

# DREAM CHILDREN: A REVERIE

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# Author's Introduction

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- Charles Lamb wore many hats as a writer, but he is best known as an essayist.
- His essays show his passions and anxieties.
- They are imbued with a personal dimension.
- His essays toe the line between fiction and non-fiction.
- The character of Elia gave Lamb freedom to fictionalize his life comfortably.

## Characters

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- Elia is Charles Lamb's narratorial persona.
- Whenever Lamb writes of Cousin Bridget, he is referring to his sister, Mary.
- John L. is Elia's heroic older brother. Elia mourns his death and bemoans his own shortcomings.
- John and Alice are Elia's dream children. And Field is their great-grandmother.

# Summary

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- Elia's children gather around him to hear stories about their great-grandmother, who lived in a mansion that she cared for.
- At her funeral, everyone praised her goodness and religious faith.
- The young Elia used to wander the grounds of that mansion admiring all of the marble busts. He spent his days picking the various fruit from around the grounds of the estate.
- Then he tells them about his elder brother John L., a handsome and great-spirited young man who rode horses from a young age.
- Then he talks to the children about the seven years he spent courting their mother, Alice.
- Suddenly, he wakes up in his arm-chair where he has fallen asleep with Bridget by his side.

# Analysis

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- “Dream Children” blurs genre lines between essay and fiction.
- It reads more like a fictional narrative inside of a dream.
- Lamb seems to be writing about a fantasized version of his real life.
- Lamb models the essay on a dream, bringing his creative faculties to the fore.
- The essay presents characters and incidents from Lamb’s own life.