

The Psychiatrist and the Universe of Ice Cream

Source: [Outside the Reality Machine](#)

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John Doe, citizen, went to his therapist's office for his regular Wednesday appointment.

The therapist sat back in his swivel chair and stared at John.

"You look terrible," he said. "What happened?"

John nodded, wiped his forehead with a handkerchief, and said, "I had a dream last night and it shook me up. I don't even like remembering it."

"A dream?" the therapist said. "That's good. Tell me about it."

"Well, I was on a game show, and the host was this horrible man. I mean, he was very nice, but it was what he did...after I answered all the questions correctly. He said I should choose a door, and behind it there would be a prize. So I glanced behind him, and all of a sudden the walls of the studio were all doors. I don't know how many. And every door had the same sign on it. IMAGINATION."

The therapist leaned forward and let out a groan.

"My God," he said. "That IS horrible. What did you do?"

"Do? What could I do? I was paralyzed. I couldn't move a finger."

"Yes, well," the therapist said, "I can understand that. Look, this calls for medication. We have to take drastic action. I'm going to write you a prescription for Theragon."

"What's that?" John said.

"It's experimental," the therapist said. "First of all, it returns your mind to a completely normal state. I've had very good luck with it. And then, within a day or two, it adjusts your cosmological impulse."

"Say again?" John said. "Cosmological?"

"Yes. It goes after your synapses and opens them up. We don't entirely understand this part of the process, but essentially, it puts your brain in touch with every other brain on the planet. And then your brain adopts whatever the average is."

"The average of what?" John said.

"Of what all other brains believe about reality itself."

"And that'll help?"

"Of course! You'll automatically click into a state of very comfortable knowing. And, best of all, you'll never face that stark choice again."

"The choice of doors in the dream."

"Correct."

"I'll never have to..."

"You won't," the therapist said. "You won't even think about that. It won't show up on your radar."

John Doe nodded.

"It sounds wonderful," he said.

"Yes," therapist said. "Once the drug is approved for wide

use, we're going to push for universal use. We want it placed in all water supplies."

On the fourth day after he started the drug. John was sitting in a little cafe near the office where he worked. He was eating a turkey sandwich. Suddenly, he felt as if he'd just slipped into a bath of warm water. He looked around the restaurant. A waitress was standing near the coffee machine. She looked at him and smiled, walked over to his table and put down a dish of vanilla ice cream with a cherry on the top. The scoop of ice cream rested in a bed of chocolate and lemon sprinkles.

"Thanks!" John said. "I was just thinking of ordering that for dessert."

"I know," the waitress said. "Welcome to the club."

"The club of what?"

"Of the Universe."

John looked down at his dish of ice cream...and it was everything he wanted.

Minus his own imagination.

And that was the best part. Never again would he need to imagine his own future and strive to fulfill it.

A voice in his head said, "You're home."

And he was. Home in the home of home.

"You're so small," the waitress said.

"Yes," he said, "it's wonderful."

He felt himself shrinking, and the ice cream in the dish was growing. It was a hill, a mountain, a range of mountains, something big, something bigger than he could fathom.

He was there with it, and it was there with him. A universe.

The waitress was small, too.

"I'm in love with you," he said.

"And I'm in love with you," she said. "We're all in love with each other."