

## Reflection Questions for *What Dreams May Come*

1. Why do you think most people believe that life goes on even after death?
2. What did you think of *What Dreams May Come's* picture of the afterlife? What did you like? What intrigued you? What bothered you about the vision of the afterlife that *What Dreams May Come* presented?
3. Suicide has always had a certain stigma around it and Catholic doctrine teaches that those who commit suicide go to Hell. Why do you think this is?
4. There are a lot of ideas about what the afterlife really is. One of the quotes from the movie about Hell is fascinating: "The real Hell is your life gone wrong." Did any quotes from the movie or ideas resonate with your ideas of what Heaven and Hell might really be like?

### Wrap-Up

The name *What Dreams May Come* is taken from the famous "to be or not to be" soliloquy in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. This is the part containing the title: "To die, to sleep--- To sleep---perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub, For in that sleep of death what dreams may come?" This quote gets at the big question that humanity is asking: if there is an afterlife like so many of us believe, then what is it like?

When I was growing up I imagined Hell as a lake of burning fire and Heaven as somewhere up in the clouds where everyone could fly, and play harps and you would sing songs for all eternity. I thought flying would be cool but after going to church for a while I decided that singing songs for eternity would be downright boring. I wasn't interested in going to Hell but Heaven didn't sound that great either. It was just the best option of the two. I had a skewed idea of what the Bible taught Heaven would be like. I find a much better picture of Heaven when I read about Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. This was existence as God meant it to be. Humans had life and purpose and love and were in perfect relationship with God and each other. There were jobs to accomplish and activities to pursue – kind of like life now only better. Perhaps Heaven is more like the Garden of Eden experience than clouds and harps and songs.

There is a great quote from C.S. Lewis, the author of the *Chronicles of Narnia*, concerning the relation between our life now and the afterlife. He said, "Every time you make a choice, you are turning the central part of you, the part of you that chooses, into something a little different from what it was before. And, taking your life as a whole, with all your innumerable choices, all your life long you are slowly turning this central thing either into a Heavenly creature or into a hellish creature -- either into a creature that is in harmony with God, and with other creatures, and with itself, or else into one that is in a state of war and hatred with God, and with its fellow creatures and with itself. To be the one kind of creature is Heaven: that is, it is joy, and peace, and knowledge, and power. To be the other means madness, horror, idiocy, rage, impotence, and eternal loneliness. Each of us at each moment is progressing to the one state or the other." This quote makes a lot of sense to me. What I do in this life shapes who I will be in the afterlife. If I have lived a life in harmony with God and chosen his way then I will be prepared to experience Heaven. If I have chosen to rebel against God and others, I am not prepared to exist in Heaven but rather Heaven itself may even be a Hell for me because I am so out of sync with reality there. Maybe Hell truly is the horror of a life gone wrong. Maybe it is the realization that life lived without a restored relationship with God and others is the worst Hell that could ever exist.

May you choose life and love and truth with God's help and become the Heavenly creature you were meant to be. "Now, with God's help, I shall become myself." - Søren Kierkegaard