

North of the Hyborian lands lies pale and misty Hyperborea, an unwelcoming wasteland that offers no warmth to visitors, of which there are very few. Unless they happen to arrive in a slave caravan, as did a young Cimmerian once upon a time...

# THE WHITE HAND OF HYPERBOREA

CONAN

THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

Vincent Darlage

the deadliest fighters in the world, immune to fear and pain. In addition to the death goddess, they worship a whole host of devil-gods and avatars. All members of the White Hand are subject to The Rule of the Master (see the *Conan RPG* for details).

Even the brooding Cimmerians, amongst their forested ridges and misty hills, know the infamous the White Hand. The sight of it can set a brave man to trembling. Members of this order are known as Witchmen or Witchwomen, all of who are virtual devils in human guise, without the taint of compassion or any other constraint that limits other men to sensible or moral behaviour.

This organisation is small, though its leader, Louhi, longs for it to reach the size and prestige of the Black Ring of Stygia. Even so, perhaps because she

SOON THE TRAIL OF THE HYPERBOREAN HORSES FADED OUT ON STONY SOIL. BUT THERE WAS LITTLE CHANCE TO LOSE THE TRAIL, FOR NOW AND AGAIN HE PASSED A SIGN THAT HIS SON'S ABDUCTORS HAD LEFT TO GUIDE HIM; THE IMPRINT OF A HAND, WHITE AGAINST ROCK OR SOIL. BETIMES IT WAS SEARED INTO THE DRY, SCRUBBY GRASS OF A HUMMOCK LIKE A PATTERN OF FROST LEFT BY A BLAST OF PRETERNATURAL COLD.

WITCHCRAFT! HE GROWLED, DEEP IN HIS THROAT, AND HIS NAPEHAIRS PRICKLED. HIS OWN HOMELAND, CIMMERIA, LAY TO THE NORTHWEST. HIS PRIMITIVE FOLK KNEW OF THE WHITE HAND, DREAD SYMBOL OF THE WITCHMEN OF HYPERBOREA. HE SHIVERED AT THE THOUGHT THAT HIS SON WAS THEIR CAPTIVE.

L. SPRAGUE DE CAMP AND LIN CARTER,  
THE WITCH OF THE MISTS

Even though most sorcerers work alone, many have found the need for mutually supportive communities for darksome training and better understanding of the esoteric tomes they study. Indeed, given the scarcity of truly powerful tomes, it is understandable that the possessors of such tomes would find themselves at the centre of such gatherings, and the truly powerful practitioners of the art find themselves equally sought after by others. Other societies are formed by those practitioners who, either through obsession or temperament, long to be a leader. Such is the case with the White Hand of Hyperborea, a sorcerous cult devoted to Louhi, considered to be the avatar of a death goddess.

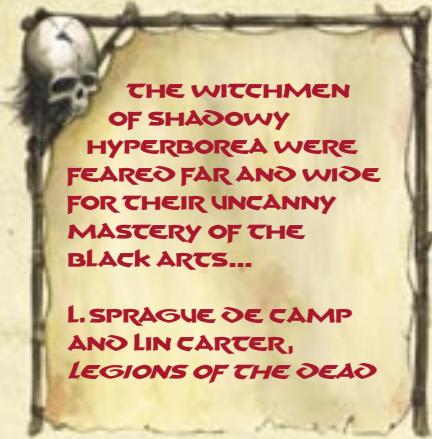
The White Hand is a strange cult of wizard-assassins that holds power in Hyperborea through the terror of their horrible arts. They kill without leaving a mark and fight only with their strange, platinum-tipped rods. Those who serve in the White Hand undergo strange mortifications of body, mind and will. They are accounted





also has the services of the infamous Witchmen of Hyperborea and became an avatar of their horrible god, her magical order has gained the attention of Thoth-Amon of the Black Ring, as well as the Scarlet Circle in far Khitai.

## THE WITCHMEN OF HYPERBOREA



The Witchmen and Witchwomen of Hyperborea serve the sorcerers and sorceresses of Hyperborea, learning from them, serving them and protecting them. As with all prestige classes in the *Conan RPG*, this class is a favoured class for any who meets its requirements.

Low level Witchmen serve as shock troops and assassins for the Witch Kings and Queens. Until they reach 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> level, they are required to dress in skin tight black clothing and featureless white ivory masks while in public view. They are taught to not divulge their emotions, lending them expressionless faces at higher levels, which aids them in Bluff checks. At ninth level, the character is deemed a Witch King or Witch Queen and usually begins his or her own cabal of Witchmen, although all are still considered part of the White Hand. Individual avatars may order their Witchmen to display their own symbol on their black uniform. For

example, Vammatar's Witchmen, in de Camp and Carter's *Legions of the Dead*, had a red emblem on their chests.

**Hit Die:** d6.

### REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Witchman of Hyperborea, a character must fulfil all of the following criteria.

**Sorcery Styles:** Must know at least two sorcery styles.

**Codes of Honour:** Must not have a code of honour.

**Skills:** Knowledge (arcane) 5 ranks, Perform (ritual) 5 ranks.

**Race:** Must be Hyperborean.

**Religion:** Must be a worshipper of the Death Goddess of Hyperborea in good standing.

**Corruption:** 1 or higher.

**Special:** Must have been a member of the White Hand coven for at least a year.

### CLASS SKILLS

The Witchman of Hyperborea's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (alchemy) (Int), Craft (herbalism) (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (any) (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Sense Motive (Wis), and Sleight of Hand (Dex). See the *Conan RPG* for skill descriptions.

**Skill Points At Each Level:** 6 + Int modifier.

### CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Witchman of Hyperborea prestige class.

#### Weapon and Armour Proficiency:

The Witchman of Hyperborea gains no new weapon or armour proficiencies. Note that armour check penalties for armour heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand and Tumble.

**Advanced Spell:** At 3<sup>rd</sup> level and every level thereafter, the Witchman of Hyperborea improves his knowledge of any one of the sorcery styles he already knows by gaining any one of the advanced spells listed under the style. The Witchman of Hyperborea is taught this spell by his Witch King or Queen and does not get to choose his own spell. This is a supernatural ability.

**New Sorcery Style:** This new sorcery style may be chosen either from the *Conan RPG* or from *The Scrolls of Skelos*, and the Witchman of Hyperborea also gains the basic spell associated with it.

**Scholar Levels:** The Witchman of Hyperborea may add his Witchman of Hyperborea class level to his scholar class level for the following purposes: gaining bonus spells for high Intelligence, determining effective scholar level when casting spells. This is a supernatural ability.

**Witchman Accoutrements:** The Witchman gains a Rod of the Witchman and The Faceless Costume for free. If the Witchman dies, the Rod and the Costume are removed from the dead body so that others cannot steal them.

**Exotic Weapon Proficiency:** The Witchman of Hyperborea is proficient with the use of the Rod of the Witchmen (see below).

**Bonus Feats:** The Witchmen of Hyperborea gain a bonus feat at 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> levels as they develop their fighting styles at the expense of magical power. They may choose from the following feats: Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, Striking Cobra, Weapon Finesse.

**Mortification of Body (Ex):** The Witchman of Hyperborea gains curiously green eyes and his body is trained not to telegraph coming attacks or movements or to reveal emotion. The green eyes allow the Witchman to take the Steely Gaze



feat even if he does not otherwise meet the prerequisites. The body training gives the Witchman a Bluff bonus equal to his class level. Hyperboreans are naturally thin and gaunt, and this mortification makes them even more so.

**Mortification of Mind (Ex):** The Witchmen are trained to obey their leading avatar and to not feel the emotions their faces already refuse to betray. As cold as the land they live in, they are inscrutable and alien in thought. This makes them extremely resistant to mental domination from anyone other than their avatar. The Witchman gains a +2 bonus to Will saves against spells from the Hypnotism and Divination styles. They gain a -2 penalty against any spell of any school cast by their avatar.

**Mortification of Soul (Ex):** The Witchman is twisted and vile through his training. He has no sense of right or wrong, only a duty to his avatar. He automatically gains a point of corruption and a +1 power point bonus. His soul is so cold, he can sear his emblem, the White Hand,

onto any surface with a press of his palm, leaving a white imprint as if frosted.

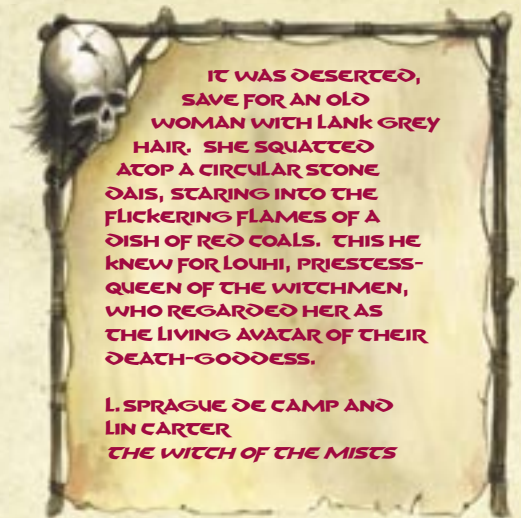
**Leadership:** The Witchman of Hyperborea that reaches this level becomes a Witch King or Witch Queen and gains the Leadership feat as a bonus feat. If the character already has the feat, he gains the Enhanced Leadership ability as a 6<sup>th</sup> level Noble (see the *Conan RPG*).

**Avatar (Su):** The avatar of a Hyperborean Witchman Cult gains all the benefits of The Rule of the Master (see the *Conan RPG*). Hyperborean avatars also have damage reduction equal to their Cha bonus derived directly from their magical natures, rather than from the hardness or natural armour of their bodies. This is indicated in the entry for Damage Reduction by the parenthetical note (avatar) after the number. Any damage reduction gained in this way can be removed by use of the *incantation of Amalric's witchman*

spell. Avatars immediately gain a +10 bonus to Reputation. The avatar becomes the sponsor of his or her own arcane religion (see *The Scrolls of Skelos*). That of Louhi, the Death Goddess, is detailed below.

## NEW ARCANES RELIGION

### LOUHI, DEATH GODDESS OF HYPERBOREA



**TABLE 01:  
THE WITCHMAN OF HYPERBOREA**

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Dodge Bonus	Base Parry Bonus	Magic Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+0	+0	+1	+0	+2	+2	Scholar Levels, Bonus Feat, Exotic Weapon Proficiency, Witchman Accoutrements
2	+2	+0	+0	+2	+0	+3	+3	Bonus Feat, Advanced Spell
3	+3	+1	+1	+3	+1	+3	+3	Bonus Feat, New Sorcery Style
4	+3	+1	+1	+3	+1	+4	+4	Mortification of Body, Bonus Feat
5	+5	+1	+1	+4	+1	+4	+4	Bonus Feat, Advanced Spell
6	+6	+2	+2	+5	+2	+5	+5	Mortification of Mind, New Sorcery Style
7	+6	+2	+2	+6	+2	+5	+5	Advanced Spell
8	+7	+3	+3	+6	+2	+6	+6	Mortification of Soul, Advanced Spell
9	+8	+3	+3	+7	+3	+6	+6	Leadership, New Sorcery Style
10	+9	+3	+3	+8	+3	+7	+7	Avatar, Advanced Spell



Although Louhi is a mortal sorceress, she is considered to be the living avatar of the Hyperborean death-goddess. She is the master of the cult and all worshippers must follow the Rule of the Master as given in the *Conan RPG*. She teaches magic, warping her followers' bodies, minds and souls, in exchange for their obedience.

**Requirements of Worship:** Pay a tithe worth 1 sp/level/month to the local priests of Louhi, attend at least one cult meeting/month.

**Benefits of Worship:** Spells (Counterspells, Curses, Divination, Immortality, Necromancy, Oriental Magic, Prestidigitation).

**Requirements for Ordained**

**Priesthood:** Standard, plus as follows: must know at least three sorcery styles and three advanced spells; Knowledge (arcana) 8 ranks; must give up at least three magical links to oneself to the cult's avatar.

**Benefits of Ordained Priesthood:** Standard, plus sorcery teaching is available (Counterspells, Curses, Divination, Immortality, Necromancy, Oriental Magic, Prestidigitation)

**Typical Punishments for Disloyal Priests:** Killed in a sorcerous ritual.

## NEW SPELL

### LEGIONS OF THE DEAD

**PP Cost:** 1 point/5 corpses

**Components:** V, S, F

**Casting Time:** 1 full round

**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. per scholar level)

**Effect:** Up to 5 corpses per scholar level

**Duration:** Concentration plus 1d6 hours

**Saving Throw:** See Below

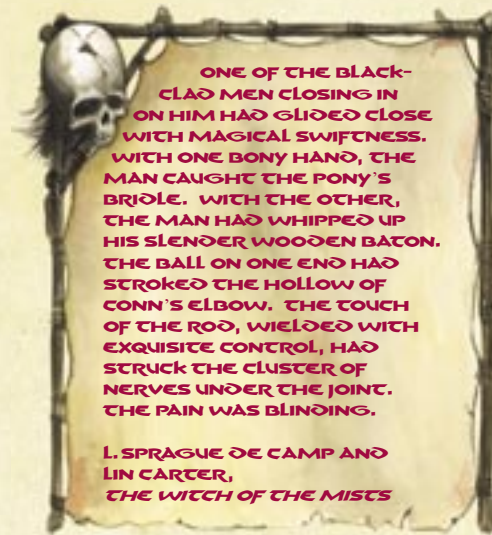
**Prerequisites:** *Raise Corpse*, Magical Attack Bonus 10+

This spell works as a more powerful version of *Raise Corpse*, allowing a veritable army of undead to rise and work for the sorcerer. The undead follow the sorcerer's verbal commands until the spell expires, when the undead become lifeless corpses again.

\* This spell can have severe repercussions on a campaign world and is subject to Runaway Magic (see the *Conan RPG*).

## NEW MAGICAL DEVICE

### THE ROD OF THE WITCHMEN



**TABLE 02:**  
**THE ACOLYTE PATH OF THE WITCHMAN OF HYPERBOREA**

Character Level	Scholar Level	Witchman Level	Witchman of Hyperborea	Magical Attack Bonus
1	1	-	<i>Lesser Ill-Fortune</i>	+0
2	2	-	<i>Calm of the Adept</i>	+1
3	2	1	-	+2
4	2	2	<i>Ill-Fortune</i>	+3
5	2	3	<i>Raise Corpse</i>	+4
6	2	4	-	+4
7	2	5	<i>Death Touch</i>	+5
8	2	6	<i>Astrological Prediction</i>	+6
9	2	7		+7
10	2	8	<i>Gelid Bones</i>	+7
11	3	8	<i>Agonising Doom, Greater Ill-Fortune</i>	+8
12	4	8	<i>Warding, Visions</i>	+9
13	5	8	<i>Sorcerous News</i>	+9
14	5	9	Free Choice	+10
15	5	10	Free Choice	+11



The Rod of the Witchmen, which can be used as a finesse weapon, provides a proficient wielder with ability to stun his opponents with blinding pain. A foe touched by this weapon is forced to make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + one-half your character level + Magical Attack). Armour is no defence against this attack. If the defender fails his saving throw, he is stunned for 1 round (until just before your next action). A stunned character may not act and loses any Dodge or Parry bonus to Defence Value. Attackers get a +2 bonus on attack rolls against a stunned opponent.

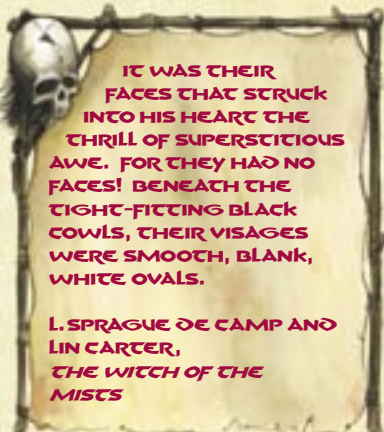
These rods or batons are over two feet long and made of sleek, gleaming black wood. The ends of each rod are tipped with spherical knobs of platinum slightly smaller than a fowl's eggs.

*Purchase Price:* 20,000 sp

## NEW UNUSUAL ITEM

The following item is not magical, but may be regarded as magical by the ignorant. It is difficult to buy, as someone has to kill a Witchman in order to have one to sell. This item is only ever offered for sale at the Games Master's discretion.

## THE FACELESS COSTUME



The Witchmen of Hyperborea dress in the costume created by Vammatar: a skin-tight black outfit with tight cowl and an ivory mask without features save for two small eye-slits. This costume is frightening to look upon and gives the Witchman a



+4 circumstance bonus to Intimidate and Bluff checks. Its overwhelmingly black look gives the Witchman a +1 circumstance bonus to Hide checks in darkness or shadows.

*Purchase Price:* 2,000 sp (the ivory mask is a work of art in and of itself, and the costume and mask is fitted exactly to its wearer to maximise the impact. The price is high also because of the extremely limited supply)

## LOUHI, THE WITCH OF THE MISTS

Medium Human Hyperborean Female  
10<sup>th</sup> level Scholar / 10<sup>th</sup> level  
Witchman

**Hit Dice:** 10d6+20 plus 10 (65 hit points)

**Initiative:** +12 (+2 Dex, +10 Ref)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**DV (Dodge):** 20 (+2 Dex, +8 Level)

**DV (Parry):** 18 (+0 Str, +8 Level)

**DR:** 5 (avatar)

**Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:**

+16/+16

**Attack:** Dagger +18 melee  
(1d4/19-20/x2 / 1 AP)

**Full Attack:** Dagger  
+18/+13/+8 melee  
(1d4/19-20/x2 / 1 AP)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:**  
Spells

**Special Qualities:**

Background (*lay priest*), knowledge is power, increased maximum power points, mortification of body, mortification of mind, mortification of soul, avatar

**Magic Attack Bonus:**  
+17 (+12 base +5 Cha bonus)

**Saves:** Fort: +9, Ref: +12, Will: +17 (+2 bonus to Will saves against spells from the hypnotism and divination styles)

**Attributes:** Str 11, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 21

**Skills:** Bluff +26, Concentration +16, Craft (alchemy) +16, Craft (herbalism) +16, Craft (stone) +5, Decipher Script +16, Diplomacy +13, Gather Information +13, Heal +5, Hide +12, Intimidate +30, Knowledge (arcana) +26, Knowledge (religion) +28, Knowledge (local) +16, Move Silently +12, Perform (ritual) +27, Profession (priestess) +5, Sense Motive +28, Sleight of Hand +12

**Feats:** Adept (necromancy), Combat Expertise<sup>b</sup>, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Rod of the Witchmen)<sup>b</sup>, Hexer, Improved Disarm<sup>b</sup>, Improved Feint<sup>b</sup>, Iron Will<sup>b</sup>, Leadership<sup>b</sup>, Menacing Aura, Negotiator, Opportunistic Sacrifice, Priest, Ritual Sacrifice, Sorcerer's Boon, Steely Gaze, Striking Cobra<sup>b</sup>, Tortured Sacrifice, Weapon Finesse<sup>b</sup>

**Climate/Terrain:** Hyperborea  
**Organisation:** The White Hand



**Base Power Points:** 11

**Maximum Power Points:** 33

**Reputation:** 72 (villain) Louhi may apply her +8 Reputation bonus to all Bluff, Intimidate and Gather Information checks when dealing with others

**Corruption:** 9 (corrupt) Louhi is extremely thin and bony

**Advancement:** By Character Class

<sup>b</sup> = Bonus feat

<sup>s</sup> = Chosen in lieu of a sorcery style

Louhi's background is as a lay-priestess in the temple of an unnamed

Seeking more power, she allied herself with Thoth-Amon and several other notable sorcerers of the Hyborian Age. Turning herself into a white stag, she lured King Conan's son into a trap. King



Conan arrived at her citadel and, during the course of combat, set her on fire. She was last seen blazing past Conan. She is presumed dead, her corpse buried underneath the rubble of her citadel.

She appears as an incredibly ancient woman. Although her rival, Vammatar, held the guise of eternal youth, such is not the interest of Louhi, although she is more than capable of performing that particular spell,

having learned it from Vammatar herself. Louhi's expressionless face is furrowed with a thousand wrinkles and her grey hair dangles in an unkempt manner. She is thin, tall and gaunt. Louhi's overriding weakness was curiosity, which ultimately led to her downfall. Thoth-Amon told her to kill Conan on sight, but she wanted to find out for herself why such a powerful wizard feared a mere mortal man. She found out.

**Spells:** Louhi knows the following styles and spells:

Counterspells: *Warding*; *Greater Warding*

Curses: *Lesser Ill-Fortune*, *Ill-Fortune*; *Greater Ill-Fortune*; *Gelid*

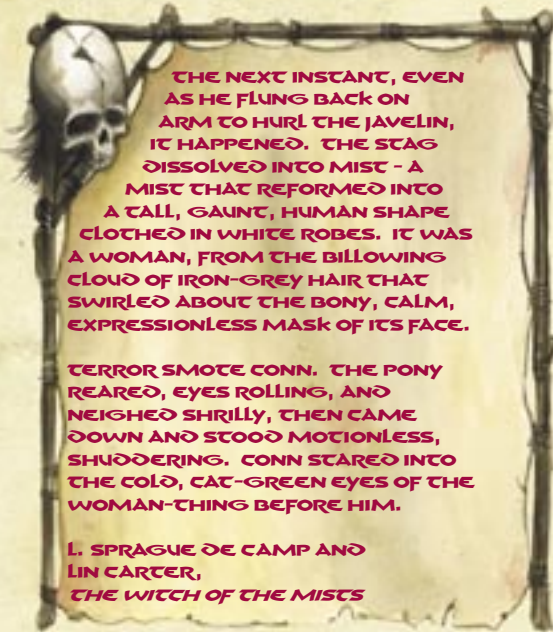
*Bones*; *Draw Forth the Soul*<sup>b</sup>  
 Divination: *Astrological Prediction*; *Visions*; *Sorcerous News*  
 Immortality: *Witch's Vigour*; *Eternal Youth*; *Life Drain*<sup>b</sup>  
 Necromancy: *Raise Corpse*; *Death Touch*; *Agonising Doom*; *Draw Forth the Heart*; *Legions of the Dead*  
 Oriental Magic: *Calm of the Adept*; *Shape-Shifter*  
 Prestidigitation: *Conjuring*, *Telekinesis*

<sup>b</sup> = Bonus spell

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

Howard's *The Hyborian Age* establishes that many aspects of this age has carried forward to the modern era. Finnish Mythology has a goddess named Louhi who rules the icy realm of Pohjola. Perhaps this is a racial memory. Perhaps she survived Conan's attack and later achieved godhood.

Also, from Finnish Myth, Louhi has several beautiful maiden daughters who sends suitors on impossible tasks – and Louhi, critical of fleshly pleasures, ensures that these suitors fail. These may not be literal daughters, but acolytes.



death goddess of Hyperborea. She became an acolyte of Vammatar, a powerful necromancer gifted with eternal youth. Louhi herself eventually became a high priestess. In Conan's youth, Louhi served Vammatar the Witch-Queen as a high priestess at Castle Haloga, where she was notably critical of Vammatar's pursuit of sensual pleasures. After Vammatar's death, she moved her base of operations to Pohiola. As she can change shape into animal forms, she must have either travelled to the Orient, hosted an Oriental sorcerer or bargained with a demon for the Oriental Magic style at some point in her career. She became identified as the avatar of the death-goddess and took control of the White Hand.

