



WHAT DREAMS MAY COME

Released: 1998 by Polygram Films

Produced by: Stephen Simon and Barnet Bain

Screenplay: Ron Bass (based upon the novel by
Richard Matheson)

Music: Michael Kamen

Director of Photography: Eduardo Serra

Directed by: Vincent Ward

Starring: Robin Williams, Cuba Gooding Jr., Annabella
Sciorra, Max von Sydow, Jessica Brooks Grant, Josh
Paddock, Rosalind Chao

Rated: **PG-13**

Heaven, or the afterlife, seems to be a very hot topic in Hollywood these days. Forget what you may have learned in Sunday school, however, we're talking heaven with great special effects and good food—a place where every person's belief structure is accommodated.

Visually, *What Dreams May Come* is a treat. Director of Photography Eduardo Serra gives us beautiful, impressionistic landscapes, vibrant with vivid washes of color, and rife with the interplay of shadow and light. At one point, the film lapses into a dull, monochromatic palette. The sudden absence of all that color serves to strikingly illustrate the events that occur. The score by Michael Kamen is also appropriate to the subject matter. Kamen has written an unobtrusive score, seamlessly weaving a background of aural color as artfully as does the Director of Photography in visual terms.

As far as acting goes, Robin Williams seems to be on a campaign to develop his dramatic chops. Coming off his triumph in *Good Will Hunting*, he delivers another top-notch performance. His range is growing by leaps and bounds. Cuba Gooding Jr. and Annabella Sciorra offer performances that stand up to William's level of excellence. I especially liked the fact that director Vincent Ward chose to use people who look like us rather than Hollywood's A-list of beautiful people. Coupled with his sure-handed direction, Ward's choice of actors lends an authenticity to each performance.

In spite of its obvious strengths, *What Dreams May Come* can only be viewed as a fantasy. On the surface, it purports to be a love story that transcends even death itself. Despite its attempt at heavy insights into the male/female relationship, however, *What Dreams May Come* offers little illumination into it. When it attempts to depict the afterlife, every cliché and religious viewpoint seems to have been incorporated into Ron Bass's screenplay. In my opinion, *What Dreams May Come* ultimately fails because it doesn't take a definite stand on any particular viewpoint. Heaven is a multi-cultural, dreamlike potpourri of scenery and places, derived from the minds of the people who dwell there. To be consigned to a heaven of my own imagination would be my idea of *hell*. It is my fervent belief that God has more imagination than I do.