
Strange Dreams

Volume 4: Collected Stories
& Drawings of Brian Andreas



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The people in this book, if at one time real, are now entirely fictitious, having been subjected to a combination of a selective memory and a fertile imagination. Any resemblance to real people you might know, even if they are the author's relatives, is entirely coincidental, and is a reminder that you are imagining the incidents in this book as much as the author is.

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*To my parents & grandparents, who gave me from an early age
a world filled with wonder & possibility & love*

*& to my sons, David Quinn & Matthew Shea, for the joy of
melting ice cream cones & catching fireflies on warm summer
nights & always to Ellen Rockne, my friend & my love,
with thanks for her grace & strength & willingness to follow
wherever her heart sings*

Other books by Brian Andreas available
from StoryPeople Press:

Mostly True

Still Mostly True

Going Somewhere Soon

Hearing Voices

Trusting Soul

Traveling Light

Some Kind of Ride

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Strange Dreams

Introduction

In the three short years since I began, StoryPeople have gone from my small studio in Berkeley to the homes of collectors all over the world. The highest compliments still come in the form of letters, with many of you writing of how you found your story, how you **knew** it was yours. In those letters so many of you wonder where StoryPeople came from. I think it somehow appropriate to try & answer that question in this book, *Strange Dreams*.

Where did StoryPeople come from? Like pearls on a necklace, I can pick out important points that lead one into the next. I started out as a playwright, later abandoning theatre like everybody else who moves to L.A.. But that sense of a world filled with characters never left me, no matter how much the heat shimmered off the Hollywood Hills. After that, I carved marble, slowing down & listening to the stone tell me what it needed. In that slowing down, I learned the dialogue that is at the center of art & life. There are no clear & final answers, there are only discussions & thoughts & silent wonder filling each moment.

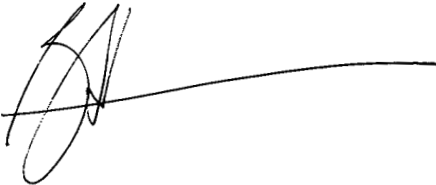
Those are some of the places StoryPeople came from. There are others, too. Ellen telling me we needed more color in our house. Raising children, laughing & yelling & wondering how to teach them about the world we each knew. The time constraint children bring with them; instead of weeks to complete a piece, now I had an hour a day. I started writing on restaurant napkins, in between mopping up spilled water & the ketchup-covered faces of the boys.

Those are all reasons, yet none of them are the **real** reasons for StoryPeople. I like to tweak people. I like to play. I like to laugh. I like to speak in accents of people from far-off, vaguely recognizable places. I like to walk in the mud & let the rain run down my back. I like to walk up slowly to cats & then bark so loud I scare them silly. I like to speak to the dead. I like to squish all of my family together in a big chair & watch videos & pick out the popcorn kernels with the most butter on them before Ellen gets to them. I like to dream up advertising promotions for new religions. I like to stare into the fire & listen to the shadows whisper their secrets. I like to stand up in public places & ask people why we can't do things another way. I like to act as if I know everything on certain days. On other days, I admit to knowing nothing. I like to remember that this is only one life & I'll probably look back at the end & say "O, that's what I was doing". I like to take time to listen to my heart, because it hasn't led me astray yet.

Where did StoryPeople come from? I have to admit I don't know. I like to think they were always here. I noticed them enough to remark on them, but they were here before me. They might have been here before all of us. Certainly, for me, it's hard to imagine a world without them.

In the end, I don't know if this helps you with the facts. I'm not very good with facts. I only know what's true...

With love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'B' followed by a long horizontal line that tapers to the right.

Brian Andreas
17 September 1996

It was a strange
dream, she said

& I don't
remember a thing
except it kept
my attention the
whole time.

The top of his head was open up to the sky & when he walked down the street he'd end up with strange things in there like the number of dogs in China, or the time it takes to cook a pig.

It's not really useful, he said, but I'd miss this stuff if it ever closed up.



he tried hard
to tell the truth
but it wasn't
always that
obvious, so
usually he

just said the first thing that
came to mind

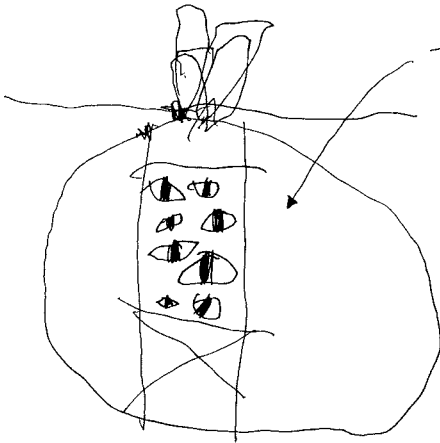
My sister read somewhere once that if you
look into your own eyes long enough

in a mirror you
change into the
Devil



& it took her almost thirty
years, but she finally did it.

She said you know what
heaven is like? & I said
I wasn't sure & she laughed
& said grownups didn't
know much at all about
important stuff & I said
I had to agree with her
even though I was one of
them myself.



this is a bag full of eyes
that stopped seeing the
amazing stuff a long
time ago, so he's
hoping to unload
them cheap