

Violet Dreams

Violet Dreams is a one-day LARP for twelve players, about two contrasting realities united by shared dreams. It uses pre-written characters, one-to-one scenes, audio technology and experimental techniques to explore the surreal, the subconscious and the (pseudo)scientific.

10am - 8pm, Saturday 25th October 2025

Headingley Enterprise and Arts Centre, Bennett Road, Leeds, LS6 3HN

£100 (subsidised tickets available)

Read on for more information.

<https://forms.gle/NXk1TYdLrF4XY4Jf6>

For any questions, drop me an email: jonolocks@gmail.com

What is this?

This is a game about dreams

You take turns lying down in a dark room, conversing with a disembodied voice, to explore a co-created dreamscape. There are some narrative threads to pursue, but the core goal is to explore a character's unconscious (and perhaps your own?)

This is a game about realities

When not dreaming you alternate between playing two different characters, who share a single dream self. Their realities are in stark contrast, so which of them is real?

This is a game about stretching your imagination

The dreaming process is not purely directed play - you will be given an initial scene to build in your head, but can expand upon it and interact with it however you like. Meanwhile your two "real" characters are shared with another player, taking it in turns to play each of them.

Is this for me?

This might be for you if you like:

Surreal, experimental gameplay

This is a game that actively seeks to confuse and disorientate your character - likely doing things you've never seen in a LARP before. We have done some playtesting, and a lot of thinking, but as this is the first run you will ultimately be taking the plunge with us!

Pre-written characters

This is a game with an established cast of 6 pairs of characters, who are each shared between two players. Each pair explores different themes, and their dreams will reflect this. On signing up you will be asked to rank your interest in each.

A highly individual experience

You will spend a meaningful proportion of the game dreaming alone. The other characters around you will shift and change (literally.) There will be no objective truth or final reveal, any sense will be yours to make.

This might not be for you if you prefer:

Purely “opaque” or spontaneous play

The core themes of each character, and certain story beats (such as the possible endings) will be clearly communicated from the start. This is to help you feel confident in how to push the game along, at the deliberate expense of surprising you as a player.

A block-buster experience

There is no complex set-dressing planned - just some plain rooms with furniture, some audio tech, and a few props.

Still not sure?

Try a game with similarities:

If you're unsure about whether this game will be right for you, I would encourage trying one of the games that inspired it, and seeing how you get on:

Top 10 Games You Can Play in Your Head, by Yourself - Sam Gorski & D.F. Lovett

The book will take you through the “setup” for a game that exists solely in your imagination, and encourage you to pursue it.

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0998379417/ref=dbs_a_def_rwt_bibl_vppi_i4

TANKERS - Sarah Cook

You will need a group and someone to run the game for you, but if that's viable you should get a good feel for what it's like roleplaying by audio alone in a dark room.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LzTxFBV4NICUPK32OepJJ_nbNc65mKiBQ90Na5DfmTg/edit

Ask me questions:

If you would like to know more details about the game (maybe read one of the character briefs, or learn exactly what will happen over the course of play) just get in touch:

jonolocks@gmail.com

Gameplay

Shared characters

This is a game for 12 players, split into 6 pairs. Each pair is given a short brief that outlines their two shared characters:

- An employee of a corporation experimenting with dreams
- A member of a collective of “fringe” theorists, also experimenting with dreams

At any given moment one pair will be dreaming in one room, while half of the remaining 5 are playing their “corporate” characters in another room, and the other 5 are playing their “collective”

characters in a third room. When it is a corporate character's turn to dream, they will afterwards switch to playing their commune character, changing places with their counterpart player.

This is (sort of deliberately) quite confusing. Here's an example of what it would look like in practice:

Alice and Bob are both playing "Red." Red is the manager in the corporate reality, and the "newbie" in the collective.

They start the game in separate rooms - Alice playing the manager, while Bob plays the newbie. When it is Red's turn to dream, they both enter the same room, put on headsets, and play out separate dream scenes with crew members through an audio call.

After that, they head to different rooms. Alice picks up where Bob left off as the newbie in the collective, while Bob switches over to playing the corporate manager.

Both characters are disorientated by the experience of dreaming, so those around them give a quick "reminder" of what they were doing before they went to dream.

Dreaming

Each player will dream for up to 5 minutes around once every half hour. Dreaming is represented by lying in a dark room, wearing a headset to communicate with a crew member who describes a scene for the dream self to explore and act upon. A bit like a one-to-one roleplaying game, but with the bare minimum of mechanics.

Themes

Corporate play will involve fulfilling tasks, seeking scientific rigour, focusing on professionalism over personality. A world that is grey, neat, and objective.

Collective play will involve interpersonal relationships, accepting conflicting interpretations, focusing on individualism and creativity. A world that is colourful, messy, and subjective.

There will be things to discover in all three spaces, but these will largely be designed to facilitate increasingly surreal gameplay and create more questions than they answer. As the game goes on the dreams may become more strange, blurring the characters' perception of reality and offering deeper self-exploration. The end of the game will demand change, with each character having to decide which version(s) of themselves they think or want to be real.

Practical

Cost:

There are three options for tickets:

Standard tickets - £100

Subsidised tickets - £50

Sponsor tickets - £150

For every person who pays for a sponsor ticket we will be able to offer an additional subsidised ticket.

Money should be sent over PayPal within three weeks of being offered a place. Alternative arrangements can be made, like paying in instalments or a later deadline, just get in touch as early as possible.

Cancellations before 7pm on Friday 15th August 2025 will get a full refund, after which point we will only be able to give you money back if we can find someone to take the space who is happy to pay all or some of the cost.

This event is not being run for profit, but if there is a bit of money left over to split between me and my core crew I would view that as no bad thing.

Sign-up:

Spaces are assigned on a first-come first-served basis, with a few exceptions:

We will ask for names at signup to share with everyone else interested in playing. If certain people would not be comfortable playing together, we will shuffle things around to accommodate this.

We will also ask you to rank your interest in the themes related to each character, or rule them out entirely. It may prove difficult to assign the first 12 signups to characters they will definitely get along with.

I will start this process once at least 15 people have expressed interest, or on 30th May, whichever comes earlier.

In short, signing up early will massively improve your chances of playing, but does not guarantee it.

Anyone not offered a space will have the chance to be put on the waiting list, and I may recruit other people to join the waiting list if it's looking a bit short. These will be shared along with the player list. In my experience even a game of this small size can see 3 or more dropouts in the weeks leading up to it (in which case your space would likely be free) so if you're keen it's definitely worth keeping yourself available!

The first part of the form will ask a few questions about the kind of character and experience you are looking for, to help us ensure you get a brief you will enjoy.

The second part of the form covers access needs, and the third asks some optional questions on how you found out about the game and what drew you to it. These sections will have no bearing on your chance of being offered a space.

There will also be the opportunity to go on a waitlist for the game, and to opt in to receive emails about potential future runs, or other games I make.

Food:

No food is included in the cost of this game, aside from some simple drinks and snacks. I encourage you to bring your own food to eat either in-character during the game or by taking a short break.

If you would prefer a hot meal, the venue is home to a cafe which is open 9am - 9pm. You can read their menu here: <https://heartcentre.org.uk/abk/>

The game will be finishing up by 8pm, but the venue is booked until 9pm. I will be arranging a big order with the venue cafe to arrive as debriefs finish, for anyone who wants it. Alternatively there are many places to eat on Otley Road, just a few minutes away from the venue.

Costumes & Props:

I encourage you to bring plain office clothes, ideally in greys, whites and blacks, to give the corporate scenes a stiff, serious atmosphere. You will be given coloured lanyards and name badges to help differentiate each character. Then also bring along some sort of accessory in your character's colour to wear during scenes in the collective - like a scarf, jacket or hat - to give those scenes a bit more personality. If this will be difficult to source, something can be provided on request.

Headsets:

Dream scenes are by default played through an audio call, wearing a headset. To speed up set-up, and avoid people having to share headphones, you're asked to bring your own audio equipment. These include:

A device that can connect to a call through the internet (ideally something handheld, like a phone)

Headphones with minimal sound leakage

A microphone with reasonably clear audio

If you would prefer to have something provided, please get in touch as soon as possible.

I'm very happy to make many adjustments to this intended set up as needed - see the "Access" section below for more information.

Safety & Themes

Intent:

My goal as an organiser is to build a space where:

- everyone is confident to explore the themes of the game and characters together, knowing that they can avoid content which would make them uncomfortable or upset
- players are able to step away, and return, at any time
- safety mechanics are used freely, not just as a last resort

"OC:" - changing and deescalating

If something is happening which you would like to change or stop, you're encouraged to communicate this by saying so, prefaced with "OC:", which stands for out-of-character.

For example "OC: I'd prefer not to talk about this", "OC: I need more space," or "OC: Could we step outside to chat for a moment?" There is no limit to how or when you can do this, and if someone asks something of you please adjust as smoothly as you can.

Stopping the game

If something happens that requires urgent attention - like a medical emergency or safety hazard - call out "Stop The Game."

Upon hearing this you should immediately stop roleplaying, pay attention to the source of the call, and either await instructions or take action as appropriate. Alert the game organisers and venue staff if they are not already present.

Stepping away

If at any time you need to step away, but feel that your character would or could not - perhaps they are in the middle of an interview, or about to be called to dream - then the gesture of shielding your eyes can be used to signal that you are stepping away for out-of-character reasons. If you see someone shielding their eyes then do not obstruct their exit or acknowledge their absence, regardless of the context.

The "engine" of this game will be constantly running, with a fixed schedule for when each character will be called to dream. This will be clearly communicated, to help you pace your game, however this means it won't be possible to adjust timings on the fly. If you need to skip a dream scene to attend to out-of-character needs that is absolutely no problem, and I want you to feel encouraged to do so.

If you step away for more than a few minutes, speak to a member of crew before heading back in-character. They will be able to give you a short description of any dreams you may have missed, and make sure you know where (and who) you should be next.

There will be nothing in the game that makes a character's absence significant. If someone hasn't been seen for a while, you should assume in-character that they are nearby, safe and well.

Themes

The following themes are central and unavoidable parts of the game:

- Dream realities and doubt over what is real
- Characters taking drugs, specifically hallucinogens
- Corporate hierarchies and toxic social dynamics

The following themes may feature prominently for some characters, but could be avoided or ignored by others. As this game takes place in a confined space it will be very hard to miss them entirely:

- Romance
- Power and authority
- Low self-esteem

The following themes are not intended to be part of the game - though they exist in the characters' worlds they should not be brought into focus during play:

- Sexual violence and harassment
- Discrimination based on protected attributes

The expression of interest form gives an opportunity to mention any other content which would make it difficult for you to engage with the game. If I think there's a chance it will come up I may add it to this list.

Access:

The venue, Heart Centre, has:

- Level access throughout the building
- Accessible bathrooms
- Lifts between floors (through every room used for the game is on the ground floor)

For more detailed information see the Accessibility page on their website:

<https://heartcentre.org.uk/accessibility/>

The venue has a small car park with two disabled parking spaces. These are all first-come first-served. There is limited on-street parking. The nearest car park is at The Headingley Taps, a few minutes away from the venue, for 50p per hour.

The nearest train stations are Burley Park and Headingley, around 15 minutes walk away from the venue, and 5-10 minutes from Leeds station on a regular stopping service. The 1, 6, 28, and 97 bus services all stop nearby.

The Expression of Interest form has a section for noting any adjustments you might require to engage with certain parts of the game (specifically the "dream" scenes and written documents) as well as a more open-ended space for requests. I am always happy to discuss these things further over email: jonolocks@gmail.com

By default, "dream" scenes involve lying down in the dark, with a headset on, talking to someone over a call while another person does the same on the other side of the room. We can look at the following adjustments as needed:

- Turning the lights on
- Sitting or standing, rather than lying down
- Going to the crew room to play the scene face-to-face

Inspirations

Paprika - Satoshi Kon

The film that inspired a game built around “guided dreams”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=padZletY36o>

Deep Morphean Transmissions - Dying Stylishly Games

A tabletop game about exploring dreamscapes and questioning your reality, that's so *deliciously* weird.

<https://www.drivethrurpg.com/en/product/275744/player-materials-for-deep-morphean-transmissions>

Top 10 Games You Can Play in Your Head, by Yourself - Sam Gorski & D.F. Lovett

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0998379417/ref=db_a_def_rwt_bibl_vppi_i4

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TANKERS - Sarah Cook

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LzTxFBV4NICUPK32OepJJ_nbNc65mKiBQ90Na5DfmTg/edit

The book and game that reassured me that you could get a lot of play out of lying still in a dark room

Severance - Apple TV

A strong inspiration for the “corporate” side of the game

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTqIZkvbNVg>

The Team

My name's Jon Fry and I like running small-scale experimental LARPs. My most recent project along these lines is Motorway South (jonolocks.co.uk/motorway-south) a game about identity and public transport, loosely inspired by the video game Disco Elysium. I've also spent the past few years doing something completely different, as Head of Plot at Empire LRP.

This project was co-written with Erin Marsh and Riley Routh, both of whom I've had many fruitful collaborations with. They both have impeccable instincts for story and play!

Erin has a Substack which you can subscribe to for updates on new projects:

<https://erinmakesnoise.substack.com/>

Riley's podcast The Tide, a mystery roleplaying duet, is well worth a listen: <https://tide.show/>

I'll be recruiting a few more crew to look after various things on the day. Their names will be added to the list of players and crew for everyone to look at before places are assigned.