

Learning by Ear – General Knowledge, Episode 6 “Why do we dream?”

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Directing infos

People:

Announcer

Jenny: ca. 14-year-old girl

Jack: ca. 15-year-old boy

Jack's grandma: nice old lady

Actor / king dignified / dramatic voice

Locations:

At Jack's home

Outside (under a tree)

Atmos / Sounds / Music:

Dramatic film music in the background (something like Celine Dion or out of "10,000 BC")

Film music plays and then stops abruptly (Jack turns off the film)

Rustling of potato chips bag / reaching in to bag / eating chips

Putting away glasses

Clashing of plates

Rustling of aluminum bags

Steps

Fast steps coming closer

Putting plates on wood

Insects flying around in the heat / Birds twittering...

Calm and deep breaths, light snoring

INTRO (Announcer):

Hello and a warm welcome to the latest radio play from the Learning by Ear "General Knowledge" series! This time, however, we're not really talking about everyDAY but more about night and sleeping. And to be more precise, we're actually talking about the dreams we have when we're sleeping. It all begins so romantically -- Jack invites Jenny so they can watch a love movie together and just as everything is going so well and his dreams are about to be fulfilled, Jenny goes and asks one of her typical questions, which has nothing to do with romance whatsoever -- "Why do we actually dream in the first place?" she asks.

1. Szene:

1. Atmo: Dramatic film music in the background (something like Celine Dion or out of "10,000 BC"

Rustling of potato chips bag / reaching in to bag / eating chips

Jack: *(whispering, ordering)* "Sshh Jenny! Stop making such a racket! *(breathes out deeply, sucks in his breath and is carried away)* Now! Listen carefully, the old king is about to say the most important lines of the film!"

2. Atmo: Actor (Man, very dramatic, in the background)

"And in the end you two lovers become the leaders of all the people in the land of yellow hills *(Fade in film music and out again)* Because you always believed in your dreams and always knew they would come true..." *(Fade in film music again)*

Jenny: *("talking over the lines")*

(annoyed, groans) "Boo -- what a soppy movie! I can't take this! *(bites into a chip, smacks her lips)* Does it go on for much longer?"

3. Atmo: Film music plays and then stops abruptly (Jack turns off the film)

Jack: *(breathes out deeply, then angry)* "No it doesn't -- it's finished! *(Huffs)* I'm never watching a film with you again! All you do is complain and fidget! Although it's such a chick movie -- *(calculating)* There's a couple and an argument and then the making-up and believing in dreams etc etc..."

Jenny: *(offended)*

"What do you mean a 'chick movie'? You're the one who was just crying your eyes out!"

Jack: *(vehemently)*

"I was not crying my eyes out!"

Jenny: *(teasing him)*

"So you didn't shed a tear or two? I'm sure you just had some thing in your eye then when you wiped away those tears and then something must have got up your nose!!"

Jack: *(meekly)*

"Well, I did think it was cool the way they both stood up for each other in the film -- *(enthusiastic)* Whatever happened and whatever anyone said they always fought for each other and made sure their dreams came true! Why are you laughing? What's so funny about that then?"

Jenny: *(amused)*

„I'm just thinking about what would happen if my dreams came true. That would be mad! I usually dream total nonsense!"

Jack: *(arguing)*

"Not that kind of dream!"

Jenny:

"I know, I know, but I've never really understood why we always say that. Like, I'm dreaming of becoming a football player or if I lose three kilos I'll finally have my *dream figure*..."

Jack: *(interrupts, teasing)*

"three kilos wouldn't be enough!"

Jenny:

"Oh shut up! I mean it always sounds as though dreams are the same as wishes."

Jack:

"Or ideas, or aims."

Jenny:

"Exactly! But that's total nonsense! I've always imagined becoming a professional footballer but I've never *dreamt* about it, I mean never while I was sleeping! Sometimes I can fly and sometimes I dream that I want to run after a ball but I'm rooted to the spot. That kind of thing (*laughing*) things that would prevent me from becoming a professional footballer if they were to come true. In other words, dreams are totally unnecessary, aren't they? I mean, why do we dream in the first place?"

MUSIC

2. Scene:

1. Atmo: **Putting away glasses / Clashing of plates / Rustling of aluminum bags / Steps (Jack is clearing up)**

Jack: *(on the atmo) (annoyed, imitating Jenny)* "Why do we dream in the first place?" *(swears quietly to himself)* Typical Jenny! Soooooo unromantic!!! *(rummaging around)* Now I'm stranded just like an idiot who's been dreamed away! But I swear I'm never going to *(frightened)* GRANDMA???

Jack's grandma: *(concerned)*

"Oh, sorry boy! I didn't want to frighten you. I heard someone swearing in the room and I wanted to see what was going on *(confused)*. Are you already clearing up? Isn't Jenny here any more?"

Jack: *(annoyed)*

"Nope!"

Jacks Oma:

"Did you have an argument?"

Jack: *(very annoyed, rummaging around (sounds like above))*

"Grandma can't you just leave me alone? It's none of your business! *(resigned, breathing out)* OK, OK, let's keep it short and sweet. Is it true that dreams are totally unnecessary and don't have any point?"

Jacks Oma: *(comforting, kind)* "Of course not! Did Jenny say that? Is she very alert this Jenny? Full of energy and quite chaotic?"

Jack: *(confused, to himself a bit)*

"Chaotic? You can say that again! What should I do with these peanuts, grandma?"

Oma:

"Just put them on that cupboard."

2. Atmo: Putting plates on wood

Jack:

"But what does that have to do with dreaming?"

Oma:

"Well, when we dream our brain does exactly the same as what you're doing now..."

Jack: *(a bit stupidly, confused)*

"It talks with its grandma?"

Oma:

"Don't be stupid! It doesn't talk with its grandma, the brain tidies up!"

Jack: *(still confused)*

"What do you mean the brain tidies up?"

Oma:

"Well, when we're sleeping, the brain stays awake. And then it puts all the impressions it's gathered over the day in some kind of order, sorts out the unimportant experiences and saves the new images and impressions. Like you now as you go about your clearing up. You put the plates with the plates, throw away the empty peanut shells, etc etc. You open the cupboard to put something away there and then you find some old stuff... When the brain wants to put an impression in the right place and rummages in the cupboard, so-to-speak, to find a suitable home for it, it sometimes brings up long-forgotten images. That's what dreams are!"

Jack:

"Dreaming is basically like clearing up then? Now I understand."

Oma: *(proud that she was able to explain everything so well)*

"Good. And by the way, dreams are always only a couple of minutes long. And usually we dream just before we wake up. And when the brain announces it tidy and can absorb new impressions again, we wake up."

Jack: *(laughing, not really listening to his grandma anymore)*

"So Jenny is right -- dreaming is like clearing up and therefore totally unnecessary!"

MUSIC

3. Scene:

- 1. Atmo:** *(Jenny is outside under a tree -- sleeping)*
 Insects flying around in the heat / Birds twittering...
 Calm and deep breaths, light snoring
 Fast steps coming closer

Jack: *(calls, first from a distance, then getting closer)*

"Jenny! Je--nny! *(to himself)* Oh, there she is, under that tree... That's got to be her..."

- 2. Atmo:** **Steps**

Jack: *(arrives, a bit out of breath)*

"Jenny, hi! I've got to tell you something. You were totally right!"

Jenny / 3. Atmo: **draws in breath, snores softly**

Jack: *(confused)*

"Are you sleeping, or what?" *(Jenny draws breath)* You can't be! *(Disarmed)* You're joking, she's just lying under this tree sleeping! *(shakes her a bit)* I'm going to hold her nose and then at least she'll stop snoring!"

Jenny / 4. Atmo: **breathing loudly**

DW-Radio Learning By Ear General Knowledge: Dreaming

Jack: *(completely frightened)* "Oh, my God, what's going on? Jenny's eyes are twitching wildly! *(panicking)* Maybe she's in a coma! *(Worried)* Oh god, what should I do? *(calling, worried)* Jenny, Jenny come to, please come to!"

Jenny: *(sleeping still a bit grumpy not awake yet)*

"What is going on? What's all this noise about? You're as pale as a ghost. What's wrong?"

Jack: *(relieved)*

"Jenny! What a relief! What luck! You're still alive!"

Jenny: *(not getting anything)*

"What?"

Jack: *(as if talking about heroic deeds and surmounted adventures)*

"Jenny, you're so lucky that I happened to be passing by! You were lying under the tree and I walked towards you and found you unconscious and your eyes were twitching and basically I didn't stop to think and ..."

Jenny: *(interrupts him dryly)*

"Jack? Sorry to spoil your story but you didn't save my life at all. You merely interrupted my REM sleep experiment."

Jack: *(sulkily)*

"What REM sleep?"

Jenny: *(lecturing)*

"REM stands for "Rapid Eye Movement" and researchers call the stage when the eyes move the fastest, REM sleep."

Jack: *(not understanding anything)*

"So?"

Jenny:

"Well, that's when we dream as well -- during the REM sleep stage."

Jack: *(really angry and very loud)*

"So does that mean I've just been scared to death and was worried for your life just because YOU are EXPERIMENTING with DREAMS? Even though you said they were totally UNNECESSARY??!!"

Jenny: *(meekly)*

"Well, maybe I did speak a bit soon yesterday when we were watching that film. Once I got home I asked my mum about dreams and what they were for etc etc.. She always reads the family pages in the newspaper and they are always talking about stuff like that. Anyway, she told me dreams were very important. They're like..."

Jack: *(interrupts her triumphantly)*

"like tidying up your brain. Right?"

Jenny: *(surprised)*

"Nonsense! *(short pause, then thinking aloud)* If they were like tidying up the brain they really would be unnecessary *(giggling)* That's what I think about tidying up anyway."

Jack:

"Ahh"

Jenny: *(continuing undisturbed)*

"My mum told me that researchers aren't really agreed on the function of dreams but most of them assume they have a point of some kind. Some say that all the impressions of the day are copied over from where the short-term memory is in the brain to where the long-term memory is. So basically dreams wipe the slate clean -- they empty storage space as such. Unimportant images or impressions are thrown away after we see them briefly in our dreams."

Jack: *(a bit defiantly)*

"Exactly what I was saying -- like tidying up!"

Jenny: *(with a start)*

"You're right! Like tidying up. (*small pause and then sniggering conspiratorially*) That must only be true of nightmares. Whatever. But other researchers think that we re-experience things, which have had a strong impact on us, in our dreams, such as accidents or natural disasters."

Jack: (*bored*)

"or tidying up our rooms..."

Jenny: (*lecturing*)

"Yes, exactly. And dreams help us to process these things. But other researchers, again, think that dreams can show us ways of solving our unresolved problems -- problems we can't solve when we're awake. And yet others think that dreams are just random images, which are caused by the fact that the brain matures during REM sleep. Or that dreams keep the brain awake so that we can function normally after we wake up. Or..."

Jack / 5. Atmo: **Calm and deep breaths, light snoring**

Jenny: (*stops*)

"Jack?" (*angry*) Now he's sleeping! (*Jack snores, Jenny is stunned*) You're joking! There you are -- my friend Jack is a nightmare. To talk to him about dreams is totally unnecessary!"

MUSIC

OUTRO (Announcer):

Wakey wakey! Thanks for dreaming along with us and remember that anyone who wants to impress their dream prince or princess with all these facts about sleep and dreams can listen to the program again and read up on all the science at <http://www.dw-world/lbe>. This program was dreamt up by Lydia Heller. Thanks for listening and remember to tune in next time!