

## Bunuel's recurrent dreams

- Tigers Bulls Barriers
- Failed Tests
- The Actor's stage fright
- Army & the Colonel
- Father's Ghost
- Raphael & Mother: Sad ghosts in the emptiness
- Union with the Holy Virgin
- The Secret Stairway
- Pillow Talk

'I have a list of about **fifteen recurring dreams** that have pursued me all my life like faithful travelling companions: (NOTE THE FREE ASSOCIATION IN BUNUEL'S WRITING)

- Some of them are terribly banal- I'm pursued by tigers or bulls; I find myself in a room, shut the door behind me, the bull smashes its way through and so on.
- Or I have to take my final exams all over again; I think I've already passed them, but it turns out that I must do them once more, and, of course, I've forgotten everything I'm supposed to know.
- Another (*similar*) dream is the kind where I absolutely must go on stage in just a few minutes and play a role I haven't learned. I don't know the first word of the script. This sort of dream can be long and very complicated; I'm nervous, then I panic, the audience grows impatient and starts to hiss. I try to find someone-the stage manager, the director, anyone-and I tell them I'm in agony, but they reply coldly that I must go on, the curtain's rising, I can't wait any longer.
- Another of my ongoing anxiety dreams is returning to the army fifty or sixty years old, dressed in my uniform, I return to the barracks where I did my military service. I'm very uncomfortable, I slink along the walls, I'm afraid to tell anyone I've arrived. It's embarrassing still to be a soldier at my age, but there doesn't seem to be anything I can do about it. I have to talk to the Colonel, I have to explain my case, to ask him how it's possible that after all I've been through I'm still in the army.
- Sometimes I dream that I'm back home in Calanda, and I know there's a ghost in the house (undoubtedly prompted by my memory of my father's spectral appearance the night of his death). I walk bravely into the room without a light and challenge the spirit to show himself. Sometimes I swear at him. Suddenly there's a noise behind me, a door slams, and I wake up

terrified. I also dream often of my father, sitting at the dinner table with a serious expression .....

No one's really interested in other people's dreams, so I won't dwell on the subject, although I find it impossible to explain a life without talking about the part that's underground-the imaginative, the unreal. Perhaps, then, I'll just **indulge** myself through one or two others

- -for instance, the dream about my cousin Rafael: macabre, of course, yet not without its bittersweet aspects. I had this dream for the first time when I was about seventy, and since then it's continued to affect me deeply. Rafael has been dead for a long time, and yet, in my dream, I meet him suddenly in an empty street. "What are you doing here?" I ask him, surprised. "Oh, I come here every day," he replies sadly. He turns away and walks into a house; then suddenly I too am inside. The house is dark and hung with cobwebs; I call Rafael, but he doesn't answer. When I go back outside, I'm in the same empty street, but now I call my mother. "Mother! Mother!" I ask her. "What are you doing wandering about among all these ghosts?"
- Yet a bit later I had another dream which moved me even more. In it I see the Virgin, shining softly, her hands outstretched to me. It's a very strong presence, an absolutely indisputable reality. She speaks to me-**to me, the unbeliever**-with infinite tenderness; she's bathed in the music of Schubert. My eyes full of tears, I kneel down, and suddenly I feel myself inundated with a vibrant and invincible faith. When I wake up, my heart is pounding, and I hear my voice saying: "Yes! Yes! Holy Virgin, yes, I believe!" It takes me several minutes to calm down.  
The erotic overtones are obvious, yet they always remain within the chaste limits of a platonic devotion. Perhaps if the dream had continued, it would have vanished, or given way to desire? I don't know. I simply feel overwhelmed, my heart is full; it's an ethereal feeling I've often experienced, and not just in dreams.  
A long time ago, at least fifteen years now, I used to dream that I was in church. I press a button behind a pillar, the altar pivots slowly, and I see a secret staircase. Nervously, I descend the stairs and find myself in a series of subterranean chambers. It's a long dream, and mildly upsetting-a feeling I enjoy.....
- I remember waking up one night in Madrid, unable to stop laughing. When my wife asked what had happened, I told her that I'd dreamed of my sister Maria, and that she had given me a pillow as a present.  
**That's all I could remember, so I'll leave the interpretation to the psychoanalysts.'**