

The background is a red-tinted illustration of a city street. In the foreground, a large, dark, multi-eyed creature hangs from the sky, its body draped in dark fabric. The creature has several glowing white eyes. The city below features various buildings, including a church with a tall spire on the left and a multi-story building with a balcony on the right. The overall style is reminiscent of a horror-themed comic book cover.

THE INVESTIGATOR'S COMPANION

A SUPPLEMENT FOR
WHISPERS IN THE DARK

M.T. BLACK

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WHISPERS IN THE DARK

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INTRODUCTION

THE INVESTIGATOR'S COMPANION is a supplement for the *Whispers in the Dark* roleplaying game. It supplies new backgrounds, feats, and optional rules for your game, as well as a magic system. In order to use this supplement, you need the *Whispers in the Dark: Quickstart Rules for 5e*. No other books are required.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUNDS

YOUR CHARACTER'S BACKGROUND reveals what you have been doing prior to the start of your adventures. It very often corresponds to an occupation, but sometimes it refers to a way of life. In some cases, you have chosen to leave this occupation behind in order to investigate strange mysteries. In other cases, you are still actively employed and need to fit your adventuring around your job.

The *Quickstart Rules* included 8 backgrounds. This supplement includes 20 more, giving you a total of 28 backgrounds to choose from.

ANTHROPOLOGIST

YOU SPECIALIZE IN the study of human society through the ages. This is a broad field and it is likely that you specialize in one or two areas, such as religion, family, music, magic, work, or politics. You may be employed by a university, but you might also have a private sponsor or be self-funded.

- *Skill Proficiencies:* History, Investigation, Religion or Arcana
- *Weapon Proficiencies:* Simple
- *Saving Throw Proficiencies:* Intelligence
- *Additional Languages:* Four other languages of your choice
- *Equipment:* A set of ordinary clothes, a notebook, a pencil, an anthropology text such as Bachofen's *Natural Law* or Tylor's *Primitive Culture*
- *Money:* You have savings of $1d6+2 \times \$100$. Your monthly income is $1d6 \times \$50$.

COWPOKE

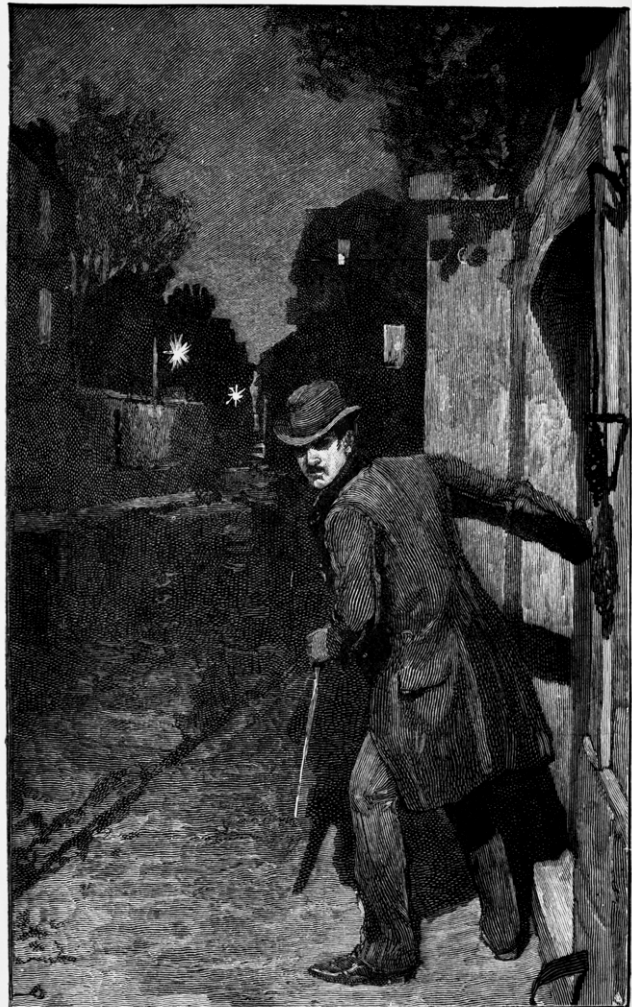
YOU ARE THE classic cowboy or cowgirl. You probably worked on a ranch on the American frontier, herding cattle up and down cattle trails. For whatever reason, you've left the frontier life to establish yourself in the city.

- *Skill Proficiencies:* Acrobatics, Animal Handling
- *Weapon Proficiencies:* Simple and one firearm of your choice
- *Saving Throw Proficiencies:* Constitution
- *Equipment:* A set of ordinary clothes, a whip, a firearm of your choice, a box of 100 bullets
- *Money:* You have savings of $1d4 \times \$50$. Your monthly income is $1d4+1 \times \$10$.

CRIMINAL

YOU MAKE A modest living on the wrong side of the law. You may have turned to crime early in life or it may have been a recent pursuit, perhaps brought on by a change in circumstances. You are most likely a petty thief but you might also be involved in extortion, fraud, or some other profitable vice.

- *Skill Proficiencies:* Deception, Stealth
- *Tool Proficiencies:* Thieves' tools
- *Weapon Proficiencies:* Simple
- *Saving Throw Proficiencies:* Dexterity
- *Equipment:* Thieves' tools, a set of ordinary clothes
- *Money:* You have savings of $2d4 \times \$100$. Your monthly income is $1d6+2 \times \$10$.



ENTERTAINER

YOU ARE A professional entertainer, amusing an audience for money. You could be a dancer, singer, musician, actor, acrobat, comedian or something more exotic, such as a lion tamer. Your venue of choice might be the playhouse, the music hall, or even the circus. It's likely that you have several talents but that you are known for one in particular.

- *Skill Proficiencies:* Acrobatics, Performance
- *Tool Proficiencies:* Your choice of an instrument
- *Weapon Proficiencies:* Simple
- *Saving Throw Proficiencies:* Charisma
- *Additional Languages:* French or Spanish
- *Equipment:* A set of ordinary clothes, a set of performance clothes, an instrument (your choice)
- *Money:* You have savings of $1d4 \times \$100$.
Your monthly income is $1d6+1 \times \$10$.

EXPLORER

YOU JOURNEY TO different regions on the planet for the purpose of discovering information and resources. You may have been sponsored by a university, a wealthy benefactor, or via a public subscription. Favored destinations for American and European explorers at this time included the Pacific, central Africa, central Australia, and the polar regions. Mountain climbing was also popular, with several peaks conquered for the first time during this era.

- *Skill Proficiencies:* Athletics, Survival
- *Weapon Proficiencies:* Simple and one other of your choice
- *Saving Throw Proficiencies:* Strength
- *Additional Languages:* Two of your choice
- *Equipment:* A set of ordinary clothes, a set of exploration clothes, a hunting knife, a weapon (your choice), a box of 100 bullets (if your weapon is a firearm)
- *Money:* You have savings of $1d10 \times \$100$.
Your monthly income is $2d6 \times \$10$.

FARMER

YOU MAKE YOUR living by cultivating the land. Farming is enormously varied. You might raise crops or livestock; you might subsist on your produce or sell it for profit; and you might own your land, rent your land, or even work for another farmer.

- *Skill Proficiencies:* Animal Handling, Nature
- *Weapon Proficiencies:* Simple and one other of your choice
- *Saving Throw Proficiencies:* Dexterity
- *Equipment:* A set of ordinary clothes, a weapon (your choice), a box of 100 bullets (if your weapon is a firearm)

- *Money:* You have savings of $2d6 \times \$100$.
Your monthly income is $1d8+2 \times \$10$.

FORMER CULTIST

YOU WERE ONCE a member of a foul cult but luckily found your way out. You may have left of your own accord, you may have been rescued, or you could have been ejected by the cult leaders. Whatever happened, it is likely you are on very bad terms with the remaining cult members and it's possible your life is at risk. Possible Mythos cults include the Fraternity of the Beast, the Society of the Yellow Sign, and the Church of Starry Wisdom.

- *Skill Proficiencies:* Arcana, Religion, and one other of your choice
- *Weapon Proficiencies:* Simple
- *Saving Throw Proficiencies:* Charisma
- *Equipment:* A set of ordinary clothes
- *Money:* You have savings of $1d4 \times \$50$.
Your monthly income is $1d6 \times \$10$.

GAMBLER

LOTS OF PEOPLE enjoy gambling but you are a professional, making your living through placing wagers. Your game of choice may be a card game such as faro, three card monte, or poker. Dice games, especially hazard and birdcage, are also popular with gamblers. Alternatively, you might bet on horse racing, boxing matches, or wrestling.

- *Skill Proficiencies:* Insight, Sleight of Hand
- *Weapon Proficiencies:* Simple
- *Saving Throw Proficiencies:* Charisma
- *Tools:* A gaming set of your choice
- *Additional Languages:* French or Spanish
- *Equipment:* A set of ordinary clothes, a notebook, a pencil, two gaming sets (your choice)
- *Money:* You have savings of $1d12 \times \$100$.
Your monthly income is $3d6 \times \$10$.

GUNSLINGER

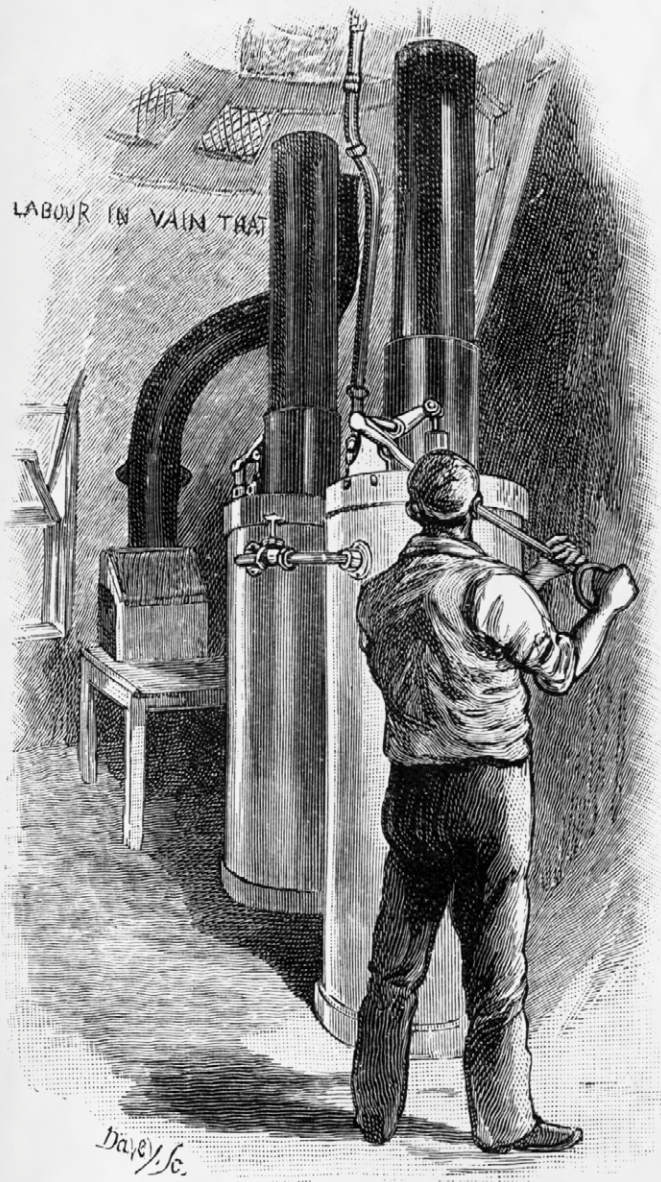
YOU ARE A skilled gunfighter, most likely from the American frontier, and you have a fearsome reputation. You may have been a sheriff, a gun-for-hire, or even an outlaw. For whatever reason, you've left the frontier to try life in the city.

- *Skill Proficiencies:* Intimidation, Stealth
- *Weapon Proficiencies:* Simple and two other firearms of your choice
- *Saving Throw Proficiencies:* Dexterity
- *Equipment:* A set of ordinary clothes, two firearms of your choice, a box of 100 bullets
- *Money:* You have savings of $1d10 \times \$100$.
Your monthly income is $2d6 \times \$10$.

LABORER

YOU MAKE YOUR living by selling the strength of your body. You are very flexible and have likely had numerous jobs. Whether it is digging ditches, picking apples, working in a factory, or a myriad of other tasks, you learn quickly, work hard, and get the job done.

- *Skill Proficiencies:* Intimidation, Survival
- *Tool Proficiencies:* Pick one of your choice
- *Weapon Proficiencies:* Simple
- *Saving Throw Proficiencies:* Strength
- *Equipment:* A set of ordinary clothes, a set of tools (your choice)
- *Money:* You have savings of $1d4 \times \$50$.
Your monthly income is $1d4+1 \times \$10$.



MERCHANT

YOU MAKE YOUR living by the purchase and sale of goods. This term encompasses a vast array of professions, from the sophisticated importer to the roadside fruit vendor.

- *Skill Proficiencies:* Deception, Insight, Persuasion
- *Weapon Proficiencies:* Simple
- *Saving Throw Proficiencies:* Charisma
- *Additional Languages:* Either French or Spanish
- *Equipment:* A set of ordinary clothes, a set of fine clothes
- *Money:* You have savings of $2d6 \times \$100$.
Your monthly income is $1d12+2 \times \$10$.

MISSIONARY

YOU WERE COMMISSIONED by your religious group to bring your message and your service overseas to a distant group of people. For some reason you have returned from the mission field: perhaps you are on a furlough, perhaps there was a family emergency, or perhaps you have had a crisis of faith.

- *Skill Proficiencies:* Medicine, Religion, Survival
- *Weapon Proficiencies:* Simple
- *Saving Throw Proficiencies:* Wisdom
- *Additional Languages:* Three other languages of your choice
- *Equipment:* A set of ordinary clothes, a notebook, a pencil, a religious textbook
- *Money:* You have savings of $1d8 \times \$50$.
Your monthly income is $2d4 \times \$10$.

POLITICIAN

YOU ARE SOMEONE who holds or is seeking government office. This could be the local city council, the state legislature, or even Congress.

- *Skill Proficiencies:* Performance, Persuasion, and another one of your choice
- *Weapon Proficiencies:* Simple
- *Saving Throw Proficiencies:* Charisma
- *Additional Languages:* One other language of your choice
- *Equipment:* A set of ordinary clothes, a notebook, a pencil, a photograph of yourself
- *Money:* You have savings of $2d6 \times \$100$.
Your monthly income is $1d6 \times \$50$.

PRIEST

YOU ARE A recognised leader in an established religion. You could be a priest in the Catholic or Episcopal churches, or a minister in one of the many other denominations in the United States such as the Baptists and Methodists. You could also be a leader from a non-Christian religion, such as a Jewish rabbi, a Buddhist priest, or an Islamic mufti.

- *Skill Proficiencies:* Insight, Religion
- *Tool Proficiencies:* First Aid Kit
- *Weapon Proficiencies:* Simple
- *Saving Throw Proficiencies:* Wisdom
- *Additional Languages:* Greek, Latin, and two others of your choice
- *Equipment:* A set of fine clothes, a set of clerical attire, a holy symbol, a holy book
- *Money:* You have savings of $1d8 \times \$50$.
Your monthly income is $2d4 \times \$10$.

PRIZE FIGHTER

You are a professional fighter who makes your living by boxing or wrestling. You may travel around the country with a show or perhaps you work solo, showing up at fighting exhibitions and trying your hand. It doesn't matter so long as there is a purse to win.

- *Skill Proficiencies:* Acrobatics, Athletics, Performance
- *Weapon Proficiencies:* Simple, your unarmed strike uses a d4 for damage.
- *Saving Throw Proficiencies:* Strength
- *Equipment:* A set of ordinary clothes, boxing gloves
- *Money:* You have savings of $1d4 \times \$100$.
Your monthly income is $1d6+1 \times \$10$.

SAILOR

YOU ARE PART of the crew that operates a ship. Your vessel could be sail or steam-powered and might operate on the open seas or on rivers. You are certainly well travelled and have likely seen sights that more parochial folk have not.

- *Skill Proficiencies:* Athletics, Perception, and another one of your choice
- *Weapon Proficiencies:* Simple
- *Saving Throw Proficiencies:* Constitution
- *Additional Languages:* One of your choice
- *Equipment:* A set of ordinary clothes, compass
- *Money:* You have savings of $1d8 \times \$50$.
Your monthly income is $2d4 \times \$10$.



SCIENTIST

YOU STUDY THE natural world, attempting to gain a systematic and orderly understanding of it. You have a broad knowledge of science, but you also have a special area of expertise, such as astronomy or chemistry. You may be attached to an institution, or you may be privately funded through inherited wealth or some other windfall. Although the label "scientist" is used, you are more commonly called a "natural philosopher" in this era.

- *Skill Proficiencies:* Nature, Perception
- *Tool Proficiencies:* Your choice of a chemistry set or astronomy kit
- *Weapon Proficiencies:* Simple
- *Saving Throw Proficiencies:* Intelligence
- *Additional Languages:* Latin, and one other of your choice
- *Equipment:* A set of fine clothes, a chemistry set or astronomy kit, a notebook, a pencil, a magnifying glass
- *Money:* You have savings of $2d6 \times \$100$.
Your monthly income is $1d8 \times \$50$.



SPIRITIST

YOU CLAIM TO have a special connection with the spirits of the deceased, and you make your living by helping your clients communicate with their departed love ones via seances and the like. In fact, you are a charlatan who achieves results through sleight of hand and other deceptions.

- *Skill Proficiencies:* Deception, Sleight of Hand, and another one of your choice
- *Weapon Proficiencies:* Simple
- *Saving Throw Proficiencies:* Charisma
- *Additional Languages:* French or Spanish
- *Equipment:* A set of ordinary clothes, set of clothes appropriate for your spiritual performances, a crystal ball or similar prop
- *Money:* You have savings of $2d6 \times \$100$. Your monthly income is $1d6 \times \$50$.

STUDENT

YOUR PRIMARY OCCUPATION is study. You could be in formal education at a secondary or tertiary level, or you may be learning from a private teacher in a less formal environment. The subject of your education could be virtually anything. It may be vocationally related, or you could be studying for your own amusement and edification.

- *Skill Proficiencies:* History, Investigation, and one other of your choice
- *Weapon Proficiencies:* Simple
- *Saving Throw Proficiencies:* Intelligence
- *Additional Languages:* French, one other of your choice
- *Equipment:* A set of ordinary clothes, pencil, notebook
- *Money:* You have savings of $1d4 \times \$100$. Your monthly income is $5d6 \times \$1$.

WRITER

YOU ARE MAKING a modest living as a writer. You most likely write fiction or poetry, but you may supplement your income with the occasional freelance article or travelogue.

- *Skill Proficiencies:* Perception, Persuasion, and another one of your choice
- *Weapon Proficiencies:* Simple
- *Saving Throw Proficiencies:* Wisdom
- *Additional Languages:* Two other of your choice
- *Equipment:* A set of ordinary clothes, a notebook, a pencil, a typewriter
- *Money:* You have savings of $1d4 \times \$100$. Your monthly income is $2d4 \times \$10$.

CHAPTER TWO

FEATS

A FEAT is a talent or an area of expertise giving you special capabilities. It embodies training, experience, and abilities beyond what regular skills provide. Attaining a feat represents a major accomplishment and is an important part of your identity.

The *Quickstart Rules* included 13 feats. This supplement includes 20 more, giving you a total of 33 to choose from.

You must meet any prerequisite specified in a feat to take it. If you lose a feat's prerequisite, you can't use that feat until you regain the prerequisite.

ADEPT MAGICIAN

Prerequisite: The Neophyte Magician feat

THROUGH ADDITIONAL STUDY and research, you have honed your magical abilities and learned several more spells. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Intelligence score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- Add two spells to your ritual book.

BATTLEFIELD VETERAN

WHETHER AS PART of an organized fighting force or just having been caught in the wrong place at the wrong time, you have seen the face of war. The experience you gained in surviving real military engagements grants you the following benefits:

- Being within 5 feet of a hostile creature doesn't impose disadvantage on your ranged attack rolls with firearms.
- When you have cover against an attack, if it still hits, you have resistance to that attack's damage.
- When you examine a wound, you have advantage on Intelligence and Wisdom checks to determine what caused it.

BOLD PROVOCATEUR

Prerequisite: Proficiency with at least one martial weapon

YOU HAVE A talent for challenging, taunting, and goading your foes, focusing their attention on you instead of your allies. When you hit a creature within 30 feet of you with an attack roll, you can use a bonus



action to mark that creature as being *provoked* by you until the end of your next turn.

While a creature is provoked by you, whenever it is within 30 feet of you it has disadvantage on attack rolls that do not target you. In addition, when it hits a creature besides you with an attack roll, it provokes an opportunity attack from you if it is within your weapon's reach.

A creature stops being provoked by you if you become incapacitated or if it is provoked by someone else.

COMPELLING PERFORMER

Prerequisite: Proficiency with Performance

YOU HAVE TRAINED your natural talent for performance into a gift no one can ignore. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain proficiency with one musical instrument of your choice.
- After you spend 1 minute performing, you can choose any number of humanoid within 60 feet of you who watched and listened for that entire minute. You then make a Charisma (Performance) check. Each target you chose must make on a Wisdom saving throw against a DC equal to your check result. On a failure, each target has disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks made to perceive any creature other than you until your performance ends or until the target can no longer hear you. You can choose to end the performance at any time, otherwise it can last up to 1 hour, though it ends early if you are incapacitated or can no longer speak. The effect ends early for an individual target if it is attacked. Once you have used this benefit, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

CONSUMMATE ACTOR

Prerequisite: Charisma 13 or higher

YOU ARE A superb dramatist, and gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain proficiency with disguise kits.
- You have advantage the first time you make a Charisma (Deception) check against someone.

DEDUCTIVE SLEUTH

Prerequisite: Proficiency with Investigation

YOU ARE AN expert in both inductive and deductive reasoning, and you are on the forefront of the burgeoning field of criminology. You gain the following benefits:

- The first time you make an Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Insight) check against a particular creature, you have advantage on the roll. If you succeed, you also learn one of the following facts about the target (the DM chooses which): a recent location they've visited, an object they've handled, a person they've spoken with, or their highest ability score.
- Whenever you succeed on an Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Insight) check against a creature, you gain advantage on the next attack roll or Charisma check you make against that creature during the next minute.

ELUSIVE DODGER

Prerequisite: Dexterity 13 or higher

YOU HAVE AN uncanny ability to avoid getting injured. When an attacker that you can see hits you with an attack, you can use your reaction to halve the attack's damage against you.

FAST PISTOLEER

Prerequisite: Proficiency with revolvers

YOU'VE LEARNED THE art of the quick draw and you are an expert with revolvers of all kinds. Your skills live up to the legends told of gunslingers in the American West, granting you the following benefits:

- You can draw or stow two revolvers when you would normally be able to draw or stow only one.
- The first time any creature takes a turn in combat, if you do not have a weapon in hand, you can instantly draw a revolver at the end of that creature's turn, even if you are surprised.
- When you take the Attack action and you are holding a revolver in each hand, you can attempt to strike multiple targets. Instead of making an attack roll, choose a 10-foot square within that weapon's normal range. Each target in the area must roll a Dexterity saving throw (DC equals 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Dexterity modifier). On a failure, a target takes piercing damage equal to 1d4 + your proficiency bonus. After you use this action, each revolver must be reloaded before you can attack with it again.

FEROCIOUS BERSERKER

YOU ENTER A trance-like fury in battle, enabling you to inflict and absorb heavy amounts of damage. On your turn, you can enter a rage as a bonus action. While raging, you gain the following benefits:

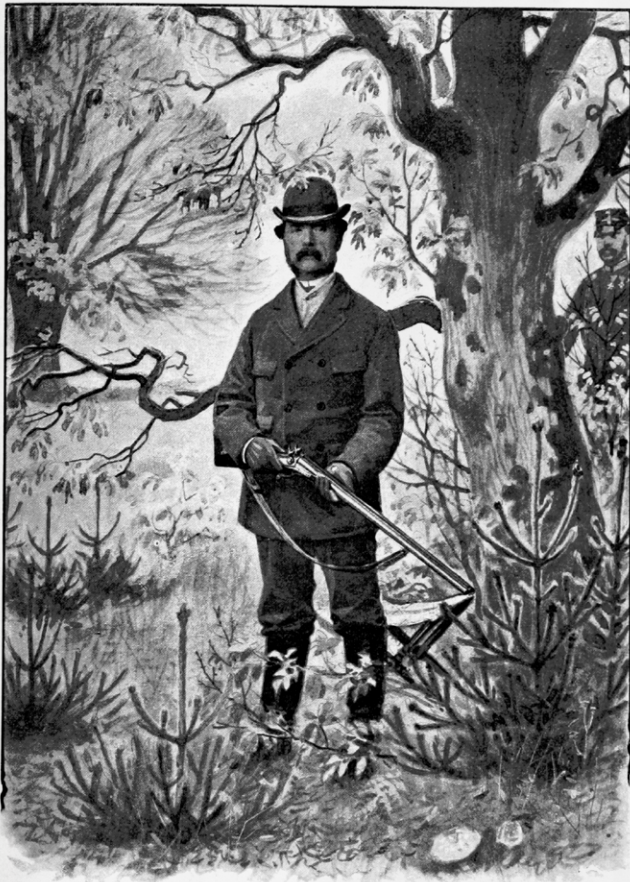
- You have advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws.
- When you make a melee weapon attack using Strength, you gain a +2 bonus to the damage roll.
- You have resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

Your rage lasts for 1 minute. Once you have used this feature, you must finish a short rest before you can use it again.

GUN ENTHUSIAST

YOU HAVE TRAINED extensively with firearms and gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain proficiency with all revolvers, rifles, and carbines.



HANDY CRAFTER

Prerequisite: Proficiency with one or more types of artisan's tools

YOU ARE AN expert in the use of tools to craft or repair objects. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- When an object has been repaired, damaged, created, or destroyed with some kind of tool, you have advantage on all Intelligence and Wisdom checks to discern information about that object.
- You can use a bonus action to take the Use an Object action.
- You can grant temporary hit points to a crafted object (including a vehicle, door, or barricade) by spending 1d10 minutes working on it with appropriate tools. You make an ability check with those tools, then grant that object (or a section of it equivalent to a 5-foot cube if it is larger than that) temporary hit points equal to half the result of your ability check.

LUCKY SOUL

Prerequisite: You must be using the optional luck rules in order to select this feat

YOU WERE BORN lucky or you somehow became lucky. The number of luck dice you have is increased by 2.

MARTIAL ARTIST

Prerequisite: Strength 13 or higher

You have mastered one or more of the martial arts, such as boxing, karate, kung-fu, or something else. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- Your unarmed strike uses a d4 for damage.
- When you use your action to make an unarmed strike, you can use your bonus action to make another unarmed strike.

NEOPHYTE MAGICIAN

Prerequisite: Proficiency with Arcana

THROUGH COUNTLESS HOURS of study and research, you have learned several spells. When you take this feat, you acquire a book to write your spells in, called a ritual book. Choose two spells to add to your ritual book.

RAPIER WIT

Prerequisite: Charisma 13 or higher

YOU ARE QUICK-WITTED in social situations, especially when delivering witty remarks and cutting insults. As a bonus action, you can force a creature within 60 feet of you that can hear you to make a Wisdom saving throw. The DC equals 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier. On a failure, the target has disadvantage on the next ability check or attack roll it makes within the next minute. If it fails by 5 or more, you gain an additional benefit for the next minute: the next time you make an ability check contested by the target, you gain advantage on the roll.

ROUSING ORATOR

YOU CAN INSPIRE courage and commitment in those who hear you give a speech. After 1 minute speaking to a group of people, you can choose a number of friendly humanoids up to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1) who heard you speak for that entire minute. Each target gains the following benefits:

- It gains temporary hit points equal to 1d6 + your proficiency bonus.
- It recovers 1 level of exhaustion.
- While it still has the temporary hit points gained from this feature, it has advantage on saving throws against becoming frightened or exhausted.

Once you have used this benefit, you can't use it again until you complete a short rest.

SPLENDID FENCER

Prerequisite: Strength 13 or higher

YOU HAVE DEVELOPED peerless sword fighting skills and gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Strength score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain proficiency with all bladed weapons.
- When you roll a 1 or 2 on a damage die for an attack you make with a bladed weapon, you can reroll the die and must use the new roll, even if the new roll is a 1 or a 2.

STALWART SURVIVOR

Prerequisite: Proficiency with Survival

YOU ARE AN expert in wilderness survival, and most remote and dangerous places feel like home to you. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- Whenever you make a Wisdom (Survival) check, you can treat a d20 roll of 7 or lower as an 8.
- While traveling for an hour or more in a wilderness setting, you gain the following additional benefits:
 - Difficult terrain doesn't slow your group's travel.
 - Your group can't become lost except by magical means.
 - Even when you are engaged in another activity while traveling (such as foraging, navigating, or tracking), you remain alert to danger.
 - If you are traveling alone, you can move stealthily at a normal pace.
 - When you forage, you find twice as much food as you normally would.
 - While tracking other creatures, you also learn their exact number, their sizes, and how long ago they passed through the area.

THEORETICAL ALIENIST

Prerequisite: Proficiency with Medicine

YOU ARE A pioneer in the new but growing science of alienism, the study of mental health. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Intelligence or Wisdom score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain a bonus on Wisdom (Insight or Medicine) checks equal to your Intelligence modifier (minimum 1).
- When a creature within 30 feet that can hear you makes a Wisdom saving throw or a Sanity check, you can use your reaction to grant that creature advantage on the roll.

TOUGH BRUTE

YOU ARE PARTICULARLY hardy and able to survive things that would kill regular people. When you are reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, you can drop to 1 hit point instead. Once you have used this feature, you can't use it again until you complete a short rest.

CHAPTER THREE

MAGIC

IN THE UNIVERSE described by the Mythos, magic is real, powerful, and sinister. Skilled adepts, known variously as wizards, sorcerers, magicians, and other titles, can manipulate these forces to affect the world.

Magic is potent but often subtle. There are no fireballs to toss around or ice storms to conjure up. Many spells are focused on gathering information. Offensive spells, where they exist, require time to cast, meaning you need to cast them well before the fighting begins.

Magic is very difficult to perform well and it usually takes many years to reach the status of master. There are no magical schools and not even an authoritative textbook. Practitioners painstakingly assemble scraps of knowledge and rituals from a variety of grimoires, such as the *Corpus Hermeticum*, the *Secreta Alberti*, the *Pnakotic Manuscripts*, and the infamous *Necronomicon*.

Some learn magic on their own, spending innumerable hours studying ancient manuscripts. While others have a master to guide them on their occult journey. Whether done alone or with others, magical is always very dangerous, threatening the sanity of those who practice it.

WHAT IS A SPELL?

A SPELL IS a discrete magical effect and a single shaping of the magical energies that suffuse the universe into a specific, limited expression. In casting a spell, a character carefully plucks at the invisible strands of raw magic suffusing the world, pins them in place in a particular pattern, sets them vibrating in a specific way, and then releases them to unleash the desired effect.

Countless spells have been created over the course of history, and many of them are long forgotten. Some might yet lie recorded in crumbling grimoires hidden in ancient ruins or forgotten libraries.

CASTING A SPELL

CASTING A SPELL involves performing a precise ritual involving gestures, incantations, and (sometimes) a material component. In order to cast a spell, you must have a written copy of this ritual before you in a language you can read. These instructions are most likely in a grimoire, but they may well have been copied to a piece of paper or another surface. Anyone can attempt to cast a spell, but those with the Arcana skill have a much greater chance of success.

Spells are described in the following section. Each spell description begins with a block of information, including the spell's name, difficulty, casting time, material components, range, and duration. The rest of a spell entry describes the spell's effect.

Most spells take time to cast due to the intricate nature of the rituals involved. You must maintain your concentration while you cast a spell. If your concentration is broken, the spell effect does not occur and there is no other penalty.

SPELL FAILURE

SPELLS PUT THE caster in contact with dark powers and alien minds, which mean they are inherently dangerous. As a would-be magician, you risk health and sanity whenever you cast a spell.

All spells have a difficulty class (DC). When casting a spell, you must make an Intelligence (Arcana) check with this DC. Those who are not proficient in Arcana have disadvantage on this roll. On a success, the spell effect occurs. On a failure, you must make a sanity check with a DC equal to the spell's difficulty.

SPELL LIST

THE FOLLOWING SPELLS are available:

<i>animate dead</i>	<i>hideous laughter</i>
<i>bestow curse</i>	<i>identify</i>
<i>blindness</i>	<i>magic circle</i>
<i>charm person</i>	<i>magic weapon</i>
<i>comprehend languages</i>	<i>protection from evil</i>
<i>contact elder god</i>	<i>see invisibility</i>
<i>find familiar</i>	<i>sending</i>
<i>force truth</i>	<i>speak with dead</i>
<i>glyph of warding</i>	<i>summon ghoul</i>

SPELL DESCRIPTIONS

THE SPELLS ARE presented in alphabetical order.

ANIMATE DEAD

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Difficulty Class: 15

Range: Touch

Components: A ruby worth \$50 and a drop of blood

Duration: Instantaneous

THIS SPELL CREATES an undead servant. Choose a corpse of a Medium or Small humanoid within range. Your spell imbues the target with a foul mimicry

of life, raising it as an undead creature. The target becomes a **zombie**.

On each of your turns, you can use a bonus action to mentally command any creature within 60 feet of you that was made with this spell. You decide what action the creature will take and where it will move during its next turn. Likewise, you could issue a general command, such as to guard a particular chamber or corridor. If you issue no commands, the creature only defends itself against hostile creatures. Once given an order, the creature continues to follow it until its task is complete.

The creature is under your control for 24 hours, after which it reverts to a corpse.

BESTOW CURSE

Casting Time: 1 minute

Difficulty Class: 15

Range: 500 feet

Components: Special (see below)

Duration: 1 hour

YOU ATTEMPT TO curse a humanoid within range. In order to cast this spell, you must have a body part (such as a strand of hair or bit of nail) or a personal item (such as a pencil or cup) from the target. When you cast this spell, choose the nature of the curse from the following options:

- Choose one ability score. While cursed, the target has disadvantage on ability checks and saving throws made with that ability score.
- While cursed, the target has disadvantage on attack rolls against you.
- While the target is cursed, your attacks and spells deal an extra 1d8 necrotic damage to the target.

BLINDNESS

Casting Time: 1 minute

Difficulty Class: 13

Range: 500 feet

Components: Special (see below)

Duration: 1 hour

YOU ATTEMPT TO blind a humanoid within range. In order to cast this spell, you must have a body part (such as a strand of hair or bit of nail) or a personal item (such as a pencil or cup) from the target. If the spell is successfully cast, the target is blinded for the duration.

CHARM PERSON

Casting Time: 1 minute

Difficulty Class: 13

Range: 500 feet

Components: Special (see below)

Duration: 1 hour

YOU ATTEMPT TO charm a humanoid within range. In order to cast this spell, you must have a body part (such as a strand of hair or bit of nail) or a personal item (such as a pencil or cup) from the target. If the spell is successfully cast, the target is charmed by you until the spell ends or until you or your companions do anything harmful to it. The charmed creature regards you as a friendly acquaintance. At the end of every 30 minutes, the target may make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a success, the spell ends. If the target has the Arcana skill, it knows that it was magically charmed after the spell ends.

COMPREHEND LANGUAGES

Casting Time: 1 minute

Difficulty Class: 11

Range: Self

Components: A pinch of salt

Duration: 1 hour

FOR THE DURATION, you understand the literal meaning of any written language that you see, but you must be touching the surface on which the words are written. It takes about 1 minute to read one page of text.

This spell doesn't decode secret messages in a text or a glyph, such as an arcane sigil, that isn't part of a written language.

CONTACT ELDER GOD

Casting Time: 1 hour

Difficulty Class: 15

Range: Self

Components: A lapis lazuli worth at least \$100

Duration: 1 minute

YOU MENTALLY CONTACT an Elder God, such as Nodens. This spell must be cast at night and there must be no other creatures within 20 feet of you.

If you successfully cast the spell, you can ask the Elder God up to five questions. You must ask your questions before the spell ends. The GM answers each question with one word, such as "yes," "no," "maybe," "never," "irrelevant," or "unclear" (if the entity doesn't know the answer to the question). If a one-word answer would be misleading, the GM might instead offer a short phrase as an answer.

FIND FAMILIAR

Casting Time: 1 hour

Difficulty Class: 11

Range: 10 ft

Components: \$10 worth of charcoal, incense, and herbs that must be consumed by fire in a brass brazier

Duration: Instantaneous

YOU GAIN THE service of a familiar, a spirit that takes an animal form of your choice: bat, cat, crab, frog (toad), hawk, lizard, owl, poisonous snake, rat, raven, sea horse, spider, or weasel. Appearing in an unoccupied space within range, the familiar has the statistics of the chosen form, but it is treated as a fey instead of a beast.

Your familiar acts independently of you, but it always obeys your commands. In combat, it rolls its own initiative and acts on its own turn. A familiar can't attack, but it can take other actions as normal.

When the familiar drops to 0 hit points, it disappears, leaving behind no physical form. It reappears after you cast this spell again.

While your familiar is within 100 feet of you, you can communicate with it telepathically. Additionally, as an action, you can see through your familiar's eyes and hear what it hears until the start of your next turn, gaining the benefits of any special senses that the familiar has. During this time, you are deaf and blind with regard to your own senses.

You can't have more than one familiar at a time. If you cast this spell while you already have a familiar, you instead cause it to adopt a new form. Choose one of the forms from the above list. Your familiar transforms into the chosen creature.

FORCE TRUTH

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Difficulty Class: 13

Range: 15-ft-radius

Components: Gold dust worth at least \$50, which the spell consumes

Duration: 1 day

YOU CREATE A magical zone that guards against deception in a 15-foot-radius sphere centered on a point of your choice within range. Until the spell ends, a creature that enters the spell's area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there must make a DC 13 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, a creature can't speak a deliberate lie while in the radius. You know whether each creature succeeds or fails on its saving throw.

An affected creature is aware of the spell and can thus avoid answering questions to which it would normally respond with a lie. Such a creature can be evasive in its answers as long as it remains within the boundaries of the truth.

GLYPH OF WARDING

Casting Time: 1 hour

Difficulty Class: 15

Range: Touch

Components: Crushed diamonds worth at least \$50 which the spell consumes

Duration: Until dispelled or triggered

WHEN YOU CAST this spell, you inscribe a glyph that later unleashes a magical effect. You inscribe it either on a surface (such as a table or a section of floor or wall) or within an object that can be closed (such as a book, a scroll, or a treasure chest) to conceal the glyph. The glyph can cover an area no larger than 10 feet in diameter. If the surface or object is moved more than 10 feet from where you cast this spell, the glyph is broken, and the spell ends without being triggered.

The glyph is nearly invisible and requires a successful Intelligence (Investigation) check against your spell save DC to be found.

You decide what triggers the glyph when you cast the spell. For glyphs inscribed on a surface, the most typical triggers include touching or standing on the glyph, removing another object covering the glyph, approaching within a certain distance of the glyph, or manipulating the object on which the glyph is inscribed. For glyphs inscribed within an object, the most common triggers include opening that object, approaching within a certain distance of the object, or seeing or reading the glyph. Once a glyph is triggered, this spell ends.

You can further refine the trigger so the spell activates only under certain circumstances or according to physical characteristics (such as height or weight), creature kind (for example, the ward could be set to affect aberrations or drow), or alignment. You can also set conditions for creatures that don't trigger the glyph, such as those who say a certain password.

When triggered, the glyph erupts with invisible magical energy in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on the glyph. The sphere spreads around corners. Each creature in the area must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. A creature takes 4d8 psychic damage on a failed saving throw or half as much damage on a successful one.

HIDEOUS LAUGHTER

Casting Time: 1 minute

Difficulty Class: 13

Range: 500 feet

Components: Special (see below)

Duration: 1 hour

YOU ATTEMPT TO incapacitate a humanoid within range. In order to cast this spell, you must have a body part (such as a strand of hair or bit of nail) or a personal item (such as a pencil or cup) from the target. If the spell is successfully cast, the target perceives everything as hilariously funny and falls into fits of laughter. This causes the target to fall prone, become incapacitated, and unable to stand up for the duration. A creature with an Intelligence score of 4 or less isn't affected.

Each time it takes damage, the target can make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw with advantage. On a success, the spell ends.

IDENTIFY

Casting Time: 1 minute

Difficulty Class: 11

Range: Touch

Components: A crushed pearl worth at least \$20, which the spell consumes

Duration: Instantaneous

YOU CHOOSE ONE object that you must touch throughout the casting of the spell. If it is a magic item or some other magic-imbued object, you learn its properties and how to use them. You learn whether any spells are affecting the item and what they are. If the item was created by a spell, you learn which spell created it.

If you instead touch a creature throughout the casting, you learn what spells, if any, are currently affecting it.

MAGIC CIRCLE

Casting Time: 1 minute

Difficulty Class: 15

Range: 10 ft cylinder

Components: A special mixture of iron and silver powder worth at least \$100, which the spell consumes

Duration: 1 hour

WHILE CHANTING THE ritual, you sprinkle the powder in a 10-foot-radius circle and create a 20-foot-tall cylinder of invisible magical energy. Choose one or more of the following types of creatures: celestials, elementals, fey, fiends, or undead. The circle affects a creature of the chosen type(s) in the following ways:

- The creature can't willingly enter the cylinder by non-magical means. If the creature tries to use teleportation or interplanar travel to do so, it must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw.
- The creature has disadvantage on attack rolls against targets within the cylinder.
- Targets within the cylinder can't be charmed, frightened, or possessed by the creature.

When you cast this spell, you can elect to cause its magic to operate in the reverse direction, preventing a creature of the specified type from leaving the cylinder and protecting targets outside it.

MAGIC WEAPON

Casting Time: 1 hour

Difficulty Class: 13

Range: Touch

Components: Gold dust worth at least \$100, which the spell consumes

Duration: 1 day

YOU ENCHANT A non-magical weapon. Until the spell ends, that weapon becomes a magic weapon with a +1 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls.

PROTECTION FROM EVIL

Casting Time: 1 minute

Difficulty Class: 11

Range: Touch

Components: Powdered silver and iron worth at least \$10, which the spell consumes

Duration: 1 hour

UNTIL THE SPELL ends, one willing creature you touch is protected against certain types of creatures: aberrations, celestials, elementals, fey, fiends, and undead.

The protection grants several benefits. Creatures of those types have disadvantage on attack rolls against the target. The target also can't be charmed, frightened, or possessed by them. If the target is already charmed, frightened, or possessed by such a creature, the target has advantage on any new saving throw against the relevant effect.

SEE INVISIBILITY

Casting Time: 1 minute

Difficulty Class: 13

Range: Self

Components: Silver dust worth at least \$50, which the spell consumes

Duration: 1 hour

FOR THE DURATION, you see invisible creatures and objects as if they were visible, although they appear ghostly and translucent.

SENDING

Casting Time: 1 minute

Difficulty Class: 11

Range: Unlimited

Components: A short copper rod worth \$10

Duration: 1 round

YOU SEND A short message of twenty-five words or less to a creature with which you are familiar. The creature hears the message in its mind, recognizes you as the sender if it knows you, and can answer in a like manner immediately. The spell enables creatures with Intelligence scores of at least 1 to understand the meaning of your message.

You can send the message across any distance and even to other planes of existence. However, if the target is on a different plane than you, there is a 5 percent chance that the message doesn't arrive.

SPEAK WITH DEAD

Casting Time: 1 minute

Difficulty Class: 15

Range: Touch

Components: Special

Duration: 10 minutes

YOU CAN SPEAK to a dead person using their physical remains as a channel. In order to cast this spell, you must be touching the corpse of the target, the headstone over their grave, or a

container holding their remains. You may also cast the spell while holding an object that the target possessed in life, but in that case you have disadvantage on the Intelligence (Arcana) check. The spell fails if the corpse was the target of this spell within the last 10 days.

If successfully cast, until the spell ends, you can ask the target up to five questions. Only you can hear the answers. The target knows only what it knew in life, including the languages it knew. Answers are usually brief, cryptic, or repetitive, and the target is under no compulsion to offer a truthful answer if you are hostile to it or it recognizes you as an enemy.

SUMMON GHOUL

Casting Time: 1 minute

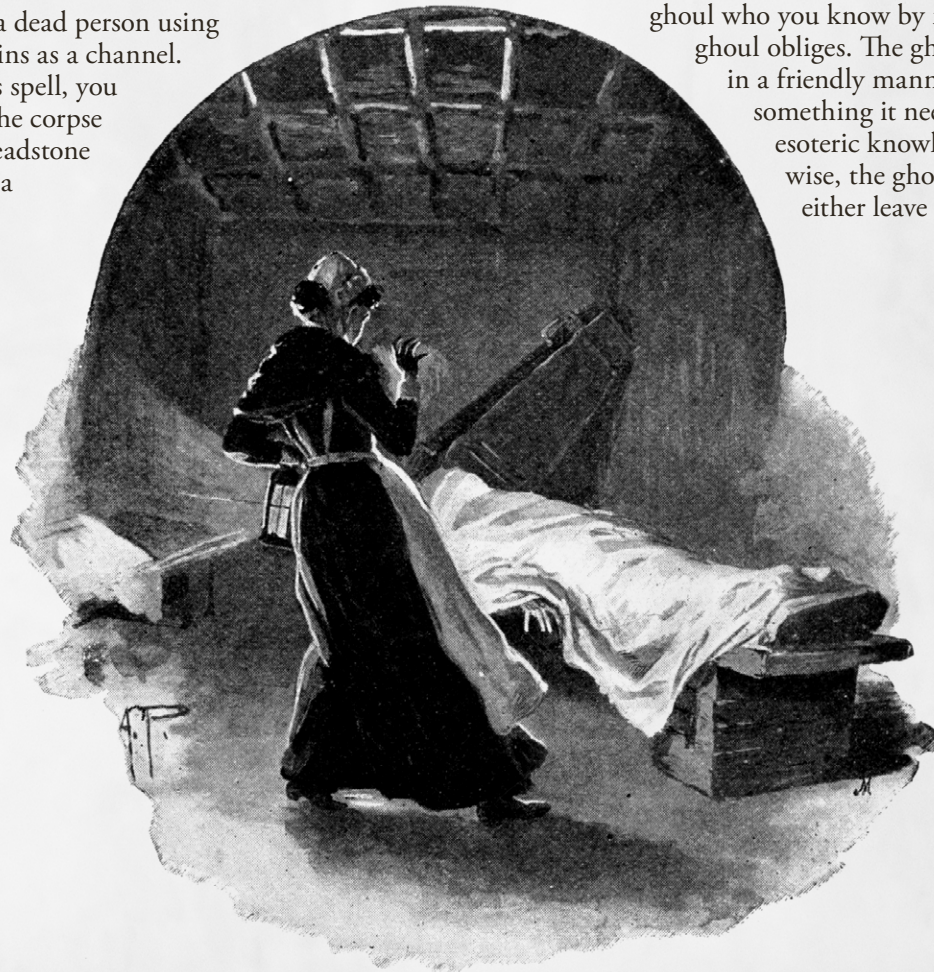
Difficulty Class: 11

Range: Self

Components: Humanoid skull

Duration: 1 hour

THIS SPELL MUST be cast in a graveyard at midnight. If you successfully cast the spell, a ghoulish creature comes to you after an hour has elapsed. The ghoulish creature is neither hostile nor friendly and listens to what you say before reacting. If you ask to be taken to another ghoulish creature who you know by name, the ghoulish creature obliges. The ghoulish creature may react in a friendly manner if offered something it needs, especially esoteric knowledge. Otherwise, the ghoulish creature is likely to either leave or attack you.



APPENDIX A

OPTIONAL RULES

THE FOLLOWING RULES may be included at the GM's discretion.

LUCK

WHILST CHARACTERS RELY on strength, determination, and skill to overcome the terrors they face, there is no denying that luck also plays a role. In *Whispers in the Dark*, your luck is represented by luck dice, which are d6s. You have a number of luck dice equal to your proficiency bonus. When you make an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check, you may roll one or more of your luck dice and add them to the total.

Once you have used a luck dice it is expended and can't be used again. All expended luck dice are restored when you take a long rest or start a new adventure, whichever comes first.

EXPLOSIVES

AN ITEM THAT explodes specifies its area of effect in parentheses after the explosive property. No attack roll is necessary. When the item explodes, it deals the indicated damage to each creature within the area of effect. A successful DC 12 Dexterity saving throw halves the damage.

STACKING EXPLOSIVES

EXPLOSIVE ITEMS BECOME more powerful when stacked together to explode at the same time. If using dynamite, each additional stick increases the damage by 1d6 (to a maximum of 10d6) and the area of effect by 5 feet (to a maximum of 20 feet). If using powder kegs, each additional keg increases the damage by 1d6 (to a maximum of 12d6) and the area of effect by 5 feet (to a maximum of 30 feet).

EXPLOSIVES

Explosives	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
Dynamite (stick)	\$1	3d6 bludgeoning	1 lb.	Explosive (5 ft. radius sphere)
Gunpowder (keg)	\$3	5d6 fire	20 lbs.	Explosive (10 ft. radius sphere)
Detonator & Wire	\$3	—	5 lbs.	—

LIVING EXPENSES

THE BACKGROUND SECTION gives a monthly income for each entry in United States dollars. The Living Expenses table suggests the average cost per month of living, and includes accommodation, food, and other essential expenses. If you are supporting a family, add a quarter to the total.

LIVING EXPENSES

Lifestyle	Monthly Expense
Wretched	\$5
Poor	\$25
Comfortable	\$50
Superior	\$150
Luxurious	\$400

Wretched. You have no permanent home and you find shelter where you can, often squatting in empty buildings. Finding enough food to eat is a daily struggle, while your clothing is old and ragged.

Poor. You probably live in a boarding house or perhaps you are renting a small prefabricated cottage. You generally have enough to eat but never an abundance. Your clothing is plain but neat.

Comfortable. You live in a good-sized home of 6 rooms or more which you might even own. You eat well, including some minor luxuries. You also dress well, with at least one set of fine clothes.

Superior. You live in a large, attractive villa or similar in a good part of town. You enjoy an abundance of food and always dress in fine clothing.

Luxurious. Living in a mansion or similar, you enjoy the very best that life has to offer.

APPENDIX B

THE MYTHOS

THERE ARE THINGS about the world and universe which it is better for the majority not to know. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of infinite seas, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. Should we do so, we must be prepared to accept notions of the cosmos, and of our own place in the seething vortex of time, whose merest mention is paralyzing.

We are only one—perhaps the least—of the highly evolved and dominant races of this planet’s long and largely unknown career. Things of inconceivable shape had reared towers to the sky and delved into every secret of Nature before our first amphibian forbear crawled out from the hot sea. Some had come down from the stars; a few were as old as the cosmos itself; while others had arisen swiftly from terrene germs.

Most powerful are the Great Old Ones, who lived aeons before there were any humans, and had come to the young world out of the sky. These entities are not composed altogether of flesh and blood. They have shape, but that shape is not made of matter. When the stars are right, they can plunge from world to world through the sky; but when the stars are wrong, they cannot live.

Although they no longer live, they can never really die. Some lie in stone houses in the great city of R’lyeh beneath the waves, preserved by the spells of mighty Cthulhu for a glorious resurrection when the stars and the earth might once more be ready for them.

When the first humans came to be, the Great Old Ones spoke to the sensitive among them by molding their dreams; for only thus could their language reach the fleshly minds of mammals. These first people formed a cult which has never died.

There are also tales of rites and sacrifices to nameless Elder Gods. Outside the ordered universe, at the centre of all infinity, the daemon-sultan Azathoth gnaws hungrily in chaos amidst the muffled, maddening beating of vile drums and the thin, monotonous whine of accursed flutes. Azathoth is attended by the blind, voiceless, mindless Other Gods whose soul and messenger is the crawling chaos, Nyarlathotep. There is also the fabulous Yog-Sothoth, the All-in-One and One-in-All of limitless being and self, which appears as a congeries of iridescent globes, stupendous in its malign suggestiveness.

Some people know things about the universe that no-one ought to know. We find terrible hints of these matters in such esoteric texts as the Pnakotic Manuscripts, the Book of Eibon, and the seven cryptical Books of Hsan. But most enlightening and fearful of all is the monstrous and abhorred Necronomicon by Abdul Alhazred.

In this forbidden text, readers encounter names and terms with the most hideous of connections—Yuggoth, Great Cthulhu, Tsathoggua, Yog-Sothoth, R’lyeh, Nyarlathotep, Azathoth, Hastur, Yian, Leng, the Lake of Hali, Bethmoora, the Yellow Sign, L’mur-Kathulos, Bran and the Magnum Innominandum—all hinting at nameless aeons, inconceivable dimensions, and worlds of elder, outer horror.

These ancient books describe a vast and appalling universe which lies deeper than matter, time, and space, and whose existence most only suspect. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age.

A FURTHER NOTE ABOUT HPL

The above summary is an amalgam of quotes extracted from the writings of H.P. Lovecraft and provides a useful and evocative summary of the Mythos that underlies *Whispers in the Dark*. We’ve printed this summary at the behest of some of our playtest groups, who wanted something to share with those players completely unfamiliar with the Mythos.

In the *Quickstart Rules*, we included a sidebar called “The Problem with HPL” which condemned Lovecraft’s prejudices while honoring his creative legacy. Since publishing those rules, Evil Hat have included a similar statement in their book, *Fate of Cthulhu*. The creators of the present volume wish to affirm both of these statements.

APPENDIX C

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