The woman to whom the eminent historian, Bruce Catton, refers is Julia Dent Grant, wife of the President and great American general Ulysses S. Grant. Her recently published memoirs, the existence of which were previously unknown except to her family, reveal her to have been a person who had numerous psychic experiences throughout her life. History demonstrates that she indeed influenced her husband in many ways; her memoirs indicate that the source of some of her advice to him, and of her urging him toward various actions, came from dreams and intuitions which proved remarkably accurate.

The course of American history would have been very different had Julia not had a premonition which impelled her to leave Washington, D.C. the evening of April 14, 1865, the night when President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated in Ford's Theater.

Thursday, April 13, 1865, had been a day of joy, gratitude, and celebration throughout Washington. The tragic and bitter Civil War was ended. The city glowed that evening with an "illumination." Every government building and many private ones were brilliantly lighted in honor of peace restored to the nation. General and Mrs.

Ulysses S. Grant were invited to accompany Secretary of War Stanton and Mrs. Stanton on a tour of the city, ending at the Stanton's residence where a gala reception was held. General Grant, the hero of the nation, received congratulations and expressions of gratitude from all the great men who were assembled in Washington at that time. Mrs. Grant glowed in the adulation of her husband.

Yet the next morning she awoke with a compulsive urge to leave Washington and return to the Grant's small house in Burlington, New Jersey. As soon as General Grant awoke she begged him to take her and their youngest son, Jesse, the only one of their four children with them at that time, and leave Washington that day.

The General told Julia that he couldn't promise, as he had an appointment with President Lincoln at nine o'clock that morning. Just then a messenger came with a note from President Lincoln, delaying the appointment until eleven o'clock. General Grant said this made it unlikely he could leave that day, but Julia pleaded so insistently that he said he would do what he could and would certainly take her if it were possible.

Julia's sense of urgency increased. In her words, "I do not know what possessed me to take such a freak, but go home I felt I must." About noon she answered a rap at the door of her...
hotels room and saw a man whose dress and manner she thought strange. He bowed and said, "This is Mrs. Grant?" When Julia assented, he continued, "Mrs. Lincoln sends me, him, with her compliments, to say she will call for you at exactly eight o'clock to go to the theater." Mrs. Grant found the attitude of the man discourteous and his message seemed like a command; she bridled at both.

"You may return with my compliments to Mrs. Lincoln and say I regret that as General Grant and I intend leaving the city this afternoon, we will not, therefore, be here to accompany the President and Mrs. Lincoln to the theater." The man hesitated a moment, then spoke more urgently, "Madam, the papers announce that General Grant will be with the President tonight at the theater." Julia responded, with some acerbity, "You deliver my message to Mrs. Lincoln as I have given it to you. You may go now."

That was not the last Julia was to see of the young man. After receiving the invitation from Mrs. Lincoln, Julia wrote a note to General Grant urging him to go to Burlington that evening, saying she did not want to go to Ford's Theater, that he must take her home. And when three staff officers called to pay their respects to her, she dispatched them to urge the General to leave Washington that night. The General sent back word that she was to have her trunks ready, and for her and Jesse to have lunch, and if he could be back in time they would leave for Philadelphia on the evening train, en route to Burlington.

Thus it was that Julia and Jesse were at late luncheon with a friend, Mrs. Rawlins, and her little girl, when four men entered the dining room and sat opposite the ladies.

Julia tells us, "I thought I recognized in one of them the messenger of the morning, and one, a dark, pale man, played with his soap spoon, sometimes filling it and holding it half-lifted to his mouth, but never tasting it. This occurred many times. He also seemed very intent on what we and the children were saying... I said to Mrs. Rawlins, in a low tone, 'Be careful, but observe the men opposite to us and tell me what you think.' After a moment or so she answered, '...I believe there is something peculiar about them.' I said, '...they have been listening to every word we have said. Do you know, I believe there will be an outbreak tonight or soon. I just feel it, and I am glad I am going away tonight.'"

When Julia and General Grant rode to the train depot, later that afternoon, that same "dark, pale man" rode past them at a gallop. Wheeling and turning back, he again rode close to the Grant carriage, thrusting his face as near to the General's as he could, glaring at him. The man was later identified as John Wilkes Booth, who would, in a few hours, keep his deadly rendezvous at Ford's Theater, assassinating President Lincoln.

The Grants continued on without incident to Burlington, having learned while at supper in Philadelphia of the tragedy in Washington. The mail the next morning brought a startling letter for General Grant. It read: "General Grant, thank God, as I do, that you still live. It was your life that fell to my lot, and I followed you on the cars. Your car door was locked, and thus you escaped me, thank God."

It was later learned that the name of General Grant was on the list to be assassinated and he had been expected to be in the box with President Lincoln at the theater. Only Julia Grant's strong premonition prevented a double assassination the night of April 14, 1865.

Julia Grant not only had many such intuitive experiences, she also recorded precognitive dreams which were fulfilled with astonishing accuracy. One of these occurred in May of 1844, when she was 18 years old. She refers to it as "a very odd dream."

The young Lieutenant Grant was stationed at Jefferson Barracks, near St. Louis, Missouri, only five miles from Julia's home. He had been very attentive to her for some time and just a couple of weeks previously had asked her to wear his class ring from West Point, explaining that he intended it to be an engagement ring. Julia declined, regarding Grant as a delightful friend rather than as a lover. Grant then left for his home in Ohio, on a leave of absence from Army duty. Meanwhile, his regiment was ordered to Louisiana and Julia understood from his fellow officers that if Grant did not return within ten days to see her he would be on his way down the Mississippi and would not be at the Barracks again.

The ten days passed with no sign of Grant and Julia found herself unexpectedly lonely for his company. Her room was newly furnished, and she remembered the old superstition that whatever you dream the first sight in a new bed will surely come true. Accordingly, when she retired that night, a Saturday, she "named the bedposts," not forgetting her absent friend, Lieutenant Grant. She did indeed dream of him. She saw him, dressed in civilian clothes, not in his uniform, arriving at her home at noon. He came in, greeted everyone cordially, seated himself near Julia; when she asked him how long he would remain, he said, "I am going to try to stay a week."

The next morning, Sunday, when Julia told her family about the dream they all exclaimed, "That dream will not come true. Julia, Mr. Grant is now calmly sauntering down the Mississippi, far below the mouth of the Ohio." Julia thought, regretfully, that they were quite right.

On Monday, at noon time, Julia and...
her maid were in Julia’s room. The maid looked out of the window and said that she saw Julia’s brother, John, at the gate, accompanied by Lieutenant Grant. The maid remarked that “Mr. Grant has on citizen’s clothes and how odd he looks in them, too.”

Julia described the ensuing scene: “I was, of course, pleased at his return and told him so, saying, as we seated ourselves with the family in the drawing room, ‘How long do you expect to remain, Mr. Grant?’ He replied, ‘I can go to stay a week.’ Then my sister exclaimed, ‘You have said the very words sister dreamed you did.’ I had not thought of my dream all of this time. He turned to me and asked if I had been dreaming of him. I replied that I had named one of my new belles下次 posts for him, and all of my dream had come true: he had returned at noon with the repulse to my question as to how long he would remain, and was dressed in citizen’s clothes. On inquiring how he happened to be dressed so, he told me he was wearing borrowed plumage; that he had plunged into Gravois Creek and was nearly drowned; was out of course very wet and had to borrow dry clothing from brother John, who lived some two miles from us.”

The incident of the wetting in the creek and the borrowed clothes is corroborated by Grant in his own memoirs, as well as an explanation of how he happened to be in Missouri instead of on the way to Louisiana, a totally unexpected occurrence.

The next several years Julia had other precognitive dreams. She became engaged to Lieutenant Grant in 1845, but their marriage was delayed for four years, part of which time Grant was in Mexico, fighting in the Mexican War. Julia was accustomed to hearing from him in each mail out of Mexico. She had been without a letter for a month when she dreamed that the Monday paper was handed to her and the second name in the “D’s” in the list of advertised letters was Julia Dent—2. The next morning was Monday and Julia was leaning out of her window when the paper was handed to her sister, Nell, who had just gone to the door. In Julia’s words, “I called down to her not to open the paper until I had told her my dream, that she must look at the second name in the “D’s” in the list of advertised letters and see if it was Julia Dent—2; and sure enough, there it was, and I lost no time in sending for those two very nice letters.”

About the same time Julia had another dream. She and her sister had wanted to go to New Orleans for the Mardi Gras, but it was not possible to do so. Julia dreamed that she arrived at New Orleans “amidst hurrahs, salutes of cannon, a great display of flags and flowers, and there were bright carpets spread for me to walk upon, or rather for the party I was with.” When Julia told this dream to her young friends she assured them that when she did go there, all this would happen. More than thirty years later, in 1880, Julia did go to New Orleans for the first time, accompanying her husband General Grant, who had completed his two terms as President of the United States in 1877.

As the Grants and their party approached the city a salute of twenty-one guns was fired and there were shouts of applause. The city was gay with flags and bunting and garlands of flowers. Bright carpets were spread for the visitors to walk upon. All was just as Julia had dreamed it.

In the spring of 1861 Grant was away on a visit to his family and had asked Julia to open his letters and forward the important ones to him. Some years earlier he had resigned his commission as a Captain in the United States Army. One night Julia dreamed the same dream three times.

She wrote of this incident: “I received through the mail a peculiar package from which, upon opening, an old and familiar ring of my mother’s (which I had always considered mine, but which was claimed by my sister at my mother’s death) tumbled out, wrapped up in tissue paper, and, as I loosened the paper, the little ring flashed out bright stars on the surrounding paper. Of course, I put my interpretation on this singular dream, so oft repeated, and wrote to my sister Emma, saying, ‘I will surely receive the ring before the week is over. Nell will remember it was mine and send it to me.’ Now comes the strange part of this dream. About the middle of the week (I had the dream Saturday night and wrote to Emma on Sunday), I did receive an unusual looking letter addressed to ‘Colonel U.S. Grant, Official Business.’ The difference in rank in the address I did notice, but on opening it, I found it contained a sheet of vellum, the face of which was entirely covered with tissue paper, and as I raised my hand to draw down the tissue covering, I expressed to view the great seal of the State of Illinois, which is spangled over with stars; just as in my dream, the little ring flashed out its stary light. A prophecy of Mamma’s, made long ago, now came vividly to my mind. This then was the meaning of the dream. Mamma had sent her little shining ring as a reminder, and so I interpreted it. The letter contained the commission of U.S. Grant as colonel of the 21st Illinois Volunteer Infantry.”

The prophecy Julia refers to had been made by her mother four or five years earlier. Julia and her sister, Nell Dent Sharp, were resting after dinner when Mrs. Dent joined them. She had been listening to a conversation between her husband and Captain Grant, Dr. Sharp, and several other gentlemen. Pointing a finger bearing the same ring about which Julia would dream later, Mrs. Dent said “I want to make a prophecy this Sunday afternoon... That little ring will fill the highest place in this government. His light is now hidden under a bushel, but circumstances will occur, and at no distant day, when his worth and wisdom will be shown and appreciated. You will all live to see it, but I will not.” Nell asked if her mother meant Dr. Sharp. “No,” answered Mrs. Dent, “I mean Captain Grant.”

Julia described two visions she experienced, both of which were proven true. The first was many years in the fulfillment, the second only a few days. The latter occurred during the early
days of the Civil War, when Grant was a colonel stationed in Missouri. Julia, who was living in Illinois with the children, was preparing to take them with her on a visit to Grant. The afternoon of her departure she lay down to rest; suddenly, while still awake, she distinctly saw her husband only a few yards away from her. She saw only his head and shoulders, about as high as if he were on horseback. He looked at her earnestly and she started up on the bed and called out "Ulysses!" A friend in the next room said, "Did you call?"

When told of the vision the friend said that Julia was just nervous about her husband and shouldn't think anything more about what she had seen. During the train trip, however, Julia heard the news of the battle of Belmont, in which Colonel Grant's unit was engaged. When Grant met her train she told him of seeing him on the day of the battle. He asked her at what hour she had seen him, and when told he said, "That is singular. Just about that time I was on horseback and in great peril, and I thought of you and the children, and what would become of you if I were lost. I was thinking of you, dear Julia, and very earnestly, too."

General Grant's *Personal Memoirs* include an account of his narrow escape from enemy bullets after the battle of Belmont, November 7, 1861, verifying the danger of his situation at the time of Julia's vision.

The other vision which Julia described was fulfilled during the Grant's travel in the Holy Land, several years after her husband had completed his tenure as President. Many years previously, when Julia was still at home with her mother and sisters, she had been reading aloud to them from Prescott's *History of the Conquest of Mexico*. She had just finished the account of Cortez' assault upon the capital of Mexico when they were interrupted by a servant making some inquiry. Julia sat back in her chair to rest "(for I do not know how long, when directly I saw a mountain with cliffs and precipices draped in overhanging clouds. Moving out of this cloud came a cavalcade of miniature horsemen with silver helmets, spears, and banner; and bright flags fluttering in the breeze. I saw them all so clearly, these horses and men, scarcely more than eighteen inches high, the horses champing their bits and tossing their tiny heads to loosen the reins as they wound up the rugged mountain in solemn procession."

In February 1878, the Grants were approaching Jerusalem on horseback, escorted by a large group of dignitaries and a guard of honor dressed in the elaborate uniform of the Turkish governor. The General and the greater part of the escort were some way in front of Julia and the rest of the party. As she looked ahead she saw the scene she had beheld in her vision, so many years earlier. "Every detail of this brilliant sight before me was so exact in every feature—the rugged mountain, the cliffs, the overhanging clouds, the silver helmets, the glittering lances, and gay banners— all, all were so exact with my daydream of long years ago that I cannot help but tell it here."

The Grant's daughter, Ellen Wrenshall Grant, called Nellie, had a pre-cognitive dream which is recorded by Julia. When Nellie was about eight years old, in the summer of 1865, the people of Philadelphia presented General Grant with a house in their city, in gratitude for his heroic service to the country. The first morning in the new house Nellie said, "Mamma, when are we going to our home?" Julia replied, "Why Nellie, this is our home. We are going to stay here always." Nellie looked at her mother and said, "No, Mamma, no. This is not our home. I have just come from there. Our house is a great, great house . . . (she struggled to find words to describe what she meant) like . . . like . . . the picture in my geography of the . . . the . . . Capitol in Washington; I know, Mamma, I was just there." Julia said, "No, no, little girl. You have been dreaming, little one." The small girl thought awhile and then agreed that she had indeed been dreaming. Nevertheless, it was only three years later that her father was elected President and in early 1869 the family moved into the White House. Nellie was married, in 1876, in that "great, great house" of which she had dreamed.

Julia Grant tells us little about her husband's reactions to her psychic experiences. Certainly General Grant seems not to have disdained them: on the contrary, he often followed her advice while knowing the source of the advice was an intimation or premonition. Indeed, had he not listened to Julia Dent Grant on that fateful day of April 14, 1865, he might not have lived to go on to hold the highest office of his country, the Presidency of the United States.