

# Movies, Fairy Tales, and the Psi Dreaming Contest

Starring: Sherry Puricelli



Sometimes life feels like a movie or fairy tale. If you'll forgive the mixed metaphor, this year's Psi Dreaming Contest fits that playbill. And since I was cast in the role of telepathy sender, I had a front-row seat.

**Casting Call:** Ed Kellogg contacted me asking if I'd be the sender for IASD's psi dreaming contest. Directing the event would be Dale Graff of "Men Who Stare at Goats" fame, assisted by Cynnie Pearson, widely recognized host of IASD's PsiberDreaming Precognitive Dreaming contests.

**Setting the Stage:** Dale Graff takes center stage, describing the Psi Dreaming process. There are four sealed envelopes. Nobody here knows the images inside. Next up, Cynnie offers words of encouragement. When I'm introduced I tell the audience how I will be sending the image.

Then, Dale calls Rita Dwyer to the stage. Rita is here? Unfortunately, Rita has suffered from health issues. While everyone at IASD misses her, we understand Rita needs to focus on healing, so imagine our surprise when she walked in!

Many of you know Rita but in case you don't, over the years, Rita has selflessly shared her dramatic story of a dream that saved her life—literally!



Cynnie passes envelopes to Rita

**The Story Behind the Story:** In 1959, Rita was developing rocket fuel for the US Space Program when suddenly, an explosion set Rita and her lab on fire. Rita screamed for help but none arrived—that is, until her friend and colleague raced into the lab, finding her amidst smoke and flames, and pulled her to safety. This friend, Ed Butler, had experienced a recurring dream in which he'd rehearsed specifically how he would rescue Rita.

Becoming a believer and advocate for psi dreams, Rita formed one of the first and longest standing dream groups. She later took on the role of IASD's informal greeter, with a knack for remembering names and helping everyone feel welcome. She also demonstrated uncanny psi abilities in her own right.



Sherry holds target image envelope.

**On Stage:** After introducing Rita, Dale asked Cynnie to shuffle the four envelopes, and Rita to shuffle them again. Then, with much fanfare, I pulled one sealed envelope from Rita's hand, waving it over my head.

**In my Room:** Before opening the envelope, I was startled when the ocean-facing door suddenly burst open. I looked but didn't see anyone. No other door in my room had been opened or closed. It appeared the door was pulled open from the outside.

After securing the door, I meditated, grounded, and protected the space for clear sending. Then I opened the envelope.

## The Target Image:

I couldn't believe my eyes! The first thing I saw was a wall of fire raining



L – R: Sherry Puricelli, Dale Graff,  
Bobbie Pimm, Rita Dwyer

down behind three characters being chased by a fire-breathing dragon! I couldn't help myself. Instantly, I felt fear! It was a movie poster for Shrek, which I'd seen and loved years earlier. Yet now, imagining myself in the scene, the image felt threatening and dangerous.

I'd been told we don't send frightening images since participants don't want nightmares. I looked again to be sure I hadn't been dreaming. Yes, still three characters running from a large fire-breathing dragon.

**The Scene:** I recognized this scene from the movie. It was the rescue scene. Shrek, dressed as a knight, had just rescued Princess Fiona and his side-kick, Donkey, from the clutches of a female dragon. Involuntarily, I couldn't help thinking of Rita Dwyer. A few years earlier, she had told me over the phone how she'd always thought of Ed Butler as a knight in shining armor. He had been her rescuer. In fact, the very first time I had met Rita, she'd been in the chapel of Rolduc Abbey in Kerkrade, Netherlands, lighting a candle in memory of Ed's passing.

**Preparing to Send the Target Image:** I stepped away for a moment, wondering how I could do this without frightening dreamers. How could I send this image with the accompanying emotions and senses without eliciting fear? And then there's Rita. I'm familiar with her psi abilities. Did you know Rita Dwyer has single-handedly won more psi contests than any other individual in the history of IASD psi contests? That's what I've been told.

I had a dilemma. I'd agreed to send an image, which, if received, could trigger someone's personal nightmare. How could I be honest and true to the target, yet do so in a manner pleasant for all dreamers?

I thought about the movie and characters. In my opinion, Shrek is one of the greatest love stories ever written, especially for dreamers. Princess Fiona was not a typical fairy tale princess. By day, a feisty red-haired princess, by night she became an ogress. Her curse could only be broken "*by true love's first kiss*," at which point Fiona would "*take love's true form*." Shrek, an ogre full-time, had isolated himself. Donkey was a comical side-kick seeking friendship. In hindsight, the one character I didn't even consider was the dragon.

The ogress part of Fiona reminded me of the aspects we don't readily show others, the parts we see at night in our dreams. In my personal version of the story, Fiona accepted and integrated those parts because, when kissed by Shrek, she was transformed—but into the Ogress! In the end, both Fiona and Shrek came out of hiding and isolation, revealing themselves, with all of their flaws, while simultaneously appreciating imperfections in each other and the villagers. Even Donkey and the female dragon fell in love. So for me, it's a remarkable story about transcendent love.

I revisited the image, focusing on the smiles of the characters, thinking to myself, I would be smiling if I'd escaped. I'd feel free.



**Sending the Target Image:** So I play-acted, a broad smile across my face, looking to each side, noting three of us, thinking (and sending) "we've escaped, can't be caught, can't be stopped." I ran and ran, and then I "ran" in slow-motion, emphasizing each movement so dreamers could see the scene frame by frame. One at a time, I introduced an emotion or sense. I *felt* the exhilaration of having escaped, *felt* the wind on my face, in my hair, *felt* slight warmth at my back, *saw* my friends running alongside me (I didn't look back), *heard* our labored breathing, our footfalls on stones, a whoosh of fire, I *smelled* sweat and fire/smoke, *tasted* acrid fire-tinged air.

After play-acting, I drew a rudimentary picture of the image so dreamers could see colors and structural components, especially the smiling faces. I also woke several times during the night, revisited the image, sending it to dreamers with feelings and themes of "transcendent love," "coming out of hiding," and "self-acceptance."

My dreams seemed nondescript except the song, “Everybody Has a Dark Side,” which kept repeating in my dreams. The song captured my emotional associations to the movie.

You can google the full lyrics but, for me, the standout lyrics were:

*Everybody's got a dark side  
Do you love me?  
Can you love mine?  
Nobody's a picture perfect  
But we're worth it  
You know that we're worth it  
Will you love me?  
Even with my dark side?  
Don't run away  
Don't run away*

I'm describing my thoughts, preparation, and experiences now so you may revisit your dreams and possibly discover additional personal connections and hits.

**Looking Back:** I was blown away by the dream reports mentioning fire, chase scenes, castles, and movies, among others. Drawings depicted strong structural connections.

Some dreamers even picked up on happenings inside my room that evening. Similar to my door opening itself, some dreamers heard knocking on doors, banging, etc.

I continue to feel awed by the events that transpired and wonder if the archetypal story chose us? Several events, each extraordinary, combined in such a manner to give me pause.

Ed Kellogg, vigilant about only allowing “pleasant” images, somehow selected an image with fire showering toward the backs of protagonists. Rita Dwyer, against the odds, showed up at the conference, was the last person (before me) to hold the target image in her hands. And the story in Shrek strongly resembles Rita’s personal story, rescue, even coming out of potential hiding to share her story and her love with all of IASD and the world. In addition, Rita’s dream report had detailed her yelling out in fear and being subsequently rescued.

When the time came to select contest winners, like last year we had two types of winners: we’d crown Pat Higgins, “General Contest Winner,” and also crown Rita in the “Special Honorable Mention” category, but we learned she’d already gone home. I was asked to step in for Rita so she could be crowned in absentia.

Adding even more to the fairy-tale vibe, I’d brought a red wig to wear to the dream ball, so when Rita/I was crowned, she/I bore a slight resemblance to Shrek’s Princess Fiona. Suffice it to say, life really can be stranger than a fairy tale, especially for dreamers.

**Sherry Puricelli, MHA, M.Div.**, was the designated sender for IASD’s 2015 Psi Dreaming Contest in Virginia Beach, VA.

Dream coach, archetypal retreat facilitator, and owner of *AwakeNDream, LLC*, Sherry frequently facilitates psi practices along with empowerment coaching, embodiment, and ceremony. She is IASD’s Regional Representative for Connecticut.



**Sherry, in costume, reveals the target image at the Dream Ball.**