

# DREAMESCAPE

Jason Maclean Jones, James Soper & Rob Barrett

*'This was not the first time I had apparently awoken from dream-filled slumber only to find myself trapped somewhere inbetween. Lost but lucid, this dream world was curious, extraordinary and seemed as real as my own.*

*Writers of weird fiction stories called it the Dreamlands; fantastical realms drawn forth from the minds of dreaming humans. Often beautiful, sometimes sinister, the Dreamlands existed on another plane entirely to our Waking World.*

*Whether it existed physically at all was a matter of conjecture, but I had been here before, as had other famous Dreamers before me. And they knew that other beings, immeasurably more ancient and powerful than us humans, slumbered in the deep forgotten places amongst the stars... and dreamed also.'*

## THE DREAMING

You are trapped behind the gates of sleep by Great Cthulhu in R'lyeh. Locked within a nightmare and unable to wake up, your dreaming mind has been fractured into many pieces. These shards and fragments lie scattered throughout the dreamlands; exploring, living and dying alone. Your aim is simple: to recover them, escape and wake up.

To do so, you must explore the Dreamlands, protecting your shards while shifting between your missing dream-fragments, surviving encounters until you find a gates and matching key that will lead back to the waking world. The powers of the Great Old Ones are of course set against you – eating away at your sanity, sapping your will and abilities and placing obstacles in your way. The reward for failure is high - to be trapped forever in a cage within your own mind!

Dreamscape is a tough game to win. Some decks are harder than others and you may often die at first. Repeat playthroughs will reward your experience as the story evolves and you learn to avoid traps and focus on specific goals. The knowledge you need to win is hidden down many narrative paths. So good luck, you will need it!

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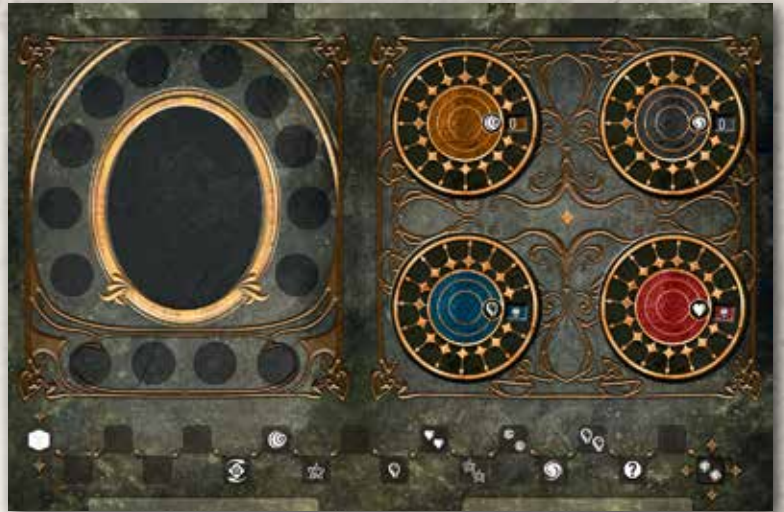
**Sleeping on the job:** the BadCats



# COMPONENTS



**6 CHARACTER SHEETS**



**CHARACTER DASHBOARD**



**6 MYTHOS TOKENS**



**16 SKILL MASTERY TOKENS**



**4 ELDER SIGN TOKENS**



**4 CTHULHU TOKENS**



**EVENT MARKER**



**EVENT TRACK BOARD**



**6 CHARACTER MARKERS**



**20 ELDER RUNES**



**450 STORY CARDS**

## SHATTERED MINDS

A major concept within the game is the Dreamer's shattered mind. Because fragments are scattered randomly around the Dreamlands, you will draw story encounters in a non-linear fashion, making the game sometimes feel disjointed, much like a real dream! It is your job to reveal this narrative jigsaw puzzle and piece the story back together.





6 CHARACTER STORY CARDS



2 SHARD CARDS



20 LOCATION CARDS



7 TALENT TILES



EXPERIENCE CUBE



4 REFERENCE CARDS



120 ITEM CARDS



1 ELDER DIE,  
1 PIP DIE, 1  
REWARD DIE



28 CONDITION &  
HUNTED TOKENS



32 CONDITION CARDS



20 THREAT CARDS



140 LORE CARDS

WORK IN PROGRESS





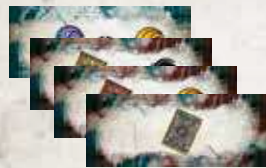
LOCATION PORTAL CARDS



OPEN REALM DECKS WITH PORTAL CARDS ON TOP



ELDER RUNE SUPPLY



TALENT TILE SUPPLY

BASE ELDER RUNE POOL

# PLAYER TABLEAU



THREAT DECK



CHARACTER BACKSTORY CARD & MARKER



CONDITION DECK



SHARD CARD



LORE DECK



IN PLAY

A component is *in play* when it is considered part of the tableau (playing area) and any functions or abilities it has are active.



PROTECTED SLOTS FOR ITEM CARDS



EXPERIENCE CUBE

IN PLAY AREAS FOR TALENTS OR CARD REWARDS



# GAME SETUP

Set up the **Player Tableau** as shown here. *Semi faded* components are not placed during setup – these areas will become filled as the game progresses.



## I DREAMER DASHBOARD

Insert your chosen **character sheet** ( / side face up) into the **Character Dashboard**. Set the four stat dials to their starting positions (shown in the table on **page 7**). Place the **Experience cube** in the first position of the **Experience track**, then claim the relevant **Character backstory card**, **character marker** and the 'Four shard' card. Take 3 'Fortune' **Elder runes** (half an elder sign icon on each side) to create your Dreamer's base **Elder Rune** pool. Place the **Threat**, **Condition** and **Lore** decks to one side (do not shuffle them).

## II STARTING ITEMS

Place all tokens to form a supply. Separate the **Item cards** into two decks; **Locked** (shown by a and a black on the backs of the cards) and **Open**. Place the **Locked deck** within reach. Then from the **Open Item deck** find the **Starting Gear** cards (numbered #001-#014) and take the **001** 'Strange Heirloom', placing it above your dashboard as shown. This card provides a special pentagonal **Elder rune** so take this token also. Randomly draw another **3 cards** from the starting gear set, placing them next to your **Dashboard** (in the protected slots if you wish), then return the rest to the bottom of the **Open Item deck**. Do not shuffle either of the Item decks.

### LOCKED REALM DECKS



### TOKEN SUPPLY

## III REALM DECKS

Separate each **Realm deck** with its matching **Portal card**, shuffle each deck (keeping the **Portal card** on top) and place each deck within easy reach. Keep the **locked Realm decks** shown separate from the rest. All other **locked Story cards** can stay in the card tray insert. Place the **Event marker** on the blue start position of the **Event track**.

## IV LOCATIONS

Place the deck of **Location Portal cards** within easy reach ('passive' grey side facing up) or lay them out if space allows. Place the **Talent tiles** within reach.



### EVENT TRACK



### AREA FOR IN PLAY ITEM CARDS



OPEN DECK



LOCKED DECK

# FIRST NIGHTMARE

If this is your first time playing *Dreamscape*, the Elder Gods highly recommend you follow the **QUICK START Tutorial** sheet which you can remove from the centre pages of this rulebook.

WORK IN PROGRESS



# CONTENTS

This Rulebook (v2023.02) will change as new stories and rules are added to the game. Download the latest version at [www.badcatgames.eu/games/Dreamescape](http://www.badcatgames.eu/games/Dreamescape)

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# WINNING

The goal of Dreamescape is to escape the nightmare. If your Dreamer wakes up before Cthulhu can take control of the nightmare, you win the game! To do this you must draw a special 'Last Gate' card. The card will tell you if you have escaped successfully.

# LOSING

Losing the game is far easier than winning. You will need to play quite a few times, exploring the Dreamworld thoroughly, piecing together the narrative puzzle before you have a chance of escaping. There are two ways to lose the game:

- 1 Running out of **Shards** or
- 2 Being told to place a **7th Mythos token** on the **Character sheet** but there are none in the supply.

# SHARD CARDS

**Shards** represent the Dreamer's largest dream fragments. When a shard is destroyed and there are still **Shard cards** available, draw the next highest numbered card to continue the game (see **CHANGING SHARD** on page 20). If no **Shard cards** are available, Cthulhu completely gains control of the Dream, the game ends immediately and you lose.




POSSIBLE  
STARTING  
REALM  
DECKS







**SETUP ABILITY**  
Action when drawing the card.

**IN PLAY ABILITY**

There are three ways to lose **Shards**:

- 1 If **Sanity**  drops to 0
- 2 If **Vitality**  drops to 0
- 3 If a **Story card** outcome shows 

# DREAMERS

Dreamescape presents six **Dreamer characters** to play; each with their own unique backstory. Each character has four stats: **Sanity** , **Vitality** , **Déjà vu**  and **Lucid Dreaming** .







# DREAMER SHEET

Dreamer **character sheets** are double-sided and represent the level of power (**Tiers**) the character has in the dream world. The table on the following page details the initial stats for **Tier 1** ( / ) and the changes gained when advancing to **Tier 2** ( // ).



# DREAMER ABILITIES

Dreamers have up to four abilities that change depending on their **Tier** level. Activating these abilities is explained on page 10 (**PHASE 2**).

-  Gain point(s) in the stat shown
-  Remove a token from a card in play
-  Gain 2 bonus skill icons for the next skill test
-  Spend stat points to gain something
-  Claim one extra reward from an **Story card**
-  Swap points between stats.



# DREAMER SETUP & ADVANCES

Dreamers have up to four abilities that change depending on their Tier level.

Rosalinde		1	1	9	11	7	6	+1	+1	+3	+3	8	9		
Arngeir		0	0	11	13	7	6	+2	+2	+1	+1	8	9		
Akiyo		2	0	11	9	7	6	+1	+2	+3	+1	8	9		
Dalby		1	0	12	10	7	6	+2	+1	+2	+2	8	9		
Zofia		0	2	10	10	7	6	+1	+2	+2	+2	8	9		
Ashcott		0	2	11	9	7	6	+1	+1	+2	+4	8	9		

## DASHBOARD

The **Dashboard** is where you track your Dreamer's statistics, skills, abilities and bonuses during the game.

**PROTECTED ITEMS**  
Three slots to protect Item cards from forced discards (but not Fade effects).

**DREAMER PORTRAIT**  
Section for character sheet to be slotted in, leaving spaces for tokens to be placed.

**EXPERIENCE TRACK**  
Records the experience (XP) gained from story encounters.

**STATS**  
Four dials that change value during play\*.


\* Stat values shown on white backgrounds are not available in Dreamescape. They will be unlocked in future expansions.



# BEGINNING

Every new game begins with the Dreamer lost in one of the Realms of the Dreamlands. Each unique **Realm** is a set of **Story cards** and a covering **Portal card**.

## REALM DECKS

Each **Realm deck** has a unique symbol (  for example) shown in the top left corner of all cards belonging to that deck.

**Realm Portal cards** have a 'passive' and an 'active' side. Flipping to the active side indicates that this is the deck from where you will draw **Story cards**. Only one **Realm deck** can be active at a time.

### PORTAL CARD (PASSIVE)



REALM DECK SYMBOL

COMMONLY USED SKILLS

TYPE ICONS

Story related icons specific to the Realm deck.



### PORTAL CARD (ACTIVE)



KEYCODES

REALM ABILITY


EVENTS

**Portal cards** indicate what **events** will trigger when the event symbol  appears on a **Story card**. Most **Portal cards** also have a **realm ability** that can be triggered when the  symbol appears on a **Story card**.

### RULE CHANGES

If text on a card contradicts a rule in the rulebook, the card text always takes precedence.

## LOCATION DECKS

 **Location decks** are similar to **Realm decks** with their own **Portal cards** and unique symbol but contain only one **Story card**. **Location portal cards** remain secret until discovered during play. *They then remain discovered (active side up) for the rest of the game.*

### LOCATION PORTAL CARD (ACTIVE)

LOCATION DECK SYMBOL

TYPE ICONS



REALM ABILITY

LOCATION STORY CARD



The current **Shard card** specifies possible starting **Realm decks**. Take the **Portal cards** indicated, select one randomly and return the others. Flip the drawn card to its 'active side' and place your **Character marker** onto it. This is now the active deck from where you will draw **Story cards**.

## GAMEPLAY

Each turn follows a sequence of six phases:

- I ENCOUNTER PHASE:** Draw the top **Story card** from the **active deck**, check for **Events** then read the encounter.
- II REACTION PHASE:** Choose one **reaction option** or follow a secret **Keycode** link. Use character abilities, item cards, spend rewards or XP.
- III RESOLUTION PHASE:** make a **skill test** by throwing runes or by spending **stat points**.
- IV OUTCOME PHASE:** Flip the card over and read your chosen **outcome** in the **success** or **fail** portion of the card.
- V RESULT PHASE:** Apply the results indicated and any **rewards** or **penalties** shown on the card.
- VI MEMORIES PHASE:** If the **Story card** is not stored for **rewards**, discard it to **Memories**.





## PHASE 1 - ENCOUNTER

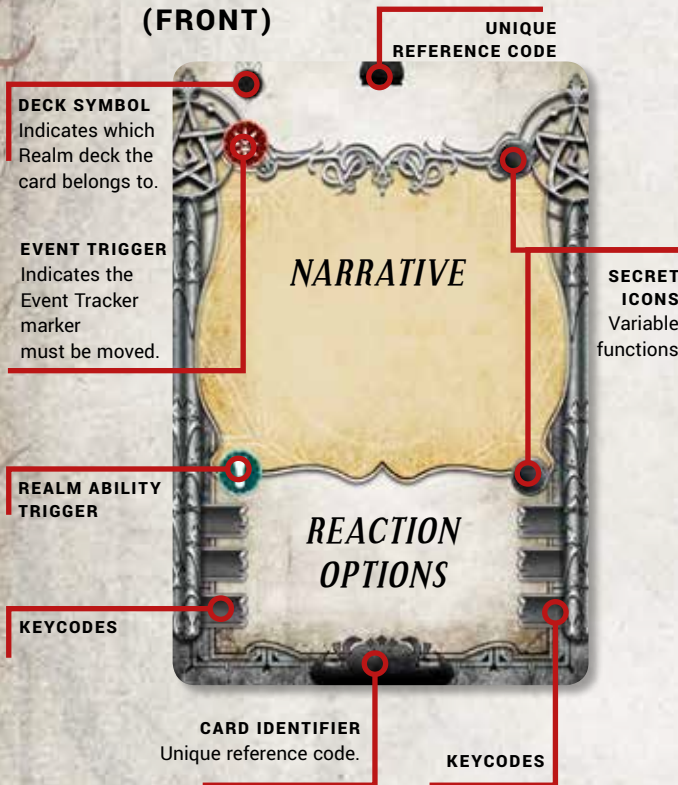
Draw the top **Story card** from the active **Realm deck** and check for a possible **event**. Then read the **narrative** and **reaction options**.

## STORY CARDS



**Story cards** provide narrative situations that offer three choices, leading to **fail** or **success** outcomes on the back of the card. Unique **Story cards** are referenced by if they are **open**, or if they are **locked** (with a numerical reference code).

### STORY CARD (FRONT)



### DREAM DICE

Three types of dice are used for variable outcomes in Dreamescape:

- ELDER DIE** - Used for variable outcomes on Story cards and for Cthulhu influence tests.
- PIP DIE** - Used for outcomes such as suffer where [x] is the number rolled on this die.
- Reward DIE** - Used for variable rewards.

## Events

If the **event trigger symbol** is shown on a **Story card**, immediately move the **Event marker** up one step on the **Event track** and check the active **Portal card** for the applicable result.

If an event specifies a unique **Story card** ( 635 is shown in the example below), this card immediately becomes the new active **Story card**. The previous card is shuffled back into its **Realm deck**.

If the **Event marker** is already at the top of the **Event track** when an event is triggered, it remains here and no event is triggered.

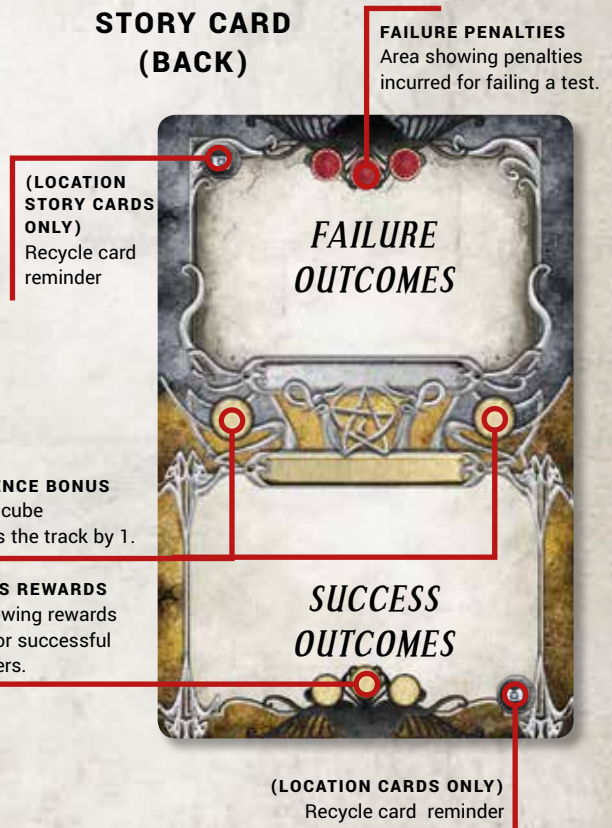
While in Celephais, Zofia's player notices the **event trigger** on a **Story card**.

She moves the **Event marker** one step up the **Event track** from position 2 to 3. She checks the **Portal card** which shows that Zofia gains +1 .

Zofia's player then continues reading the **Story card**.



### STORY CARD (BACK)






## PHASE 2 - REACTION



Check for **Keycode** links, use **Dreamer abilities**, use **Item card** functions or abilities, spend **XP** or **rewards** before making a **reaction choice**.

If the active **Story card** shows the **Realm ability trigger**  you may take this action **before** making a **reaction choice** or following a **keycode** link.

### Keycodes

**Keycodes** are secret storylines that become available when matching the 'key' icon (from an **Item** or **Lore card**) to its 'lock' icon (on an **Story card**) by lining up both cards side by side. The revealed code offers an alternative **Story card** to follow instead of the current card (shuffle the old card back into its Realm deck).


In this example, David has matched the knife icons revealing **keycode #116**. He can choose to immediately replace his current **Story card** with card **116** - which then becomes the new **active card**.



**Note the other keycode icons do not match and are therefore not valid.**

If you don't use a **keycode**, choose one **reaction option** from those listed on the active card. You may use **Items**, spend **XP**, **rewards** or activate **Dreamer abilities**.







A **Dreamer ability** is activated by spending 1 .

Sometimes the **reaction section** also specifies an immediate effect (such as modifying **stats**) above the **reaction options**. This effect **must** be applied before making your reaction choice.

### MISSING STORY CARDS

If a specific **Story card** is missing from its locked or open Realm deck:

- Check **Memories** and **rewards**. If it is present there, draw it and gain .
- If it has been **Banished**  from the game, immediately gain  and choose an alternative **reaction option** from the current **Story card**. If no other options are possible, immediately take , discard the card to **Memories** and return to **Phase 1** by drawing a new **Story card**.

## Skill List

Each character skill represents a group of mental or physical abilities employed by the character to progress through the dream by making tests.



Investigate/Explore/Search/Inspect  
(actively look at something)



Think/Understand/Study/Learn  
(discover something new about a situation)



Observe/Spot/Notice/Detect  
(notice something interesting or unusual)



Navigate/Travel/Sail/Locate/Sense Direction  
(plan and execute travel)



Trade/Bargain/Gossip  
(seek to barter for something)



Sneak/Hide/Blend In/Disguise  
(go un-noticed by others)



Trick/Pretend/Bluff/Deceive/Cheat  
(use subterfuge for something)



Strength/Might/Lift/Climb/Swim  
(use physical prowess)



Steal/Manipulate/Tinker/Pick  
(use manual dexterity to accomplish something)



Talk/Persuade/Charm/Befriend/Judge  
(communicate with someone)



Attack/Defend/Wrestle/Fight/Overpower  
(battle another person or creature)



Cast/Perform Ritual/Invoke/Summon  
(use a spell or mythos skills)



Resist/Persevere/Willpower/Resolve  
(use mental fortitude)



Dodge/Leap/Balance/Swing/Aim  
(use physical agility)



Alert/Perform/Entertain/Distract  
(put on a display to impress or confuse others)



Repair/Create/Aid/Heal/Fix/Break  
(use available materials to produce, restore or break something)



Rest/Wait/Stay Still  
(narrative choice not requiring a skill test)



Move/Run/Scramble/Dash  
(narrative choice not requiring a skill test)

WORK IN PROGRESS



## PHASE 3 - RESOLUTION



Each **reaction option** usually requires a skill test or spending stat points to complete the encounter successfully.

**Note:** If you choose an option that says 'end the encounter' or draw another **Story card** (🔍), the currently active **Story card** is discarded directly to **Memories** without claiming any **rewards**.

### Spending Stat Points

To spend stat points, reduce the applicable stat by the amount indicated. You cannot choose to fail this option; you **must** spend the points required or choose an alternative reaction option.

### Skill Tests

Passing skill tests requires gaining successes equal to or exceeding a **test difficulty level**.

🔍 has a **test difficulty level of 2** requiring 2 complete ⚡ icons to succeed.

Skill tests require throwing your Dreamer's **Elder Rune** pool (see opposite page). If the required number of successes is not met, the test is Failed.

Level 0 tests are automatically successful.

Modifications to **test difficulty** such as **+(x)** or **-(x)** for example, increase or decrease the **test difficulty level** by the value of x.

If a character skill is blocked by a 🚫, or a test is for a skill not present on a character sheet, the test *can* still be attempted, but no bonus **Elder rune** is gained for having the skill.

### THE ELDER RUNES:



**FORTUNE:** Gained from skills on the character sheet and skill icons on cards. Provide 1/2 successes.



**MASTER:** Gained from upgraded character skills and some items. Provide 1 success or none.



**CURSED:** Gained from Cursed Items.



**HIGH FORTUNE:** Gained from unusual Items or Lore cards.



**ARTIFACT:** Gained from rare Artifact Items. Provides 1 or 2 successes.



**HEIRLOOM:** Gained from the special heirloom artifact.

### Rune pool

The base Elder rune pool consists of **three Fortune runes**. Additional runes can be added to the pool from other components in play. Half runes must be combined to gain a ⚡ success. Runes are thrown **once only** (unless a 🔄 re-throw action is used). Runes are not discarded after use.

Throwing 🕷️ on a rune means Cthulhu's influence over the dream has increased. Immediately gain 🌀, placing it over one of your Dreamer's **character abilities**, even if you subsequently re-throw the rune using a 🔄 and get a different result.

### SKILL TEST EXAMPLE

Arngair hopes to purchase a Shantak. He therefore attempts the 🤝 **Trade skill test**.

His **Elder Rune** pool has the 3 base **Fortune runes** plus 1 for having the **Trade skill** on his **Character sheet**. He also has the 'Earthly Coins' **Item card** (showing a 🤝 icon) so can add +1 **Fortune rune**. He has two **reward cards** showing the 🤝 icon so spends both for +2 **Fortune runes**, discarding the cards to **Memories**. Finally, he chooses to add the special rune from his Strange Heirloom item.



Arngair throws 8 runes and gets three successes (by matching up half icons) - not enough to pass the test. Worse he attracts Cthulhu's attention, gaining 🌀 immediately!

Arngair does have another **reward card** showing a ⚡ (1 automatic success) but also an **Item card** with a rune re-throw action 🔄. He chooses to use the item and re-throws his 'Heirloom' **rune**, a big risk but... success! He gains the four successes to pass the test. He can save that ⚡ **reward card** for a future test.



## PHASE 4 - OUTCOME



Flip the **Story card** over to read the relevant outcome paragraph that matches the **reaction option** chosen.

For example, if you failed a skill test, read the FAIL outcome paragraph **only**.

## PHASE 5 - RESULTS



Apply the results of the relevant outcome paragraph. Advance the **Experience cube** along the **Experience track** by the number of shown on the card (if any). Apply any **penalties** shown if the test was Failed or claim the card for any **rewards** shown if successful.

### Story Rewards

**Rewards** are shown at the bottom of the Success section. They can be used immediately or stored below the **Dashboard** for later use. The maximum number of reward cards allowed depends on the Dreamer's Tier level (see table on page 7). **Only one reward option** can be claimed from a card unless two of the same symbols/icons are shown. In this case both matching rewards can be claimed. The card is then discarded to **Memories**.



*The two Sneak skill bonuses shown here can be claimed together but only for a single test.*

**Stat or XP changes** - Raise the applicable stat or XP by one for each icon shown.

The list of reward icons is shown on the **Reference cards**.

### Story Penalties

All **penalties** shown on the Failure side of **Story cards** are **resolved immediately**.

**Penalties** are explained on the **Reference cards**. Gained tokens such as **Condition** or **Hunted** tokens must be added to an applicable card in play, or can otherwise be ignored.



Once all **penalties** have been applied, the **Story card** has been completed.



### FAILING TESTS

Even if you Fail an encounter, your Dreamer still learns from the experience. You may still advance the **Experience track** if **XP cube(s)** are shown on the **Story card**. You can therefore choose to fail a test on purpose!

#### TYPICAL Rewards:



**STAT INCREASE:** Increase the applicable stat by one for each icon shown.



**RE-ROLL:** Spend to roll or re-roll one **Elder die**.



**RE-THROW:** Spend to throw or re-throw one **Elder rune**.



**ELDER SIGN:** Spend to add +1 success to any test or use a **character ability**.



**Reward DIE:** Roll the die immediately and claim the indicated reward.



**RUNE:** Add one **Elder rune** of the type indicated to the next test.

## PHASE 6 - MEMORIES



After completing the **active Story card** (and if it **has not** been stored for **Rewards**), discard it to **Memories**.

Continue this six phase sequence until either you find a special 'Last Gate' **Story card**, or run out of **Shards!**

### Empty Realm Decks

It is possible to run out of **Story cards** in the active **Realm deck**. If this happens, immediately gain an **Elder Sign token** for surviving the **Realm** then use the action to choose a different (not locked) **Realm deck** to become the new active deck.

If a particular **Realm deck** is specified but is empty of **Story cards**, take back all **open Story cards** belonging to that deck from **Memories**, shuffle them to reform the deck, then proceed at **Phase 1**.

If you are ever unsure what to do after completing a **Story card**, discard the card to **Memories** and draw again from the active **Realm deck**.





# ADDITIONAL RULES

## EXPLORATION


Traveling between **Realm decks** and/or **Locations** is called **Shifting** and represents you jumping between the dream fragments of your character.


### Shifting Realms

There are three possible shifting actions:

 **Shift Realm deck** - Most often the deck icon will be specified ( for example); otherwise a ? means **any** Realm deck. To shift, follow these three steps in order:



- Replace the active **Portal card** with the new one and move your **Character marker** to this new card. The replaced **Portal card** goes back on top of its deck.
- Reset the **Event marker** to the lowest level on the **Event track**.
- Begin again at **Phase 1** by drawing a **Story card** from the new active deck.

 **Change Realm deck** - Take all **Realm Portal cards** (*excluding any that are locked*), shuffle and draw one at random. Place all others back onto their respective decks. Then follow the three steps above.


 **Choose Realm deck** - It is your choice which **Realm deck** becomes active. Follow the three steps above.


### Shifting Locations

The three ways to shift to a **Location deck** are as follows:

 **Discover / Switch to a new location** - Often a specific **Location** will be indicated (such as ). **Remember that once discovered, Locations remain 'active' side up for the rest of the game.**

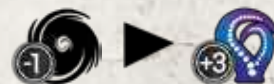
- Place the **Location Portal card** 'active' side up on top of the active **Realm portal card** with your character marker. Then start at **Phase 1**, drawing the **linked Story card** shown on the **Location Portal card** as the new active **Story card**.

 **Choose a Location** - Take a discovered **Location Portal card** and follow the step shown above.

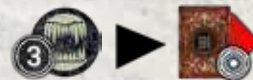
 **Location Keycodes** - If a **Lore card** in play shows the same location icon as on the active **Story card**, you may immediately shift to the indicated **Location Portal card** by following the step shown above (See the box example on the right.)

## CARD ABILITIES

Abilities on cards often show actions separated by black, blue or red arrows. The arrows indicate that the action or effect on the right results from applying the action on the left. A blue arrow indicates a successful result while a red arrow indicates a failed result. For example:



means spend 1 Lucid point to gain 3 Sanity.



means if 3 Hunted tokens are on this card, discard **this Condition card**.



means you may discard [x] Vitality to remove an equal number of **Condition tokens** from this **Condition card**.




means make a Will (4) skill test: If successful remove 3 **Condition tokens**, or if failed discard 2 **Lore cards**. Then make 1 **Fade test**. (**Fade tests** are explained on page 14).





means spend either 2 Lucid or 1 **Elder token** to get the result shown on the **Story card**.




In this example, Dalby has previously discovered the **Zoog Enclave** location, gaining **Lore card 124**. Later you draw an **Story card** that shows the **Zoog Enclave** symbol  as a **keycode**. Instead of continuing with the current **Story card**, you decide to use this secret route to shift to the enclave. The **Location Portal card** for the **Zoog Enclave** is placed over the active **Realm Portal card** (**Enchanted Woods**). The previous **Story card** is returned to its deck and **Story card 539** is now drawn instead. **REMEMBER:** Linked **Location Story cards** must **never go to Memories**. Instead, they are **always** returned to beneath their **Location Portal card**, to be drawn again in future.




## GAINING ITEMS

**Item cards** have silver and black backs. There are two decks; **Locked (Rare or Unique)** and **Open (Common)**. Specific **Item cards** are referenced in game with this symbol  (open) and  (locked) with a unique numerical code.





 **Item cards** are resources to help the Dreamer survive. The **gain item** action is shown by this symbol with a blue arrow (this example indicates gain 2 Item cards).

When gaining item(s), and no unique code is indicated, cut the **Open Item deck** and draw the required number of cards. Items gained from the **Locked Item deck** will always be specified by their unique identifier code and therefore can never be randomly drawn.

When gaining a specific **Item card** but already have that card in play, place a  on the card instead.

When gaining an **Item card** and a specific token is shown in the token space (top right corner), place one token there.

## Discarding Items

 The **discard item** action is shown by this symbol with a red arrow. Any **Item card** can be chosen to be discarded and any tokens on it (or **Elder runes** associated with it) must also be discarded. The **discard item** symbol with a target icon () means it is *this* **Item card** that must be discarded.


The maximum **Item cards** that can be in play at any time (not including in protected slots) is shown in the table on page 7. At **Tier 1**, the maximum is 7 cards.

## PROTECTING ITEMS



As Cthulhu exerts his influence on the Dreamer, items can often **Fade** from the dream and be forgotten. Luckily, three items forming the strongest bond within the dream can be protected by placing them in the **protected item slots** above the **character dashboard**. **Item #001** *must always* be placed here. Items in these slots are protected from normal discard actions (such as from **Story card penalties**). They are not protected however from discard actions shown on the card itself nor from other cards that directly specify that the **Item card** must be discarded.



## FADING ITEMS

Some item functions and abilities require making a **Fade test**, referenced by this icon with the number indicating how many times the test must be made consecutively. 


## Fade Test


To make a **Fade test** roll the **Elder die**. If the result shows a , the item immediately fades and is discarded to its **Item deck**. Any other die result has no effect and the item does not fade.  tokens on the **Item card** can be removed instead of making a **Fade test** on a 1:1 basis.




The action above means use this ability to re-roll an **Elder die** then make a **Fade test** once.

## BARTERING & EXCHANGES

The **test difficulty level** of **Trade skill** tests can be reduced by bartering items. The **barter value** of items is shown in the top left corner of the card. 


Each point of **barter value** provides +1  towards a **Trade skill** test. An **Item card** must be discarded to gain its **barter value**, regardless of the number of successes it provides.

**Exchanges** are denoted on **Story cards** by  with the number indicating the minimum combined **barter value** of **Item cards** that must be discarded to gain the benefit indicated.




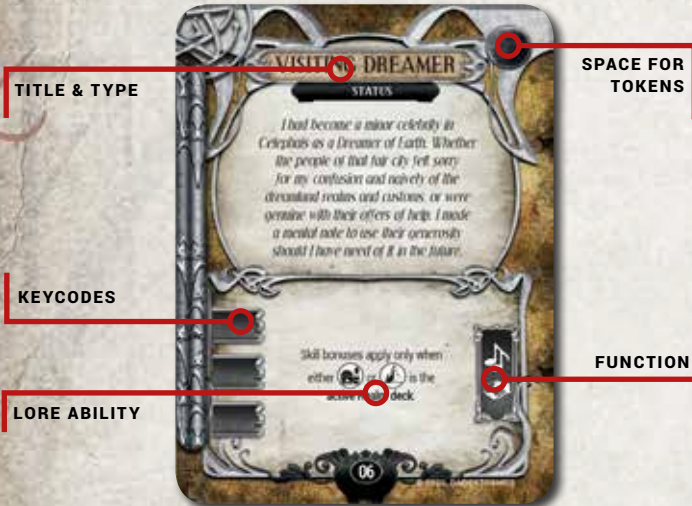


## GAINING LORE


**Lore cards** provide the secret knowledge necessary to win the game. They have gold-yellow coloured backs and are always locked. **Lore cards** are referenced in the game with this symbol  with the unique numerical code. There is no limit to the number of **Lore cards** that can be in play at any time.







The  symbol means the **Lore card** must be immediately removed from play.




## GAINING CTHULHU TOKENS





**Cthulhu tokens** represent the Great Old One's awareness and influence on the Dreamer's nightmare. When gaining a , place it in any **character ability** space on your **character sheet** that does not already contain a token. If a token covers an icon, that ability cannot be used.

When placing a  on a **character ability** space but there are none in the supply (the 5th ) , remove all  from the **character sheet** and place a  over a **character skill** instead. Cthulhu's will begins to directly corrupt the Dreamer's mind. This skill bonus is now blocked **for the rest of the game**, unless you can remove it!








## THREAT CHALLENGE EXAMPLE

This **Cnidarian** challenge has three possible rewards and four penalties. Akiyo decides she will attempt to reach the  reward.


**1 STEP 1:** Akiyo begins the challenge by making a  test. As well as her 3 base **Fortune** runes Akiyo has  on her character sheet (giving her a further  ) and on an **Item card** giving another. She risks using her 'Strange Heirloom' ().

Akiyo throws the runes and just passes the test, getting 4 successes.





**2 STEP 2:** She follows the blue success arrow to a level 3 difficulty  test. Luckily Akiyo has an upgraded Willpower skill  providing one  as well as her base 3 runes. She spends a reward card showing a  to gain another  and chooses to risk her Heirloom again. She throws and gets:



Only 2 successes and some Cthulhu bad luck! She must immediately take a **Cthulhu token** but can then choose to add to her test result by taking further actions. Akiyo spends another reward card showing a  to re-throw the Heirloom, gaining the last success!




# THREAT CHALLENGES

Special combat challenges are called **Threats** and indicated on **Story cards** by using the  threat icon. **Threat cards** have a green and bronze coloured back and are referenced on other cards by  with a unique code.





**Threat cards** are grouped into factions, shown by the icon in the top left of the card backs.







Reaction options indicating a **Threat challenge** will either show a faction icon (such as ) or indicate which specific **Threat card** should be drawn. To challenge a faction, draw all **Threat cards** showing the indicated faction icon and randomly select one.



A **Threat Challenge** test is a sequence of paths leading to rewards and linked by skill tests. Red skill tests are compulsory while black stages are optional. You may choose to stop the challenge before attempting an optional test. Blue arrow paths are available after making a succesful test while red arrows paths lead to a penalty for failing.






To make a skill test, throw the **Elder Runes** as normal. Ending the sequence on a reward completes the challenge successfully and allows that reward to be claimed. Ending the challenge at an optional skill test does not yield a reward. In either instance, discard the **Threat card** to the **Threat deck** and read the  **Success** outcome on the **active Story card**.

Failing at any step ends the challenge immediately and the linked penalty shown must be applied. Discard the **Threat card** to the **Threat deck** and return to the current **active Story card** and read the  **Failure** outcome.


**3 STEP 3:** This **Threat card** shows that Akiyo can immediately claim a **Story card** reward from **Memories** (she claims a card showing a ) and must now face the next compulsory test (a level 2 ). As well as her 3 base runes, Akiyo has the  skill () so chooses to test with just these runes.



To avoid failure, she chooses to spend  (to gain another ) , throws it and gains the last elder icon she needs to match, giving her the 2 successes she needs!


**4 STEP 4:** Akiyo's final compulsory challenge is a level 3 . She has a **Lore card** with a  () for a total of 4 **Fortune cards**. Spending her previously gained story card reward gains her an automatic  success. She rolls and gets only 2 successes. Having come so close, she decides to spend her XP (to gain another ) and has to reset the **Experience track** to the starting position.





With 3 successes she passes and can claim the  reward. She stops here and instead returns to read the **Success** outcome of the **Story card**.






## GAINING CONDITIONS


**Condition cards** are temporary statuses gained from **Story cards**. They have a red coloured back and are referenced by this symbol  with a unique code. There is no limit to the number of **Condition cards** that can be in play.

When gained, add  equal to the number shown in the token placement space. **Condition card** abilities that indicate changes to , refer to that specific card.




**Condition tokens** can be removed by:


- Spending an Elder Sign  token (   )
- A reward on a **Story card**
- Specific story outcomes

If all tokens are removed from the **Condition card**, discard it (  ) back to the **Conditions deck**.

## Hunted Conditions

**Hunted cards** are a special type of **Condition card** with their own unique tokens. There are two kinds, **Hunters** and **Superhunters**.




**Hunter cards** are linked to a specific **Realm** - they are discarded (  ) if the active **Realm deck** changes from the one shown on the **Hunter card** (not when the Dreamer discovers or activates a **Location** because it is still within the same **Realm**).

**Hunted cards** enter play with  tokens on them equal to the number shown in the token placement space (unless a **Story card** specifies otherwise.)

**Hunted tokens** can be gained as:

- Penalties on **Story cards**
- Specific story outcomes


**Hunted tokens** can be removed by:

- Spending a  token (   )
- Rewards on **Story cards**
- Specific story outcomes


If all **Hunted tokens** are removed from the card, discard it back to the **Conditions deck**.

## Superhunter Conditions

**Superhunter cards** represent deadly pursuers that hunt the Dreamer throughout the game! They are global and have no linked **Realm**. They **are not** removed from play when the Dreamer shifts to a different **Realm deck**.




**Superhunter cards** enter play with  tokens equal to the number shown in the token placement space, unless a **Story card** specifies otherwise.

They can only be discarded if **all tokens** have been removed.

They cannot be removed by using the  action.

## Elder Tokens

**Elder tokens**, are powerful gifts from the Elder gods that have five possible uses (discard after use):

- automatically pass one skill test
-  remove 2 condition tokens
- cancel out a **Mythos token** 
-  /  remove two **Hunted** or one **Superhunter token**
- pass one stage of a **Threat Challenge**



## SKILL MASTERY



**Skill Mastery** tokens are upgrades to a character's base skills. To gain a **Mastery** token, discard **four reward cards** showing matching skill icons (a star can be substituted to meet this requirement). Place the applicable **Mastery** token over the matching skill on your character sheet.

A Master skill provides **one Master rune** to the Dreamer's rune pool instead of a **Fortune** rune.



**Mastery** tokens can also be used to cancel out a blocking the skill (both tokens are discarded).



## GAINING FROM EXPERIENCE



Various benefits can be gained from the **experience track**. Any icon shown below or before the current position of the **experience marker** can be claimed by resetting the **experience track** to the starting position. Only one benefit can be claimed at a time.

The final benefit on the **experience track** is a **Talent tile**. To claim this benefit, reset the **experience marker** and choose one tile from those available in the supply.

## GAINING TALENTS

**Talents** are permanent character upgrade abilities that fit into the three slots in the base of your **Dreamer dashboard**. They can be activated at any time by placing one onto the tile. Talents with a on them cannot be used again until the token has been removed.



when gaining a Condition card



Maximum Items in play is now +3



when 7 or more items are in play



when gaining any of these Items



When losing or more, recover



to travel to a known Location



if 5 or more Conditions are in play



if 5 or more Lore cards are in play



When suffering or more, recover

## USING DEJA VU

**Déjà vu** means 'already seen.' In Dreamescape this powerful ability represents the Dreamer's recurring dreams. You can use this ability to:



- **Repeated Dreams** - Remember a previous dream (option on **Story cards**) by spending the points indicated
- **Recall Memories** - to immediately return 1 **Story card** of your choice from **Memories** or **rewards area** and shuffle it back into its **Realm deck**
- **Remember Special Location** - to shift immediately to a discovered **Location card**
- **Foreknowledge** - to gain one **Fortune rune** for the next skill test or **Threat challenge stage**.

## USING LUCID DREAMING

**Lucid dreaming** is the Dreamer's most powerful ability. It allows you to take direct control of the dream by:



- Influencing the outcome of certain story encounters.
- to immediately gain and (even if either stat has just dropped to 0).
- to raise the Dreamer's **Tier level** from 1 to 2 (see **Tier Advancement** on the next page).
- to gain one **Master rune** for the next skill test or **Threat challenge stage**.



WORK IN PROGRESS



# PROGRESSION

## CHANGING SHARD

When changing a **Shard card**, make the following additional changes:



- 1 Recycle all **Memories** cards back into their **Realm decks** (making sure to separate **open** from **locked** cards).
- 2 Discard all current item cards (except #001 and any in the protected slots of the **dashboard**) unless you spend . You may spend  instead for each additional **item card** you wish to keep. Note that **Lore cards** are not discarded!
- 3 Discard all **Condition cards** (including **Hunted cards** but not **Superhunter cards**). Reset **Sanity** and **Vitality** to their starting levels.
- 4 Reset the **Experience track** to its starting position.
- 5 Swap the previous **Shard card** for the next **highest numbered card**, following any setup instructions on the card. Draw the **Realm Portal cards** indicated on the new **Shard card**, choose one randomly to be the new **active Realm deck** and return the others to their decks.

## TIER ADVANCEMENT

The level of power a Dreamer has to manipulate the dream world is represented by **Tier** levels. Each tier is exponentially more powerful than the last.



To advance your Dreamer from **Tier 1** ( / ) to **Tier 2** ( // ):

- 1 Spend  and replace the **character sheet** in the **dashboard** with the higher **Tier** sheet on the reverse.
- 2 Then increase the Dreamer's current **Stats** by the amounts shown in the character table on page 7.
- 3 You may also discard 1  from the **character sheet** and redistribute any others that remain to cover different skill positions.



# SAVING THE GAME







Dreamscape has no set time limit, so at some point you may want to save your current game state in one of the enclosed bags.

*For accuracy we recommend making a note of any tokens remaining on item, lore and condition cards before following these steps:*

- 1 Discard the **Experience marker** and all  from your **Dashboard**. Discard any **Hunted condition cards** and  tokens (keep **Superhunter cards** and their  tokens). Place the active **Realm Portal card** aside for now.
- 2 Store all , , ,  and  in play. Recycle **Memories** by separating **open** from **locked** cards, returning them all to their respective decks.
- 3 Place all in play **Item, Lore, Condition** and **Reward cards** on top of the active **Realm Portal card**. Also place all discovered **Location cards** onto the **Reward cards** or **Portal card**. Lastly, place the active **Shard card** on top of this deck and store them all.
- 4 All other components, the **character sheet** and **dashboard** can now be stored directly in the gamebox ready for next play.

## REFRESHING A SAVE

To reset your **tableau**:

- 1 Lay out all **Rewards, Items, Lore** and **Condition cards** and the stored **Shard card** into the tableau as before.
- 2 Redistribute any saved  as equally as possible among these cards. Do the same with any saved **superhunter** . If a token remains, choose which card the extra token goes on.
- 3 Redistribute any  back on to the **character sheet** in *any order you choose*.
- 4 Return any  to their dashboard skills. Return any  to your **dashboard** or any applicable **Item cards**. Place the **Experience marker** on the start position of the **Experience track** and the **Event marker** on the start position of the **Event Track**.
- 5 Lay out all discovered **Locations** and all **Realm decks**, placing undiscovered **Locations** within reach.
- 6 Lastly, either activate your stored **Portal card** and begin at **Phase 1**, or  to start in a new **Realm** of your choice by activating its **Portal card** then beginning at **Phase 1** as normal.



## GAME MODES & VARIANTS

Here are a few game variants that change the Dreamescape experience. You can mix and match any of these rules changes to suit your play style:

- 1 **DREAMEASY** - During Game Setup choose 3 Starting Gear **Item cards** instead of the random selection and increase the **Item** and **Reward** card hand limit to **9 cards**.
- 2 **STORY MODE** - Make your **reaction choice** based on the narrative options offered and not the skill type or **test difficulty level**. To do this we recommend covering up the **skill options** in the **Reaction section** so they remain unknown until revealed.
- 3 **FAILING FORWARDS** - When starting a new game, keep up to 7 **Lore cards** and activate any **Locations** discovered from your previous game.
- 4 **NIGHTMARE** - For a tougher challenge start the game with only 2 **Shards** available and restrict the **Item** and **Reward** card hand limit to 6 cards.

## GAME AMBIGUITY

Dreamescape is a game system that has a huge number of card interactions and combinations. It can therefore happen occasionally that something (such as more complex symbol actions) might not be covered specifically in the rules, be explained in detail, or that causes you uncertainty during play. In all of these cases, apply the following rule:





- **RULE OF NIGHTMARE** - Resolve the situation in a way that is the worst outcome for your Dreamer character.

Look out for further Scenario packs, Realm Boxes and Story packs in the DreamQuest series to continue your adventures!



### LEGACY ARTIFACTS (Optional Rule)

Some rare **Item cards** have the **Artifact** keyword below their title. These remarkable items are priceless and often dangerous **Legacy Artifacts** that become persistent once they enter play. All have the abilities shown below:

- They cannot be  or  unless specified on another card.
- After being unlocked, you may begin any new game with any or all of these items in play. **Cursed Legacy Artifacts** must always enter play.
- On gaining an Artifact, place  on the space. 

WORK IN PROGRESS



# GLOSSARY

- Action** - Instruction on a card to perform such as removing tokens, changing stat values or rolling a dice.
- Active** - In play /in use (this can apply to Realm Decks, Story cards, Items, etc..).
- Banish** - To remove a component from play, making it unavailable during standard game play.
- Barter value** - The relative worth of an Item Card. Used for trading, bribing or exchanging.
- Change Deck** - Draw the next active Realm deck by randomising the available (open) Portal Cards and drawing one.
- Choose Deck** - The player chooses the next active Realm deck.
- Conditions** - Temporary bonuses / penalties with variable effects tracked by tokens on the card.
- Cthulhu Tokens** - These negative counters build up and convert into Mythos Tokens.
- Portal Card** - The top card of a Realm or Location Deck detailing possible events and actions within the deck.
- Déjà vu** - A stat allowing the Dreamer to relive memories. Has various functions.
- Dreamer** - The player's character in the game.
- Elder Runes** - Allow skill tests to be attempted. In play runes form a pool.
- Elder Signs** - Provide successes towards completing skill tests or spent to trigger abilities
- Elder Tokens** - Powerful rewards that help you survive and control Mythos tokens, amongst other perks.
- Experience Points (XP)** - Gained from Story cards. Can be spent to gain bonuses.
- Hunted** - A special Condition Card tracked using Hunted Tokens.
- Fade** - Tests an item's longevity using an Elder die. If die = Cthulhu icon, discard the item.
- Flip** - Turning a Story card from one side to the other, usually to choose a different Reaction.
- Fragment (Dream)** - A fractured piece of the Dreamer in the Dream world.
- Item Cards** - Beneficial objects carried by a character.
- In Play** - A game component that is in your 'Tableau' play area (its effects are active / can be used).
- Key** - One half of a Keycode found on Items and Lore, composed of a symbol and number.
- Keycode** - A matching Key and Lock that reveal a unique Locked card.
- Legacy Artifacts** - Special items that once revealed, remain in play in every game
- Location** - A secret place in the Dreamlands that must be discovered.
- Lock** - One half of a Keycode found on Story cards, composed of a number and a symbol.
- Locked** - Cards that can only be obtained through a Keycode or specific instruction to find and draw.
- Lore Cards** - Represent the knowledge and status of a character, among other things.
- Lucid Dreaming** - The most powerful stat allowing the Dreamer to alter the dream world.
- Memories** - The discard pile for Story cards that can be returned by spending Déjà vu.
- Mythos Tokens** - Represent Cthulhu's control over the Dreamer. They block off character skills and cause defeat.
- Outcome** - The result of a Reaction, detailed on the back of an Story card (split into Success & Fail).
- Reaction** - Decision for the player to make based on a story encounter. Usually three options.
- Realm** - A large explorable part of the Dreamlands (such as Dylath Leen or the Enchanted Woods).
- Recover** - Placing a Story card back into its Realm deck (and shuffling) rather than discarding it to Memories.
- Release** - Moving a Locked Card from the Locked Deck into its matching deck (and shuffling).
- Rewards Area** - Part of your Tableau where Story cards with Story Rewards are stored for later use.
- Sanity** - A stat measuring mental resistance to the nightmare. When it reaches 0, the Dreamer's current shard is lost.
- Shard** - A dream 'life'. Your Dreamer normally has four of these. If you lose all 4 the game is lost.
- Skill Test** - A comparison of a Dreamers current skill compared to (match or beat) a target difficulty number.
- Skills** - A set of 16 abilities that vary between characters.
- Story card** - A story scene within the Dreamlands that presents options and outcomes for the player.
- Realm Deck** - A themed set of Story cards linked with a matching Portal card.
- Story Penalties** - Gained from failed outcomes on Story cards. Always immediate effects.
- Story Rewards** - Gained from successful outcomes on Story cards.
- Superhunter** - Special Condition card that hunts the character across Realm decks. Tracked using Superhunter tokens.
- Test Difficulty** - The target number of a test, listed in brackets after a skill icon.
- Threat** - A tough but rewarding challenge encounter.
- Tiers** - An indication of the power of the dreamer and the difficulty of a Story card.
- Vitality** - A stat measuring physical wellbeing. When it reaches 0, the Dreamer's current shard is lost.

The complete card  
list for DreamEscape  
is on our website.

[www.badcatgames.eu](http://www.badcatgames.eu)





**WORK IN PROGRESS**



# ICONOGRAPHY



Story Card / Draw an Open or Locked story card (identifier code is shown)



Re-draw. After completing the active card, re-draw the previous Story card (even from Memories or Rewards).



Unlock/Release the specified locked Story card by adding it to its Realm deck so it can be drawn normally.



Flip a Story card to its reverse side and either read the outcome or re-choose a reaction option.



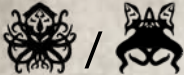
Recycle a Story card back into its Realm or Location deck / Banish a storycard



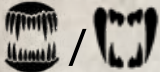
Story card rewards. Indicates how many reward cards can be recovered from (or must be discarded to) Memories.



1 success towards any test or ability



Failure (Penalty) / Threat challenge.



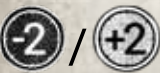
Hunter / Superhunter. Specific types of Condition cards.



Banish something from the game. (Often a card) by returning it to the game box.



Action Target. Used to specify actions targetting a particular card (e.g. Banish *this* Item card or Discard *this* Lore card).



Number circle to indicate a quantity (e.g. cards or tokens to draw or discard, or points to spend).



Sanity statistic. A measure of the Dreamer's ability to resist the nightmare.



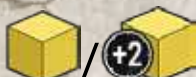
Lucid Dreaming statistic. A measure of how powerful the Dreamer's ability to change the Dream world.



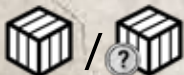
Deja vu statistic. A measure of the Dreamer's ability to recall memories and relive moments from previous dreams.



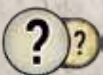
Vitality statistic. A measure of the Dreamer's physical wellbeing.



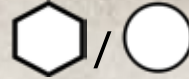
Experience or XP. The quantity gained is shown if more than 1.



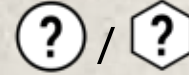
Barter or Exchange. The total Item value required for the exchange is often shown.



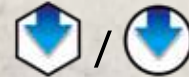
Skill test. The number after the skill type shows the test difficulty.



Location / Realm deck



Shift (travel) to a different Realm / Shift (travel) to a known Location or discover a new Location. Most often the specific deck icon will be shown.



Choose which Location / Realm your Dreamer shifts to.



Change to a new (random) Realm deck



Banish a Location from the game.



Skill Mastery. Upgrades a Fortune rune to a Master rune.



Item cards. Can be Banished/ Discarded or Gained.



Lore cards. Can be Banished or Discarded



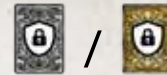
Condition cards. Can be Banished or Discarded.



Shard card. Can be Banished when the Dreamer's shard dies.



Threat card. A more detailed combat challenge.



Item / Lore card is protected from Discards (but not Banish actions).



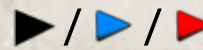
Card Identifier Codes (Open / Locked)



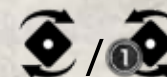
Free action on a Realm or Location card.



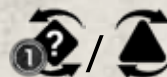
Event trigger on a Story card. Refer to the active Portal card for the specific event.



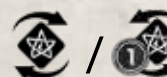
Result arrows. The action or effect on the right of the arrow results from applying the action on the left. Blue is success, red is failure.



Roll (or re-roll) the pip die the number of times indicated. If rolling more than once, add the numbers together.



Roll the Reward die / re-roll one Elder Rune (any shape).



Roll (or re-roll) the Elder Die.



Fade test. The number of consecutive Fade tests to be made is always indicated.



