

ATLAS GAMES PRESENTS

# The Dream Lich

BY KERTH BAKER

While a powerful necromancer may seek eternal life within a skeletal shell, a master oneiromancer — a new kind of dream magician described in *Occult Lore*™, a **Penumbra** D20 System sourcebook from Atlas Games — can take a different approach. Through dark rituals culminating in the taking of his own life, an oneiromancer can abandon physical existence entirely, becoming an immortal spirit haunting the dreams of others — a **dream lich**.

Dream liches are powerful and sinister creatures who drift between the dreams of mortals feed-

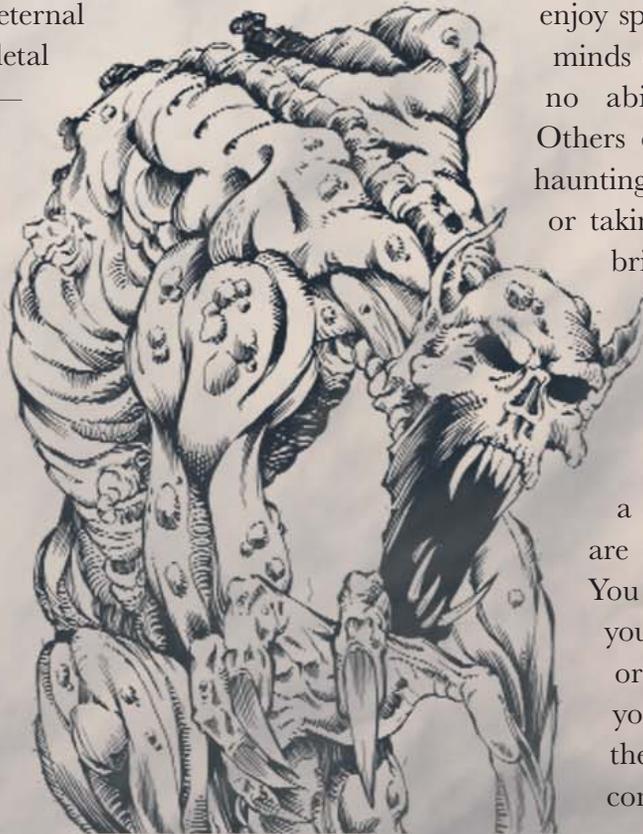


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ing on fear and nightmares. Some simply enjoy spreading terror, preying on the minds of children or those who have no ability to defend themselves. Others continue their arcane studies, haunting the dreams of living warlocks or taking possession of the minds of brilliant sorcerers. Mercifully, few oneiromancers have the level of skill or the depravity of spirit required to become one of these creatures. But while there are only a handful of these spirits, they are not tied to physical locations. You are not safe simply because you stay away from ancient tombs or ruined towers. If you dream, you are vulnerable — and one of these nights, a dream lich may come for your mind.

# NEW CREATURE TEMPLATE: Dream Lich

In its natural form a dream lich appears as a spectral caricature of its former self, its body twisted by the evil desires of its spirit. However, the appearance of the creature is governed by its imagination and it will typically shift its appearance to cause maximum fear or confusion.

More terrible than its twisted form is the dream lich's ability to steal the dream points of another creature traveling inside a dream. Normally, the ways in which the dream environment changes and events occur are dictated by the whims of the dreaming mind. But if someone enters the dreams of another, becoming a lucid dreamer, he can attempt to impose his own will on the dream world, performing impossible feats or altering the dream reality itself. The discipline and force of character required to perform these feats are counted in dream points. The dream lich's physical attack can drain the lucid dreamer's dream points, giving it even more corrupt power over the dream and everyone in it.

"Dream lich" is a template that can be added to any creature that possesses at least eight oneiromancer levels. The creature's type changes to "incorporeal undead." It uses all of the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**Hit Dice:** Increase to d12.

**Speed:** Same as base creature.

**AC:** A dream lich receives a +5 deflection bonus to its armor class.

**Attacks:** Same as base creature. Even though the dream lich is incorporeal, in a dream its blows cause pain as if they were solid.

**Damage:** Same as base creature.

**Special Attacks:** A dream lich possesses all of the special attacks of the base creature, plus those listed below:

*Dream Point Drain (Su):* Any creature struck by the physical attack of a dream lich must make a Will save (DC 20) or lose 2d6 dream points. The dream lich gains the points that are lost. If a lucid dreamer loses all of his dream points in this manner, his dream self is slain, and he suffers twice the usual death penalties when he wakes up.

*Nocturnal Possession (Su):* If a dream lich can locate and kill the self-image of the individual whose dream it currently inhabits, the victim and the dream lich must make an opposed Will saving throw. If the victim wins this contest, he wakes as normal. But if the lich wins the roll, it suppresses the mind of the victim and assumes control of its body. A *wish* or *miracle* can put an end to this possession; the only other way to break this control is to enter the dreams of the victim — who is effectively sleepwalking for as long as the lich remains in control — and hunt down and defeat the lich.

If a dream lich remains in possession of an individual for more than one day for every two points of Wisdom possessed by its victim, the victim's soul is driven out of the body. At this point, if the dream lich is defeated the victim's body falls into a coma. The only way to restore the spirit to the body at this point is to use *wish*, *limited wish*, *miracle*, *raise dead*, or *resurrection*.

**Special Qualities:** A dream lich possesses all of the special qualities of the base creature, plus those listed below:

*Alter Self (Su):* The appearance of a dream lich is simply a manifestation of the spirit's imagination. It can shift its form at will as per the spell *alter self*, and this effect has an unlimited duration. While the spirit is incorporeal by nature, it can conceal this fact within a dream; it can assume a solid appearance, although this

illusion will be broken when someone attempts to touch the creature.

**Dream Points:** For every hit die or level possessed by the base creature, a dream lich possesses a number of dream points equal to eight plus its Wisdom modifier. So a dream lich with a total of 14 character levels and a Wisdom score of 18 would possess 168 dream points. It can expend these points at the usual rate (two per turn, plus one for every rank of Lucid Dreaming possessed by the creature). Of course, if it has ten oneiromancer levels, it may expend any or all of its dream points in a single turn.

**Incorporeal:** A dream lich can only be harmed by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magical weapons, or magic, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. It can pass through solid objects at will, and its attacks pass through armor. It always moves silently.

**Regeneration:** A dream lich is only partially real. Its belief in itself is so strong that it can recover from any sort of injury, given time. It recovers two points of damage each round, and can regenerate lost limbs. This can even restore damage inflicted through use of the Stream of Consciousness oneiromancer ability; Stream of Consciousness is the only way the dream lich can regain dream points, other than through its Dream Point Drain ability, since it never wakes up). The only type of damage that can actually kill a dream lich is the effect of an *oneiric bolt* spell, and this damage can still be regenerated unless it actually kills the creature. While it can only be killed by *oneiric bolt* damage, reducing a dream lich to zero hit points will cause the creature to be ejected from the dream it is currently inhabiting, and into that of the creature nearest its previous host in the real world.

**Spells:** A dream lich can cast any spells that it could while alive. It recovers its full complement of spells every 24 hours of subjective dream time.

**Turn Resistance (Ex):** A dream lich has +4 Turn Resistance.

**Undead:** As an undead creature, a dream lich is immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, *sleep* magical effects, paralysis, stunning, and disease. It is not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

**Saves:** Same as base creature.

**Abilities:** A dream lich gains a +2 bonus to its Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. Being undead, it has no Constitution score.

**Skills:** A dream lich receives a +4 natural bonus to Disguise, Hide, Listen, Lucid Dreaming, Search, Sense Motive, and Spot checks.

**Feats:** Same as base creature.

**Climate/Terrain:** Any dream

**Organization:** Solitary

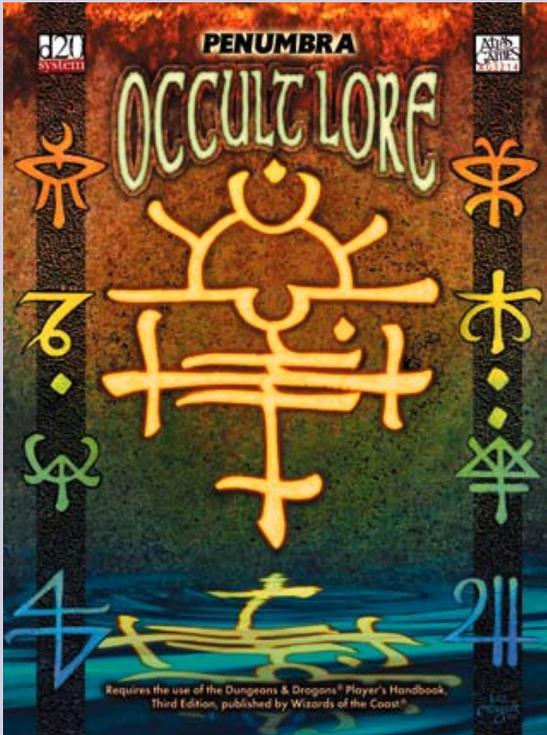
**Challenge Rating:** Same as base creature +2

**Alignment:** Any evil

**Treasure:** A dream lich does not collect wealth or material goods, but it may carry *transient* magical objects.

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