

Books in Easy English
Stage 3



Longman

Mysteries

G.C. Thornley

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Do Dreams Save Lives?

Are dreams of any use to the dreamer or to anyone else? We may remember the traveller who left the ship *Waratah* at Durban because of his terrible dreams. The *Waratah* later disappeared entirely, with everyone on board. The traveller's dreams helped him and saved him from death; but they did not help the other people. Why was this man treated differently from everyone else?

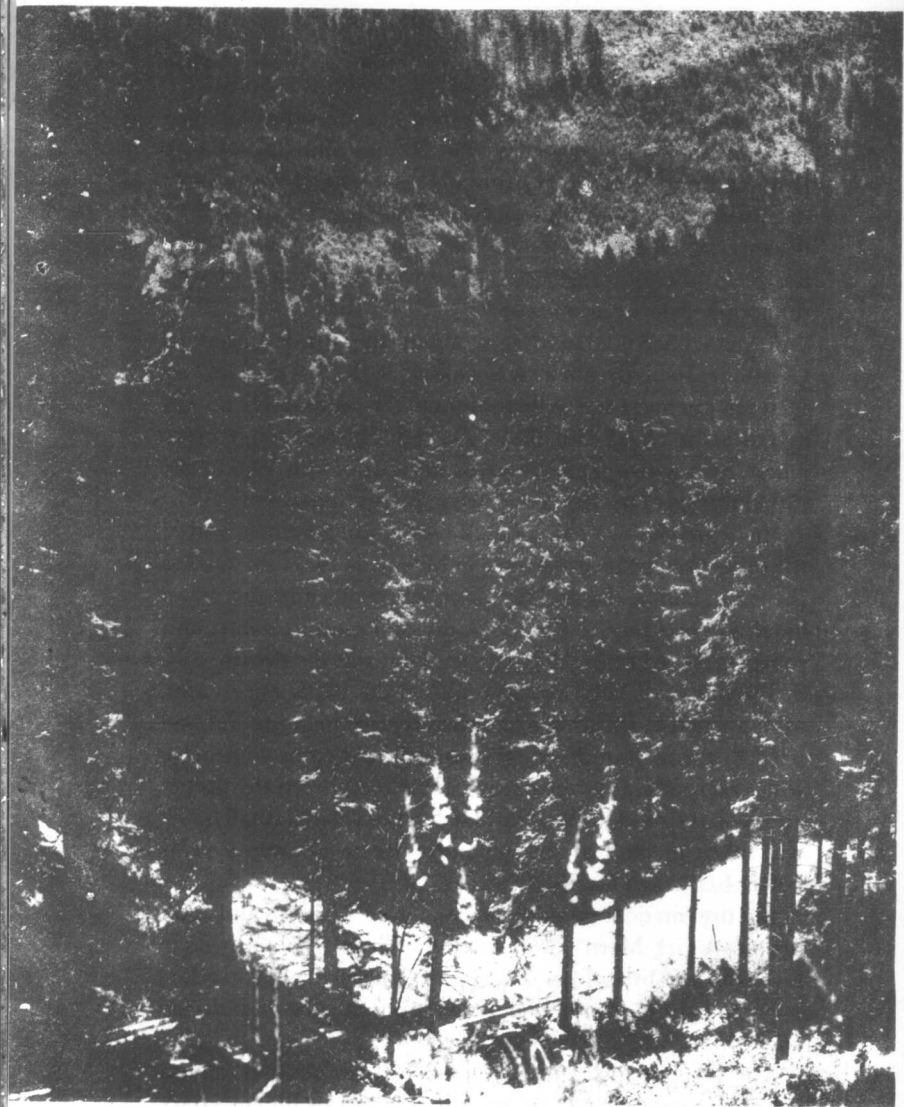
A man once had a dream about the Black Forest in Germany. In his dream he was walking in the forest when two men ran out and tried to throw him to the ground. He ran off as fast as he could, but they followed. He reached a place where he saw two separate roads in front of him, one to the right and one to the left. Which road ought he to take?

He heard the two men behind him, getting nearer, and at the same time he heard a voice in his ear. It told him to go to the right, and he did so. He ran on and soon came to a small hotel. He was received there kindly and given a room; and so he was saved from the two men. That was the dream.

Twenty years later he was really in the Black Forest and, as happened in the dream long before, two men ran out and tried to throw him down. He ran off, and came to a place with two roads, as in the dream. He remembered the dream and took the road to the right. He soon reached a small hotel, was taken in, and so was safe. His dream of twenty years before had saved his life.

But dreams do sometimes save the lives of friends and other people. A girl, Merna, who lived in Czernak, Poland, was in love with a Polish soldier, Stanislaus Omensky, who marched away to fight in World War I. Later on, she began to dream about him.

The first dream came in October 1918, about a month before the end of the war. In the dream she saw him in a dark place among some rocks or stones. He was trying to move



The Black Forest.

some of them, but he could not do so. So he stopped trying and sat down on the ground, alone in the dark.

She had this dream several times, but then in the following summer it changed. In the new dream she saw a castle on a hill. Part of the castle had fallen down and there were a lot of stones on the ground below the broken part. She went towards these in her dream, and then she heard the voice of her boyfriend, Stanislaus. The voice came from under the stones, and so she tried to lift some of them. But she was too weak to do this, and she had to go sadly away.

This dream took the place of the older one, and she saw the same stones several times in her sleep on other nights. She told her mother about it, and a lot of other people in Czernak heard about the dream. But they did not care very much. A girl's dreams are not important to other people.

Merna decided that she ought to find that castle. She was quite sure that it was a real one, but there are a lot of old castles in that part of Poland. There was little hope of finding a special one among so many. But the dreams continued, and one day Merna could not bear it any longer. She had to find that castle. So she began a long journey on foot.

Day after day she went onwards, looking for the castle. She slept on the ground beside the road, and sometimes farmers gave her something to eat. For them it was only another sad story of the war, but they had kind hearts.

One day in April 1920, she came to the little village of Złota. There on the top of a hill stood her castle, as she had seen it so often in her dreams! She ran into the village and fell down on the ground.

Of course, a crowd of people arrived and looked down at her. A policeman arrived too, and Merna told everyone about her dreams.

'There's the castle!' she cried wildly, pointing to it. 'That's the castle that I've seen in my dreams!' But the people saw the castle every day and did not care much.

She got up and went towards the fallen stones at the

bottom of the castle wall, and some of the villagers went with her. She asked the men to lift up the stones, and they laughingly did so. They did not believe that her story had any meaning, but it was not difficult to lift a few stones. They found nothing on the first day, but after working for two days they heard a man's voice calling from below.

Merna knew that voice. It was the voice of Stanislaus Omensky, her boyfriend. The men quickly made the hole bigger and soon brought him out. He had been in the darkness for two years, and at first the strong light of day hurt his eyes. But soon he was looking round with surprise at the people who were standing there.

He had lived on the food that he had found in the castle. He had entered the castle during the war; then part of it was hit and destroyed, and his way out was closed by falling stones. So he could not get out and he had to remain there until Merna brought him help.

What caused her to dream like that? How did her mind know anything about a castle which she had never seen? How did she know that Stanislaus was down there among the broken stones?

What Happened to P.H. Fawcett?

Parts of South America were almost unknown when P.H. Fawcett went there. In one place, high up in the mountains, three countries meet—Peru, Bolivia and Brazil. The governments of these countries could not agree about the exact position of the frontiers¹ which separated them. Fawcett had been an army officer, and he had made a special study of frontiers. The Bolivian government asked him to visit their country and to decide on the frontiers and to fix them. Then all doubts about them would disappear. He was told that life in the wild mountains would be hard, but he accepted the offer, and a short time later he was in South America.

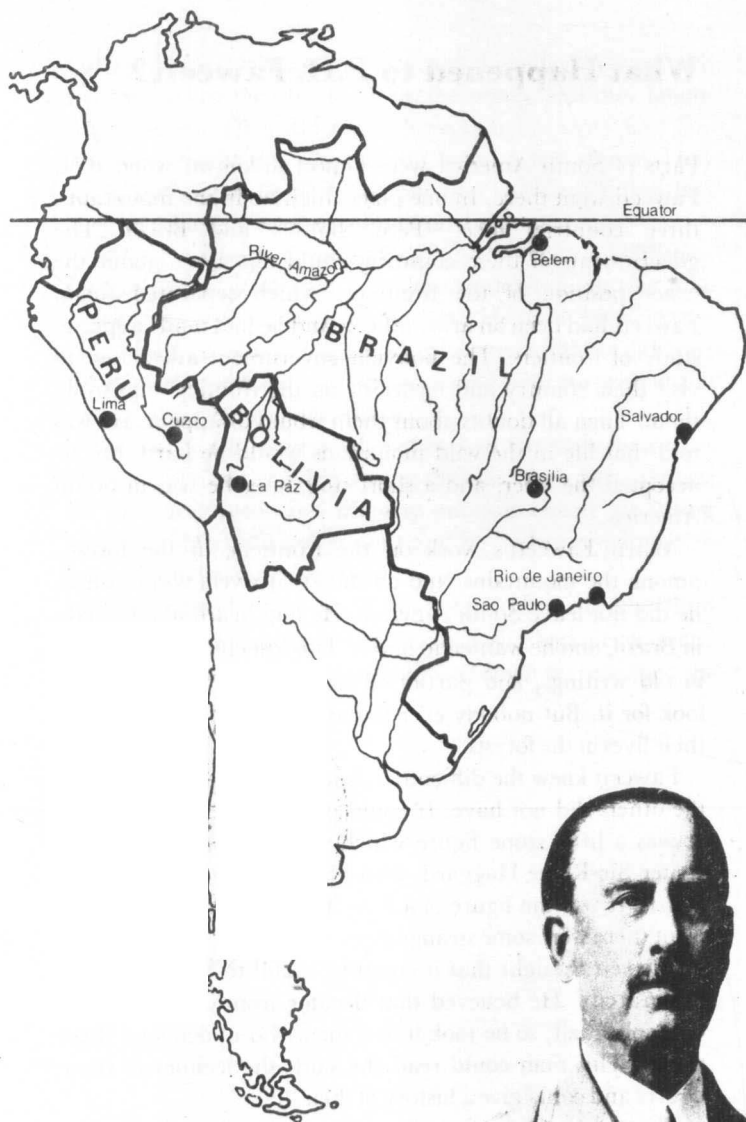
When Fawcett's work on the frontiers, in the forests, among the mountains, and on the great rivers was finished, he did not leave South America. He had heard of a lost city in Brazil, and he wanted to find it. This lost city was described in old writings, and parties of men had often gone out to look for it. But nobody ever found it, and a lot of men lost their lives in the forests.

Fawcett knew the difficulties, but he had something which the others did not have. It could possibly be an advantage. It was a little stone figure which was given to him by the writer Sir Rider Haggard, who had brought it home from Brazil. It was the figure of a man in black stone, and on the front there were some strange signs.

Fawcett thought that it could be useful to him in finding the lost city. He believed that it came from one of the lost cities of Brazil; so he took it to a man who understood these things. This man could read (he said) the feelings of stone figures and could give a history of their 'lives'.

The man held the little figure in one hand, and was then

¹frontier: a line which separates two countries.



Map of South America showing frontiers.

P.H. Fawcett.



able to 'see' things in the darkness. He described them to Fawcett:

I see land which reaches from North Africa to South America. There are a lot of mountains, and from some of them smoke and fire are going up into the air above. The land is covered with trees and plants. The people on the African side have very bright eyes, and they also have some fine and beautiful buildings.

On the American side of this land the people are more beautiful in appearance, and they live in a country of lovely flowers. Some of their buildings are on the sides of mountains, and I can see that a lot of them are temples put up in honour of the gods of the place. At the top of each temple there is a big eye. Several men—they look important—are walking about near the temples, and the most important of them is wearing a stone plate in front of him. On this plate there are some signs like those on the figure of the little stone man in my hand. These men, I am sure, are the Masters of the World.

But now I hear a great voice. It calls out over the country and it says that the people are too proud, they must therefore be destroyed. The smoke and fire from the mountain-tops is increasing! The whole land is burning from side to side! The people die!—it is the end! I can see nothing more—nothing more!

The speaker ended and gave the little stone figure back to Fawcett. He said that these things had happened very long ago—many hundreds of years, for example, before Egypt became a great country.

Fawcett took the stone figure to others who thought that they could read it; but they all said the same sort of thing. It seems that the signs on it were about the end of the lost Atlantis, the great land which perhaps once lay between Europe and America. Perhaps it was beginning to sink below the seas when the little stone figure was made. Fawcett took it thoughtfully away, and decided to carry it with him when

he went to look for the lost city. He almost believed that Brazil and Atlantis were two names for the same place, and he hoped and expected to find something interesting in the great forests.

Perhaps not many people would believe the strange story told by the man who held the stone figure. But Fawcett was not only a traveller. He was also a dreamer. There was probably something strange about the stone, and perhaps he could feel it himself.

'I shall find the answer in the lost city,' he thought. His son Jack decided to go with him. His other son, Brian, did not go with them, but they took a friend, Raleigh Rimell. The little party went first to Cuyaba and then were ready to start for the north-east.

The last letter that Brian Fawcett received was written on 29 May 1925. They were not going into country with unfriendly Indians or man-killing wild animals. There was no mention of serious illness or lost supplies. But there were no more letters.

The party just disappeared.

Two years later a French engineer, Roger Courteville, arrived in Lima, Peru. He said that he had seen P.H. Fawcett in Brazil two months before. Brian Fawcett hurried to Lima and met the engineer and his wife. They told him that they had seen an old man sitting beside the road. He said that his name was Fawcett, and he seemed to have suffered a great deal. But at that time Courteville knew nothing about Fawcett, and did not know that he was lost. The old man did not ask for help, and Courteville continued his journey. When he heard the facts, he wanted to go back and bring the old man to Lima; but there was no money to pay for the journey.

In 1932 a Swiss traveller, Stefan Rattin, came back from the forests with a story that Fawcett was a prisoner of some Indians who lived near the Sao Manuel River. Rattin claimed that he had spoken to Fawcett.

'I was talking to the chief of the Indians,' Rattin said. 'Suddenly an old man appeared. His long hair and yellow beard almost hid his face. He looked sad, and he watched me closely all the time. Later on, I was able to speak to him for a moment. I asked him in English who he was, and he told me that he was an English officer.'

Rattin described the old man as about sixty-five years of age, short, and wearing four gold rings. His clothes were of the kind that the Indians wore, a simple piece of cloth round the middle.

Brian Fawcett did not believe that the old man was his father. The age was right; P.H. Fawcett was born in 1867. But he was not a short man, and he never had much hair—certainly not fair hair.

Rattin started a journey back to the forests because he wanted to bring the old man out; but Rattin disappeared too.

More important than these reports, perhaps, was that of Virginio Pessione, who led a party to the Kuluene River. They met an Indian woman who described three white men who were prisoners of the Aruvudu Indians. One day, long before, they had come down the river in a boat. One of them was old and had blue eyes. Another seemed to be his son. There was also a third man, who was rather old. The oldest of the three was wearing two rings. The Indian woman called the old man 'Father Carayba', and said that he was now chief of the Aruvudu Indians.

The woman seemed quite sure that the white men were still alive, and Brian Fawcett thought that perhaps his father was one of them. It is known that Indians like to hold white men prisoner because they can sometimes act as doctors and they can help the Indians in other ways.

In 1944 Brian Fawcett heard by telephone that Senhor Edmar Morel, a newspaper reporter, had with him a boy, Dulipe, who was the son of his brother Jack Fawcett. But Brian Fawcett did not believe this; and indeed a Rio

newspaper later proved that Dulipe was not the son of Jack Fawcett.

Another report said that the bones of P.H. Fawcett had been found in the earth. But scientific work later proved that they were not his bones.

What happened to Fawcett and his party? It is probable, one must suppose, that they all died and that their bones lie in one of the South American forests. But why are there no stories among the Indians to explain their disappearance? Why did the letters suddenly stop?

Did they perhaps reach the lost city that they were trying to find? If someone ever finds the lost city, will they find there the remains of Fawcett's party—or even living people who will tell us the full story of that party?

Piltdown Man

One day in 1912, the great scientist Dr Arthur Smith Woodward gave some important news at a meeting in London. He said that parts of a man's skull¹ had been found at Piltdown, a village in Sussex, England, near Lewes. The pieces of the skull had been found by a certain Mr Charles Dawson, a lawyer living in Lewes.

The find was important because the skull seemed to be of the shape between a man's skull and the skull of an animal of long ago. It was probably 500,000 years old. Darwin had said that all living things slowly change in several ways to make themselves suitable to the places in which they live. He called the change evolution, and he led people to suppose that man, too, was the result of evolution. The most important difference between man and earlier man-like animals was in the size of the skull. Every step except one in the slow evolution of man's skull had been proved by the finding of old skulls. Now the Piltdown skull seemed to fill up the last empty space in the history of man, although several parts of this skull were missing.

The finding of the Piltdown skull, even without the missing parts, was therefore very important and interesting to world scientists. Towards the end of the year, Dawson found another interesting piece of bone and showed it to Dr Woodward. Some months later Dawson, Woodward and a French scientist, Teilhard de Chardin, visited the place near Piltdown and found another piece of bone. Later still, Woodward found another part of a skull in about the same place. There were also some bones of animals there.

It seemed now that the missing kind of man had been found and was known. A scientist at Cambridge said that the pieces of bone in the skull did not all come from the same

¹skull: the bone of the head.

kind of man or animal. But most people believed that the Piltdown skull was that of a man of long ago. Dr Woodward agreed, and did he not know more than most men about old bones? But there were still a few doubts about it, and Dr Woodward wanted to find a tooth which belonged to the skull. He described the tooth as it ought to be if it was ever found.

On 13 August 1913 Teilhard de Chardin found a tooth near the place where the skull had been found. It was exactly like the tooth which Dr Woodward had described. Later on, a lot of other pieces of bone were found in the place.

In 1915 Dawson found the top part of a man's skull, the tooth of a big animal, and the tooth of a man. Then, in the next year, Dawson died.

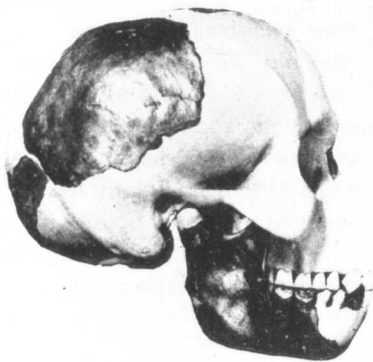
Copies of the Piltdown skull were made and sent to several foreign countries. Old skulls and bones were also found in other parts of the world, and are now known by the names of the places where they were found. Thus we have the Peking Man, and the Java Man, and so on. But there were still doubts about the Piltdown Man.

Before Woodward died (1944) he wrote a book about the Piltdown Man called *The Earliest Englishman*. But another scientist, Dr Kenneth Oakley, was now using a scientific way (radio carbon) of finding the age of bones. This was then a new thing, but it has been very useful in a lot of scientific work. He said that the Piltdown skull was only 50,000 years old. Before this most scientists had believed that it was half a million years old.

The whole matter was studied again by several other scientists, and in the end it was proved that the finds had not been in the ground for thousands of years. They had been put there shortly before they were found. But the person who did it was clever and knew a great deal about the subject. The bones and teeth were really old, although they were made to seem much older. They probably came from somewhere else, but they were cleverly given the colour of



Early scientists studying old skulls.



The Piltdown skull.

Piltdown earth. They were placed in the ground with great care; not just one man but several men of great scientific experience believed that they had been there for thousands of years.

Nobody knows the name of the person who took such trouble. And nobody knows why he did it. Perhaps he just wanted a laugh, but he took a lot of trouble to get his laugh. He heard about the tooth that Dr Woodward described; so he made or found one, and put it in the right place. This man knew something about science because he understood bones. That is clear. But great scientists do not waste valuable time on this sort of nonsense. So Dr Woodward and Teilhard de Chardin were not the men who did it.

Was it Dawson? Dawson is now dead. Someone said that he had seen Dawson colouring an old bone. He said it a long time after Dawson's death. But another man said that he knew the name of the man who put the skull in Piltdown, and the name was not Dawson.

So who was it? Nobody knows except perhaps one man; and he says nothing.