



# HYPERCONSCIOUS

## EXPLORATIONS IN PSIONICS

*A psionics adventure-sourcebook for 7th-level characters*

BY BRUCE R. CORDELL

Uses the Third Edition rules from the v. 3.5 revision.

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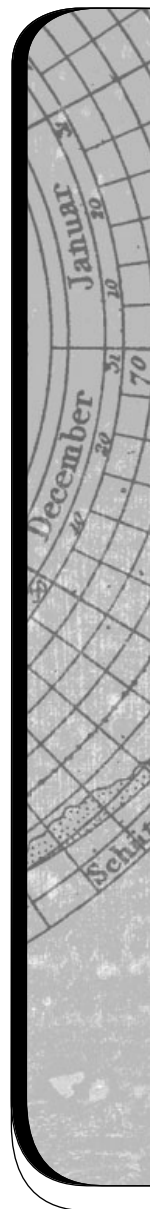
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# The Gate of Dreams

*What was my dream? A distant, unknown world / That elemental ether doth immerse,  
With matter in a wild disorder hurled, / And primal forces in contention whirled,  
A senseless demon over all supreme, / Who seeks with apish malice to reverse  
Creative influences, and coerce / A universe to death, and bring its scheme  
To chaos whence it came? What was my dream?  
—Joseph O' Connor; Edmund Clarence Stedman, ed.*

**D**ream is the gate, mind the fuel, and time an illusion. In *Hyperconscious: Explorations in Psionics*, discover psionics master Bruce R. Cordell's latest imaginative adventure, for 7th-level characters. During play, *Hyperconscious* unveils lots of valuable new game material. Many of the dozens of new psionic prestige classes, powers, monsters, feats, and items focus on psionic and dream-based themes derived from this adventure. Plus, in these pages you will discover more about the insidious entity known as the Dark Plea and its machinations—information that ties together the plotlines in all three of Bruce's previous Malhavoc Press titles.

*Hyperconscious: Explorations in Psionics* also updates Malhavoc Press' previous psionics rules material to v. 3.5 of the d20 System. Some of the material in Chapters Three through Eight originated in Bruce's EN-World Award-winning psionics books *If Thoughts Could Kill* and *Mindscapes*. This material has all been updated to be fully compatible with the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*.

This book is the only place you can find the v. 3.5 updated source material from these books plus the new adventures all in one volume. If you do not want any updated rules from previous books, look for the electronic (PDF) edition of *Hyperconscious*, a 64-page book that contains only the new material (a adventure plus new rules). If you'd like just the v. 3.5 updated versions of *If Thoughts Could Kill* and *Mindscapes*, they are also available in electronic editions. (Customers who have already purchased the v. 3.0 electronic editions of these books can buy low-cost upgrades to update their PDFs to the v. 3.5 editions.) You can find links to all these electronic products at <http://www.montecook.com/mpress.html>.

## USING THIS BOOK

Throughout *Hyperconscious*, a dagger (†) is used to signify a class, creature, power, feat, or item introduced in this book. Otherwise, all references to powers, feats, and other rules come from the *Expanded Psionics Handbook* and the v. 3.5 revision of the three Core Rulebooks: the *Player's Handbook*, *DMG*, and *MM*.

For the sake of convenience, each creature's statistics offer both Space/Reach and Face/Reach values, as well as the v. 3.0 and v. 3.5 versions of damage reduction (where applicable).

Bonus source material and ideas to augment the information in *Hyperconscious: Explorations in Psionics* appear on Monte Cook's website. To find the links to these free web enhancements, visit the book's product page: [http://www.montecook.com/mpress\\_Hyper.html](http://www.montecook.com/mpress_Hyper.html).

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Born in Watertown, S.D., **Bruce R. Cordell** earned a degree in Environmental, Population, and Organismic Biology from the University of Colorado. While working as a research associate in process chemistry he learned to synthesize DNA, but he could not resist the call of game design. In 1995, after a few years as a freelancer and designer of online text-generated virtual worlds, he abandoned science for a designer position at TSR, now Wizards of the Coast. His many design credits include the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*, *The Sunless Citadel*, and the *Epic Level Handbook*. He won the Origins Award for Return to the Tomb of Horrors and *ENnies* for *If Thoughts Could Kill*, *Mindscapes*, and his work on *Manual of the Planes*.

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### Malhavoc Press

**Malhavoc Press** is game designer Monte Cook's d20 System imprint devoted to the publication of unusual magic, monsters, and evocative game elements that go beyond traditional fantasy. Malhavoc Press products such as *The Book of Eldritch Might* exhibit the mastery of the d20 System rules that only one of its original designers can offer.

Current titles are available to purchase in either print or electronic (PDF) format at [www.montecook.com](http://www.montecook.com). Look for *Beyond Countless Doorways*, a new book of planes by classic Planescape® authors, available soon.

# Shades of Delusion

*Every dream is a prophecy; every jest is an earnest in the womb of Time.*

—George Bernard Shaw

The institution known as the Oraculus splinters, sundering the Seven Sages. Now, each Lone Sage decries the others as frauds and proclaims unique revelations of future eras—a future that whispers back secrets of unimaginable power! Are these visions true, or are they merely nightmares? Will the player characters find out?

**Encounter Levels:** *Hyperconscious* is designed to be a *challenging* adventure for four 7th-level player characters (PCs). Be advised that groups of fewer than four characters or groups of nonoptimized characters may want to start this adventure at 8th level. PCs should advance to 8th level through the course of the adventure. DMs can run the adventure for larger groups; such groups will have an easier time at the start of the adventure.

## PREPARATION

As DM, you need four rulebooks to run this adventure: the DMG, the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*, the MM, and the *Player's Handbook*.

Each encounter provides you with a variety of information. Boldface blocks of text are player information, and you may read them aloud or paraphrase them as you see fit. Sidebars contain additional information for you. Bits of nonplayer character (NPC) conversation sometimes provide other information for players.

The new feats, items, monsters, powers, and prestige classes introduced over the course of this adventure are detailed in Chapters Four through Eight.

The adventure has no specific setting so that you can stitch it into your own campaign world. However, DMs may find the information in *When the Sky Falls* (Malhavoc Press, 2003) useful to expand upon the meteor crash that starts the chain of events leading to PC involvement. The following section also explains some of the basic concepts the PCs may discover for themselves as the adventure plays out.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In the past, the Oraculus served as an important site, for it housed the Seven Sages. Kings sought out the Seven Sages to learn of the fate of their kingdoms and of their heirs. Generals sought the sages' advice on strategy. Pilgrims inquired about health and ways to get ahead in the world.

Over time, the sages' advice became a modern legend, and many truly believed that the Seven Sages could gaze, somewhat accurately, into the near future.

All that changed when what some called the punishing fist of the gods literally splintered the Oraculus. A fiery chunk of starstuff fell upon the temple of the Oraculus, leaving behind only a glowing crater.

While the Seven Sages physically survived, their unity did not endure that strike. Some of the sages fled, while others remained nearby. All those remaining swore enmity and decried the other sages as frauds. Some even claimed sudden new and powerful insight into the Far Future—a future that whispers back secrets of unimaginable power to those willing to listen. Of these remaining sages, a human named Thales is the only one still active in the public eye.

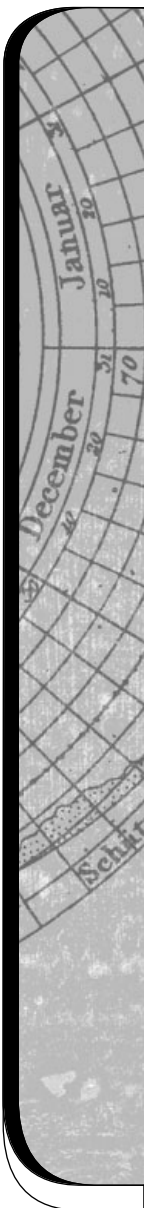
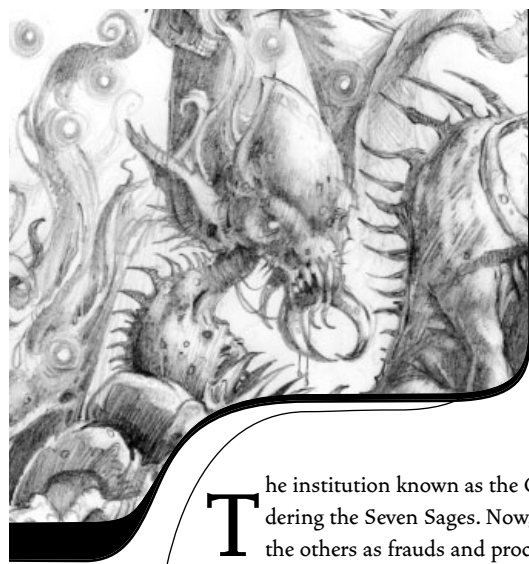
Now these sages, splintered as they are, seek further knowledge of the Far Future. Meanwhile, one of them wants to rebuild the Oraculus, regain its ties to a dreamlike environment called the Shallows, and recover the ability to create “dreamstained” items. This is, perhaps, not very wise given the Dark Plea's unseen influence on the Shallows and those who utilize these Dream-abutted environments. But even sages are ignorant of—or influenced by—certain things.

## THE NATURE OF DREAM, THE SHALLOWS, AND THE DARK PLEA

There is a force in the multiverse known as the Dark Plea. Some believe it is merely a malign psychic force that can make its presence known only by the nightmares it causes in passing. In truth, the Dark Plea is something far more dire.

The betrayal of a psionic godmind by her siblings left a residue of this dark deed in the Far Future and created the prospect of the Dark Plea. The Dark Plea is a stain on the future that bleeds backward through time to help ensure the certainty of its own creation by any and all means. One avenue that the Dark Plea uses to affect the past (our present) is Dream.

So far, the Dark Plea's agents in this world are few, but on distant worlds and planes, its victories have been earth-shattering. Literally. These worlds have burst asunder under blows from the Dark Plea's most powerful, nightmare-spawned—but still unknown to us—other progeny.



One cannot pin down Dream in all its varied guises and its associated wonders, enigmas, and nightmares (some possibly even more potent than the Dark Plea). It has no single comprehensive definition: No laws bind it save its own—and those are mutable. Dream is many things to many creatures.

This makes Dream the perfect vehicle for a powerful entity of the Far Future to utilize as a medium for affecting the past.

Of course, Dream is too vast even for any one entity to encompass—even an entity as potent as the Dark Plea. But the Dark Plea is a powerful psionic force, and its affinity for Dream is strong. Using its power, it has seeded an ancillary region to Dream, which some call the Shallows.

## THE SHALLOWS

The Shallows are akin to Dream, and they partake of the substance of Dream in that they require dreamstuff to inflate and stabilize their existence. Yet the Shallows are artificial environments—a series of manufactured planes of existence that abut Dream and sometimes ensnare dreamers wholly. Such dreamers never penetrate into the greater gulf of honest Dream that lies beyond. Dreamers so ensnared run a slight risk of gaining the notice of the Dark Plea, or at least servitors of the Dark Plea.

Many of the prestige classes offered in this book, including the dream keeper† and the awakened dreamer† (see Chapter Eight: Prestige Classes), draw their power partially from the Shallows and partially from actual Dream, though practitioners of these classes usually do not realize that a hostile mind created the Shallows. Indeed, many that dream within the Shallows never come to any harm and servitors of the Dark Plea never notice them. Likewise, practitioners of classes that draw ability from the Shallows may never realize the truth or come under the influence of the Dark Plea.

If the adventure's conclusion brings about the final destruction of the Oraculus, the Dark Plea's influence over the Shallows ends but the Shallows persist. The Shallows have grown too large and too much a part of “reality” to fade—they've taken on an independent existence. Thus those who study prestige classes that rely partially or wholly on the properties of the Shallows are not harmed, though a few individual powers of those prestige classes may mutate into something different. (For instance, dream keepers† should replace the Craft Dreamgift† feat that they gain at 1st level with the Infuse Dream† feat.)

The Shallows have the following traits:

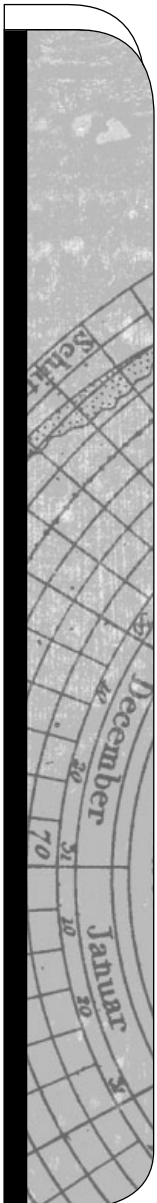
- **Subjective Directional Gravity.** Each region of the Shallows obeys its own rules of gravity.
- **Variable Time.** Time spent physically (or as a dreamer) in the Shallows never fully maps to real time. Sometimes more time passes in the waking world than in the Shallows, while other times less.

Each time a creature physically enters and leaves the Shallows, roll percentile dice to determine the differential using the following table:

d%	Time Differential
01–02	Only seconds have passed in the real world.
03–25	Real-world time that passed is only 75% of time spent in the Shallows.
26–75	Time spent in the Shallows is equal to time that passed in waking world.
76–98	Real-world time that passed is 175% of time spent in Shallows.
99–100	1d4 extra days have passed in the real world in addition to time spent in the Shallows.

- **Finite Size.** The Shallows are a series of artificial environments that, while able to multiply on their own, will only ever be an adjunct to the greater gulf beyond that constitutes Dream.
- **No Elemental or Energy Traits.** As a whole, the Shallows do not possess elemental or energy traits; however, a specific region of the Shallows might possess such traits. Discrete sections of Shallows are each referred to as a “shallow.”
- **Very Morphic.** The Shallows are not quite “highly morphic,” but neither are they completely stable in form and character. Usually, specific regions of the Shallows, once formed, persist for long periods unless someone applies concerted effort to change or delete that region. *The ability to grow a new shallow or alter an already formed shallow is not described in this book but is up to the individual DM's discretion.*
- **Mildly Neutral-Aligned.**
- **Normal Magic/Normal Psionics.**
- **Special Property.** Dreamers, as well as creatures that physically enter the Shallows, need not eat or drink to maintain perfect health, though they can do so if they desire.

The Shallows are coterminous to the Material Plane and also to the Astral Plane. Most creatures who reach the Shallows do so only as a dreamer (this is also referred to as being present as a “dreamself”), not physically, and they do so as easily as falling asleep. Even if an average dreamer tumbles into the Shallows instead of into true Dream on any given night, the dreamer has no guarantee of ever finding the Shallows again, unless a servitor of the Dark Plea marks the dreamer somehow. Characters who take levels in many of the prestige classes presented in this



book and who begin to dream usually enter the Shallows instead of Dream. In most cases, little distinguishes the Shallows from Dream to the average dreamer. The Dark Plea knows the difference, which allows it to find and touch dreamers each night and induce nightmares or worse. Luckily, the odds of any average dreamer in the Shallows running across the Dark Plea or one of its servitors are relatively miniscule.

Some creatures can enter the Shallows physically by using special powers granted by prestige classes, by utilizing supernatural or extraordinary powers, or by finding actual gaping portals (such as the one described in Chapter One, Part Three: The Crater).

Unlike in Dream, if a dreamself dies in the Shallows, the character must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or take 1 point of temporary Constitution damage upon waking. If a creature in the Shallows physically dies, it is dead, and servitors of the Dark Plea sometimes steal its soul away for nightmares.

Unless a dreamself has the Lucid Dreaming† feat (see Chapter Four), the dreamer has little chance to realize that she is dreaming or to understand the extent of her abilities while within the Shallows. Even with the Lucid Dreaming feat, creatures physically present in a dream can dismiss a dreamer against whom they make a successful touch attack. (A lucid dreamer can attempt a Will save against a DC of [20 + half the attacker's HD + the attacker's Wisdom bonus] to remain in the dream and not wake up.)

Note that neither those physically present in a dream nor dreamselfs can fall asleep or be induced to sleep while visiting the Shallows or Dream. Dreamselfs are already sleeping, and those plunged physically into dreamsleep find normal sleeping impossible.

While creatures that are physically present in the Shallows can travel from shallow to shallow, they must walk far enough so that one dream shallow collapses and another random dream picks up. (Most dreamers cannot travel in this manner unless they use the Lucid Dreaming† feat.) Unfortunately, such travel is chaotic and random, and travelers seeking a desired locale usually don't find it. However, the Shallows of the Oraculus currently enjoy rigid linkages that ensure easy access between each shallow.

## ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Thales, previously one of the Seven Sages, attempts to gain the characters' trust and aid. He gives them a version of the truth concerning dreamstained items (see Chapter Five: Psionic Items), offers to teach them his specialized psionic art, and indicates that if they aid him, they can gain more dreamstained items and some gold.

Characters who accept Thales' proposal visit the site of the former Oraculus to find a crater, but Thales indicates that all

is not as it seems. With the aid of the sage, all step into the crater to a dreamworld, where a portion of the original Oraculus yet stands. The PCs can see only a segment of the Oraculus initially, because six of the Seven Sages have convinced themselves that every other sage is a traitor, and each sage wishes to stay true to his or her own beliefs regarding the whispers from the future of what shall come hereafter. Thales indicates that first the PCs must find each drifting portion of the Oraculus, then deal with its resident renegade sage and retrieve that sage's particular "token of divination." These tokens allow a sage to access the True Adyton, where he can see full visions of the Far Future.

Presuming the characters go along with Thales' plans for any reason, they may learn more about the Oraculus, the Seven Sages, an entity known as the Dark Plea, and how Dream serves as a corridor to potential futures. (See the previous section for more on these topics.)

The last renegade sage, Anacharsi, attempts to tell the characters the truth: If the Oraculus returns to its former status, it will open a way to the Dark Plea, which is a creature that exists in the future. Anacharsi tries to tell the PCs that through manipulating the past (our present), the Dark Plea could actually attempt to create itself.

## CHARACTER HOOKS

Generally, you can introduce the Oraculus to your campaign, at least in passing, some time prior to the inception of this adventure. Possibly someone the characters know visits the Oraculus from time to time, hoping for insights into the future. Perhaps a PC visited the Oraculus in the past for a reading.

Another hook is the existence of dreamstained items (see Chapter One, Part One and Chapter Five: Psionic Items). Dreamstained items are akin to standard psionic items; however, they are easier and less costly to create. While in truth these items are tainted and dangerous, most users do not realize this, and thus the common name for a dreamstained item is "dreamgift." Very few know the secret of dreamgift creation (only the Seven Sages of the Oraculus possess this secret; see the Craft Dreamgift† feat in Chapter Four). Because the cost of their creation is low, their market price is likewise less, making dreamgifts desirable to the common purchaser. Generally, a dreamgift costs only one-fourth the amount one would expect for a similar nondreamgift item, and the manifester level required to create the item is about one-half of what would normally be required.

But, dreamgifts have secret flaws: That which empowers them also invests each with a filament of nightmare. The Dark Plea is the ultimate source of each dreamstained item's special ability and unique curse. At the core of each item lurks a sick nugget of knowledge whispered from a potential