



# A study of Psychoanalysis in *Tell me your Dreams* by Sidney Sheldon

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## Abstract:

This paper explores the analysis of the multi personality characters in the novel *Tell me your dreams* by one of the most and bestselling American writer Sidney Sheldon. This novel tells an interesting mysterious story with a woman as the main character. Childhood experiences are a common factor in everyone's life. It might help to see who the human beings are. Some may be funny and some are scary. Strange combinations of ideas and emotions in the mind can lead to disaster. This research tries to analyse the different identities that reside within the protagonist. When childhood memories from the day are repeated in the brain during sleep, the experience can become stronger. When a person's sleep was filled with nightmares and they woke every morning with a sense of impending doom. It also affects the future behaviour and life of the individual. Interpreting nightmares can offer insight into today or glimpses of the future.

## Keywords:

Personality disorder, Trauma, Childhood, Disassociation, Homicide.

## Introduction

American writer and Hollywood producer, Sidney Sheldon has been a master thriller writer, an unsurpassed favourite among millions of readers. Sidney Sheldon had a sparse, almost journalistic writing style. He did not linger heavily on detail, except where it was really essential to setting a scene. Popular for his racy thrillers that are studded with mystery, crime, passion, and lust, Sidney Sheldon's novels have been claimed to be the most compelling ones in the genre. Sheldon was awarded an Academy Award, a Tony Award, and had an Emmy nomination for his writing and producing prowess and the latest Guinness Book of Records heralds him as the most translated author in the world. Many of his novels have been made into highly successful television miniseries and he has also written the screenplays for twenty-three motion pictures. His most famous works are *If Tomorrow comes* (1985), *Master of the game* (1982), *The other side of Midnight* (1973), *Tell me your dreams* (1998), *Nothing lasts forever* (1994). Sheldon is consistently cited as one of the top-10 best-selling fiction writers of all time. *Tell me your dreams* is an exciting, engaging and interesting novel based on the concept of Multiple Personality Disorder or Split Personality. Sidney was very good at setting up a mystery and constructing a story, as well as drawing believable characters quickly and efficiently.

## Glimpse of the Novel:

The story begins with "Ashley Patterson", a computer whiz who believes someone is following her. She's shy, introverted, tireless worker, loner, and not on good terms with her father Dr. Steven Patterson, who was a famous heart surgeon. Her coworkers: Toni Prescott, an outgoing singer and dancer. She is a strong and courageous woman who devotes her time to internet dating; Alette Peters is an aspiring artist and has inborn talent of painting who is quiet and spends her weekends at church. The three women don't get along very well due to their different natures. Toni and Alette generally maintain a friendship, but Toni

dislikes Ashley and criticises her harshly. All three have problems with their mothers, who told them they would never become anything. Ashley fears someone is following her. Two other murders have already occurred, with an identical pattern. All of the murdered men had been castrated and had sexual relations before being murdered. The evidence suggests that the same woman was involved in all the cases. When a gift from one of the murdered men for Toni is found among Ashley's belongings, she is identified as the murderer and arrested. At this point, the three women emerge as the three selves of a woman suffering from Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD).

The second half of the novel deals with Ashley's violent personality, the court is convinced that Ashley is innocent. Ashley is committed to an insane asylum, She was sexually abused as a child, which led to her developing a strong hatred for men. At the asylum, Ashley is treated for MPD. It is revealed that his father, Dr. Steven was the one who sexually abused her which caused her to develop dissociative identity disorder which led to the creation of Alter Toni and became an object of hatred for her mother. While living in Italy as a teenager, she was again attacked by her father, leading to the creation of Alette. She turned into a very soft person, but the softer side of Ashley is just a front to tell Dr. Gilbert to show him that she's finally come to terms with everything so she and Alette can break out of the asylum to kill her father, who is staying in the Hamptons for Christmas. In the end, Ashley takes a train to the Hamptons, where her father is staying, when Toni suddenly appears to kill him.

### **Psychoanalytical Approach:**

Multiple personality disorder is one of the dysfunctional behaviours where the person or a patient can have at least two characters or personalities. This disease is the disease of perplexity due to the character change that can occur under any circumstance. As same as in this novel, Ashley Patterson, later identified as a multiple personality disorder patient, commits crimes against her male colleagues. These Personalities present in the same person as a result of a defence mechanism that may have been activated due to trauma. In this case, Toni and Alette were two personalities created by Ashley's subconscious to protect her from further harm. There are several conditions found to be associated with this disorder, including self-harm, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). But Trauma and Childhood experience is seen as one of the biggest reasons for triggering these dissociative identity disorders. It also includes unexplained loss of personal information from memory. As a result, the subconscious creates distinct personality poles other than its personal as a defence mechanism to safeguard itself from the nightmarish recollections of the trauma. So Toni and Alette's characters were subconsciously created to defend Ashley.

Her childhood experience influenced her to have this split personality. Ashley has this horrific experience alongside the abuse, When she was six years old when the first abuse took place in London. The subsequent abuse happened when he was eight years old in Rome. Her father sexually abused her and her mother also ignored her. Ashley's real character is the character she normally uses in her normal daily life. The other two characters stayed in Ashley's body until she became an adult. They dated or took up part of the time, especially when Ashley comes to terms with their horrible encounters. The first alter represents her struggle and fear as a helpless immature child, and (Toni) becomes a protective child and becomes homicidal when faced with similar conditions. While the second person (Alette) portrays her feelings of shame and pain at having been raped, she becomes a console source, exuding warmth and motherly love and having a good relationship with Ashley. Ashley suffered from the common side effects of multiple personality disorder. They are like the accompaniment: 1. Ashley is constantly disturbed by the recurring event (terrible accident) in her life and by the imagination of disturbed occasion (terrible bad dream). 2. Ashley or Toni constantly strive to maintain a strategic distance from the slope and consider injury, and constantly strive to keep themselves away from exercises or circumstances related to the cause of the injury. Ashley persistent amnesia or lack of revision of the essential factor in her memories of the horrible. The following information are clear manifestations of Ashley. In Ashley's case, she is not simply a victim of abuse from his father, but also despised by his mother.

On the other hand, she is constantly caused by bad dreams. Ashley also felt being followed by someone. She felt like someone was going to kill her. Ashley felt nervous and felt persecuted. She has a similar bad dream almost every night. She was confronted with the horrible bad dream as well as the feeling of being followed. Ashley assumed that usually someone followed her and had to kill her. Ashley's bad dream is a direct result of her pressure and her terrifying creativity being pursued. The feeling of weight and

the thought that keeps playing in a person's brain can also exhaust and put them off. The feeling of maintaining a strategic distance from the ordeal can affect anyone. This is the mind's programmed arrangement. Sigmund Freud's theory of dreams suggests that dreams represent unconscious desires, thoughts, wish fulfilment, and motivations. According to Freud, people are driven by repressed and unconscious longings, such as aggressive and sexual instincts. So because of her personal experience awful nightmares and early life recollections leads her to create a person known as Toni and Alette Who had been brutally killed and castrated after sex through the character Ashley Patterson, who commits the murder of five men. The barbaric murders committed by one but three personalities but one personalities rightly result in the trace of a troubled mind and heart crying out for help and a riot seeking salvation, through love and tenderness made Ashley surrender to the devil of affliction or grief. With reference to the article psychological conflict in Anita Desai's *Cry the Peacock* by Suganya B and M John Suganya, this paper explores the study of Psychoanalysis in *Tell me your Dreams* by Sidney Sheldon.

## Conclusion:

"It's important to define one's values and understand who they are" (web). Each person has different faces both internally and externally. One is focused towards the outer world. It is a very personal and well designed one which everyone creates for the world to see. This face only allows to connect, interact and shape strong relationships. Next is the face that is most effectively recognised only by self conscious. Unlike the outer face which is usually an ideal one, the directed inward face comes with its personal shadows. This face talks approximately about one's real selves, traumas, desires, and tendencies. Most people hide their inner character. Their experience, memories and trauma, will get stored in the subconscious mind. When their ego is stimulated, their original face comes and burst out and they show who they are. Though these character changes are able to be identified by normal people whereas in Ashley's the characters were unnoticed by her.

"Crime committed by a sense mind deserves to be punished, but crime committed by a lost sense, a lost heart & soul pursuits treatment" (web)

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