

When Reason Sleeps, Demons Wake

A Play-test Mini-Supplement for Ron Edwards' *Sorcerer*



All art by Goya

An Introduction

This is a play-test mini-supplement for Sorcerer containing three different settings that share the same feature: Sorcerers draw their power from a world of dreams.

- The first, *Something Wicked Within* draws upon the horror-film genre, and demons are our dream selves, hideous and monstrous.
- The second setting, *Dreams Beyond Time and Space* draw from the literature of H. P. Lovecraft and others, and our dreams touch upon a dimension beyond our own, one that is alien and insane and demons are the malign entities that haunt that *other* place.
- *The House of Gloaming* draws upon the more fanciful works of Clive Barker, Lord Dunsany, and Neil Gaiman, a baroque world where our dreams are mystical places shaped by our dreaming minds: our Demons are creatures of this chaotic and strange world, our nighttime companions who can be both beguiling and cruel.

Each of these settings is discussed in greater detail, each in its own section. The following information is a general overview that is applicable to nearly all the settings.

What is a Sorcerer?

A Sorcerer is someone who knows more than the other dreamers, those normal people who are passively carried along on the currents of the River Lethe, sleepers blissfully ignorant of the dark potential of the sleeping world. Sorcerers are those awakened few who have awoken in the dream world to discover the dream world and their own terrible powers. Anyone with Lore is considered a Sorcerer, and:

- May draw upon their strength of Will to carry on when others would drop from fatigue or injury (see Sorcerer page 108).
- Can conduct any of the Sorcerer Rituals (See Sorcerer pages 86-91), including Pacts (Sorcerer & Sword pages 55-57), the possible creation of Tokens (Sorcerer & Sword page 58-61). They may also be able to use Hypnotism to put someone to sleep: this could be as simple as staring someone in the eyes, the use of a pendulum, or a more elaborate ceremony with incense and other sounds to lull one to sleep.
- Are marked by the experience, afflicted with both a Telltale and a Price.

What are Demons?

Exactly what each demon is defined by each setting, although the following rules are equally true of all the demons. Demons are Dream-Entities, born of the Dreams. All of these Demons come from that place that sleepers visit and are normally confined there; they may only cross over in those circumstances where a Sorcerer performs some ritual that allows them to transgress those boundaries between the Dream World and the Waking World. It is only with the assistance of a Sorcerer that they can exist in the Waking World, however they may be able to

exist on their own independently of the Sorcerer (see *Something Wicked Within's* "Humanity at Zero" section for an example).

The relationship between Sorcerer and Demon should have tension at its core. In *Something Wicked Within*, the Demon hates its dependence upon the Sorcerer and secretly craves replacing its Sorcerer in the Waking World, to slake its dark lusts. In *Dreams Beyond Time and Space*, the Demons are anathema to our own existence and are eager to invade our own reality and undo it, starting with their Sorcerer. In *the House of Gloaming*, the Demons seek to lure the Sorcerer into the Demon's own dream reality, never to return to the Waking World. In each of these settings, the Demon is there to put the character at risk: offering power at a terrible cost.

Demons are creature of and masters of their own reality, reflected in their lore. The Demon's disadvantage is that they are unfamiliar with the human reality and with human nature and this is their weakness. The Demon's desire to undo the Sorcerer can only be achieved by robbing the Sorcerer of their humanity and drawing them into the world of the Demon. As the Sorcerer loses Humanity, their Demon grows in power. The following rules are a suggested deviation from the rules to reflect these changes:

- When a Sorcerer loses a point of Humanity, the particular Dream Demon involved in the transgression (the Ritual or the event that triggers the Humanity check) gains a point of Power. Accordingly, the Demon's Stamina, Will, and Lore increase by one point as well. The additional ability is chosen by the GM with possible input from the player. This power can be chosen and used immediately by the Demon or later be chosen by the GM based upon the necessity of the Demon or its Sorcerer. Preferably, this new ability should be thematically tied with the Sorcerer's Humanity loss.
- When a Sorcerer gains a point of Humanity, their Demon (or one Demon who would be appropriate for the circumstances) loses a point of Power, Stamina, Will, and Lore. One ability, thematically appropriate if possible, becomes inaccessible to the Demon. Should the Sorcerer lose a point of Humanity at another time and this Demon is responsible in part, than this Demon regains the earlier lost ability.

As noted earlier, Demons are normally confined to the Dream World and have no or limited power in the Waking World. The exceptions are those rare few who have permanently manifested in the Waking World and function as **Immanents** (see *Sorcerer & Sword* page 50). The other Demons have little ability to influence the Waking World. There are those desperate times however when the Sorcerer can transgress the boundaries between Waking World and Dream World by *Summoning* their demon while awake.

- This functions as a *Snap* ritual (see *Sorcerer* page 85), reducing the Sorcerer's roll to one-die versus the Demon's Power.

- The Demon manifests in the Waking World for a number of rounds equal to its Power. Should the Demon's power be reduced, it will leave that much earlier. It can then use some of its Power in the Waking World, but the Summoning immediately puts the Demon into Need.
- The real world is anathema to the Demon. Each use of its Abilities causes Fatigue (see Sorcerer page 110), but not only is Stamina reduced, but the Demon's Power is reduced with each use.
- The Demon, even if Bound, cannot be killed. It will reappear in the Dream World when the Sorcerer next dreams, in Need and at Stage 3: Vengeful.
- The Summoning attempt immediately results in a Humanity check by the Sorcerer.

Demon Abilities in this Setting

All Demon Abilities function normally in the Dream World and cannot normally extend into the Waking World except under unusual circumstances. For those Demons drawn into the Waking World or who are Immanents, the GM will have to adjust the Abilities accordingly or declare certain Abilities powerless in the Waking World. The following are some suggested variations on Abilities.

Cloak: Can be used to hide in someone else's dream, to spy on their dreams.

Cover: The "Cover: Changeling" does exist in this setting, allowing the User to declare who they are going to appear as when the ability is used. If appearing as someone intimately familiar with the person being interacted with, the witness gets a Will versus the Cover rating to see through it.

Hold: This ability can be used to "hold" someone in their activity in the Dream World, or it can be used to keep a Dreamer from temporarily waking up for the duration of the ability.

Hop: The Demon can travel from dream to dream. Unlike the version in the rulebook, this Hop is not visible as it happens in the dream. Any Demon can Hop from dream to dream and will be noticed by the dreamers unless concealed with Cloak. A Possessor Demon has special powers. As long as the Dreamer is not wakened, the Possessor can command the dreamer's body to carry out simple tasks: sleepwalk or sleep talk and handle very simple tasks. Opening a door is a simple task, where as picking up a gun and pointing it at the sleeper's head is not. It is possible for a simple task to be harmful to the sleep walker: the Demon can have the sleep walker step out in front of a car. This Possession roll requires a Demon's Power versus Dreamer's Will roll (not Stamina, see Sorcerer pages 48-49 for comparison). Possession puts the Demon in Need.

Link: Can be used when the Sorcerer is awake or asleep.

Perception: These powers are in the Dream World and can often be fantastic: See into others' dreams. Find other Dreamers. Hear into others' dreams. See Cloaked Demons.

Shapeshift: Can be used in a power similar to the Cloak: Changeling Power but allows constant change. The User may look like someone's intimate, but does not have the ability to convincingly portray that individual through any

but the most superficial interaction. Talking, for example, is a dead give-away. Shape changing into an animal or object however can be very convincing. Unlike the Cover: Changeling, as long as this Power is in use, fluid changes are possible.

Taint: Often takes form as haunting nightmares that torment the target even when they are awake. A Vengeful demon may very well use this on their own Sorcerer.

Transport: A critical power for the Demon. This provides the Demon with the power to allow the Sorcerer to accompany the Demon through different Dreams or areas of the Dream World. It requires the simultaneous use of Travel. It helps to have a Perception that allows the Sorcerer or the Demon to seek out the dreams of others.

Travel: Every Demon has to have power. This is a mandatory ability and is not free. This allows the Demon to move through Dreams. The form of the movement depends upon the Demon. There is one other type of Travel, and it is only available to those Demons who become Immanents when the Demon's Sorcerer loses their last point of Humanity: Cross the Borderland: This allows the Demon to move bodily through into the Waking World or the Dream World.

Warp: One of the most powerful abilities in the Dream World: this allows the Demon to Warp the very nature of the Dream. A door can suddenly appear or the floor can turn into quicksand with the use of this ability. This power is functional when the Demon crosses over into the Waking World.

The Setting and their Demons

Something Wicked Within: Dark-Self, Dark-Self Demon, Night Twin, or Dark Dream-Self

Dreams Beyond Time and Space: Demons of the Abyss or Demons of the Void

In the House of Gloaming: Dreamworld Demons, Companions, Guides, Bargainers, Goblins, Imps, Bête Noir, or the Children of the Night

What is Humanity?

Humanity is particularly specific within this setting: Humanity is your bond to the Waking World. It is at risk when you transgress those boundaries. Humanity is gained when you reject the allure of the Dream World. Committing a heinous crime does not put the Sorcerer at risk of Humanity loss unless it is somehow tied to the Sorcerer's relationship to Demons and the Dream World. Each of the three settings has a particular theme and the Humanity Loss and Gain rolls should reflect these, but here are some following suggestions for Humanity Loss and Gain rolls.

Humanity can be lost when:

- Whenever the Sorcerer conducts a Contact, Summon, or Bind ritual
- The Sorcerer violates someone else's dreams (examples: causing terrible nightmares, or tormenting another dreamer by pretending to be their dead parents who are disappointed deeply in the dreamer)

- When the Sorcerer brings out something from the Dream World into the Waking World
- Whenever the Sorcerer brings someone from the Waking World directly into the Dream World
- When the Sorcerer or his Demon kills or torments someone in the Dream World

Humanity can be gained when:

- The Sorcerer banishes a Demon that they did not Summon.
- Returns a Dreamer abducted bodily from the Waking World and taken into the Dream World. This could also extend to important artifacts or objects taken as well and hidden away into the Dream World.
- Destroys an Immanent, Pagan Thing, or Old One that has manifested in the Waking World.
- Banishes or lies to rest a Ghost haunting the Dream World (or the Waking World).

The Dream World: the Mystical Otherworld

The Mystical Otherworld is first introduced (*Sorcerer & Sword* page 32-33) and is central to this setting: as nearly all the Demons and much of the Sorcery takes place within this place, known hereafter as the Dream World. The Dream World constantly exists but is separate from the workaday reality known here as the Waking World. When we dream, our consciousness touches upon the Dream World and its inhabitants, but this sort of conventional dreaming never requires a Humanity check. Sorcerers are able to control and take power of the Dream World through the use of their Demon.

When the Sorcerer is awake, the Demon is conducting its own activities and knows nothing of the Sorcerer's activities, unless there is a link and then it is merely an ever-present acknowledgment of the welfare of the other. When a Sorcerer dreams, their consciousness touches upon the Dream World while their physical body remains behind. This sort of activity does not require Humanity rolls either. Once in the Dream World, the Sorcerer can conduct all manner of activities based upon the setting. The Sorcerer with their demon can observe the dreams of their rivals or other interested parties, the Sorcerer can indulge in all sorts of pleasures and diversions, the Demon can shape part of the Dream World into a heaven or a hell, or people in the physical world can be located through their dreams. These actions may require the use of Lore rolls or Demon abilities, but typically do not require Humanity rolls.

However, there are times when transgressions happen, when boundaries are crossed. A Sorcerer may, while dreaming, take their body with them into the Dream World, and anyone else in bed will awaken to find them missing (this requires the normal use of the Demon ability conferred to the Sorcerer as User, the Demon cannot cross into the Waking World until it has "Travel: Cross the

Borderlands"). A dreaming Sorcerer can alter and change things in their dream that will still be true in the Waking World (this requires the use of Warp by the Demon). For example, a Sorcerer locked in jail can sleep in her cell, dreaming of wandering the corridors and finding the key to her cell, clutching it in her hands. When she awakens the next morning, she may have either the real key or an exact duplicate in her clenched hand. Any of these sorts of activities evokes a Humanity Loss check.

Depending on the setting, most people dream and while they all touch upon the same region, they are effectively isolated in their dreams. When we dream of others, it is not normally the dream selves of others we see, but merely images of them. There are times when our dreams do mesh with those of others, and these are often times when people awaken to their powers and become Sorcerers. The Dream World is limitless and constantly fluid and changing. Sorcerers are able to stake out and shape entire regions to meet their needs, while most dreamers simply flit through the Dream World leaving no impressions behind. Using their Power, some Sorcerers may bodily enter the Dream World and create their own domain, in a place where they cannot age and have near god-like powers. These Sorcerers however depend upon the power of their Demons to maintain their power and position, and should that relationship sour, they are at the mercy of their Demon. Nearly all dreamers however are safe from the direct depredation of Demons. It is only when directed by a Sorcerer that the Demons have access to something human to be able to affect Dreamers.

What if you want to leave the Dream World? A Sorcerer can make a Lore roll at any time to awaken if in a stressful experience (unless hit by the Hold ability). Normal sleeper cannot awaken until they experience something traumatic (seeing a traumatic sight in the dream or being the target of a Demon ability or an attack by a Demon or Sorcerer).

Dying in the Dream World

Sorcerers can spiritually or bodily enter the Dream World. What happens if the Sorcerer attempts to strangle the Dream Self of another Dreamer? What if two Sorcerers bodily or spiritually battle it out in the Dream World? What if a Demon besets a Dreamer and attacks it with slavering fangs or with a psychic attack? Can you die in the Dream World?

Those who physically manifest in the Dream World: all Demons and those who physically enter the Dream World will die normally and be affected normally. Damage is carried out as normal and it is possible to suffer terrible damage or even die.

If the target of the attack is only there in spirit (in other words, their body is in the Waking World) they too take damage normally. They can be attacked by others who are present in spirit or bodily and by demon attacks and abilities. When attacked, any sleeper may make a Will vs. Will roll at the end of the round

(unmodified by any penalties) to wake up. This attempt to awaken does not constitute an action on the part of the Dreamer. If they are successful in the roll, they can immediately awaken. Once awake, all damage counts as temporary, even damage sustained as lasting. The target awakes frightened and half-mad. If the Dreamer does not awaken before taking greater than twice their Stamina (see chart in Sorcerer on pages 107 or 132) they suffer severe consequences and may not awaken. The consequences are determined by the setting, the intent of the attackers, and the GM decision (player's advice on the consequences are welcomed). Odds are the person's body will be catatonic or in a coma and their Dream Self is stranded in the Dream World and subject to the torments and attention of their attackers. This sort of attack results in a Humanity Loss Check by the Sorcerer. Those who would rescue such a bereaved Dreamer and return them back to the physical world would receive a Humanity Gain Check.

For a good literary example of the Dreamworld and violence in the Dream World, see Haruki Murakami's *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicles* and for a poor but appropriate cinematic version, see *Dreamscape* (1984).

About Lore

In this setting, Lore is very powerful and is what distinguishes a normal dreamer from a Sorcerer. Without Lore, one can only touch briefly the Dream World and is powerless there in the Dream World. With Lore, the Sorcerer is able to use and manipulate the Dream for their own ends, redefining the Dream. The nature of the Dream depends on the setting and thus Lore is more likely to be powerful *In the House of Gloaming* setting than in the other two settings.

What can Lore do? When in the Dreamscape, it can be used to generate *Currency* (**Sorcerer** page 75) for nearly any roll in the Dream Worlds. Lore can be used to identify which are Dreamers and which are Demons. Lore can be used recall areas or past encounters in the Dream World, drawing on facts from previous dreams and experiences before play began ("flashbacks"). Lore can also be used to twist or manipulate the Dream World, but this should be in very minor ways to ensure that the Sorcerer remains tied to their Demon. However, this is a game about creativity, and should the players come up with something interesting and want to use their Lore, allow them to do it. This should be done sparingly and if it would normally require a Demon Ability, the Sorcerer automatically suffers a Humanity Loss check.

The following is a list of *possible* but *rare* events that a Sorcerer might be able to pull off using their Lore and other elements if the circumstances prove right.

Contacting someone in their dreams: Sorcerer's Will versus Target's Will. Sorcerer and Target must both be sleeping and blood related or intimately familiar. This can be a brief exchange for a number of rounds equal to the success. Normally this requires the Demon abilities Travel + Perception to do this. Requires a Humanity Loss check.

Dream Hopping: Sorcerer's Will versus Target's Will +1. Sorcerer and Target must both be sleeping and blood related or intimately familiar. The Sorcerer must be in physical contact with the Target or be in possession of a valued personal effect of the target. Normally Requires the Demon abilities Travel + Transport + Perception to do this. Requires a Humanity Loss check.

Minor shaping of the Dream: Sorcerer's Will versus Opposition Dice of 1. Causing a faucet in a dream that is dry to suddenly drip water or to change the color of your shirt is a minor action. If it offers a little color and no significant change or tactical advantage, this does not require a Humanity Check. Demons can use their Lore to do this as well.

Significant Shaping of the Dream: Sorcerer's Will versus Sorcerer's Will +1. To reach into your jeans and to produce a gun that was not there previously or to open a door that is not there. Normally this requires the Demon Ability Warp. Requires a Humanity Loss check.

Give someone a dream flash while they are awake: Sorcerer's Will versus Target's Will. The Sorcerer must be in physical contact and must have witnessed the dream that is being flashed. The Currency from this success can be used to modify the next logical roll ("*See, I know what your heart's innermost desire, I may be able to fulfill your... particular needs...*"). Normally requires the Demon ability Daze, Hint, or Hold (and the Demon need not be in contact or have previously witnessed the Dream). Requires a Humanity Loss Check.

Conceiving or giving birth in the Dream World: This is a complex ritual determined by the GM. The intent and procedures should be explored and the resulting dice rolls and consequences based upon the experience.

Sacrificing or intentionally dying in the Dream World: Bodily death in the Dream Land follows the rules for Necromancy (see Sorcerer & Sword pages 58-62).

Creating Your Sorcerer

Follow the standard Sorcerer rules for character creation. The following are some suggestions for Descriptors for this particular setting.

Stamina Descriptors

Dying – Cancer, a weak heart, failing organs, you sense that your time is just around the corner. Your body has betrayed you, but you are desperately hanging on for some particular reason...

Prison Physique – One look at your frame and your old school ink and people know your gym was the exercise yard of some high-security prison.

Steady Diet of Cigarettes and TV – Your body has been honed by the modern age of cable television, beer, potato chips, and a comfy couch. In other words, you look like shit.

Strung Out on Crank/Pharmaceuticals – Lean and gaunt and skeletal, you're only strength comes from what little desperation you can eke out of your famished and punished body.

Wheel-Chair Bound/Disabled – It could have been a wartime incident or an automobile accident, a birth or congenital defect, but whatever the reason is, you are at a disadvantage in society, being severely limited by your disability.

Will Descriptors:

Academically Trained – You spent a bit of money and now have a piece of paper certifying that you've jumped through the hoops.

Fixated – You're desperate for something more, something outside you that you constantly fix your full attention on, both a source of strength and weakness.

"Just a Little Too Tense" – You're wound tighter than spring. The intensity of your stare makes other people uneasy.

Sensitive – You perceive things that other people ignore or overlook. You experience a world different from that those around you experience.

Serene – This world can be a really shitty place, but for everyone around you, you are an island of sanity and decency even in the thick of it.

Lore Descriptors:

"In Depravity There is Wisdom": You have done a lot of things you should be ashamed of. Maybe you never had a conscience, or maybe you're just good at quashing it, but by exploring the dark side of your personality and your world you have learned a great many terrible things. Sure, the nightmares were difficult, but that was just another realm to explore. Now that you have plumbed those depths, you have gained greater power than you would have ever thought... *Pity the world...*

Narcoleptic – You have dramatic sleep onsets where amidst your work or play you instantly collapse asleep. Doctors claim it is simply a case of Narcolepsy, but the dreams you have during these fits are unlike any dreams you normally have at night...

Night Terrors: You suffered Night Terrors as a child. Perhaps it was the medication or the experiments, or it could have been something you taught yourself, but you learned early on that there was more to your dreams than most people believe.

Premonitions: Perhaps it could have been a “gift” from your family, your destiny, an act of the divine, or some “sixth sense” you tapped into, but you have always had premonitions and watched tomorrow unfold in your dreams. Aware of this, you have gradually explored your powers and are not only close to mastering your abilities, but have discovered a remarkable amount about the Dreams that provide you with your power.

Occult Experience/Training/Library: Perhaps you were a skeptic regarding the paranormal or an academic investigator, but somewhere along the way *something* convinced you, made you a believer, and spurred your own researches into the unknown. That experience still haunts your dreams...

Waking World/Dreamworld Mentored: You have a mentor or mentors that have endowed you with terrible knowledge. They may have trained and taught you in the Waking World: your satanic cult parents, your stern Roma grandmother, or the Order of the Rosy Twilight. Or they may have come to you in your dreams: the man that claimed to be your “real” father, your kindly grandmother, or the voice from the cellar in your dreams. They introduced you to your own little Dreamworld, a place where you have power and knowledge... friends... and enemies...

Prices

Addicted to Sleeping Pills: In order to sleep at night, you find yourself constantly on barbiturates and sedatives which keep you from feeling much in the Waking World: -1 to any conflicts involving emotions or passions in the Waking World.

Dream Echoes: You feel a constant déjà vu when talking with others, and their actual communication with you is garbled by what they said to you in your last dreams: -1 to all speaking communication

Haunting Visions: when you close your eyes at night, terrible things visit you in your sleep. – 1 to all Dream related rolls

In Another World: You're an absent presence in the waking world, someone who cannot function well in the harsh light of everyday reality: -1 to all social interactions in the Waking World.

Restless Sleeper: Your body is fatigued from its nocturnal activities: -1 to all physical actions in the Waking World

Something Wicked Within (Dark Dream Horror)



Yes, there are monsters. Each of us nurtures one, something dark and troubling deep within the subconscious, a dark self, a demon, that lurks beneath the veneer of normalcy and civility. Yet when we dream, reason sleeps and demons dance...

Influences

Movies: *Nightmare on Elm Street*, *The Cell*, *Psycho*, *Poltergeist 1 & 2*, *Buffalo Bill and Hannibal Lector of Silence of the Lambs*, Bradbury's *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, *Mulholland Drive*, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, *Closet Land*, TV: *Twilight Zone's* "It's a Good Life" episode (Anthony, who wishes people into the Cornfield), Fox's *Millennium* TV series, Lars von Trier's *The Kingdom* mini-series, HBO's *Carnivale*. Books & other culture bits: Gaiman's *Coraline*, Barker's *The Thief of Always*, *Naked Lunch*, NY's *Son of Sam*, Pop-interpretations of Freud, Goya, *Geek Love*.

"When one creates phantoms for oneself, one puts vampires into the world, and one must nourish these children of a voluntary nightmare with one's blood, one's life, one's intelligence, and one's reason, without ever satisfying them."

-Eliphas Levi

Sorcerers are those who have contacted their Dark Selves that live in their dreams, a being that exists in their subconscious. They bargain and bind this Other, fully acknowledging this entity that is not so much a dark twin, but as a dark fragment of their personality. Most wise people repress the monster within, which rarely surfaces in dreams or moments of stress or tension. A Sorcerer has

engaged with that dark portion of their psyche as an equal, not as something to be suppressed and forgotten, but a dubious ally and resource in the Waking World. As a result, the Sorcerer can draw upon those dark, forbidden powers that others instinctively shy away from.

Sorcery in this setting is drawing upon the powers best left suppressed, powers that normally appear only in dreams. When dreaming, the Sorcerer enters the subconscious, and by binding the *Dark Dream-Self* that resides almost wholly in the same subconscious realm, the Sorcerer is better able to control their own dreams and potentially the conscious real world as well. Their power is great, to the extent of even allowing their demons to not only be present in the Waking World, but to manifest in the Waking World. The dangers are great however, for the Demon may potentially dominate the Sorcerer.

Humanity is your connection to your conscious self and the real Waking World. Repeated abuses and interaction with the subconscious demon, the *Dark Dream-Self*, ruptures this link between self and the conscious world.

As Humanity decreases, the Dark Dream-Self Demon grows and increases in power, and the Conscious Self (the Sorcerer) of the Waking World diminishes, becoming a shadow while the Dream-Self becomes more fleshed out. When humanity hits zero, the conscious self (the Sorcerer) is suppressed and lost forever as the subconscious self (the Demon) with its sinister needs possesses the Sorcerer's body permanently. Many of those who commit inhuman atrocities, such as serial killers, are those whose own real personalities have been suppressed by the demon self. When Humanity hits Zero, the Sorcerer must meet their end in a scene framing that player's downfall and hinting at the consequences of the *Dark Self's* victory.

The ***demon*** is the subconscious self that is actively suppressed, lest we become monsters ourselves. For some people, it is a dark id, cruel and selfish and petulant, while for others it is a dark super-ego: cruel and domineering and sadistic. The demon lurks there in the darkness of the human soul and it is instinctively hidden away and neglected by the conscious self. Yet at night, it sometimes creeps forth and the ambitious and foolhardy can bind it. Being of the subconscious and of the Dream World, the Demon is able to wield and use powers normally beyond human ability. The Demons of *Something Wicked Within* may not begin with a Power greater than the Sorcerer's Humanity. However, over time, the Demon gradually grows,



increasing in Power and Abilities. Each time the Sorcerer loses Humanity, the Demon gains a new Ability and increases in Power, Lore, and Stamina as it grows. Should its Sorcerer increase in Humanity, the Demon's power ebbs away and it loses a point of each and an ability.

The demon initially only manifests itself in the dream world, riding as a parasite in the mind, but when the demon's power exceeds the humanity of the Sorcerer, it is able to appear in the real world, either as a parasite, a voice in the back of the mind, or as an inconspicuous demon, usually appearing as one's own shadow. When its power is greater than the Sorcerer's humanity, it can appear as a Passer demon, bearing the same appearance as its Sorcerer – a very potentially dangerous proposition. When a Demon's Power exceeds that of the Sorcerer, the ability gained is automatically: Cover [Name of the Sorcerer]. Those with Lore can distinguish the two by a Lore test versus the Demon's Power to distinguish between the Demon and the Sorcerer. Those with a relationship with the Sorcerer can merely sense something wrong if they encounter the Demon separate from the Sorcerer by making a Humanity test versus the Demon's power.

To appear in the Waking World at the behest of the Sorcerer, the demon must be brought across from the Dream World, requiring a Summons test. To be forced back into the subconscious, it requires a Banish roll (see below). For a Demon to travel to the Waking World on its own, two conditions must be met: it must have Travel and it must be of greater power than its Sorcerer (thus possessing "Cover: [Name of Sorcerer]").

Something Wicked Within Rituals

Contact: Contacting your own personal Dark Self Demon typically involves that recurring dream that the Sorcerer has always had that takes place at night in a familiar and intimate childhood location that seems creepy and different. The Dark Self can also be contacted in Dreams that take place at a location of deep guilt and trauma, often a crime scene where the Sorcerer conducted a crime, such as the alley where the Sorcerer murdered a prostitute or the woods where the Sorcerer buried his or her little sister.

To Contact someone else's unbound Dark Self Demon requires that the Sorcerer infiltrate that Sleeper's dream or ingest a part of that person's body such as hair, blood, or fingernail or toenail clippings.

It is possible to Contact one's own or another's Dark Self in the Waking World by entering a trance in front of a mirror. If successful the Demon's own appearance will replace the Sorcerer's own reflection.

If one is able to manifest his Dark Self Demon in the Waking World and take a photograph of the Demon or some other representation, this picture allows a +1

bonus to all the Sorcerer's actions in the Waking World in relation to the Demon. It should be noted that the Demon resents such photos or drawings and will do anything in its power to destroy them.

Summon: Summoning one's own Demon is the next inevitable step after Contacting. One need only seek out and hold out a hand to draw one's Demon forth – the act of holding out the hand in the Dreaming World and accepting one's own Demon is a highly symbolic act. The act of drawing one's Dark Self out of the closet, the shed, or from the cellar or attic can require a little work, a trail of candies or toys, or dressing up as one's own mother or father and commanding to come out are all examples. Bonuses for such means of drawing out one's Dark Self are added to the Summon roll.

A Sorcerer can summon their Demon into the Waking World by using a Summon Ritual.

Summoning another person's unbound Dark Self Demon is more complicated process. Having Contacted it, one can Summon it in the Dreams or the Waking World by either befriending it with an outstretched hand or grasping it and wrestling it into one's own Dream or out of the Mirror.

Bind: While the Initial Contact and Summoning may seem like drawing forth a slightly sullen and child-like version of the Sorcerer or another person, the Binding betrays the dark nature of the Demon, for this is when the bargaining becomes. One must nourish one's own dark desires and here an offering or sacrifice helps significantly. Some examples: Bringing a piece of the school you burned down that night as an offering to your pyromaniac alter-ego who despised school, bringing your mother's tongue after all those years she harassed you, or providing the trussed up bully that tormented you as a child to your sadistic self are all ways of providing a substantial bonus to your Dark Self.

It is in the negotiation of the Binding that the Dark Self's twisted Needs become known and that the Sorcerer must acknowledge *the Other* as an equal and promise to nurture it's petty and sick desires.

Punish: While the Dark Self is often very weak and sickly initially, the Binding ensures that a Dark Side Demon becomes more and more powerful while the Sorcerer becomes weaker. To ensure compliance, it is appropriate to the setting to torture one's own Dark Side Demons to keep them in line. Few Demons in Sorcerer will be as responsive (and resentful) as one's own *Dark Side* Demons. Normally a Sorcerer may automatically punish one's own bound Demon to a level equal to their Will, but this can be increased by dressing up as one's parents or older siblings and punishing the Demon or using instruments of punishment from the childhood such as a razor strop or a belt. When Punishing another person's Dark Self, follow the standard Sorcerer rules.



Banish: Banish can take two forms. The first is when one simply physically Banishes a *Dark Side* Demon from the Waking World, which one can do to their own Demon or another Dreamers or Sorcerer's Demon by following the normal Banish ritual. This merely causes the Demon to instantly retreat back to the subconscious mind where it resides.

The formal act of Banishment (almost to Extinction), as a means of destroying a *Dark Side* Demon is more difficult. Banishing one's own Dark Self Demon to a shadow of itself is a difficult and trying task and usually entails a significant confrontation as the Dark Self Demon knows the Sorcerer more intimately than any other Demon could. In addition to the normal Banish roll, the Sorcerers inflict injury upon themselves, the Demon's Power versus the Sorcerer's Stamina in Fist Damage, resolved after the Banishment roll. If successful, the Demon is almost entirely destroyed, brought down to a Power of One and with the Cloak (Inconspicuous ability). It no longer functions as a Demon, but can be Contacted, Summoned, and Bound again if the Sorcerer so desires. In the meantime, the Demon is nearly powerless and just haunts the Sorcerer's dream, possibly causing the odd nightmare. It is impossible to completely destroy a *Dark Side* Demon.

You cannot Banish (to Destroy) another person's *Dark Side* Demon.

Contain: A Sorcerer can contain their own *Dark Self* in the Dream World by locking the Demon up in the same location it was discovered: a closet, a toy chest, the basement, attic, or shed or other suitable location.

Containing one's own *Dark Self* Demon in the Waking World is very difficult generally. One must physically lock the *Dark Self* Demon in the very same Waking World location that the *Dark Self* Demon was first Contacted and Summoned from in the Dream World. For this reason, many *Dark Self* Demons attempt to destroy the Waking World childhood home or other locale.

Another person's *Dark Self* Demon can be bound by a Sorcerer in the Dream World or Waking World in any container or locked room that is familiar in the Sorcerer's contemporary life. There is a bonus if one uses an object or location that is owned by that *Dark Self* Demon's Waking Self.

Any *Dark Self* Demon can be Contained in the Waking World in a mirror as well, although any breaking of the mirror will free it. If one tries to Contain one's own Dark Self Demon in a Mirror there is a +2 penalty. Anyone looking into the mirror will see the Contained Demon behind them, looking over their shoulder.

Bonuses to Rituals

- Conducting rituals in childhood home or other life-significant locations.
- Using a relic from one's own childhood or other significant event that your Dark Self Demon to which your Demon would respond (the knife used to murder your spouse). Often used as a sacrifice which your Demon then spirits away somewhere else.
- Dressing as the parental figure of your childhood.
- Bribing with candies, treats, or pornographic materials.
- Sacrificing childhood and adulthood tormentors to your Demon.
- Cutting or burning oneself during the ritual.

Other Demons

Old Ones: "Old Ones" are mostly great and powerful Dark Dream Self-Demons who once entered the real world, absorbed their sorcerers, and were finally sent back into the dream world where they still lurk. Such entities still take an interest in their living relatives or may be Contacted, Summoned, and Pacted by those of their blood or holding an artifact that the original binding Sorcerer once held. Old Ones are thus capable of carrying out all rituals except Banishing, in that they are able to Contact, Summon, Bind, Punish, and Contain any Undead that they create by killing in the Dream World or any of the Beasts that they create. They have no power over Pagan Things, however.

The obvious example for an Old One would be "Freddie Krueger", although any serial killer or mass murderer in history could possibly fit. These are the powerful figures in the Dream World that present a menace to Sorcerers who linger too long in the Dream World. Another example: Reverend Kane that appeared in *Poltergeist 2* as is the Reverend that appears in the Dark Future short story and novel "Route 666". One last contemporary example would be "Samantha" from **The Ring**.

Pagan Things: Pagan Things reflect our collective darkest fears. The subconscious dread of countless sleeping minds has coalesced to create all manner of non-human Pagan Things that are comprised solely of and fed by fear. Some are easily identified, giant snakes and spiders being the most common, although black dogs and cats abound as well. Others are less defined and far more mysterious, such as the *Thing Under the Stairs*, *the Monster Under Your Bed*, and *The Thing Right Behind You*. All can be Contacted, Banished, and Summoned, but almost none of them are capable of being Bounded or Pacted. Summonings and Contacts with such Pagan Things are often accidental or an

act of malice by another Sorcerer. Some example Pagan Things would be the demonic house from Gaiman's *The Thief of Always*, the jutting rock at the heart of the movie *Picnic at Hanging Rock*.

Beasts – Dark and dire Beasts can be crafted from the Dream Worlds by Sorcerers and Old Ones alike, and imbued with a life of their own, but true intelligence is denied them. The ones crafted by humans often look like massive, dark, hulking shadows of real animals, while the Beasts crafted by the self-aware Old Ones are flashes of shadow, claws, and teeth, the unknowable and unseen shadow of nightmares. While they can be Contacted or Summoned in the Waking World or the Dream World, lacking any real intelligence, these Beasts cannot be Bound by Sorcerers (although the Nightmare Beasts can be Bound by the Old Ones or Commanded by them), they can be Banished if the venture into the Waking World and can be Banished and Contained in the Dream World. Examples of Beasts are Simon's talking pig head from *The Lord of the Flies* while a more comedic example would be the monster under the stairs in "The Munsters". In the comic "Cloak and Dagger", Cloak would absorb people into his cloak and there in the darkness lay monsters that devoured people. Likewise, from "Poltergeist", the little demon clown doll and the evil old tree were all Beast Minions of an Old One.

Undead – The Old Ones frequently prey upon Dreamers in the Dream World. While few fall victim to them, those that do are often Bound to the Old One forever until freed by another through the use of Containing the soul of the dreamer into an object-artifact from their living days are being Banished by the Sorcerer. These Undead crave Final Rest except for a few maddened or depraved souls. These Undead can appear as Zombies that can be Summoned by the Old One based on a Lore test or they can be Ghosts that float about disembodied or are trapped and Contained by the Old One themselves. For bloody zombies in body bags acting at the behest of an Old One, the first Nightmare on Elm Street is a classic, as is the later sequel when we see how Freddie has contained the souls of those he murders - their faces are squirming under his flesh. The gray monster fish in "The Thief of Always" is another example of "Containing" souls of the living.

Ghosts – Most Ghosts are covered in the Undead above, but some human dreamers that die in their sleep have an inkling of the truth about the Dream World and a reason to persist, and thus their souls can venture forth into the Dream World to help those they love or care for. Such Ghosts can be Contacted and Summoned, but never Bound, or Contained. Any attempt to Punish them by their living, dreaming connection simply breaks the bond between that individual and their Ghost. Drawing upon Poltergeist 2, when that old short psychic woman from the first film dies in Poltergeist 2, she appears in the Otherworld to help, or maybe it was the family's grandmother - I forget, but its a perfect example of the dead having a job to carry on in the afterlife.

Dreams Beyond Time and Space (Cosmological Dream Horror) or Beyond the Pale

Something lurks out there, beyond time and space... We feign ignorance and suppress our unease, but when we sleep, somewhere deep within the primitive reptile-part of our mind, we remember their ancient manipulations, their tampering with our very humanity... and their inevitable return... It is in our sleep when we may cross to that void where they lurk...



Influences: Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos, Clark Ashton Smith's "The Treader of Dust", ICE's *Dark Space* game supplement, Edgar Allen Poe's "The Tell-tale Heart", the video game *Dreamseed*, and the movies John Carpenter's *In the Mouth of Madness*, John Carpenter's *The Prince of Darkness*, *The Hidden*, *Event Horizon*, Cronenberg's *Existenz* and *Videodrome*, and *Quatermass and the Pit* (also known as *Five Million Years to Earth*).

A **Sorcerer** is someone with the madness and the genius to transcend the confines of our existence, grasping for something more... and something terrible... Perhaps Sorcerer's are an evolutionary step forward or some ancient gene-tampering has given them unprecedented powers. Maybe the Sorcerer has been trained from within a cult, been subject to innovative and dangerous experimentations, or more classically, has read a forbidden tome, researched arcane rituals, or heard whisperings deep in their mind...

...regardless of the access, the **Sorcerer** is someone with ultra-cosmic perceptions and see beyond time and space, peering deep into the abyss, the edge of the cosmoverse and bargaining with those who reside there. The physical body cannot travel to the Abyss, but the sleeping or meditating consciousness can defy physical and natural laws and venture forth to where no human should journey. It is in this transgression of the natural boundaries during periods of sleep or trance or meditation that a Sorcerer can trigger powers and abilities other humans could only dream of through the assistance of a demon of the Abyss.

Sorcery is tapping into a power from beyond our universe, an Abyss from which no light or matter exists. This power is granted through the patronage and binding of demons, squamous and horrifying entities that skulk in the abyss, biding their time for their fateful return to our reality, the Waking World.

*In contrast to the emptiness of the void and the cyclopean and inhuman entities, **Humanity** is your grip on sanity, human inspiration, and reality.* The malefic and alien patrons of the Sorcerer are a challenge to this: the demons are entities that seek to invade and destroy our reality, the abyss and their powers are blasphemous and sacrilegious. Trifling with this power and trafficking with such demons inevitably invites damnation and madness.

Should a Sorcerer reach **Zero Humanity** while in the Waking World, that Sorcerer has succumbed to their human frailty. If their Will is lower than the Stamina, they have felt the void within and die of a massive heart attack or brain aneurism, whereas if their Will is lower, their insignificant monkey brain has collapsed under the cosmological horror and majesty of the Abyss and its occupants and they have gone irrevocably mad. As always, the endgame scene should be set up and executed in a suitably dramatic fashion that concludes this character's story.

If the Sorcerer loses their last point of humanity while in the Dream World – with their mind touching the Abyss, their personality and soul are obliterated as the *Demons of the Abyss* devour their soul and use their body as a husk to invade reality, bloating the Sorcerer's soulless body with their inky, tentacled, sanity-destroying bulks. Being fully possessed by the minions of the Old Ones from the Abyss, the flesh puppet that was once a Sorcerer continues to carry out their nefarious scheming in our reality. The player and the GM should arrange an epilogue which hints at these misdeeds, should the other players not intervene.

*These **Demons of the Abyss** are inconceivable monstrosities that existed before the universe and will be the end of it.* Lairing beyond even the coldest and darkest realms of space in the Abyss and comprised of something far more mysterious than Dark Matter, they eagerly await their triumph and the destruction of existence. Until then, their alien minds steal forth, whispering into the dreaming minds of mortals to further hasten the end of meaning and reality.

The *Demons of the Void/Dream World* that most Sorcerers summon are naught but the lesser servant creatures of these alien anti-gods, yet even these modest entities are worse than even the most depraved and perverse imaginings, more terrifying than any night terror. They begin as Parasites, but can evolve into Possessor Demons that gradually replace the Sorcerer's organs as humanity is lost, or into Passer Demons that are given birth painfully by the Sorcerer regardless of sex.

Dreams Beyond Time and Space Rituals

As with all the Rituals for the Dreams Beyond Time and Space setting, when a ritual is performed any clocks or other means of telling time become unstable and for any witnesses time may hurdle forward or reverse for moments and candles may burn down instantly or the flame may crawl back up reforming the candle. Objects and people in the room may have shifted position or have slightly different dimensions or appearance.

Contact: Contacting with the Demons of the Abyss is concerned with fracturing time and space and is conducted either in dreams or in trance state. Chanting ancient and inhuman verses and the use of incense with hallucinogenic drugs are the primary means of altering one's state of consciousness. Doing so within the framework of a chalk outline done with the obligatory non-Euclidean geometry is ideal.

The Sorcerer heads for the cold numbness of the Abyss and therefore a cold room is often central to the ritual, as is holding a cold object in one's own hands.

The contact takes place within the mind through telepathic means with the far off entities. The entity remains within the Abyss unless Summoned.

Once a Demon of the Abyss has been Summoned and if it is manifested in the Waking World, contact involves tracking down its trail or its Summoning and Binding Sorcerer through the use of the Lore skill.

Summon: All rituals in the Dreams Beyond Time and Space setting are particularly fraught with danger, but Summon is one of the most dangerous as it tears holes in the fabric of reality.

When one Summons a Demon of the Abyss in the Dream World, one's own consciousness ventures forth to the very edge of the Abyss, an act of damnation for even strong minds. So in the Dream World, the initial Summoning is not a bringing of the Demon to the Sorcerer, but rather bringing the Sorcerer to the Demon. In a sense, it is the Sorcerer who has been *summoned* by the Demons.

Summoning a Demon of the Abyss into the Waking World is even more challenging – for it does not merely slip a sliver of its essence into your mind, but it journeys from the edge of the cosmaverse, shredding apart reality and emerging through the rent to pulsate on the floor with tentacles twitching and oozing. Again time and space will flux and the emanations outwards will cause queasiness for people in the nearby area, electrical systems will burn out, pregnant women nearby will miscarry, and small birds and animals die instantly while larger animals will panic and act aggressively.

Bind: The act of Binding follows the Summoning, when the Sorcerer nears the edge of the Abyss and the Demon from that benighted place slips forth into their psyche, latently resting part of its essence in Sorcerer's subconscious mind. The Sorcerer will never be the same again. It latches onto its host, often the Sorcerer, acting as an extra organ in the body cavity and can be detected by instruments as an anomaly of some sorts. Another Sorcerer can still sense the Telltale organ.

This Binding is only partial – the Demon exists in the physical world but can only exert its powers when the Sorcerer is asleep or in trance. There is one last element of the Binding that some Sorcerers will complete, which is crossing over the demon from the subconscious to the conscious world. Allowing the Demon to cross over is a transgression and immediately results in a Humanity Loss roll. The actual experience is agonizing as well and the Sorcerer takes Special Damage: Lethal from the Demon's Power against the Sorcerer's Stamina. If the Sorcerer survives the experience, the Demon's organ has extended its own tendrils up their spine and driven it home into the Sorcerer's brain and the Sorcerer can use the Demon's abilities in the Waking World and the Dream World. Again, each use of a Demon Ability in the Waking World is a painful experience, and the round after it is used the Sorcerer takes non-lethal damage: (Sorcerer's Stamina vs. Demon Power).

Punish: The Demon is a thing of unreality and our own existence is a painful and hateful thing for the *Demon of the Abyss*, but its animus allows it to endure. To Punish, the Sorcerer must tightly weave reality around it, forcing the Waking World and its material and spiritual comforts into the very being of the *Demon of the Abyss*. Attending an orchestral performance or repeated viewings of *On Golden Pond* are noted for their ability to punish and immiserate Demons. In the Dream World, punishing can be a leisurely journey down a particularly fond memory or intruding upon the memory of a content and sleeping child, an experience terrible for both demon and infant.

Another means of punishing the Demon is to starve its host. Poisoning, starving, or near-drowning of its host, invariably the Sorcerer are prolonged means of demonstrating to the *Demon of the Abyss* the powers of the physical world and its own precarious physical existence in this world. Likewise, cutting or piercing one's skin, branding, or electrical shocks can be used to punish a Demon at the expense of its Sorcerer.

Banish: The presence of a Demon invited from the Abyss and bound has an inevitable warping effect on reality. While the presence of emotions and meaning may disturb a *Demon of the Abyss*, it is wholly insufficient to Banish it. The only means to Banish a Demon is through ancient techniques passed on from generation to generation. These formal techniques follow rituals older than humanity itself. Some say that the ritual are the words of Creation, others say that the rituals evoke the 10,000 names of god that created the universe, while a few argue that the ritual names the *Demons of the Abyss* and includes them into

the realm of the physical and of creation thereby empowering the Sorcerer to expel them. The truth is that the reason why banishment works is a mystery. The act of banishing entails following these rituals, kept secret by religious sects, passed down by Demon Hunters, or encoded in rare tomes.

Some argue that a Demon of the Abyss can be Banished by the killing of its host, the Sorcerer, while others suggest that the Demon is then let loose to prowl reality and seek out and even mentor a new host-Sorcerer.

Contain: The ritual of Containment draws upon similar measures as the Ritual of Banishment and its origins are just as obscure. The Containment ritual is merely a portion of the larger Banishment ritual, drawing upon the same chants and accoutrements as candles and incense as its more powerful version. There have been reports that recent innovations have been made on the Contain ritual using new mathematical applications drawn from Astro-Physics or Genetics. Using non-Euclidean geometry or drawing upon sequences in the human genome formulated by powerful super computers, some Sorcerers and other occult figures claim that the *Demons of the Abyss* can be contained by the formulae drawn from such experimentations.

Other Demons

“They worshipped, so they said, the Great Old Ones who lived ages before they were any men, and who came to the young world out of the sky. The Old Ones are gone now, inside the earth and under the sea; but their dead bodies had told secrets in dream to the first man...”

-“The Call of Cthulhu”, H.P. Lovecraft

Old Ones – (Power 11+) The Old Ones are simply those entities of the Abyss that loom on the periphery of reality and the cosmaverse. The Old Ones are the monstrosities of the Abyss, those creatures that defy imagining – each is “as small as a world and as big as alone” (e e cummings). If they so desire, they can be Contacted and Summoned, as well as Pacted with, although their alien intelligence means that they potentially interpret the Pact differently than the Sorcerer would expect.

Beasts – Beasts are those humans or animals infested with wayward Demons. For whatever reason, some of the demons become merged with their host and lose their identity, being severed from the Abyss, and both demon and host have become mad, merging into a nightmarish abomination. Beasts are most frequently encountered in the Dream World, hunting on the edge of sleepers’ dreams, but a handful have manifested in the world. Those inhabiting both Dream and Waking Worlds can be Contacted, Summoned and Pacted with as they still remember a fragment of their nature, however those in the Waking

World are much further from the Abyss than those in the Dream World and consequently there is a +2 die penalty to all rituals.

“They have hinted at strange survivals in terms that would freeze the blood... but it is not them that there came the single glimpse of forbidden eons which chills me when I think of it and maddens me when I dream of it.”

-“The Call of Cthulhu”, H.P. Lovecraft

Pagan Things – Humans are not the only ones who dream. There are others, and they still linger in the Dream World. Perhaps the Serpent People who preceded humanity lurk on only in dreams, extinct in the Waking World but lingering in the Dream World, thus explaining many people's fear of snakes in their dream. Perhaps some of the higher animals dream, and their collective dream is represented by an archetypal animal that tries to sway humanity from approaching the Abyss, such as The Dog, while others madly encourage humans to venture nearer, such as The Snake, while a few cynically watch on and offer no help at all, as does The Cat. Nearly all Pagan Things exist only in the Dream World and can only be Contacted and Summoned in the Dream World and Pacted with there. If a Sorcerer sleeps next to a pet animal that is well cared for, they have a +2 bonus to the Contact, Summoning, and Pact as their pet's contribution to the Dream Archetype Animal makes that Pagan thing more predisposed to it.

Ghosts – Most people die and their consciousness dissolves as brain death occurs. A few extraordinary individuals die somewhere between the Waking World and the Dream World and are trapped on the border, capable of appearing in both the Waking World and the Dream World. This half-life suspended between the two worlds is either accidental or intentional. If accidental, they crave Final Rest, which can be effected by an exorcism (Banish) modified by the circumstances of their death. If this existence is intentional, then if banished they simply retreat from one World to the other and may return at the same time in the next lunar cycle. Both can be Contacted, Summoned, and Bound.

Undead – There are a number of possibilities for the Undead. Some dreamers, typically not Sorcerers, accidentally or intuitively approach the Abyss and have their reason obliterated, and while they may live and act, they no longer have souls and carry out their routine actions, acting as Zombies. It is reputed that the famous voodoo ceremony to make Zombies usually entails sending the victim's soul to the Abyss, while many of the loa that are summoned are Old Ones who may then control these Zombie vessels. It is possible that a person in the waking world can become a Zombie when temporarily possessed by “hopping” demon, which devours their soul and leaves them a Zombie which can then be controlled by the Demon as well.

In the House of Gloaming (Baroque Dream-Fantasy)

"You see things and say 'Why?' But I dream things that never were and say 'Why not?'"

- George Bernard Shaw

Influences: Miyazaki's *Spirited Away* and *My Pet Totoro*, Clark Ashton Smith, H. P. Lovecraft's Dreamlands Cycle, Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* (particularly *Preludes and Nocturnes*), *American Gods*, and *Stardust*, Zelazny's *Chronicles of Amber*, Grimm's Fairy Tales, *Grimm* the role-playing game, the movie *Labyrinth*, *The Adventures of Alice in Wonderland*, *Peter Pan*, "Bump Toad" adventure in *The Book of Hunts for Whispering Vault*, *Nobilis*, Charles Stross' *Singularity Sky*, and Bill Watterson's *Calvin & Hobbes*.

The only time we may transcend the mundane is when we dream, when the trappings of the physical world which bind us to mediocrity unwind and we discover the whimsy, wonder, and horror of the reality beyond our rules and symbols and paradigms, a world of magic rather than the workaday world of mediocrity. In truth, our Waking World is a gray, drab, but safe and predictable place relative to the madness and inspiration of the Dream World.

Thus Dreaming is when we escape from our humdrum lives; our sleeping minds drawn by the color and spectacle of the Dreamworld, tentatively nears these places, a place both grotesque and wonders. It is said that much of the greatest art and poetry and inspiration comes from those who tap in to and capture a small part of that magic.

Names for the Dreamworld: The Land Beyond the Bed, The House of Sand, the Dreaming, the Castles in the Sky, Slumberland, the Gloaming, the Land of Nod, Fairyland, Cloudland, Sugarplum Mountain, Cloud Cuckoo Land, Pillowland, Nevernever Land, Sugarcandy Mountain, Wonderland, Closetland, the Dreamworld, Neverland, Saturnalia, Dreamscape, East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon, the Nightlands.

Sorcerers are those that do not lurk passively as do most dreamers, but tap into and seize part of that inspiration and experience and power of the Dreamworld.

The Sorcerer, through their connection with the Dreamworld wields more power than any other human, but even the Sorcerer is but a thief, a parasite, in relation to the awesome power of the entities that shape and rule the Dreamworld.

For the Dreamworld is not ours, we are but mere witnesses to the imaginings of entities far greater than ourselves. Our own sleeping minds rarely ever venture into these imaginings, but rather flit about the periphery, lest we never return, for the Dreamworld is so beguiling that to experience it makes the Waking World seem excruciatingly tedious. Yet the Waking World is our birthright and it is best if people stay where they belong and accept their place...

Yet the Sorcerer flaunts these rules. A Sorcerer is one who realizes that dreams are the closest humans can come to divinity – and that divinity is found only within dreams... Sorcerers are those humans who reach further than others and dabble in this supernatural realm of the gods, one accessible only while dreaming. When we dream, we trespass into the playground of gods and monsters, angels and devils.

Sorcery in this setting is the ability to defy our nature, to surpass our own limited imaginings and to skirt about in a reality ruled by things far greater than ourselves.

Humanity in this setting is your attachment to reality – knowing that despite the wonders beyond, humanity is meant to exist in a world of routines. A person whose humanity declines has problems staying in the real world, the Waking World, and their mind constantly wanders, mulling over the delights and terrors in the Dreamworld. As humanity nears zero, the Sorcerer may lose themselves in the horror and marvels of a world where we do not belong and have problems distinguishing between the human world, the Waking World and the reality beyond, the Dreamworld.



If a Sorcerer reaches **Humanity Zero** while in the Dreamworld, their minds become trapped in the world beyond. Their mind is awake but cast adrift, and they forget their mundane selves, their physical bodies starve. As their bodies wither into husks, their souls adrift in the Dreamworld eventually becomes noticed, inevitably a cruel fate and they may be reshaped into an inhuman minion, trapped in jar for display, or devoured by some entity like the *Old Thing in the Bog*.

If the Sorcerer is in the Waking World when they reach **Humanity Zero**, it means that they have become part of the Dream in the Waking World and are no longer human. The Sorcerer is possessed by their Demon, carrying out its deeds in the mundane physical world and then retreating back into the dream with the

Sorcerer's body, heavily warped and transformed by the Dream Presence of the Demon.

Demons are the servitors of the dream world and reality. Dragging one forth into the real world gives a Sorcerer power, while binding one within the dream is far less dangerous. Demons are a mixture of the whimsical and the grotesque: a grumpling that once served the *Goblin King*, a sliver of the night that the *Moon Queen* absentmindedly misplaced, or the thought child that *Absentia* and the *Prince of Fools* conceived and then neglected. The demons are the living artifacts and inhabitants of unimagined vistas, or the demons, trolls, goblins, and bestial minions that slave away at the behest of the supernatural entities that command them. But what may be the tools or slaves of deities may become the masters of mortal sorcerers if the sorcerer fails to control them. Running amok in reality, these minions can become gods themselves if humanity is careless...

Old Ones are the gods of the Dreamworld and are the creators of the cosmos. Typically they are remembered by humans in vague and poorly understood terms through fairy tales and myths. They could be the *Horned King*, *Queen of Hearts*, *Baba Yaga*, *The King of Rats*, the Seelie and Unseelie Courts, the *Prince of Swords* and the *Prince of Fools*, the *Stranger*, *Old Misery*, the *Green Man*, and a whole host of other entities beyond imagining. They are the gods that created and shaped the Dreamworld. They cannot be affected by any of the rituals and may not be Pacted with – one can only hope to entertain them.

Pagan Things are those entities that may have once been part of our world, or are entities of some power in the Dreamworld. These could represent those such as the Fey Courts that



once ruled the wilds of the earth, or the great sentient trees that were among the first entities created in the Dreamworld when it was young and whose roots reach deep between worlds. *Uncle Bear*, *Grandfather Grasshopper Legion*, and *Constant*, the *First Dog*, are examples of Pagan Things that may still be bound by some ancient magic and can be bound by Pacts, but all other rituals will typically fail. The ancient rites that bound mortals and Pagan Things have gone unpracticed and the ties between both are tenuous at best. It should be noted that Pagan Things, who either once enslaved or were once enslaved by humanity still bear some animosity towards mortals. *The Big Bad Wolf*, exiled here into the Dreamworld along with many of his cohort still harbors resentment and their lot delights in tormenting the dreams of the innocent. Some of these entities can be Contacted in both the Waking and Dreamworlds, while fewer can be Summoned into the Waking World. None can be Bound, but they may be Pacted within the Dreamworld.

Beasts are the non-sentient Dream Creatures and Minions of the Old Ones, the rulers of the Dreamworld. Some are loyal and dutiful servants, others horrid creatures of war, while a handful are forgotten and roam free. A Dream Beast serving an Old One cannot be affected by any rituals except Contain, although a free-roaming Beast can be Summoned, Contacted, and Pacted. Beasts could be *Flying Monkeys*, *Black Goblins* and *Horned Trolls*, *Woven Shadows*, *Rat Minions*, the *Leviathan* and *Behemoth*, and others.

Ghosts can vary dramatically within this setting; each has its own origin and story. Some of the Old Ones have become bored with their existence and faded away, yet these powerful entities still haunt massive swaths of the Dreamworld when roused from their ennui. The vast majority of “Ghosts” in the Dreamworld are human dreamers whose dreaming minds have become trapped. Some Ghosts are devoured by Old Ones or their minions, others kept in jars or menageries for the Old One’s amusement. In the Waking World Ghosts can appear as well, with Ghosts being the souls of powerful dreamers, often Sorcerers, trapped in the Dreamworld but able to manifest at certain times in a place or near an object of significance to that dreamer in the Waking World. These places or objects may very well be Tokens (see Sorcerer & Sword pages 58-61).

The House of Gloaming Rituals

Contacting: Contacting the Demons of the Dreamworld stands in stark contrast to how most occultists think Sorcery should work, often entailing undignified and child-like behavior. Initial contact is through Dreams and usually entails the reading of myths, a fairy tale, or a children’s book originally influenced by the entity to be summoned. More frequently, a nonsensical child’s rhyme can be sung before sleeping and once asleep as the chanting of this rhyme will draw the Demon. The Demon can be summoned through the Dream, with the area often changing to reflect the domain where that entity lives. A Sorcerer trying to contact *Old Man Marsh* will find themselves singing a song and squeezing the mud between their toes as the rolling hills around gradually become marshland.

Much more difficult is contacting the Demon in the Waking World, in which case one typically has to venture to the locale which that particular entity is associated. Singing the same contacting rhyme or reading the same passage in a shadowy area will open a portal and allow conversing between the Sorcerer and the Demon that is lurking in the shadows. Contact is usually made through a reflection in a pool of water or the shiny surface of a bauble.

A few powerful Sorcerers have ancient trinkets or charms that allow one to more easily contact a particular creature. A mirror used at the Autumn Equinox may be used to draw forth a Dryad fearful of the coming Winter or the use of an old Skeleton Key can be used to invite in the lanky and ghoulish Doctor Pennycrank.

Summon: All standard Demons can be Summoned while in the Dreamworld, and nearly all can be drawn into the Waking World with considerable more effort required. Doing so transgresses boundaries and necessitates not only a Humanity Roll for the very Summoning, but a second one for the outright transgression of toying with the Waking World.

The Dreamworld is a wondrous place and some are loathe to leave such a place for minds and a world as drab as ours. Such creatures need to be lured, captured, or forcibly dragged into our world. Drawing upon their True Names is one means of compelling them, as is drawing upon some of the older rituals that still evoke them, corruptions of the rituals that the Old Ones use. Some can be summoned more easily as they are curious about who is summoning them. Others tire of the whimsical world of Dreams and are easily convinced to sally forth, at least until they discover how unappealing the Waking World truly is. Some of the meaner ones hunger for the tasty flesh of humans and need little persuasion to venture into a world where bone marrow is abundant. Some chaff under the onerous obligations of the Old Ones and delight in a world where they only have a foolish Sorcerer to contend with.



The Summoning ritual, like the Contacting and Binding rituals, may seem deceptively easy: a few rhymes, a name written in mud, a handful of spring flowers, and a copper penny may be all that is necessary to draw forth a creature from the Dreaming. Usually a couple of ancient relics or simple trinkets that are suggestive of the nature and essence of the creature to be summoned are utilized. Conducting a Summoning in the Dreamworld is fairly easy as these things are all around and over the millennia the knowledge of these creatures has become widespread, whispered in the rustling of weeds or carried about by the wind.

Bind: Unless engaged in some important task or already familiar with the Waking World, most creatures of the Dreaming are not too hostile when drawn by a Contact or Summon ritual, as their curiosity or cruelty might mitigate from being drawn from their own world. Binding is an entirely different matter. Suddenly discovering themselves being bound to something as insignificant as a human Sorcerer is incredibly demeaning for those who have served the gods. For those Demons who have turned their backs on the gods, being bound to a Sorcerer is all the more humiliating after escaping the clutches of the Old Ones!

Thus Binding is an intense struggle against an unwilling Demon. The Binding may be intensely physical, such as wrestling with a giant Bog Troll or catching and squeezing a Grumpkin into a Brass Jar. Other creatures are only bound through a battle of the wills, such as a staring match with the Giant Cobra that once guarded the Monkey King's treasure, or commanding through mystical ties your own Changeling Twin. Some entities are better bound by drawing upon the mysteries of the Dream Worlds. Lore can be drawn upon to Bind those esoteric or more abstract Demons, such as learning the weakness of Winter or using your Lore to find out where the North Wind nests while the South Wind is blowing.

Binding such a fanciful and grotesque or enthralling creature is an intense ordeal and saps at the humanity of the Sorcerer, for these are forces not to be trifled with. All Bindings occur in the Dreamworld, but once Bound, a Demon can be drawn across to the physical world, transgressing boundaries and necessitating another Humanity Loss test, as noted in the Summoning section above.

Punish: All creatures of the Dreamworld are spectacular but bizarre creatures made of Dream Essence. They are remarkable different from human beings and nearly each and every one has something anathema to it, and this is its weakness. The Blind Rat Sage is a creature of Knowledge and Wisdom, yet is fearful of cats and exasperated by meaningless limericks or riddles with no answers. The creatures of the forest, such as the Awakened Trees and Faeries are of the Essence of Nature and are harmed by objects of Culture, in particular cold-iron. Creatures of Night, such as the Fanged Maw and the rare Black-Spotted Blood-Drinker are tormented by bright lights. The Cornfield Scarecrow and the Voice in the Well are of the Essence of Culture and therefore abhor wild and untamed things. To Punish a Demon requires that it be exposed to the very Essence anathema to its own. These Demons are particularly resentful to any suffering and harbor their animosities for centuries...

Banish: As all Demons of the Dreamworld are Immanents within the Dreamworld, they call the Dreamworld their own and Banishing them is difficult and complex. The periphery in which most mortal human dreams occur is unappealing to Demons of the Dreaming World, yet it is by extension part of their own world. Consequently, if a Demon does not want to be Banished out of the vicinity of the Banishing Sorcerer and hurled to another part of the Dreamworld, it can take test against its own Power and use any bonuses to that successful roll as Bonuses to its own Will versus the Banishment. Should a Dreamworld Demon be in the Waking World, it is not allowed this power and may be more easily Banished.

While Summonings and Bindings draw upon sympathetic Essences, Banish rituals are like Punish rituals in that they rely upon contrary opposing Essences. These counter-Essences are supported by more seeming nonsensical rhymes or verses that sap the will of the Demon and through the Demon's natural

abhorrence aid the Sorcerer is warping the Dreamworld and projecting the Demon elsewhere far away.

Contain: As can be imagined, Demons are creatures of a constantly changing and whimsical world and one of the greatest traumas for them is to be trapped in a dreary and static environment. In some ways, the Waking World is the Essence of Reality and is counter to their Essence of Unreality and thus containing Warty Toad in a unmarked Jar of Ashes or capturing a Spring Morning in a book of Statistical Tables is the single worst thing a Sorcerer can do to a Demon. And for this reason, Sorcerers do it with alarming frequency. The more simple and commonplace the container used the more power it has to hold the Demon. Regardless of the Dream Demon's size, any manufactured or crafted vessel or object can hold any Dream Demon.

The actual Contain ritual requires less Occult artistry and a lot more physical effort and cunning than one would expect. By using objects and situations anathema to the Essence of a Dream Demon, one has to corner or trap a Dream Demon in the Biscuit Tin or Urine Sample Jar. Contain is effective in the Dreamworld, but far easier to do in the mundane world. The Sorcerer can roll Humanity against itself and use any bonuses to assist in the Lore/Contain roll.