

Dreams

by Vanessa Nicette

In elementary school, a friend told me that in her dream, she had said to her parents, "It doesn't matter, it's just a dream anyway." That was the moment when they were attacked by pirates and her parents wanted to come up with a battle plan.

To this day, I don't know what to make of it. "... just a dream". Something bothered me about it then, and it still bothers me today. Didn't that take away the magic from her dream — the wonderful, the crazy, the adventure — that feeling that everything was real? Probably my childish self was also a little hurt because with this word "only" she portrayed dreams that still accompany me so intensely today as unimportant, not real.

I could write forever about my experiences and memories related to dreams: from repeating childhood dreams that seemed so real each time, to my "research" as a teenager, to dreaming under a full moon with two subjects (one of whom was me), to seemingly endless conversations, sometimes with complete strangers.

In dreams time and space move in new dimensions, they let us dive into other worlds. We experience adventures, terrible, even boring things without leaving our sleeping place. In dreams, the most absurd things are taken at face value by people who otherwise question everything. We master unsolvable tasks with flying colors, while the simplest things demand the greatest efforts from us.

Even in real life, every dream has its time: there are people who have their dreams present, others who never remember their dreams, and still others who suddenly remember a dream even though they couldn't for years.

Dreams are tricky. They erase themselves from our memory, although we have just played them through in our head — or they appear as if out of nowhere. There are even those moments when we are unsure whether a memory is a dream or even a real experience.

But how can I make these experiences, which are fleeting for so many people, last? Keep them from being forgotten?

Since 2011, I therefore ask people who meet me to write down their dreams for me and portray them at their sleeping place with my Mamiya 645, illuminated with bedside lamps.

The handwritten, the sleeping place, the medium format — this also gives the viewer the chance to get to know the dreamer, at least a little.

My love for dreams, has opened up to me stories of people that I would otherwise never have known. I know small and big secrets about the dreams that I have already collected, and also about dreams that have been entrusted to me in exchange. It is wonderful what trust people give me in this project.

For me, "Dreams" is a contemporary document of our society, albeit one of a somewhat different kind. It is the dreams and the intimate portraits that capture the zeitgeist in a very personal and surreal way.