Clarion Review

Thriller

The 6th Dream
Samuel J. Fisher
Create Space
978-1-4635-7194-8
Two Stars (out of Five)

Samuel J. Fisher is in good company in choosing to write about dreams; from Shakespeare to Poe, writers have pursued the topic, some with great success.

In *The 6th Dream*,the premise that Logan (the first-person narrator) is an anesthesiologist, someone who literally puts others to sleep, is a clever twist for a story about dreams. Logan purports to love dreaming over absolutely anything else in his life. Perhaps the only significance to Logan's given occupation is that it allows him access to certain medications that he uses to put himself to sleep for extended periods of time. His actions bring into question his mental stability and his ethics as a doctor. That said, Logan injects himself with the sleep-inducing potions not to find rest, but instead to dream. He has specific, ongoing dreams that he follows like soap operas, and the people in these dreams apparently are as real to him as are any people in his waking life.

Fisher effectively captures the chaos of dreams melding into one another during periods of deep sleep: in the middle of one sequence, another suddenly starts, already in progress, almost as if a channel has been changed. Even the characters in Logan's dreams have fantasies and dreams of their own, and as these characters face their own individual demons, they, too, spiral into circumstances that evolve from those dreams. Some of the dreams are suspenseful and especially violent, while others offer a touch of romance. One even includes such vivid descriptions of food eaten during a European vacation that readers may be left drooling.

That Fisher can so realistically describe certain details and so convincingly illustrate the fractured and surreal aspects of dreaming is certainly to his credit. He obviously has both the imagination and the ability to write a good story. Where he fails, however, is in the lack of editing and in the story's weak, off-putting conclusion.

Without commas, so many phrases run together that their meanings are obscured. When

commas are present, they are improperly placed. (This is apparent in dialogue, where commas are placed outside the quotation marks. In addition, there are no question marks at the end of questions, and apostrophes appear before the final *s* in any number of plural words. Rampant typos contribute to making this a difficult read. Further, misused words, such as “cognitive” for “cognizant” and “perspective” for “respective,” do not reflect well on the author.

Perhaps most distracting, however, is Fisher’s mixing of tenses. “The shower feels great, and the … dreams came back to me,” and “I try to push Ava to safety, but there was not enough time” are statements that supposedly take place in the present. In each instance, the change in tense results in a subconscious jerk that draws the reader out of the story for a moment, just enough to be distracting.

Finally, the very ending of *The 6th Dream*, meant to be a surprise, is indeed exactly that, but not in a good way. With the vibrant imagination Fisher has already shown he possesses, he is certainly capable of writing a stronger and more satisfyng conclusion.

Cheryl Hibbard