



## Sleep Paralysis (Studies in Medical Anthropology)

*Shelley R Adler*

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*Sleep Paralysis* explores a distinctive form of nocturnal fright: the "night-mare," or incubus. In its original meaning a night-mare was the nocturnal visit of an evil being that threatened to press the life out of its victim. Today, it is known as sleep paralysis-a state of consciousness between sleep and wakefulness, when you are unable to move or speak and may experience vivid and often frightening hallucinations. Culture, history, and biology intersect to produce this terrifying sleep phenomenon. Although a relatively common experience across cultures, it is rarely recognized or understood in the contemporary United States.

Shelley R. Adler's fifteen years of field and archival research focus on the ways in which night-mare attacks have been experienced and interpreted throughout history and across cultures and how, in a unique example of the effect of nocebo (placebo's evil twin), the combination of meaning and biology may result in sudden nocturnal death.



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