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Category: Short Story

The World Underneath Me

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6:00am. Alarm ringing. Snooze. 6:30am. Alarm ringing. I open my eyes and close them immediately. Black, red, blue, purple, then black again. I feel like I am falling. I open my eyes at last. Staring directly into the sun shining through the window. I look away quickly then roll off my bed. "Ow" I say, like I expected to fall. I untangle myself from my covers and start my boring, everyday routine again. I get dressed, brush my hair and my teeth, floss, pack my bag, put on my shoes, eat breakfast, and go to school. Have you ever had that feeling where you close your eyes and it seems like you're falling? When you fall, in reality, you always land somewhere, correct? If that is true, then where would we land when we fall in a dream? Nobody can answer that because we all open our eyes before we can find out.

"Natalie, can you explain what pain receptors are?" my teacher asks to me as I walked in late to class.

"May I pass, Mrs. Whitson?" I reply.

"The test is tomorrow. Is there a problem?" she says, inquisitively.

"No ma'am. I'm just not feeling the best today." I lie. I feel fine, I am in my own zone.

"Do you need to go to the front office?"

"No ma'am."

I let the teacher fade into the background. Science is my best class. I am sure I will be fine not listening. Pain receptors are nerves in the skin that sense pain and are what tell you if something is hot or cold. Speaking of pain, would it hurt to fall when you land in the falling, dream-like vision? If people don't remember dreams, then how do most people remember the falling? I decide to set up a plan. I look up what makes this sensation happen. I develop strategies to try for several nights until it happens again.

10:37pm. September 4. I finish my homework and get ready for bed. The first theory is that there is a "natural downshifting of the nervous system" according to sleep.org. I walk a lap around my house, do 20 jumping jacks, as well as 50 crunches. After warming up, I turn down the temperature to 62o Fahrenheit. My mom is going to get mad but that's her problem. The best temperature to sleep in is 64o.I get in bed. My muscle tone shifts and hopefully that will make the dream begin. I cannot wake up. My goal is to find what happens when the falling stops in the dream.

6:00am. Alarm ringing. I wake up right away with my face full of hope. Then my eyebrows drop. I did not experience the glitch illusion.

I am going to school. I start with math. I am paying attention, however, because math isn't my forte. After math I have science. Since I didn't listen yesterday, I am going to listen today. I have computer science following regular science. That is when I will plan my second attempt.

10:30am. Headed to computer science. I arrive and set down my backpack. I log into my assigned terminal as fast as my fingers will type.

"Mrs. Hayes, what has you in a hurry this morning?" my teacher asks.

"I am just excited to have a good class at last this morning." I reply.

"Usually, I see you come in with a 'get me out of here' attitude." my teacher retaliates.

"Uhh, I am just tired most of the time, Mr. Barell," I lied.

"I don't believe you. That is one of the worst excuses I have heard in a long time. Are you okay?"

"Okay, fine. I am attempting an experiment to answer a question of mine that hasn't been answered online. I am looking up information, so I can fall quite literally into place to find the answer," I say, giving up trying to cover my plan.

"Why didn't you just say so? I will leave you to your searches instead of class today but, please talk with me before next week so I can fill you in," he says generously.

"Thank you, Mr. Barell. I greatly appreciate it," I reply, while thinking about how smoothly that went over. I started to research. I found that I'm not the only one who wants to know the answer. Only problem is, no one has done an experiment, or at least no one has written anything online about it. I come up with the basis of a story for a theory.

8:24pm. I finish my homework that doesn't exist, and I start to get ready for bed. I brush my teeth and change. I plan my outfit for tomorrow while throwing my hair up in a messy bun. My plan tonight is to watch a scary movie to tense up my muscles. I will fall asleep with creepy visions in my head. As I fall asleep, my brain will have chances at misinterpreting a message of sleeping into falling. I log into Netflix to pick a scary movie. I see many, but land on one I had been avoiding.

10:54pm. I fall. I fall fast. Colors switch over and over once again. Black, pink, red, blue, purple, green, black. Falling faster and faster. It doesn't stop. I hear a voice in the background.

"Is she okay? Is it a nightmare? Why is she screaming?"

"She won't wake up! Do we call the police?"

 I think to myself, *don't open your eyes*. I feel a cold hand brushing me trying to calm me down. I hit the ground and open my eyes fast in fear. The person besides me jumps back, then takes a deep breath. I come to realize that my mom, dad, and Zoe, one of my sisters are next to me.

"What happened? Are you okay? You were screaming!" said Zoe.

"I was? It was just a nightmare," I reply, feeling sick.

"Do you need a glass of water?" my mom asks.

"That would be great, thanks."

I get up and start walking down the stairs. I feel dizzy and there are doubles of everything. I stop. Life goes black. I fall to my end. 3:42am. Fourth stair. 3826. Westbrook Lane.