

UFO

When I was younger, Mum always told me that UFOs were fake. She said that they were just myths. I trusted her at first - I guess that's just what little kids do. But when I was older, I started bringing home stacks of tattered flying saucer books from the library, everyone I could find. Mum didn't understand. But I researched anyway, trusting that, someday, I'd find living proof that UFOs were real.

And I did, one day.

But it wasn't in the form of books.

I saw one.

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Christmas night, 12:00. My mouth was about as dry as a square of that sandpaper you get at the hardware stores and I was seriously regretting having ever eaten that overly hot potato at lunch. It was burning my mouth from the inside out, and I was pretty sure all the water had been sucked out of me. No matter how many times I swallowed, I still felt like a human desert.

Liquid. Water. Clean water. That's what I needed. Inhaling a long, shaky breath, I hauled my unwilling weight of a body up above my feathery soft pillow and swung my legs over the bed. It would be quick, I told myself. I had to tell myself because I

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needed the water, but for some reason my body didn't seem to want to move that much.

I managed to tiptoe my way to the kitchen, as quietly as I could (in actual fact, I was quite proud of myself for being so silent). I'm a little scared of the dark, so I kept close to all the bedroom doors when I walked. By the time I arrived, my toes were aching and the prospect of water was seeming more and more beautiful.

Noiselessly I started to make my way over to the big silver tap near the window-I knew it was silver because I had seen it so many times in broad daylight. Even now, the moonlight winked on its sleek surface, setting off glimmering metallic stars. Smiling, I reached for the large IKEA glass on the matching washstand and switched on the tap.

It was as the water was gushing out, smooth and clear, that I saw it. Just a pale yellowish blue kind of shape at first, nothing more. Gently, absently, I began to grope toward the tap and flicked the knob so that the stream of water halted. The shape was still spiralling across the scorching black sky. Unable to help myself I lent forward over the sink. It looked like a shooting star; magical. Almost as magical as the fairies in those Shirley Barber stories where everything is perfect. Just – well – they don't have UFOs in Shirley Barber stories. And I was pretty sure this was a UFO.

So I kept standing, gazing, with the water still balancing precariously in my hand. I watched the flying saucer shooting across the sky, making ongoing circles as if it were being controlled by a new high tech remote. With one hand, I raised the glass of water to my lips and gulped it down.

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That was when it disappeared. I'd only looked down for a second, yet it was nowhere to be seen. I searched the sky with my eyes as best I could, but it was really gone. Gone for good. With a sigh, I glanced away, biting down on my bottom lip.

Maybe it had just been a dream.

Or I'd imagined it.

But then I turned back again, staring at that inky black sky, that strange starless night, and I knew in one short breath that what I'd seen hadn't been false at all.

I had well and truly seen a UFO.

By Babette E