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The Edge Of Dreaming



Reviewed By: [Amber Wilkinson](#)

What would you do if you dreamt you were going to die? Roll over and forget about it or lie awake considering it as a possibility? I suspect those are questions that is hard to know the answer to unless it has actually happened. It happened to director Amy Hardie.

A science documentarian by trade, she had begun investigating the nuts and bolts of death after her mother died suddenly from a type of leukaemia. But her rational exploration was rocked by something as innocent-sounding as a dream. Having never recalled one before, she woke in her house in the Scottish Borders from one in which her horse had died. Shaken, she got up to check on him and discovered that he had, indeed, passed away in the night from a heart attack. Just a coincidence, she thought... until she had a second dream predicting that she would die at some point after turning 48, just days before her 48th birthday.

What follows is an intimate document of the next, difficult, year of Hardie's life as she begins to question her rational approach and discovers that even when you aren't superstitious, fear can still take root - "it's like mushrooms," she says. "It grows on its own in the dark." Personal documentaries are prone to pitfalls, with many sinking so far into navel-gazing that it's difficult to care. But rather than pushing you away, Hardie's film draws you towards its intimacy. This is less a straightforward year in the life, than an emotional, poetic snapshot, exploring themes to which we can all relate - mortality and the fear of death.



Hardie - helped immeasurably by the sharp and sympathetic editing of Ling Lee - develops a structure for her film that mimics a dream in its loose overlapping of images and thoughts, which gradually build to form an impressionistic whole. Although artistic in temperament, the film is pacey and Hardie's storytelling enviably economical. Home video footage from the past and present is interwoven with her own observations, interviews with neuroscientists, some beautiful photography of changing seasons in the Borders and evocative animation of the dreams she experiences to build a lyrical picture of her life with her family in the here and now and her search for answers.

This is less a factual chart than an emotional hug of a film, embracing themes and ideas and broadening out to be not just a scientific examination of our own 'mind map' but a consideration of our visceral response to dreams. Affecting, and ultimately, brimming with optimism, Hardie's film is a genuine one-off that encourages contemplation.



Documentary exploring the relationship between humans and their dreams, from the personal perspective of the director.

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Director: [Amy Hardie](#)
Cast:
Runtime: 73 minutes
Year: 2009
Country: UK
Festivals: [EIFF 2010](#)

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