



Michael Moorcock's

Elric OF MELNIBONÉ

DREAM REALMS

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Sample file

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INTRODUCTION



But we do not wish Prince Elric, for instance, to give his life, for that would mean he could not fulfil his destiny elsewhere. So you see, dear Lord Reynard, we act out of necessity, not sentiment, nor always decently, nor always courageously, in a highly complex conflict, full of subtle attack and counterattack. Imagine a large orchestra, in which every instrument must be in perfect tune if a particular piece of music is to be played, also perfectly and at a specific moment. Yet each member of that orchestra can be separated by thousands of miles or even thousands of years, scattered across the Multiverse, which, if not infinite, appears to be infinite. If only one of our heroes does not act as he is supposed to act, if events do not happen exactly when they are due to happen, if Elric and his avatars do not do what they must do precisely at the right moment, then there is no hope for any of us. Life will be extinguished. The Multiverse will collapse into inchoate primal matter, and there will be no intelligence, this time, to give it form.'

- Son of the White Wolf

Dreams play a pivotal role in the destiny of the Young Kingdoms and the Multiverse. Without the power he gained from twice embarking on the Dream of a Thousand Years, Elric of Melniboné would have been unable to fulfil the role given him by Fate; had he not shared a journey to the Dream Realms with the dreamthief Oone, he would have never conceived the aid needed to survive the second of those millennia-long quests.

Countless others have pierced the veil between the waking and sleeping worlds, from the early dreamthieves, who mapped the Dream Realms and in so naming them gave them their familiar form, to the Sorcerer-Emperors of Melniboné, who reigned for ten thousand years on the strength of dream-schooled sorcery, to less skilled rogues, who embarked upon slumberous adventures in desperation or by ill-chance.

Now you too can follow in these footsteps. From the couches of the Dreaming City of Imrryr, where a small portion of your soul can be traded for a thousand years of dreaming

life, to the dreams of the tormented, where a dreamthief's craft can ease pain and make profit, to your own dreams, where you may have to defend yourself against sorcerous attack – the Dream Realms offer power and peril as great as any found in the Young Kingdoms, and every adventurer should be prepared for both.

Dream Realms details the titular Realms as encountered by Elric and Oone in *The Fortress of the Pearl* and explores the variations hinted at by the dreamthief during that adventure. The Dream Realms present different vistas on every adventure, and the obstacles faced by Sorcerer-Emperor and mistress dreamthief are only a fraction of the perils a visitor to those lands might face. Yet certain patterns, either naturally extant or forced upon the Dream Realms by the Guild of Dreamthieves, do occur consistently. Only by studying these patterns and seeking them amidst a mess of illusions can dreamthieves practice their trade, and other dream travellers even manage to survive.

Dream Realms also serves as your guide to the enigmatic Dream Market, where the Guild of Dreamthieves meets to buy and sell dreams and nightmares alike. Here, travellers can hire dreamthieves or purchase already captured dreams from dream merchants, and here those few with the courage, character and determination to become apprentice dreamthieves can seek admission to the guild.

Dream Realms details the process by which Elric dwelt on Earth and visited adjoining spheres in *The Dreamthief's Daughter*, *The Skrayling Tree* and *The White Wolf's Son*, presenting an alternative means of travel between the Million Spheres, albeit one that carries a terrible price and deadly dangers. The entirety of the Multiverse is open to practitioners of the Thousand-Year Dream; this section does not detail even a fraction of the worlds one might visit, only the mechanism for doing so and some of those famously visited by Elric during his two millennia-long sojourns.

Finally, *Dream Realms* details the mysterious city of Tanelorn, a mystical dwelling seldom spoken of, and rarely seen.

ADVENTURES IN DREAMS

The Dream Realms are the most easily accessible planes in the Multiverse for nearly every man, woman and child in the Young Kingdoms visits them! Of course, an ordinary dreamer has neither understanding nor control of his voyage through the Dream Realms, rarely remembering more than scattered titbits of his adventures there, and gaining no benefit from his experiences. To truly explore the Dream Realms is, paradoxically, one of the most difficult to master of all the schools and traditions of sorcery.

The most experienced dream travellers are the Guild of Dreamthieves. Law-sworn walkers of the Moonbeam Roads, the dreamthieves painstakingly studied their dangerous – but lucrative – art and mapped the miasmic Dream Realms, either cataloguing or creating their present shape.

The rules for dreamtheft can be found on page 123 of *Ehrlic of Melniboné*. For more on the dreamthieves themselves, see *Chapter 3: The Dream Market*.

Non-dreamthieves cannot participate in actual dreamtheft, and find it dreadfully difficult to join another's dream, but they too can learn to achieve a certain lucidity and purpose within the Dream Realms. Certain curses and traumatic events may force this state upon a non-adept, but with practice, a person of exceptional willpower or sorcerous strength can impose his waking mind upon the Realms.

Alternatively, by use of a dream couch of Melniboné, anyone can use a powerful form of dreaming to explore the Million Spheres – for the price of a small portion of his soul. This form of artificial dreaming entirely bypasses the Dream Realms, using the same method of transfer to instead deposit the dreamer's consciousness on another plane, where he can live and study for thousands of years in as little as a night's unnatural sleep.

For more on the dream couches of Imrryr and some of the worlds the Sorcerer-Emperors of Melniboné have habitually visited with them, see *Chapter 4: The Thousand-Year Dream*.

DREAMS IN THE CAMPAIGN

The Dream Realms present many challenges to those who brave their depths – none, perhaps, as great as the challenge their use poses for Games Masters!

The most obvious problem with a dream quest is that it seems to require a dreamthief, either already in the party or temporarily attached to it. The former restricts dream adventures, while the latter is an imposition some players prefer not to deal with. **Why Do You Dream?** on pg. 8, suggests several ways to involve dreams and the Dream Realms in an adventure without the direct intervention of a dreamthief.

Even when one of the adventurers is a dreamthief, involving the rest of the characters in his profession seems superfluous at best, irresponsible at worst. Most people are ill-equipped to handle the Dream Realms, and the Guild of Dreamthieves knows it well. **Dream Companions** on pg. 7 provides one solution to this problem.

Games Masters and players should also be conscious of the different types of challenges posed by the Dream Realms. Adventurers cannot simply steamroll their way through a dream quest, no matter how powerful their swordsmanship or sorcery may be in the waking world.

CONTROLLING THE DREAMSCAPE

Within the Dream Realms, the form of matter is malleable and subject to the will and whims of dreamer and dream traveller alike. Experienced dreamthieves and sorcerers, as well as certain philosophers and warriors who practice

mental as well as physical discipline, can use this mutability to their advantage.

CHANGING THE TRAPPINGS

When a character enters the Dream Realms, whether as part of his own dream or another's, he changes how he and others perceive those Realms. Consciously or unconsciously, he moulds the vistas he encounters to conform to his memories and imagination. A conscious manipulator of the Dream Realms can use this ability to create terrain favourable to him and any companions he may have.



When a character dreams, he generates a version of the Dream Realms whose essence conforms entirely to his own psyche. If his memory is full of deserts, then deserts the Realms will be, interspersed with oases and camel trails and nomad camps. If he hails from a coastline, he might sail slumberous oceans in a ship of dreams. The guardians, monsters and inhabitants of the Realms also take on forms appropriate to their surroundings. Each of the seven Dream Realms imposes certain requirements of function, but the form is the dreamer's to mould.

When a dream traveller visits these Dream Realms, however, he also imposes something of *his* mind on them. His presence impinges upon the dreamer's imagination and generates, or discovers, new lands and peoples within the dreamscape.

A character with no formal training in the manipulation of the Dream Realms automatically makes a Persistence test at

–40% when he enters each of the seven Dream Realms. If successful, the dream traveller changes significant portions of the dreamscape to match his own: creatures, individual inhabitants, settlements and terrain type can all change to conform to his memories and desires; the Games Master makes these alterations. If unsuccessful, the dream traveller has no large-scale influence on the Dream Realm, although any temptations the Realm sends against him will still be tailored to his own psyche.

Dreamthieves, and others skilled in the manipulation of the Dream Realms, consciously adjust each Realm as they enter it. A trained character is one who has the Dreamthief or Dreamcrafting advanced skills. Upon entering each of the seven Dream Realms he may choose to make a test of one of these skills to alter the form of that Realm. If successful, he may choose to alter any number of aspects of the Dream Realm.

Unlike an untrained visitor, a skilled dream traveller can also choose *not* to alter the Dream Realm beyond giving specific form to its temptations.

MANIPULATION OF THE DREAM REALMS

Aspect Manipulated	Test Modifier
Change cosmetic elements only (e.g. the colour of the sky and dirt, the facades of buildings)	+20%
Change nonliving elements (e.g. the type of terrain, the shape of buildings, the course of rivers)	0%
Change animals and plants (e.g. substituting one monster for another)	–20%
Add or remove animals and plants (e.g. creating horses for the dream traveller to ride, removing interposing monsters)	–40%
Change intelligent creatures (e.g., making the inhabitants of a Dream Realm friendly, reducing their combat skills)	–60%
Add or Remove intelligent creatures (e.g. giving the dream traveller an army, removing guardians)	–80%

The dreamer whose dream is being visited cannot resist the alteration of his Dream Realm unless trained in such manipulation. If both dreamer and dream traveller are trained, the Dreamthief or Dreamcraft test is opposed.

Opposed Dream Manipulation

	Dreamer Fumbles	Dreamer Fails	Dreamer Succeeds	Dreamer Critically Succeeds
Traveller Fumbles	The Dream Realm becomes more hostile to both parties; neither controls the changes.	The Dream Realm becomes more hostile to the dream traveller, but the dreamer has no control over how it changes.	The dreamer can manipulate the Dream Realm normally. In addition, the dream traveller automatically fails the Dreamcraft or Dreamtheft test to manipulate the next Dream Realm.	The dreamer is in no danger from the Dream Realm; even its normal temptations do not apply to him. He can otherwise manipulate it normally. In addition, the dream traveller automatically fails the Dreamcraft or Dreamtheft test to manipulate the next Dream Realm.
Traveller Fails	The Dream Realm becomes more hostile to the dreamer, but the dream traveller has no control over how it changes.	The Dream Realm is unchanged.	The dreamer can manipulate the Dream Realm normally.	The dreamer is in no danger from the Dream Realm; even its normal temptations do not apply to him. He can otherwise manipulate it normally.
Traveller Succeeds	The dream traveller can manipulate the Dream Realm normally. In addition, the dreamer automatically fails the Dreamcraft or Dreamtheft test to manipulate the next Dream Realm.	The dream traveller can manipulate the Dream Realm normally.	The Dream Realm is unchanged.	The dreamer can manipulate the Dream Realm normally.
Traveller Critically Succeeds	The dream traveller is in no danger from the Dream Realm; even its normal temptations do not apply to him. He can otherwise manipulate it normally. In addition, the dreamer automatically fails the Dreamcraft or Dreamtheft test to manipulate the next Dream Realm.	The dream traveller is in no danger from the Dream Realm; even its normal temptations do not apply to him. He can otherwise manipulate it normally.	The dream traveller can manipulate the Dream Realm normally.	The Dream Realm offers no danger to either party; even its normal temptations are negated.

Acquiring Items

Dream travellers usually begin their adventures with nothing but the clothes on their backs. Weapons and other equipment are easy to come by in the mutable Dream Realms, however, although not always without a fight.

An untrained dreamer or dream traveller can only hope to stumble across the items he needs. The Dream Realms habitually provide everything necessary to pass through them save willpower, but they also habitually hide these provisions or make it a greater challenge to acquire them than to press on without them.

A trained dream traveller (see above) can make a conscious effort to manifest the items he needs to progress. This requires a Dreamthrift or Dreamcraft test. Unlike large-scale manipulation of the Dream Realms, this cannot be opposed even by a trained and lucid dreamer.

Acquiring Dream Items

Desired Item	Test Modifier
Mundane items (e.g. clothing, food or decoration)	+50%
Ordinary equipment (e.g. torches, rope, lockpicks)	+20%
Ordinary weapons and armour	—
Enchanted weapons and armour	-50%

The one thing neither conscious nor unconscious manipulators of the Dream Realms can determine is how the items they desire will arrive. Weapons, for example, are likely to appear if wished for but they may appear in the hands of a host of enemies, and the dreamer may soon wish he had sought less efficacious armament!

No item gained in the Dream Realms returns to the waking world, save for whatever outward form successful dreamthrift gives the captured dream.

Sorcery in the Dream Realms

Now Elric knew terror. But it was a familiar terror and within seconds he had regained control of himself. He knew that, whatever its name, he was about to enter a land where Chaos ruled.

It was only as the boat sailed under the carved rocks and into the grotto beyond that he recalled he had none of his familiar spells and enchantments; not one of his allies, nor his patron Duke of Hell, was available to him here. He had only experience and courage and his ordinary sensibilities. And at that moment he doubted if they were enough.

- *The Fortress of the Pearl*

While certain sorceries deal specifically with the Dream Realms – dreamthrift most famously – other types of magic are greatly impaired or outright impossible.

The Lords of the Higher Worlds and the Elemental Lords cannot extend their influence to the Dream Realms. Characters within the Realms cannot call upon any Pacts or Summonings they may possess, although they may be called upon to make Pact tests (for example, to escape the City of Inventive Cowardice in Paranor). On the other hand, whatever POW a character has dedicated to his Pacts is available for his use as long as he remains within the Dream Realms.

Rune Magic still functions within the Dream Realms, but the paths of mind required to access it are different and it operates at reduced effectiveness. To wield his rune magic in the Realms, a character must have at least 10% in both the Lore (Dream Realms) skill and either the Dreamthrift or Dreamcrafting skill. Even when accessible, Rune Magic costs twice as many Magic Points in the Dream Realms.

Skill: DREAMCRAFTING

The original sorcerous art from which Dreamthrift was derived, Dreamcrafting is the Chaos to the dreamthieves' Law – where their art is codified and careful, based on recognizing and even enforcing patterns, Dreamcrafting is both required to create those patterns and heedless of destroying them.

Dreamcrafting is an advanced skill and a form of sorcery. It must be learned, either from a mentor or a grimoire, and requires two advancement rolls to gain a minimum level. The minimum level of Dreamcrafting is equal to 10 plus the character's POW.