

# The Sleeper and Her Dreams, Ray Bradbury

## The Sleeper and her Dreams

Long before there was anyone to listen, there was the High Attic Place, where the weather came in through broken glass, from wandering clouds going nowhere, somewhere, anywhere, and made the attic talk to itself as it laid out a Japanese sand garden of dust across its planks.

What the breezes and winds whispered and murmured as they shook the poorly laid shingles no one could say except Cecy, who came soon after the cat to become the fairest and most special daughter of the Family as it settled in with her talent for touching other people's ears, thence inward to their minds and still further their dreams; there she stretched herself out on the ancient Japanese garden sands and let the small dunes shift her as the wind played the rooftop. There she heard the languages of weather and far places and knew what went beyond this hill, or the sea on one hand and a farther sea on the other, including the age-old ice which blew from the north and the forever summer that breathed softly from the Gulf and the Amazon wilds.

So, lying asleep, Cecy inhaled the seasons and heard the rumorings of towns on the prairies over the mountains and if you asked her at meals she would tell you the violent or serene occupations of strangers ten thousand miles away. Her mouth was always full of gossips of people being born in Boston or dying in Monterey, heard during the night as her eyes were shut.

The Family often said if you stashed Cecy in a music box like those prickly brass cylinders and turned her, she would play the ships coming in or the ships in departure and, why not, all the geographies of this blue world, and then again, the universe.

She, in sum, was a goddess of wisdom, and the Family, knowing this, treated her like porcelain, let her sleep all hours, knowing that when she woke, her mouth would echo twelve tongues and twenty sets of

mind, philosophies enough to crack Plato at noon or Aristotle at midnight.

And the High Attic waited now, with its Arabian seashores of dust, and its Japanese pure white sands, and the shingles shifted and whispered, remembering a future just hours ahead, when the nightmare delights came home.

So the High Attic whispered.

And, listening, Cecy quickened.

Before the tumult of wings, the collision of fogs and mists and souls like ribboned smokes, she saw her own soul and hungers.

Make haste, she thought. Oh, quickly now! Run forth. Fly fast. For what?

"I want to be in love!"

The End