

A Dream Interpretation

Peter is a stock market analyst who suffered a depression and has a tendency to black moods. Several years back he found himself hopelessly attracted to a woman whom he noted for her softness and sensitivity. He entered into relationship with this woman but somehow it went horribly wrong. In the relationship he was happy but she was not. She left him, saying he was too hard and callous and that he would never change. Broken hearted, he went from one relationship to another, each one more problematic than the first. The common theme of each relationship was the perceived sensitivity of his partner. After a while he lost faith in relationships and fell into periodic depressions. These depressions caused him to take an easier job and to spend time alone, away from the rat race as he called it. It was during one of these depressions that he decided to come in for a dream analysis session and reported what had been a repetitive dream for the last several years, a dream whose nuances had first appeared as his first true relationship began to crumble.

The dream ran as follows:

I am in the city, but it is a sort of wasteland where nothing ever happens. In this city there are an endless number of high rise concrete apartments. In one apartment there is a girl. She is caught in the apartment because it is so run down that the lifts no longer work. All around are thousands of mangy stray cats.

The dream reflected Peter's relationship to his own inner feminine. In the dream the young girl is trapped in a hard and hostile environment. Here nothing ever happens and nothing ever changes. Cats (which Peter hates) are symbolic of the feminine and in the dream they are starved and uncared for. The mood and atmosphere of the place was reminiscent of Peter's own moods and depression. The dream presented a static situation which seemed to have no resolution.

Yet, through studying the dream, Peter finally recognized his own hard and callous nature as it was reflected in the cityscape of his dream. While he had been criticized along these lines many times he had ever really taken such criticism to heart. It took the extreme images of the dream to set Peter thinking. Working on the dream released a watershed of remorse. "How right she had been, if only I'd listened."

Peter approached the unconscious the hard way. His attraction to sensitive women highlighted the need to develop his own sensitivity. Instead Peter sought relationship where the partner would carry his own unlied sensitivity and feeling life. The depressions and black moods which Peter suffered were simply an unconscious means of making Peter listen to and honor his own feelings. This approach, instigated within the unconscious, worked - Peter's depressions forced him to back away from the harshness of the world. And from there he was able to listen to himself and his dreams for the first time.

Through working on his dreams Peter's depressions soon cleared. He entered into a new relationship, lost what he called his hard edge and took a new job as a financial adviser - a move away from the cut throat nature of his previous role as a market analyst.

Source: *Dream Analysis Info*
<http://www.dreamanalysis.info/>
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MANGY CATS

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Exposition. The opening scene, which introduces the place, characters, and situation that the dreamer will face—the issue or problem as expressed through metaphor.

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Lysis: The result or solution of the dream's action. The Lysis signifies how the dreamer might deal with the problem or issue that was expressed during the exposition stage. In effect, the work of the dream has produced a solution or result for the dreamer. The Lysis shows where the energy wants to go. "Where there is no lysis, no solution is in sight."

What was the problem inside the dream? A girl is trapped inside an apartment in a high rise wasteland.

How was the problem solved, or what was the result of the action? The problem wasn't solved. The girl was still trapped at the end of the dream, unable to go up or down in the lifts.

Amplifications

List the images in the dream.

- (1) What does each image symbolize or mean to you? What comes to mind?
- (2) What feelings do you associate with this symbol/image/person?
- (3) Is there an archetypal or cultural significance to this dream image? If so, what is it?
- (4) What hidden parts of myself might this dream represent?

IMAGE	ASSOCIATIONS & FEELINGS
wasted city	<i>post-apocalyptic, hard and hostile environment; feelings are hopelessness, dismay, sadness.</i>
trapped in concrete	<i>nothing ever happens, nothing ever changes. despair.</i>
girl	<i>vulnerable, beautiful, loving, hopeful</i>
lifts	<i>means of movement up or down; means of escape, egress, entrance; progress, technology, men</i>
thousands of mangy cats	<i>I hate cats! Ugh. They make me feel revulsion (disgusting!). But cats are typically associated with the feminine. Stray cats: starved, uncared for, unwanted. rat race = cat race</i>

Circumstances

What immediate circumstances did this dream arise from? What long-term circumstances?

I've been depressed, especially lately. Susan left me, saying I was too hard on her and callous about life in general, other people. She said I'd never change and this broke my heart. Since then I've had so many worthless relationships; they've gotten worse and worse! The women have been more and more sensitive to the point that I can't please any of them. Finally I gave up on dating and have been depressed ever since. I downgraded in my job to get out of the rat race, but I'm not any happier.

Dream Series

What dream series did this dream appear in, if any?

This is pretty much the same dream I've had repeatedly for a while now, I guess for the past 2-3 yrs. Ever since Susan broke up with me. They vary, as sometimes there are rats in the dream, sometimes stray cats, sometimes packs of dogs, but generally cats, cats, cats, and some trapped female.

ANALYSIS

Review the appropriate attitudes to bring to dream interpretation:

- Nothing can be assumed regarding the meaning of the dream or of specific images.
- The dream is not a disguise but a set of psychic facts.
- The dream probably does not tell the dreamer what to do.
- Be aware of the personality characteristics of the dreamer and the interpreter.

I've built up an ego for myself that's hard, hostile, and doesn't show hope. I radiate dismay and sadness wherever I go, just like my girlfriends and Susan said. My ego is as strong as concrete; nothing happens to change me, I never change; I'm full of despair.

Inside me is this girl—vulnerable, beautiful, loving, and full of hope. But she's trapped inside me in the wasteland of my hard ego, the doorkeeper, the one who could fix the lift (he's a guy after all). He isn't providing the technology for her to escape, enter, exit, etc. It's as if I'd rather keep her hostage inside myself than give her a way of escape. Maybe I'm afraid she'll leave me like Susan and all the other women.

Where does this fear of being left come from? What other women have left me in my life? No-brainer here: what about mom leaving dad when I was four and just leaving me there? I remember being barely five years old and having to make my own breakfasts and lunches, and how sad I felt that I had no mom to help me. I remembered the waffles she used to make me. This makes me want to cry and RAGE.

Then there are all these cats in the dream. They are revolting. I wonder why that is? Do I really hate cats, or do I just hate my inner feminine so much? I love her sensitivity, hopefulness etc. but she's a female after all... cats have a way of twining themselves around your legs... but females do it with your heart. I haven't wanted to really give my own inner female my heart, much less anyone outside me my true heart, because mom's leaving like that broke my heart. Did I ever really grieve that? How can I get help with this problem? Well, at least I'm working with a therapist who can help me unravel these things.