

CONVERSION

This section describes the necessary updates to play the adventure with the rules of *Dungeons & Dragons* 5th Edition. The updates follow the same order and have the same title as the parts in the original adventure. If a reference to a part of the adventure is absent, then it means that it does not require any modification and can be used in its original form.

The text appearing in this way is intended to be read or paraphrased to the characters when they arrive at a certain place or certain events occur, as described in the text.

The text that appears in these boxes contains additions to the adventure and game recommendations for the DM.

COMMON DREAMS

Most human, demihuman, and humanoid beings require sleep. During sleep, all beings dream, even if they can't recall any details. Sometimes dreams take frightening turns, but in general even the worst, most terrifying nightmares are part of the normal dreaming process.

Dreams help people work out the problems of the day, giving control to the subconscious for a time while the conscious mind rests. Dreams usually have a cathartic effect, helping to purge negative emotions or offering possible solutions or courses of action to the conscious mind. Normal nightmares work the same way as the subconscious reveals things that the conscious mind is afraid of in an effort to overcome those fears.

THE DREAM PLANE

All *DeD* campaign worlds exist on the Material Plane. Each separate world exists inside a separate bubble separated from the next by the Astral Sea. Each of these bubbles float somewhere in the Material Plane.

Surrounding the Material Plane are the mists of the Ethereal Plane. The Ethereal Plane consists of two distinct parts: the Border Ethereal and the Deep Ethereal.

The Border Ethereal touches the Material Plane, but it is really a place of both dimensions. When someone is in the Border Ethereal, it's here and there at the same time.

The Deep Ethereal is like a vast ocean, with islands of matter called demiplanes floating in its endless mists. The *Demiplane of Dread*, the setting for all *Ravenloft* campaigns, is located here. This demiplane of fear and madness includes the Nightmare Lands domain.

Between the Border and the Deep, a shimmering wall of

color stretches to separate one part from the other: the Wall of Color. It's a two-dimensional boundary, having width and length but no discernible depth. Those who have seen the northern lights of many material plane worlds mentally connect the phenomenon to the Wall of Color, for they appear similar. Those who understand the true nature of its existence, however, know this shimmering expanse by its real name: the Dream plane.

The Dream plane exists in the extradimensional, infinitesimal width of the Wall of Color. It is not a solid, travel-inhibiting barrier, but a translucent expanse of bright patterns of harmless energy. On one level of reality, it is simply a rainbow in the ethereal mist. On another, it holds the place where dreams occur.

Due to its connection to all Material Plane worlds via the mists of the Border Ethereal, the Dream plane is sort of a reflection of all reality. When a person dreams, a portion of its inner being interacts with this reflection. This dream-self maintains a connection with the physical body but also passes into the Dream plane in order to participate in normal dream scenes.

The exterior of the Wall of Color, the true boundary between the waking world and the Dream plane, is known as the Veil of Sleep. In common dreams, only a dream-self can cross the Veil of Sleep and enter the extradimensional space of the Dream plane (planar travellers simply pass through the Wall of Color and enter the Deep Ethereal). Inside the Dream plane, dreamers participate in separate and extremely personal dream scenes of their own (albeit subconscious) creation. Sometimes dream images can spill from one dreamer's scene into another's, or two or more dreamers can actually share the same dream scene, but these are extremely rare occurrences.

Ethereal travellers wandering near the Wall of Color can't see the multitude of dreams playing out within its shimmering surface. For one thing, those who are awake can't cross or see through the Veil of Sleep. For another, the dream scenes occur in a place that's slightly askew from normal reality. Particularly sensitive travellers might hear distant voices or catch some unexplainable movement out of the corner of their eyes, but that's about the only clues they'll encounter as to the true nature of the Dream plane.

A Twist in Cosmology

The actual standard *D&D* Multiverse setting does not speak of a Dream plane, and it is not a barrier between the Border and the Deep Ethereal. To use these rules you are not forced to diverge this much from the standard cosmology. The plane of Dreams could be a totally different plane located in any place you think logical or it could be something completely different. Anyway, to use these rules is advised to include the Dream plane somewhere in your own version of the Multiverse.

BOOK II: THE RULES OF DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES

The information that follows is not common knowledge to the inhabitants of the various campaign worlds. Indeed, the vast majority of people believe that dreams are nothing more than series of images, ideas, and emotions occurring during sleep. Some know bits of the true knowledge as legends or myths. A select few know the truth, though most of these people are wizards, priests, sages, or the rare planewalker (for few planewalkers know the reality of dreams).

THE REALITY OF DREAMS

Both the waking world and dreams have reality, though the level of that reality varies. For comparison, each level of reality is given a rating. This rating ranges from 1 (the most ephemeral) to 4 (the most real).

The vast majority of dreams taking place in the Dream plane have a reality level of 1. This means that the dream scene is real in and of itself, but it has no lasting effect on the waking world. Events in this level of reality are fleeting and insubstantial. They can affect the thoughts and emotions of the dreamer, but little else.

Rare individuals have the ability to inadvertently alter their dreams to level 2 reality. These dreams become more real, more tangible, and pocket dimensions called dreamscapes are formed to contain them. Within a dreamscape, dream scenes can have more lasting effects, even going so far as to change the physical reality of the waking world. Dreamers can be damaged or even killed by dream scenes with this level of reality.

The waking world is defined as level 3 reality. Nature operates by the normal laws of the world, whatever they may be. All prime worlds have this level of reality.

Level 4 reality is hyper-reality, where all things are more real than reality itself. Some portions of some planes may contain this level of reality. Events here are more pronounced, more potent. A blow inflicts more damage in this reality, a spell has more power, food tastes much better, and colors are more vibrant.

Legends claim that there is a fifth level of reality, places where the powers of the planes reside. If such a level of reality exists, it is beyond the reach of most mortal beings.

CONTROLLED DREAMS

Somewhere inside the *Demiplane of Dread*, in a domain called the Nightmare Lands, at least three levels of reality are at work at the same time. The fleeting dream streams of level 1 reality drift amid great clouds of level 2 reality, causing both to interact with the more permanent expanse

of level 3 reality to create a place of madness and constant change (Dr. Illhousen calls this combined reality “the Terrain Between”). This combination of reality levels gives the domain a unique relationship and special connection to the Dream plane.

Led by a mysterious dark lord called the Nightmare Man, the Nightmare Court feeds on the fears and insecurities of dreamers. The members of the Court specialize in different types of dreams, but they share a common desire - the dreams they crave are all nightmares.

The members of the Nightmare Court have the ability to reach into the Dream plane and drag dreamers into their realm of terror. They control a mystical, invisible web that stretches from the Nightmare Lands through the Deep Ethereal and into the Dream plane. Inside the Dream plane, the mystical filaments act like the strands of a spider’s web, waiting to snag unsuspecting dreamers instead of flies. Only dark dreams interest the Nightmare Court, other dreams are unaffected by the web.

A dreamer (actually, the dream-self) caught in the web is only held for a short period of time. During this period, the nightmare becomes a recurring dream. It plays out each night and sometimes multiple times in a single night. The fear and negative emotions it produces in the dreamer provides sustenance to the Nightmare Court.

Through the extended senses provided by the mystical web, the Nightmare Court’s members can gaze into the Dream plane and examine the dreams they have captured. When a particular dreamer interests a member of the Court, that dreamer’s dream-self is pulled down the web line and into the Nightmare Lands. In the Nightmare Lands, the dreamer becomes a prisoner whose darkest subconscious is used to entertain and feed a particular Court member.

Dream prisoners of the Nightmare Court are held in dreamscapes. They are similar to the ones that form in the Dream plane except that they are always in existence.

The inner regions of these pockets of dream reality are like empty stages waiting for plays and players to prance across them. Captured dreamers are locked inside the sphere, where their nightmares and darkest phobias provide the energy to create dream scenes.

Though a dreamer’s dream-self may be a prisoner of the Nightmare Court, its waking body shows signs of wear. Upon waking, a tormented dreamer appears haggard, in time, its physical and mental condition deteriorates as the benefits of restful sleep are denied. Paranoia sets in, eventually leading to true madness. If such a person doesn’t find release, insanity and failing health will eventually lead to death.

CHAPTER II: DREAM RULES



despite the fact that Dr. Gregorian Illhousen of Nova Vaasa is right about a great many things, his theory that the Nightmare Lands domain operates without any discernible rules isn't one of them. In fact, all dreams have rules. It's just that the rules don't follow any set pattern. Bluntly, dream reality is a reality of constant change - everything is subject to change in a dream, even the rules that govern the dream reality.

In this chapter, the rules governing normal dreams and nightmares are presented first, followed by rules and rule modifications specific to the Nightmare Lands. The base rules can be used in any *DeD* campaign setting. The modified rules apply only to *Ravenloft* and the Nightmare Lands.

CREATING DREAM-SELVES

Every character with the capacity to sleep and dream has a counterpart *dream-self* that participates in events that occur in level 1 and level 2 realities. If a player character is going to adventure in either dream reality, the player should prepare a separate character record sheet for the character's dream persona.

ABILITY SCORES

A character's dream-self has the same Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores as its waking self. The dream-self's Strength and Dexterity scores are based on the character's mental abilities, though its perceptions of its physical abilities may modify the scores.

Strength Score: A dream-self's Strength score is equal to its Wisdom score, for willpower equates to strength in dream realities. The character's physical Strength score can modify the dream Strength score, as a physically weak or powerful character will expect to be similarly weak or powerful in a dream. This adjustment is the same as the character's Strength modifier. In no case will the adjustment lower a score below 3 or raise it above 20.

For example, Thorin has a Wisdom score of 12. This makes its dream-self's Strength score 12 as well. However, its real Strength score of 17 has a +3 modifier. This is added to the dream Strength to give Thorin's dream-self a Strength score of 15 ($12 + 3 = 15$).

Dexterity Score: A dream-self's Dexterity score is equal to the character's Intelligence score, for Intelligence measures a character's mental agility. The character's Dexterity score can modify this number, as dexterous or clumsy characters continue to perceive themselves as such even in dreams. This adjustment is the same as the character's Dexterity modifier. In no case will the adjustment lower a

score below 3 or raise it above 20.

For example, Thorin has an Intelligence score of 14. This gives its dream-self a Dexterity of 14. However, its real Dexterity score of 18 provides a +4 modifier. This is added to the dream Dexterity to give Thorin's dream-self a Dexterity score of 18 ($14 + 4 = 18$).

OTHER CHARACTERISTICS

How do the rest of a character's statistics translate into a dream-self? In many cases, there are no changes unless the dream scene itself imposes them. A dream-self's base characteristics are determined as follows.

Alignment: A dream-self's alignment is the same as that of its waking character. However, a character's alignment can have some affect on certain types of dreams and nightmares.

Dreams, by their very nature, are chaotic. For this reason, when a dream becomes particularly chaotic and frenzied, lawful and neutral characters have disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Armor Class: A dream-self usually carries the same equipment as its waking character. This means that a dream-self's Armor Class is the same as the waking character's, though be sure to check the dream-self's Dexterity bonus as the dream Dexterity is different from the waking Dexterity.

Speed: A dream-self has the same speed as its waking character.

Hit Points: A character's dream-self always begins a dream scene with the character's total hit points, even if the character has recently suffered damage and isn't currently at its maximum. This reflects the character's ideal view of itself. In some cases, a dream or nightmare may dictate that the dream-self enters the scene with less than maximum hit points. Such a case would be if a wounded character were to experience a nightmare about the pain and damage it suffered.

If a dream-self experiences multiple dream scenes in a single period of sleep, it falls to you and the nature of the dream scenes to determine how hit points are recorded. Some nights, a dream-self's hit points are calculated from one scene to the next, losing or gaining hit points as though each scene was a continuation of the one before. On other nights, each scene is considered a separate situation, and the dream-self's hit point total is determined by the nature of each scene. There is no continuation in these scenes; the hit point total rises and falls to match each situation.

In dreamscapes controlled by the Nightmare Court,