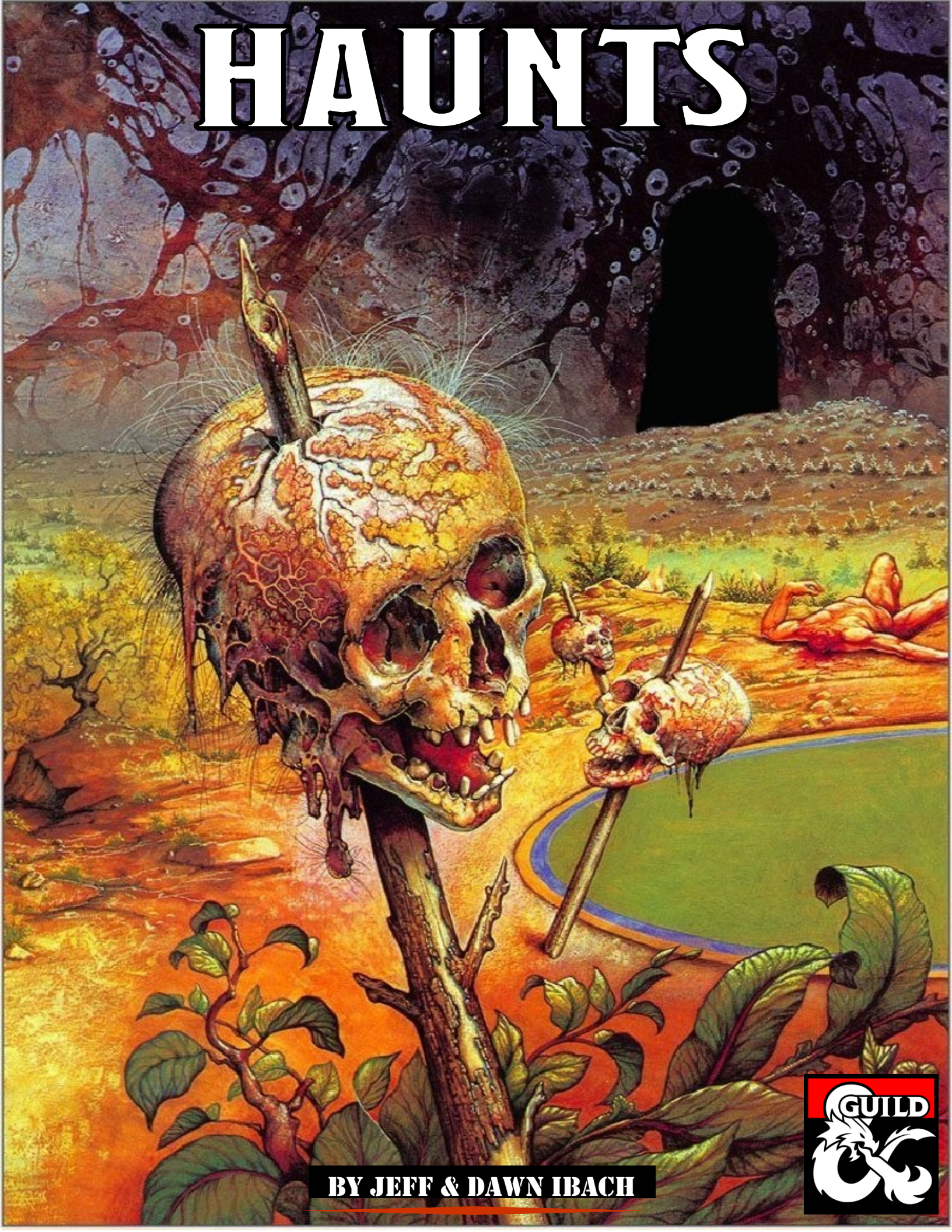


HAUNTS



BY JEFF & DAWN IBACH



Haunts

Haunts are a DM's way to spook the players and create mood for a haunted locale. Haunts are not monsters like ghosts or specters, they are more like an 'echo' of a lingering tortured or very willful individual or group. They're not traps either, they can't really be detected until someone triggers it, because then it is dormant and not even really there. It is suggested if a character uses an ability to detect the presence of undead, haunts would count as such.

Whenever one is triggered, it always has an associated visual or audible effect, or both. If there's a visual it can be translucent, possibly giving away its nature or as realistic as needed for the scene to play out. Anyone disbelieving can use the spell save DC.

When haunts interact with the living, we need some rules to govern them, and for that haunts emulate an effect covered by an already existing spell, like *sleep*, *mage hand* or *suggestion*. There's no casting involved, there's no verbal, somatic or material components. You could say the haunt **is** the spell and vice versa. The key to using haunts is to never let the characters know it's a spell. Just describe the effects and any saving throw they may need to try and let their own imagination fill in the rest.

As an example of a haunted area, reference the house in the movie *Poltergeist*. When it moved things around, that was *mage hand*. When the researcher imagined he was clawing his own face off, that was *phantasmal killer*. When the tree came to life and attacked the boy that was *animate object*, and when the Freelings were getting overcome with mosquitoes talking to the neighbor that was *insect plague*.

When designing your own haunts, reskin destructive spells to keep PC's off balance. An evil clown's thrown balls are *magic missiles*, a fiery lance could be *scorching ray*, etc.

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WHATEVER ARE HAUNTS?

Haunts are lingering, noncombatant spirits that haunt an area, like a ghost. However, apart from sometimes being startling in appearance (depending on the situation), they have no real attacks or stats as a monster. Instead, each one emulates a spell-like effect for rules purposes. They manifest when the living interacts with it under the trigger header. Determine their area using the monster size rules, your choice of tiny, small, medium, large, huge and gargantuan).

They can appear as a single entity (frequently translucent), multiple entities, or some visual effect, like dripping ectoplasm or blinking lights. It may just produce sounds, in which there is no visual.

Attacking them with any weapon or spell is useless. Whatever spirit or spirits have manifested to create a haunt, their ties to the material plane are fragile and they produce no real substance to attack. They can however be turned by a cleric (this removes the haunting for 24 hours).

Multiple examples are given below and you can easily expand this list. For determining their stats for spell save DC's, their initiative and their saving throw vs. Chanel Energy to Turn Undead, use the chart below.

Party Level	Spell Save DC	Wisdom Save / Initiative Modifier	Level which spell is 'cast'
1-4	12	+2	Level
5-8	14	+3	Level +1
9-12	16	+4	Level +2
13-16	18	+5	Level +3
17-20	19	+6	Level +4

USING HAUNTS

When a haunt is triggered by the trespassing of the living, it's visual or audible effect begins. It may be slowly revealed or a startling, sudden manifestation. Have everyone roll initiative, even the haunt (modifier above). On its turn the haunt releases it's effect if warranted.

DESTROYING HAUNTS

Each haunt has it's own way to be destroyed forever. Sometimes this can be quick and immediate, other times it could require research and much more effort.

Restless Spirits

Trigger: Coming within 5 feet of the haunt's area. Restless spirits are a minor, lingering haunts that makes things move about and go bump in the night. Once they are disturbed they use the spell *mage hand* to rap on surfaces or move objects from one place to another. There is no other visual associated with it. If it fails its save vs. Turn Undead, it instead unleashes a cacophony of screeches and laughs emulating the *fear* spell.
Destruction: Cast the *hallow* spell in the area.

The Boring Bard

Trigger: Speaking within 15 feet of the haunt's area. A boring bard is any haunt that manifests as a single person or persons who isn't quite aware it is dead. It appears and tells a boring, droll story in a monotone voice and constant reflections and corrections on its own words, emanating an effect per the sleep spell.
* Jebidiah Sonsin, an old prospector, who drones on and on about failed mining expeditions and frequently gets sidetracked.
* Marley, an aged coach driver who can't stop talking about how things were in the 'good old days'.
* A middle-aged mother with no eyes or nose who sings a lullaby while cradling...nothing.
Destruction: Stay and listen to its entire delivery, then acknowledge it with applause or kind words. This could take 1d20 rounds or 1d4 hours.

The Seducer

Trigger: Any creature with a charisma of 15 or more approaches within 10 feet of the haunt's area. A seducer haunt is out to control others. Perhaps that is just its personality or in life it was always charmed or confused by another, or commanded others.
* Denna Smitmor: a bard who, while very pretty, has the wit of a rock. She flirts and compliments and has masterful seduction skills, emulating charm person.
* Evanston Dimitri, a nobleman who was slain by a succubus, emulating the spell *dominate person* to cause them to do harmful or embarrassing acts.
* A tyrant or king who always got his way and expected complete obedience. He emulates *geas* on a target to perform some task.
Destruction: Find the bones of the haunt somewhere within 1d100 feet of the manifestation and bury proper.

The Torture Chamber

Trigger: Coming within 5 feet of the haunt's area. Countless souls were tortured and killed in this horrific room. Whether or not the equipment is still there, the anguish lingers on creating this haunt that duplicates the effect of *dissonant whispers*. The target may even see the various implements of torture as an illusion.

Destruction: Cast the *hallow* spell in the area.

The Jealous Protector

Trigger: Coming within 5 feet of the haunt's area. Some creature here is very overprotective of another creature or object. Approaching releases an effect similar to *thunderwave*.

- * A child clutching a favorite doll.
- * A thief with his back to the party cradling a sensational jewel.
- * A husband keeping a very strong clutch on his wife's arm.

Destruction: Find the bones of the haunt somewhere within 1d100 feet of the manifestation and bury proper.

The Old Scholar

Trigger: Entering the room where the haunt resides, usually an old library, study or research lab. It will nod or greet them with simple acknowledgement, and if asked a question can produce an answer as per the spell *legend lore*.

- * Diesen Miles, an old librarian flipping through an old history text with thick reading glasses.
- * Kemia Hostcovel, research apprentice to a powerful diviner.
- * Quodert Brint, dabbling with alchemical equipment.

Destruction: They ask one question of the characters that has always escaped them. Answer it and the haunt will go to rest.

The Butler

Trigger: Any creature with an abundance of equipment or clothing comes into the haunt's room.

The room should have some basic amenities, like chairs, tables, some food or drink or tobacco, coat rack or closet, etc. An old butler or maid appears and acts in tandem with an *invisible servant* and take off PC's coats or cloaks and hang them, offer them wine or a cigar and a light, a light massage, etc.

Destruction: Cast the *hallow* spell in the area.

The Judge

Trigger: Any creature entering the haunt's room with a dire secret, stolen goods or in disguise.

The haunt will begin to interrogate various intruders with *zone of truth* as to their business, what they are hiding or what did it steal and if found guilty will charge the creature with a task in penance.

- * Return the item to its rightful owner.
- * Kill a marauding beast to prove your worth.
- * Take a vow of truthfulness for one year.
- * Donate item to a worthy cause.

Destruction: Complete the task and return to tell the tale.

The Entertainer

Trigger: Entering the haunt's room or area, particularly one with negative thoughts or attitude.

A number of translucent audience members begin to fill the area and the applaud as the main attraction shows up.

- * A jester who performs so that the target is effected per *Tasha's hideous laughter*.
- * A musician who plays a lively and rousing tune targeting the victim with *Otto's irresistible dance*.
- * A stage magician who *polymorphs* a random party member into a small animal.

Note these effects are just annoying if encountered alone, but some crafty monsters who know the situation may lair or wait in ambush near the area to take advantage of the victim.

Destruction: Cast the *hallow* spell in the area.

The Mystic Guardian

Trigger: Interacting with the object or area the haunt is guarding. It could be an item, a secret door, or a locked chest for example. The haunt doesn't even need to appear, it just uses *modify memory* to get them to leave.

- * "Well, I thought there was a secret door here but I can't find it now".
- * "Try as I might the lock on this chest is too difficult for me to pick, besides I think it's empty."
- * "Everyone, I remember hearing about that item, it is said to carry a powerful curse that cannot be removed. We should leave it here."

Destruction: Overcoming the guarded item despite it's attempts. This may trigger a vindictive *thunderwave* effect as the haunt dissipates in rage.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can spellcasters use *counterspell* to disrupt haunts effects?

A: It's not recommended because remember these effects aren't spells, they duplicate the effects of spells for ease of use only. The effects are supernatural, and should always be described as such, never as the spell might say.

Q: Aren't these a little unfair? The PCs have no way to avoid the haunt!

A: Sure they do. The goal is not to toss random spell effects at players, the idea is to unsettle them with spooky scenes. Remember the librarian in Ghostbusters? All she did was raise her finger to her lips and say "shhhhh." It wasn't until the murderhobos, err, Ghostbusters charged her that it unleashed *fear*! There's also a few examples here where the haunt is actually helpful to the party.

Also don't forget Channel Energy to Turn Undead. If the cleric in the party wins initiative and they're experienced with haunts it could end before it even begins!

Q: I don't get it, if the spell effect it duplicates says it effects one target, does it target everyone or just one, or what?

A: Always treat it like the spell. If it says one target, pick one PC you think would get the most out of the encounter or the one that makes the most sense.

Q: Could the haunt use spell effects multiple times?

A: It could at your discretion. Does the situation warrant it? Is the haunts' attitude tenacious or forgiving?

Q: Do I roleplay the haunt?

A: That's the idea. Again, the point of these is to add spooky encounters and mood that just don't rely on combat. They can evoke the feelings of the area, ask questions of the characters or just play out their actions without necessarily targeting the PCs at all until they interfere. If the haunt chooses to appear completely real, the party might not even know they are dealing with a haunt at all.

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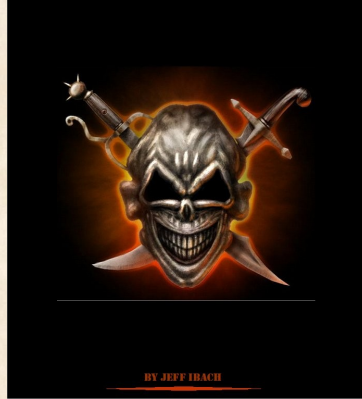
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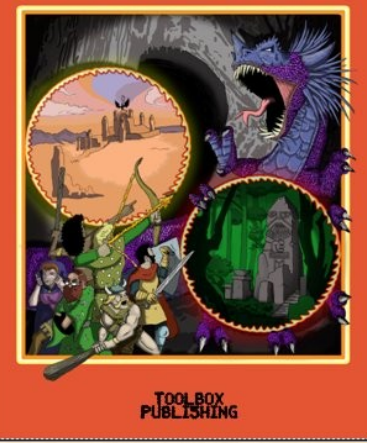
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TOME OF ENCOUNTERS



CREDITS—TOOLBOX PUBLISHING

Written by Jeff & Dawn Ibach
Editing and Layout: Jeff Ibach

Contact: jeffibach.DM@gmail.com

Jeff and Dawn are the ENnie-award winning authors behind AEG's Toolbox (2002) and Ultimate Toolbox (2009).

Dawn also has written nearly a dozen "Miscellaneous Mishaps" articles for Dragon & Dungeon Magazines between 1997 and 2003.

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