

0. DREAMS OF DEATH - Story Preface

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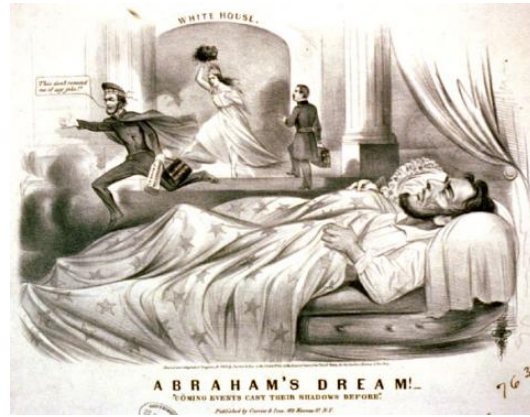
10. BOOTH'S CAPTURE AND DEATH

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President Lincoln, it is said, paid attention to his dreams. This image depicts a lithograph, created by Louis Maurer and published by Currier & Ives (circa 1864), which has the President worrying that he might lose the election of 1864. The work has this title: "Abraham's dream!-Coming Events Cast Their Shadows Before." The Library of Congress [describes the work in greater detail](#) at its website.

It would not be uncommon for someone who receives death threats to have [nightmares](#).

Days before his assassination, the President had a dream that troubled him. He talked with his wife about it. He told his cabinet and his bodyguard, William Crook. He told Ward Hill [Lamon](#), who recorded the story in one of his books, *Recollections of Abraham Lincoln*:

About ten days ago, I retired very late. I had been up waiting for important dispatches from the front. I could not have been long in bed when I fell into a slumber, for I was weary. I soon began to dream. There seemed to be a deathlike stillness about me.

Then I heard subdued sobs, as if a number of people were weeping. I thought I left my bed and wandered downstairs. There the silence was broken by the same pitiful sobbing, but the mourners were invisible. I went from room to room; no living person was in sight, but the same mournful sounds of distress met me as I passed along. I saw light in all the rooms; every object was familiar to me; but where were all the people who were grieving as if their hearts would break?

I was puzzled and alarmed. What could be the meaning of all this? Determined to find the cause of a state of things so mysterious and so shocking, I kept on until I arrived at the East Room, which I entered. There I met with a sickening surprise.

Before me was a catafalque, on which rested a corpse wrapped in funeral vestments. Around it were stationed soldiers who were acting as guards. There was a throng of people, gazing mournfully upon the corpse, whose face was covered, others weeping pitifully.

'Who is dead in the White House?' I demanded of one of the soldiers, 'The President,' was his answer. 'He was killed by an assassin.' Then came a loud burst of grief from the crowd, which woke me from my dream. I slept no more that night; and although it was only a dream, I have been strangely annoyed by it ever since. (Pages 116-117)

On the day he was assassinated, Abraham Lincoln told [his bodyguard](#), William H. Crook:

*Crook, do you know I believe there are men who want to take my life? And I have no doubt they will do it...I know no one could do it and escape alive. But if it is to be done, it is impossible to prevent it. (Margarita Spalding Gerry, editor, *Through Five Administrations: Reminiscences of Colonel William H. Crook*, p. 66)*

Hours later, John Wilkes Booth stepped into the [Presidential Box](#) at Ford's Theater. He had a derringer and a knife in his hands.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/DREAMS-OF-DEATH-Assassination-of-Abraham-Lincoln>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/DREAMS-OF-DEATH-Assassination-of-Abraham-Lincoln>

Questions 2 Ponder

Are Nightmares Predictive of Future Events?

President Lincoln had nightmares about what might happen to him as a result of the death threats he received. Do you think Mr. Lincoln was worried about those threats?

Have you ever worried about something, then had a nightmare about it?

Have you ever watched a scary movie, then had a nightmare about it? Was the nightmare just about the story you watched—or—were you part of the nightmare? Did the nightmare seem real, or did it seem like just a dream?

Did Death Threats Frighten Abraham Lincoln?

What do you make of the conversation President Lincoln had with Crook, his bodyguard, on the day he was assassinated?

Do you think the President was afraid of the potential of assassination? What about the way he conducted himself makes you think he was (or was not) afraid?

Media Stream

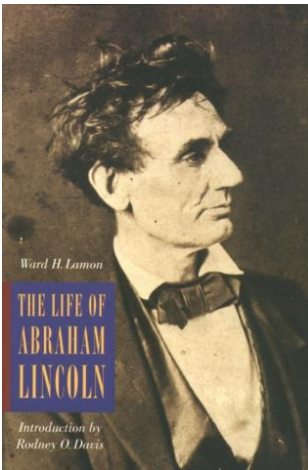


Abraham's Dream!

Currier & Ives illustration, online courtesy Library of Congress.

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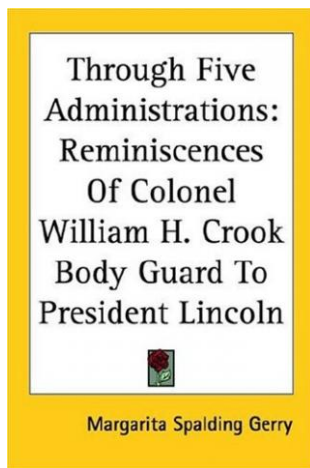


The Life of Abraham Lincoln - by Ward H. Lamon

Image of book cover, online courtesy Amazon.

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Through Five Administrations: Reminiscences of William H. Crook

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