

The background of the cover is a dark, atmospheric illustration of a castle. The castle's facade is covered in a dense pattern of skulls, giving it a macabre and horror-themed appearance. Several windows are illuminated from within, casting a bright green glow. The castle has multiple towers and a central entrance. The overall tone is dark and ominous.

# RETURN TO SCREAMHAUNT CASTLE

A 2ND LEVEL 13TH AGE ADVENTURE  
IN FOUR TWO-HOUR SESSIONS

BY ASH LAW

# RETURN TO SCREAMHAUNT CASTLE



Author: ASH LAW  
Developer: Rob Heinsoo  
Cartography & Cards by: ASH LAW  
Layout: ASH LAW  
Cover: ASH LAW

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# SESSION I: THE CURSE OF GRAVENSTEIN

## RUNNING THIS SESSION

This session is designed for 2<sup>nd</sup> level characters. At the end of the session, each character should gain an incremental advance.

The session, as written, should take approximately two hours.

## WHAT HAS COME BEFORE ICON ROLLS

At the start of the session remember to ask each player to roll their adventurer's icon relationships. Generally speaking a 6 can be traded in for a clear benefit, a 5 when traded in will benefit the adventurer or party but there will be an associated complication, obligation, or drawback.

This first session is a good time to identify the icons who have a stake in the adventure, and to think about how to bring in elements that include the influences of those icons.



## HEARTH-SIDE TALES

### Read this aloud:

Years ago on a stormy autumn night a festive gathering was held at the cursed Scrimhunt Castle, known locally as "Screamhaunt". The castle's curse was activated, and the castle came alive, killing the guests. Some of the guests, brave adventurers, managed to defeat the castle, and escape.

The defeated castle folded in upon itself and disappeared. Since then there have been rumors of its reappearance on stormy nights, a ghostly castle that is gone by the time anybody can investigate. Each time the castle appears it is in a new place.

Some of the icons have been tracking these ghostly occurrences, and have determined that the castle is making its way toward the town of Gravenstein.

A group of brave heroes has been dispatched to the village. You are those heroes. Your task: to investigate the castle and deal with any threats.

This is a montage scene. The point of this montage is to describe the meeting of the adventurers.

Describe to the players how their characters meet discretely at a tavern in Axis called the *Trumpet and Horn*, prior to heading to Gravenstein.

Turn to the first player and ask them to describe a tale that they have heard about the character of the player to their left. Then turn to the second player and ask them to either confirm the truth of the tale and supply further details, or to deny the tale outright and set the record straight. Go around the table until everybody has had a chance to tell a tale about another character, and to either elaborate on their own legend or to set the record straight.

This is a great time for the players to highlight their One Unique Things, or to establish pre-existing relationships.

For example:

*Player 1: Well I heard that Thuddar the Barbarian once ate a whole bear.*

*GM: Is that true?*

*Player 2: Yes, Thuddar actually ate it live—as befits a barbarian chieftain. It’s how you get to be chieftain in the Bear Clan!*

Or...

*Player 1: Well I heard that Thuddar the Barbarian once ate a whole bear.*

*GM: Is that true?*

*Player 2: No, Thuddar is a vegetarian, as are all members of the Bear Clan! You might be thinking of the time when Thuddar freed a bear and in return it taught him how to speak the secret language of bears.*



With a montage you don’t need to roll any dice—this is purely narrative play. Montages are useful for skipping over parts of the story that are less exciting than what comes later, but still acknowledge that the event happened or a location or relationship has been established. The second point of the montage is to introduce new characters. The third purpose of a montage is to re-introduce existing characters, reminding everybody of their abilities and personalities and relationships.

## ARRIVAL IN GRAVENSTEIN

The adventurers arrive in Gravenstein as the mist is rising from the floor of the valley that gently cradles the town.

Gravenstein is famous for its stonemasons and masons, and provided much of the stonework for the Cathedral in Santa Cora (though the building owes more to the magic of the Archmage and the power of the gods than the skill of the masons of Gravenstein).

Through the center of the town runs the river Graven, a tributary of a much larger river that feeds into the Midland Sea. On the banks of the Graven are the stonemason’s warehouses and their docks from which they ship their ornamental produce. Surrounding the town are high walls, built by solid dwarven workmanship.

Outside the town walls and on the southern side of town are a smattering of farms, but the majority of food is traded for from villages and towns elsewhere. It being autumn the fields have just been harvested of barley, but there are still plenty of pumpkins growing.

In the center of Gravenstein is a small imperial fort, home to the local garrison.

The people of Gravenstein for the most part are a mix of surface-dwelling dwarves and humans, though there are members of all races in the town; they pause in their work to look at the armed adventurers as they ride into town.



*This is a perfect time to introduce aspects that play to the adventurers’ backgrounds and icon relationships. If there is a definite pro-Elf Queen slant to the party mention how the town walls are topped by filigreed stonework of obvious elven design. If the party has negative icon relationships with the Prince of Shadows make sure to describe the corpses displayed on the city wall, executed for thievery. If the party has a definite religious slant then describe the many roadside shrines and the religious carvings that adorn almost every building in town.*

*Similarly if there is a character with a background ‘Pie eating champion of Forge’ then make the day that the party arrives the local pumpkin pie festival.*

This part of the adventure is pretty free-form. There are a trio of taverns in town (*The Red Dragon Inn, The Dog and Star, and the Stonecutter’s Arms*), some temples to visit, the imperial garrison and city walls, and plenty of common folks going about their business.

The adventurers are free to do anything that they wish, but you should remind the players why their adventurers are there: *Screamhaunt Castle* is approaching and will likely arrive on the next storm. If the party starts to lose its way narratively, remind the players that they are in town expecting to investigate a ghostly castle, and that a storm is coming that night. *In other words if the players decide to start a random barfight it’s time to bring in the thunder and lightning.*

If the adventurers’ time in town is spent gathering information on the locale it will definitely get them a benefit. If a character spends time interacting with the town and its inhabitants let them make a skill roll appropriate to what they are up to (DC 15), and on a success let the player know that their character has obtained information that will be useful later. You don’t

have to specify what the information is, let the player tell you what they learned later in the adventure.

*For example if a player succeeds at the skill check they could later tell you during the flooded graveyard fight that they learned a local legend about the dead buried there and you in turn would give them a +1 to an attack roll.*

It is a good idea to have physical tokens to hand out to show the benefit gained, tokens that the players hand in when they tell you what the benefit was.

As the adventurers explore the town the townsfolk keep mentioning a local fortune teller, Madame Vex, who foretold their arrival.

## MADAME VEX

While exploring the town of Gravenstein the adventurers come across an impressively painted building, replete with signs indicating a fortune teller. The sign above the door reads 'Madame Vex, True Seer', and the door opens as the adventurers stand in the street.

*GMs: If the adventurers are hesitant about going inside let them know that it has the sign of an icon that they are allied with carved unobtrusively on the lintel of the door. This of course was carved recently, Madame Vex really can see the future, wants the adventurer's gold, and foresaw that such a carving would help.*

The interior is much what you'd expect—all incense and beaded curtains. Sitting, as though expecting them, is the tiefling Madame Vex. She greets the adventurers by name.

*"Ah, you have come as the castle arrives, to defeat a returning evil. I have seen you in the cards. Come, sit, and I will read your fortune. All I ask is that you pay thirty silver coins for each card I turn for you."*

She displays a deck of cards for them, a fortune-telling device known widely in the Dragon Empire as an 'arcana deck'. The deck of cards also has eight suits of numbered cards (*Hearts, Chalices, Trees, Suns, Leaves, Moons, Gems, and Stars*), but none of those will come up in her readings—the adventurers will only get the impressive-looking trump cards in their readings. **At the back of this adventure I've**

**included a full arcana deck for you to print out and use as a prop at the table.**

Thirty silver coins comes to three gold pieces, and she says that a standard reading from her consists of four cards, so that's twelve gold per adventurer who wants their fortune told. She's willing to haggle, and the adventurers might even be able to get their fortunes told for free if they haggle or just downright refuse to pay.

*When Madame Vex turns over her cards roll a d20 four times per adventurer for the full reading that she provides (don't worry about interpreting the readings now, all will become clear during the adventure!):*

1. **The Asterism**—Three large red stars, above a constellation that looks like are a trio of monsters, possibly dragons. *"Sometimes there are no good choices, and you must choose what is least-worse...such a moment approaches for you".*
2. **The Crowned Sun**—A sun, with a golden crown above it. *"Light can reveal hidden truths, or blind you to the obvious. Perseverance will be rewarded, but do not delay in acting when the time is right".*
3. **The Eye of Night**—The moon, painted light blue/cyan, with a dark hole in it like a cat's silted pupil. *"You will be watched, be sure of who your allies and enemies are".*
4. **The Fountain**—A golden fountain flows beneath a mountain. *"Some will prosper, some will wither, and your choice will determine who suffers".*
5. **The Greater Gem**—A sapphire sits above a coiled serpent. *"Great treasure awaits, but obtaining it means taking a risk that will change you forever".*
6. **The Green Leaf**—A green leaf, supported on both sides by stags as though the leaf were a heraldic shield, the stag on the right has a golden crown around its neck. *"Some choices are out of your hands; some fates are sealed".*
7. **The Hanging Tree**—An oak with orange autumn foliage stands alone, an empty noose dangling from a branch on the right side, and a hanged body hanging on the left side. *"Past misdeeds will always find you, and rewards for good deeds will not always be what you expect".*
8. **The Hidden Star**—A purple pentagram with candles burning at its points, one of the

- candles has gone out. *"Magic is the answer to your problems, but don't rely on magic alone"*.
9. **The Huntress**—A green-hooded woman stands in front of two golden lionesses. *"Beware! You must take care not to concentrate too much on the past lest you are taken unawares by the present"*.
  10. **The Jester**—A blindfolded jester in traditional fool's motley holds an unlit lantern. *"If it's stupid and it works, it wasn't stupid. Fortune will smile on you, however don't test your luck too much"*.
  11. **The Key**—A grinning skeleton dances before a locked door, a golden key in its bony hand. *"To move forwards you must leave something behind"*.
  12. **The Masked Lover**—A figure dressed in silks reclines on a bed, their identity hidden by their garments and a white mask. Above the figure is a magenta heart. *"Help will come to you from an unexpected quarter: you can always rely upon your friends, but don't let your enemies fool you"*.
  13. **The Mirror**—On this card a man in white looks into a mirror, but what is reflected there is a woman in red ... or if you look at the card another way it is the woman looking into the mirror and the man is her reflection. *"You must discover a new side to yourself, a past talent long forgotten will be remembered or a new skill will be learned. Also, don't take things too literally"*.
  14. **The Princess**—A woman in all-concealing red robes sits on a throne, cradling something in her arms. The card is smudged; it is hard to tell what she is cradling. *"A challenge can be overcome easily, if you trust in yourself"*.
  15. **The Red Chalice**—A ruby-bejeweled cup holds a red liquid, perhaps wine, perhaps blood. *"A choice you make between two things will rely upon taking a risk, but failure to act at all will spell doom"*.
  16. **The Rose**—A rose sits in the center of a circle of thorny rose-stems. *"Things of great beauty often cause pain, but ugliness is no virtue"*.
  17. **The Tower**—A trio of hooded figures stand in front of a tower as lightning strikes it. *"You might be able to right a past wrong, but only by sacrificing something"*.
  18. **The Vizier**—A grey-bearded man in a monk's robes holds a golden dagger in one hand, and a pair of golden scales in the other. *"Listen to advice, but trust your own instincts. Your choices will have consequences that you cannot foresee"*.
  19. **The Wandering King**—A figure in blue armor sits in the saddle of a horse, gazing off at something only he can see. *"You can't save everyone, nor safeguard against all things, but a quick wit and preparation can save the day"*.
  20. **The Winged Heart**—A scarlet heart is held aloft by white wings. *"Your strength needs to be properly applied"*.
- GMs:** Record who gets which card, you will need this information in the sessions to come later in the adventure.
- Whether or not the adventurers get a reading from Madame Vex, she tells them that she knows that the ghost of 'Screamhaunt' will appear soon on a hill just outside town. The castle is being drawn to the burial place of the first lord of the castle, Sir Scrimhunt. Madame Vex lets the adventurers know that nobody locally remembers where the nobleman was buried, but she's sure that one of the graves in the graveyard outside of town must be his. She instructs them to wait in the graveyard that surrounds the hill, telling them that they don't want to be standing atop the hill when the castle materializes.
- GMs:** If the adventurers refuse to listen to the hints that the townsfolk give them to go see Madame Vex, and they refuse to enter her home, then eventually she'll go to see them instead. The only difference between meeting her in her home and meeting her in a tavern or on the road is she'll charge them double for a reading.
- By the way, you have our permission to print out the 'arcana deck' at the back of this adventure for use as a prop at the table. I've included the non-face cards too (Hearts, Chalices, Trees, Suns, Leaves, Moons, Gems, and Stars), and the card backs.



# TOWN OF GRAVENSTEIN

WAY NORTH ★  
TO THE CEMETERY

★  
STONECUTTER'S  
ARMS ★

★  
THE DOG & STAR  
TAVERN ★

★  
RED DRAGON INN

★  
IMPERIAL  
GARRISON

RIVER GRAVEN

★  
HOUSE OF  
MADAME VEX

★  
PLOWED FIELDS  
OUTSIDE THE WALLS

GREENGRAVE  
WOODS



## THE STORM

Once the adventurers have met Madame Vex the oncoming storm hits with sudden force. Leaves are blown from the autumnal trees, and the wind whips the rain sideways.

The stormy sky starts to swirl around a hill outside of Gravenstein, lightning striking at it. If the adventurers are already headed to the hill outside of town due to Madame Vex's advice, the storm catches them in the open, soaking them to the bone. If the adventurers have no clue about where to go, the storm gives a strong visual clue—the constant lightning strikes on the hill that rises above the graveyard is a huge signpost.

Regardless of where the adventurers were when the storm started, in town or on the road, it arrives before the adventurers reach the graveyard.

## FLOODED GRAVEYARD

The storm is supernatural in nature, and concentrating all its fury upon the hill at the center of the graveyard.

As the adventurers arrive the graveyard begins to flood. Wooden caskets come out of the ground, floating among the gravestones.

The storm reaches an unnatural intensity, and the ghostly Screamhaunt Castle appears on the hill. However, before the adventurers can move toward it, undead rise from the flooded ground and attack the adventurers.

Due to the flood and the sucking mire that the ground beneath the water has become, during this fight the adventurers cannot double-move in a round, and all creatures have a -4 penalty to disengage checks.

Number of PCs	Ghoul	Newly Risen Ghoul
3	2	3
4	2	10
5	3	7
6	3	13

## GHOUL

*They hunger only for what they used to be.*

3rd level spoiler [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +8

Vulnerability: holy

**Claws and bite +8 vs. AC—8 damage**

*Natural even hit:* The target is vulnerable (attacks vs. it have crit range expanded by 2) to attacks by undead until the end of the ghoul's next turn.

*Pound of flesh:* The ghoul's claws and bite attack deals +4 damage against vulnerable targets.

*Infected bite:* Any creature that is slain by a ghoul and not consumed will rise as a ghoul the next night.

### Nastier Specials

*Paralyzing bite:* When the ghoul hits a vulnerable target with a natural even attack roll, the target is also stunned (save ends).

**AC 18**

PD 16

**HP 36**

MD 12

## NEWLY-RISEN GHOUL

2nd level mook [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +5

Vulnerability: holy

**Scrabbling claws +7 vs. AC—3 damage**

*Natural 16+:* The target is vulnerable (attacks vs. it have crit range expanded by 2) to attacks by undead until the end of the ghoul's next turn.

*Pound of flesh:* The newly-risen ghoul's scrabbling claws attack deals +2 damage against vulnerable targets.

**AC 17**

PD 15

**HP 9 (mook)**

MD 11

*Mook:* Kill one newly-risen ghoul mook for every 9 damage you deal to the mob.

## THE LOST TOMB

When the adventurers have finished the fight against the undead, the storm passes, and the water begins to drain from the graveyard. The castle is nowhere to be seen, unfortunately. That's right, it's gone!

However, the flood uncovered the long-lost grave of Sir Scrimhaunt. The grave consists of a huge stone slab carved with the dead noble's likeness.

The adventurers have a short time to rest and explore the graveyard and the site of the tomb. Fortunately, the slab that covers the grave is right in the middle of the area where the adventurers were recently fighting. You could even say that they don't spot it at first but use the slab as a convenient place to sit while getting the water out of their boots, and then the adventurers notice to their horror that they are seated on Sir Scrimhaunt's grave.

It is a DC 30 skill check to move the slab (or DC 25 if multiple characters cooperate). Beneath the slab is a stairway leading downwards, with water receding down the steps as the effects of the supernatural storm vanish.

As the adventurers start down the stairs they meet undead coming the other way...

*GMs: If the party is taking too long to move the stone slab, or refuse to engage with it, then the zombies coming up the stairs blow the lid right off and pour out. Give the zombies a surprise round, so two of them can act before normal initiative.*

Number of PCs	Zombie Shuffler	Human Zombie
3	4	1
4	4	2
5	4	3
6	4	4

## ZOMBIE SHUFFLER

"Mwauurgh . . ."

1st level mook [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +0

Vulnerability: holy

**Rotting fist +5 vs. AC**—3 damage

*Natural 16+*: Both the zombie and its target take 1d4 damage!

*Headshot*: A critical hit against a zombie shuffler deals triple damage instead of the normal double damage for a crit.

**AC 14**

**PD 12**

**HP 10 (mook)**

**MD 8**

*Mook*: Kill one zombie shuffler mook for every 10 damage you deal to the mob.

## HUMAN ZOMBIE

"Brains . . ."

2nd level troop [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +1

Vulnerability: holy

**Rotting fist +7 vs. AC**—6 damage

*Natural 16+*: Both the zombie and its target take 1d6 damage!

*Headshot*: A critical hit against a zombie drops it to 0 hp.

### Nastier Specials

*Eat brains*: More dangerous zombies don't try to kill the moving targets before feasting on brains; they keep attacking any enemy they've knocked unconscious, rolling attacks against the helpless enemy until it's dead.

**AC 15**

**PD 13**

**HP 60**

**MD 9**



# SESSION 2: THE TOMB OF SIR SCRIMHUNT

## RUNNING THIS SESSION

This session is designed for 2<sup>nd</sup> level characters. At the end of the session, each character should gain an incremental advance.

The session, as written, should take approximately two hours.

## WHAT HAS COME BEFORE

The adventurers have been called upon to track down and investigate a haunted castle, one that is seemingly teleporting itself across the Dragon Empire in search of something.

The adventurers have found the castle, or at least a ghostly apparition of it, and located a way in, steps leading down into the grave of Sir Scrimhunt.

## ICON ROLLS

At the start of the session remember to ask each player to roll their adventurer's icon relationships. Generally speaking a 6 can be traded in for a clear benefit, a 5 when traded in will benefit the adventurer or party but there will be an associated complication, obligation, or drawback.

## JOURNEY TO THE DARK

As the adventurers descend into the grave their minds are assaulted by a series of scary images and ghoulish scenes.

This is a montage scene. The point of this montage is to describe the scene on the stage.

Turn to the first player and ask them to describe something that the adventurers half-see or hear: far-off wailing, unearthly whispers, worms that spell out a message, etc.—then turn to the player to their right and ask them to say how their character reacts to the things that the adventurers experience on their journey down into the grave. Go around the group until everybody has had a chance to describe

something horrific, and everybody has had a chance for their character to react to the horror.

This is a good opportunity for those whose characters are renowned for their fearlessness to show that off, and for those whose characters are secretly superstitious to display a side of their character that might not normally be seen.

*GMs: Just how horrific you are willing to let players go with these visions is down to you and your relationship with your players—this montage is intended to get everybody in the mood for a spooky adventure, not to make the players (or you) uncomfortable. If you are playing with friends you've known for years you are probably safe to let the players go nuts in this montage (or not, if you know better!). If, however you are playing with a group of people that you've known for only a few hours, then you should probably ask them to limit the spooky stuff to Halloween-store level frights.*

## THE ANTE-CHAMBER

The stairs lead down into an ante-chamber, a brick-built barrel-vaulted room from which lead five doors made of bone.

Once they enter the ante-chamber the tunnel through which they descended collapses behind them, trapping the adventurers in the tomb. Maybe it is ghostly activity that causes the tunnel to collapse, maybe it is just an old tunnel through recently waterlogged soil.

### The glass coffin

In the center of the room is a glass coffin in which is a withered corpse. At the head of the coffin is a candelabra with five candle holders. The candle holders of the candelabra are empty, but are coated with black wax.

### The doors

The doors are made of interlocking bones, fitted together so carefully that they seem to be carved from a behemoth's ivory rather than assembled from separate bones.

Each of the doors can be opened easily, but the doors can only be opened one at a time—if a door is no other door will allow itself to be moved. It takes a minute to open a door, as they are heavy and move slowly.

The doors are also enchanted, should they be damaged they reassemble themselves—skeletal hands emerging from the doors to pick up bones knocked loose.

Above the archway of the stairs that led downwards into the hidden tomb are written the words “*Let light show the way.*”

### Lighting the candelabra

Each of the rooms, has a black candle in it. Once all the candles are lit in the candelabra, the ghost of Sir Scrimhunt appears (see *Sir Scrimhunt appears*).

**GMs:** *If the adventurers do something unexpected (say they eat the candles or destroy the candelabra, or just don't engage with the puzzle), head to the Guardian section and then go to Sir Scrimhunt Appears.*

## ROOM 1: TROPHY ROOM

This room is full of battle-standards, flags, and banners. Unfortunately, they are all so old that they crumble easily at a touch. It looks like these are trophies captured in war.

If the adventurers *deliberately* despoil any of the banners a curse laid upon the room activates:

**Visions of past battles +5 vs MD**—target uses their best attack against their nearest ally

One banner won't crumble to dust. Near that banner is a black candle, placed neatly on the floor.

### Holdfast Battle Standard

*Wondrous item*

*Always:* You and any nearby ally who spends a recovery heals +1d4 hit points (champion: +2d4; epic: +3d4).

*Quirk:* Shout victory cries.

## ROOM 2: GRAVE GOODS

This room has a stone table set up as a kitchen. On the table are carved stone fruits and meats, empty stone bottles, and other grave goods designed to last the ages.

On the table, seemingly thrown there, is a black candle. The candle was still lit when it was left there and there is a small pool of black wax under the wick.

If the adventurers disturb the stone food a curse laid upon the room activates:

Apologizing to ghosts: DC 20. If an adventurer fails the skill check make the following attack against the adventurer:

**Hunger for stone +10 vs MD**—3d6 damage as the adventurer attempts to eat the stone food

## ROOM 3: OSSUARY

This room is an ossuary, a room full of and decorated with bones. There is a table and six seats here, all made of bones. On the table are cups and plates made from carved bones. Unlit skull-and-bone lanterns hang from chains in the ceiling.

Just inside the room, on the floor, is a black candle.

If the adventurers interfere with the bones in the room a curse laid upon the room activates:

Dodge: DC 20. If an adventurer fails the skill check make the following attack against the adventurer:

**Exploding bones +10 vs PD**—2d8 damage

## ROOM 4: PORTRAIT ROOM

This room contains a huge portrait painted onto the plaster of the back wall. As soon as the adventurers open the door the portrait starts to decay, though not so quickly that they do not have time to thoroughly examine it.

On the floor near the portrait is a black candle.

If the adventurers mock the portrait or pick at the flaking plaster a curse laid upon the room activates:

**Share my fate +10 vs PD**—2d10 negative energy damage as the target's face starts to flake off like old plaster

If an adventurer complements the subject of the portrait or the artistry they do not face the curse, and instead they gain a recovery and their normal maximum recoveries increases by 1, until the end of this session.

## Room 5: Armor Display

This room contains rusted swords and antiquated suits of armor. The weapons and armor are displayed on wooden frames, but these are so decayed that touching anything causes the whole display to collapse in a cloud of dust and rust flakes. Though most of the armor and weapons survive it will take more than a mend spell to make them workable again.

If the adventurers denigrate the rusted weapons and armor (for example saying something like “*this stuff is just junk*”) a curse laid upon the room activates:

**Curse of rusting blood +5 vs PD—1d12  
poison damage**

Near the back of the room is an un-rusted sword, and a black candle.

### Sword of Victory Assured

*Cursed sword*

*Always:* +2 to attacks and damage with this weapon (champion: +3; epic: +5).

*Recharge 16+:* Roll a d6 and if it is below the escalation die value slay one nearby mook (the mook is reduced to 0 hp).

*Curse:* The first time an ally spends a recovery after you use the recharge power, the recovery is spent but does nothing and the ally gains no benefit from spending it.

*Quirk:* Smugness, especially when faced with defeat.



## THE GUARDIAN

**GMs:** If the adventurers gather all five candles, put them in the candelabra, and light them—skip this section and go straight to ‘Sir Scrimhunt appears’.

The adventurers hear a sound like rolling dice, and spot a couple of knuckle bones that have rolled out of one of the bone doors. As they watch another bone falls out, then another, then the doors fall into heaps of bones.

The adventurer’s horror the bones assemble into an undead monster which attacks them.

Number of PCs	The Guardian	Bone Puppet
3	1	0
4	1	0
5	1	1
6	1	1

## BONE PUPPET

4th level troop [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +10

Vulnerability: holy

**Shortsword +10 vs. AC—14 damage**

*Natural 16+:* The target moves down 1d3 points in initiative order, to a minimum of 1.

*Natural even miss:* 5 damage.

**R: Javelin +8 vs. AC—10 damage**

*Press advantage:* The legionnaire deals +1d8 damage with its attacks against enemies that have a lower initiative than it.

**AC 21**

**PD 15**

**MD 17**

**HP 48**



## THE GUARDIAN

This thing of reanimated bones really wants to add to its collection.

Double-strength 4th level caster [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +9

Vulnerability: holy

**Bone storm +9 vs. PD—14 damage**

*Natural even hit:* 14 negative energy damage to the enemy with the most hit points.

*Natural odd hit:* 14 ongoing thunder damage.

**R: Bone shield +9 vs. PD—14 ongoing lightning damage, and the target is weakened (save ends both)**

**Frightening Thirteen:** If the ghost rolls a natural 13, then for the rest of the battle the enemy with the most hit points at the start of the round (GM chooses on ties) must roll a save in order to take a move action. Failure to save indicates the character is too busy trying to stop their own skeleton from crawling out of their mouth to move.

*Strength from pain:* The ghost heals 4d6 hp every time an enemy rolls a death save.

*Fear:* While engaged with this creature, enemies that have 18 hp or fewer are dazed (–4 attack) and do not add the escalation die to their attacks.

**AC 20**

**PD 16**

**MD 16**

**HP 100**



## SIR SCRIMHUNT APPEARS

**GMs:** Once the candelabra has been lit, or once the guardian has been defeated, the ghost of Sir Scrimhunt appears.

A ghost arises from the glass coffin, a glowing apparition of Sir Scrimhunt holding a ghostly sword. The ghost attacks the party.

Once the ghost is defeated it becomes insubstantial (*the fight ends when the ghost is reduced to 0 hp, but the ghost doesn't vanish*), and the sword in its hand becomes a phantasmal candelabra with five lit candles on it. A luminous passageway opens up in the air, and the ghost walks down it, silently beckoning the adventurers to follow.

Number of PCs	The Ghost of Sir Scrimhunt	The Reanimated Corpse of Sir Scrimhunt
3	1	0
4	1	0
5	1	1
6	1	1

## THE REANIMATED CORPSE OF SIR SCRIMHUNT

*The corpse has decided to join in the fight too.*

4th level spoiler [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +7

Vulnerability: holy

**Sword +9 vs. AC**—10 damage

*Natural even hit or miss:* Unless the reanimated corpse is staggered, the attack also deals 8 ongoing negative energy damage.

### Nastier Specials

**Barrow-touch:** The reanimated corpse's attacks against enemies taking ongoing negative energy damage are against PD instead of AC and their crit range expands by 2.

**AC 21**  
**PD 17**                      **HP 48**  
**MD 13**

## THE GHOST OF SIR SCRIMHUNT

Double-strength 4th level caster [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +9

Vulnerability: Holy

**Flaming sword +9 vs. PD**—20 fire damage

**R: Burning gaze of doom +9 vs. PD**—20 fire damage

*Natural even hit or miss:* 5 ongoing fire damage.

**C: Burning aura +9 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)**—10 ongoing fire damage

**Frightening Thirteen:** If the ghost rolls a natural 13, then any books in the room (including spell books carried by wizards) bleed. Perhaps there are story consequences, especially if PC has reasons to care about the books.

**Intangible:** The ghost can't make opportunity attacks, and enemies can't make opportunity attacks against it. The ghost can pass through solid objects, but is always drawn by fate back into the fight unless it uses a standard action to stay inside a wall until the start of its next turn.

**Strength from pain:** The ghost heals 4d6 hp every time an enemy rolls a death save.

**Fear:** While engaged with this creature, enemies that have 18 hp or fewer are dazed (–4 attack) and do not add the escalation die to their attacks.

**AC 19**  
**PD 15**                      **HP 116**  
**MD 17**

## LUMINOUS PASSAGE

The ghostly passage passes through soil and rock, yet those who set foot in it are able to walk through the ground as though it were not there.

At the far end of the passageway is what looks like the great hall of a castle.

# SESSION 3: THE RETURN OF SCREAMHAUNT CASTLE

## RUNNING THIS SESSION

This session is designed for 2<sup>nd</sup> level characters. At the end of the session, each character should gain an incremental advance.

The session, as written, should take approximately two hours.

Screamhaunt Castle has no pre-determined layout, so pay attention to the *exploration* section which talks about how to generate the castle as the adventurers explore it.

## WHAT HAS COME BEFORE

The adventurers have been sent to investigate the ghostly 'Screamhaunt' Castle, and through their discovery of a lost tomb have found their way inside the phantasmal structure.

Prior to coming to the castle the adventurers met a seer who foretold their fortune, fortunes that are about to come to pass.

## NEW CHARACTERS

New characters this session are unfortunate travelers who have been scooped up by the castle on its phantasmal journeys and have been lucky enough to meet the party.

## ICON ROLLS

At the start of the session remember to ask each player to roll their adventurer's icon relationships. Generally speaking a 6 can be traded in for a clear benefit, a 5 when traded in will benefit the adventurer or party but there will be an associated complication, obligation, or drawback.

## BANNERS OF THE GREAT HALL

The adventurers arrive in the great hall of Screamhaunt Castle, the luminous passageway and the ghost of Sir Scrimhunt fading away behind them. The great hall is decorated with banners, which are revealed, as the adventurer's eyes adjust to the lighting, to show their greatest fears.

This is a montage scene. The point of this montage is to describe the banners (and thus the greatest fears of the characters).

Turn to the first player and ask them to describe their character's greatest fear, then turn to the player to their right and ask them how that greatest fear is luridly displayed on one of the banners in the great hall. Go around the group until everybody has had a chance to describe a banner that shows another character's greatest fear. This is a good opportunity for players to reveal facts about their characters that others may not know.



*If there is a character in the group that is genuinely and preternaturally fearless (say through a magic item or one unique thing) then their banner instead shows their greatest regret or perhaps their secret shame, biggest character flaw, or hidden inner weakness.*

The great hall has many doors and staircases that lead from it, but none of them lead outside.

The banners, should they be taken down, turn into millions of spiders and scuttle over the party. The spiders are harmless, but will tickle the backs of character's knees as they run up into their clothing.

## EXPLORATION

The adventurers are here to investigate the castle, but they are currently trapped in it. The adventurers will need to deal with the haunted castle, and eventually find a way out. This session the adventurers will explore several of the rooms, after which they face one of the ghosts of the castle, and after that they will have an opportunity to rest in a bedroom in the castle.

**You decide when the ghost of Magister Wurst shows up, but it should be after a minimum of one room explored per adventurer and should occur near the end of the session.**

The castle shifts around the adventurers, so once they leave the great hall they won't be able to return to it.

Each of the rooms is linked to the arcana cards that Madame Vex read for the party in the first session of this adventure. If the characters didn't get a full card reading, pick rooms at random or select ones that appeal to your personal taste, and ignore the boxed text headed 'Fortune Smiles'.



*Some of these rooms can be very unsettling for some players (and some GMs). Check in with your players if they look uncomfortable. This is supposed to be spooky fun, so tailor your GMing to your group's needs. Of course other groups might want to go all-in with the horror, and if that is the case you should all discuss beforehand what lines you won't cross and what sorts of things you will gloss over.*

*You can probably get through all ten rooms in this session in about an hour or so. The more players you have the more time you should expect it to take to move through each room.*

*As a GM you can control how apt the adventurers are to explore any given area—if you add in more atmospheric detail (vivid description of shadows, detailing the exact color of things, adding additional objects to areas, describing the strange smells and sounds of each room) players will spend more time in a room, but keep the description terse and players are more likely to move along quickly.*

*The number of rooms that the adventures explore before Magister Wurst shows up is down to you—the more rooms explored the more time you need to run this session and the greater the attrition on the adventurers' resources*

#### OPEN GRAVES

This area was part of the basement of Screamaunt Castle, and in its dirt floor a series of open graves have been dug. In the gloom-light it is hard to tell if these open graves are currently occupied. A shovel stands nearby. It is only after the graves have been spotted that the party realizes that the uneven floor of the basement is uneven because there are hundreds of already full unmarked graves in the dirt. The party are walking over the graves of the dead.

#### **Fortune Smiles: The Asterism**

*Anybody who got the Asterism card in their fortune telling notices that there are pipes running along the ceiling, part of a furnace heating system. The pipes are hot—jumping up to them and clinging on means avoiding the hands of the dead entirely at a cost of taking 1d8 fire damage.*

As the party moves through the area hands burst up from the dirt floor, attempting to drag the adventurers down into an early grave:

**Dodge the dead: DC 15.** If an adventurer fails the skill check make the following attack against the adventurer:

**Dragged into a shallow grave +15 vs AC—3d6 damage**



## THE LION CREMATORIA

This room is part of a basement, an area so large that its far walls disappear off into the misty darkness. Along the nearest wall basement is a huge chimney and a great iron furnace shaped like a lion's face. Half-alive sounds come from the furnace whenever it is not being directly looked at.

Anybody who touches the furnace takes 2d6 fire damage as the metal gets suddenly and unexpectedly hot where they touched it. Dealing damage to the furnace deals 1d12 psychic damage to each adventurer present as wailing ghosts fly out. Leaving the furnace alone is the best policy.

The furnace was last used by the living to dispose of the dead caused by the Diabolist's plague that ended the 12<sup>th</sup> Age.

### *Fortune Smiles: The Fountain*

*Those who got the Fountain card can push an ally toward the furnace instead of themselves if they fail the skill check.*

The furnace suddenly springs to animated life, and draws in a mighty breath as its fires stoke up to a white heat. The party is pulled in toward the furnace by the sudden wind:

Grab hold of something: DC 20. If an adventurer fails the skill check make the following attack against the adventurer:

**Burned alive +15 vs PD—1d6** ongoing fire damage, passing a DC 10 skill check to climb out of the furnace ends the damage

## THE RATS

The basement is full of rats. The adventurers can see them in corners eating fresh meat or gnawing on what look like finger bones. Best not to speculate on where their feast has come from.

### *Fortune Smiles: The Green Leaf*

*Anybody who got the Green Leaf card from Madame Vex can opt to take no damage from the rats, but at the cost of designating one ally to automatically get hit by the rat's attack if they fail their skill roll.*

The rats rush the party in a dark wave:

Avoid the rats: DC 15. If an adventurer fails the skill check make the following attack against the adventurer:

**Verminous bite +15 vs AC—3d6** poison damage

## THE POOL OF BLOOD

In a castle corridor of the characters notices that their feet feel warm, and wet. Looking down the party discovers a pool of fresh blood seeping up from the floorboards. There is no rational explanation of where the blood is coming from. The red-black blood sticks to the adventurers, caking them with gore.

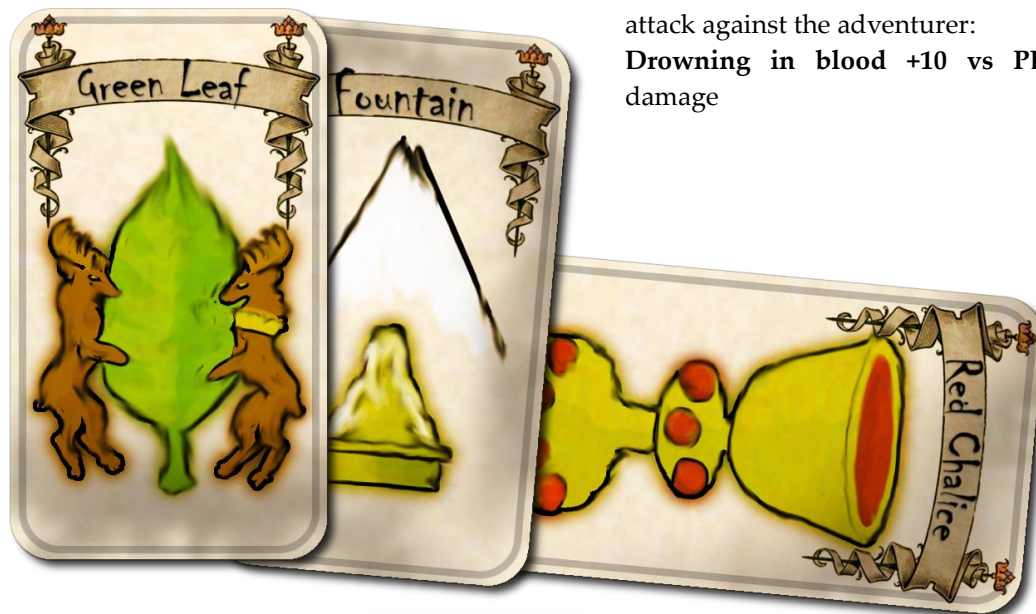
### *Fortune Smiles: The Red Chalice*

*Anybody who got the Red Chalice card gains 10 temporary hit points instead of being harmed by the drowning in blood attack.*

The adventurers feel the floor beneath the blood begin to crumble, then drop away:

Leap to safety: DC 20. If an adventurer fails the skill check make the following attack against the adventurer:

**Drowning in blood +10 vs PD—10** damage



### THE SHADOWS IN THE LIBRARY

This room is a library, though the books all contain unsettling poetry that shifts when it is not being looked at. All the poetry is about the adventurers, and is full of lurid descriptions of torture and death. Taking and reading one of these books causes nightmares, waking terrors, and disturbing hallucinations.

While in the library one or more people in the room notice they have one more shadow than there are light sources in the room. The extra shadow flees once noticed. Turning out the lights might not be a good idea.

#### **Fortune Smiles: The Wandering King**

*Anybody who got the Wandering King card as part of their fortune is inspired to spout their own poetry, helping to block out the whispers (letting them reroll the skill check and take the better roll).*

The adventurers start to notice a whispering sound coming from all around them, from the books of dark poetry:

Block out the whispers: DC 25. If an adventurer fails the skill check make the following attack against the adventurer:

**Secrets from beyond the grave +10 vs MD—2d8 psychic damage**

### THE KITCHEN

The kitchen was in use at the time of the fateful party during which Screamaunt Castle disappeared on a stormy night years ago. The bodies of the kitchen staff can be found stuffed into the chimney, and guests who have been turned into ghouls lurk in the shadows.

#### **Fortune Smiles: The Tower**

*Adventurers who got this card in their visit with Madame Vex realize that the ghouls are hungry and no real threat, and can be easily outrun—doing so raises the DCs of other characters by 5 for smiting the ghouls, but means that the running characters leaves their friends behind. Hey, it's like they say: "you don't have to be faster than the ghoul, just faster than your friends".*

The ghouls rush the adventurers, salivating:

Smite the pitiful ghouls: DC 20, or expend a limited use power (daily or recharge). If an adventurer fails the skill check make the following attack against the adventurer:

**Pitiful bite +5 vs AC—2d6 damage**



*OK, so these ghouls are not as strong as those the adventurers faced back in the graveyard. They are sneaky and quick, but are easy to dispatch before they do any great harm. They are not a full fight,*

*therefore, more a potentially deadly jump-scare.*

### THE ENDLESS STAIR

The curving stairway leads both up and down, but whichever way you go you will arrive back where you started. If there is an easy way for the adventurer to tell this (allies on the stair below that they meet further up, marks that they leave on the wall) then all is good, if a little weird. If the character leaves marks and keeps going anyway, new marks and bloody handprints appear as though somebody elsewhere in the castle is begging for help. If the character has no way of telling that they are going in a circle they lose a recovery from exhaustion.

#### **Fortune Smiles: The Masked Lover**

*Anybody who pulled the Masked Lover card notices marks on the walls left by past adventurers, and does not risk losing a recovery.*

The endless stair has an odd effect on the weak minded:

**Non-Euclidian madness +10 vs MD (each adventurer on the stairs)—target loses a recovery**



### THE MUSIC BOX

Found in a room, the music box begins spontaneously playing. The music gets louder and stranger, so loud that it is painful. Breaking the music box stops the music for all but one adventurer who continues hearing it. The other characters must shout to be heard by the unlucky adventurer who is now bleeding from the ears (6 psychic damage). The music stops suddenly, and the music box is back where it was found (and intact if it was smashed).

#### **Fortune Smiles: The Princess**

*Those who pulled the Princess card can just go with the music, and take no damage from pulled muscles resisting the spirits of this room.*

As the adventurers go to leave the room the doors slam shut, and music begins to play. Invisible hands grab the adventurers, forcing them to dance to the music.

Dodge invisible hands: DC 25 (or DC 15 for characters that can see invisible ghosts). If an adventurer fails the skill check make the following attack against the adventurer:

**Ballet of the damned +15 vs PD—1d12 damage**



### THE GREENHOUSE

The greenhouse would normally be on the exterior of the castle. The folding of the castle has left it with each of the panes of glass staring into grisly scenes inside in the manor. Dead and dry potted plants spill out of their painted pots, and dry leaves rustle on the floor.

#### **Fortune Smiles: The Jester**

*Anybody who got the Jester card during their fortune telling realizes that dry (un)dead plants will avoid fire. By pouring lamp oil over themselves and setting themselves on fire (1d4 fire damage) they can avoid being targeted by the vines and lower everybody else's DC by 5.*

Dry woody vines shoot out of the shadows, attempting to grab the adventurers and pull their limbs off:

Dodge the vines: DC 15. If an adventurer fails the skill check make the following attack against the adventurer:

**Vine attack +5 vs AC—2d6 damage**

### THE BALLROOM

This room is lined with mirrors—once the doors are closed they are hard to find again. The polished wooden floor is thick with dust and grime. As the characters look for the way out ghostly music begins to play. (GMs, if you are using music in your game "To the shock of Miss Louise" by Thomas Newman is highly recommended here).

#### **Fortune Smiles: The Hanging Tree**

*Anybody who was dealt the Hanging Tree card gets +5 AC against the ghouls due to noticing them early, or can shout a warning to the whole party giving everybody +1 AC.*

In the mirrors phantasmal images of celebrations past show, figures in archaic costume dance to the ghostly music. What doesn't show in the mirrors are the ghouls that have crept into the room:

Smite the pitiful ghouls: DC 25, or expend a limited use power (daily or recharge). If an adventurer fails the skill check make the following attack against the adventurer:

**Pitiful bite +5 vs AC—2d6 damage**

## THE GHOST OF MAGISTER WURST

**GMs:** Run this section after the adventurers have explored several castle rooms.

When the castle disappeared it took with it its then living owner, Magister Wurst. Though the castle took his life, it did not allow his soul to leave.

Rising like a mist from the castle floor, Magister Wurst appears, cackling madly—he wasn't terribly sane in life, and now that he's dead he's completely lost it.

Number of PCs	Magister Wurst	Screamhaunters
3	1	10
4	1	13
5	1	17
6	1	20

**GMs:** This is a double-strength fight.

### SCREAMHAUNTERS

*These past victims are a part of the castle now.*

3<sup>rd</sup> level mook [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +4

Vulnerability: holy

**Terrifying shambling +8 vs. MD—6** psychic damage

**AC 19**

**PD 15            HP 10 (mook)**

**MD 20**

**Mook:** Kill one screamhaunter mook for every 10 damage you deal to the mob.

### THE GHOST OF MAGISTER WURST

*The Magister's ghost moves like a puppet with broken strings.*

Double-strength 4<sup>th</sup> level caster [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +9

Vulnerability: holy

**Whispered secrets +9 vs. MD—28** fire damage as the target's brain catches fire

**C: Strangling intestines +9 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—12** damage, and the target is grabbed and pulled into engagement with the ghost

*Natural 16+:* Each enemy not engaged with the ghost is pulled next to the ghost, who engages it. Enemies already engaged with the ghost are subject to fear (save ends) no matter their current hit points.

**Frightening Thirteen:** If the ghost rolls a natural 13, then the next enemy to attack the ghost has the effects and damage of their attack deflected to a random ally.

*Intangible:* The ghost can't make opportunity attacks, and enemies can't make opportunity attacks against it. The ghost can pass through solid objects, but is always drawn by fate back into the fight unless it uses a standard action to stay inside a wall until the start of its next turn.

*Strength from pain:* The ghost heals 4d6 hp every time an enemy rolls a death save.

*Fear:* While engaged with this creature, enemies that have 18 hp or fewer are dazed (–4 attack) and do not add the escalation die to their attacks.

**AC 20**

**PD 15            HP 100**

**MD 17**

## THE RED BEDROOM

Once defeated Magister Wurst dissipates into a fine mist.

The next door the adventurers try brings them to a bedroom with a huge four-poster bed, the bedroom of the hedonist Magister Wurst whose ghost they have just banished. This looks like as good a place to rest as any.





# SESSION 4: THE UNFOLDING OF SCREAMHAUNT CASTLE

## RUNNING THIS SESSION

This session is designed for 2<sup>nd</sup> level characters. At the end of the session, each character should gain an incremental advance.

The session, as written, should take approximately two hours.

Screamhaunt Castle has no pre-determined layout, so pay attention to the *exploration* section which talks about how to generate the castle as the adventurers explore it.

## WHAT HAS COME BEFORE

The adventurers have been sent to investigate the ghostly 'Screamhaunt' Castle, and through their discovery of a lost tomb have found their way inside the phantasmal structure. Having faced multiple haunted rooms and the ghost of a demented noble the adventurers were wounded and exhausted, and had no choice but to sleep in the first bedroom they found.

Prior to coming to the castle the adventurers met a seer who foretold their fortune, fortunes that are about to come to pass.

## NEW CHARACTERS

New characters this session are hapless travelers who have been scooped up by the castle on its phantasmal journeys and have been lucky enough to meet the party.

## ICON ROLLS

At the start of the session remember to ask each player to roll their adventurer's icon relationships. Generally speaking a 6 can be traded in for a clear benefit, a 5 when traded in will benefit the adventurer or party but there will be an associated complication, obligation, or drawback.

## DREAMS IN THE RED BEDROOM

The adventurers are spending the night in the castle's Red Bedroom, so named because of its opulent draperies and huge four-poster bed covered in crimson silk sheets. Every door that they have tried so far has led deeper into the castle and danger, and the Red Bedroom seems to be the safest option to rest in. (RH: I think ASH is having a laugh here, so try to say this to the party with a straight face and no maniacal laughter.)

However, the castle is in a way alive (or perhaps we would be better saying that the castle never died), and it haunts their sleep.

This is a montage scene, as all the characters experience a shared dream. Turn to the first player and ask them to describe a horrible shared nightmare that their character finds themselves experiencing as they sleep, then turn to the player to their right and ask them how their character reacts in the nightmare and ask them to add a new detail to the shared dream. Go around the group until everybody has had a chance to add to the group nightmare, and to have their character be part of the dream. This is a good opportunity for players to reveal facts about their characters that others may not know.



*OK, maybe there is somebody who claims that they are not part of the shared nightmare because their character never sleeps. Unless it is the One Unique Thing their exhaustion and the castle's malign influence dulls their senses and lulls them into a deep sleep—yes even the forgeborn and twygzog in the party. Those who genuinely never sleep get to watch their companions twitch and scream without being able to rouse them.*

Once the adventurers have experienced their nightmare they all wake simultaneously with a start. Their rest was not as refreshing as it would normally have been. Players can choose the following:

- All expended resources (limited use powers, etc) regained but they start with no expended recoveries regained.

- The adventurer regains up to half of their normal recoveries, but their recharge powers have a -2 penalty to their recharge rolls.
- The adventurer regains all spent recoveries, but recharge powers have a -4 penalty to their recharge rolls and they do not regain any of their expended daily powers or per-day use class abilities.

## EXPLORATION

The adventurers are trapped in the castle, and need to find a way out of it (and also find a way to deal with the many hauntings in the castle). This session the adventurers will explore several of the rooms, after which they face the ghosts of the castle's builder, and after that they will be able to leave the castle. You decide when the ghost shows up, but it should be after a minimum of one room explored per adventurer and should occur near the end of the session.

The castle shifts around the adventurers, so once they leave the relative safety of the Red Bedroom they won't be able to return to it.

Each of the rooms is linked to the arcana cards that Madame Vex read for the party in the first session of this adventure. If the characters didn't get their cards read pick rooms at random or select ones that appeal to your personal taste, and ignore the boxed text headed 'Fortune Smiles'.

### THE MIRROR

The adventurers find another bedroom, this one with a full length dressing mirror. The reflection of the adventurers in the mirror doesn't follow their motions, and either stares at them unnervingly or the adventurers reflections are beating their fists against the mirror as if trapped inside. If the mirror is broken anybody reflected in it at the time loses their reflection forever, in this mirror and all others.

#### **Fortune Smiles: The Mirror**

*Adventurers who got the mirror card in their fortune telling from Madame Vex receive help from their reflections, which emerge briefly to aid the adventurers lowering the DC for that adventurer by 10.*

While the adventurers are engaged with watching the mirror, ghouls creep into the room:

Smite the pitiful ghouls: DC 25, or expend a limited use power (daily or recharge). If an adventurer fails the skill check make the following attack against the adventurer:

**Pitiful bite +5 vs AC—2d6 damage**

### THE ATTIC

The rambling attic seems to stretch on forever. In fact it *might* stretch on forever. A lot of junk ended up here, the personal belongings of the wizards who died long ago in this castle.

The attic is a jumble of oddments and oddities, which cast unnerving shadows. As the adventurers move through the attic the shadows move and stretch unnervingly as the adventurer's light source moves.

#### **Fortune Smiles: The Crowned Sun**

*Anybody who got the Crowned Sun card during their fortune-telling from Madame Vex can use lanterns and other light sources to drive their extra shadow away, giving them a +5 bonus to their PD and no miss damage.*

The adventurers in this area each gain an extra shadow, which the character with the highest Wisdom will notice first:

Run from the shadows: DC 25 (or DC 15 for the character with the highest Wisdom). If an adventurer fails the skill check make the following attack against the adventurer:

**Hungry shadow-thing +15 vs PD—3d4 negative energy damage**

*Miss: Half damage.*

### THE HALL OF DRAGONS

This large hall is dominated by a long table with many high-backed chairs, all covered in dust sheets. On plinths along the outer edge of the hall are huge dragon skulls—each stone plinth has an inscription upon it, giving the history of the dragon. At the end of the great hall is a marble statue of a Dragon Emperor from a previous age.

As the adventurers explore this room a white goat appears behind the party in such a way that only the rearmost party member spots it. If the rearmost party member looks away the goat will disappear and haunt their dreams from then on

out as a bad omen. If the whole party sees it (*the rearmost party member spots it, doesn't look away, and alerts others to its presence*) then the goat speaks a short sentence in a language unknown to any party member then bursts into flames and burns away to nothingness.

**GMs:** *So what did the goat say? It might be gibberish, but when I've pulled the whole goat-prophecy thing in my games I've had it be a dire prophecy that the party only manages to translate after it came to pass.*

**Fortune Smiles: The Eye of Night**

*Those who got the Eye of Night card are wary enough of the room that they are not distracted by the strange white goat, and gain +5 to their skill check and +5 to PD against the dragon's attacks.*

A moment or two after the goat has gone, the dragon skulls in the room animate and breathe dark fire upon the party:

Dodge dragon breath: DC 20. If an adventurer fails the skill check make the following attack against the adventurer:

**Undead breath +15 vs PD—2d8 negative energy damage**

**THE FRESCO HALLWAY**

The walls of the hallway are painted with frescoes depicting the history of the Dragon Empire. In the unsteady light it almost looks like the frescos are moving.

**Fortune Smiles: The Rose**

*Adventurers who were dealt the Rose card in their readings remember Madame Vex's words and instinctively back away from the walls, gaining a +5 bonus to AC against the frescos.*

The frescos come to life, hurling their weapons at the party:

Dodge the unreal: DC 15. If an adventurer fails the skill check make the following attack against the adventurer:

**Illusionary attack +10 vs MD—3d6 psychic damage**

**THE PORTRAIT AND THE EMPTY CHAIR**

A party member spots a portrait that looks just like them or somebody that they know, but dressed in old-fashioned clothing. When they next look at the picture a dark figure is standing behind the image of them or their loved one, a shadowy hand upon their shoulder. When next looked at both figures are gone, and the picture is now of an empty chair. From then on out every inn the character visits will just happen to have a chair that looks like the chair from the image. The patrons and proprietor of the inn will always claim that the chair has always been there. Being too close to the chair will cause the character to be very afraid. Sitting in the chair will cause a fit or seizure during which they will have terrible visions.

**Fortune Smiles: The Vizier**

*Those who got the Vizier card instead gain positive prophetic visions when they sit in the 'haunted' chair that keeps turning up in inns. The visions are not always useful because they are so vague and allegorical, but there is a 10% chance that a vision will contain useful information.*

While the adventurers are engaged with looking at the portrait, ghouls drop from the ceiling:

Smite the pitiful ghouls: DC 25, or expend a limited use power (daily or recharge). If an adventurer fails the skill check make the following attack against the adventurer:

**Pitiful bite +5 vs AC—2d6 damage**



### THE BLOODY MESSAGE

The party sees a message appear on a wall in front of them. The message is written in blood, as though scrawled by an invisible hand. The message is in a very old wizarding language and reads “*Zumus omnex mortuzii*”. Any magic user in the group will be able to translate “*We are all dead*” or perhaps “*We are already dead.*” If they do translate they will discover that their own writing hand is covered in blood, the palm having been sliced open to the bone (6 damage). The handwriting is theirs.

#### **Fortune Smiles: The Hidden Star**

*Those who got the Hidden Star card will be able to instinctively counteract the runes, allowing them or one ally to reroll a failed skill check.*

The writing on the wall continues, and the party realizes too late that the writing is explosive runes:

**Stop, drop, and roll:** DC 25. If an adventurer fails the skill check make the following attack against the adventurer:

**Explosive runes** +15 vs PD—3d6 fire damage

Miss: Half damage.



### THE NURSERY

This room is a child’s nursery, though dusty and full of cobwebs. Creepy looking porcelain dolls sit on shelves around the room and cover an undersized bed. Wooden alphabet blocks are scattered across the floor around an open toy-box. Carved knights and horses are arranged in ranks on the floor as though about to go into battle. In one corner of the room stands a cradle, rocked by an unseen hand.

#### **Fortune Smiles: The Greater Gem**

*Whoever was dealt the Greater Gem card realizes that one of the dolls has a priceless gem around its neck. Retrieving the gem gains them a gem worth 2000 gp as a piece of jewelry, and the gem is a magic item.*

#### **Gem of Priceless Wonder**

*Wondrous item*

**Recharge 11+:** At the start of battle you may use the gem’s magic to apply a +1 rune to a mundane (non-magical) weapon, armor, or implement and roll for the random rune effect. At champion tier you can either apply two +1 runes to two objects or one +2 rune to one object. At epic tier you can apply either a +1 rune and a +2 rune to two objects, or a +3 rune to one object.

**Quirk:** Covet pretty things.

*However, true to Madame Vex’s reading of the card whoever retrieves the gem suffers a strange curse: the porcelain doll transforms into turns to a tiny withered and mummified version of the character, and the character turns into a full-sized living porcelain doll. This affects only the character’s appearance (no attribute or racial changes), and will involve a major quest to undo the curse.*

*If two or more characters got the Greater Gem card, then they all get the option to retrieve a magical gem. In that case the character’s transformations proceed gradually enough (at first) that the first character doesn’t notice they are cursed until all characters have gained their gems.*

The open toy-box sucks the adventurers toward it:

Avoiding being sucked into a tiny box: DC 15. If an adventurer fails the skill check make the following attack against the adventurer:

**Crushed into a tiny space +5 vs AC—2d8 damage**

*Miss:* Half damage.

After the adventurers escape the toy box the toys in the room come to life, and laugh shrilly at the adventurers, then just as suddenly stop and resume normal inanimate object behavior.

#### THE TROPHY ROOM

The room is full of stuffed animals, with animal heads mounted on the wall. Trophy rooms are just spooky by themselves, and walking through one on a stormy night in the middle of a castle of the damned is doubly spooky.

##### *Fortune Smiles: The Huntress*

*Any adventurer who got the Huntress card notices that one of the lionesses in the room blinks, giving them enough time to gain +5 to their AC by dodging to the side.*

One of the stuffed trophies, a lioness, comes to life and attacks the party:

Fighting a reanimated lioness: DC 15, or expend a limited use power (daily or recharge). If an adventurer fails the skill check make the following attack against the adventurer:

**Claw swipe +10 vs AC—2d6 damage**

#### THE CORRIDOR

The party is exploring a corridor when the area begins to get darker and darker. Light sources dim, and even magical light fades. As the party moves onwards toward the darkness they can hear something moving about... but they are going to have to get within an arm-span of it to find out what it is. If the party turns back and beats a retreat the light returns to normal. If the party presses onwards they find a ... creature. It is a wet red humanoid curled into a ball. It is missing its eyes and tongue and skin, and is making throat-sounds. If the party pulls the thing out of the darkness they discover that it is a dying dwarf, in great pain and unsaveable. If the party doesn't pull the thing out of the dark a pale hand appears and drags it away further into the darkness. Following the hand into the darkness will lead to a blank wall.

##### *Fortune Smiles: The Winged Heart*

*Any character who drew the Winged Heart card remembers Madame Vex's admonition to properly apply their strength and notices that the shrinking corridor is not a magical effect but a mechanical one driven by hidden cogwork—giving them a +5 bonus to their skill check.*

After the party has dealt with the strange happenings in the corridor the walls begin to close in on them as the corridor shrinks:

Brace, break the walls, or run: DC 20. If an adventurer fails the skill check make the following attack against the adventurer:

**Crushed +5 vs AC—1d12+4 damage**

#### THE LONG HALLWAY

The long hallway is lined with suits of armor. The armor is patterned after the armor used by the Crusader's army but is ceremonial—it probably won't stand up to a solid blow. The suits are rusted in place from centuries of disuse and neglect. When the adventurers pass between them the helms turn to watch them, though the suits only move when they are not being directly observed. Each suit of armor grasps a weapon. While the swords are blunt and their metal fatigued, the maces and hammers are still



operable. One of the maces has the personal mark of the Crusader.

Whoever is taking the lead down the long hallway stumbles into a spider web. After a moment of flailing and brushing eyeball-sized spiders off themselves everything will be OK. Later the lead adventurer will notice that the adventurer with the longest hair is scratching their scalp. Then the long hair will begin moving. Spiders laid eggs there and the eggs are hatching! The spiders might bite the head and hands of the infested character, but while painful and temporarily disfiguring the bites are in no way deadly.

#### **Fortune Smiles: The Key**

Whoever was dealt the Key card realizes that one of the war hammers is magical, but the suit of armor won't release it until another magical weapon is placed into its empty hand.

#### **Rhetorical Hammer**

*Cursed hammer*

*Always:* +2 to attacks and damage with this weapon (champion: +3; epic: +5). This weapon ignores any damage resistances of its target, and on a natural even hit ignores any damage-avoidance abilities.

*Curse:* The attuned adventurer feels compelled to speak honestly at all times, and must succeed at a hard save (16+) to tell a direct lie or a normal save (11+) to hide the truth through clever wordplay.

*Quirk:* Lies hurt your ears.

Lurking in the shadows behind the suits of armor are hungry ghouls:

Smite the pitiful ghouls: DC 25, or expend a limited use power (daily or recharge). If an adventurer fails the skill check make the following attack against the adventurer:

**Pitiful bite** +5 vs AC—2d6 damage

## GRAVENSTEIN APPEARS

**GMs:** Run this section after the adventurers have explored several castle rooms. The number of rooms that the adventures explore before Gravenstein shows up is down to you—the more rooms explored the more time you need to run this session and the greater the attrition on the adventurers' resources.

The adventurers stumble at last into a banquet hall with skeletons sat at a long table. The table is set for a meal, but the meal being served is worms, maggots, and other unwholesome things that are found in graves. At the head of the table is a rotting corpse, who stands to address the adventurers.

"Ah, my honored guests. I felt you crawling around inside me. My name is Gravenstein, and I built this castle long ago at the command of Sir Scrimhunt. Little did he know that I put more than my sweat and toil into this castle—I put my very heart into it. Every death in this place has fed me life, and I have returned to the town the bears my name to feast. Come, join us!"

The skeletons rise from their seats and slowly move toward the adventurers.



Number of PCs	Gravenstein's Ghost	Decrepit Skeletons
3	1	14
4	1	28
5	1	42
6	1	56

*GMs: This is a double-strength fight.*

There are a lot of skeletons in this double-strength final battle. Have Gravenstein stay at the back and keep out of the fight as much as possible, not taking any actions until the adventurers whittle his mooks down to a reasonable number.

Once the battle is over Gravenstein's unlife is ended, and the adventurers will see a still-beating heart drop from his dissipating corpse.

### DECREPIT SKELETON

*1<sup>st</sup> level mook [UNDEAD]*

Initiative: +6

Vulnerability: holy

**Sword +6 vs. AC—3 damage**

**AC 16**

**PD 14**

**MD 10**

**HP 7 (mook)**

*Mook:* Kill one decrepit skeleton mook for every 7 damage you deal to the mob.



### GRAVENSTEIN'S GHOST

*Double-strength 4<sup>th</sup> level caster [UNDEAD]*

Initiative: +9

Vulnerability: holy

**Flesh-melting touch +9 vs. PD—4d8 acid damage.** For each of the damage dice that come up 1, the ghost makes a *dread gaze* attack as a free action against a different far away or unengaged enemy.

**R: Dread gaze +9 vs. MD—**As a free action, the target makes a basic attack against its closest ally. If it isn't next to an ally and doesn't have a ranged weapon in hand, instead it attacks itself.

***Frightening Thirteen:*** If the ghost rolls a natural 13 then the enemy with the highest initiative begins to turn inside out. The player of that character can choose to take 13 ongoing damage (and suffer amazing pain) OR move to last in the initiative round due to stopping their insides becoming their outsides.

*Intangible:* The ghost can't make opportunity attacks, and enemies can't make opportunity attacks against it. The ghost can pass through solid objects, but is always drawn by fate back into the fight unless it uses a standard action to stay inside a wall until the start of its next turn.

*Strength from pain:* The ghost heals 4d6 hp every time an enemy rolls a death save.

*Fear:* While engaged with this creature, enemies that have 18 hp or fewer are dazed (–4 attack) and do not add the escalation die to their attacks.

**AC 20**

**PD 15**

**MD 17**

**HP 108**

## THE CURSE IS LIFTED (OR IS IT?)

### FLEEING THE LAST BATTLE (LOSE)

Oops! The adventurers ran instead of fighting. They find a way out of the castle, only to discover that it has fully solidified upon the hill outside the town of Gravenstein.

Worse, the townsfolk of Gravenstein have suffered an awful fate! Their skeletons have crawled out of their bodies (*killing them in the process, obviously*) and are now dragging their flesh into the castle for Gravenstein's Ghost to feast upon.

The adventurers have investigated the castle, but have failed to protect others and now must call for help in defeating this newly-formed bastion of undeath.

### KEEP THE HEART (DRAW)

If the adventurers take the heart and keep it safe with them then they are able to navigate out of the ever-shifting maze of the castle back to the real world.

Once in the real world the adventurers look back to see the castle has solidified upon the hill. *Screamhaunt Castle* is still haunted, but at least the immediate threat of Gravenstein is ended.

### DESTROY THE HEART (WIN)

Destroying the heart, causes the castle to fully solidify and come into the real world, then centuries of neglect catch up with it all at once and the castle begins to crumble into ruin. The adventurers run out just in time.

Once the dust clears the adventurers look back to see the ruins of the castle on the hill above the town of Gravenstein. The undying castle is dead at last.

## THE ROAD GOES EVER ON...

So the adventure is over, but what next?



*Well for my own group the adventure will continue—one of my players had his character turned into a living doll by the curse in the nursery, and now they seek to undo the curse. That will involve bargains with shadow dragons, descending into the underworld to speak to a dead god, and finally a trip into the Echo to seek out a valley of living shadows. Along the way I expect to hear much in-character complaining from him about his stubby little doll fingers, and will enjoy watching the rest of the party have to deal with adventuring with a 6' tall creepy doll.*

### GRAVEBSTEIN THE DEATH LORD

If the adventurers ran away and didn't kill Gravenstein then the town that bears his name has become a city of the dead. Depending on where you decided Gravebstein town is, this will threaten one or more icons. The new city of the dead might extend the Lich King's power even further from the isle of the Necropolis, or might be a rival to his power.

As experts on *Screamhaunt Castle* the adventurers will be much in demand by those who want to oppose the undead.

### MADAME VEX

Regardless of what happens to the castle, Madame Vex the seer is likely to survive (seeing glimpses of the future tends to give one an advantage in that respect). The tiefling seer could end up as a recurring NPC, either a patron for the adventurers who dispatches them to solve problems that only she can foresee, or a morally grey Machiavellian player-of-games and meddler with fate.

### SCREAMHAUNT Lives!

Just because the castle is destroyed doesn't mean all the undead are gone, nor that the ruins won't attract monsters. Remember also—the castle has returned before, and may yet hold further secrets to be discovered.

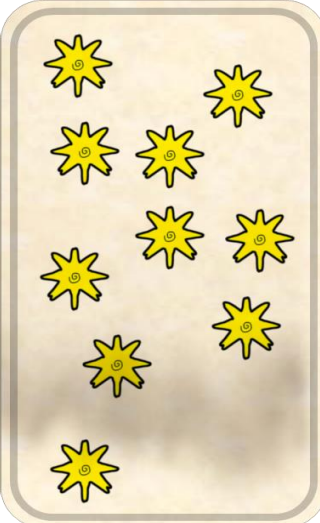
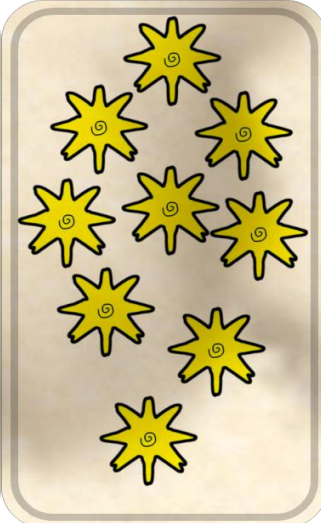
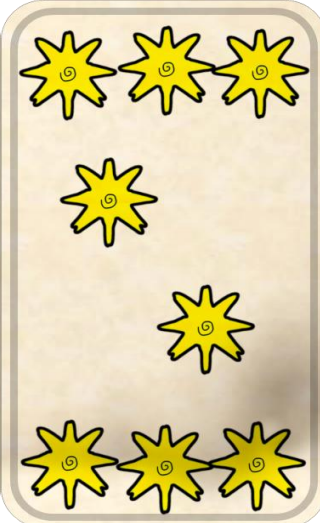
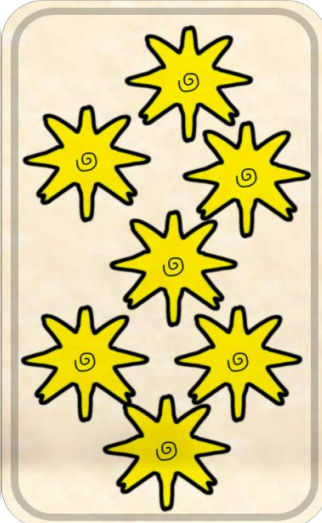
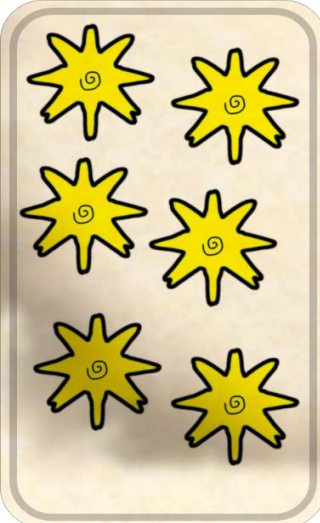
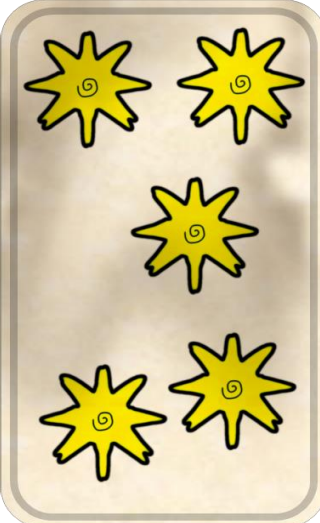
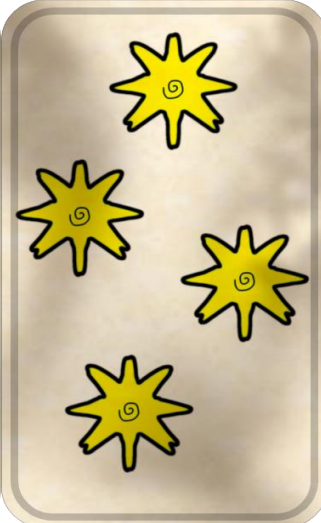
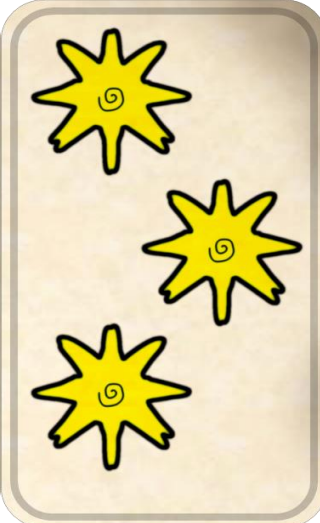
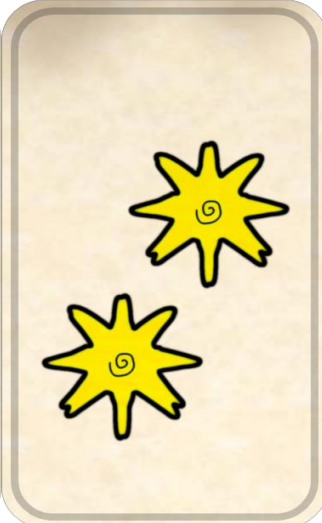
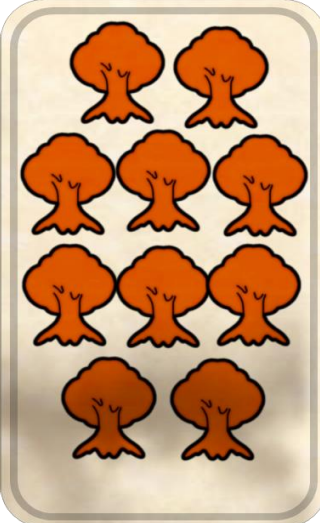
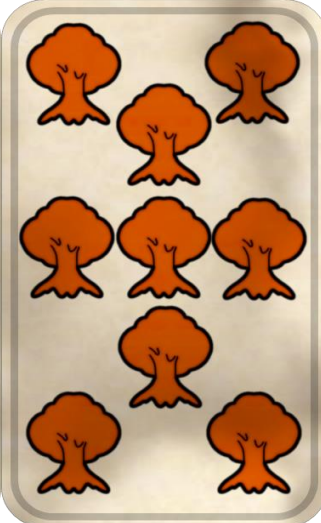
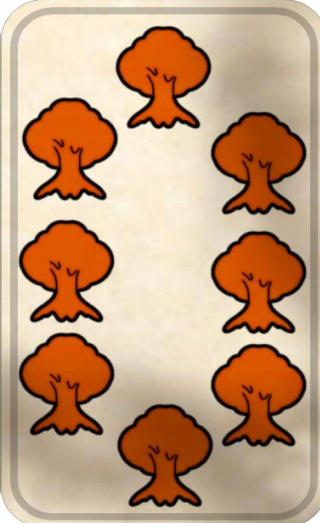
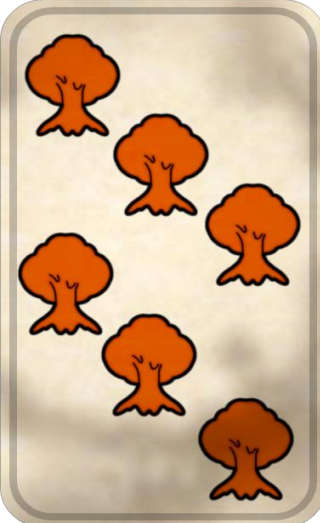
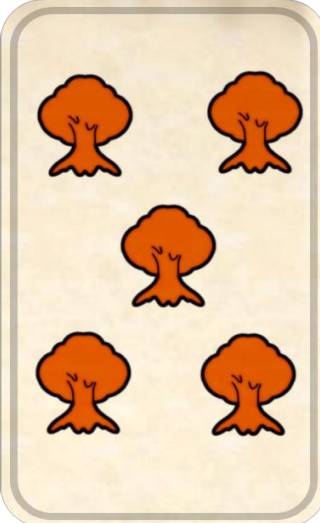
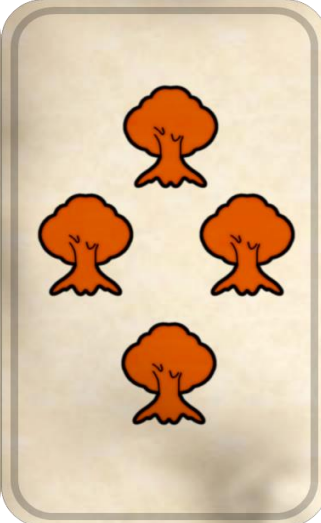
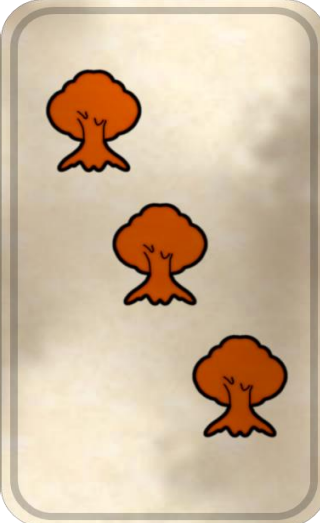


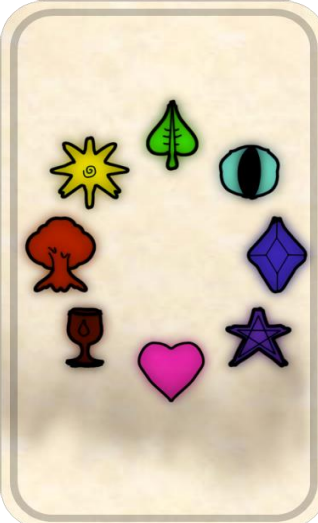
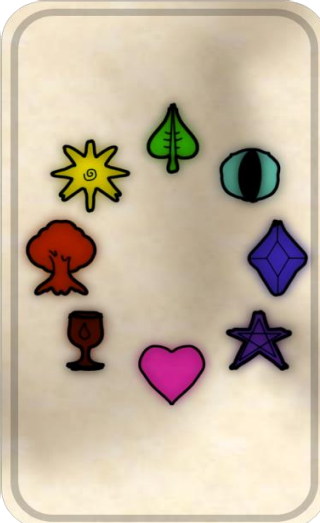
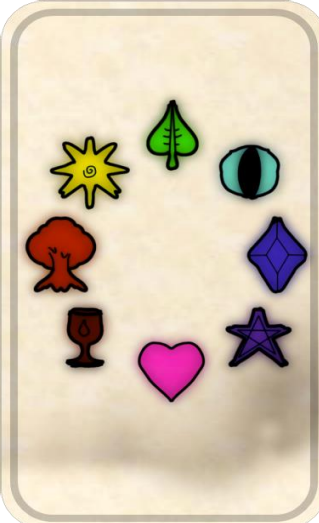
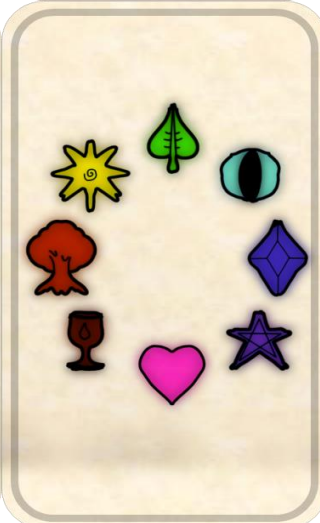
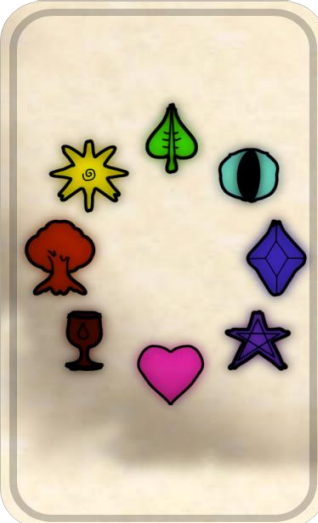
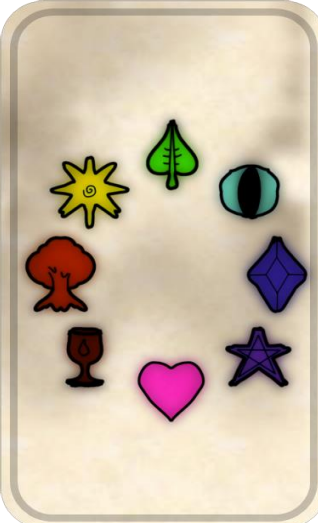
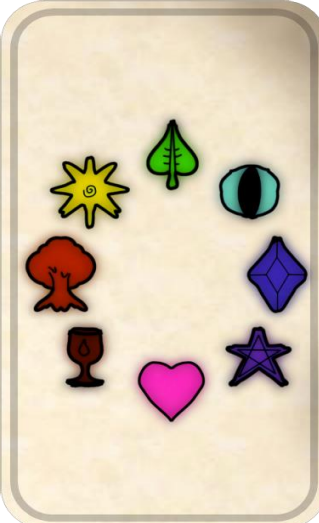
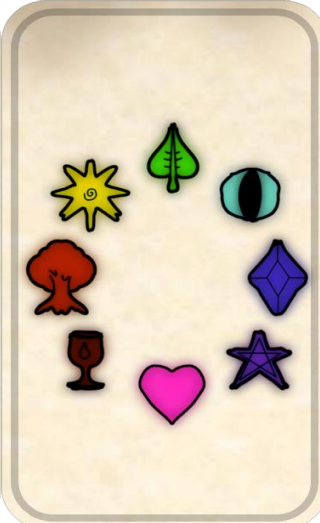
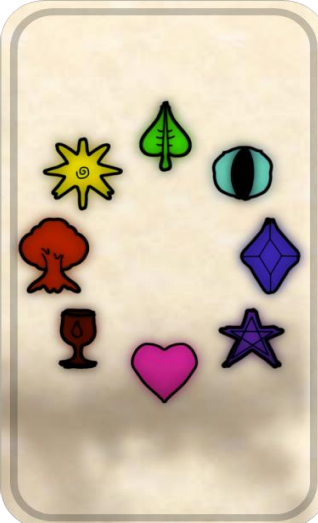
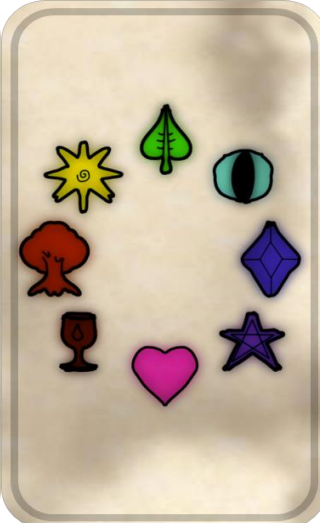
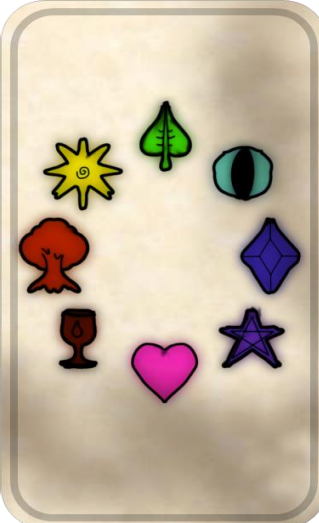
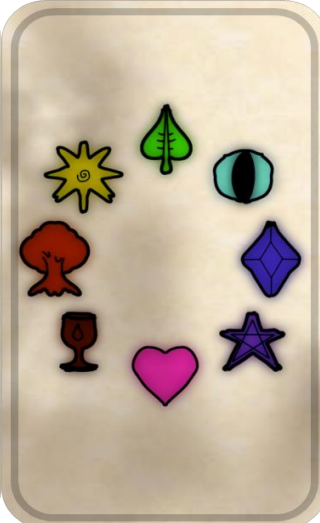
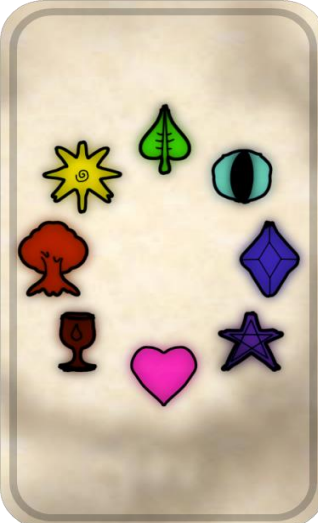
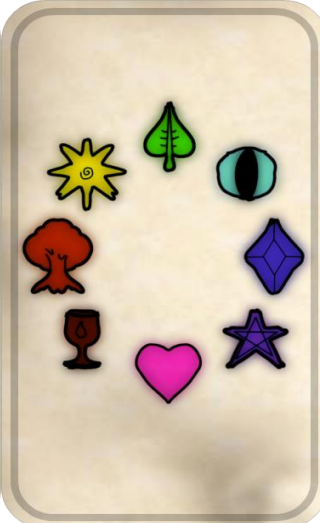
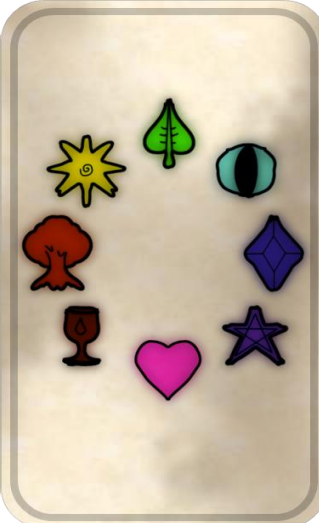
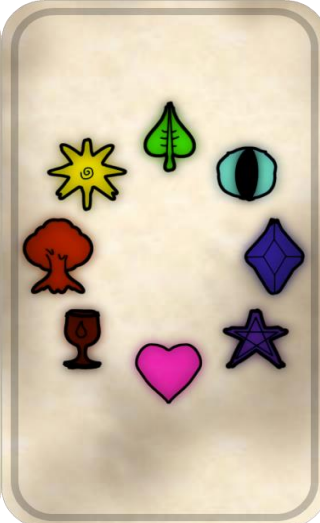
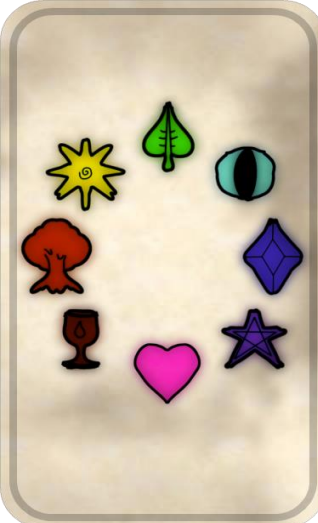


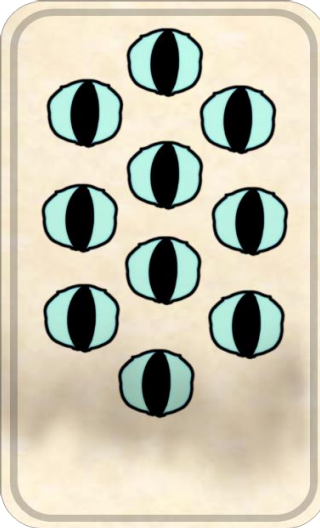
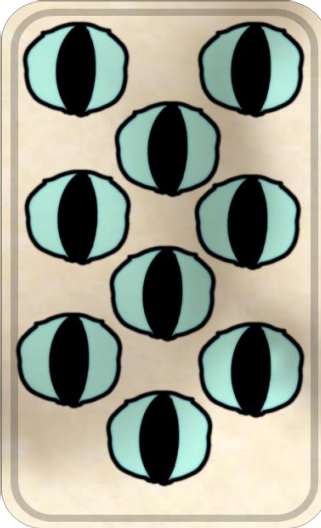
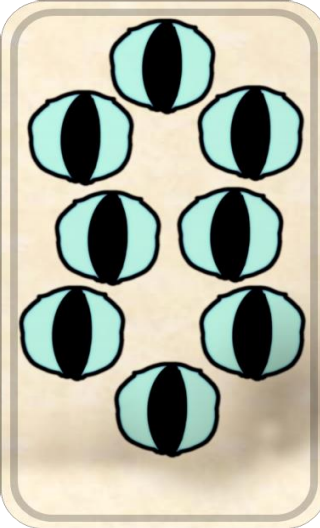
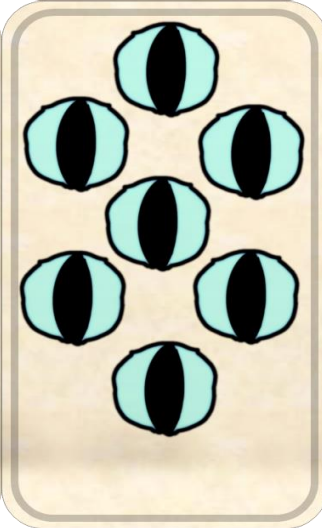
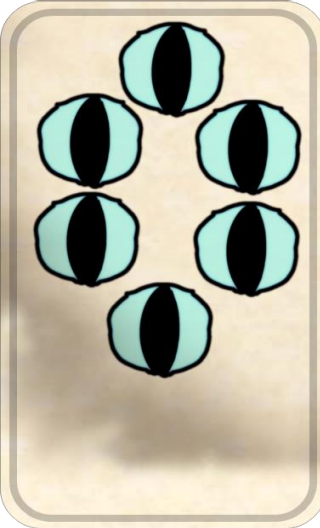
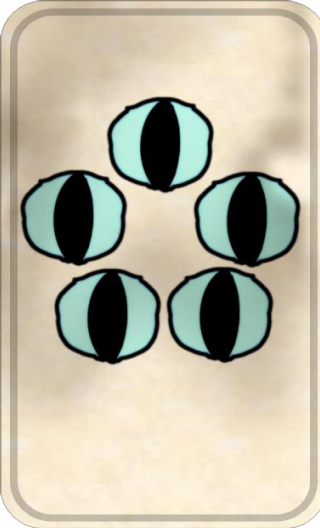
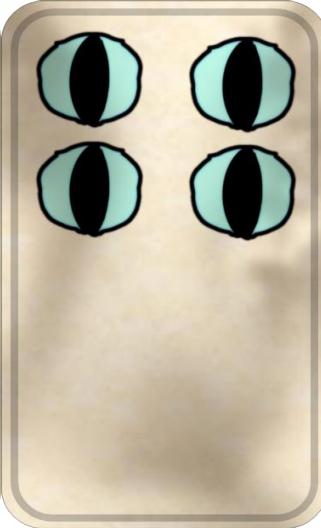
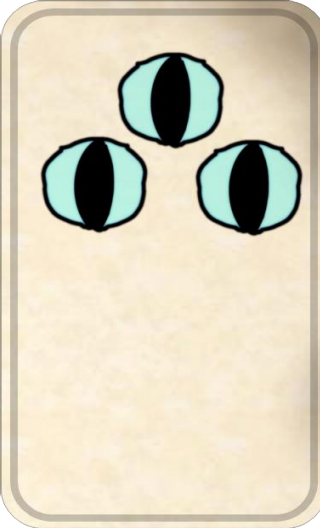
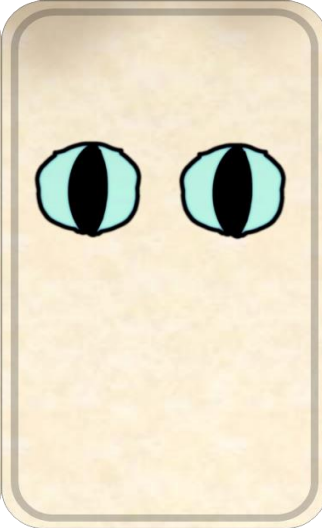
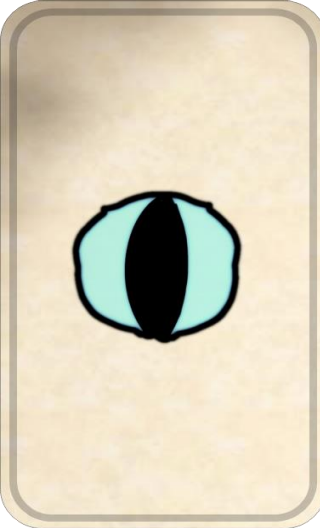
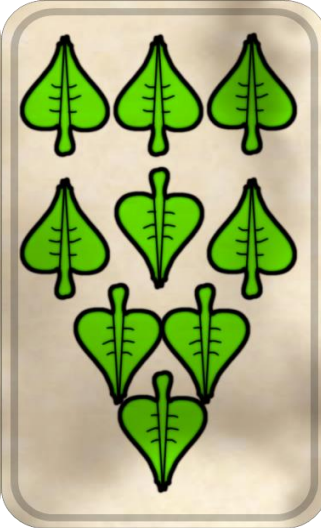
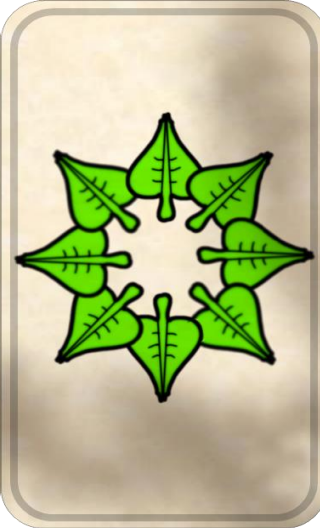
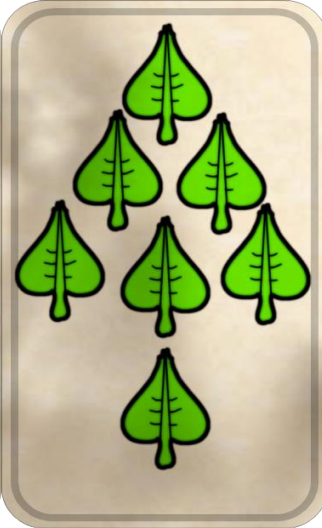
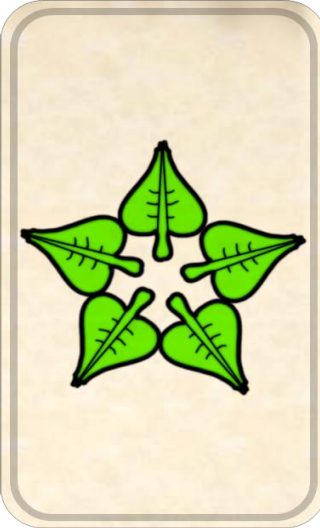
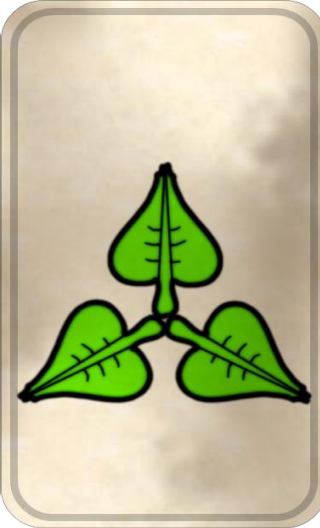
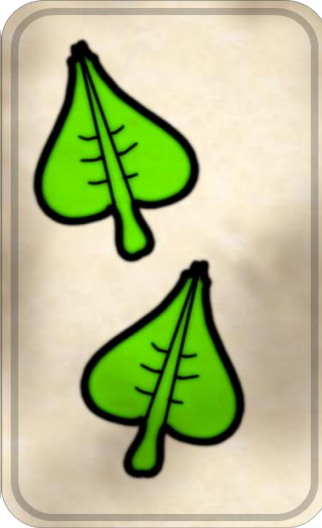
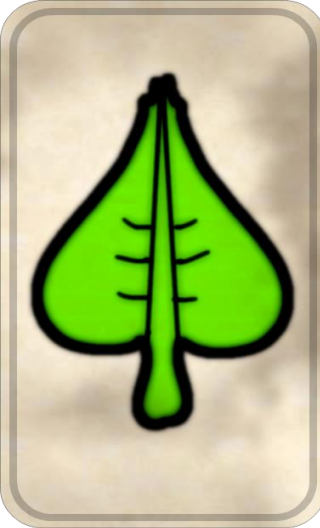






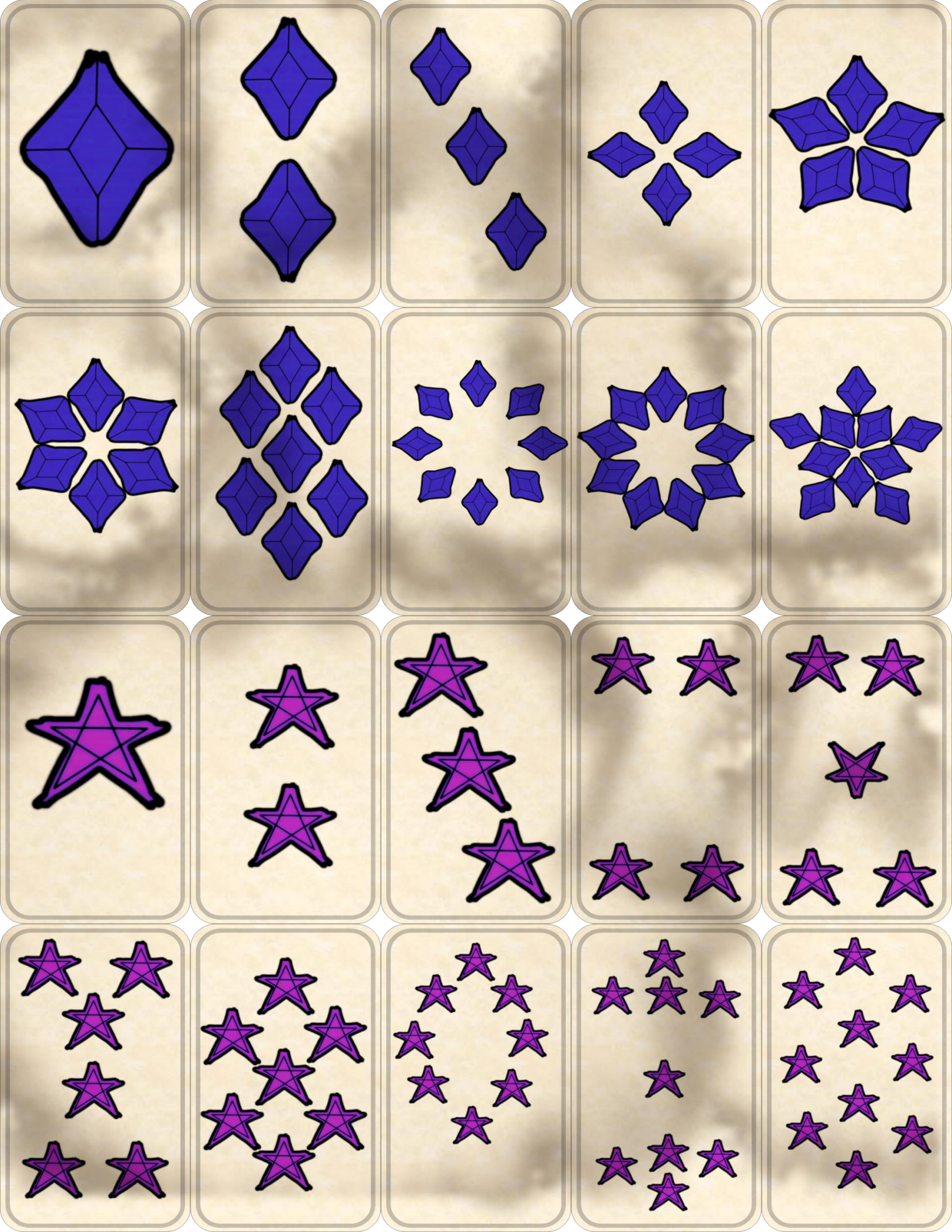


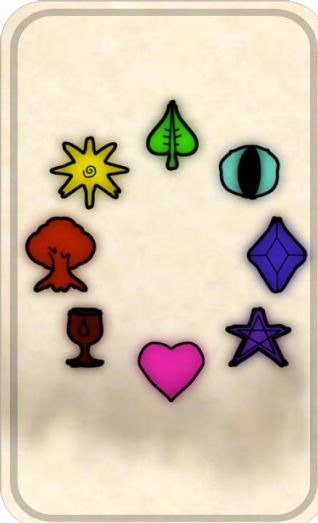
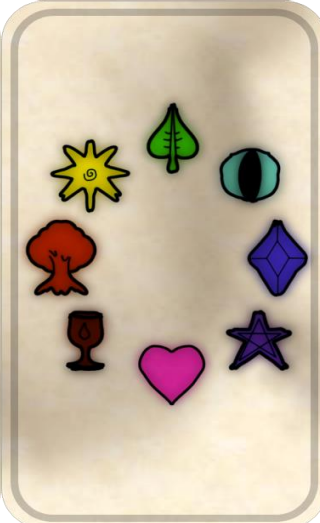
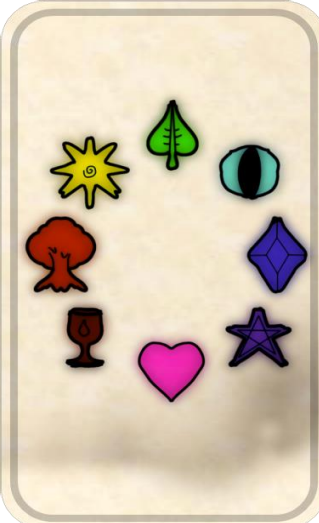
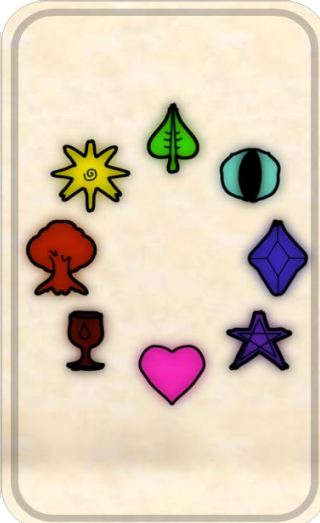
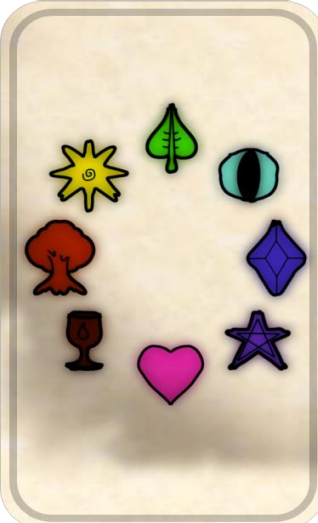
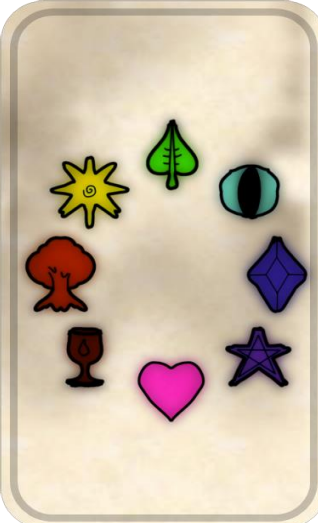
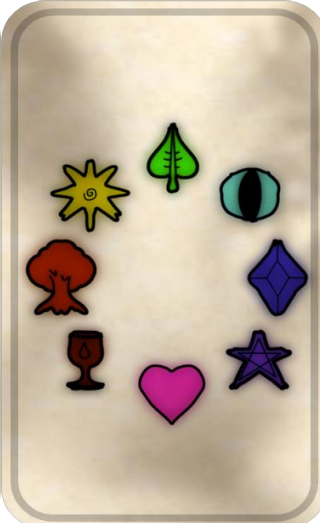
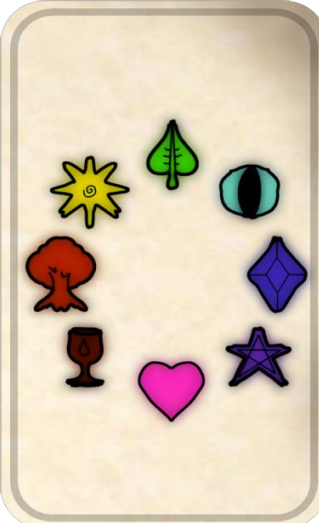
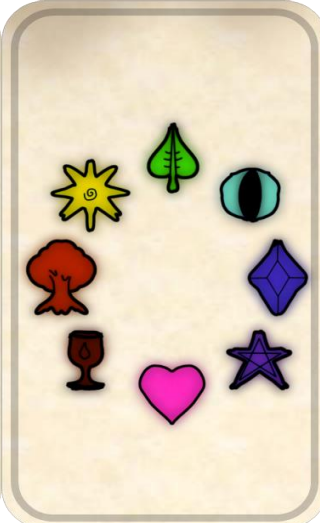
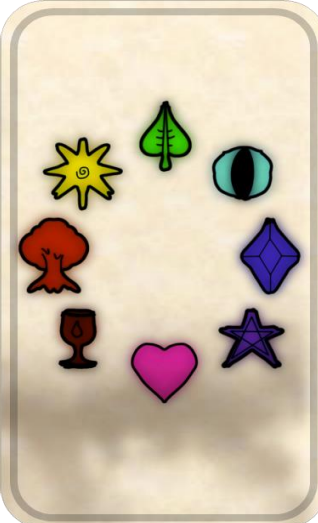
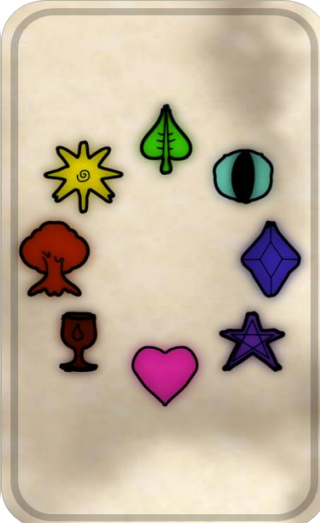
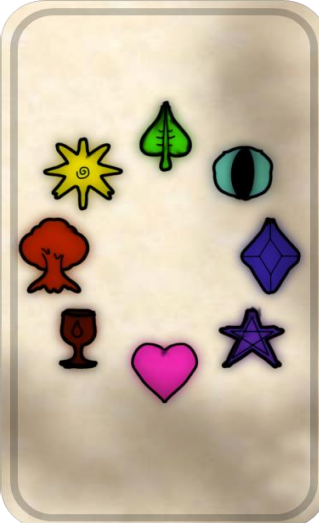
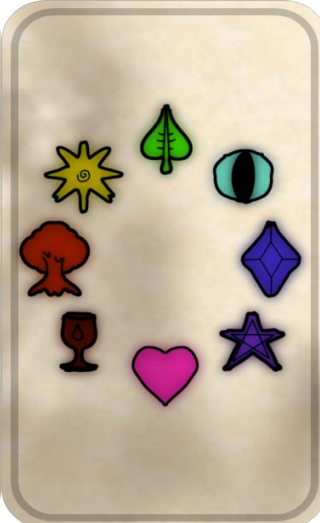
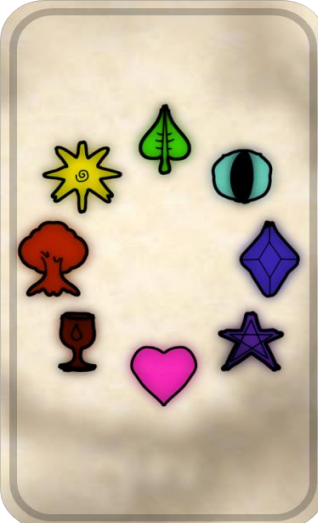
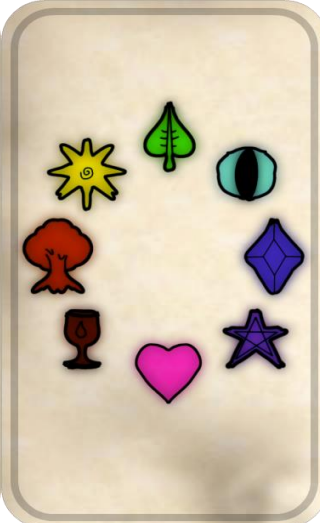
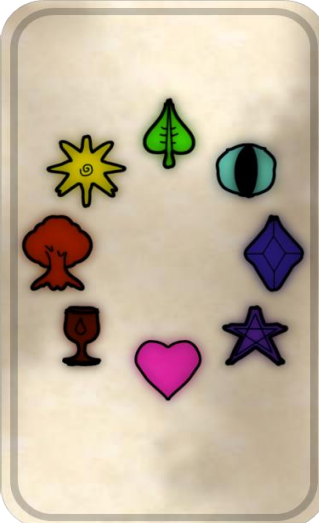
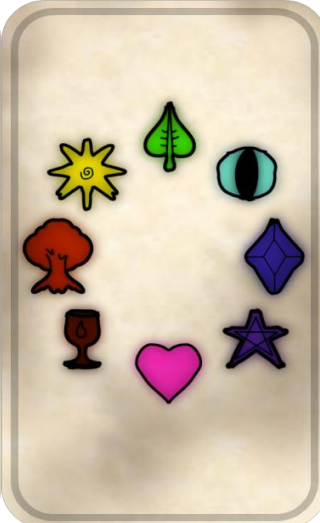
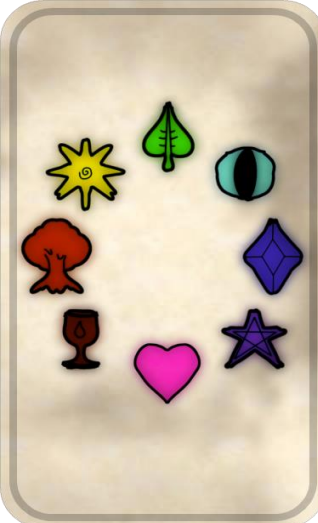


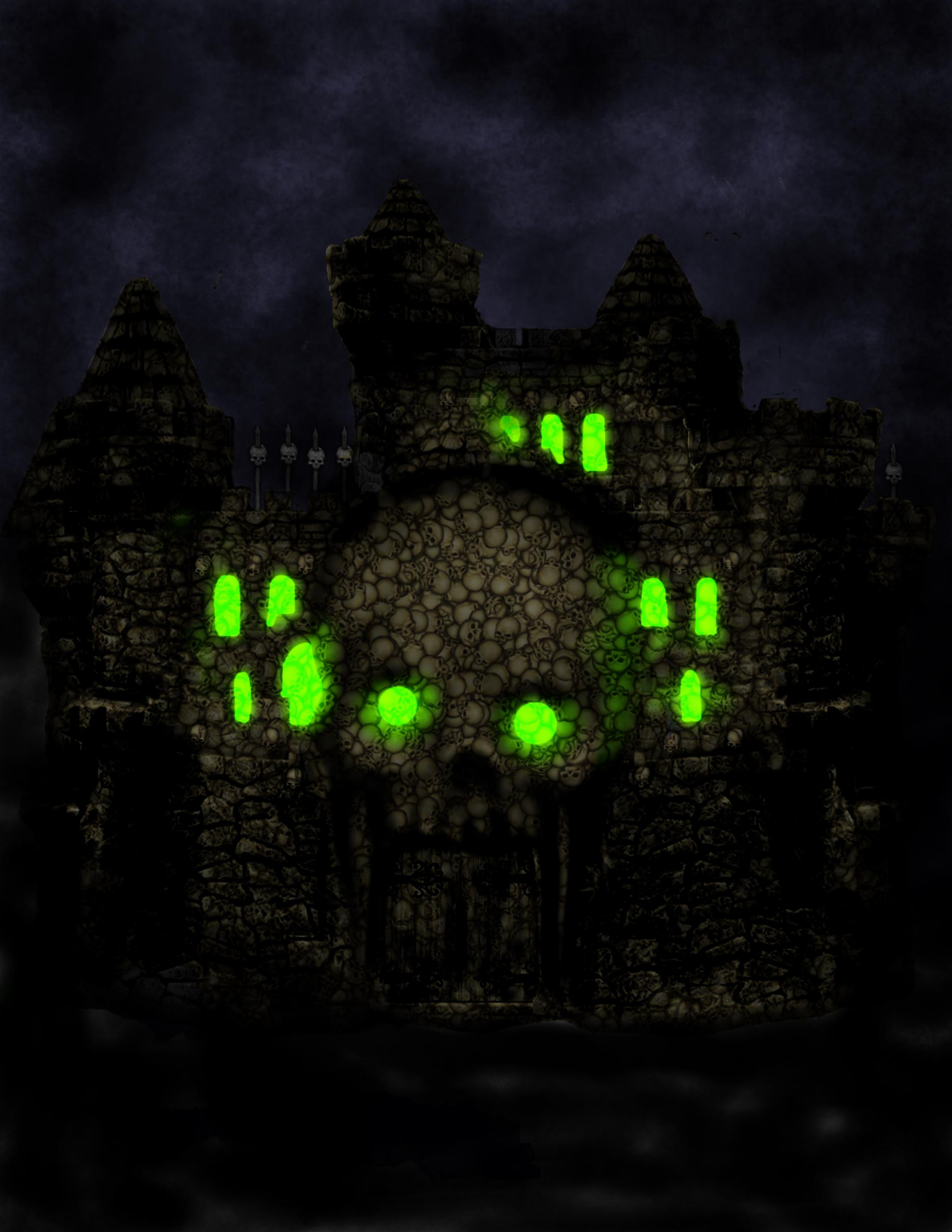












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