

WONDER CITY STORIES

VOLUME 4:

WHOSE DREAMS COME
TRUE

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EPISODE #5

Defying Gravity

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Defying Gravity

Suzanne Feldstein was just putting her book and StarLeaf into her bag on top of her blue cotton blanket and green cardigan when her StarPhone buzzed in her pocket.

Hey you, texted Simon, bringing, as always, a smile to her face.

Hi yourself, she replied.

I'm sorry I couldn't get home in time to take you to chemo today, he said.

She sighed at the screen. His flight had been cancelled—they all seemed to do that these days—and he was stuck in Los Angeles another day. *It's ok, Angelica is taking me*, she told him.

Give her a kiss from me, he said. *I'm booked on a redeye tonight, fingers crossed it actually takes off.*

Will do, she said, then typed, *Miss you so much*, and sent it before she could second-guess herself.

Miss you too, he said. *Can't wait for this season's filming to be done. I hate this town.*

I've got the latest show downloaded on my tablet, she said. *Will watch while I'm sitting with nothing else to do. I have a lot of free time on my hands right now.*

Love you, only one more cycle after this right?

That's what the doctor ordered, she typed. A car horn tooted outside, and she picked up her bag and went out, locking the front door behind her.

Angelica, dark hair sleeked back into a ponytail, wearing jeans and her favorite tie-dye hippie flouncy blouse, leaned across and popped the passenger door of her Toyota sedan open. "You're looking good, sweetie," she said as Suzanne slid into the seat. "Nervous?" She adjusted her sunglasses, and Suzanne was glad she hadn't worn the mirrored shades. Suzanne avoided mirrors these days.

"Nah, I'm an old pro at this now," Suzanne said, adjusting her blue turban. She leaned across and kissed Angelica on her powdered cheek. "That's from Simon."

"Thank you, ma'am," Angelica said. "Is that boy on his way home yet?"

"Tonight," Suzanne said, strapping in. She checked her insistently buzzing phone. *I should go, Simon had typed. My agent wants me to meet someone since I'm still in town.*

Go west, young man, she said. *Or whatever direction, I'm off to get my elixir vitae.*

Love you, he said again.

Love you too, she typed, then put her phone in her bag and leaned her head against the back of her seat.

"Simon?" Angelica said, pulling out from the curb.

"Of course," Suzanne said. "Only a few more trips out to LA this season, I think he said."

"Unless he lands that movie gig," Angelica said with a sigh. "I sometimes feel like he's trying too hard by staying here with us." She paused, and said, slowly, "Y'know, we all *could* move out there after I finish my coursework."

Suzanne looked askance at her. *Don't PhD students have to stay at their school until they get their degrees?* "He says he hates the town, though. And you'd pretty much have to foot the bill for all that."

"I'm not exactly hurting," Angelica said, "thanks to Jane Liberty and her weird guilt money."

Suzanne nodded and looked out the window. *But, she thought, all three of us living together? Being across the country from Ira and Andrea? The car turned onto one of the main streets. Andrea and Ira aren't getting any younger. Andrea had that fall last year. Ira's had more than one heart attack—god, we nearly lost him three years ago! And what if the surgery and chemo don't work? I could be dead by the time she finishes her courses.* Irritably, she fumbled a tissue out of her purse and dabbed at her eyes. *I'm an idiot. And I think my Xanax has worn off.*

"You okay, querida?" Angelica said, glancing aside at her.

"Yeah," Suzanne said, sniffing and laughing at herself. "Just... I guess I'm not such an old pro at this yet."