

Chapter 1

“Not Where I Wanna Be”

Inside his sailboat Sarantos drifted aimlessly while his voice sang with the harmony of the powerful green sea. He inspired his words with everything he felt inside his being. It was a gift as deep as the waters that moved his verse with hope.

He laughed heartily and breathed in the wild sea air. Sarantos stood in his boat against the dark stormy day. He was exhilarated as the rain splashed against his whiskered face while his long dark hair dripped in unison to the downpour.

He loved those moments when he became the sail and held out his hands allowing his song to articulate the colors of an artist’s paintbrush. He felt each wave inside his heart and allowed the painting to extend across time to capture memories that belonged somewhere else. This was his life. And he was free!

Sarantos never remembered how he’d arrived there, inside this boat. He dreamed that he must be a trick or an illusion skillfully crafted by a powerful wizard, one who enjoyed watching him contemplating his own existence. It worked. That is how he spent most of his days.



Today, his vocals were strong enough to reach the heavens, so he sang:

“Hello, I see you watch me from behind your cloud. Don’t think I don’t know why you made me sing out loud. The shadowed night calls your wizard’s light - that I wish upon you to make things right.”

A loud clap of thunder rang out as if applauding his song, while against the dark sky bright dancers came to life with chaotic movements that reached all the way to the sea. Sarantos almost capsized his little boat laughing with over-exuberant enthusiasm. He’d always felt what he knew to be joy, but this laugh was different. It was a soft tickle between the ribs that made him think about his dreams.

He frequently had strange night visions when he slept. Once, he'd dreamed of a place he'd never been where others like him would join in singing and all the voices turned into a vibration of acceptance. A place where all dreams were recognized and appreciated.

Sometimes he wondered if his wish upon the stars would ever arrive to the place he could only see inside his mind. That thought had his attention more than most.

The storm calmed and the waters stilled. He put up the sail and sat down to think.

When his wish did arrive, would they know who it belonged to? Whoever helps dreams come true has to pay close attention or someone could get the wrong dream. Maybe, everyone was in charge of their own dreams! Had he always had the answer? He knew his name, but never remembered being named. Sarantos understood time, but never knew what day it was. He'd been lost, of that, he was quite sure. His memories he could see, but they no longer existed, just like the stars. What was he supposed to do with that information?

Sarantos fell into a fitful slumber.

He dreamed of a little boy who worked in a store helping his parents. His child's heart longed to explore and sing. He always had joy, but felt trapped in his small body and lacked the knowledge to make his dreams into reality. This boy seemed to have the same dream as Sarantos. Suddenly, the dream turned into a frightful nightmare when the boy wanted to write songs but couldn't find any paper to write the lyrics on, and so he began running around in a circle looking for anything to write on.

Sarantos moaned in his sleep.

The child's urge was increasing and the boy was panicking. He needed to release his thoughts into lyrics. Then a miracle happened. He spotted a paper napkin on the table and before he forgot his words the child began to write feverishly.

Sarantos awoke in an intense sweat. He shivered as the cool early morning air moved across his damp skin. What a horrible dream, but he was glad it ended well.

The idea of not being able to make music would be too much to hold in. He would burst! It was hard to visualize that anyone would not have the opportunity to express or share their voice. Unthinkable!

He was so very lucky on his boat to be singing with the moods of the sea and the sky. Although, he was never sure if he created their moods with his voice or their moods gave him a voice! It didn't matter as long as they experienced the beautiful majestic moment together.

Something always nagged at him, in the back of his mind, where thoughts never sit still for very long. He understood that his voice knew where it wanted to be, but Sarantos wasn't where he wanted to be. There was one disturbing thing about his predicament. He wasn't exactly sure of how to get to where he wanted to be. That would take some thought.

He sat up and started to sing about his dream:

“How can a napkin hold a song and to a little boy belong? His heart on paper he writes, a soul explored in many lights.”

His song was quickly interrupted as the sea started to sway and he spotted something floating toward his boat. Sarantos watched intently as the waves seemed to carry it closer and closer. It was a purple bottle that bopped up and down in the water and finally hit the side of his boat. Bending down carefully so he didn't rock it back out to sea, he grabbed the corked bottle and stood up.

“Well, what's this,” he asked out loud?

The bottle had a unique shape. It was quite round with a flat bottom and the neck looked twisted like a rope. The color was iridescent in shades of rich purples and when he moved the bottle, the colors changed like magic. When he turned it around and moved the bottle just right he could make out letters. They spelled *Inspiration*.

Well, he already had a boatload of inspiration, but he thought he would pop the cork and see what was inside. He looked in and pulled out a scroll. When he unrolled the page and looked at the top, it read; *Write your dream below the dotted line*..... Of course, he had nothing to write with, the irony of it made him chuckle.

Suddenly, huge waves were coming up over his boat and he held onto the paper and bottle for dear life. Something big was under the water rocking his little sailboat.

“Stop it,” Sarantos yelled.

The water settled and a big voice with a deep whisper replied, “Give me back my inspiration.”

Sarantos turned in a circle and couldn’t locate the direction of his mysterious visitor. The only thing in the sea besides him was a huge rock outcrop that protruded out of the water.

“Please show yourself to me.”

He had to rub his eyes several times in disbelief as a piece of the rock started to move. Like magic, a section of the rock appeared to come apart and there in the water was a giant creature with a huge bulbous head and small squinty eyes, but what was really cool were the eight arms coming out of the bottom of his head, where a neck should be.

“That’s my bottle of dreams you’ve taken and unless you’re a pirate please return it to me. I only showed myself because you had some manners, otherwise, I could have taken back my bottle without asking.”

Sarantos was too enamored to tell the creature he wasn’t a pirate, so he asked, “Wow, are you the magician from behind the clouds?”

“Heaven’s no, I’m Charity, but I’m most commonly known as an octopus. Please give me my bottle before the pirates show up and I’ll be on my way.”

“I’m not afraid of pirates. You may have eight arms but it appears you can’t write and the paper clearly said to write your dream below the dotted line. If you don’t mind, I think I’ll use this for my dream.”

“Now, you’ve hurt my feelings. I can use ink, in case you didn’t know.”

“Well, how did I hurt your feelings? You’re just a creature of the sea pretending to be a magician. Can you sing?”

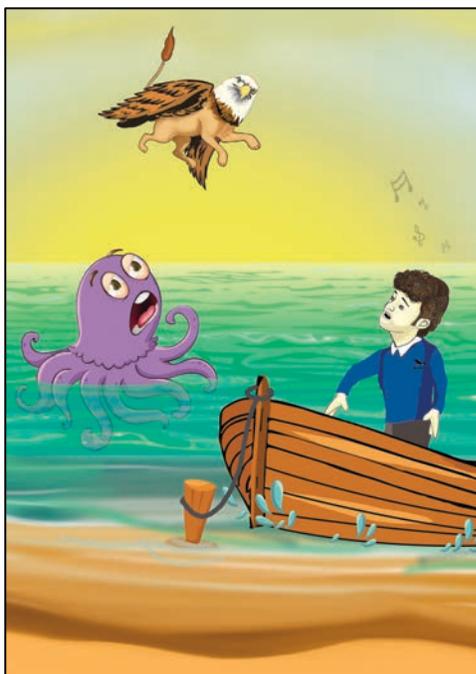
“I have three hearts and you’ve managed to hurt all of them. I also, have a great long-term memory and will remember how you’ve treated me. I may not be a magician, and never said, I was, but I’m the best illusionist in the world, although, I’m not a singer.”

“I suppose I’m sorry if I hurt your feelings, but I think I’m going to try and sing my dream on the scroll.”

“Do you think you could sing my dream below the dotted line, too? I dream of finding a family, but there appears to be no one here but me. In fact, you’re the first being I’ve encountered besides the pirates.”

“Sure, I’ll sing a dream for both of us!”

Sarantos started singing his dream. He sang of others rejoicing in his music and feeling the joy of his words. His voice rose and carried far over the sea. Then he noticed his dream was starting to come true. Charity was dancing, splashing her arms to the rhythm of the song and even joined in and started humming the tune. He was glad to see such joy on her face. He tried hard to sing of her family and help her dreams come true. But the paper wasn’t changing and no words were being written.



Suddenly, something flew out of the sky and landed on the rock causing a vibration that sent Charity’s eight legs flailing about in fear, until she blew ink all over the paper, the sail, the boat, and Sarantos. He continued singing.

A giant bird as large as a person sat on the adjacent rocks and watched in silence.

Charity was astonished and stared back at the bird. It had the wings and head of an eagle. It had the body, back, legs, and tail of a lion. When she realized he wasn’t a threat, she continued humming and dancing and then sang about her own dream.

Sarantos was grinning from ear to ear. The ink turned his voice into words upon the page. He sang of memories and pirates and soon the sail, the boat and his clothes all had lyrics upon them. He was elated and when he finally stopped, he stared in awe of Charity. She had given him a gift that allowed him to see his words written, and they were beautiful. His music had combined with Charity's ink and it produced magic words that made him smile. It was perfect, just like he'd hoped.

"Charity, look at my boat and the paper, we've changed the landscape of music!"

"Well done," squawked the giant bird.

"Thank you," replied Sarantos.

"I'm sorry if I frightened you, but I heard your music and felt your danger. Since you're travelers, I needed to warn you of the approaching pirate ship."

"I'm not afraid of pirates," said Sarantos.

"Me either," added Charity.

"You should be afraid. They are pirates without a conscience and will steal your dreams and capture your true self aboard their pirate ship. Many a traveler didn't heed my warnings. Be wary of the great Captain Fear and his crew of pirates that have the power to convince you that your dreams are folly, or before you know it you'll be aboard their ship swabbing decks and believing that's what you were sailing around waiting to do. The Captain gave up his dream a long time ago and now he steals other's dreams. Rumors say they are kept down in Fear's locker. You know what they say, misery loves company," as he finished his wings lifted slightly.

"Hum, well that's a scary thought, isn't it Charity?"

"Yes, and I have heard of him doing that from some passing doves that stop to have a chat once in a while. Maybe that's why I never see anyone on the sea floating free. It seems with Captain Fear stealing our dreams that there are not many of us left on the open waters."

Sarantos's eyebrows wrinkled, "We should find others and save them from the pirates." He looked at the bird, "What creature are you? I've never seen anything as interesting as you until now."

"And you never will again, because there is only one me. I'm what humans call a Griffon, but my real name is Hope. I already knew both of your names before I arrived. It's my business to assist travelers," he said in a high voice as his tail twitched from side to side and those intelligent looking beady eyes opened and closed.

Sarantos stared at the Griffon in fascination and said, "I really like your name and appreciate you helping us out, but we don't have any treasure. That's why the pirates won't be interested in us and now that we know he steals dreams, we'll keep them to ourselves. Right Charity?"

Charity looked a little sad and said, "I'm not sure that will work, Sarantos."

"Charity is right. Look at what you have in your hand. It's a bottle of dreams. Sarantos, that is the most prized treasure of all, especially by pirates that have misplaced their own dreams and ambitions. Without dreams there is no hope and that's why I've come to find you and your ship. I will carry your bottle of dreams and place them amongst the most prized possessions in the universe. There they will be safe until you learn how to use them. Then it will be like a portal opened to a magical realm and once that opens you'll understand how to make more dreams."

"Will mine be protected, too," asked Charity?

"It'll be my honor. We must hurry though. I think the pirates spotted me and even though it's not evening, the darkness follows them and will surely shorten the day."

Charity's giant head turned quickly and Sarantos followed her gaze. It appeared that a storm was brewing off to the north. Several clouds were thick with blackness and a dark mist gathered below them all the way to the sea. The waves were high and the sea slowly turned a dirty grey and then went black.

Hope began to squawk, "Over yonder, they come. The pirate with one eye."

The winds picked up and the mass of darkness moved toward them at a rapid speed. Sarantos quickly folded up the dreams and put them in the bottle. The dark

looming galleon created waves that caused the sailboat to thrash around wildly, but he steadied his hand and managed to put the cork back into the bottle. When he looked up, the ship was now visible.

The ship was ominous and unnerved Sarantos. He watched as the huge sail whipped around in the cutting wind. It sent shivers down his neck and deep into his spine. He almost fell overboard when the pirate galleon turned and the sail was in plain view. There was a massive eye looking at him in defiant mockery. The eye surely had a spell on it, because it moved from side to side and kept returning to stare directly down at him. He pulled his own eyes away and that's when he saw the eerie bold letters printed above the eye: FEAR.

Charity moved behind his little sailboat when the deck came into view and as the mist cleared, Sarantos could see the captain leading his crew. He wore the typical pirate's hat a captain would wear, but there was nothing typical about him. He was a terrifying giant. The moon outlined his horrible expression and there it was in the middle of his forehead, his one eye. It shifted left to right like a ping-pong ball being hit about, but it stopped quickly and looked right at Sarantos. Peering into that horrible eye caused his legs to become abruptly weak and he almost toppled over into the water, but Charity raised a tentacle to balance him upright.



Hope screeched and flew at Sarantos grabbing the bottle from his grasp. His long talons held it firmly and then he took flight.

“Thank you,” Sarantos hollered to the Griffon.

He watched as Hope quickly gained altitude and distance and flew up into the sky.

Captain Fear raised his voice and screamed, “Shoot Hope from the sky, he carries the treasure.” He turned and cursed so loud the sky rumbled, “ Blast that Griffon, he’s a menace to pirates. Shoot him, before he escapes.”

All Sarantos could do was watch as Hope moved in many different directions trying to avoid the dangerous cannon balls that were being thrown into the air with a catapult contraption that sat on the large deck of the ship. The cannon balls appeared lighter than normal and Sarantos thought they were probably specially made just for Hope. The captain started shooting his pistol, but by then Hope was out of range.

The Captain bellowed, “Follow that Griffon.”

He was so angry and forgot all about the little sailboat. By the time he remembered and swung his head around to look, the sailboat was floating into the distance. “Change course, change course, after that sailboat.”

When the ship had started chasing Hope, Charity had used her arms to pull the sailboat even further away from the mad pirate and his crew, but the pirate’s galleon was quick.

Soon the pirate ship was closing in and the two friends could once again make out the Captain and his crew. This time though Sarantos was stronger because the Griffon had given him hope to believe in his dreams and to not let them be stolen.

When the ship was close enough the giant pirate with one eye shouted, “No one escapes me. How dare you to even try?!”



“You don’t scare us,” Sarantos shouted from his little sailboat.

The Captain’s voice became seductively snake-like as he pointed to his cook, “I don’t want to scare you. I want to save you from your foolishness. You can see my cook has a face filled with happiness. It’s a pleasure for him to serve me and me mates.”

His laughter bellowed so loud that it shook the sea and moved his ship closer to the tiny boat of Sarantos.

“To think my cook wanted to open his own restaurant selling sushi to the ungrateful masses. Luckily we found him, because we appreciate his fine food, don’t we lads?”

They all replied with a hearty, “Aye, Aye Captain.”

Fear slapped the poor cook on the back so hard he knocked him overboard. The Captain and whole crew burst into laughter. A very wicked laughter.

“Well, shiver me whiskers, boys, he went overboard without walking the plank!”

The laughter increased and one pirate started passing out drinks to toast the flailing cook in the water.

Charity continually moved them away, with her arms wrapped around the little boat. She headed for the rocks.

Sarantos watched the man as he bobbed around in the water until a rope was finally thrown to him from the pirate ship. He could see a life preserver was attached. The man quickly grabbed on.

Then Charity said, “For a moment I thought about saving the dreamless man, but decided to pull us further away. He will have to find his own destiny. It was his choice and choice is always important. We learn from the right choices we make but the wrong ones teach us lessons, as well.”

Sarantos nodded his head and yelled, “Good luck making your own choices, dreamless man.”

The pirates started hauling the cook up to the deck of the ship.

“Charity, what if you never make your first dream come true and you’re lost at sea for most of your life. Does that mean other dreams you might have created are lost as well?”

“It’s possible, but I have lots of dreams. Some are larger than others. But, I don’t dare share them with you this close to the dream snatcher.”

“Why does Captain Fear have one eye? Are there many giants like him out on the sea?”

“I’ve never run across another pirate ship. Captain Fear is known as a Cyclops. Maybe, he lost his dream because he only has one eye to see from, and it’s possible that could have interfered with his view.”

Sarantos watched as they finally lifted the shivering cook onto the boat and replied, “I’m not really sure. Sometimes, I close my eyes and my dreams are still there, as clear as ever.”

While the pirates were laughing and carrying on, the brilliant octopus had moved the little boat next to the rock and she had wrapped the boat and Sarantos underneath her, until they ultimately disappeared from view.

The captain yelled, “Now let’s capture those two and add them to our dark and dreamless world.”

The second mate hollered, “Captain they’re gone. Blimey, they’ve plumb disappeared.”

“That’s not possible,” yelled the Cyclops as he scanned the sea. “No, no, no. How did they trick me? Why wasn’t someone watching? I wondered what all those words were on that little boat? Now, I may never know.”

The Captain blamed the cook and sent him below to cook continuously for seven days and seven nights.

Sarantos couldn’t believe his ears.

The Captain shouted, “Quickly they couldn’t have gotten far. Set sail and head north and be quick about it!”

Charity watched as the dreamless ship faded quickly from view. Then she came away from the rock and released the boat and Sarantos.

“Are you all right?”

“Yes, thank you, I’m fine and that was very quick thinking. You’re quite brilliant and a really good friend Charity.”

“Well, I want to help others and I thank you for singing my dream and teaching me how to sing and dance. Your music does that to me.”

“I’m still not where I wanna be. While, I know what I want to do, the where and how seem to evade me.”

“I don’t think you need to worry, because you love what you do and we might all get distracted from our dreams sometime, but I’ve been thinking we have to take action. I keep dreaming of a family, but now I must really go and search the open sea. When I find them, I’ll return and help see you safely to your dream, if you haven’t found it already.”

Sarantos felt sad to see his friend leave and suddenly realized that might be why the Captain captures dreams, because he can’t find his own and doesn’t want to be all alone. Sadly, it seemed Captain Fear had lost his own dreams forever and so, decided to create his own dream by stealing the dreams of others.

Sarantos was quite tired. It had been a very exciting day. He was worried about Captain Fear showing up again when he wouldn’t have the quick thinking octopus with him, as his friend would leave in the morning in search of her own dream.

His dreams were now filled with pirates and Captain Fear taking the purple bottle after he destroyed Hope. It was a long, restless night.

The morning was perfect with calm weather and a new boat covered with words. Sarantos started singing about his new friend and the ink would change to the words he sang.

“Good morning, my friend,” greeted Charity.

“Good morning,” Sarantos sang.

“I must leave now and look forward to us meeting again,” she reached out an arm and they shook hands, but Sarantos jumped on top of her head and gave her a warm hug.

“I’ll miss you, but good luck in finding your family.”

“Thank you. I won’t give up.”

And just like that she was gone. Determined to reach her dream.

Sarantos was in a sad mood and feeling rather lonely. He kept an eye out for the pirate ship and sang very quietly.

He had spent the day changing all the lyrics on his sail, his boat and his clothes. He noticed the words didn’t appear as dark as they used to. *Maybe the ink was fading?*

The day had dragged itself slowly into night.

The night was calm and full of stars, so he left his sail up for the evening and managed to tie his boat to the rock. Then he laid back and looked into the bright night where billions of stars were twinkling. He felt they were speaking when they sparkled, to anyone willing to listen. Tonight he didn’t wish on them to make his dreams come true. Instead he just stared and then he saw something utterly amazing. He saw what appeared to be a horse in the stars! So he sang quietly to it:

“Oh, horse dancing as a star, I wish you could come and carry me afar. To my dream, to my dream, to my wayward dream.”

He watched as he sang and the stars outlining the horse magically came together as one. Then like a flash, it disappeared and was gone. But something white moved across the evening sky and vanished behind the moon. Sarantos was patient and he kept a lookout for the flying object. It finally reappeared and quickly dove right toward him. It was coming in fast and as it got closer, he saw it was a white horse with wings. There were two female riders who looked to be nymphs. He’d heard stories in his memories about such beautiful creatures and now they were in front of him.

Sarantos stood up to meet his guest. He was glad he tied the boat to the rocks, because that’s where the magnificent beast landed. He was white with incredible muscles and wings that twinkled like the stars. His mane was long, thick and

glorious. He stood proud on the rocks, just like some of the wild horses Sarantos had seen in his mind's eye.

He spoke with a rich masculine voice, "You summoned me, friend of Pegasus."

"I did?"

"Yes you did. You wished me right out of the heavens with your verse. Although I was lucky to hear your voice, it was almost too weak. But, here I am and I'm a friend of the muses and lover of poetry."

"But, I was singing lyrics," Sarantos said with some surprise.

"Your lyrics are beautiful poetry. All verse is poetry when it carries the heart of the one who is writing it, saying it or singing it. That's why I've come. I stopped at the moon and brought my friends. They're muses and wanted very much to meet you."



Sarantos replied, "Hello, Pegasus and your muses."

"Oh, no they're not my muses they belong to no one and yet belong to everyone at the same time. This one with the long red hair is Aoido, she is the muse of song and tune. She can assist you. Mnemosyne is the name of the one with long dark hair, because memories are dark. She is the muse of memory."

Sarantos was overwhelmed with joy, "Thank you so much for listening to my song and feeling my heart's passion. I welcome you to my humble little boat. Did you come to carry me to my dream?"

The two muses giggled and Pegasus answered quite bluntly, "No."

"Sorry, I thought maybe..."

The muses jumped onto his sailboat and began looking over the words he'd written and when they'd finished they sat on the edge of the boat.

Mnemosyne spoke first with a soft and delicate sound, “You have a lot of good memories here. I enjoyed reading your story. There are so many memories that make up great poetry and verse. What I love is that you feel it so much that it lasts you many years. That’s powerful, because our memories make up who we are and tell our unique story. By the very nature of sharing, it becomes part of the listener. Oh, I love memories so much!”

She giggled and clapped her hands together, as Pegasus threw his head back and the lights danced across his wings.

The voice of Aoido was musical, “I feel your voice has weakened this past day, because your heart upon the ink is lacking. You see how it’s faded? That’s your voice and the tune is off. Be proud and never let obstacles interfere with your joy. Everything in life is a lesson and we must look inside to find the answers. Some people come to us only as advisors, so be advised but always follow your own heart. Some spirits get confused with mixing joy and discipline. You can have both. Sometimes the world is moving so fast it makes me dizzy. Your voice is pure and you have a spirit to share, so let go of your restrictions and proceed to accept yourself as your true self. Not what others want to see you as, that’s not their choice at all. I call them the Hungry souls, like Captain Fear. They can’t get enough of their own spirit because they lost the recipe, so now they want yours. The captain put some senseless fear into you. It was only a tiny obstacle, so release it in song.”

She quit talking and sat back down.

“I’m so glad you came and encouraged me with your voice and I will look to myself, but more importantly I will trust my own self, my own song.”

The muses smiled and both of them leaped upon Pegasus and they said in unison, “Now sing, Sarantos, sing.”

He stood proud and shouted, “Today my dream reached the stars!”

Sarantos started singing loud, about his dreams, every single one of them and the joy created colors on his sail. He sang of his friends, his loves, and the memories of his childhood. It all came flooding back and he knew where he wanted to be and how to get there.

As he sang the waves rippled and shifted and out of the water came another voice, his friend Charity. Next to her was another octopus.

She sang his name, “This is Oliver and that over there hiding in the rock is little Sarantos.”

A perfect small octopus came away from the rocks and said, “Hello, Sarantos.”

They all laughed and sang. Sarantos had touched his friend’s life with song. His song was life. He sang louder and clearer until a deep shadow appeared on the horizon. He understood the power was in him, so he sang and willed the sailboat toward the shadow.

“Whoever’s listening, please let it be my dream, because this is exactly where I wanna be!”

He didn’t know if anyone was listening, but he repeated it over and over again until him and his sailboat were spinning out of control.

“Bye Charity.”

She whispered, “Until we meet again, my friend.”

Then he saw a Phoenix appear right over his head and it died and was reborn as the ship spun wildly. He saw two sides of his face, one in the light and the other one hidden in the dark shadows. He embraced them and realized his spirit owned both reflections. He stopped spinning and stood alone in the dark. His boat was gone and he couldn’t find his shadow.

An incredible hum like that of a memory filled his head with enlightenment and a bright florescent building of violet hues grew quietly behind him. In it’s light he found his shadow waiting there ready to be reunited as one. He embraced it and felt the world listening.

A million lights finally gloriously revealed him standing center stage where he stood before a crowd of people. He was alive. His voice rose in harmony with the band. Sarantos had at long last found his true purpose in life.

Sarantos awoke in his bed with an answer to his dream created from a dream. A large smile made his jaw hurt and he said out loud to no one in particular, “Today, I turn thirty and I finally found my voice and now we’re both home. This is exactly where I wanna be!”