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Red Silk Realities
by Bailey Hunter

Gassssp!

Denni sat bolt upright the air burning her lungs, unable to breathe out for a moment. Wide eyes scanned the room waiting for the shapes in the darkness to reveal themselves. Finally she exhaled slow, feeling the breath pass shuddering across her lips.

She reached for her dream journal, knocking a glass to the floor.

“Damn. Where’s the pen?” she muttered.

Fumbling through the fog of disjointed images she found the night lamp and turned it on. She had to get the dream on to paper as fast as possible – before it all faded once again.

It was the same dream she’d been having for weeks. She found the pen and began to scribble furiously across the pages.

Night, dark, silver moon, enormous tree with no leaves, branches reaching up towards the sky with gnarled fingers...

It’s decorated. Strange, large decorations tied with equally large red silk bows. They shimmer in the moonlight, crescents dangling. There was more this time. With every dream there is more.

“Damn!” Why couldn’t she see what they were? She was so close. Almost close enough to recognise. Then she remembered something. She started writing again.

A face. There was a face this time. A man? Can’t quite remember. The face was pale, the eyes dead. I’m sure it was a man. Where was he? Was he by the tree? No. He was no where. Just a face.

Denni laid the journal down beside her and stroked her cat who’d come to see why she was up so late again.

‘Any excuse for a cuddle.’ The thought offered her a smile.

“Well Jimbo, seems my dream has come back again. Do you think that next time you could have the dream for me? I’m getting pretty tired of having the same one over and over. Perhaps we could switch dreams. You can dream of the tree and I can dream of mice or birds or whatever it is you dream of.”

Jimbo pushed his striped face against Denni’s, seemingly ignoring the bargain.

“Ahhh, just as well I suppose. I need to figure this thing out. It must mean something, otherwise why would I keep dreaming it over and over? At least if it has purpose I can deal with it.” Denni let out a long sigh. “Let’s go get something to drink. Maybe a shot of scotch will help me get through the rest of the night. 7am comes too early when you don’t sleep.”

Denni slipped out from between the covers letting her toes adjust to the cool bare wood of the floor before padding off to the kitchen, Jimbo doing his best to trip her up as she walked, circling and rubbing against her ankles.

She ran her hand across the wall until her fingers found the light switch and in a brilliant flash the kitchen appeared ahead of her. An elaborate rental costume was laid out on the table and an empty bowl of surrounded by several crumpled candy wrappers sat beside it as a reminder of season.

“Maybe it’s just all the Halloween stories and shows that are causing this dream,” she offered to Jimbo as she pulled a tumbler and the scotch from the cupboard. “Whatever it is I hope it stops soon. Don’t know how much more I can take. It’s easy for you, little man. You just go back to sleep when I leave. It’s definitely a cat’s life.” Denni sipped her scotch while looking over the costume. A maroon and gold renaissance dress with a large,