the ivy growing up the sides of the walls, a stranger might have guessed they were in a quaint little mews somewhere in London, instead of in Mountain Brook, just five minutes from downtown Birmingham. Mountain Brook had always looked more English than southern, something that had always surprised her out-of-town buyers, but most of the iron, coal, and steel barons who had settled it had been from either England or Scotland. Crestview, her very favorite house, that stood atop Red Mountain and overlooked the city, had been built by a Scotsman and was an exact replica of a house in Edinburgh. A few seconds later, she eased the new light blue Mercedes into her parking space, took her purse and keys, and headed up the stairs leading to her townhome. When she got inside and closed the door behind her, thankfully, the loud, jangling five-?thirty traffic noises quieted down to a soft muffle. Her building was just one of the many stately old red brick apartment buildings built in the twenties and turned into condominiums in the eighties, when this side of town had gone condo-crazy. Her unit was a well-appointed two-story townhouse in the elegant, high-end enclave known as Avon Terrace and was kept immaculate at all times. The dark brown parquet floors were polished and shined, rugs vacuumed, kitchen and bathrooms gleaming and spotless. They had to be. She was the listing agent for the entire complex, and her unit was the model other realtors showed to potential buyers. Today, she ?didn't stop to check the mail in the silver dish on the small table in the foyer, as she usually did, but walked straight through to the small den off the living room and sat down at her desk. She knew it must be written by hand. Something like this typed up on the computer would be far too impersonal and certainly not in good taste. She opened the right-hand top drawer and pulled out a small box of monogrammed stationery containing ten sheets of thin blue paper with matching blue envelopes. She took out a few pages and one envelope, then reached across the desk and fingered through a bunch of pens she kept in a brown leather penholder with gold embossing, searching for something to write with. As she continued to test one cheap plastic pen after another, she wished she had kept at least one good fountain pen and that bottle of maroon Montblanc ink she had saved for years. Every one of her old black felt pens had dried up, and now she would have to use the only thing she had left that still worked. She stared at it and sighed. Life was so odd. Never in a million years could she have imagined that she would wind up writing something as vitally important as this on ten-year-old stationery with a fat, bright red ballpoint pen with silver sparkles that had Ed's Crab Shack: Featuring the Best Crab Cakes in Town written on the side. Good Lord. She had never been to Ed's Crab Shack in her life. Oh, well. Nothing to be done now. She carefully dated the upper right-hand side of the page with tomorrow's date, then took a moment to think about exactly what she wanted to say and how best to say it. She wanted to strike just the perfect tone: not too formal, yet not too casual. Businesslike, but personal. After reviewing the specific points she wanted to make, she began: To Whom It May Concern, Good morning, or afternoon, whatever the case may be. When you read this, I will be gone for good. The reasons for my action are varied and many. In the past, I have always strived to be someone my state could be proud of, but I feel that my leaving at this particular time will not cause as much attention as it once might have. On a personal level, as I do not wish to upset my friends or co-workers or cause anyone undue stress, this letter is to inform you that I have already made all the necessary final arrangements, so please do not worry about finding me, and I apologize in advance for any inconvenience this may cause. But please be assured that although I..." The phone inside her purse on the floor suddenly started ringing to the tune of "I'm Looking Over a Four-Leaf Clover." Still concentrating on her letter, she reached down with one hand, rummaged through the purse, and finally dug the phone out and

answered it. It was Brenda from work, all excited. "Have you seen the paper yet?" "No, not yet. Why?" "Guess what? The Whirling Dervishes are coming to Birmingham!" "The who?" asked Maggie, not wanting to be rude, but also not wanting to lose her train of thought. "The Whirling Dervishes from Turkey! The men with the tall cone hats and long skirts that twirl around in a circle. There's a picture of them in today's Entertainment section." "Really? The real ones?" "Yes, the real ones! And they're coming to the Alabama Theatre for a one-night-only performance. The Chanting Monks from China or Tibet or somewhere had to cancel, and they got the Dervishes to fill in at the last minute." "Well, that was lucky." "And guess what else? I can get us two free tickets from Cecil. Aren't you just dying to see them?" "When are they coming?"

Maggie asked, still trying to concentrate on her letter. "November the second. Look at your calendar." "Now?" "Yes, I'll hold on. You know everybody in town will be scrambling for tickets." "Oh, dear. Maggie could tell Brenda was going to pin her to the wall on this, so as a courtesy, she reached across her desk and picked up the Red Mountain Realty calendar with the photo of the entire staff on it and flipped the page over to November; then she said, "Oh, honey, that's a Sunday, and I don't think I can make it. Darn, and

I really would have liked to see them. Why don't you take Robbie?" "Robbie?" "Yes, she might enjoy it." "You know I can't get my sister to go anywhere at night, much less go and see any Whirling Dervishes. Oh, come on, Maggie, you have to go! When in your lifetime will you ever get another chance to see real Whirling Dervishes? You know, you're not going to Turkey anytime soon." "Well...that's true...but..." Brenda did not let her finish. "I don't care what you say, we're going. I'm calling Cecil first thing in the morning. Goodbye!" Brenda hung up before Maggie had a chance to say no. Oh, Lord. Maggie started to dial her right back and tell her she really couldn't go, but then hesitated. What excuse could she give? She hated to lie.

She supposed she could say she would be out of town. In truth, she really would be out of town, but knowing Brenda, she would insist on knowing where she was going, who she was going with, and why. Oh, Lord. Why had she answered the phone? Now that she had finally made the decision, she wanted to go ahead and do it, and sooner rather than later. It had taken her long enough to get to this point. Naturally, doing something like this would never have been her first choice, but after having made out list after list of all the pros and cons of her life and thoroughly exploring every other possible solution, it had become painfully clear that she had no other option. Oh sure, it would have been easier if she could have somehow unzipped her scalp, taken her brain out, and held it over the kitchen sink, and just rinsed away all the old regrets, hurts, and humiliations right down the drain, and started over, but that was impossible. All she could do was get out now while she still had the mental and physical faculties to do it. Thankfully, all the major preparation and planning of how she was going to do it, method, logistics, etc., had already been completed. Just one last quick stop at Walmart in the morning for some equipment, and she was good to go. But she was torn about what to do about Brenda. Should she call her back? Or should she simply drop it? Brenda wasn't just any casual acquaintance. She was her real estate partner, and they had been through so much together. Especially after Hazel died. Had it been under any other circumstances, she would have been more than happy to go with her, especially considering all the nice things Brenda had done for her. Just last month, when she had been so sick with that terrible flu, Brenda had insisted on coming over and cooking all her meals. She had taken such good care of her. Oh God, the very last thing in the world she wanted to do was to have to let Brenda down. But now, thanks to her stupidly picking up the phone, it would be the last thing. She sighed and looked at the calendar again. It would be so much more convenient for her to do it tomorrow or the next day at the latest, but Brenda had sounded so excited, and the poor thing had been having such a hard time lately. November 2 was only six days from now, and considering everything was almost in place and ready to go, she guessed there really was no great rush. So, maybe waiting until the morning of the third wouldn't make all that much difference. It was the decision to do it that mattered most and sticking to it, not when.

There was certainly no danger of her changing her mind. It would just mean a slight delay and having a little extra time to get things in order and do a rehearsal to make sure there were no last-minute glitches. After all, this was something you had to get right the first time. And Brenda had made a point; it really would be a shame to miss the Dervishes. When she was eleven, she had seen a photograph of the Whirling Dervishes in one of her father's National Geographic magazines, and they had looked like something right out of the Arabian Nights, so exotic in their tall cone hats and long swirling skirts. And seeing them the night before she left for good would be a nice send-off for her and certainly make more of an occasion out of it. Besides, it was so important to support the arts, but most of all, she wanted to do something nice for Brenda, as a sort of farewell gift. It was the least she could do for a good friend. She picked up the phone and dialed. "Listen, Brenda, when you speak to Cecil, ask him if it's possible to get us seats in the middle, and if he could, to try

to get us as far up front as he can. We want to get a close look at their outfits." Brenda said, "Don't worry. If Cecil knows you're coming, they'll be good seats. But I'm bringing my binoculars so we can get a really good look at them, okay?" "Okay." "Oh, I'm so excited! Hey, Maggie-what do you suppose they wear when they are not in their twirling outfits?" "Oh gosh, honey, I don't have a clue." "Me neither. I just can't wait until November the second. Can you? I'm so glad we're going. Yeah!" Maggie smiled. "Well...I'm glad you're glad." "See you tomorrow." "Yes, you certainly will," said Maggie. *Revue de presse* [Fannie Flagg is] a born storyteller. *The New York Times Book* Undoubtedly [Flaggs] wisest book, comic and compassionate . . . Born of a tender heart and nurtured by an imaginative mind, its certain to touch the readers soul. *Richmond Times Dispatch* A fun and rollicking Nancy Drew mystery for grown-ups. *The Birmingham News Classic Fannie* . . . What [Flagg] writes about, time and again, are the touching, terrifying, heartbreaking, hysterical, extraordinary, everyday things that make us human. *Southern Living*