

The Dream Palace

Ever see something in your daily life that sparked an interesting thought or story? Maybe an old lamp post triggered a story or daydream about Narnia, or an interaction at a coffee shop reminded you of an interaction from a movie you saw. This game seeks to find those moments from your everyday life - and use it as fuel for a collaborative story with friends.

Much like a mind palace is used to remember facts about the real world for later recall, the Dream Palace is a place that anchors certain aspects of a Dream World which will be created by you and your friends through play.

Play can be done in person or online in various ways and can be played with as many or as few players as desired. Though it's recommended around 3-5 players. Likewise, the materials needed to play will vary between groups. Some may wish to use index cards to keep track of the communal Dream Palace while other groups may keep an online folder or images which show all the connections in the dream palace. However you guys decide to create and maintain your Palace, you'll need two types of things to keep track of:

- The Anchors to the Dream Palace, and
- The connections between the Anchors.

The idea of this game is to create a fun and imaginative story among friends and to see where that goes as the Dream Palace changes and grows.

The Phases of Play

This game has roughly three different phases in it:

- Setup
- Exploration
- Modification

During the setup, some loose ideas and thoughts should be shared among those deciding to play - what will constitute an anchor? Will there be some limits to how often anchors can be found? Additionally, some game housekeeping should be decided upon. The Exploration Phase is the more passive phase, it involves being aware of and exploring the outside world for material or events which might serve as an anchor point for the Dream Palace. Finally, the Modification Phase is when the Dream Palace is modified and the collaborative story in which the Dream Palace is used continues on.

The Dream Palace

As the story unfolds and the game continues, the Dream palace will grow and change depending on what the players do. Do to this, it is important to keep track of and have a record of the Palace. The Palace is a collection of two different things: The anchors which the players come back with and the connections between these anchors. It is up to the group to determine how / what these will be represented with. String/yarn, lines in a computer file, even Twizzlers or other forms of licorice could be used to represent the connections to the anchors. Anchors could be index cards labelled, photos taken, text fields in a file, cheezits or brownies. Though the latter would have issues as each anchor - on some level- is a unique entity. As long as the anchors can be told apart and can be remembered as what it originally referred to, it's totally okay to use.

As explained above, Anchors are references to moments encountered which give rise to a situation or story in which a player would want to interact with. Generally, these can be found in fleeting moments or serendipitous encounters. In terms of the Dream Palace, it is a definable notion/ idea within the Players mind that can be discussed with the group - additionally it is

represented by either a picture or a description which can help the Player remember what the defining experience of seeing that originally led to the intriguing daydream / story thought.

Connections are what make the Dream Palace change. The ebb and flow of the connections represents the combined Dream Palace of the players. Connections are used to bring anchors together in interesting ways which will make for intriguing story points to the collective Dream.

Starting the Dream Palace

The Setup Phase to the Dream Palace begins by bring a group of friends together, either in-person or online, and going over some of the basics behind the game. What are Anchors? What are connections? What will our space for the Dream Palace look like. Ideally, the one 'leading' the group will possibly come with a starting Anchor for reference.

From the basic anchor, it can be added to the Dream Palace and the player who added it can explain both:

- where the anchor came from in their life (what situation brought it about)
- what the anchor made them think of which proved interesting.

After the anchor is introduced, the other players can begin asking questions - keep track of these questions (and any answers that are given). Once this conversation has begun to die down, bring the talk back towards what will happen the next time everyone meets - who will have anchors and what will these anchors look like. Try to make the meetings regularly scheduled to the best of your groups abilities. As this game is intended to have a lot of downtime, it is important to keep a consistent schedule.

Finding an Anchor

The more passive phase of Exploration follows from that first setup of the Dream Palace. Each person then goes about their normal routine in life, keeping in mind the story points and questions raised last time. At some point, they may encounter a new Anchor which they think would be a nice idea to bring along back to the group for the next meeting. Once this new idea has been found, it should be recorded or remembered by the player - both the physical manifestation of it as well as the interesting story or imagination that resulted from it. As more time passes, let the anchor sit in your mind and expand where the story might go. What are some thoughts that are interesting about it? Are there questions it raises to you? Don't focus too hard on this part, just let it come naturally as a background thought to whatever might be happening. It might help to keep something on your person to write with if you are worried about forgetting a possible anchor. Also keep in mind that anchors need not be visual, try to incorporate other senses into the anchors (Taste, Touch, Smell, Hearing)

Examples of Anchors:

- a map from the drugstore
- an old lamppost
- a pedestrian bridge from a park
- the way a leaf fell to the ground
- a couple you saw from earlier that day
- The way your coffee tasted earlier today
- the smell of food as you entered a restaurant/kitchen
- the decorations of a building you saw
- the warmth felt waking up under the comforter of your bed
- the gravel at a quarry you past
- the sound of thunder and rain from a recent storm passing

Bringing the Anchors back together.

The next time all the players meet together, the Modification Phase can begin. To do this, first go over any open questions that were raised from the last modification phase - or that were left open from the setup phase. As these questions are raised, if any new anchors are introduced by a player as a response to those questions, bring them up and introduce the new portions of the Dream Palace. This new anchor will be introduced to the Dream Palace with one connection - the anchor where the open question came from. When introducing a new anchor, follow these steps:

- Describe the story behind the anchor, what aspects/elements does it add to the Dream Palace?
- Say what triggered this from your day-to-day life and mark/label the anchor for the Dream Palace.
- Address the open question this is related to and the anchor which the question is attached to. As a group, figure out how the two actor's story ideas combine together.
- Write down new thoughts or questions that result from this new anchor.

After all the open questions are asked, if a player still has an anchor to add to the Dream Palace, they can add them now. However, no connections will be given yet. Continue the process though with the story hook and any open questions that players might have about the anchor or the story hook for it.

Once all anchors have been added, review the story as a group. As the Dream Palace becomes larger, it is natural to find some idiosyncratic portions to the group story. When this happens, each player who added an anchor in this phase can change one connection to any anchor that wasn't added in this phase. This change can consist of: moving the connection to a different anchor, removing the connection, or changing the direction of the connection. In each case, it needs to be clearly stated how each of these anchors story threads are modified for this connection in the Group Story. When this changed connection is made, any new questions the group has about it can be filled in - if there were any open questions remaining for the old connection, either remove them or change them to the relevantly changed connection.

Once each player who added an anchor has a chance to modify a connection, review all the current open questions about the story and discuss where everyone thinks the story might go - then determine the next time to meet. Once this is done, everyone can go back to their day-to-day life and being looking for new anchors to add to the Dream Palace.

Continuation of the Dream Palace

The story/game can continue between the Exploration and Modification Phases as long as new questions are being generated to further the collective story. If a lull in the questions begins to happen - or every 5-10 cycles - try adding in new anchors that don't relate to previous anchors. These new anchors can add new elements to stories that have been mostly answered, or can help signal that a Dream Palace is nearing completion.

A Complete Dream Palace

As all stories do, at some point the Dream Palace will be nearing completion. Once this happens, upon mutual agreement of the players. Go back through all the questions and anchors that were originally used to start this Palace and see where the story went from there. What were some interesting points in the stories? Did some sort of curveball or unexpected change take anyone by surprise? Find out if this story ends on a good note, or if the group seems to think a new Dream Palace could be started to become a 'sequel' of sorts to this completed Dream Palace.

Is there a budding writer in your group of players? Perhaps they would like to take these concepts and form them into a nicely written story to share with others!

Note that the designers of this game take no responsibility for any effects on your sanity; we rather think it will be beneficial, but your own consciousness is yours to look after.