

Dreams, Omens and Superstitions



by Blair Gorman

Dreams

EACH ONE of us leads a double life. There is the ordinary work-a-day life of our waking hours and, beyond that, the mysterious dream life which we enter through Gates of Ivory or Gates of Horn. This is a charming fancy of the ancient Greeks who believed that dreams which delude pass through the Ivory Gate and those which come true through the Gate of Horn.

While all people dream during sleep, not all dream activities come into our consciousness, so that frequently there is no remembrance of a dream on waking. Occasionally, however, a dream is so clear and vivid that its memory lingers for years. It is no wonder, then, that ancient peoples attached great importance to the significance of dreams and believed them to be direct messages from their gods. The old dream interpreters were very particular and refused to consider the dream of anyone who had been drinking heavily the night before, because only to the temperate did the gods reveal their secrets.

History and literature abound in references to dreams. Those of Joseph, Daniel, David and the Wise Men as related in the Bible are familiar to us all. Because of the general belief that dreams were an indication of what was going to happen, a vast amount of material has grown up on this subject. Probably the oldest Dream Book is the brick one, which was kept in the library at Ninevah, and which was consulted regularly by the soothsayers of that time.

There are certain general rules for interpreting dreams. In order to have any real significance they must, according to general belief, occur during a healthy, tranquil sleep. Never take seriously dreams of suffocation, drowning, falling from a great height, or others of a similar nature. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred these dreams result from physical causes and are not at all prophetic. Sometimes dreams are a mere jumble of impressions. This does not necessarily mean that they have no meaning. Such nonsense dreams often contain valuable clues.

You may ask how you can study your dreams, when they are so soon forgotten. The best way to do so is to keep a piece of paper and a pencil at your bedside, and jot down your impressions as soon as you awaken. It will be amusing to work out the symbolism at your leisure, and who can tell, you may find something really valuable in them. Not all of us are so fortunate as to find the answers to our questions during sleep, but it is said that Benjamin Franklin often did so. Coleridge was another of these lucky persons. He composed two or three hundred lines of his poem Kubla Khan while asleep in his chair and, on waking, instantly committed them to paper. The dreams of Homer were held in such esteem that they were styled Golden Dreams, and, says one writer, "Among the Grecians we find a whole country using no other information but going to sleep."

There are to be found in all parts of the world many and varied superstitions relating to dreams. The maidens of old went to great lengths to dream of their lovers. In one book the procedure is described as follows: "Writing their name on a paper at 12 o'clock, burning the same, then carefully gathering up the ashes and laying them, close wrapp'd in paper upon a looking-glass marked with a cross, under their pillow; this should make them dream of their love." Further on we read that, "If you would wish to be revenged on a lover by tormenting him with hideous dreams, take a bird's heart and at 12 o'clock at night stick it full of pins, and a semblance of him wilt appear before you in great agony."

Dictionary of Dreams

Absent Persona - Seeing absent persons denotes their speedy return and a joyful reunion.

Abandoned - To be deserted by your friends shows you have their affection and love. If you abandon someone else, it is a sign of disappointment.

Abroad - To be abroad shows success in your undertakings.

Abyss - To fall into one denotes the loss of your lover or that you will be deserted by your friends.

Accident - Seeing one, passing worries. To be in one, slow but eventual success in your enterprise.

Admirer - You will realize your wishes.

Altar - Happiness. A speedy marriage to the one you love.

Anchor - Hope and influential friends.

Angel - Good news and a voyage.

Anger – Beware of powerful enemies.

Animals - Domestic animals are a sign of return of absent friend, and family happiness. Wild animals, secret enemies.

Automobile - Seeing one, a visit from a friend. Riding in one, a journey.

Baby - To hold one, true love. To rock one, embarrassment.

Bacon - To eat bacon, triumph over enemies.

Balcony - Bad luck.

Balloon - To go up in one, unexpected fortune. To see one, a message from home.

Band of Music - Money.

Bank - If you are depositing, beware of loss. If you are drawing money, disappointment.

Barber - Trouble. If you are being shaved by one, a long journey.

Bath - If the bath is either too hot or too cold, trouble in the family. Moderate temperature, pleasure and wealth.

Bear - To be attacked by one, persecution by some enemy. If it runs away, success.

Beard - For a man to dream he has a long beard denotes good fortune. If in trade he will thrive; if in love he will marry the object of his affections.

Bed - To see a strange bed, trouble. To sleep in a bed, good luck.

Bees - Success, but if stung by them, failure.

Beggar - Always a good sign, especially to lovers and businessmen. To give alms, unexpected present. To be a beggar, good health.

Boil - To hear a church bell ringing alarm or a quarrel. A dinner bell means a feast or a wedding.

Beach - Standing on one, comfort. Sitting on one, "take care you have a rival"

Betting - Losses and disappointment.

Bereavement - Visit from a friend or relative.

Birds - Seeing them or hearing them sing, pleasure and profit. If they are quarreling, a great change in your life. If you dream of birds three times in succession, you will fall heir to a fortune within the year.

Birthday Presents - To receive them, poverty. To give them, a pleasant surprise.

Bleeding - Loss of goods and of character.

Blind - To dream that you are blind is generally a lucky sign. To lead the blind means success in love.

Blood - To see it, great riches, a faithful lover. To lose it, disappointment and loss.

Boat - Arrival of a friend. To row a boat, inheritance of money. To see one founder, danger or illness.

Books - Reading a good one, pleasure and honors. Reading a bad one, disgrace. To give a book, victory over an enemy.

Bottles - Full, pleasure. Empty, sickness. Broken, sadness.

Bread - Eating it, profit in business. White bread means friendship; brown or black, poverty.

Bucks - A happy marriage and prosperity.

Bridge - Crossing one, success and prosperity. Passing under one, trouble. Falling from one, loss of business.

Brother or Sister - Dreaming of one that is dead, long life and prosperity.

Building - Illness, losses.

Burning - A sudden danger.

Business - Someone wishes to enter into partnership with you.

Cage - Danger. If empty, a marriage broken off.

Cake - Pleasure is in store. A family festivity.

Camel - Good luck.

Candles - If lighted, mean and happiness and prosperity.

Cards - Loss of money; a quarrel. To play cards, unnecessary expenditure.

Castle - Success. A happy event is in store.

Caller - Good health.

Cat - Perfidy.

Cemetery - Prosperity.

Check - Cashing one means loss of money.

Children - Pleasure. To punish a child, injustice.

Church - To see one, inheritance. To enter one, troubles.

Climbing - To climb a steep slope means many difficulties to be faced. If you reach the top you will overcome them.

Clock - Expect important matters in business.

Coal - Beware of enemies. To see coal burning means happiness and success.

Cooking - Look for a wedding soon!

Cross - Happiness, triumph.

Crowd - Importunity.

Crown - Elevation to some dignity.

Crows - Bad luck.

Crutches - To walk on them yourself means trouble. To see others using them, troubles for these persons.

Cyclone - A catastrophe.

Dancing - Success, gaiety.

Darkness - To be in the dark is unfavorable. To go from darkness to light means good tidings.

Deer - Disputes.

Dice - To play dice means that you will have ups and downs in life. If you win, fortune will favor you during the coming year.

Dirt - Sickness and dishonor.

Ditch - An obstacle.

Dog - Friendship. If barking, a good sign; if howling, look for bad news.

Doves - Success, pleasure. A happy event.

Drowning - To see another drown means joy after sorrow. To dream you are drowning, prosperity.

Drunkenness - Success.

Eagle - Success, prosperity.

Earthquake - Serious danger.

Eating - Danger.

Eggs - Good luck unless broken, when a quarrel is indicated.

Elephant - Certain victory.

Elopement - Sign of speedy marriage.

Enemies - If you dream of enemies be careful in whom you place your trust.

Engagement - Great pleasure in store.

Fall - To dream that you fall means trouble and losses. To fall into water, poverty and distress.

Family - To dream of a family is a sign of joy.

Father - To dream of him as living, great joy; dead, financial losses.

Fence - To climb a high fence signifies a sudden rise in life.

Fields - To be in green fields is a happy omen. Plowed fields foretell disputes, to the lover, disappointment.

Fig - Prosperity and happiness. Also indicates a legacy.

Fighting - To the lover this means loss of your loved one through a foolish quarrel.

Finger - If you dream you cut your finger and the blood flows your sweetheart will prove kind and true, and you will receive money from an unexpected source.

Fire - Small fire, pleasure. A large fire indicates some great festivity. To light a fire means that an important event will occur.

Fishing - Big fish, happiness; small ones, only limited success.

Flag - Floating, danger. To carry one, honor and success.

Flame - Triumph.

Flies - Rivals.

Flood - Slander.

Flowers - To see them, pleasure; to wear them, marriage; to pick them, good

health.

Flying - Great success.

Fountain - If the water is clear, riches and honors. If muddy, vexation.

Friend - If alive, pleasure; if dead, money trouble. To enjoy yourself with a friend, a quarrel.

Fruit - Pleasure and profit.

Funeral - Marriage. To be at your own funeral means notable success.

Gaiety - Sorrow.

Gambling - To lose is a good omen; to win is bad.

Garden - A pleasant surprise. If the garden is bare of flowers, a temporary lack of money.

Gifts - To receive them, means that something good is about to happen. To a lover, speedy marriage.

Glass - If full, a sentimental message; if empty, poverty. A broken glass foretells success.

Gloves - Putting them on, a pleasant trip; losing them, a blunder. Soiled gloves mean that you will suffer insult.

Gold - Loss of money.

Grasshopper - Losses.

Guitar - You will have a declaration of love. **Gull** - A safe journey. **Hair** - Separation. If the hair is white, honors will be yours. Blond hair means flattery.

Harp - Friendship.

Hat - Disillusionment.

Hay - Success in business.

Hearse - Festivities.

Hen - A black hen means that you will receive news; a white hen, good times. Several hens, scandal, gossip.

Hill - To climb hills or to travel over them signifies good fortune. Your name will be known to posterity.

Horse - A happy omen.

Horseshoe - A journey.

House - A sign of good fortune.

Hunger - Prosperity.

Hunting - Useless labor.

Ice - Danger.

Ice Cream - Profit from your undertakings.

Illness - Worry.

Ink - If the ink is black you will become involved in an unfortunate scheme. If ink is red, good news awaits you.

Iron - If hot, a risky undertaking.

Ivy - You have faithful friends.

Jail - If you see others in jail you will lose your liberty. If you are in jail you will be raised to a high station in life.

Jam - Quarrel.

Jewels - Look out for your money matters.

Journey - A risky venture.

Key - You will miss an appointment.

Kiss - Kissing a relative, beware of deception. Kissing a stranger, a journey.

Kitchen - Profit from your enterprises.

Knife - Quarrel and separation.

Knot - Difficulties ahead!

Ladder - To climb one, success; to descend one, trouble.

Lake - If the water is clear, friendship; if muddy, quarrels.

Lamp - If lit your course is clear; if not, difficulties are ahead.

Laughing - Change of circumstances and friends.

Legacy - Loss of money.

Letter - Visit from a friend. Good news.

Light - To see light is a happy omen. Honor and riches are in store. Success in love.

Lightning - Love quarrels.

Linen - If clean, a legacy; soiled, illness.

Lion - A new friend.

Liquor - Riches.

Locomotive - Unpleasant journey.

Love - To dream you are in love shows that you are not susceptible. If you dream of another loving you, you will go through life alone, unsought.

Man - A girl dreaming of a man, gossip.

Map - A long journey.

Marriage - To dream you are married is unfortunate. To be present at a wedding foretells pleasant news.

Matches - Riches.

Milk - To drink it, happiness; to spill it, your plans will not succeed.

Mirror - Gallantry.

Money - To find it, good luck. To see a large amount, treachery.

Moon - Success in love. Full moon, delay.

Mother - Joy and happiness.

Mountain - Ascending a mountain, success and riches. To descend, the reverse. Loss of a loan.

Moving - To dream of moving means beware of thieves.

Mud - A happy future. To be muddied means worry.

Mule - Business difficulties.

Music - A happy omen. Good news from an absent friend.

Nails - Unexpected news.

Naked - To be naked, poverty.

Needles - To see them, annoyances.

Neighbors - Beware of gossip.

Nest - To see one, profit. To see a full one is an omen of good luck.

Newspaper - Treason and slander.

Noise - A quarrel.

Nose - A big nose is good luck. A long nose, increase in the family. A short nose, poverty.

Nun - Inheritance.

Nuts - Riches and happiness. If you crack them, however, your love will be unfaithful.

Ocean - Dreaming of swimming in it, is unlucky. If you are on it, beware of

deceitful friends.

Olives - Very lucky; honors and success, peace.

Orchard – Riches, a happy marriage.

Organ - Hearing it played, good luck; playing it yourself, disappointment.

Oven - A change. You may become notorious.

Owl - Sickness or poverty. Caution is needed.

Oyster - Easy profit

Pain - To be in pain, better luck.

Palace - Trouble.

Palm Tree - Good luck.

Paper - Good omen. If creased, pain.

Park - Happiness.

Parrot - Gossip. Indiscretion.

Peaches - Expect pleasure.

Pearls – Worry, hard times, disillusionment.

Peas - If green, happiness; if dry, marriage.

Perfume - Great success.

Pies - To make them, joy and profit.

Pins - Quarrels.

Pipe - Pleasure. If broken, a quarrel.

Pit - If you fall into one, disappointment in love. To be in one and climb out, you will overcome your difficulties.

Policeman - Trouble or dishonor.

Pool - Gazing into a clear pool means true friendship. If muddy, quarrels.

Prayers - Happiness.

Precipice - Danger.

Present - To receive one means trouble with someone of the opposite sex.

Prison - To be in prison indicates good luck; to escape, success in your undertaking.

Purchases - To dream you are buying means you will receive money.

Purse - If empty, prosperity, well filled, good fortune.

Puzzle - If you dream that you are puzzled, someone is about to confer a great favor upon you.

Quarrel - To quarrel with someone indicates unfavorable news.

Rabbit - White, friendship; black, reverses.

Racing – To run a race foretells success in life and joyful news. To ride in a race, on the other hand, means disappointment and anger.

Railway - A journey.

Rain - Inheritance. A fine rain means worry.

Rainbow - Change of fortune and travel, also unexpected good news.

Rats - Beware of enemies.

Reading - To read an entertaining book, success in love and riches.

Reconciliation - You will receive a valuable gift from a loved one.

Removal - Change of employment

Ring - Wearing a ring, success; receiving one, marriage.

River - If clear and smooth, happiness and good fortune; if muddy, sorrow.

Road - A broad road, happiness; narrow one, deceit.

Rocks - To see them, losses; to climb them, success.

Roses – Happiness and good fortune if received.

Running - To dream you are running means worry; if others are running, bad news.

Safe - Cares.

Sailing - Change of residence.

Salt - A very good omen unless upset when it means sorrow.

Sand - Disappointment.

Scandal - Unexpected legacy from a relative.

School - If a grown up dreams of going to school, expect a great change.

Scissors - Quarrels.

Separation - Much enjoyment from an unexpected source.

Shaving - Loss of money.

Sheep - A good omen.

Ship - A successful journey.

Shoes - Quarrels.

Singing - To hear yourself sing, sorrow; to hear others sing, pleasure.

Skating - Easy gain.

Smoke - Failure.

Snakes - Trouble or sickness.

Snow - Success, money.

Soldiers - Troubles or lawsuits.

Spider – Lawsuit.

Stairs - To climb stairs, success; to fall down, grief.

Stars – Generally happiness and good news. If hidden by clouds, misfortune.

Stockings – Money.

Storm – Danger.

Stove – Good news.

Strange place - A legacy.

Straw - In stacks, wealth; in sheaves, economy.

Sun - Honor and wealth. If hidden, struggles. A red sun, discord.

Surprise - Good luck; success in business.

Swallow - Approaching, family happiness, good news; leaving, unhappiness.

Swimming - Success. You will meet someone you have not seen for a long time.

Table - To set one, prosperity.

Tea – Worry.

Tear - To tear a garment, passing bother.

Tears - Happiness.

Teeth - To lose one, loss of a friend or disappointment in love. Seeing white teeth, great joy in store.

Telegram - A surprise.

Theatre – To be in one, indicates that you will soon change your residence.

Thread—Beware of intrigues.

Thunderstorm - Danger threatening

Toothache - You will receive an offer that will be advantageous to you.

Traveling – Unexpected good fortune.

Treasure - Disappointment.

Trees - If in foliage, you will get your wish.

Tunnel - A laborious undertaking.

Umbrella - Inside out, coming change; lost, abandonment.

Uncle - An inheritance.

Undertaker - A wedding.

Uniform - Adventure.

Veil - If white, sorrow; if black, disappointment. For an unmarried person, marriage.

Vexation – You will acquire some property and your place in life improved.

Vines - Health and wealth.

Violet - Happiness.

Violin -Happiness in love.

Visit - Paid, injustice; received, flattery.

Volcano - Peace and contentment.

Voyage - Success in business.

Walking – If alone, sadness; walking fast, you will be ultimately successful; walking with a companion, you will enjoy true friendship.

Wall – Trouble, obstacles to your plans; to climb over one, joy and happiness.

Watch - Money.

Wedding - To attend one, disappointment; to dream of your own is a good omen.

Weeping - Pleasure, good news.

Well - To see one, good luck; to fall into one, danger.

Wheels - Inheritance.

Window - Generally unlucky. To fall out, an unsuccessful lawsuit; to see them broken, sickness; to see them shut, disappointment.

Wine - To see or drink it, profit; to spill it, bad luck.

Wings - To have them, improvement in position.

Woman - To see one, bad luck; to see many, gossip. To see a blond woman, devoted love.

Work - Good luck if you are doing it yourself.

Writing - You will have pleasant news.

Yarn - A handsome present.

Zebra - A change in your mode of life.

Zodiac - You will be a great traveler.

Signs, Omens and Superstitions

IN THE LIGHT of our superior knowledge we may regard with amusement the quaint superstitions of our ancestors. The fact remains, however, that many intelligent people, today, refuse to sit thirteen at a table, decline to walk under a ladder, carefully throw salt over their left shoulder if they are unfortunate enough to spill some, and shudder at the very thought of opening an umbrella in the house.

This is nothing to be ashamed of, for some of the greatest characters of history have felt likewise. We are told, for instance, that when Julius Caesar landed at Adrumentum he tripped and fell. This would have been considered a fatal omen by his army, but with admirable presence of mind Caesar said, "Thus do I take possession of thee, O Africa!" and saved the situation.

Superstition is a tremendously interesting subject and, try as hard as we may, we cannot seem to rid ourselves of it entirely. We do not believe that troubles come in threes, but the chances are that we will cross our fingers when we say so!

To see a black cat without a single white hair is an exceedingly lucky omen, especially if seen on a white fence.

A howling dog is a sign of trouble.

A gray horse is good luck.

If ants make a heap near your door, it betokens good fortune.

When a bee flies in the window, expect good news.

In regard to bees:

A swarm in May worth a load of hay;

A swarm in June worth a silver spoon;

A swarm in July, not worth a fly.

If two birds perch on your windowsill in one day, you will be married twice.

To stroke a black cat's tail seven times ensures good luck at cards.

Crickets in a house foretell mirth and plenty.

If a dog runs between a woman's legs, her husband is going to beat her.

If you lose your dog, whistle for him three times through a knothole and he will return.

If you meet two piebald horses, one after the other, spit three times, and your wish will be granted.

Beliefs Concerning the Human Body

When you have a ringing in your ears, say the names of people you know. The name at which the ringing stops is that of the person thinking of you. Pliny said, "It is an opinion generally received that when our ears do glow and tingle, there be some that in our absence do talk of us." Tingling of the right ear means that good is spoken, and, of the left, evil.

If you sneeze after you have made a statement, it is a sign that it is true.

To sneeze rapidly three times is a good omen.

Sneeze once for a kiss; twice for a letter; three times for a wish, and four times for something better.

Itching of the palm is an indication that you will receive money unexpectedly,

"Rub it on wood, sure to come good. Rub it on brick, sure to come quick."

Itching of the nose means a visitor.

If you knock your elbow you will see someone you are very anxious to see.

If your right eye twitches, you will receive news.

A cinder in the eye foretells unexpected pleasure.

Place an eyelash on the back of your hand, and blow at it. If it disappears immediately you will get your wish; if not, your wish will be delayed.

If your fingers seem slippery and everything seems to drop, it is a sure sign of a visitor.

Get out of bed with the, right foot first to ensure a lucky day.

If your left foot goes to sleep, an enemy is thinking of you.

A cowlick is very lucky.

If your feet itch, you will tread on strange ground.

When a fever blister appears on your mouth, someone has been dreaming of

kissing you.

If four people shake hands crosswise, a marriage is dictated.

Stumbling while going upstairs is a sure sign you will not marry within the year.

A hunchback brings good fortune.

If two people say the same thing simultaneously and without another word entwine their little fingers and make a wish, the wish will come true.

Misplacing words while you are talking is the sign of a coming stranger.

If you sing before breakfast, you may cry before supper.

To put on a garment inside out is lucky, provided that you discover it and change it.

To button a coat or waistcoat unevenly is a good sign.

Put on first your right stocking, but your left shoe.

A hole in your stocking brings good luck the first day, but bad luck on the second. To find buttons means new friends.

Tearing your dress under the arm means a wedding.

Brushing your clothes at night brings surprises.

If a stick catches in a woman's dress while walking, it is a sign of a beau.

If three things go wrong with a dress in the making, you will wear it at a wedding probably your own.

It is good luck to have the hem of your dress turn up.

If any part of your clothing catches and is torn, somebody is anxious to see you.

The boy who wears his trousers out at the knee will be rich.

To find a handkerchief is a sign of a letter.

To sit on your hat is a sign that you are in love.

When a girl puts her hat on backwards, it is a sign that she has a new lover. If a matron does so, she will experience a change of circumstances, and if a man, he will have good luck in business.

When a man's shirtsleeves come down below his coat sleeves, somebody is talking about him.

If new shoes squeak, they are not paid for.

If you wear your right shoe out before your left, you will never rise above mediocrity.

To wear down your heels on the outside shows a generous nature; on the inside, a stingy nature.

If you break a shoestring, your sweetheart will turn to another.

To tear a veil while putting it on is good luck.

Household Superstitions

If after leaving home you find you have forgotten something, and have to return, be sure to sit down for a moment before starting out again.

Two bells ringing in a house at the same time foretell a parting.

Spilling salt at table is unlucky unless you take a pinch and throw it over your left shoulder.

To drop a knife accidentally so that the point penetrates the floor and it stands upright is a sign of success.

To break a mirror by accident ensures seven years' bad luck.

The failing of a picture is a sign of sorrow.

To drop a knife or fork on the floor signifies a visit from a friend; the knife, female; the fork, male.

“See a pin and pick it up, all the day you’ll have good luck.”

A hairpin found means an invitation.

To wait on old people brings success and riches.

It is very lucky to find a rusty nail. Do not pick it up but reverse the ends.

Weddings

It is unlucky for a bride to look in a mirror after she is completely dressed. To marry a man whose name begins with the same letter as one’s own is considered unlucky.

The bridegroom should not see the bride’s trousseau before the wedding.

A bride must wear something old and something new; something borrowed and something blue.

Married on Monday, always noon;
Married on Tuesday married once more;
Married on Wednesday, happy match;
Married on Thursday, splendid catch;
Married on Friday, poorly mated;
Married on Saturday, better waited;
Married on Sunday, Cupid’s wooing;
Married in the morning, quick undoing.

Place a piece of wedding cake under your pillow and you will dream of your future husband.

The following rhyme occurs in “The Progress of Matrimony”:

“But Madam, as a present take
This little paper of bride cake,
Past any Friday in the year,
When Venus mounts the starry sphere,
Thrust this at night in pillowbeer,
In morning slumber you will see
T’ enjoy your lover in a dream.”

Weather Superstition

Rain before seven, clear before eleven.

To predict weather for the evening, look at your coffee in the morning. If the bubbles that rise after the sugar has been dropped in stay in the center of the cup, it will be fair. If they go to the side, it will rain soon.

It will be fair weather:

- If before sunrise the fields are covered with mist,
- If the clouds at sunrise fly to the west,
- If the full moon rises dear,
- If there are clouds in the east in the evening,
- If spiders work early at their webs.

Signs of bad weather are:

- A pale sunset.
- A halo around the moon.
- The creaking of furniture.
- Pain in one’s corns.
- A cricket chirping loudly.

The chirping of a cricket can also be used to estimate temperature. Count the number of chirps in 14 seconds; add 40 and you will have the temperature in degrees Fahrenheit.

Frost year, fruit year.
Year of snow, fruit will grow.
A February spring is worth nothing
Thunder in March betokens a fruitful year.

Sunshine and shower, rain again tomorrow.

When the mist creeps up the hill,
Fisher, Out and try your skill;
When the mist begins to nod,
Fisher, then put by your rod.