



REVIEWS OF MY DREAMS FROM LAST NIGHT

By Richard Light

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The Flying Dream ★★★★★

A well-executed flying dream is always a great way to start out the night, and this one did not disappoint. Here was a dream that didn't aspire to be anything more than a good time. Add to that a total lack of disturbing sexual imagery, and it gave me something fun to share with my parents around the breakfast table. A light, breezy, family-friendly romp!

Kissing My Cousin ★

Unfortunately not everything can be *The Flying Dream*. I'll be honest, I was not a fan of this heavy-handed and confusing morality tale. It started with such titillating promise but quickly descended into a baffling mess that raised more questions than answers. Questions like, Why was I kissing my cousin and why did my penis fall off in the end? Stupid questions. Stupid, stupid questions. Sometimes you just have to dismiss a dream as a dream and move on. Also, she is only my second cousin, so it's not even that big a deal.



Nude High School Math Exam ★★

A formulaic and predictable offering that represents everything wrong with recurring dreams. How often is this same, tired recipe going to be warmed over and served up by my subconscious? By the time I figured out that not only had I forgotten to study for the exam, but that I was also completely naked and my penis had dropped off, I'd practically fallen asleep all over again. And don't get me started on the melting clock (ugh, real original). Recurring dreams are fine, but if you're not going to bring *anything* new to the table, then why bother? The one bright spot was a strong performance from the shocked and disgusted math teacher, played by a weird, morphing amalgamation of my aunt Jody and Oscar winner Kathy Bates (*Misery*, *About Schmidt*). Otherwise *Nude High School Math Exam* was the kind of boilerplate nonsense that gives dreams a bad name.

Forgotten Passport ★★★★★

The *Forgotten Passport* anxiety dream has been a staple of my sleeping life for years now, but I am continually impressed by how it's able to reinvent itself night after night. This is a great example of how a recurring dream can explore new places while staying true to its core premise (are you listening, *Nude High School Math Exam*?). As usual, I found myself at the airport about to board an eagerly anticipated flight when I suddenly realized I didn't have my passport. Of course much of the fun comes in the little flourishes that change every night, like which bizarre event am I desperately trying to reach (last night it was my cat's baptism) or what treasured childhood toy will my luggage turn into (He-Man's Castle Grayskull on this occasion). The real twist last night, however, was that I actually got on the plane! This almost never happens. "The plane" turned out to be my penis, and it proceeded to fly away without me, but even that was a fresh take on an old number. With end-to-end surprises that kept me guessing throughout, *Forgotten Passport* is clearly Rich's Reverie of the Night.

Shadow Man ★★★

I have never been a fan of the nightmare genre but this one was differ-

ent. Instead of the usual trope of overwhelming me with a zombie attack from the get-go, this nightmare took its time building up the tension. In a welcome twist, the villain — the eponymous Shadow Man — remained offstage until the finale. The terror came almost entirely from the threat of this menacing, spectral figure who lurked outside my parents' home while I frantically tried to secure it with the help of my younger sister Claire (replaced by a useless, crumbling china doll about halfway through). Unfortunately the climax was squandered by a miscast Paul Reiser (TV's *Mad About You*) as the Shadow Man, and a gratuitous sequence involving a disembodied penis that was strongly suggested to be my own. Still, *Shadow Man* was an interesting addition to the dreamscape, and when some of the kinks are worked out, it could prove truly nightmarish on a return visit.

Penis Falling Off *No stars*

Just awful. I have no idea what my subconscious was thinking with this one. It was uninspired, unimaginative and unoriginal. I mean, does my penis falling off really need its own solo vehicle at this point? What's most disappointing is that it came from the same creator of past gems like *Forgotten Passport* and last week's *Scarlett Johansson Dream*.

False Awakening ★★★

Friends have been giving me mixed reviews of this dream for years, but I only got around to it myself, for the first time, early this morning. I have to say, I liked it. If you're not familiar with *False Awakening*, it's where the dreamer "wakes up" and goes about his or her normal morning routine: getting dressed, preparing breakfast, and even taking a pee that feels so disturbingly lifelike it can actually wake the dreamer. Sure, I found it a bit boring and unremarkable — but *my life* is boring and unremarkable. And where is it written that dreams always have to be so surreal? It may not be for everyone, but I thought *False Awakening* was a welcome change of pace, and I hope to see more of this style of gritty realism in future dreams. Though if I could make one suggestion, it would be to lose the whole peeing sequence, as it was, in retrospect, a little too real. ○