



THE REMAKERS DREAM CATCHER

A Story & Guide for Dreamers!

TERRI SHANK

The Re-Makers Dream Catcher

It sat upon a laden shelf, in a closet filled with bits and pieces. At that time, I didn't know what it was or why it was there. But nonetheless, I would find out.

Some would say my grandmother was a collector, the less-than-kind might call her a hoarder; but one thing was for sure, my grandmother's closet held a lifetime of memories for her. There were more odds and ends in this tight space than in the rest of my grandmother's meticulously kept home combined. So when Grandma sent me searching in her "closet of hidden treasures" for an old pair of sunglasses, I dreaded the task.

I had already been searching for an hour, but to no avail could I find them. I had trudged through the first few shelves, working from the top to bottom. As I searched, I had assembled piles of mismatched items, trying to make sense of all the knickknacks. My grandmother had no rhyme or reason for stowing away such random belongings.

Nonetheless, I began grouping the items that belonged together: bags of rocks, shoelaces, old socks, needles and pins, ribbons, smelly sea shells, crushed holiday decorations and a few sticks. The piles were growing with each new discovery, and I found myself more curious to know where these random things came from and why she kept them.

Why would anyone keep a bag of rocks?

When I was just about to give up on the sunglasses, a fluffy, pearl white feather caught my eye. It poked out of nowhere, just begging to be taken out and admired.

When could you ever find such a perfect, unblemished piece in nature?

I dug deeper to pull it out, but it caught on something and refused to give. I was transported to my past fishing trips with my dad; it felt so much like the tug of a fish on my pole. One more forceful yank revealed it was part of something larger, and tangled

up on an umbrella handle. I was so determined to have that feather, and excited when I was able to unleash its hold.

Out tumbled a tattered and torn dream catcher. Hoping I was not the one that ripped it, I sadly took note of the large tear in the finely woven center ring. Grandma certainly kept things in a state much worse for wear; maybe this was broken before I even got there.

Grandma's voice broke me from my spell, and I set off to find her with itchy dust balls clinging to my clothes. There she was in her chair, right where I left her sitting peacefully sipping a tea. She seemed to have forgotten all about the sunglasses, but immediately noticed the dream catcher trailing behind me. A slow smile crept over her face as a distant memory bubbled up in her eyes. She didn't seem to care at all about the tear but was happily surprised by the sight of the Dream Catcher.

Was it possible she forgot what was in her own closet?

I approached her and sat on the ottoman she rested her feet upon. In an inquisitive voice, I asked her where it came from and why it was there. Her voice softened into a gentle whisper, making me strain my ears and get closer to hear her every word. With a proud smile, she replied it belonged to my father. She had found it long ago in a gift shop, just after she was married.

Grandma told me so many stories over the years about her marriage to my grandfather. I recalled her youthful dreams of wanting to travel the world, but getting married instead. That is what girls did in her time. I was lucky to grow up in a different age, where expectations differed and there was so much more freedom. Although my grandmother sacrificed her desire to explore, she found someone she loved.

My grandfather was a meager man. He would have given her the world on a platter if he could, but unfortunately they had to live within their means on a tight budget. Knowing how much traveling meant to his new bride, my grandfather took her on their honeymoon out West to New Mexico, where they visited a beautiful Native American

reservation. I never knew where they went away, just always remembered Grandma speaking fondly of New Mexico.

Grandma was on fire as she reminisced about the trip. I saw her eyes transporting through time, recalling the details of their stay vividly. She told me how entranced she was by the area. They spent days exploring the land, talking to people in town, eating up the local culture. On their last day, they visited a small gift shop.

Inside, there were beads and jewelry for sale, all lined up in a long, glass case. Grandpa stopped in front of the case as Grandma walked around the store, drawn to the back room. Sound had faded away as she homed in on a bright white dream catcher. She stood before it, in awe of its beauty and perfection. As a new bride, the bright white color was symbolic for her.

It took a while for Grandpa to find her. When he finally made his way to her side, he proudly carried a pretty silver ring with a turquoise stone. She shook her head and pointed to the dream catcher. Being my grandmother, she wanted that dream catcher more than another pretty ring on her finger.

As she stood contemplating their purchase, a very old woman approached. Grandma was not sure where she materialized from. In a coarse voice, she asked my grandmother if she knew the legend of the dream catcher and how it was tied to Native American culture.

Grandma was bewitched, and latched onto every word the stranger shared. The mystical woman said dream catchers were hung in places where children slept. The center ring was made of fiber and resembled a spider's web and below the ring was decorated with beautiful ribbons, feathers and beads

I looked down at the one in my hand, as if to verify the one I held was an authentic dream catcher. Despite the one in my hand being torn, Grandma pointed to the hole in the middle.

Grandma continued in her storytelling voice once I finally looked back up. I was pleased that this dream catcher fit the description of the one from the story Grandma was retelling.

As legend went, good dreams would pass through the center ring and cascade down upon the sleeping person. Bad dreams would get caught up in the middle web, where they would stay until morning when they would fade away with the light of day. Essentially, dream catchers could give someone sweet dreams and chase away their fears.

I closed my eyes and smiled, thinking what it would be like to envision all my scary nightmares getting entrapped in a sticky, central web. It would be so nice to not jolt awake with a racy heart and sweaty skin ever again.

I opened my eyes again when Grandma stopped talking. She took another sip of her tea and smiled at me, pleased I was as engrossed in this story as she had been decades ago. She continued.

Dream catchers held more significance and purpose than just abating nightmares. The elders who led their tribe would rely upon their dreams to guide them. Dreams were very important to them, full of symbolism and meaning.

Grandma's voice was slowing. I could tell all her excitement was tiring her, and I patted her foot and told her we could continue later. But before she closed her eyes to nap, she told me that she just inherently knew that she had to have that dream catcher.

Grandma squeezed my hand as she relayed the old woman's last imparting wisdom. She seemed to hear the voice in my grandmother's head and said that she was right; she would hang that dream catcher in her future child's room and teach him about the ancient legend. She explained that the dream catcher would grow to mean more to her with age; it would hold so many hopes of every dream that had yet to come.

It would not be until much later in life that she gave meaning to each feather. For her, each of the five feathers carried a life lesson meant to be discovered and passed on to others.

I found my mouth widening as Grandma said that soon after getting home, she found out she was pregnant with my father. She and Grandpa happily hung that dream catcher by my dad's crib, where it stayed in his room for many years. When he was young and she tucked him in at night, she would trust the dream catcher to keep him safe and sweet dreams to cascade down upon him. But his favorite part became learning about each feather's special meaning.

Recalling my father's joy for their nightly routine of discussing the meaning of the feathers, my grandmother's voice became light and airy. It was like she was back, sitting at the foot of my father's bed, telling him the stories anew. She closed her eyes, and with a huge smile, recreated her ritual with my dad.

Finding feathers -

I Am

The first feather we called I Am feather. Everyone is born with their own great uniqueness. Each person has the chance to set out to do something that only they can do. It's your gift, your purpose, what you bring to the world. Some of us are born to grow roots, and others wings. It's that whisper you hear in your heart that knows you and reminds you of how special you are.

I Can

The second is the I Can feather. This is what you are drawn to; where you want to leave your mark, what you love that loves you back. You are drawn to do what your heart desires you to do. This doesn't mean it will come easily, but it will not go away; it will only leave you if you set it aside and don't go after it.

My Tribe

The third My Tribe feather. When you live to who you are, in the best version you see yourself as, true to your

own greatness, you will find your tribe. It might be your family, or a friend, or a stranger you meet that you never forget. Your tribe sees your greatness and reminds you when you forget it.

I Believe

The fourth I Believe feather. Believing in the magic of life and in the mystery that there is something much bigger than us. We are all connected to that magical force. Just as we are all connected to the moon and sun. Imagine if the moon looked down upon all of us and our dream catchers; what would it see? Don't forget to recognize and feel the magic that surrounds you.

Set Them Free

And the last, fifth Feather, Wings to Fly. Give wings to your biggest dreams; you must set them free. If you hold onto them too tightly, they cannot make their mark. Let them go.

"Now that you have listened to that heart of yours, you might start to have doubts if you can really do this. Your Dad had lots of doubts. He seemed down right scared sometimes, like everyone else is. That is fear. Fear is good if terrible things are about to happen and you know you must get away, but lots of fear is just the mean voice that tells you that you are not enough...all the reasons you can't do something that you really want to do... It might even be someone else's voice telling you it won't work... You fearless self will know the truth; trust can replace fear..."

"And yes, you will have fears, but trust those to the center ring. You will also get lost and forget what your dreams are, but whatever it is you feel you are called to do, to be, will keep calling you. You have already made a mark on this world; from the moment you were born, you changed lots of people's lives, including mine."

"As you go on, you will keep adding to your dreams. Exploring makes life rich and full. There will be things you need to learn, to do, to see, to find, to grow, to make your dreams happen. You may even need to let go of things, like you need to stop saying no to yourself. You can grow the good things and let go of the bad things."

"We call those *seeds of intention*. This is a list of things it will take to make your dreams come true. It can be your secret list. You can write them on the inside of your beads and you will know they are in there, but no one else will know. It's all part of dreaming."

Her voice becomes so strong now, it's like she's talking through me, not to me:

"Do you think you are ready now? Tell me what you dream of? What do you see, my child? What do you see with your heart, not your eyes?"

What I didn't know that day, when I went in search of my Grandma's sunglasses, was that she and I would make my own dream catcher out of random things in that closet of hers. I would hang it by my bed and grow up to make hundreds of dream catchers with others.

Just as the wise woman passed the legend of the dream catcher down upon my grandmother, and as she passed the legend to my Dad, I would pass the story on; and so it would go.

Have you found your five feathers?

Dream catchers can be crafted out of many things. The components are the same; feathers, ribbons and beads with a center ring to catch and release.

My dream catchers are made with sticks, to ward off bad dreams in the night, but they can also be made with string.

The important thing is to dream. Leave your mark, my friend. Spread your light onto the world...

Finding Feathers

Feathers appear on your path unexpected but not without purpose.

I Am special and was born into my own greatness



I Can do what my heart desires me to do



My Tribe sees my greatness



I Believe in the magic in the mystery that connects us all



Set them Free I give my dreams wings to fly





In Dreams we Plant the Seeds of Our Future.

What will it take to make your dreams come true?

What do I need to learn, to do, to see, to find, to
Make my dreams come true? Is there anything I need to
let of that is holding me back? This can be a secret list
with your ideas written on the inside of your Dream
Catcher's beads (no one but you will see).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____



Be fearless in
the pursuit of
what sets your
soul on fire!

Fear of failure can stop
us from believing in the
power of our dreams.

To be fearless we must
replace fear with trust.

To help ward off voices
that tell you that you
are not good enough,
imagine affixing those
fears to a branch from
the imaginary "Tree of
Trust". Now let them
go so they can fade
away.



Find Your Tribe

"Surround yourself with the dreamers
& the doers, the believers & the thinkers
but most of all, surround yourself with
those who see greatness within you
even when you don't see
it in yourself."

Edmund Lee



Author's note

The ReMakers Dream Catcher is a fictional story which was written to accompany the *ReMakers Dream Catcher Craft Guide*.

The story and craft guide help others create something beautiful with non-traditional materials, while also encouraging all of us to reimagine what is possible in our lives.

Dream catchers today can be found in nearly every color, shape and form. The beliefs surrounding dream catchers remain a fascinating part of American history, and can be interpreted quite magically and mystically. The true origins should also be celebrated.

Terri Shank

Author,
Upcycle Artist & ReMaker Kit Designer



Beacon co-owner and moonlighting artist, Terri Shank whimsically breathes new life into clean discarded healthcare packaging materials.

Her artwork and ReMaker craft kits give value to Dupont™ Medical grade Tyvek® packaging. She believes relentless curiosity is needed to meet the environmental challenges of plastic packaging and uses art to encourage new thinking around resource recovery.

Visit www.irenditions.com to see more of her work and traveling exhibit *Enchanted*.