

For All Character Levels

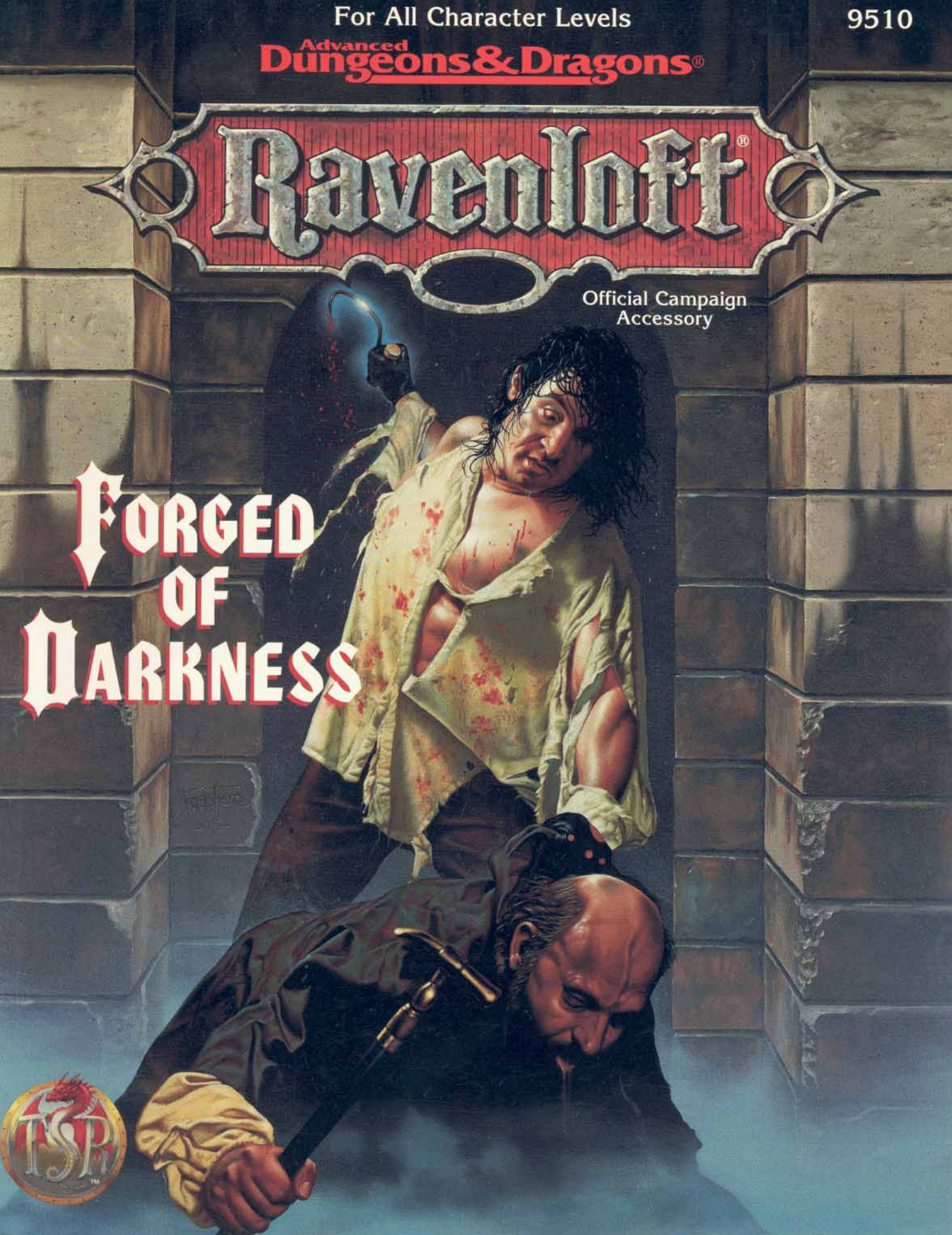
9510

Advanced  
**Dungeons & Dragons®**

# Ravenloft®

Official Campaign  
Accessory

## FORGED OF DARKNESS



## Relic's Hidden Effects

These tables are presented to help make the creation and use of any magical item more varied and dangerous, thus making each item unique. Clues to these hidden effects should be attached to an item's *Legends* or to the fate of its last owner. A *legend lore* spell may reveal an effect or the activation procedure. A Vistani tarokka reading certainly will. The DM may select effects or roll 2d10 and consult the following tables to determine the secrets of a relic.

### Table A: Hidden Powers

These powers are usually activated by command words or specific conditions. (See Table B.) If the listed effect mimics the use of magic that would require a powers check, then a powers check must be made when the power is invoked.

- 2 Causes members of the opposite sex to fall in love with the owner and seek to either win their love or jealously guard him or her from other suitors. Check Table C.
- 3 Permits owner to see invisible, ethereal and/or astral creatures and items; in turn this makes it possible for invisible, faerie, ethereal and astral horrors to see the owner and affect him or her. Check Table C.
- 4 Makes the owner immune to all enchantment/charm spells save for the charm of a lover and creatures with natural charm abilities.
- 5 Makes a faithful spouse immune to enchantment/charm spells, but also makes him obsessive. See Table C.
- 6 User may cast *dispel evil* once per week but at the cost of destroying a blessed or holy item. If no such item is possessed, this effect can not be manifested.
- 7 Lets owner cast *knock* once per day, but then doors, gates, windows, chests and chains will not lock behind him for the rest of that day.
- 8 Lets owner cast *dispel good* once per week, but this drains 1d4 points of Constitution for 1d4 days. If the owner's Constitution drops to "0" he must make a successful System Shock roll or die. Roll on Table C.
- 9 Owner may cast a *protection from evil* spell repelling one specific creature, but he must first create a doll or other simulacrum with personal effects to effect the creature. See Table C.
- 10 Lets owner cause *paralyzation* by touch, twice per day, but drains 1d4 Strength for one day. Roll on Table C.
- 11 Owner may cast *animate object* once per day, after which the item must save vs Crushing Blow or disintegrate.
- 12 Owner may cast *cause disease* three times per day, but the owner also must make System Shock roll or the effects of the spell rebound. Check Table C.
- 13 Grants corporeal undead the ability to live again for three hours once a year, but this risks a 25% powers check.
- 14 Makes an elven user immune to surprise, but blind to hidden or secret doors. Roll on Table C.
- 15 Functions as a *hat of disguise*, but owner must save vs. Death Spell at +4 or be polymorphed into the form of the disguise. See Table C.
- 16 Allows owner to turn undead as if a 3rd level cleric when presented forcefully; failure means undead are attracted.
- 17 Owner can cast *resurrection* once per month; but a failed Resurrection Check results in *animate dead*. See Table C.
- 18 Owner can turn water into holy water once a day, draining one spell level or charge from the owner's items or spells per vial transformed. Check Table C.
- 19 Owner can *feeblesmind* another being by touch, once per month; a successful save vs Spell causes it to rebound.
- 20 Roll twice on Table C.

### Table B: Triggers

Some bizarre or difficult phrase, ritual, task or condition must be completed to activate each power and hidden power.

- 2 Must be drenched in the: <sup>1</sup> blood of a mature vampire, <sup>2</sup> the sap of the tree of death, <sup>3</sup> perfume of a rose, <sup>4</sup> oil of persuasion, <sup>5</sup> unending ridicule, <sup>6</sup> spider's ichor.
- 3 Must be used only during a specific astronomic phase: <sup>1</sup> a new moon, <sup>2</sup> comet's reign, <sup>3</sup> a lunar eclipse, <sup>4</sup> rising harvest moon, <sup>5</sup> year's death, <sup>6</sup> morning star.
- 4 Must be used by a lesser monster, such as: <sup>1</sup> a goblin, <sup>2</sup> a kobold, <sup>3</sup> an homunculous, <sup>4</sup> an insect, <sup>5</sup> a monkey's paw, <sup>6</sup> a scavenger.
- 5 Must be used by a: <sup>1</sup> child, <sup>2</sup> a halfling or kender, <sup>3</sup> an innocent, <sup>4</sup> a mindless one, <sup>5</sup> a withered crone, <sup>6</sup> an elf.
- 6 Must be submerged or buried for 24 hours in a special location: <sup>1</sup> a sunken treestump, <sup>2</sup> a tar bog, <sup>3</sup> rancid meat, <sup>4</sup> cream from black cows, <sup>5</sup> 10,000 gems, <sup>6</sup> dung.
- 7 Must be struck against: <sup>1</sup> a silver anvil, <sup>2</sup> a cracked gravestone, <sup>3</sup> a church bell, <sup>4</sup> a foe's head, <sup>5</sup> the rising dawn, <sup>6</sup> the dust of a saint's feet.
- 8 Must claim the life of: <sup>1</sup> an innocent, <sup>2</sup> a fifty year old sherry, <sup>3</sup> a newborn calf, <sup>4</sup> a raging fire, <sup>5</sup> a new formed friendship, <sup>6</sup> love's sweet bloom.
- 9 Must be blessed by: <sup>1</sup> a druid or ancient priest, <sup>2</sup> a mother, <sup>3</sup> a lord or lady, <sup>4</sup> a raven, <sup>5</sup> of dawn's first rays, <sup>6</sup> an eldritch being.
- 10 Must perform some ritual: <sup>1</sup> an alluring dance, <sup>2</sup> burning arcane spices, <sup>3</sup> the song of awakening, <sup>4</sup> a pantomime of peace, <sup>5</sup> anointing with oils, <sup>6</sup> ritual cleansing of item.
- 11 A command word or phrase must be: <sup>1</sup> spoken, <sup>2</sup> sung, <sup>3</sup> shouted, <sup>4</sup> whispered, <sup>5</sup> written & burned, <sup>6</sup> signed.
- 12 Must be used to protect: <sup>1</sup> the innocent, <sup>2</sup> wealth, <sup>3</sup> love, <sup>4</sup> peace, <sup>5</sup> beauty, <sup>6</sup> justice.
- 13 Must be used by a: <sup>1</sup> good-aligned creature, <sup>2</sup> a rogue, <sup>3</sup> a priest, <sup>4</sup> a mage, <sup>5</sup> a warrior, <sup>6</sup> a simpleton.
- 14 Only functions when: <sup>1</sup> on holy ground, <sup>2</sup> on a sea-going vessel, <sup>3</sup> held aloft, <sup>4</sup> turned around, <sup>5</sup> exposed to light, <sup>6</sup> blown on constantly.
- 15 Must be worn by a: <sup>1</sup> man or woman of noble heart (lawful good), <sup>2</sup> common animal, <sup>3</sup> fool, <sup>4</sup> virtuous lady, <sup>5</sup> man with a full beard, <sup>6</sup> seventh child.
- 16 Only functions when it: <sup>1</sup> draws first blood, <sup>2</sup> is spun, <sup>3</sup> is rapped, <sup>4</sup> is toppled, <sup>5</sup> is polished, <sup>6</sup> is turned over.
- 17 Must be used with: <sup>1</sup> ignorance, <sup>2</sup> joy, <sup>3</sup> anger, <sup>4</sup> a song on the lips, <sup>5</sup> receipt of a fee, <sup>6</sup> all due haste.
- 18 Must be tied: <sup>1</sup> to an innocent child for seven days, <sup>2</sup> to the tail of a skunk, <sup>3</sup> to one's ear, <sup>4</sup> to a silver chain, <sup>5</sup> in a blazing bonfire, <sup>6</sup> with a gold ribbon.
- 19 Must be washed in the: <sup>1</sup> tears of a mindflayer, <sup>2</sup> dew of 1,000 morning glories, <sup>3</sup> nectar of the gods, <sup>4</sup> mud of oblivion's bog, <sup>5</sup> windsong of pride, <sup>6</sup> blood moonbeams.
- 20 Only activates in the hands of a specific character or member of a specific bloodline, heritage, or one who an ogress, hag, blind beggar or other oracle prophesized.

# FORGED IN DARKNESS

## Table of Contents

Introduction	2
How to Use this Book	2
<b>The Hands of Power</b>	<b>5</b>
Many-Fingered Hand	6
One-fingered Hand	8
Three-Fingered Hand	10
Unfingered Hand	12
<b>The Black Vault</b>	<b>14</b>
Azalin's Crystal	15
Bane's Adder	16
Blacker's Hook	18
Dead Man's Armor	20
Golden Blade of Ren	22
Headsman's Axe	24
Pipe of Mordent	26
Tome of Terror	28
Tyenn's Reflective Shield	30
<b>Giuseppe's Toys</b>	<b>31</b>
Dancing Men	32
Death-in-a-Box	34
Porcelain Tops	36
Tin Soldiers	40
Toy Nightmares	42
<b>The Workshop of Klorr</b>	<b>43</b>
Hourglass of Klorr	44
Hourglass of Souls	46
Moondial of Klorr	48
Waterclock of Klorr	51
<b>Relics of Doom</b>	<b>53</b>
Caskets of the Damned	54
Linen of Mummification	56
Spade of Grave Digging	58
<b>The Powers of Nature</b>	<b>59</b>
Kren's Brazier	59
Kren's Crystal Distillery	62
<b>Unearthed Arcana</b>	<b>64</b>

## Credits

**Design:** William W. Connors  
**Development:** Harold Johnson, Steve Miller,  
Elizabeth Tornabene  
**Editing:** Elizabeth A. Tornabene  
**Creative Director:** Harold Johnson  
**Cover Art:** Fred Fields  
**Interior Art:** Steve Bryant, John Dollar, Karolyn Guldan,  
Stephen Fabian, and Bruce Zamjahn  
**Art Director:** Bruce Zamjahn  
**Graphic Design:** Greg Kerkman  
**Typesetting:** Angelika Lokotz



TSR, Inc.  
201 Sheridan Springs  
Lake Geneva  
WI 53147  
U.S.A.



9493

TSR Ltd.  
120 Church End,  
Cherry Hinton  
Cambridge CB1 3LB  
United Kingdom

This book is protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America. Any reproduction or unauthorized use of the material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written consent of TSR, Inc.  
Random House and its affiliate companies have worldwide distribution rights in the book trade for English-language products of TSR, Inc.  
Distributed to the book and hobby trade in the United Kingdom by TSR Ltd.  
Distributed to the toy and hobby trade by regional distributors.  
ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, AD&D, RAVENLOFT, MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM, and DUNGEON MASTER are registered trademarks owned by TSR, Inc.  
MONSTROUS MANUAL and the TSR logo are trademarks owned by TSR, Inc.  
All TSR characters, character names, and the distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks owned by TSR, Inc.  
© 1996 TSR, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Printed in the U.S.A.

## INTRODUCTION



Deep beneath the soil of my adopted homeland lies a grim and terrible tomb. It is the final resting place not of a defeated hero, nor of a villainous fiend. It is the repository of an arsenal of fell magics. I speak, as you may have guessed, of the Black Vault.

Gathered therein are swords, shields, arms, and armor from all the worlds that the Mists have invaded. Some are powerful, with long and dire legacies. Others are newly formed to serve the needs of Azalin, Lord of Darkon. Without exception, they have left a trail of suffering and torment behind them.

Not so many years ago, I undertook a perilous adventure in an effort to rid the world of these evil relics. Gathering about me a stalwart band of champions, I traveled to Darkon and, at no small risk to ourselves, my allies and I dared to explore the caverns beneath the Grim Fastness where we hoped to find the Black Vault. And there, we did indeed discover its secret location.

By the time we reached the Vault, half our company was lost. My clumsy efforts to open the sealed door to that arcane arsenal cost the lives of two more of my companions. I dare say, though, that the price paid was worth the reward. Though the foul guardians of that noisome place finally forced us to flee, we brought with us many of the Vault's malignant objects. Each of these has been destroyed or hidden safely away and will trouble the world no more.

Still, I must look to the future, for we left behind more evil artifacts than we dared bring forth. What remains? Dare I plan a second assault on that stronghold of darkness? Or will their wretched curses ravage the realms before I can act? For the present, I cannot say.

*From the journal of  
Dr. Rudolph Van Richten*

## How to Use This Book

**F**orged of Darkness is a somewhat unusual sourcebook for use with the RAVENLOFT® campaign setting. It contains neither an adventure nor a wealth of background information on a single person or place. Rather, it is something of a catalog of items arcane.

Within these pages, the reader will discover an amazing array of magical items. To aid the Dungeon Master's use of this book, these items have been grouped into chapters according to their last known location, their original creator, or according to a broader category. This scheme of categorization doesn't mean that all the items listed in a section will be found together; a group of adventurers clever and foolhardy enough to penetrate the grim recesses of the Black Vault would not necessarily find all the items listed in the Black Vault chapter, this merely refers to the point of origin of each item.

## The Entries

Each magical item in this book is presented in a common format, so a Dungeon Master (DM) can quickly locate specific information about an item during play, without having to read an entire entry. This ease of reference is valuable during play, when delays can spoil the mood and pacing of even the best-prepared adventure.

## Overview

Each item's listing begins with a physical description and a brief history. Each item is also illustrated, so the DM may describe it to the players when their characters first encounter it.

## Manufacture

This section details what research, history and legend describe as the process by which the item was created and the materials from which it was fashioned. This information may be limited to an item's reported form, since an item's history and origin are often shrouded in mystery and evil.

# INTRODUCTION

## Charges

Many of the magical items described in this manual can be used only a limited number of times. Details of an item's limitations and charge usage will be explained in this section.

If it is possible for one of these artifacts to be recharged, this section will also list the means to charge the item. These methods often require perilous undertakings on the part of the wielder and can be utilized by the Dungeon Master to generate an exciting adventure.

## Use

In almost every case, a special action is required to activate the powers of the magical items in this book. A word of command, an unusual gesture, or some ritual is often required to tap the magical energies stored within the item.

However, possession of one of these relics does not mean that the owner automatically knows the special actions required to activate the device. He will not know these secrets unless he witnesses the item being used by another or researches history and legend for a hint of the forgotten rituals. It is possible that an artifact may possess a dark intelligence which seeks to corrupt others and which will make them aware of any required actions through an omen or manifestation. A skillful DM can make learning these dark secrets the goal of, or the reward for adventures.

## Powers

This section recaps any known or rumored arcane powers of each item. Further, any side effects, magical or mundane are described.

## Curses

As has been frequently illustrated, all power comes at a price, and great power commands the highest. Each of the artifacts described herein has some curse or maleficence associated with it. Those who would use the incredible powers of these items must accept the consequences those powers may bring. Many times the costs are far worse than they first appear.

We thought, because we had power, we had wisdom.

Stephen Vincent Benét  
*Litany for Dictatorships* (1935)

## Destruction

Since many of the artifacts described herein will cause as much harm as good, it is reasonable that champions of good may wish to destroy them. Many adventures can be centered around the destruction of these artifacts.

Any known or rumored methods for destroying one of these magical items are listed in this section. However, beware! Over the years these relics may have grown more powerful and the dark energies of the Mists may have corrupted their very nature. They will seldom be easy to destroy. Many times, an item may be destroyed only by completing a complex series of quests and under very specific circumstances such as during astrological events that occur rarely. Indeed, simply discovering the *means* to destroy one of these items can be the focus of a difficult and challenging set of adventures.

## Placement of Magical Items

Over the course of the last few years, much has been written to aid the Dungeon Master in creating the atmosphere of suspense and horror so vital to running a successful RAVENLOFT game. One of the topics frequently addressed in these articles is that encounters should be planned. In short, adventures should be carefully structured and DM's should not make frequent use of wandering monsters during RAVENLOFT games. The same holds true for the discovery of magical items, they should not be casually introduced into a campaign. The recovery of an important magical item should be carefully planned as the first stage in a broader melodrama of terror.

An excellent example of how this may be done can be found in J. R. R. Tolkien's book, *The Hobbit*. At the story's beginning, Bilbo's company finds several magical elven swords, including Bilbo's own sword, Sting. In addition to giving

# INTRODUCTION

He who passively accepts evil is as much involved with it as he who helps to perpetrate it. He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it.

Martin Luther King, Jr.  
*Stride Toward Freedom* (1958)

those heroes better defense, Sting becomes a crucial link to the rest of the adventure. When the companions are captured by goblins, their elven swords instantly mark them as goblin enemies. If the heroes had been armed with only their normal blades, they may well have been able to convince the goblins that they meant no harm. It might even be argued that, if not for the discovery of Sting, Bilbo would never have found himself in the dark caves where he discovered the magical ring that later became the focus of the War of the Ring which brought about the end of the Third Age of Middle Earth.

A clever Dungeon Master can weave similar events into his adventures. A magical item discovered earlier might contain clues to a later mystery, or it may foreshadow—or speed—the coming of a great enemy. With care, players will gasp with surprise when they realize this effect of the item in later adventures.

## Legends

Finally, there are many tales of mystery and the supernatural told about each of these artifacts. In this section legends, folktales and reported rumors about each of these relics of magic are examined. Though many of these tales may present exaggerations or complete fabrications about the powers of these items, still, in every folktale there is a grain of truth.

Legends often associate an item with renown champions of the Realms of Mist, or with their presence during important historical events. And it often seems that the very nature of a magical item undergoes an alteration as a result of its involvement with history.

A Dungeon Master may find it easy to adapt, retell or expand on these legends when planning adventures for his players' heroes.

## Adventure Hooks

Each artifact in this book can become the source of several adventures. Indeed, these items present numerous challenges to any party of heroes.

For example, the heroes might be charged with the recovery of some ancient artifact, perhaps the theft of the *Pipes of Mordent* from the dark recesses of the Black Vault. This is a grand endeavor worthy of several sessions of play.

Once the heroes have recovered this grim relic, they might be called upon to employ it in some fashion—thus falling victim to the consequences of using this item. Or they might discover that they are faced with the task of protecting this relic from those who would reclaim it.

While the heroes possess the *Pipes*, they may try to learn more about their nature and history. Specifically, they may try to discover the tunes that activate its special powers, or they may seek a method to destroy the *Pipes*.

Ultimately, the heroes will face the need to destroy the item or otherwise rid themselves of it. The treasure that seemed so valuable at first often demands too high a price for its services, for the *Pipes of Mordent* devours the lives of many to satisfy its hunger.

Other adventures can be spun around stopping the creation of these items. This is especially true of the dreadful *hands of power*. If the heroes learn that someone is in the process of manufacturing one of these grisly things, they might well attempt to thwart his efforts. Or a truly foolish champion might seek to have one of these items created for himself. The creation of one of these relics will surely be noticed by the realm's mystical rulers and other powerful creatures. Further, powerful magic items in Ravenloft often find a way to acquire power over their creators.

Finally, the Dungeon Master might involve the heroes in a fulfillment of a prophecy about an item or create an adventure that causes the heroes to relive the legend behind an artifact.

Knowledge of these artifacts of evil is not merely a valuable defense against those who would try to use them against the heroes. This knowledge opens the doorway to days of grand adventures and nights of endless terror.

# HANDS OF POWER



Throughout the world of Ravenloft, there are few artifacts as powerful or dangerous as the *Hands of Power*.

Four types of these *hands* are legended to enhance the abilities of the different professions of adventurers. The *Unfingered Hand*, for example, serves thieves and rogues best, while the *Many-Fingered Hand* greatly enhances priests' miraculous magic.

Though the subject of some debate, the secrets for creating these horrid objects is believed to have been discovered by that coven of dread hags rumored to rule the forsaken domain of Tepest—Leticia, Laveeda, and Lorinda Mindefisk. If this is true, those hags have shared their secrets with others of their kind, for many hags are said to know how to create *Hands of Power*.

## Characteristics

The dread *Hands of Power* are as bizarre as they are grotesque. Each is a grisly candle combined with a severed human hand.

Perhaps the most intriguing quality of these obscene objects is that they usually do not appear to be enchanted. Only when the wick is lit will spells such as *detect magic* reveal that a *hand* is anything more than a sinister curiosity; thus there may be many non-enchanted *hands of power* about. Further, spells such as *dispel magic* or an *anti-magic shell* will have no effect on an extinguished *hand of power*, for it is no more magical than a common kitchen knife.

There are many similarities among the various *hands of power*. No *hand of power* can be created without the aid of a hag. All require a severed hand from the body of an executed criminal. And each *hand* exacts a terrible price from any who would make use of its sinister magical powers.

These candles will burn for a total of 13 hours (78 turns) before being exhausted. It is believed impossible to recharge a *hand of power*.

## Other Types of Hand

Only four varieties of *hands* are described herein. Each of these types of *hand* is benefits one of the basic character classes presented in the *Player's Handbook*. The desperate souls of Ravenloft may well have discovered how to create other varieties, but none have yet been encountered.

Many a scholar speculates that it would be possible to create a *hand* that is attuned to the special powers of a psionicist. Indeed, there are rumors among some circles of sages that an object similar to a *hand of power* had been found in the lost domain of Kalidnay. As such mentalists were legion in that desert realm, it may well be that this sort of *hand* exists. Use of this grim relic risks exposure to the magical viruses of the Mists.

Another unusual *hand of power* is rumored to have been found in the domain of Darkon. Although little is known of its exact powers, the creature behind its creation seems to be the night hag, Styrix. Through her great knowledge of magical travel and intimate study of our Realm's fabric, some speculate that this device could allow its owner to cross the borders of the Mists even when they have been sealed by Evil's hand. Sadly, this *hand* appears to also be a conduit for fiends to enter the land and possess the user.

Several other *hands of power* are part of legend, though whether they exist and what is the nature of their curse is pure conjecture.

There is the *hand of glory* legended to confer invisibility on its wielder, though to eventually lead to despair, perhaps an encounter with other ethereal monsters.

Then there is the many fingered *hand of silence* fabled to be used by thieves to put the inhabitants of a house they are robbing to sleep, one victim per finger lit. If destroyed the user may fall into an eternal sleep or be struck deaf and mute.

Finally, there is the *monkey's paw* rumored to lead its user to a dead man's treasure or to the hidden pathways of the Dead. Death is only the first of the curses associated with this *hand*.

It is better to light a candle  
than to curse the darkness.

Chinese Proverb

# HANDS OF POWER

## The Many-fingered Hand

Of all the *hands of power*, there is none more terrible than the dread *many-fingered hand*. This sinister item can be created only with the aid of a spectral hag calling upon dark, long-forgotten spirits of evil to bestow horrific, unnatural power upon the priest who dares use it.

A *many-fingered hand* is a truly disturbing sight. The fingers of the severed hand are spread wide and a fleshy wick is set into each slit digit.

## Manufacture

A *many-fingered hand* is fashioned from the hand of a murderer hanged for his crime. The hand is harvested on a foggy night while the body still hangs on the gallows. A stone knife chipped from a gravestone is used to cut off the hand.

Within four hours after it is severed from the body, the murderer's hand must be soaked in the ichor of a fiend or otherworldly summoned eldritch being and presented to a spectral hag for enchantment. The hag demands the undertaking of some wicked deed as payment in advance for her services. Only after this task is completed can the supplicant entreat the crone to finish the enchantment.

The first step in this enchantment begins when the hag takes the supplicant's left arm in a vice-like grip and tears five thin strips of skin from it. Each wound leaves a long, black scar.

The strips of skin are then cured in an oven for 13 hours. When the strips have acquired the texture of hard leather the hag slits each of the harvested *hand's* outstretched fingers and lays one strip into each slit, then stitches it shut with thread made from her hair. This process may require three to four hours to complete.

Once the wicks are in place, the crone begins to chant and howl to draw the attention of the dark spirits that will empower the hand. While the hag shrieks her hideous song, the supplicant fills her cauldron with holy water.

The water is polluted by spilling the supplicant's blood into the cauldron. The hag seizes the supplicant's right arm, holds it over the pot while sinking her misshapen teeth into his flesh. This wound also leaves black scars. The



hag then tosses the *hand* in the boiling cauldron.

The *hand* must boil for 66 minutes, at the end of which time it is fully enchanted and ready for use. When the hand is complete, the supplicant has truly begun the descent into darkness and corruption.

## Charges

A *many-fingered hand* will burn with a midnight blue flame for a total of 13 hours (78 turns). At the end of this time, the flames will sputter and die, leaving the candle nothing more than a macabre oddity.

Though it is believed impossible to recharge this candle, some folktales, most notably *Moratty's Hymn to Madness*, tell of a wicked priest, Alchon the Mad, who managed to renew the melted wax by destroying a sacred site and transforming the entire assemblage of worshippers there into gibbering maniacs.



# HANDS OF POWER

## Use

Only a priest can invoke the powers of a *many-fingered hand*. The user must light *all* the wicks embedded in the fingers in a specific order. The little finger must be the first wick lit, then the ring finger, and so on until the thumb is lit. At the moment that the last wick starts to burn cold and blue, the *hand's* magic is manifested.

To extinguish the burning wicks, the *hand's* user must snuff them in the reverse order in which they were lit. That is, the thumb must be extinguished first, and the little finger must be snuffed last. The user must extinguish the flames with a snuffer made of silver, bone, and obsidian. The moment the little finger's wick is doused, the *hand's* magical powers die.

Although the *hand's* user must light it, he need not remain near the candle to benefit from it. Once the wicks are burning, the owner may travel wherever he wishes and still benefit from the *hand's* magic. Only when the flames are snuffed or the candle exhausts its 13 hours of fuel will the enchantment fade.

## Powers

The powers of this candle greatly enhance the magics of an evil priest, and many of their ilk covet the dark benefits of a *many-fingered hand*. However, only the bravest or most desperate priest dare employ these foul objects, for they exact a high price from their users.

When the last flame springs to life upon the *many-fingered hand*, the user is filled with magical energy drawn from the darkness of the cosmos, transforming the priest into a deadly enemy of light.

The *hand* increases the priest's powers by four levels to gain and cast spells and in his attempts to *turn* or *command* enchanted or undead creatures.

The *hand* also doubles the number of bonus spells received for a high Wisdom score, and the character is immediately granted major access to the Sphere of Necromancy.

Further, the *hand* creates an aura around the priest equivalent to a *protection from good* spell.

## Curse

The *many-fingered hand* draws upon the most sinister of evil spirits to increase its user's powers. Due to this link to evil, there is great danger in using this object.

Whenever the *hand* is extinguished, there is a chance that sinister forces empowering it will claim the user's spirit in payment for their services. When the last flame is snuffed, the user must make a Wisdom check. If the check fails, the priest's spirit is displaced and his body possessed by a gibbering, insane spirit. If the user's spirit cannot return to its body within 24 hours (save vs Death Magic) it is consumed by the dark shadows and the body withers and dies. The user cannot be restored to life.

## Destruction

It is nearly impossible to destroy a *many-fingered hand* before it has burned its allotted 13 hours, for it reforms itself within 13 turns after any attempt to destroy it. This *hand* can be destroyed if eaten by insects and scattered to the four winds.

Temporary destruction can be achieved by use of *lightning* or *electricity* (requiring 13 days to reform), or *disintegration* (requiring 13 weeks to reform). Other methods of destruction merely malfom the candle for a brief time.

## Legends

Only fragments found in ancient texts begin to hint at the possibilities of the powers of this *hand* if commanded by a true master.

Arcana reports that through the power of the *hand*, priests may summon and bind spirits and enchanted creatures to their will for 13 days, up to a total of one spirit per flame. Such services drain a portion of the user's life, or the life of the land. Through these spirits, the user may be able to *commune* with higher powers.

It is also written that if the candle is lit during the dark of the moon, it will burn for 13 days, not merely 13 hours. This *hand* may also be snuffed by an enchanted wind, but the one who snuffs the candle may have his spirit sucked from his body as well.

## The One-fingered Hand

The name of the *one-fingered hand* is a bit misleading. A *one-fingered hand* is a severed hand with its fore and middle fingers extended and the others curled as if in a fist. The two extended fingers are lashed together so that they appear to be a single digit. A wick is secured between the two extended fingers, reinforcing the impression that there is only one finger.

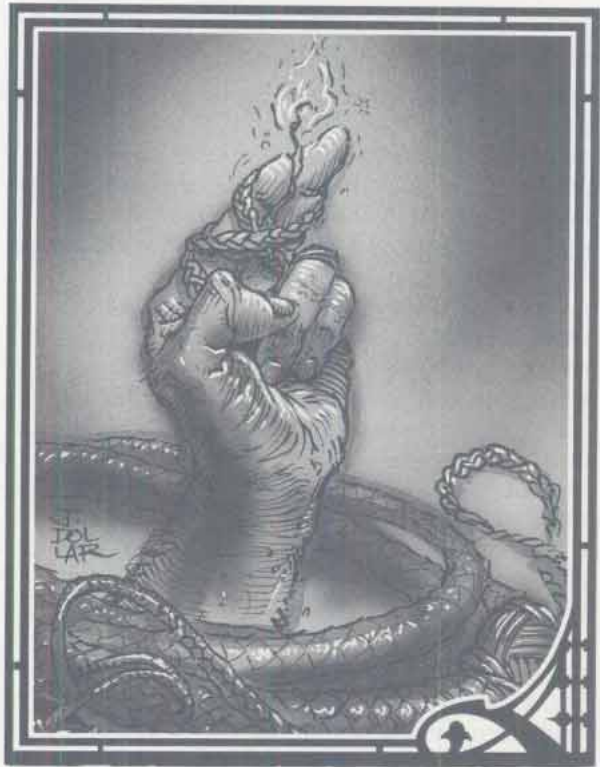
### Manufacture

The most important component in the creation of a *one-fingered hand* is the harvesting of the hand itself. The hand must be cut from a convicted criminal who has been whipped or beaten to death for his crimes. It must be severed with a silver blade heated until it is blue hot. The heat from the knife cauterizes the flesh and, it is believed the spirit of the dead man is imprisoned within the hand. Curiously, *rigor mortis* does not appear to set into a hand which is harvested in this manner.

Within 48 hours after cutting off the hand, it is presented to a sea hag for enchantment. The crone demands that the petitioner undertake some grim and dreadful task in her service before she will enchant the hand. Once her price is paid, it is believed that the hag is magically compelled to fulfill the bargain. The petitioner must also provide several *potions of invulnerability*.

The insidious enchantment ritual begins with the hag shaving the supplicant's head. Locks of this hair are then braided into a thin cord used to bind the hand's extended fore and middle fingers together. The hand's thumb and other fingers are folded and sewn in place against the palm. A wick, also made from a thin braid of the supplicant's hair, is threaded between the extended fingers. The constructed hand is steeped in the *potions of invulnerability* for 24 hours and then molten bee's wax is poured over the hand to fill any gaps between the wick, the fingers, and the hair.

When all this is complete, the hag drops the hand into a cauldron of seawater boiling over a driftwood fire. The pot boils until all the water has



evaporated, leaving only salty rime. This completes the preparation of the *one-fingered hand*.

When the supplicant receives the *one-fingered hand*, he will have begun the irreversible descent into darkness and suffers the malevolent effects as if he had failed a powers check.

### Charges

A *one-fingered hand* will burn crimson red for a total of 13 hours (78 turns). At the end of that time, it sputters and goes out, having exhausted the magical fuel.

Though it is believed impossible to recharge a *one-fingered hand* once it has exhausted its fuel, popular myth speaks of extending its life by ten minutes (10 turns) for each mortal wound struck to a worthy opponent while using the powers of this candle. What constitutes a worthy opponent is unclear, but it is suspected that the foe must be higher level than the candle's owner and present some deadly risk to the candle's user.

# HANDS OF POWER

## Use

Only warriors may light or extinguish this candle. From the moment that its user first lights it, the powers of the *one-fingered hand* are manifested. Although the person wishing to benefit from the magical effects of this candle must light it, he may travel far from the candle while it burns without fear that its powers will fail him.

Just as it is impossible for anyone but a warrior to light this candle, so too must it be the lighter's hand that extinguishes it. In order to snuff the flame, the hand's owner must curl his fingers about the burning wick. The magical flame that dances atop the candle burns his flesh for 1d2 points of damage, then fails.

## Powers

From the moment that it is lit until the time that it is extinguished, the *one-fingered hand* bestows upon its owner three magical abilities. The nature of these enchantments makes these *hands* especially valuable to warriors.

First, it improves its lighter's Armor Class. For as long as the candle burns, a -4 bonus is applied to the character's Armor Class. In no case, however, can the *hand's* benefits ever give the user an Armor Class better than -10.

The *hand's* second benefit is to increase the rate at which a character's wounds heal. While the *one-fingered hand* burns, its owner regenerates 1d6 points of damage per round. In addition, the user will be able to regenerate wounds caused by fire, acid, or other types of injury not normally affected by regeneration.

The *hand's* third and final power is to protect its lighter from deadly attacks. The character gains a +4 bonus to all his saving throws.

## Curse

Of course, any magical item created by a hag has a sinister price for its services. Every time a wound is inflicted on a foe while using this candle, the user must make a powers check equal to 1% per point of damage inflicted. Further, upon extinguishing the flame, for every turn the powers were used the lighter will suffer 2d10 points of

damage. He must also make a second powers check equal to 1% per point of damage suffered.

## Destruction

Destroying a *one-fingered hand* can be a difficult task. While the wick is lit, the hand is nearly immune to all attempts to damage it. In fact, only a *wish* or *disintegrate* spell can accomplish the task, though at the DM's discretion, other powerful magics might be sufficient to destroy it.

When the candle is not burning, the destruction of the *one-fingered hand* is much easier. The foul object need only be tossed into any large fire and left to burn for 66 minutes (11 turns). At the end of that time, the *hand* is destroyed and crumbles into ash. Prior to the passing of the 66th minute, however, the *hand* is unharmed. It can be recovered from the fire and suffers no penalties other than burning the one who sought to retrieve it from the flame.

## Legends

Popular lore relates that Gondegal the Lost King once used just such a *deadman's candle* to slay the vampire lord of Malkavnia. But he spurned a reliance on black magics and cast it away.

Some ghost stories tell that the *one-fingered hand* not only confers superior prowess in combat, it also bestows a secret vulnerability by which its user may be defeated.

Other rumored magics identified with this *hand of power* include that it makes its user a master of swords. Some tales tell that this candle's dark force goads both the user and those he encounters into senseless duels so that it can drink of the loser's life force, perhaps draining Constitution or Wisdom and the will to live.

The wounding curse of this blade has made it into more than one legend that tells of a mighty warrior who fought for over an hour and slew the deadliest foe, emerging from the battle with scarcely a scratch. Yet when the candle was blown out, many wounds scarred the champion and he fell to pieces.

Whatever the truth, all lore holds that if the user is slain in battle the candle will go out.

## The Three-fingered Hand

The *three-fingered hand* is as powerful as it is deadly. Created with dark magics and the dread knowledge of an annis, a *three-fingered hand* is coveted by wizards and other magic-wielders for its ability to enhance spell-castings.

### Manufacture

The first step in the making of a *three-fingered hand* is the acquisition of the hand itself. As is the case with the other *hands of power*, this hand must be cut from the body of a criminal put to death for his crimes, but he must have been impaled, either with weapons or on a spike. The hand must be cut from the body with a bronze axe. If it is not severed cleanly with a single blow, the hand will not absorb the enchantments.

Once the hand has been harvested, it must be delivered to an annis. To curry the annis' favor, the supplicant is called upon to perform some despicable deed. Only by completing this deed will the annis agree to enchant the *hand*.

To make a *three-fingered hand*, its fingers are positioned in a most disturbing fashion. The thumb, fore-, and ring-fingers are extended while the middle- and little-fingers are bent down upon the palm. Iron nails are driven through the curled fingers to hold them in position. The hand is then dropped into a cauldron of boiling fat rendered from bodies of fallen magic wielders and the liver of a faerie dragon. While this fat may have been collected from a variety of individuals, all must have been good-aligned creatures.

After the hand has boiled in the fat for exactly 13 minutes, it is withdrawn from the pot. The annis then forces slivers of yew wood beneath the nails of the extended fingers to serve as wicks. When the last wick is in place, the annis places a hood over the head of the supplicant and begins a powerful, evil ritual cloaked in mystery. It is said that seeing this ritual will drive a man mad, and so the hood is for safety.

After nearly six hours the cruel rites are complete and the hag presents the supplicant with the *hand*. The supplicant's acceptance of the hand signals his embracing of darkness and he suffers as if he had failed three powers checks.



### Charges

A *three-fingered hand* will burn green for a total of 13 hours (78 turns). At the end of the 13th hour it burns out, useless, its enchantments spent.

Though it is not believed that a completely exhausted candle can be recharged, it is rumored that the extinguishing of the life of a sentient, magic-wielding creature while using this candle will negate the consumption of the wax during that use. Thus if its user slays a wizard while burning the candle for 15 minutes, this results in no loss of fuel for that usage.

### Use

Only a wizard or non-priestly spellcaster may light a *three-fingered hand*, and invoke the powers. This is not an easy task, however, for all three of the *hand's* wicks must be lighted simultaneously using three tapers held in the owner's left hand.

# HANDS OF POWER

Lighting the *hand* requires the owner to make a successful Dexterity check. Failure indicates that the wicks do not all contact the flame at the same time. Additional attempts may be made to light the candle, with each requiring one round.

Although the *hand's* owner must light the wicks, he need not remain near the *hand* to benefit from its magics. Once the *hand's* powers have been invoked, the owner may travel freely and still enjoy the *hand's* powers. Only extinguishing the wicks by the lighter's breath or a magical wind will terminate the *hand's* magics.

## Powers

While it is burning, the *three-fingered hand* bestows upon its owner a staggering increase in his wizardly abilities to cast spells.

While the candle burns, its owner gains benefits similar to the *dilation*, *extension*, *augmentation*, and *far-reaching* spells. This results in any spell the owner casts having its range, duration, and area of effect doubled. Damage directly inflicted by a spell is increased by 50% and any saving throws made because of these spells are subject to a -4 penalty.

The spellcaster is more resistant to magical attacks upon his own person making save vs magical sources with a +4 bonus.

## Curse

This amplification of the character's magical energies is not without its costs. With every spell cast, there is a chance that the wizard will push his body and mind beyond their limits. The result is that the character must make a System Shock roll whenever he casts a spell with the aid of a *three-fingered hand*. A bonus equal to the character's experience level is added to the System Shock roll, as is a penalty equal to the level of the spell. Thus, a 12th-level wizard with a Constitution of 13 who casts a 4th-level spell would fail on a roll of 94% (85% system shock + 12% experience level -4% spell level) or greater.

If the System Shock roll fails, the wizard suffers a magical backfire, suffering the negative effects of the spell being cast on himself or suffering 2d8 points of damage if spell is benign or defensive.

The spellcaster must then make a save vs. Death Magic. If he fails, he will explode in a savage blast of magical energy. This detonation inflicts 1d4 points of damage per the user's experience level to everyone within a radius of 5 feet per the user's level. Only living tissue is affected by this blast, and the blast produces no heat or concussive force.

## Destruction

The only recorded method for destroying a *three-fingered hand* is when its owner dies due to failing his System Shock and save vs Death Magic roll. If its owner fails, the *hand's* wicks flare brightly for a few seconds, then the *hand* melts suddenly into a pool of wax.

## Legends

Legends abound about *three-fingered hands* and their use and misuse. There appears to be no way to avoid the devastating effects of loss of control of the mystic might imparted by this hand. The magical misfires and backlashes can be survived, though results are often embarrassing for the mighty mage who suffers them. But little is known about how to diffuse the destructive energies.

One way speculated on by scholars is to siphon magical energy and charges from all magic items in the possession of the user. This diffusion, it is theorized, would drain one charge per item if he fails a System Shock roll, and 10 charges if he fails a save vs Death Magic. If the magical items do not have charges, then it requires an item save vs Magical Fire (-4 penalty to save if failed a save vs. Death Magic) or be destroyed. Just how this alternative magical disruption can be channeled is unknown, but in theory it is possible.

Many a lad with stars in their eyes, and a lust for the mysteries of ancient magics have speculated on what powers might be commanded if one could only master this *hand*.

Some propose that the user can learn to pass unseen unless one possesses faerie or ethereal or astral vision such as a mage. Others hope for the rainbow, the power to grant *wishes*, though undoubtedly at a great cost, which would lead to failed powers check and eternal corruption.

## The Unfingered Hand

**A** *unfingered hand* is not, as its name implies, fashioned from a hand whose digits have been cut off. Rather, a *unfingered hand* has been severed at the wrist and holds a thick, black candle in its curled fingers with a deathless grip.

### Manufacture

The creation of a *unfingered hand* is a dark and sinister process that requires the aid of a greenhag and corrupts the user's spirit.

The primary ingredient in the manufacture of a *unfingered hand* is a hand cut from the body of a convicted criminal who has been beheaded or drawn-and-quartered. The hand is cut off using a coldforged iron-bladed knife. This gruesome operation must be conducted under the light of a full moon. Speed is of the essence in harvesting the hand, as *rigor mortis* must not have set in.

Once obtained, the harvester of the hand curls its fingers around a black candle made from the rendered fat of dead men, and holds it in place till *rigor mortis* sets in.

While this completes the physical construction of the *hand*, there remains the task of enchanting it. The aid of a greenhag must be enlisted in order to infuse the *unfingered hand* with magical energy. These horrid crones demand a dread price for their services. Some greenhags demand a service for themselves, such as a murder, while others demand a more general service, such as the desecration of religious sites dedicated to good or other unspeakable acts. She will also direct the petitioner to bring her the heart of a quickling, the sap of quickwood or the essence of a creature of the plane of energy.

Once the greenhag has been paid, the harvester of the *hand* presents the foul construction to the crone. She will prick the petitioner's finger, allowing a single drop of blood to fall upon the hand's wick. Then she begins the sinister ritual that infuses the *unfingered hand* with its magical power.

This ritual requires no fewer than three hours to complete. During this time, the petitioner is entranced and will retain no memory of what has been done to, by, or for him during the ceremony.



When the supplicant regains his senses, the greenhag will have vanished, but the *unfingered hand* will be complete. The dark deeds the supplicant performed and the evil magic that he has taken part in corrupt him as if he had failed two powers check.

It is said that once her price has been paid, the greenhag is bound to fulfill her bargain, so the supplicant need not fear the crone's betrayal. Of course, this may not be true, and many will expect their fiendish partner to turn on them.

### Charges

The candle gripped by the *unfingered hand* can burn with a sparking and sputtering silver flame for a total of 13 hours (78 turns).

It is believed impossible to recharge this candle. However, there exists in the fragments of the epic poem of *Windson, The Cold Hand*, reference to planting one of these hands in an elven Tree of Life where it was regenerated as if it were alive.

# HANDS OF POWER

## Use

The powers of a *unfingered hand*, as is the case with the other *hands of power*, are invoked when the wick is lit. The *hand* may be lit only by a rogue, thief, bard or assassin.

Once lit, the *unfingered hand* can only be extinguished when a drop of the lighter's blood falls on the wick. Even immersing the *hand* in water or placing it in an area devoid of air cannot snuff this magical flame.

The hand's owner need not carry it with him to gain its benefits. Once the *hand* is lit, the owner may go where he will and do what he wants.

## Powers

While it burns, the *unfingered hand* bestows upon its owner all the benefits of a *haste* spell. This includes double movement rate, a +2 bonus to any initiative rolls, and the ability to attack at twice his normal rate per round.

In addition to the great speed at which this object enables its owner to move, the *unfingered hand* allows him to *jump* and *spider climb* while it burns. Both these abilities have the same effect as the spells described in the *Player's Handbook*.

## Curse

As most wizards know, a *haste* spell is not cast with impunity. Every use of that magic ages the caster one year. A *unfingered hand* exacts the same price for its services when it is extinguished.

For every ten minutes that the candle burns, its owner must make a save vs Death Magic at -4 or age one year. Thus, if the candle were lit and left to burn, it could add up to 78 years to its owner's age. The candle also ages its owner one year for each time it is lit. Thus, if a *unfingered hand* is burned in five-minute increments until it burned up, the *hand's* owner could age up to 94 years.

## Destruction

While lit, this *hand* is virtually indestructible. But the destruction of an unlit *unfingered hand* is not difficult. Because it is partially mummified, a *unfingered hand* makes its item saving throws as

if it were made of leather. A *unfingered hand* is thus vulnerable to lightning, acid, fire, magical fire, or *disintegration* attacks. Should it ever fail a saving throw, it is destroyed.

When a *hand* is destroyed, any owner who once used this candle ages one year for every minute of fuel left. A successful save vs Death Magic at -4 results in aging only one year for every 10 minutes left. Thus, if a newly created hand, which could burn for the complete 13 hours, were destroyed, it would age its owner a staggering 780 years (78 years if the user saves).

## Legends

The only significant tale about a *unfingered hand* from folklore is found in the elven edda of *Windson, The Cold Hand*. This song spins the sad story of a master thief, legended to be half elven and half wind spirit, whose roguish feats were famous throughout the realms.

Windson found happiness in the arms of a princess of Sri Raji and so retired from the life of a rogue. But his legend had spread far and all new princes of thieves longed to challenge the master to prove themselves more worthy. One Aldon Filch found a way.

He believed he discovered the secret of Windson's success, for many claimed the elf possessed the fastest fingers in the realm, quick to pinch a purse or slip a stiletto between one's ribs before his victim ever knew. Further, it was said he could slip from shadow to shadow as quietly and swiftly as the wind, and to fight a squad of castle guards as if assisted by pairs of phantom hands. This power came from a black candle wrapped in a dead man's bony hand.

Aldon slipped into his better's home while Windson was away and stole his black candle. Then, mastering it's magic, Aldon returned to challenge Windson, by stealing what he held most dear. Before Windson's eyes, Filch evaded his every sword thrust and killed his lady fair.

With a cry of anguish, Windson nicked the rogue and dripped his blood on the candle to extinguish it. Then Windson threw the *hand* into a roaring fire, and as it melted and years piled on Windson's head, he had the satisfaction of seeing the human thief wither and die of old age.

# THE BLACK VAULT



ver the centuries, many magical weapons, shields, and suits of armor have washed up on the misty shores from realms beyond.

Many of these, upon the death of their owners, have found their

way into the Black Vault of Azalin, magelord of Darkon. Indeed, it is possible that this armory contains more artifacts of evil than any other in Ravenloft. All of these items has a dark side. Without exception, all those who have possessed an item once sealed in the Black Vault have suffered greatly in exchange for calling on the powers of these ill-fated treasures.

The magical arms and armors listed on the following pages do not begin to exhaust the armory of Azalin's Vault. The extensive collection housed in the lord's Vault is too large to be detailed in a single volume. Still, these items are representative of what is surely the most cursed magical armory in Ravenloft.

## Finding the Black Vault

It is worth noting that the Black Vault is not within the walls of Castle Avernus in Darkon's capital city of Il Aluk. It lies buried deep beneath the Grim Fastness. This malevolent fortress is located near Avernus, and it serves as the headquarters for Azalin's dreaded secret police, the Kargat.

Few people have ever seen the Black Vault, for the caverns beneath the Grim Fastness are filled with the living dead and other creatures of darkness. It is told that a party of heroes, led by Dr. Rudolph Van Richten himself, once managed to invade the Black Vault and carry off some of its horrible treasures, but this may not be true.

A weapon is an enemy even to its owner.

Chinese Proverb

## Opening the Black Vault

Apart from the magelord Azalin himself, only the High Master of the Kargat is authorized to open the Black Vault. Any who attempt to break into the Vault will face unliving terrors and deadly wards. The Black Vault has been sealed with a *wizard lock* by Azalin himself (18th-level wizard).

The Vault was forged from a meteoric iron impervious to physical harm. It is protected by other spells, including a *symbol* of death, a *screen* (an illusion of an empty vault), and *antipathy*, which affects all good creatures.

The door's lock is a complex series of dials and knobs that form a representation of the planetary system where Azalin lived. The Vault can only be opened when the dials and knobs are arranged in the position that the worlds occupy at the present time. A failed attempt to open the Vault sets off alarms and a series of defensive spells, including *chain lightning*, *ice storm*, and *death fog*, on the hallway outside of the Vault.

## Items Believed Destroyed

Many items were carted off by Van Richten in his foray. Little is known of their powers, only that each was reported destroyed, if such items can be. All that was recorded were their names.

There were the weapons: the wicked *wyrm's tooth*, *slasher*, *shadow-walker's sword*, *dark destiny's scourge*, *hoarfrost's hammer*, the *fiist of fury* and *fallen Karlak's sabre* plus the armors: *brightbane's buckler* and *foolheart's breastplate*.

Among the treasures were the *decanter of time*, *bloodcup of Noth*, *goblet of gladness*, the jewelry: the *widow's veil*, the *bracelet of betrayal*, the poisonous *peace's pin* and *gambler's gold*, the musical instruments: the *dervish flute*, *Escher's harp*, *Truehope's trump*, and the *chime of awakening* and more. Books of dread lore burned were: the *libram of unending life*, *manual of the planes*, *scroll of damnation*, and the *tome of mold*; arcane rods broken include ones of *shades and empires*, of *tempests and evil's beacon*, of *death, decay, and commanding*. And there were *shackles of shame*, *chains of binding*, and a *collar of correct thoughts*, plus a *robe of rulership* and a *helm of illfortune*. Arifacts dark and dread filled.



# THE BLACK VAULT

## Azalin's Crystal

Popular lore of Darkon says that Azalin the magelord is always watching and can see into the very hearts of his people. Perhaps this tale grew out of the legend of *Azalin's Crystal* also called *Azalin's Orb* or *Eye* a great golden globe of quartz with reported mystical powers.

## Manufacture

In the early years after Lord Azalin carved the mighty kingdom of Darkon he sent the general of his Kargat into the heart of Bluetspur to steal a stem from the crystalline *Tree of the Hydra*.

This single crystal was said to be larger than the head of a horse and filled with a lacing of gold fibers. The loyal guardsman carried the crystal to the three Hags of the land of Tepest. What arcane rituals were performed to cut and polished it into an orb are unknown. But the loyal general did not return from these rites.

## Charges

The *crystal* is a permanent magical item and does not use charges. It may only be used three times a day for one hour each.

## Use

The secret comand words that invoke the *crystal's* powers are known only to Azalin. Further, rare oils and ointments of enchanted beasts must be used to polish it to clarify the images and prophecies.

## Powers

Through the *crystal* one can look anywhere there is an opponent. The effort automatically succeeds though the vision may be blurred or cryptic if not properly annointed. The user may look anywhere undetected and undetectable. With the proper words, the *crystal* can cast *clairvoyance* or *ESP*.

Attacks may be directed through the orb, but a save vs. Spells is required or each rebounds. The *crystal* itself can cast a *telekinesis* spell. Further, attacks seen through the globe may be redirected



but the price is to also suffer the damage caused.

A *foreshadowing* may be cast on those viewed. This foresight shows possible dangers, so that the viewer may take advantage of them. It may even create a vulnerability where none existed.

## Curse

When the *crystal* is used the wielder must make an Intelligence check or be snared by the orb's *mindweb*. What happens in that mental maze is unknown. Those who escape often develop phobias or strange quirks. Further, each time one uses the foreshadowing power a madness check must be made. The worst cost of all, however, is attracting the attention of Azalin.

## Destruction

*Azalin's orb* is rumored to be indestructible. Many a thief has tried shattering, bashing, melting, burning and disintegrating it to no avail. Perhaps only Azalin's demise will crack this *orb*.

# THE BLACK VAULT

## Bane's Adder

**T**his weapon was first brought into Ravenloft decades ago by a mercenary known only as Bane. Bane allied himself with Strahd von Zarovich and was sent by his new master to infiltrate Castle Avernus and assassinate Azalin.

On the surface this mission appeared to be nothing short of suicide—perhaps a convenient way for Strahd to dispatch a powerful underling. But Bane's skill and experience in the martial arts made success a distinct possibility. Indeed, since Bane carried a magical weapon with him, the likes of which had never been seen, Strahd dared hope that his enemy would soon be destroyed.

When Bane failed to return from his mission, Strahd soon gave him up for dead. It was clear that his agent had failed, and paid the ultimate price. Strahd did not consider that the man's weapon may have fallen into the lichlord's hands.

*Bane's adder* is a sleek arquebus built by dwarves of a long-forgotten kingdom. So skilled were these craftsmen that they were able to infuse the firearm with magical energies. The gun itself is similar to other arquebuses, having a thick stock and a belled, unrifled barrel. The weapon is highly decorated, fashioned to imitate the body of a viper, the barrel seeming to end in a gaping jaw with wickedly curved fangs circling the barrel.

## Manufacture

*Bane's adder* was born in the forges of an ancient race of dwarves. It is not known whether they created the gun at Bane's request or if the mercenary obtained the weapon after its creation. In either case, there can be no question that the weapon is of the finest craftsmanship.

## Charges

Like most magical weapons, *Bane's adder* does not have a limited number of charges. The only limitations on the use of this firearm are the user having suitable ammunition and smokepowder, and enough time to reload. Further, the smoke from each shot may give the gunner's position away and obscure subsequent shots (-2 to Hit).



## Use

*Bane's adder* is as difficult to load and fire as any other arquebus. The weapon has a speed factor of 15 and can only be fired every third round.

Like all firearms, *Bane's adder* may misfire, possibly injuring its user. Due to the gun's superior form, this happens only on a natural attack roll of 1. If a misfire occurs, the person using the weapon suffers 1d6 points of damage. The weapon cannot be used again until it has been cleaned, which requires 10 minutes (1 turn).

The damage that *Bane's adder* inflicts depends on the type of projectile that it fires.

## Powers

Almost all firearms are designed to accept shot made of lead. The dwarves who designed *Bane's adder*, however, planned for the use of a wide variety of bullets. The magic of *Bane's adder* enchants the shot fired from its barrel. The effects of a bullet are determined by the metal from

# THE BLACK VAULT

which it is formed. The magic of *Bane's adder* imparts a +2 bonus to its attack and damage rolls, regardless of the type of ammunition used.

The following describes the magical effects that different types of shot manifest when fired from this gun. The Dungeon Master's may allow characters to experiment with other types of shot. To date, only shot made of pure metals absorbs the magical effects when fired from the *adder*. Ammunition fashioned from alloys does not manifest magical effects but may still be fired with a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls.

**Lead:** This is the most commonly used type of shot. It is almost always available, being fairly easy to buy or to make. When a lead projectile hits its target, it inflicts 1d10 points of damage, rerolling scores of 10 and adding to the total, thus a roll of 10 and a second of 8 would inflict 18 points of damage +2 for the *adder's* magic.

**Silver:** When loaded with shot cast from pure silver, *Bane's adder* becomes a deadly weapon versus the shapechanger, lycanthrope and enchanted monster. Any creature with an unusual vulnerability to silver weapons, such as a werewolf, must make a save vs. Death Magic or be instantly slain when hit with silver shot. Even if the saving throw succeeds, the target suffers normal damage as noted under **lead**.

**Iron:** Any fiend which is not on its home plane must immediately make a save vs. Wands when hit with an iron ball fired from *Bane's adder*. Failure indicates that the creature is instantly dispelled, forced back to his home plane or teleported away to a random location. Even on a successful saving throw, the creature suffers double the normal damage caused by **lead**.

**Gold:** In *Bane's adder* gold shot is tremendously effective against any good-aligned creature. All such targets suffer double the normal damage from **lead**.

**Platinum:** Any creature capable of using wizard spells is especially vulnerable to attacks made with platinum shot. A hit by such a ball prevents the creature from casting spells for a number of

rounds equal to the points of damage inflicted. This shot inflicts normal damage as with **lead**.

## Curse

Because of its potential for misfire, use of *Bane's adder* is risky. However, as the damage from a misfire is minimal, this is not the greatest threat to its owner.

Whenever *Bane's adder* is fired at a dwarf, it will automatically misfire. The weapon's creators placed this enchantment upon their handiwork so that they might never be threatened by it.

In addition, whenever someone uses *Bane's adder* to attack someone whose alignment exactly matches his own, he suffers the same damage he inflicts on his target. This includes the possibility of death, planar displacement, and other special effects.

## Destruction

Only the hands of dwarves can unmake this nefarious weapon. Indeed, even then, the one who would destroy the *adder* must be an experienced gunsmith. If such a person can be found, and is willing to do the deed, he must first safely dismantle the gun making several proficiency checks. Each failure results in a misfire inflicting triple the normal damage. Once in pieces, the smith can destroy the weapon simply by heating it in a forge until the wooden stock burns away and the metal barrel softens into a shapeless mass. Attempts by others to destroy it will fail.

## Legends

Legend has it that if the user can concentrate and is pure of purpose, he will never miss his target. One cocky soldier found that he could never miss with this weapon and took to bragging about his skill, until his captain challenged him to shoot a jug off his own son's head. The soldier's faith in his ability wavered and the shot killed the boy.

Rumored effects of other metal shots include: copper shot generates an electric blast, nickle will shatter any lock or binding, cobolt will penetrate any armor as if AC 10, zinc will generate a burst of light equal to sunlight, and coal will ignite fires.

# THE BLACK VAULT

## Blacker's Hook

**B**lacker's hook was made within the lands of Ravenloft more than a decade ago now by a man named Jack Blacker. Blacker was a man obsessed with knowledge. It was his goal to ultimately learn everything and master every skill. This jack-of-all-trades took pleasure in his abilities and his accomplishments eventually became a vainglorious, overbearing pride.

Blacker settled in Il Aluk a decade ago, but he vanished years ago and whether he still lives or is dead is unknown. Blacker spent his years as a tinkerer and craftsman putting his vast knowledge to work in the creation of many tools.

Many of Blacker's most famous items are intricate mechanical devices that he designed to perform simple, everyday tasks in the most complicated manner possible. Blacker also crafted many simple, everyday tools and objects, commissioned by the townsfolk.

As the years passed, the weight of Blacker's vast knowledge affected his mind. He became convinced that some sinister cabal was following him, determined to kill him and harvest his brain. No one ever saw the macabre enemies that Blacker feared, but this did little to ease his fears.

Because of his paranoia, Blacker began to enchant the everyday items that he made. His plan was that these items would fall into the hands of his enemies. More often, however, they came into the possession of innocent folk.

Blacker's hook is one of his more simple cursed objects. The hook is nothing more than a curved metal hook with a wooden handle; the type used by cargo handlers or in a butcher's shop.

## Manufacture

The hook is made of a curved steel hook with a barb at the tip and a cylindrical wooden handle set at right angles. Blacker crafted the entire item himself, carving the handle and smithing the hook at the forge he had built behind his home.

The children of Il Aluk still whisper that Blacker crafted his most dangerous items while stark naked under the light of the full moon and that madness will come upon whoever handles them. The truth of this story is subject to some debate.



The curse of madness is certainly valid.

It is not known whether Blacker created the hook with a specific enemy in mind. Blacker spent his years in Il Aluk in the grip of paranoia, and extensive lists of his "enemies"—mostly his creditors—were found among his papers.

## Charges

The hook does not store or use charges. When it is employed in combat, its powers are activated. The hook may be used just as a *sword +1* or other magical weapon might be.

## Use

The hook can be used for many mundane tasks, including baling hay, dragging heavy objects, hooking meat, and so on. Any proficiency check made by someone using this item gains a +2 bonus if such a tool would aid the endeavor.

The hook may also be used as a piercing melee weapon. Whenever it is wielded in this fashion it is

# THE BLACK VAULT

considered a +2 weapon with a speed factor of 2, that inflicts 1d4+1 points of damage to small to man-sized targets and 1d4 to larger targets.

## Powers

Whenever someone using *Blacker's hook* fails a fear or horror check, its special powers are triggered. Instead of being frightened, the owner is filled with an overwhelming, maniacal courage. This causes the character using the hook to attack the thing that caused the fear or horror check. During this attack, the wielder's Strength is boosted to 19, giving a +3 bonus to the attack roll and a +7 bonus to damage caused. Once activated the only weapon the character will use is *Blacker's hook*. These effects fade the moment that the enemy has been driven away or slain.

## Curse

Anytime the hero uses the *hook* to vanquish an enemy, its first curse takes effect—the hero feels a need to brag of his bravery. The *hook* confers the bard's ability to interest bystanders in the tale (page 42 of the *Player's Handbook*). The crowd's reaction should be determined normally for this ability, with a save vs. Paralyzation.

The hero may bend his companions' ears for a while, but if they tire of their friend's newfound interest in boasting, the wielder will still feel a need to tell his story. Any crowd will do. The character will seek out the company of those willing to listen to him, even if he has to buy the whole tavern a round to get their attention.

Further, each time *Blacker's hook* gives its owner the gift of courage in the face of great evil, it exacts a price. As soon as the maniacal rage leaves its owner, he must make a Madness Check as described in the Ravenloft Campaign Setting. Eventually, anyone using *Blacker's hook* will be driven utterly mad by the implement.

## Destruction

*Blacker's hook* can be destroyed by melting it in a mystic forge. The fire will burn its wooden handle, and melt its steel hook. If the hook is unmade, its powers will be dissipated in a puff of colorful but

harmless smoke.

As a last act of defiance, however, everyone in the area must attempt a save vs. Breath Weapon to avoid inhaling these fumes. A failed saving throw requires the victim to make a madness' check.

## Legends

A common fable throughout Darkon is that this enchanted *hook* eventually leads its wielder down the paths of paranoia and madness. He sees malice in every glance, threats in every spoken word. Eventually, the curse of the *hook* leads its owner to attack hecklers and those who offer him insult. Then it will lead him to wait in dark alleys and shadows to avenge these imagined threats.

Some folk speculate that *Blacker's hook* is the same as the famous hook of Bad-hand Duke, a pirate of wicked repute. That tale says that the spirit of that dastardly villain still *haunts* his hook and possesses it users to lead them into deep misery and misfortune.



# THE BLACK VAULT

## Dead Man's Armor

This suit of full plate armor was designed and constructed at the behest of Azalin himself. It will fit any human or demihuman who stands 5 to 6 feet tall and is of average build.

It would be difficult to imagine a more fearsome looking suit of armor. Not only is the *dead man's armor* dull black, its entire surface is covered with ivory scrollwork, small spikes and razor-edged fins resembling an arcane skeleton. Its helm is fashioned with a skull-shaped visor that creates the image that the wearer is some manner of living dead.

## Manufacture

Hidden within Castle Avernus is an *anvil of darkness*, one of the most sinister blacksmithing tools. One of the first things created on this anvil was the foul *dead man's armor*. If a more diabolical creation was ever shaped on that anvil no knowledge remains of it today.

This dread armor was formed from scraps of other armor from fallen champions of light. Each remnant once belonged to a paladin slain by a servant of Azalin. The piece of armor that failed the paladin and permitted the fatal blow was harvested and carried to Castle Avernus. There, the metal was reforged and reassembled to create this evil relic.

The armor scraps were melted down and resmade into a new piece for of this black armor. The vampire dwarf, Axrock, crafted the armor from plans his master, Azalin, supplied. After three months of careful work the armor stood completed. Grim Azalin then wove spells of black powered necromancy into the metal of the armor and made it an object of horror.

## Charges

The *dead man's armor* is a permanent magical item and does not use charges. Folklore reports that its negative energy field can be nullified for a time if exposed to pure positive energies thus prolonging the life of one trapped within the cursed armor.



## Use

As with most magical armors, no special actions or commands are required for the owner to draw upon the powers of the *dead man's armor*. The *dead man's armor* does not manifest any magical effects until it is worn by someone.

There are rumors of a special command that will allow the wearer to remove the armor without harm, but this command is apparently known only to Azalin. It is possible that Axrock, the dwarf who created the *dead man's armor*, also knows of ways in which the armor's powers and curses may be nullified.

## Powers

Anyone who dons the *dead man's armor* becomes a walking inferno of necromantic magic. In addition to its special powers, the armor acts as full plate armor +4, bestowing a base Armor Class of -3 to its wearer.

# THE BLACK VAULT

Anyone who touches the *armor* while another wears it, whether the part of body which made contact with the armor is bare flesh or garbed in clothing or armor, must make a save vs. Death Magic at +2 or be instantly slain. The death visited upon the victim is so painful and terrible that he must make an insanity check at a -4 penalty if he is *resurrected*.

If the *dead man's armor's* wearer intentionally grapples a foe (an action which ignores the AC value of the armor itself and instead makes an attack roll against AC 10 plus magical and Dexterity bonuses) the victim must save vs. Death Magic to avoid dying instantly. Unlike those who touch the *armor* themselves, however, these poor folk cannot be brought back to life. Instead, these victims will rise in three rounds as undead, cannibal zombies (see *Creatures of Darkness*, the third RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® appendix). These foul creatures are under the command of the wearer of the *dead man's armor* and will obey his spoken orders. These wretches' torment ends quickly. After three days of servitude, they crumble to dust and are forever destroyed.

Necromantic spells that are cast upon anyone wearing the *dead man's armor* are instantly turned back upon their caster. The caster is entitled to any saving throws normally associated with the spell. The spell's original target is not affected by the spell in any way. In the case of spells requiring the caster to touch the armor wearer, like *chill touch*, the caster is affected by both the spell and the normal effects of touching the *armor*.

Lastly, anyone wearing the *dead man's armor* is able to control undead as if he were an evil cleric of a level equal to his current level. If the wearer is an evil priest who can already use this power, he gains a +2 bonus on both his roll to assume control of the undead and his roll to determine how many hit dice of undead are affected.

## Curses

Though the *armor* has no effect if not being worn, anyone donning the *dead man's armor* is affected by the terrible magics woven into it the moment that the last piece of the *armor* is donned. In addition to the drawbacks associated with being

trapped in this suit of armor, the character wearing it is a terrible threat to everyone, friend or foe, who brushes against the *armor*.

With each passing day, the wearer of the *armor* is drained of one experience level or hit die. Thus, a 10th-level character can wear the *armor* for only 10 days. At the end of that time, the *armor* consumes his life force and falls from his body.

If a wearer tries to remove the *armor* or to have it stripped from him before his fate overtakes him, he becomes weaker and weaker as each piece is removed. This growing weakness should be sufficient warning for all but the most desperate or foolish victim, for if the *armor* is completely removed, the wearer permanently loses 2d6 points of Constitution and must make a System Shock roll at his new Constitution or die.

Freed from the *armor*, the victim's corpse will rise again in three days as a revenant bent on revenge against the one who placed him in the armor or against the new armor's wearer, stalking the night for 72 hours before collapsing to the ground and crumbling to dust.

Because the *dead man's armor* was fashioned from the armor of fallen paladins, it is vulnerable to attacks made by these holy warriors. Whenever a paladin strikes someone wearing the *dead man's armor*, there is a chance he will instantly slay his target. Any natural attack roll of 20 on such an attack indicates that his blow has found its mark. Those slain by a paladin's enchanted weapon will not rise again as a revenant.

## Destruction

Only scholarly speculation exists regarding how to destroy this relic. It is thought that the armor can only be unmade in the manner it was made: dismantled on the *anvil of darkness*, superheated in the fires of a volcano and quenched in a vat of holy water, or in blessed in some other manner.

## Legends

Those who use the *armor* to exact revenge either by wearing it or forcing their victim to wear it, have all met with grim fates. They are corrupted and used by dark powers as tragic examples of the price of vengeance.

# THE BLACK VAULT

## The Golden Blade of Ren

Created by a master weaponsmith in the free city of Greyhawk, this bastard sword was drawn to Ravenloft along with its mad master some 25 years ago. Upon the death of that worthy, the blade found its way into the hands of Azalin and now rests in the Black Vault.

The *golden blade* is slightly smaller than an average bastard sword, reflecting its original owner's rather diminutive stature. The pommel is fashioned in the shape of a cawing raven's head with ruby chips for eyes. Despite the weapon's name, the sword's blade is not made of gold; it is fashioned of an alloy with an amber hue.

### Manufacture

The *golden blade* was created using a carefully guarded secret of weaponsmithing. The steel of the blade was folded and hammered hundreds of times in the same way that a samurai's katana is crafted. This process created an incredibly resilient steel which could be forge shaped and sharpened on the finest whetstones until the sword had a razor keen edge. Ancient elven magics—learned, bought, or stolen—were then infused into the weapon, preserving the blade's sharpness against all damage or aging.

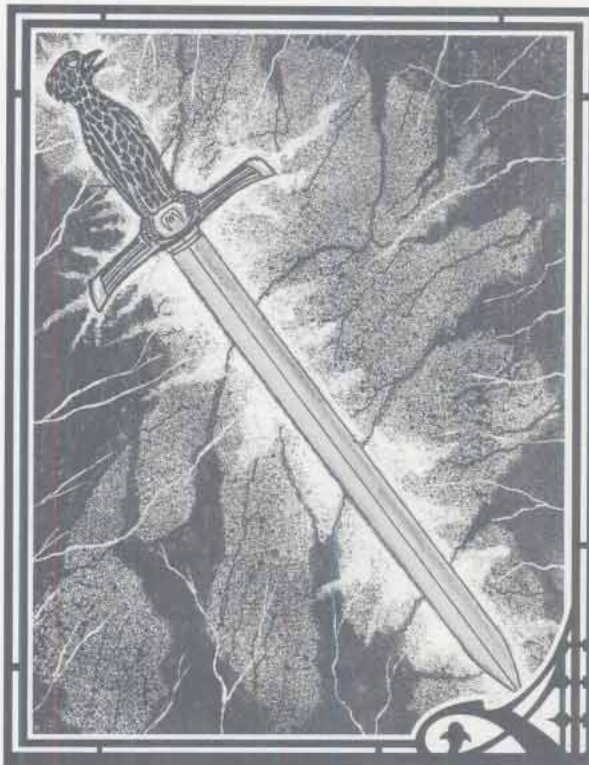
The grip, fashioned in the shape of a raven's body with wings tightly folded, was carved from a single piece of ivory and stained black with a dye extracted from raven's feathers.

### Charges

Like most magical weapons, the *golden blade* is a permanent magic item and does not use magical charges. When it is employed in combat, its powers are activated. The *blade* is used just like any magical *sword* +3.

### Use

The *golden blade of Ren* can be used just like any bastard sword. When used one-handed, it inflicts 1d8+3 points of damage to small or man-sized targets and 1d12+3 points to larger targets. When used with both hands, it causes 2d4+3 points of



damage to small or man-sized foes and 2d8+3 points to larger ones.

### Powers

The *golden blade* has a natural bonus of +3 which is applied to both its attack and damage rolls. In addition, this bonus is added to the user's initiative roll, effectively reducing the weapon's speed factor from 6 to 3 if wielded one-handed and from 8 to 5 if held in both hands.

Whenever the *golden blade of Ren* is pulled from its scabbard, its user gains several magical effects. These effects are activated automatically; no word or gesture of activation is required.

Without a doubt, the *golden blade's* most impressive power is its ability to increase the Strength of its owner. This effect works whenever the user twists the head of the pommel. The sword imparts a +3 bonus to its owner's Strength score. This magical effect may only be summoned three times a day, and it lasts for only one turn each time. This magical effect functions exactly like a *strength* spell.



# THE BLACK VAULT

Another power the *golden blade* commands is similar to a *feather fall* spell. Although the user's weight is not affected and he does not fall at a reduced speed, he will always land on his feet (if he so desires) and will suffer no damage from any fall. His possessions will likewise be unaffected by the fall, no matter how fragile they might be.

The third and final power of the *golden blade of Ren* is the costliest to its owner. Whenever the weapon used in a combat, its owner is affected by a *haste* spell. He gains a -2 bonus to his initiative, is able to move at twice his normal speed, and can make twice his normal number of attacks each round.

## Curse

The most obvious and commonly encountered disadvantage associated with use of the *golden blade of Ren* is its automatic *haste* spell. Each time that the weapon is drawn and used in a combat, the user ages one year. This effect is different than a *haste* spell. While *haste* ages its subjects by speeding up their metabolisms, the *golden blade* ages its owner by draining a portion of the user's—one experience level or hit die per claw—like a wraith.

The *golden blade* has a second sinister curse. Anyone who dies wielding this weapon or from its aging effects, will rise in three days as a wraith. In this form, the victim is compelled to seek out the *blade's* current owner and destroy him, possibly spawning a new wraith. It is likely that the weapon will be in the possession of the wraith's former companions and the victim will be forced to attack those it once called friends in life. If the weapon has not been claimed when the wraith rises, it will remain bound to the weapon and will jealously attack all who come near.

## Destruction

The destruction of the *golden blade of Ren* is not a feat to be undertaken lightly. Stored within this hungry weapon are the accumulated lives of all those who have been aged to death by its powers. Shattering the blade will release these spirits.

In order to unmake the *golden blade*, it must be heated until it is white hot and then suddenly

chilled to sub-zero temperatures. This may require magical methods to generate the volcanic heat and arctic cold, or it may be found in some remote polar region. However this feat is accomplished, the resulting thermal stress will instantly shatter the weapon.

At the moment it is destroyed, the *golden blade* will release the spirits of those it has recently consumed in the last decade. These spirits will take the form of wraiths who attack anyone in the area. From 2 to 20 (2d10) such creatures will be freed from the confines of the sword.

## Legends

There are many tales about the wondrous adventures of the mighty warrior Ren. They are renown for the fearful challenges he faced, the desperate quests he undertook, and the narrow escapes he made. Some say that Ren was crazed or at least a halfwit, always running headlong into trouble of his own making, never looking before he leaped. Indeed, many of the stories depict his grand impatience, overwhelming desire for haste, and ill-conceived strategies, just so there was some action.

One legend relates how the warrior, lost and weary, seeking shelter charged into a barren cave when he heard noises from within. It contained a nest of basilisk. Before they could turn their baleful gaze in his direction, Ren realized his error and fled the cavern straight over the edge of a cliff. If not for the magics of his sword he would have been paste ground between boulders.

Those who have wielded the *golden blade* have taken to echoing the mighty Ren's frantic feats. They grow impatient and impetuous, making hasty decisions and leaping into trouble before they know just what they face. All developed a compulsion to leap into a fray, and barring that, to pick a fight to ease the boredom. And should they suffer defeat, they seem driven by a desire for vengeance.

Perhaps this madness stems from the clamor of spirits trapped within the *blade*. There is a veritable council of wraiths, all vying for control of the *blade's* wielder, much like the ego of a self-aware sword seeks to dominate its owner. What mind can long hold back the eternal cacophony?

# THE BLACK VAULT

## The Headsman's Axe

**L**ong ago, in a now-forgotten land, a cruel and powerful necromancer rose to command an evil empire. With powers unequaled by other mages, he created a tyranny of fear. For decades, his word became cruel and terrible laws.

In the end, the forces of justice triumphed. A band of heroes led by the noble knight Lambert challenged the necromancer in his stronghold. Righteous sword met villainous magic, and the magician fled to save his life. But even when the tyrant had been routed and war was won, years of danger lay ahead, as the task to rebuild that shadowy kingdom began.

Among the many relics from that sinister reign was a terrible weapon known as the *headsman's axe*. When the dark lord fled, he left this behind. No records exist to relate what evil this arcane axe performed. But, somehow, it made its way into the misty domains of Ravenloft, where it now holds a place of honor in the Black Vault.

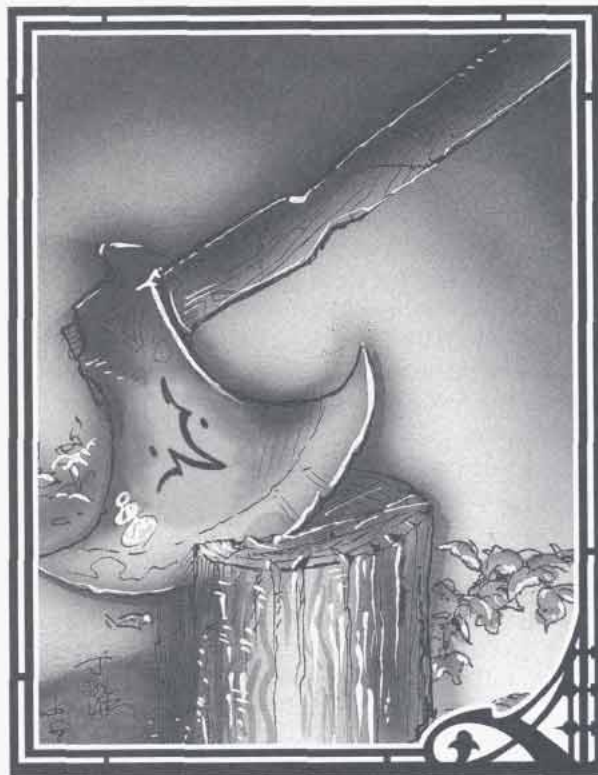
## Manufacture

The six-foot haft of this weapon was fashioned from the heart of a rowan tree growing over the grave of an ancient wizard. The blade, a great and terrible crescent, was carved from the shoulder blade of a black dragon and worked until it had the hardness of steel and the gleam of ivory. A single rune, the dreadful sigil of the necromancer, was carved along the edge of the blade.

## Charges

The *headsman's axe* combines the features of both a magical weapon and an enchanted staff. Some of its powers are permanent and need not use magical charges, while others depend upon mystical energies stored within the weapon. The axe functions as a magical weapon while the haft functions as a magical staff.

The *headsman's axe* will store a maximum of 15 charges. These charges are expended at various rates based on the power evoked. It can be recharged only through the act of beheading. Each beheading adds 1d4 charges to the weapon's magical reserves.



## Use

The magical might of the *axe* blade is always available to the *axe's* wielder. This requires no special commands or gestures to activate.

The special powers of the haft-staff which drain charges require a magical command be spoken to summon the effect. Learning the various trigger phrases may require extensive research.

## Powers

The *headsman's axe* is a +2 weapon. If used against a helpless foe, it becomes a +4 weapon.

Even without the amazing magics of its haft, the *headsman's axe* is a deadly weapon. In combat, it performs as a large slashing weapon, similar to a bardiche (speed factor = 10). If used against small or man-sized targets, the *headsman's axe* inflicts 2d6+2 points of damage and against a large targets causes 3d6+2 points of damage. The *headsman's axe* cannot be set to defend against a charging enemy.

# THE BLACK VAULT

Any natural attack roll of 20 indicates that the weapon has cleanly decapitated its target. In the case of most humans, demihumans, and humanoids, this is instantly fatal. Unusual creatures not slain by this attack will still suffer maximum damage. A beheading strike that kills its victim increases the number of charges stored in the weapon by 1d4 points.

When the word *dunkelfeuer* (pronounced "DOONK-el-foy-er") is spoken, the weapon is engulfed in a magical black fire for 1 round. Anyone struck by the *headsman's axe* during this round must save vs. Breath Weapon or suffer double damage. If the *headsman's axe* is used against inanimate objects during this time, the objects must make a save vs. Magical Fire or begin to burn. Only a *dispel magic* spell prevents the *dunkelfeuer* from consuming the object. It requires 1 round per 10 pounds of weight for an object to be consumed by this fire. *Dunkelfeuer* will not spread as normal fire does; only the touch of the *axe* will ignite the *dunkelfeuer*. Summoning the *dunkelfeuer* expends 2 charges.

The command *schutzzool* (pronounced "SHUHT-zool") may also be given. This encases the wielder in a magical barrier that renders him immune to injury from normal fire. He remains vulnerable to magical fire, but receives a +4 bonus to any saving throws against such attacks.

The *axe's* final power is triggered by the word *flammeplatzen* (pronounced "FLAHM-eh-plahtz-en") and expends 8 charges. When this word is spoken, a pyre elemental (described in the *RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix Vol 1&2*) is instantly summoned. This creature has 8 Hit Dice and obeys the holder of the *headsman's axe* for 24 hours. At the end of that time, the pyre elemental dissipates harmlessly.

## Curses

The *headsman's axe* contains such evil that anyone who uses it cannot help but be tainted.

Each use of one of the weapon's special powers requires the wielder to make a powers check. The chance of failing this check is equal to the number of charges expended to create the effect. Thus, summoning the pyre elemental requires an 8% powers check.

Further, anyone who employs the *headsman's axe* in combat cannot help but become evil. Even the most upright paladin is not immune to this effect. Whenever the weapon is used to behead an enemy, the *axe's* wielder must make a save vs. Spell or his alignment will shift one step toward chaotic evil. For example, a lawful good paladin uses the *headsman's axe* to behead a convicted criminal, his alignment would shift to lawful neutral or to neutral good. The next time that paladin uses the *axe*, perhaps to decapitate an enemy in the heat of battle, his alignment would shift to chaotic good or true neutral.

Even if the user abandons the weapon, a deadly curse pursues him. Everytime thereafter, when a foe using a slashing weapon rolls a natural attack roll of "20," the cursed victim must make a save vs. Death Magic, or his head is cut off.

## Destruction

Little is known about the true nature of the *headsman's axe*, but there are theories on how this fell relic may be destroyed. Since the weapon seems to draw its sinister magics from the elemental plane of fire, it may be possible to effect its destruction by subjecting it to either elemental fire or its nemesis, elemental water.

A second theory is that this dread device draws its powers from the pyre elemental bound within it. If the pyre elemental can be summoned forth and then barred from returning to its haven and destroyed outside of the *axe*, then perhaps this weapon will also dissolve in a puff of smoke even as the pyre elemental is extinguished.

## Legends

Falcon the Great, a wizard of no small repute once possessed this arcane arm and outfitted his champion with it. He soon discovered the secrets of summoning the elemental, and that, though it could be defeated, like a vampire it would retreat to the haven of the *axe* and therein regenerate. However, with each fearful summoning of the pyre elemental, the captain was possessed by an evergrowing fever that seared his brain, driving him mad, till one day he spontaneously burst into flames and was consumed.

## The Pipe of Mordent

**T**hough the *pipe of Mordent* is not a weapon of war, it has often been carried into battle. This association with warfare attracted Azalin's attention and he added it to his arsenal.

At first glance, the *pipe* seems to be a normal bagpipe. It consists of a leather bag fitted with five pipes: a blowpipe, a chanter, and three drones. The soft leather bag is covered with blue velvet trimmed in silver. The unnatural pipes are fashioned of human flesh and elven bone.

The *pipe of Mordent* was created some fifteen years ago by a bard known only as Stewart. Stewart was not a native of Mordent, but had been washed ashore in the wreckage of a great sailing ship. Little is known about Stewart's life or history. Nobody even knows what land he once called home. But soon after his shipwreck, Stewart started his life anew in the land of Mordent. The people of that domain proved friendly, and it was not long before they accepted the castaway. Stewart chose to teach music, to perform, and to fashion various musical instruments for sale as his profession.

## Manufacture

Not long after he settled in his new home, a mysterious figure called on Stewart. The stranger offered Stewart a temptingly large sum of money to make a bagpipe for him. The man would supply the materials he wished Stewart to use, with strict instruction that the bard use nothing else. Stewart thought nothing of this demand or this commissioner's manner. After all, many of his customers requested special modifications or decorations to satisfy their taste or glorify their family lineage when they commissioned an instrument. That the *pipe* was to be fashioned of bone, instead of wood, repelled Stewart. But the stranger insisted, and the promise of a golden bonus soon quieted the bard's disharmony. However, when the commissioner demanded that the windbag be fashioned from human skin, Stewart refused. The mysterious client flew into a rage, destroying the bard's shop and threatening his very life. Fearful of the stranger's strength and power, Stewart quickly acquiesced.



The construction of the *pipe* took less than a month. Thirty days after he delivered the required materials, the mysterious stranger returned and demanded his instrument. Stewart complied and hesitantly requested his pay.

The client waved off Stewart's entreaty, saying that he must test the *pipe* first. With that, he began to play. As the haunting music of the *pipe* filled his shop, Stewart felt an unnatural pounding in his chest. He pleaded with the stranger to cease playing, but was ignored. The howling of the *pipe* grew louder and louder, a dreadfilled cacophony. Stewart cried out in pain as the keening of the *pipe* tore his heart from his chest and consumed him body and soul. As the last traces of the unhappy bard were drawn into the *pipe*, the stranger's playing ceased and he smiled. The *pipe of Mordent* was horribly complete.

## Charges

The *pipe of Mordent* is able to store as many as 30 charges, which are expended at varying rates

# THE BLACK VAULT

when the *pipe's* powers are invoked. As the charges are depleted, the *pipe* can recharge itself by consuming the life force of intelligent creatures. Each level of energy drained into the *pipe* provides one charge. The *pipe* can absorb a maximum of 13 charges at one time. If the *pipe* drains further levels, they are simply lost.

## Use

Making use of the *pipe of Mordent* is a simple matter for anyone who is proficient at playing the bagpipe. This skill is available as the rogue's musical instrument proficiency. Indeed, any character who can play the bagpipe can play the *pipe of Mordent* as if it were a normal instrument. The *pipe's* superior construction adds a +1 bonus to the character's proficiency check.

The *pipe's* various powers are activated when specific tunes are played. Those who are not yet familiar with the *pipe* must discover which tunes activate each magic through simple research or through such magic as a *legend lore* spell. Whenever a character tries to use one of the *pipe's* magical powers, he must make a successful proficiency check on his musical instrument skill. A failed check means that the magic simply doesn't function. Each attempt to use the *pipe* requires between 1 and 9 rounds.

## Powers

Once the character has learned the tunes that activate each of the *pipe's* powers, several effects can be produced. Each of the *pipe's* powers is activated by a different tune. The number of charges expended by each power follows in parentheses. The spell-like powers of the *pipe of Mordent* include: *taunt* (1), *deafness* (2), *unearthly choir\** (3), *confusion* (4), *shrieking walls\** (5), *repulsion* (6), *banishment* (7), *Otto's irresistible dance* (8), and *wail of the banshee\** (9). (Spells marked with an asterisk "\*" are found in the *Tome of Magic*.)

The number of rounds required to play a tune is equal to the number of charges consumed. Thus, it requires 7 minutes to play the tune that triggers *banishment*. The proficiency check is made when the character begins to play the *pipe*.

In addition to its spell-like powers, the *pipe* produces a number of side-effects when played. These effects occur automatically when the user makes a successful proficiency check. These effects do not drain any charges.

A character of any class who plays the *pipe* successfully gains a bard's abilities to inspire his allies and counter the effects of poetry or songs used as a magical attack. Further, it can counter the effects of other attacks based on sounds and influence reactions and negotiation. If the piper is a bard, the effects of these powers are doubled.

## Curse

The *pipe of Mordent* is renown for its appetite. Whenever the *pipe's* last stored charge is expended, the instrument immediately consumes the life force of every living creature within 30 feet, save for the piper. It matters not whether those in range are the piper's friends or foes. Every victim is entitled to a save vs. Death Magic to escape the hunger of the *pipe*. Although the piper is immune to this effect, he must make a powers check equal to the total number of energy levels consumed by the instrument.

## Destruction

It has been said that the only way to destroy the *pipe of Mordent* is to sprinkle it with the tears of a banshee. Whether this is true remains to be seen.

## Legends

Legend reports that since the bones are elven in origin, they are especially effective against elves. What would be the effect of replacing the chanters with bones of other races?

Grim ghost tales sing of many arcane songs that produce dread effects on this *pipe*. There is the *melody of madness* a medley that invokes a berserker rage in the listeners. Then there is the *danse macabre* a haunting refrain that animates an army of the dead, but ends with the death of the piper. And last, is the *symphony of souls*, that consumes the living spirit. Rumor has it that if it is played backwards it summons maddened spirits of former victims and may unmake pipes.

# THE BLACK VAULT

## Tome of Terror

The *tome of terror* is a book of fairy tales. It first turned up a few years ago, when a Vistana sold it to a well-to-do merchant in Pont-a-Museau in Richemulot. The *tome* was originally commissioned for the entertainment of a wealthy patron.

The *tome's* author is unknown, but it was surely his crowning achievement. Although the *tome* is superbly crafted, its appearance is ghastly almost beyond endurance, making it an object only the most decadent could truly enjoy. It is bound in a thick, smooth leather that antiquarians have been unable to identify. A human face appears to be straining through the *tome's* front cover, a face whose silent scream of agony is forever preserved. The *tome's* pages are of an exquisitely soft and smooth vellum. Its stories are handwritten in rich calligraphy with florid capitals making their reading somewhat laborious. Full-page pictures in vivid colors and gold leaf illustrate a scene from every story.

## Manufacture

For all the ghastliness of the *tome's* cover, once it is opened, it invites the reader to become immersed in its tales. The stories were copied by a masterful scribe working closely with a wizardly creator. As each tale was completed, the pages on which it was written were imbued with mystical power. A *detect magic* cast upon the *tome* will reveal an overwhelming intensity of enchantment.

The *tome's* cover gives a hint of the powerful magics that were harnessed during its creation. The wizard who created the *tome* bound the life energy of a champion into each story. The life energy of a darklord of a long forgotten domain was stolen to seal the *tome*. It is his face that adorns the cover of this infernal libram.

## Charges

The *tome* does not store or expend magical charges. However, its magical powers work only once a day. During the rest of the time, it is merely a book of engrossing fairy tales.



## Use

Anyone who can read can fall under the *tome's* spell. In fact, language is not a barrier to the "enjoyment" of these stories. Everyone who looks upon the pages of the *tome* will recognize the script within as a language with which he or she is familiar. Thus, one need only open the *tome* and begin reading a story to trigger its powers.

## Powers

Whenever someone opens the *tome* for the first time each day and begins to read any story in it, the reader and anyone within 10 feet of him must make a save vs. Spell or be instantly transported into the story. All these trapped by the magic of the *tome* become characters in the story, and find themselves a part of that world, facing the problems plaguing the story's characters.

After the heroes have faced and survived the challenges presented in the story, they are returned to the normal world. Wounds suffered in

# THE BLACK VAULT

the fantasy realm remain, just as spells cast or magical items exhausted are no longer available. Those who die in the story are not released from the *tome* but must relive the story again, and again, each time the story veers from the tale as they experienced it the first time.

## Curse

Adventurers who read the *tome* are sucked into whatever fairy tale they chose to read. They may find themselves trapped in any manner of tale, from heroic stories to cautionary fables. The only common thread in this anthology is the horrific nature of the plots and villains.

If the DM opts to use the *tome* to recreate traditional folktales, it is likely that the players will be more or less familiar with almost any fairy tale into which they are plunged. A clever DM will insert new plot twists and characters to these stories, possibly even changing the endings.

In addition to being transported away from their friends, families, careers, and plans, the heroes must cope with being transported away from their own lives. The *tome* does not necessarily strive to match profession with profession or even gender with gender. The heroes may become any fairy tale character, of any age and of any abilities. Many adventurers may find adjusting to a new body even more challenging than adjusting to an unknown world and an uncertain fate.

Also, part of the *tome's* curse naturally lies in the fact that only some of the heroes may be transported into the fairy-tale world. It is believed that the *tome* was originally created to allow its owner to travel into the stories, experience the tale personally, and transport him back. Phrases or spells may originally have been required to bring the owner back. Now, no one the *tome* transports returns of his own volition, but, perhaps these commands may be rediscovered.

Companions whom the *tome* leaves behind may be able to determine these triggers through mundane or magical research, but transported characters have no hope of discovering them, as no simulacrum of the *tome* exists in any of its fairy-tale worlds.

## Destruction

Although the *tome* is extravagantly enchanted, it is made of mundane materials. Although normal fires will not harm it in any way, any sort of magical fire may destroy it, at least for a time.

If the *tome* is destroyed, it will immediately release the combined energies of its stories in a single ferocious blast of energy. This blast will permanently transform creatures within a one mile diameter into characters from stories found in the *tome*, randomly chosen by the DM. The creatures are only transformed if the *tome* is destroyed—they are not also transported into one of the *tome's* stories.

## Legends

There are so many, varied accounts of the content of this tome, that it may be there are many different volumes of this *Study in Scarlet*, each detailing a different type of story: fairy tale, fable, and ghost story, to name a few. If such is the case, then a deadly danger lies in wait for the unwary of our fair land.

Experiencing one of these haunting stories may forever change the reader's life. Van Richten reports that one comrade who had been caught up in the book, but escaped, was plagued by constant nightmares in his dreams, until the story started to invade his very waking hours.

The good doctor's friend also had only a vague understanding of what happened to those who failed to defeat the story's challenge. If they failed they found they could not escape, for they were constantly drawn back into the story to play it again. And these were not stories of happily ever afters. Even the nice stories had turned dark and corrupted.

What happens to someone who dies in the *tome*? That remains uncertain. Perhaps that lost soul is doomed to relive the story again and again. Or perhaps the hero dies. In at least one case, it has been reported that new tales have appeared on the pages of this *tome*, tales retelling the tragic story of a friend or champion. And perhaps that is the true fate of a failed champion, to forever become a part of the *tome*.

# THE BLACK VAULT

## Tyenn's Reflective Shield

**T**yenn (Tee-YEN) was a bold warrior. He fought many battles against darkness and the assassins of the Zhentarim. They dispatched agents to kill him. When these failed, the Zhentarim chose two wizards to craft a magical shield. Then they arranged for him to "discover" it. When he took it in hand, he was cursed.

### Manufacture

*Tyenn's reflective shield* is a small, 30 inches in diameter and fashioned from brightly polished steel. Indeed, no amount of use or abuse can tarnish the gleam of the *shield's* face.

*Tyenn's reflective shield* was created in a drow forge using nefarious spells. After the *shield* was formed, two leather grips were riveted to the underside. These magically adjust themselves to fit the arm of whoever holds it.

### Use

There are no command words or special gestures required to activate *Tyenn's reflective shield*.

### Powers

*Tyenn's reflective shield* is a *shield* +3. Its special powers have a great cost to use them.

Any gaze attack directed at the wielder of the *shield* is instantly deflected away. Instead, it strikes his nearest ally, affecting that character normally. The new target of the attack is allowed any saving throws he would normally be entitled.

Any breath weapon attack is blocked and fans out around him. This increases the intensity of the attack upon the other members of the party in range, requiring saving throws with a -2 penalty.

Missiles or thrown weapons aimed at one who holds *Tyenn's shield* are diverted before reaching their target. Instead they strike one of the owner's allies, gaining a +1 bonus to their attack roll.

### Curse

Each of the powers of this magical object has a side-effect dangerous or even deadly to those



around its owner. In addition, there are other drawbacks to ownership of *Tyenn's shield*.

As is the case with cursed items, whoever picks up *Tyenn's reflective shield* will find himself unable to rid himself of it. No matter how he tries, the *shield* will be subconsciously picked up.

If the owner chooses not to use the *shield* in combat, it will grow heavier with each passing round. This causes a cumulative penalty of -1 per round on his initiative and attack rolls. As soon as the *shield* is used in the combat, all penalties vanish. Once the character readies the *shield* for combat, he can not willingly discard it.

### Destruction

Only in the drow forges of its creation can *Tyenn's reflective shield* be unmade.

### Legends

It is said that the more one uses this *shield*, the more one is dependent on it. Some tales even relate that the owner develops a new vulnerability without the shield.



## GUISEPPE'S TOYS



he domain of Odiare is not large. From east to west it measures less than 300 feet; from north to south it is hardly larger.

Although sometimes called an endless city, there are less than 100 buildings within its borders.

At the heart of this diminutive realm, however, is the vengeful automaton Maligno (pronounced "muh-LIG-noe"). Fashioned long ago by the toy maker Guiseppe, this evil doll has become a mockery of the artisan's dream to create the perfect doll.

For Guiseppe did indeed realize his dream of creating the perfect doll, so perfect that it came to life. He lived his remaining long years in misery and repentance. For Guiseppe's creation proved vengeful and evil instead of loving and kind, as a boy—or a doll—should be, and it eventually drew its own creator under its spell.

Commanded by his creation, Guiseppe fashioned an army of living dolls (called carrionettes) that turned on the adults of Odiare and killed them. (See *RM2: The Created* (#9414).)

### Transformations

Of course, there is much more to the life of the master toy maker than this sad tale. Over the decades of his life, Guiseppe crafted enough toys to fill his shop many times over. Without exception, these beautiful and delightful things brought smiles to the faces of young and old alike. With the ascension of Maligno and Odiare's incorporation into Ravenloft, however, many of these treasures became warped into things of evil.

This section describes the magical items originally created in the domain of Odiare. In some cases, these items have been taken by adventurers who visited Odiare and then managed to escape the land's grasp. In other cases, however, it is impossible to say what force transported these items from that grim domain.

It may be that Maligno himself was able to cast these objects into the Mists, perhaps hoping to spread his influence into other lands. After all, even if most of the toys he scattered were lost, a few must surely find their mark. Like caltrops sown before an advancing army, these horrible objects would cause pain and suffering among adults no matter the final outcome.

### Maligno

The sinister lord of Odiare, Maligno, is almost impossible to destroy. It is said that only fire and magic can unmake him, but the truth of the matter is that even these destructive forces will not destroy him utterly. The destruction of Maligno's body will not end this ghoulish doll's menace, for his warped spirit will simply seek out another toy to inhabit.

It may be that Maligno's final destruction, however that deed might be accomplished, would also strip the following items of their enchantments. Of course, there is no way of knowing whether this is the case as long as Maligno lives. The reverse might even be true. It could well be that these terrible toys provide a refuge for Maligno's essence. As long as even one of these items exists, Maligno may be impossible to destroy.

### Other Creations

Though only the most deadly playthings are listed hereafter, Guiseppe created many other toys. There have been many others mentioned that have found mention across the lands of the Mists.

There are a great variety of animated dolls. There are also animated hobby horses shaped like dragons or chimerae, a child's ball, a crystal ball filled with snow flakes that provides glimpses of the future, toy drums and rattles, hoops and sticks, scrying alphabet building blocks, wagons, baby dolls and baby carriages.

There is no odor so bad as that which arises from goodness tainted.

Henry David Thoreau  
*Walden* (1854)

# GIUSEPPE'S TOYS

## Dancing Men

Among the first of Giuseppe's toys to be corrupted by the foul Maligno were the *dancing men*. This collection of marionettes originally brought joy and merriment to children and adults alike. In recent years, however, they have caused only suffering and anguish.

The *dancing men* look like a child's marionette. Each is an articulated doll suspended by black string from a wooden crossbar. In the hands of a skilled manipulator, the *dancing men* can move in a disquietingly lifelike fashion.

## Manufacture

The bodies of the *dancing men* were carved from pine and carefully fitted together with bronze pins. They are jointed at the ankles, knees, hip, waist, wrists, elbows, shoulders, and neck. Each figure is painted and outfitted to resemble a traditional adventurer, so there is a warrior, a wizard, a priest, a rogue, a psionicist and a fool. The *dancing men* stand nine inches tall.

The figure's strings are woven black horsehair. The longest string is roughly 24 inches. The horsehair strings are tied to metal eyelets screwed into the ends of the crossbars.

The crossbars are also made of pine. The crossbars are connected with a swivel joint that enables them to open and close like shears.

## Charges

The *dancing men* do not store or expend charges. However, the *dancing men* don't possess limitless magic. From the moment the magic is activated, a *dancing man* will function for up to one hour. At the end of this time, or when set down, the marionette becomes powerless for 24 hours.

## Use

The *dancing men* permit their user to control the actions of a person. However, in order to control another's actions, certain conditions must be met.

Each *dancing man* can affect only a character of the same class that it resembles. Thus, the *dancing man* in the image of a wizard allows its



user to control the actions of a wizard, but not the actions of a priest or fighter. The fool is used to control a common man or woman.

Second, control requires the acquisition of an item belonging to the intended victim. This item must have strong physical or emotional ties to the subject. In addition, the object has to be placed upon the puppet as if it were a piece of the marionette's clothing or equipment. Thus, a lock of hair might be tied around the puppet's waist like a belt while a wedding ring might be placed on its head as a crown.

Once an appropriate object has been found and made part of a puppet's garb, the user need only focus his thoughts on the intended victim and manipulate the marionette to activate its powers. Establishing control of a victim requires that the user concentrate for one round. The victim may make a save vs. Spell to resist the manipulation with a penalty of -4. The magic of the *dancing men* is effective against elves, half-elves, and related folk. Undead and other mindless creatures are immune to the effects of the *dancing men*.

# GUISEPPE'S TOYS

## Powers

The *dancing men* give their user the ability to manipulate the actions of another person. Because the use of a *dancing man* employs sympathetic magic through an item that once belonged to the victim, range is not a factor. However, the victim's actions can best be controlled when the user can see him.

Someone under the control of a *dancing man* acts in a normal manner. A *detect charm* spell will reveal the enchantment, but, not even the closest observation will detect the magical manipulation.

Directing the victim's actions once control is established is simple. In order to make the subject move, the marionette is moved in a like manner. If the person operating the *dancing man* wishes to make his subject speak, he need only speak himself and the victim will echo his words.

At the end of an hour, the subject is freed of his magical servitude. He retains complete memory of all that transpired while he was dominated by the *dancing man*, but does not feel that he was acting under any form of coercion. No matter what actions the subject was forced to take, he will believe them to have been his own choice.

One important note about the power of the *dancing men* is the degree of control that they bring over a victim. While other forms of mental dominance cannot force a character to do something he would not normally attempt, any action can be forced upon someone under the control of a *dancing man*.

## Curses

When a person is commanded to perform an evil act, he need not make a powers check. Instead, the controller using the puppet incurs this check. The chance of failing such a check is increased by half. Thus, an action that would normally require a 10% check would require a 15%.

The mental bond between the puppeteer and his subject is so strong that the death of the latter may well slay the former. If a victim is killed while under controlled by *dancing man*, the puppeteer must make a System Shock check or die as well.

## Destruction

The *dancing men's* enchantment makes them resistant to damage. They are immune to fire, acid, crushing, a flashing blade and most sorcery (80% magic resistant). There are only theories of how these puppets may be destroyed. Indeed, the method of destruction may vary for each puppet.

One thought is that the key to destroying these puppets lies in their strings. If their strings are cut with silver scissors, for no other blade can cut them, the magic of the *dancing man* will dispel.

Other theories include using the toymaker, Guiseppe's chisels to unmake the puppet, or the use of an arcane flame. Another thought is that destruction of the victim's fetish on the puppet will be enough to break the link.

## Legends

The *dancing men* have had lasting effects on some of their subjects, particularly when used to control the same individual many times. The marionette's power to coerce their victims to take actions they would not normally take, coupled with the feeling that they acted of their own free will, have driven some insane.

If there are six *dancing men*, might there not be others to control children, animals or monsters? Scholars caution to remain wary. Others may be made. Don't believe that once these have been destroyed the world is free of this curse. There are many who aspire to become Guiseppe's heir.

There are other diabolical puppets: whimsical hand puppets that can animate the inanimate and sinister shadow puppets that kill. Perhaps these are related to the *dancing men*.

A fragment of one tale tells that one with great willpower can seize control over the puppet trying to control him, to animate and attack its user. Still another legend purports that there is a master puppeteer somewhere who, through use of a blank *dancing man*, controls those who think they are controlling another with their *dancing man*.

At least one *dancing man* is known to have animated to protect itself. Perhaps, that *dancing man* acquired its own intelligence. It could control a person of its own volition without suffering mortal consequences.

## Death-in-the-Box

Perhaps the most frightful of the toys created by Guiseppe is this awful parody of a child's jack-in-the-box. Under the corrupting hand of Maligno, it has become a most sinister relic.

When closed, the *death-in-the-box* looks like nothing more than an old but still sturdy oaken box with a rusty steel crank protruding from one side. The surface of the box is skillfully painted with dancing skeletons and other macabre forms.

When the crank is turned, a porcelain skull faced clown springs from the box. The clown's clothes are torn, tattered satin of a harlequin. A faint odor of carrion lingers about the box.

## Manufacture

The *death-in-the-box* was fashioned from a fine red oak for the box, painstakingly sanded and painted to a bright, rich finish. He carved delicate, festive images into the wood, then inlaid the images with mother-of-pearl. But beneath the corrupting influence of Maligno, the painting has taken on a decidedly sinister tone.

The clown's face and hands were molded of fine porcelain. The clown's clothing was meticulously sewn from brightly colored satin and fox fur. Lastly, a single silver bell, said to be of elven origins, was sewn to the tassel of the cap.

The spring and crank mechanism were built to endure, that the toy would operate well for years. Indeed, Guiseppe's toy mechanisms were said to rival those of many accomplished clockmakers.

But, after its corruption the toy's appearance changed. The clowns became dancing skeletons, the porcelain face became a grotesque skull, and wicked talons replaced the delicate hands.

## Use

This toy is operated by turning its crank. After 2d4 turns of the clanking crank and hearing its tinny macabre tune the lid pops open and the deadly clown springs out. If used in isolation or at night, the clown manifests its evil nature. If the box has been consecrated by sprinkling it with blood of a murdered victim, it will manifest its evil every time.



## Powers

In the light of day or in the midst of a crowd, this toy does not manifest its powers. It appears to be just a normal, though horrid little toy. But in the dark of night or when operated in isolation, there is a 50% chance that its wicked powers activate.

If this toy is consecrated to evil with blood, it will always manifest its powers when in isolation, and 50% of the time in daylight or crowds until its present owner dies. Then the method of activation returns to normal.

Each time the *death-in-the-box* activates, the Dungeon Master may select what happens from the following list or roll 1d6.

1. **Horror Check:** All who watch the clown pop out of the box see its eyes flash wickedly and hear a horrible, ringing laughter. They must make a Horror check. The person operating the mechanism suffers a -4 penalty on his check. Only those seeing the clown pop up are affected; just hearing the box's music has no effect.

# GIUSEPPE'S TOYS

**2. Rending Attack:** The clown's wicked talons lash out at the person who opened the box. The clown's hands will stretch as far as six feet to reach their target. If the person is unassailable for some reason, the clown will attack the nearest vulnerable person. Each hand strikes with a THACO of 15 and inflicts 1d10 points of damage.

**3. Skeletons:** When the lid pops open, 2d4 full-sized skeletal clowns spring out and attack those around the box. These are equal to Strahd Skeletons (see *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM: RAVENLOFT Appendix*) and will fight until destroyed.

**4. Death Spell:** When the clown springs out of the box, it fixes its smoldering gaze on the nearest person. That character must make a save vs. Death Magic or suffer from a fatal seizure or choking and be instantly slain.

**5. Energy Draining:** The person who activated the *death-in-the-box* becomes charged with entropic energy from the Negative Material plane. The next person he touches, whether friend or foe, is affected as if by an *energy drain* spell. The victim loses two levels.

**6. Nothing:** The magic of the *death-in-the-box* does not manifest. However, the skeletal clown still springs from its hiding place, possibly frightening unsuspecting onlookers causing a Fear check. Failure results in the witness trying to flee, or if unable to flee he suffers a penalty of -2 to all rolls and Armor Class, spells face a chance of 25% minus the caster's level to misfire. For more drama, the DM may wish to have the victim make a System Shock roll or faint.

## Curses

While many would argue that the powers of the *death-in-the-box* constitute curses, the magics of this foul toy are every bit as dangerous to the user as its obvious manifestations of evil.

Anyone who willingly takes possession of this item draws the attention of the most malevolent forces. This results in an increase in the corrupting influence of the character's deepest fears. Thus, any powers check that the character

is called upon to make while he owns the *death-in-the-box*, whether that object is currently on his person or not, is doubled.

## Destruction

Like the body of Maligno, the *death-in-the-box* is vulnerable only to magic or fire. However, only certain forms of attack will actually destroy the toy. Most attacks will leave this foul toy unharmed. Those burdened with the *death-in-the-box* must perform a wearisome amount of research before they learn how to destroy it.

Only the flames of a funeral pyre can permanently harm the *death-in-the-box*. Other blazes, no matter how intense, have little effect, for the toy reforms after such damage.

Only certain spells will affect this toy. The powerful *sunray* and *energy drain* spells are effective against the *death-in-the-box*. If either of these spells is cast upon the toy, it will crumble into a fine dust and be forever destroyed. Other usually destructive spells malfom or apparently damage this toy, but after five turns, the *death-in-a-box* will reform.

## Legends

In the year of the Grey Wyrn in Falkovnia, court records report the burning of a witch, a young lad accused of slaying his playmates with black magic. Though the boy swore that he had caused no harm, and that the foul deeds were performed by his toy jack-in-the-box, the courts found him guilty and the execution carried out.

Investigation found that those who had died had bullied and beaten the lad, publically humiliating him time and again. When the child came into possession of the purported murder box, from some mysterious benefactor, one by one his tormenters either disappeared or died horribly.

If, indeed, the lad did not perform these crimes, then it may be that this nefarious toy is possessed of its own dark intelligence and acts to protect its owner by itself. That is a truly, frightful prospect.

Another story tells of a girl, who possessed this toy, was abused by her step parents and died. After her death, it seems the box protected her brothers and sisters. Her parents met grim fates.

# GUISEPPE'S TOYS

## The Porcelain Tops

One of the more unusual types of magical items created by Guiseppe is this assortment of *tops*. Unlike his other creations, these *tops* were never meant for the hands of a child. Guiseppe created these for the woman he loved, a delicate flower named Regina. The *tops* were made of fine porcelain and appear quite delicate. These *tops* are some of the earliest example of Guiseppe's work. Legend is that he created them when still a young man.

Although each *top* is painted differently, all are identically formed. All the *tops* stand just two inches tall and are at their widest just over two-and-a-half inches in diameter. Each *top* is glazed with a beautiful glossy finish and painted with delicately detailed patterns. Each of these *tops* is associated with a specific month and reflect an element or a school of magic. Only twelve are known to exist, though there may have been others made to serve another purpose.

## Manufacture

Guiseppe made these *tops* by first crafting a master pattern with a lathe and the most precise measuring tools available. From this original a plaster mold was cast. Into the mold a carefully formulated clay slurry was poured. The exact ingredients Guiseppe mixed into his porcelain are unknown, but it is generally believed that some impurity in the mixture was used to strengthen the *tops* and aid in their enchantment.

When the *tops* had dried, Guiseppe fired them with the aid of a local craftsman. They were then glazed white, and fired again. The *tops* were then lovingly hand-painted with twelve designs for the twelve months of the year, and finished with a coat of glossy, transparent enamel. Each hollow *top* was then filled with a variety of arcane oils or potions and sealed with a silver cap.

## Charges

These *porcelain tops* do not hold magical charges. While they possessing residual magical energy and detect as magical, they manifest their powers only set in motion. The spinning of the *top*



generates the magical vortex that activates its magical effect. When a *top* stops spinning the vortex collapses in on itself and these effects vanish.

## Use

To activate the magical effect of one of these *tops*, it must be placed on a smooth, flat surface and set to spin. The *tops* are well-balanced and will spin for a long time, provided they are properly started.

Making a *top* spin correctly requires a successful Dexterity check. If the check fails, the *top* hasn't been started correctly and will fall over. If the check is successful the *top* spins true. A well-started *top* will spin for one minute plus one minute per point the die rolled less than the user's Dexterity score. If the die roll equalled the character's Dexterity score, the *top* spins for only one minute. Once set to spinning, the *top* creates a magical vortex around it that inhibits anyone trying to touch it until it has spun its duration.

## Powers

Each of these magical *tops* has a special ability related to one of the schools of magic or the elemental schools. This special power manifests the moment the *top* is spun and continues as long as the *top* whirls.

When spun, each *top* causes a magical vortex to form in the air around it. These whirlpools of mystical energy are spherical in shape and whirl into existence with a diameter of 10 feet. Each additional round the *top* spins, the vortex expands by 10 feet. Thus, after 7 rounds, the vortex would have a diameter of 70 feet. When the *top* stops spinning, the vortex collapses in on itself. All those within the active range of these vortices are subject to the magical effects of the *top*.

**January:** This *top* is painted with a sprouting seed motif, small golden kernels from which bud little green leaves and a closed bud. When spinning, some trick of the artist makes the seed appear to be budding again and again. The *top of January* is strongly tied to the magical school of Conjunction/Summoning. When it is spun, this *top* causes a starry portal to form in the air around it.

If the person spinning the *top* has a specific destination in mind when he starts it, the portal will create an instant gateway to or from that location. The normal restrictions governing magical travel within Ravenloft still apply.

If the spinner doesn't have a destination in mind, then the portal leads to a random location. The Dungeon Master can select the destination or assign odds to several locations and simply roll dice to determine where the portal leads.

The Dungeon Master should keep a few things in mind when any character uses this *top*. First, the portal is visible and can be used by anyone from either side. Also, the *top* can never be taken through the portal. It must be left behind to continue to spin when its owner steps through the portal. Finally, the portal may remain open after the characters pass through it, so pursuers may be able to follow them. However, if a creature attempts to step through the portal on the round that it collapses, a save vs. Death Magic is required or the traveller may suffer severe amputation injuries and possibly death.

**February:** This *top* is painted with delicate tracing of silvery snowflakes falling across a field of midnight blue. When it spins, the pattern seems to depict a gentle falling snow. The *top of February* is strongly tied to the magical school of Abjuration. When this *top* is set to spinning it creates a whirlwind of sparkling snow.

This whirlwind devastates all forms of magic that are within its area of effect. As the vortex expands, its power consumes the essence of magic, creating a magical dead zone. Within the area of the vortex, magical spells and magical items will not work, magical weapons lose their bonuses, and existing magical auras fail.

Magical items have a 10% chance of becoming permanently nonmagical for every minute that they spend within this magical dead zone. Artifacts, relics, and other very powerful objects may cease to function, but are never affected permanently. And while this particular *top* is immune to its own effect, the other *tops* are not.

**March:** This *top* is painted with a splendid webbing of interwoven colors. When set to spinning the colors blur together into an undulating rainbow. The *top's* magic is drawn from the school of Alteration.

The spinning of this *top* unleashes a wild nimbus of color similar in effect to that created by a *prismatic spray* spell. All within this area, except the person who spun the *top*, is struck by an effect identical to the *prismatic spray* spell. Any creature with fewer than 8 hit dice is struck blind for 2d4 and all suffer one of seven different effects determined by the color of the ray that strikes the victim. To determine which ray strikes, roll 1d8. Note the effects suffered if an appropriate saving throw is made.

- |   |        |   |
|---|--------|---|
| 1 | Red    | Suffer 20 points damage if fail to; Save vs. Spell for half damage. |
| 2 | Orange | Suffer 40 points, save vs. Spell.                                   |
| 3 | Yellow | Suffer 80 points. save vs. Spell.                                   |
| 4 | Green  | Poison: save vs Poison or die; success still suffers 20 points.     |
| 5 | Blue   | Petrified; save vs. Petrify to avoid.                               |
| 6 | Indigo | Insanity; save vs. Wand to avoid.                                   |
| 7 | Violet | Gated away; save vs Spell.  |
| 8 | Two    | Roll for two rays only.   |

# GIUSEPPE'S TOYS

**April:** This *top* is painted with a lace pattern reminiscent of a spider web sprinkled with gleaming dew. When set to spinning it forms pattern of spattering rain. April is one of the most dangerous *tops*. It is closely tied to the elemental school of Water.

When this *top* is spun it forms a watery whirlpool. Every living creature, except the spinner, caught within this whirlpool must make a save vs. Death Magic or be instantly drowned. The water does not spread beyond the whirlpool and flood the surrounding area. Anyone caught within the whirlpool for more than one round must make a new saving throw *each round* to escape.

**May:** This *top* is painted with an unusual lattice pattern similar to the facets of a cut gem. When spun this pattern appears to present an endless cascade of gems. This *top* is strongly tied to the elemental school of Earth.

As soon as this *top* begins to rotate, it forms an energy sphere of glittering faerie lights that flit all about. This sphere alters the force of gravity in its area. Within this zone everything is affected by a *reverse gravity* spell. When the *top* stops spinning, its magic ceases, causing everything in its area of effect that was not anchored to the ground to come crashing back to earth.

The person spinning the *top* is not immune to this effect, but may prepare himself to react to the sudden shift in gravity.

**June:** This *top* is decorated with a brightly-colored golden petals. When spun the pattern takes on the appearance of a blooming sunflower. Gold leaf gilds it, making this *top* flash and sparkle as it spins. This *porcelain top* has been infused with magic from the school of Illusion.

As soon as this *top* begins to rotate, a scintillating whirlwind of colors fans out from it. Anyone caught within these spectral streams must save vs. Spell or be affected as if by a *rainbow pattern* spell, causing the victims to stand and gaze at the fascinating light show. The spinner of the *top* is immune to its effects.

**July:** This *top* is adorned with an image of dark clouds and forked lightning. When the *top* is spun

a lightning storm rages across its surface. This *top* is linked to the elemental school of Air.

Once spun, this *top* creates a deadly storm of gale force winds and lightning. For each round that it spins, a stroke of chain lightning leaps from the *top*. Each round that the *top* continues to spin, another lightning bolt is unleashed.

Each lightning strike causes 6d6 points of damage. Targets are permitted a save vs. Breath Weapons to reduce damage to half. The person spinning the *top* is never struck by its lightning.

**August:** The surface of this *top* is decorated with gold, brass and copper inlaid solar disc. When the *top* spins, the pattern looks like a magical fire roaring and leaping. This *top* is tied to the elemental school of Fire.

The instant that this *top* begins to spin, it forms a ball of magical fire. Everyone caught within this flame suffers 4d6 points of damage unless they are immune to magical fire. A save vs. Breath Weapons reduces damage to half. All objects within the sphere of fire must make a save vs. Magical Fire or be destroyed. The fire created by the *top* never harms the person who spun it.

**September:** This *top* is painted with a roses nestled in a thicket of thorns. When it is spun the pattern forms a twining briar with roses budding, blooming and wilting before one's eyes. This *top* is tied to the school of Enchantment/Charm.

When this *top* begins to spin, it radiates a sphere of invisible energy that makes the very air shift and shimmer like a mirage.

Everyone within this magical aura must make a save vs. Spell or be affected as if by the spell *Leomund's lamentable belaborment*, and will begin to discuss any subject of immediate interest, often the *top* itself. As soon as the *top* stops spinning, its magical effects end.

**October:** This *top* is enameled a glossy black, and set with images of the phases of the moon. When it is spun, viewers are treated to a most unusual optical illusion of the moon waxing and waning. Strong magics from the school of Necromancy are focused within this *top*.

The moment that this *top* begins to spin, it radiates an nearly invisible mantle of shadows.



# GIUSEPPE'S TOYS

Anyone who comes into contact with this *top's* aura must make a save vs. Death Magic or will suffer the drain of one experience level or hit die instantly. Any creatures who spend more than one round within the *top's* aura must make a saving throw every round, so it is possible to lose a number energy levels to this diabolical device. The person spinning the *top* is not affected.

**November:** This *top* is decorated with a strange mosaic of autumn colors. When the *top* is spun the pattern appears to be falling leaves of red, gold, and orange blown by an autumn wind. There is a strong bond between this *top* and the magical school of Invocation/Evocation.

When this *top* begins to spin, it creates a sighing, nearly invisible sphere of frosty wind.

Any living thing that comes into contact with this wind must make a save vs. Death Magic or be aged 10 years per round exposed to the wintry wind. A successful saving throw indicates that the subject was able to partially resist this effect, aging only 5 years. In either case, a System Shock roll is required to avoid instant death. The one spinning the *top* is not subject to the effect.

**December:** This *top* is painted with a gleaming, snowy landscape dotted with the emerald spires of evergreen trees, rocky outcroppings and an icy river. When spun, the pattern appears to show a racing trip across a wintry wonderland. It is tied to the school of Wild Magic.

The instant that this *top* begins to spin, it creates a rippling aura, as if the air were a pool of water into which a stone has been cast.

Any die rolls required of a character while within the area of the *top's* effect must add a random modifier to the check. The DM rolls 1d10 to determine the modifier. If the roll is even, the modifier is a bonus. If the roll is odd, the modifier becomes a penalty. Thus, a roll of 6 indicates a bonus of +6, while a roll of 7 indicates a penalty of -7. If the roll being modified is a percentile roll, the modifier is multiplied by 5. Thus, a roll of 6 would indicate a bonus of +30 for a percentile roll. The one spinning the *top* is also subject to this effect.

## Curses

While the powers unleashed by spinning a *porcelain top* can be deadly, the *tops* bring yet another danger to those around them.

Anyone who halts the rotation of any of the *tops* by any means, unleashes a powerful burst of magical energy. This magical energy expands into a space equal to the *top's* sphere of effect at the time it was halted.

The effect of this magical release is identical to that of a *sphere of annihilation*. Thus, everything that falls within its boundaries is instantly *disintegrated*, swept out of existence. No one, not even the person who spun the *top*, is immune to this terrible effect.

## Destruction

The only way in which one of these *tops* can be destroyed is by halting its rotation prematurely. The same surge of energy that destroys everything around the *top* may annihilate the *top* itself. In order to stop a *top's* spinning, one must first survive its magical vortex effects. Then, if the item's motion is brought to a stop, an item save vs. Cold must fail or the *top* will implode.

## Legends

Legends report that some victims of these *tops* have been overcome by confusion and dizziness, verging on vertigo. In one case, the whirling vortex swallowed the mind of its intended victim, leaving a hollow shell into which wicked spirits rush to experience the thrill of physical life.

Apparently the combination of each *top's* painted pattern and the nature of the mystical oils within, transforms each toy into the perfect key to one of the realms of magic. But playing with the forces arcane is filled with peril. If mishandled the magic may go awry resulting in wild distortion or misfires of the intended effect. There have been recorded instances of these *tops* magnifying or decreasing the potency of their school's spells. And in all cases, misuse of these sinister powers sets loose a magical cyclone causing all magic of its nature to backfire upon the spinner, wreaking havoc upon all caught in its sphere.

# GIUSEPPE'S TOYS

## Tin Soldiers

These tiny warriors are easily mistaken as the common toys they have been fashioned to resemble. When originally created by the toy maker Giuseppe for children's delight, one had merely to wind them up and gleefully watched as them marched on parade. But the influence of Maligno and the magical powers of the Demi-plane of Dread have made them as deadly as living soldiers.

## Manufacture

It is believed that there are 24 of these dreadful constructs, all cast from the same molds. Half the *soldiers* were painted in bright uniforms of red and white, while the other 12 were clad in blue and light gray.

As their name suggests, these *soldiers* are made of tin. They stand exactly 20 inches tall and are jointed at the knees, hips, waist, elbows, shoulders, and necks. Their mechanisms are highly sophisticated, intricate clockworks wound using large keys protruding from the automaton's back.

Of the twelve red *soldiers*, eight are armed with long swords and shields while four are equipped with crossbows. Eight of the blue *soldiers* are equipped with axes and shields, and the remaining four carry ornate arquebuses.

## Charges

As mechanical devices, the *tin soldiers* do not have a fixed number of magical charges stored within them. Each time a *soldier's* clockwork engine is wound up, it will operate for 10 full minutes. Safeguards designed into the clockwork mechanisms prevent the *soldiers* from being overwound. Once the clockwork is fully wound, the key turns freely, never damaging the engine.

## Use

In order to ready a *tin soldier* for use, one simply winds up the key in its back, then sets it down and giving it a little shove, off it goes. Two *soldiers* can be wound and released each round.



The specific actions that a *tin soldier* can take depend on its orders. Unfortunately, these orders cannot be very complex. In fact, the order given to a *soldier* as it is released cannot exceed a brief sentence no longer than five words.

## Powers

Each of the different *tin soldiers* has special abilities that it can use in combat. Despite their variations, however, the *tin soldiers* have a number of things in common.

None of the *tin soldiers* can be directly affected by a magical spell. Thus, a *lightning bolt* or *fireball* spell will not harm one. Of course, if a spell were used to create a normal rock fall, the plummeting stones would affect the *tin soldiers* normally.

The eight red *swordsmen* are equipped with razor-edged long swords. Anyone struck by their weapons suffers 1d4 points of damage. In addition, the victim must make a save vs. Paralyzation or be affected as if by a *weakness*

# GIUSEPPE'S TOYS

spell for 2d4 rounds.

The remaining four red *soldiers*, each of which is armed with a crossbow, are no less dangerous than their sword-wielding counterparts. While they inflict only 1d2 points of damage in melee, they are able to launch *Melf's acid arrow* at an enemy. While they must make a normal attack roll to strike their target, the acid remains effective for 3 rounds, inflicting 2d4 points of damage per round.

The eight blue *axemen* wield dangerous blades that inflict 1d4 points of damage with each successful attack. In addition, anyone struck by these weapons must make a save vs. Paralyzation or be unable to move for 2d4 rounds. As usual, elves and half-elves are resistant to such effects.

The last of the soldiers, the four blue *arquebusiers*, are by no means the least dangerous. While they inflict only 1d2 points of damage in melee combat, they are able to discharge their firearms once *per round* of combat. These shots function as *magic missiles*, unerringly striking their targets and inflicting 2d4 points of damage with each shot.

## Curse

Many scholars have likened these *soldiers* to mechanical golems. Indeed, they do have much in common with those deadly abominations of science. Among the most notable similarities is an implacable resentment for their owners.

Each time a *tin soldier* is wound and released, there is a chance that it will turn on its owner. The first time an owner winds a *soldier*, there is only a 1% that it will attack, but this chance grows by 1% each time additional *soldiers* are wound and released. Thus, if the owner winds all 12 red *soldiers*, the chance of them turning on their owner is 12%. No amount of time will reduce the chance that the *soldiers* will attack their owner.

If winding a *soldier* causes it to turn on its owner, all the *tin soldiers* present instantly become active—whether or not they are already wound—and attempt to destroy their owner. *Soldiers* that are already active will abandon their missions to join in the attack on their owner.

## Destruction

Although they are immune to magic, the *tin soldiers* are not safe from destruction. Physical attacks that reduce them to 0 hit points render them inoperable, although they can be repaired. If a *soldier* is reduced to -10 or fewer hit points, it is assumed to be damaged beyond repair.

## Legends

Folktales make vague reference to unexpected variations in the ability limitations listed above. In one case, a *tin soldier* was overwound and its key accidentally broken. The mechanism would rewind itself within 24 hours of running down, and its last command became an overwhelming goal for the diabolical device. It's continuing threat only ending when it's mission was at last finished.

It has been suggested that the red and blue *soldiers* are mortal enemies and may abandon their assignments in order to confront and destroy their enemy. Finally, several tales all hint that if you melt a *tin soldier* there is a violent explosion, and those caught within its blast may be transformed into new tin soldiers.

**Tin Soldier—Red Swordsman (8):** AC 8; MV 6; HD 1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA *weakness*; SD none; SW none; MR 100%; SZ S (20" tall); ML 20; Int Non-; AL N; XP 120.

**Tin Soldier—Red Crossbowman (8):** AC 8; MV 6; HD 1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2; SA *Melf's acid arrow*; SD none; SW none; MR 100%; SZ S (20" tall); ML 20; Int Non-; AL N; XP 120.

**Tin Soldier—Blue Axeman (8):** AC 8; MV 6; HD 1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA *paralysis*; SD none; SW none; MR 100%; SZ S (20" tall); ML 20; Int Non-; AL N; XP 120.

**Tin Soldier—Blue Arquebusier (8):** AC 8; MV 6; HD 1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2; SA *magic missile* (2d4); SD none; SW none; MR 100%; SZ S (20" tall); ML 20; Int Non-; AL N; XP 120.

# GUISEPPE'S TOYS

## Toy Nightmares

These unusual items were transformed when Guiseppe's hobby horses were brought into the realms of Ravenloft. They appear to be common, if somewhat sinister, children's toys.

## Manufacture

Each *toy nightmare* is fashioned from a yard-long birch shaft, bleached white, with a horse's head mounted on one end. These hobby horses, once brightly painted and caparisoned, transformed into the evil countenances of nightmares.

## Charges

*Toy nightmares* do not hold a number of charges. Because of the manner in which they function, any *toy nightmare* can be used only once.

## Use

*Toy nightmares* are easy to use. One need only wait till midnight and then slam the shaft on the ground and the toy is magically transformed into a nightmare, a wicked steed of hags.

## Powers

As mentioned above, *toy nightmares* are simply toys that can transform themselves into real nightmares (as described in the *MONSTROUS MANUAL™* tome). The resulting creature will obey its summoner for a total of 13 days and nights.

**Nightmare (1):** AC -4; MV 15, FI 36 (C); HD 6+6; hp 30; THACO 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d6+4/1d6+4 (hooves) and 2d6 (bite); SA can set combustibles alight, paralytic breath (all within 10' must make a save vs. Paralyzation or be at -2 on their attack and damage rolls); SD nil; SW nil; MR nil; SZ L (6' at shoulder); ML Elite; Int Very; AL NE; XP 2,000.

## Curse

After its period of servitude is over, the *nightmare* will turn on its master. While creatures such as those summoned by the *toy nightmares* are used



to serving powerful beings, they despise being magically compelled to do so by mortals.

## Destruction

After they have been transformed into real nightmares, these creatures can be destroyed through combat or other means. In their toy form, however, they are invulnerable to anything except a *warp wood* spell. Such magic instantly strips them of their enchantment and destroys them.

## Legends

These evil toys are not just dangerous when they are activated, but they may also cause their user to suffer fitful sleep filled with nightmares. And tales relate that in some cases, these nightmares may occur while awake as daytime delusions, causing the user to hallucinate.

But the greatest danger for those who would command nightmares is coming to the attention of the Nightmare Court in the Nightmare Lands.

## THE WORKSHOP OF KLORR



he master craftsman, Klorr, is best known for the timepiece that bears his name.

Created with the aid of

unnamable creatures from the darkest planes of existence, that item proved to be his doom. Thus, while the *timepiece of Klorr* was the last magical item that this brilliant artisan was to fashion, it was hardly the first. Indeed, if it had not been for his long years of painstaking work on these earlier items, it seems unlikely that Klorr would have possessed even a fraction of the knowledge and skills that he called upon in the creation of his final artifact.

The majority of Klorr's early works were, as one might expect, also associated with measuring the passage of time. These pieces ranged from sundials and hourglasses to water clocks and metronomes. While most of these were either mundane or touched with only the faintest of supernatural auras, still others were fairly potent magical objects.

Even the more powerful of Klorr's earlier works were not of great importance in the power-hungry world of wizards and magic. As he grew more knowledgeable about time and magic, however, Klorr's creations gradually grew in magical power.

It is known that Klorr remained intensely attached to each object he made throughout his lifetime. When it was possible, Klorr visited wizards and potentates to whom he had sold timepieces, evidently to assure himself that his precious creation was being used and maintained in accordance with his wishes. While no sage wise in human behavior has, as yet, probed the depth and meaning of Klorr's intense and lasting interest in his creations, it is easy to ascribe his overprotectiveness to the craftsman's desire for perfection and his love for his work. After all, it is said that a great artist puts a little of himself into every object he makes. Perhaps this was even more true in Klorr's case.

### 15 February

*With every passing hour I grow more and more certain of my success. My heart, man's only true clock, that marks every moment of his life, sounds loudly in my ears. As I begin the final phase of my work, I cannot help but feel a little impatient, a little anxious. Still, I shall not falter. By this time tomorrow, the task will be completed, and I shall have mastered every aspect of mysterious time.*

### 16 February

*I am triumphant! My greatest timepiece is finished! Even now, all the wonders of time are mine to understand. The beautiful symmetry of the universe, the precision of all that is, these things are no longer mysteries to me. Am I wrong to relish this moment so? Is the pride I feel not justly due me? I cannot believe that I have actually achieved this moment. Today, all that I have sought to do, all that I have sought to master, is complete, finished. But man lives for the future, he seeks to know and master the moment yet unmarked by the inexorable hands of the clock. Even as I relish my victory over the universe, my understanding of its most private mysteries, I cannot help but wonder what tomorrow will bring me.*

### 17 February

*I am afraid. Something is amiss. My timepiece, my masterpiece, is far more than I had expected it to be. Not only does it echo the beating of my heart, it seems to control it. What will happen if I am careless and allow it to run down? When the clockwork stops, will the hours of my life also cease? And if I am vigilant and keep the mechanism wound and in good order, will my heart beat forever? The possibilities are incredible . . . and terrifying. I must not allow my pride to cloud my judgment. I must decide carefully what the future will hold for one who had his beginnings as a simple watchmaker.*

# THE WORKSHOP OF KLORR

## The Hourglass of Klorr

One of the most ornate and beautiful of Klorr's artifacts is his *hourglass*. Like the infamous *timepiece* that bears Klorr's name, this magical object gives its owner partial control over his passage through time.

The *hourglass of Klorr* resembles a standard hourglass in shape, but it is made of the finest and most costly materials. Fine, white quartz sand sifts from the upper bulb to a lower bulb of fine lead crystal engraved with delicate patterns of woodland flowers. Its elegant stand is fashioned of platinum and decorated with platinum ivy vines. The *hourglass of Klorr* is a thing of beauty that would be admired in the salons of even the most sophisticated art lovers.

The *hourglass* is mounted on an central axle, so one need merely rotate the crystal vessel by twisting the axle's handle to reset the *hourglass*. It is not necessary to lift the *hourglass*.

## Manufacture

Despite his mechanical skills, Klorr never mastered the skills of glass blowing, nor did he trouble himself to master other fields. When he decided to craft this beautiful *hourglass*, he retained a gnome craftsman to make the crystal vessel. The crystal was then etched by an elven master, who recreated the delicate chaos of wildflowers and woodland vines. The sand within the crystal was the finest white sand that Klorr could buy.

Klorr commissioned the stand's platinum framework to be built by a master dwarf metallurgist named Vard, who engraved his name on the framework's base. But Klorr reserved one of the most important tasks for himself, carefully twining the enchanted platinum wires into an arcane lattice resembling a woodland thicket.

## Charges

The *hourglass* does not store or use magical charges. However, its magical powers can only be invoked once per day. After that, the *hourglass* measures the passing of time, but manifests no magical effects until the next day.



## Use

To activate the magical powers of the *hourglass of Klorr*, one need merely rotate the crystal vessel at the end of the hour while speak the arcane words fashioned into its base. It is not necessary for the words to actually be heard for the power to be invoked, but the user must form the words with his lips. For the next hour the *hourglass's* powers are invoked. The *hourglass's* powers stop instantly at the moment that the last grain of sand falls.

## Powers

Activating the *hourglass's* magic alters the user's perception of time. From his perspective, everything slows tremendously. This effect begins the instant that the first grain of sand passes through the opening between the bulbs.

This effect is similar to that of a *haste* spell, but the subject functions at a greater speed than that spell confers. The character's normal rate of action is tripled, in effect allowing him to take

# THE WORKSHOP OF KLORR

three actions per round. The first action is made before any other character can act, the second is made during the normal course of the round as usual, and the third is made after every other character has acted. Unlike a normal *haste* spell, the magic of this *hourglass* permits its user to cast spells at an accelerated rate. The effects of spells on the accelerated character, however, are reduced to one-third as long than usual.

## Curse

The use of the *hourglass of Klorr* is not without its hazards. Each time its magical powers are invoked, the user must make a save vs. Spell. Success indicates that the use of the *hourglass* is no more harmful than the casting of a *haste* spell—that is, the user ages one year. A failed saving throw, however, can be disastrous. At the instant that the last grain of sand falls, the owner ages 10 years. Further, he suffers a temporal whiplash that causes him to behave as if under the effects of a *slow* spell for the next 24 hours.

## Destruction

Despite its fragile appearance, the *hourglass of Klorr* is invulnerable to normal damage. Electricity, fire, cold, and physical attacks will not harm it in any way. But just as the *hourglass* has some power over the flow of time, so does time have some effect on it. If an *age object* spell (as described in the *Tome of Magic*) were cast upon the *hourglass of Klorr*, it would instantly crumble into dust, forever destroyed.

## Legends

Klorr's apprentice fell victim to the curse of the *hourglass*, but instead of aging, he fell out of sync with time. Only those invoking the *hourglass*' power may see his ghostly form, doomed to haunt this treacherous artifact of time.

Others failed to control the *hourglass*, but met different fates, such as being permanently *slowed*, lost in time, or set to bouncing through time as one might skip a stone across a lake.



# THE WORKSHOP OF KLOOR

## Hourglass of Souls

The *hourglass of souls* is an item unique in all the lands of the Mists, perhaps in all the multiverse. Constructed at the behest of the archmage Azalin, years were spent researching the creation of this *hourglass*. Azalin himself devoted no less than a full year of his time.

The *hourglass's* framework is made from human and demihuman bones delicately carved with a mocking skull motif. Its crystal vessel, lightly etched with faint images of wraithlike faces, is of the finest crystal that can be found in all of Ravenloft.

Not sand, but deep red blood flows within the vessel, marking the passage of one second with each drop. A skull rests in one bulb of the crystal vessel. This skull has been so contorted and warped by Azalin's powerful magics that it is impossible to tell what race its original owner was. Hidden from sight within the skull is a still smaller skull, fashioned of crystal. Despite its grisly features, the *hourglass* seems eerily delicate and beautiful.

When the *hourglass* was completed, Azalin set it in an unregarded corner of the Black Vault. There it exhibited a faint silvery glow to entice, then entrap those who sought to plunder his storehouse.

## Manufacture

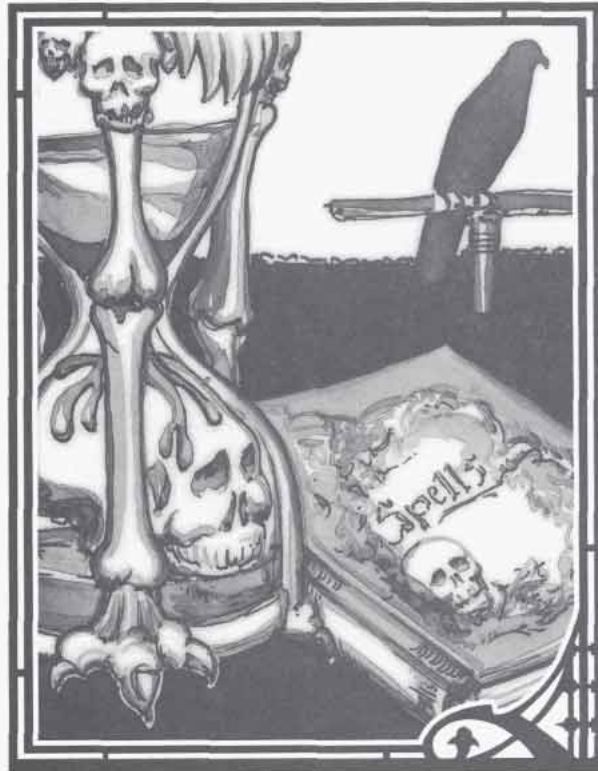
Azalin spent over a year selecting the bones for the *hourglass's* frame from victims he had tortured in the dungeons of the Grim Fastness.

He distilled and enchanted the blood that flows through the vessel. This blood was siphoned from the veins of paladins and priests of good who were captured within the domain of Darkon.

Azalin even oversaw the glassblowers as they crafted the vessel, and as they secured the crystal with its skull in place.

## Charges

The *hourglass* does not store or use magical charges. It operates like a normal *hourglass* when turned over by anyone except a wizard. It marks the passage of an hour, although in a



somewhat grisly fashion. The entire *hourglass* must be picked up and turned to start the flow of blood from one bulb of the vessel to the other.

## Use

The *hourglass* must be turned over by a wizard as he speaks the phrases etched in the base of the frame backwards to invoke its magical powers. When the *hourglass* is turned over by a wizard, the blood begins to drip onto the skull in the lower vessel. As the first drop splashes onto the skull, the wizard who turned the *hourglass* gains the benefits of its powers.

Reading the arcane phrases as they are written without reversing them results in whoever intoned those words to have three experience levels and hit dice drained, as if by a vampire.

When the last drop falls on the skull, the *hourglass* automatically flips itself back over and the benefits flee, while its powerful curse takes affect for the second hour.



# THE WORKSHOP OF KLORR

## Powers

The *hourglass* keeps time as accurately as any well-crafted hourglass would. Beyond this, when its magic is invoked, it grants the wizard who started the black blood to flow, the powers and spells of a 20th-level wizard.

In addition to changing the character's attack rolls and saving throws, this grants the wizard the maximum number of spells that he or she would have as if the day was beginning. The exact spells received by the character should be selected by the Dungeon Master based on the needs of the adventure and campaign. Whatever they are, the wizard is also gifted with complete knowledge of the magical boon that has been granted him.

The enormous powers of the *hourglass* are not always available for the taking, however. The powers of the *hourglass* can be triggered only once each seven-day period. Any attempts to use the *hourglass* before the last second of that seven-day period is up have no result whatsoever.

## Curse

When the last drop of blood splashes into the lower vessel, the *hourglass*' powers desert the wizard who turned it over. Damage suffered while at the higher level is applied to the character's normal hit point totals. This may prove fatal if the character has suffered some great wound.

The end of that hour also sets in motion a host of problems for the wizard. For just as the *hourglass* supplied the wizard with enormous powers during the first hour, so it drains the wizard of his powers for a second hour.

To begin, the *hourglass* does not just strip the wizard of all the spells it conferred, but it also strips him of all the spells he had memorized that morning as well. The *hourglass* also strips the wizard's magical items of their powers and even erases the writing in his spell book for the space of the second hour. Any magical item the wizard touches during that hour is likewise stripped of its powers until the end of the hour. For the full hour after he received the benefits of the *hourglass*, the wizard is entirely bereft of his powers and has no way to replenish them until the second hour is up.

In addition, when that first hour is run, the *hourglass* affects the wizard with an *energy drain* spell. The *hourglass*' immediately drains one life energy level from the wizard. This effect works at any distance, no matter how far the wizard may have traveled from the *hourglass*.

The drained energy is stored inside the crystal skull. The purpose of this *hourglass*, was to steal magical and life energies from wizards and their magical arsenals. Azalin enchanted the *hourglass* with an *alarm* spell which alerts him when the *hourglass* has gathered the full complement of energies that it can hold. Azalin spent years perfecting his mechanations to collect a vast supply of energy, but for what purpose, scholars can not say. Perhaps his goal is to perform some difficult and dangerous magics designed to increase his power using the purloined lives.

## Destruction

The lich lord strove mightily to make the *hourglass* proof against those who would destroy it. Only a *wish* can unmake it—although the *hourglass* will withstand the *wish* of a wizard benefiting from the item's dark powers.

## Legends

Some plot more dark and sinister than any devised by the Master of Ravenloft, Count Strahd von Zarovich, is at the root of this vile *hourglass*. To what end could Lord Azalin possibly put his treasure store of purloined life and magical energies? Did he not learn from his failed gambit of the Grand Conjunction?

Whatever his goal, several matters are worth considering regarding this grim relic. First, the black blood that flows within this gruesome *hourglass* eddies and swirls with an unnatural life of its own. Perhaps those who have lost a piece of their life to this artifact may recover it by drinking a part of the dark blood. And perhaps, the replacement of that blood with holy water may bring about a renewal of life rather than the feasting on champions.

If the *hourglass of souls* drains life and magic, might its lust not be limited to good spirits, but just be consumed with a need to feast on life?

# THE WORKSHOP OF KLORR

## Moondial of Klorr

Perhaps the most sinister of Klorr's earlier creations is his dreadful *moondial*. Fashioned to tell time by the movement of the sun about which the master clockmaker's world revolved, it has since become a malevolent thing of the night.

Physically, the *moondial* is a one-inch thick disk of bronze, slightly larger than 12 inches in diameter. The disk is numbered from 1 to 13 in the numerals of Klorr's homeland. A gnomon made in a sweeping triangular shape reminiscent of a shark's dorsal fin casts a shadow upon the disk to indicate the time.

## Manufacture

By many standards, the creation of Klorr's *moondial* was not a demanding process. Both the disk and gnomon were cast of bronze, and Klorr engraved them with the astrological symbols of his world's fifteen constellations.

Klorr then soldered the dial and gnomon together and mounted them on a three-foot-tall pedestal of black marble. Dozens of diamond chips, which twinkle in even the faintest light, are set into the marble, making the pedestal resemble a star-filled sky.

Over the years, the bronze of the *moondial* has become encrusted with verdigris. With a little careful cleaning, however, it could be restored to its original splendor.

## Charges

The *moondial* can be used seven times before its energies are exhausted. When its energies are spent, the *moondial* can be recharged by placing it under the light of a full moon for seven hours.

It is impossible to recharge the *moondial* until all seven charges are expended. And attempting to charge the *moondial* for less than a full seven hours has no effect at all.

The *moondial* detects only vaguely as magical in the light day or beneath the canopy of night. But when the moon rises, Klorr's *moondial* becomes a raging beacon of magical energy.



## Use

Invoking the *moondial's* various powers is not difficult, requiring only the utterance of a few simple command words. Discovering those commands, however, can be next to impossible without exhaustive research or magical divination. The command words, together with the powers they invoke, are listed in the next section. Each command word can take effect only during a certain phase of the moon, and its utterance at other times has no effect at all.

Once a command word has been learned, the user need only place his fingertips on the edge of the *moondial's* brass dial and, as the light of the moon throws the gnomon's shadow across the dial, speak the commands. The command's exact effect depends on the phase of the moon illuminating the dial, but the position of the gnomon's shadow is of no importance. Each of the phases, and its effect, is presented in the "Powers" section.

# THE WORKSHOP OF KLORR

## Powers

The *moondial* has ten different powers. Eight of these are tied to the phases of the moon. The last two abilities, which are by far the most powerful, can be used only during lunar or solar eclipses. The phases of the moon, the command words, and the *moondial's* powers are as follows:

**New Moon:** The power of the new moon is *invisibility*, and it is activated by speaking the word *unsichtbar* (pronounced "oon-ZEESHt-bahr"). If this word is uttered when the phantom rays of the new moon fall upon the *moondial*, the speaker will vanish, remaining unseen until the coming of the dawn. Attacks will not negate this *invisibility* as they do with the spell.

**Waxing Crescent Moon:** If the word *schärfe* (pronounced "SHAHRF-uh") is spoken while touching the rim of the *moondial* as it is bathed in the light of a waxing crescent moon, a magical aura settles over the user. From that moment until the coming of the dawn, any edged weapon that the user wields gains the magical properties of a *sword of sharpness*.

**First Quarter Moon:** Under the rays of the first quarter moon, the *moondial* has the ability to bestow a powerful magical ability upon its owner. When the light of the first quarter moon shines upon the *moondial* and the command word *stärken* (pronounced STAHRK-en) is spoken, magical strength flows from the *moondial* into the character. This newfound strength exactly duplicates the wizard's spell of the same name and lasts until the sun rises above the horizon.

**Waxing Gibbous Moon:** After the moon passes its first quarter, its powers grow rapidly. By touching the *moondial* and the speaking the magical word *zauberspruch*, (pronounced "TSAU-ber-shpruhk") the user may infuse himself with the radiance of the moon. This power causes all who come into physical contact with him to react as if affected by a *charm person* spell. This effect remains until the rising of the sun.

**Full Moon:** The brilliance of the full moon in the sky is matched only by that of the sun. Whenever someone uses the *moondial* to harness the full moon's powers by speaking the command word *strahlen* (pronounced "SHTRAH-len"), he is transformed into a thing of powerful magic deadly to creatures of the night. From the moment the command word is spoken until the rising of the sun, the user is infused with a radiance that duplicates the powers of the *sunray* spell.

**Waning Gibbous Moon:** After passing its brightest phase, the moon's power wanes only slightly. If someone taps the power of the waning moon by touching the edge of the *moondial* and speaking the word *heilen* (pronounced "HY-len"), he will become charged with the moon's healing energies. From that moment until the rising of the sun the next morning, the user of the *moondial* will *regenerate* 3 hit points per round, even after death. Only the total destruction of the character's body, as through a *disintegrate* spell, will prevent this magical healing ability.

**Last Quarter Moon:** As the moon enters its last quarter, its powers change. To capture these energies, the command word *fliegen* (pronounced "FLEE-ghen") must be spoken. From that moment until the time the sun first passes the horizon, the character will be able to *fly* as if the spell of the same name had been cast upon him.

**Waning Crescent:** When the moon lapses into its last phase, the powers of darkness are ascendant. With the speaking of the magical word *gespenster* (pronounced "ghes-PEN-shter"), the character can use these powers to assume a ghostly state. Until the coming of the dawn, he is treated as if affected by the *wraithform* spell.

**Lunar Eclipse:** During this rare time when the shadow of a planet falls across its moon, the speaking of the word *zerstören* (pronounced "tsehr-SHTOOR-en") transforms the user of the *moondial* into an instrument of absolute destruction. For the duration of the eclipse, which is assumed to be roughly fifteen minutes, the character's merest touch has the same effect as a wizard's *disintegrate* spell.

# THE WORKSHOP OF KLORR

**Solar Eclipse:** The *moondial* can be used during solar eclipses, when the body of the moon passes briefly across the face of the sun. Because of the great magical power to be gained (see the “Destruction” section) using the *moondial* during a solar eclipse is very dangerous. In order to capture the power of the moon at this time, extreme care must be taken. A solar eclipse is assumed to last for fifteen minutes. During this time, the speaking of the word *seele* (pronounced “ZEE-luh”) charges the character with energy from the Negative Material plane. For the duration of the eclipse, his touch has the same effect as the *energy drain* spell.

## Curse

Those who employ the powers of the *moondial* fall increasingly under the influence of the moon. Each time the *moondial's* powers are invoked, a save vs. Petrification is called for. If the check is failed, the character is altered.

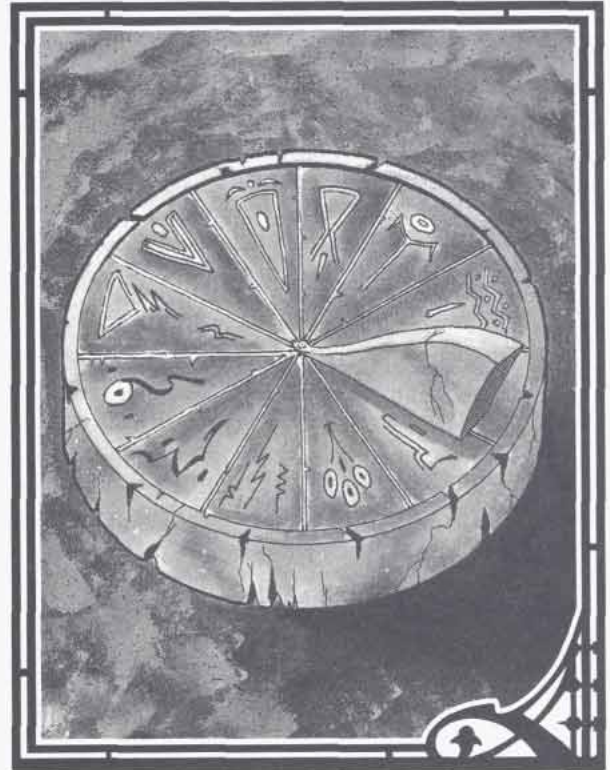
After the first failed saving throw, the character gains infravision with a range of 60 feet. Characters who already have infravision gain an additional 60 feet of range.

A second failure further enhances the character's infravision, enabling him to see another 60 feet further. But daylight becomes painful for these characters. Whenever the user must work in sunlight or an artificial light of similar brightness, he suffers a -2 penalty to all rolls.

A third failed saving throw transforms the *moondial's* user into a nocturnal being. His eyesight is permanently altered: He can see normally in all but absolute darkness, but sunlight becomes unbearable. Not only does it cause him pain and impose a -4 penalty on all rolls, but it burns his flesh for 1d6 points of damage per round.

Each failed saving throw beyond the third increases the die roll penalty by -2 points and increases the amount of damage the character suffers from exposure to direct sunlight by another 1d6 points.

In addition to the worsening the effects of the *moondial's* curse, all additional failed saving throws cause the character's form to alter. His skin grows whiter and gradually becomes translucent, his eyes grow larger and paler until they resemble the sightless orbs of a blind fish, and his body hair



falls out until he is bald from head to toe. The character loses two points of Charisma with every failed saving throw after the second.

## Destruction

Perhaps predictably, the *moondial* is extremely vulnerable to sunlight. If exposed to the rays of the sun, the *moondial* loses one charge per hour. On the turn after its last charge is expended, it glazes with tarnish and will not function unless cleansed by holy water beneath the light of the new moon. If left beneath the full sun for a year and a day, it will crumble to dust.

If a character tries to tap the powers of the *moondial* during a solar eclipse, he must act quickly, taking extreme care to allow only the light of the corona to fall upon the *moondial*. Bad timing risks the *moondial's* destruction.

## Legends

None are recorded of this night haunted relic.

# THE WORKSHOP OF KLORR

## Water Clock of Klorr

An unusual object, the *water clock of Klorr* was made after a long voyage that the artisan took as a youth. To refine his manners as well as his craftsmanship, Klorr's family arranged for him to study with a master craftsman in a distant land. During the year and a half that Klorr spent in that eastern realm, he was impressed by the unusual timekeeping devices employed there.

When Klorr returned home, he built one of these devices for himself. The *water clock* is a series of six stone basins, each with a brass drain. Chimes hanging from a support above the basins sound every two hours. The twelfth hour is sounded by the striking of every chime in a resplendent cacophony.

## Manufacture

The manufacture of the *water clock of Klorr* was surely a difficult undertaking for a young artisan. The basins were constructed from a single three-foot cube of granite. Klorr began by carving the granite into a series of six separate circular slabs and a final reservoir supported by a central granite pillar. When this rough work was done, Klorr painstakingly shaped each slab into a basin that would hold a specific amount of water.

He next added brass spigots to the lip of each basin. Each spigot was of a specific diameter, and allowed water to trickle down to the next level at a given rate once the basin was filled. The weight of the water opens the spigot—each spigot being either fully opened or closed; no intermediate settings are possible.

A bronze ewer suspended from a decorative framework in the shape of an elven maiden dispenses water from the top of the *clock* at a steady rate into the uppermost basin. It requires two hours for each basin to fill.

Every two hours, a float in the filled basin rises far enough to trigger a series of chimes. All told, it requires 12 hours for the *water clock* to complete its cycle. At the end of the complete 12-hour cycle, when the last basin is filled, the final float triggers all the *clock's* chimes at once. The water is then drained into a pitcher and the ewer on top refilled to begin the process again.



## Charges

The supernatural powers of the *water clock* do not require charges to function. Its magical energies are activated when water first begins to flow and its magical properties cease when the chimes have finished ringing the twelfth hour. Further, the *water clock* only detects as magical when the water is flowing. Otherwise, it seems to be nothing more than a bizarre sculpture.

## Use

The *water clock* begins to keep time when the elven maiden's bronze ewer is filled to the brim and tipped over. The *clock's* supernatural energies activate the moment when the first drop of water from the ewer splashes into the first basin. There may be unknown command words that activate heretofore undiscovered powers, but none have been identified at this time.

Periodically, the brass spigots need to be cleaned of lime to keep the timing correct.

# THE WORKSHOP OF KLORR

Most of the methods for measuring the lapse of time have, I believe, been the contrivance of monks and religious recluses, who, finding time hang heavy on their hands, were at some pains to see how they got rid of it.

William Hazlitt  
*Of a Sundial in Venice* (1839)

## Powers

The magic of the *water clock of Klorr* bestows a series of increased abilities upon anyone who fills the elven maiden's ewer. As each basin fills with water in turn, a new power manifests itself.

As soon as the first drop of water splashes into the *water clock's* first basin, the character who filled the ewer is transformed into a 10 Hit Die water elemental. Unlike other water elementals, those created by the *water clock* are not restricted in their movements on land, nor are they required to stay near a large body of water.

When the first chime sounds and the second basin begins to fill, the character changes again, becoming a more powerful 12 Hit Die water elemental. When the second chime sounds and water begins to flow into the third level, the character becomes a 16 Hit Die creature. This process continues, with the character gaining 2 additional Hit Dice as each basin fills. Finally, as water splashes into the last basin, the character becomes a 20 Hit Die water elemental.

When the final series of chimes sounds, as the water reaches the top of the lowest basin, the transformation is instantly dispelled. At that second, the character resumes his normal form and powers.

## Curse

The transformation of the character into a water elemental is physically torturous. When water first begins to fill the top basin and the character takes on the elemental's form, he must make a System Shock roll. Failure indicates that the transformation has killed the character.

A second check must be made when the last chamber is filled and the character resumes his

human form. If this roll fails, the character is trapped in the water elemental form. In addition, the shock and pain of the aborted transformation drives the character insane, reducing his Intelligence to that of a wild beast.

If the *water clock* is destroyed before the character who filled it has undergone the complete 12-hour transformation, the character is instantly affected as though the twelfth hour was chiming, becoming a 20 Hit Die water elemental. The player must also make a System Shock check. If it succeeds, the character is merely trapped in the water elemental form, becoming insane. If the check fails, the character's elemental form bursts like a bubble, dissolving into a formless pool of water. The character cannot be resurrected.

## Destruction

The *water clock of Klorr* exists simultaneously on both the elemental plane of Water and the Demiplane of Dread. On the Demiplane, the *water clock* is all but invulnerable to harm. While very powerful magics, such as a *wish* or a *disintegrate* spell might destroy the *clock*, nothing less will do the trick. On the elemental plane of Water, the *water clock* can easily be damaged or destroyed. On that plane, the *water clock* can be destroyed with nothing more potent than a *dispel magic*.

## Legends

Some say it takes an iron will to retain one's own mind when transformed into a brutal enchanted creature. Those with weak wills find their identity permanently lost. Even should they retain control of their personality, they may not possess the intellect to retain control of their new form and instead they dissolve into formless water.

The tragedy of this power is manifested by the danger the user presents to his friends and loved ones. All that he touches is soaked with water. Paper and powders are ruined, cloth mildews and rots, wood becomes soaked and soft, even magical potions don't fare well, for they are transformed into water at the transformed user's touch. But the greatest danger is the user's embrace. Again and again the tragedy is told of transformed user whose hold drowned his love.



## RELICS OF DOOM

A great number of relics of doom were mentioned in a journal found within that Black Vault.

Several are merely common artifacts of necromancy, while strangely a few are in reference to actually beneficial relics.

There were no records of where these magical items came from, or where they may currently be stored. They are merely unknowns.

### Tools of the Trade

Among the oldest professions practiced by mankind is the gruesome job of the undertaker. While the reputations of morticians and their ilk varies from place to place, all carry the aura of death. Even in the domain of Har'akir, where the dead are revered, the priests who perform the mummifications and burials are given a wide berth. There is something about the undertaker's friendship with death that brings a tingle of fear.

Here are listed a few of the most intriguing magical items associated with the grim confines of the grave, the stygian darkness that is death and with the foul enchantments of necromancy.

### The Powers of Nature

Legends of the great druid Kren are well-known among those who make their home in Ravenloft's core. This is especially true of the rangers and druids in the forsaken and often twisted wildlands.

It is known that Kren was not born in Ravenloft, but was somehow drawn here, although no one knows from whither. However it is, Kren has been adopted by the lands as one of their own. For many years, she traveled the lands and studied the unique, and often horrible, flora and fauna of our forests. During those years, she used her druidic powers to create many magical items. Two of the most powerful are her great iron *brazier* and shining *crystal distillery*.

### Good and Evil

The following two magical devices have remained immune to the darkness' corrupting influences. But this does not mean that they are safe to use. The unwary will find that many hazards attend the use of *Kren's brazier* and *distillery*. But how Kren's magical constructions have managed to resist the evil that infects so many other artifacts in these dread lands is something that no sage has been able to answer.

Certain individuals, and Lord Azalin is reputed to be among them, desire to obtain these devices. Of course, the question of studying the *brazier* and the *distillery* may be of secondary concern to such people. After all, mere ownership of these powerful relics is often its own reward to scholars and wizards—as well as the eccentric collector.

### The Druid Kren

There are those who say that Kren is no longer among the living. Some stories say that she met an untimely, brutal demise at the hands of Strahd von Zarovich. Others tell of her struggles in an attempt to thwart a sinister plot hatched by the dread Lord Drakov of Falkovnia. Either may be true; both are mere rumor.

There are many who swear that Kren still lives, that she still works to protect the lands. For their part, the mysterious Vistani have little to say on the subject. Still, as they do not refer to Kren as being among the dead, it seems that they might believe her to be alive.

A third possibility, one that is seldom considered by those who dwell in these dark lands, is that Kren has somehow managed to return to her home realm. If she has found a way to elude the misty tendrils of darkness, it seems unlikely that she will ever willingly return.

Spare me the whispering, crowded room,  
The friends who come and gape and go,  
The ceremonious air of gloom—  
All, which makes death a hideous show.

Matthew Arnold  
*A Wish* (1867)

## Caskets of the Damned

There are few who embrace the mortician's craft as did Amo Pesadilla, the famous Undertaker of Il Aluk. While it is certainly true that any city of Il Aluk's size has dozens of undertakers, none was more well-known or respected than Señor Pesadilla. It was Pesadilla, with his daily, intimate knowledge of death, who built the 12 *caskets of the damned* at the order of the dread Lord Azalin himself. The infamous Kargat of Darkon has harnessed the powers of the *caskets* for nearly two generations now.

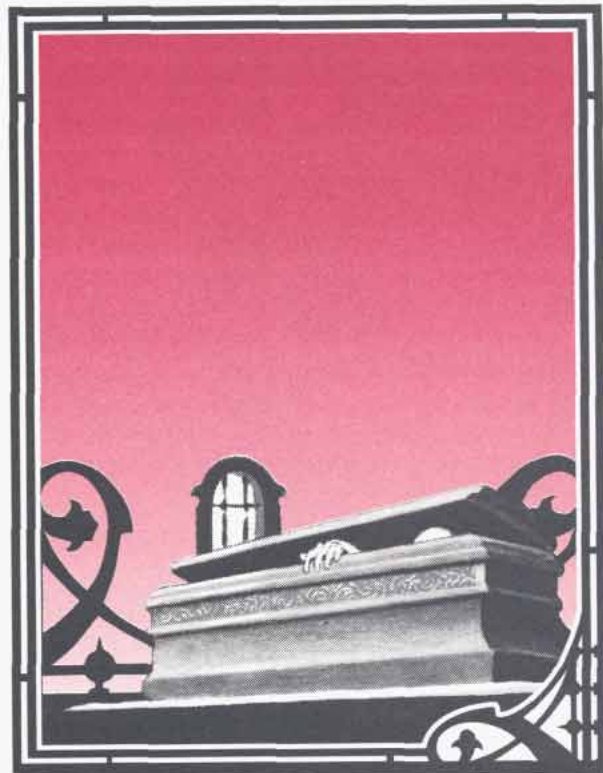
These gleaming white caskets look much like any other coffin that a respectable family of comfortable means would select for a dear departed. While the *caskets* are certainly more luxurious than is usual, their lushly cushioned interiors and lacquered exteriors are not out of keeping with the traditions established by the wealthiest of Darkon's landowners.

### Manufacture

Several decades ago, a much younger Pesadilla was visited by Colonel Veneno, then master of the dread Kargat. Veneno demanded that, by the command of Azalin himself, Pesadilla put aside his regular labors and begin construction of a dozen caskets built to Veneno's exacting specifications. Ordinarily, Pesadilla would have refused so demanding an assignment, but one does not lightly reject the requests of one's lord.

The wood from which the caskets were made was cut from a darkling forest of unusually robust pine along the edge of the Shadow Rift. As Pesadilla began to work on his assignment, Veneno presented him with the elaborate and finely crafted brass handles, hinges, and other fittings that were to be used in the making of the caskets.

What the undertaker didn't know, as Veneno didn't feel it was Pesadilla's business to know, was that these items were made of magical metals formed with the aid of the dwarf vampire, Axrock. When affixed to the finished coffin, they imbued it with magical powers closely linked to the dark and forbidden science of necromancy.



### Charges

The powers of the *caskets of the damned* are drawn from the earth itself. Thus, the caskets do not actually store magical energy within them, although their enchanted nature can still be sensed with a *detect magic* or a similar spell.

Instead of caching magical power, these magical devices act as magnifying glasses, focusing the latent energies of the grave—the same energies that fuel the powers of necromancy—on the body within the coffin.

### Use

Triggering the powers of a *casket of the damned* is not difficult. The *casket's* powers are triggered the moment that the casket is lowered into the grave. Even as dirt is cast upon it, magical energies begin to coalesce within. By the time it is completely buried, the *casket* has become a magical inferno.



# RELICS OF DOOM

## Powers

In simplest terms, the *caskets of the damned* are used to create undead. The details of the procedure, however, are somewhat grisly. For the departed must actually be alive when he is laid to rest in the *casket*, and he must still be alive when the *casket* is buried. The length of time that the victim remains buried determines the monster that the *casket* creates.

**One week:** If the *casket* remains interred for seven days, the “corpse” within will be transformed into some manner of zombie. If the victim was a warrior, rogue, or other non-spellcaster, he is changed into a mindless zombie. If a priest, wizard, or another type of spellcaster was sealed into the *casket of the damned*, he becomes a ju-ju zombie. In either case, when released, the undead creature falls under the complete control of the person who sealed him into the coffin.

**Two weeks:** A week longer, and the victim will become a ghoul or a ghastr. The *casket* creates a ghoul if the character was not a spell user; a ghastr if the character could control some manner of magical power. As with the lesser undead created by these coffins, these ghouls and ghastrs are powerless to resist the commands of the one who entombed them.

**Three weeks:** Leaving a non-spellcaster interred within a *casket* for three weeks transforms him into a wight; a spellcaster becomes a crypt servant (as described in the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Annual: Volume One*). In both cases, these monsters must obey the commands of their creator without question.

**Four weeks:** If an entire month passes from the time of burial to exhumation, the person within the *casket*, whether he was a spellcaster or not, is transformed into a vampire. As an undead, he retains all of the knowledge and powers that he had in life, as detailed in *Van Richten's Guide to Vampires*. The vampire is fully aware and intelligent, but must still obey the orders of its creator.

**Longer periods:** If a person is left buried for longer than four weeks, his corpse crumbles away and he is forever dead, beyond all hope of restoration.

## Curse

It should go without saying that the entombing of living creatures is as evil an act as one is likely to commit. Any use of the *caskets of the damned* therefore requires a powers check. As a rule, such a check should have at least a 25% chance of failure. This check is made when the last handful of earth is tossed onto the grave.

As dangerous as failing a powers check can be, however, there is a more immediate threat associated with the use of these dreadful boxes. Whenever one of these *caskets* is unearthed and opened, the Dungeon Master should roll percentile dice. There is a 5% chance per week that the *casket* remained buried that the creature within is uncontrolled. If this is the case, the monster will go berserk, attempting to destroy everyone and everything in sight.

## Destruction

The *caskets of the damned* are difficult to destroy. Only the purifying flames of a funeral pyre will destroy them. However, attempting their destruction is not without risk, for the *caskets'* magical energies and the torments they have inflicted upon those interred in them have permeated them over the decades. Whenever an attempt to destroy a *casket* is made, there is a 25% chance that the magical and psychic energies liberated will create a pyre elemental (as described in the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM: RAVENLOFT Appendix*).

## Legends

Not merely humans and demihumans have been imprisoned and changed into living dead within these foul *caskets*. Monsters and strange golem chimerae have been raised into grotesque dead. It is impossible to control these abominations.

Those who use these *caskets* are fated to slay their loved ones. Time and again comes the tale of unrequited love forced into unliving bondage.

## Linen of Mummification

Nowhere are the dead more honored than amid the swirling sands of Har'akir. But, sadly, there is also no place where the powers of the undead are greater. For some reason as yet undiscovered, the veneration of the dead in Har'akir often serves to empower those miserable souls who cannot find peace in their tombs. Indeed, the powers of the *linen of mummification* ensure that the dead will not remain quiet for long.

Prior to its use on a body, *linen of mummification* seems similar to any other funeral shroud found in the land of Har'akir. The linen must be of such excellent quality that it has a faint sheen, almost seeming to glow with its own inner luster. But only a *detect magic* spell will reveal that this fine wrap is really out of the ordinary.

## Manufacture

*Linen of mummification* can be created only by priests who serve gods of the dead. While any such cleric may attempt, subject to the normal rules for manufacturing magical items, to create a *linen*, it is most often attempted by those who serve the gods of Har'akir. The followers of Osiris and Nephthys are keenly skilled at the making of these *linens*.

The creation of *linen of mummification* begins with harvesting the flax from which the shroud will be made. Flax for a *linen of mummification* must be specially grown in a blessed graveyard or on grounds sacred to a god of the dead.

Once the flax is gathered, master weavers transform it into the finest cloth possible. The flax is carded and bleached until it is the softest, purest white, then spun into a fine thread that is woven into a delicate cloth fit for a god-king. If the shroud is being woven for a specific individual, it is not uncommon for the weavers to embroider an epitaph along its edges.

After the linen cloth has been created, it must be enchanted. This process involves several priests in a secret ceremony that requires the casting of the *bless*, *animate dead*, and *harm* spells. Other aspects of the ceremony remain the closely-guarded secrets of those priests of the dead who create these shrouds.



## Charges

*Linen of mummification* does not store magical charges. It can be used only once. *Linen of mummification* cannot be removed from one vicym and used on another.

## Use

*Linen of mummification* can only be used properly in conjunction with an intricate funeral ceremony. This religious service must be held within a temple dedicated to a god of the dead. In the case of the ancient gods of Har'akir, the ceremony consists of the following steps.

First, the body to be mummified must be laid out on a stone slab within a temple consecrated to the same god who oversaw the growing of the flax used in the creation of the linen. Often, though this is not required, the body is placed on the temple's central altar.

Once the body is laid out, the priest overseeing the mummification inserts a long metal hook

through the corpse's nostrils and into its brain. The brain is carefully withdrawn from the body and stored in a canopic jar. When the brain has been removed, the interior of the skull is flushed with purifying palm wine.

Next, a long incision is made in the body's left flank. Through this slit, all the internal organs except the heart are removed. These are treated with palm wine and other purifying substances before being stored in canopic jars.

The now-empty corpse is stuffed with medicinal herbs, primarily myrrh and cassia, and immersed in a bath of oils and resins for no fewer than 40 days. At the end of that time, the incision on the left flank is sewn shut. (In mundane mummification ceremonies, a small portion of this incision remains open. When using the *linen of mummification*, however, the cut is closed completely.)

With that done, the *linen of mummification* is wrapped around the body. Specially blessed gum is used to secure the linen to the body and to affix a number of protective amulets. The body is then placed in a sarcophagus. Scrolls on which prayers for the dead have been written are placed between the body's legs, and the lid of the casket is sealed.

When all is ready, the sarcophagus is placed in a tomb and left for three months. At the end of that time, the tomb is opened, and the seals on the sarcophagus are broken. The lid is raised up and a *raise dead* spell is cast on the body.

## Powers

If the ceremony described above has been done correctly, the corpse within the sarcophagus will now rise as a servant mummy or, if the deceased was a priest who served the gods of death, he will rise as a greater mummy.

The mummy rising from the sarcophagus is under the control of its creator. It must obey any instructions given to it, and it will not act in a fashion contrary to its creator's best interests.

If the ceremony was incomplete, or some error occurred during the preparation of the body, results are uncertain. It is likely that the body will not rise again, but there is a small chance that the subject will regain a semblance of life. However, the mummy will be out of control of the priest.

## Curse

The most greatest danger when employing the *linen of mummification* is maintaining a mummy's loyalty. At first this is absolute, but it does not remain so indefinitely.

Each month, when the moon is in the same phase as when the mummy rose from the dead, there is a chance that the mummy will break free of its master's control. This chance is equal to five times the number of months that have passed since the mummy arose. Thus, a mummy that has been walking the earth for six months has a 30% chance of rebelling.

A mummy that has broken free of its master's control is not compelled to destroy its creator. Indeed, the creature may continue to serve its former master for some time. Still, the fact that it was once an absolute slave is likely to make the monster desire control over—or revenge upon—its former master.

## Destruction

A *linen of mummification* is extremely fragile. When made properly, it is very thin and delicate; its enchantments do not strengthen it. If the *linen* is not handled with care, it may easily tear.

The greatest danger to a *linen of mummification* is not its physical frailty, however. If a *linen of mummification* is exposed to the rays of the sun, it withers and turns brown almost instantly. When this happens, all of the precious magic stored within its delicate fibers is lost.

## Legends

In the process of preparing the body for interment the priest may seek to improve on his subject's natural skills, by replacing body parts with those of greater strength, swiftness, cunning, stealth or skills. Using the *linen* to bind the body parts together provides this use, but also a vulnerability should the *linen* be severed.

Mummies often possess a fixation on the last topic that was foremost in their minds at death. This fixation presents another vulnerability.

Finally, certain ceremonies can give mummies special powers such as command of beetles.

# RELICS OF DOOM

## The Spade of Grave Digging

The origins of the *spade of grave digging* are lost in the mists of time. Some say that it was created by accident when a wizard attempted to fashion a *spade of colossal excavation*. While it seems likely that this is the case, no real proof has been found in the matter.

### Manufacture

The *spade of grave digging* does not appear magical accept when it is plunged into the earth. Anyone looking at it without a *detect magic* spell will see only a common, well-used garden tool.

The *spade's* shaft was fashioned from length of yew. The blade was hammered from a high grade of steel and shows no signs of wear or rust.

### Charges

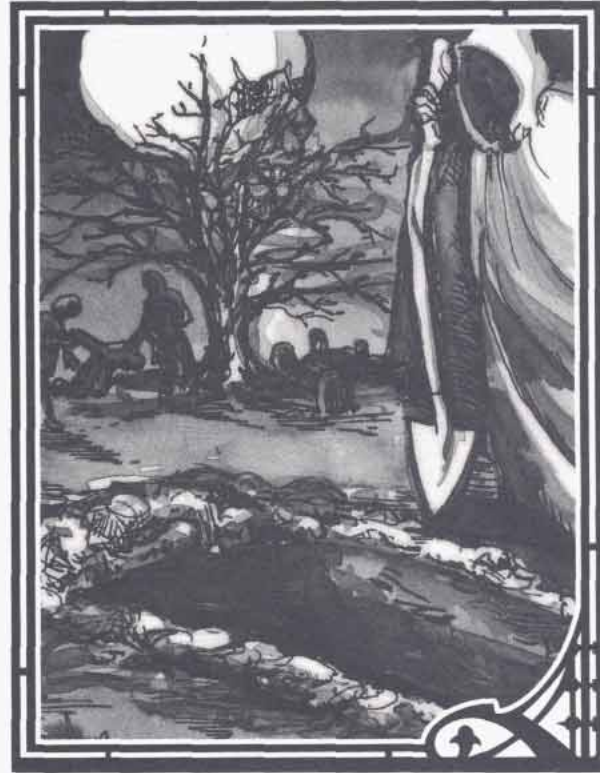
The *spade of grave digging* is a permanent magical item. Its magic does not falter with the passing of time.

### Use

The *spade of grave digging* is used just like a regular spade. It is only when someone uses it to dig a grave that its magical powers are triggered. As with the *spade of colossal excavation*, only a fighter with a Strength score of 18 or better can employ the *spade* as a magical item; it functions as a regular spade for everyone else.

### Powers

The *spade of grave digging* allows its user to dig a normal-sized grave (3 feet wide, 7 feet long, and 6 feet deep) in just 10 minutes. (It takes 20 minutes to dig a grave in hard clay or gravel.) After the grave has been dug, the character must rest for 10 minutes before digging another. In other words, the character may dig for one turn, must rest for one turn, may dig for a second turn, then must rest for a second turn. Filling the grave after the body has been laid in it requires only one round of effort, followed by one round of rest.



### Curse

The magic of the *spade* can have deadly side effects. Whenever the *spade* is used, there is a 10% chance that the soil removed from the grave will rise up as a grave elemental per the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM: RAVENLOFT Appendix*.

### Destruction

The *spade* is resistance to mundane damage but not to magical attacks or damage. It makes all its item saving throws as if it was made of metal.

### Legends

Folklore has it that this *spade* transfers the energy of those it buries to the gravedigger for 24 hours. It certainly creates a morbid fascination with death in its owner.

Lore suggests that it might confer the ability to *speak with dead* on the gravedigger. And there is a chance that those buried will rise as revenants.

## Kren's Brazier

For many years the druid Kren traveled with a tribe of Vistani as they roamed the Mists of Ravenloft. How she might have come to be accepted by these secretive people is unknown, but it is common rumor that they considered her their equal in knowledge and strange powers.

During her time among the gypsies, Kren fashioned a grand *brazier* designed to be used with different herbs, flowers, and other vegetation. When properly employed, this magical item allows druids, rangers, and all those with the herbalism proficiency to harness the powers of nature. The *brazier* is not to be used lightly, for those who are hasty or incautious may live long to regret their attempts to harness the powers of the natural world.

Physically, the *brazier* is quite simple. It is a shallow basin of black iron some 40 inches in diameter. The rim of the dish is incised with mystical symbols representing the 17 signs of the zodiac on Kren's homeland. The names of these symbols would surely interest any scholar or mage, but the Vistani seem to have forgotten them. When in use, the basin must rest atop a pentagonal base of onyx some two feet across and one foot tall.

## Manufacture

The creation of Kren's *brazier* was a long and difficult task. Perhaps the most challenging aspect of the work was obtaining the iron from which the basin was created. In order to imbue the *brazier* with certain magical characteristics, it was made with otherworldly iron. Just who forged that great bowl is a mystery, though Kren told a tale of blind dwellers beneath the lonely mountain who were like dwarves and yet not a dwarf at all.

Kren scoured the land for the meteoric iron from which she would make the *brazier*. Even with the help of the Vistani, it took almost a year for Kren to find enough ore for the *brazier*. By comparison, the long trip to a hidden mine and the calculation and sculpting of the demanding geometries of the enormous onyx base were almost child's play.



## Use

Before the *brazier* can harness the powers of the various plants that can be used in it, it must be made ready. This preparation is not particularly difficult, but it is somewhat time-consuming. The *brazier* cannot be used by characters who are in any sort of a hurry. First, a layer of charcoal made from an ash tree must be spread in the iron basin. The character must take care not to spread the charcoal into the area of the rim with the signs of the zodiac.

Once the charcoal is readied, it must be set alight. This cannot be done with any normal fire, but requires some manner of magical spell. Any spell that creates fire, from *produce flame* to *delayed blast fireball*, can be used for this purpose. Of course, the use of powerful spells can have unwanted side effects.

The coals must be left to burn for 2d4 x 10 minutes before they are ready. During this time, someone with the fire-building proficiency must be on hand to tend them. At the end of the

# THE POWERS OF NATURE

preparation period, the character tending the coals must make a proficiency check. Failure indicates that the coals have not burned evenly and the preparation process must be started again. Success indicates that everything is ready for the working of the magic.

At this point, the character who wishes to use the *brazier* need only toss a handful of herbs, flowers, or the like onto the coals. As these are consumed, their magic is released and the supplicant will be enchanted.

The beneficial effects of each plant or herb are described in the "Powers" section below. One handful of herbs or plants must be employed per Hit Die of the target. In all cases, spell effects created by the *brazier* function as if they had been cast by a 20th-level wizard or priest. In cases where the spell is to affect a specific person (other than the supplicant) and the subject is not present, an item belonging to that individual must be thrown onto the coals along with the herbs or flowers. For example, if the character using the *brazier* wishes to cast a *charm person* spell on the local constable, he might filch the constable's comb and toss it on the fire along with the appropriate herb.

Once a power of the *brazier* has been invoked, it may be called upon at any time within the next 24 hours. At the end of that period, the magic dissipates even if it has not been used. If the *brazier* is used to affect ability scores or saving throw bonuses, the bonuses remain in effect for the entire 24-hour period.

The *brazier* can enchant a character with only one magical power at a time. If a second power is invoked for the same character, the effect of the first power dissipates.

## Powers

The powers of the *brazier* depend wholly upon which plants are thrown onto the coals. The list on the next page indicates the plants known to have magical properties when used with this mysterious device.

Dungeon Masters are encouraged to allow the characters in their campaigns to experiment with the effects produced by the use of different plants than those shown here. Books recounting the

powers that folklore has traditionally ascribed to certain plants are readily available in most bookstores and libraries. With such a reference work, the possible uses that characters can find for Kren's *brazier* are almost limitless.

## Curses

While many plants produce beneficial effects when cast upon Kren's *brazier*, others do not. For example, a handful of *poison ivy* tossed upon these coals releases a cloud of smoke that affects everyone within 50 feet of the *brazier* as with an *irritation* spell. To make matters worse, the effects of this curse do not fade with the passing of time. No matter how far the afflicted characters may travel and no matter how much time elapses, the effect does not dissipate. Only a *dispel magic* or *remove curse* will ease the suffering of those affected.

Whenever the characters toss a new type of plant onto the *brazier*, the DM should roll percentile dice. If the roll is between 01 and 25, then no magical powers are unleashed. A roll of 26 to 75 indicates a beneficial magical property has been discovered. If the roll is 76 or higher, a dangerous magical property is triggered. In the last two cases, the exact effects are up to the Dungeon Master.

## Destruction

*Kren's brazier* is not only a strange and mysterious magical device, it is also a well-constructed and durable object. Even without the natural invulnerability that powerful magic tends to bestow upon an object, it would be difficult to physically damage or destroy the *brazier*.

The most effective means of destroying *Kren's brazier* is to immerse it in acid. If it is totally submerged in a powerfully caustic liquid for about an hour, the *brazier* will become so damaged that it can no longer be used. However, an acid must be highly potent in order to have any effect upon this object. Examples of suitable solvents include the spittle of a black dragon or the fluid created through the casting of a *Melf's acid arrow* spell.

# THE POWERS OF NATURE

## Herbs and Their Powers

Ash: *Phantasmal force*  
Birch: +2 on saves vs. Staves  
Bladderwrack: *Gust of wind*  
Camphor: *Detect magic*  
Chamomile: *Sleep*  
Clove: *Silence, 10'/15' radius*  
Cumin: +2 on saves vs.  
Paralyzation  
Daffodil: *Grow plants*  
Dragon's Blood: *Dismissal*  
Edelweiss: *Invisibility*  
Frankincense: *Dispel evil*  
Garlic: +2 on saves vs.  
Petrification  
Ginseng: *Cure light wounds*  
Goldenrod: *Detect evil*  
Ground Ivy: *Detect snares &  
pits*  
Heliotrope: *Augury*

Holly: +2 on saves vs. Wands  
Iris: +2 on saves vs. Death  
Magic  
Juniper: +1 Constitution  
Lemon: *Charm person*  
Licorice: *Emotion*  
Lotus: +1 Charisma  
Mastic: *Phantasmal killer*  
Milk Thistle: *Snake charm*  
Mint: +2 on saves vs. Breath  
Weapon  
Mistletoe: *Slow poison*  
Moonwort: +1 Dexterity  
Mugwort: *Astral spell*  
Myrrh: *Cure serious wounds*  
Onion: *Commune with nature*  
Pecan: *Friends*  
Peppermint: +2 on saves vs.  
Poison

Rice: *Weather summoning*  
Sage: +1 Wisdom  
Summer Savory: +1  
Intelligence  
Sunflower: *Sunray*  
Thistle: +1 *Strength*  
Thyme: *Cloak of bravery*  
Toadflax: +2 on saves vs. Spell  
Tobacco: *Bless*  
Violet: +2 on saves vs.  
Polymorph  
Willow: +2 on saves vs. Rod  
Wintergreen: *Remove curse*  
Wormwood: *Speak with dead*  
Yew: *Animate dead*

## Legends

Many are the mysteries not revealed by folktales. Only the druidess Kren knew the secrets between herbal lore and the wonders of nature, when a taste was a balm, but a lungful was deadly poison. Many still seek to follow the path of enlightenment down which she trod.

The secrets of nature locked in tree bark and root, nut and blossom require careful, deliberate study, for many are the medicines and miracles housed within the plants of nature.

Legend tells that previous possessors of Kren's blessed *brazier* have succumbed to the quest for knowledge and power, blind to the risks of such research. Many have died in their efforts or fallen afoul of their good intentions and blindness to their own weaknesses.

There are many who have been found their tongues swollen and black, the skin blue and sickly or covered with open, oozing sores as they uncovered the secrets of some of the vilest poisons which nature concocted as natural defenses.

Others have become addicted to drunken excesses or forbidden soporifics that lead their user to worlds of unimagined dreams and delight. In both cases, these sad souls met with misfortune, either suffering from fatally bad judgement or dreaming away their life and dying of starvation and malnutrition.

There are those who succumbed to temptation, using the knowledge they gained to win a love or loyalty. Misuse led to *feble-mindedness* or even a complete change of alignment.

Nature is one with rapine,  
a harm no preacher can heal;  
The mayfly is torn by the swallow,  
the sparrow is speared by the shrike;  
And the whole little wood where I sit  
is a world of plunder and pray.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson  
*Maud: A Monodrama* (1855)

# THE POWERS OF NATURE

## Kren's Crystal Distillery

The distiller's art is an ancient and respected one. It has been practiced, along with the equally ancient and respected arts of the brewer and vintner, since the dawn of civilization. From time to time, these mundane arts have resulted in the unexpected creation of magical liquids—some beneficial and some less so.

During her long years roaming the lands of Ravenloft, the druid Krenn developed a magical device that combined the mundane science of distillation with the druidic arts. When the proper components are used in her *distillery*, their magical essences are removed and concentrated. Under the hand of a skillful operator, the *distillery* will produce magical potions of great potency.

### Manufacture

As with more mundane stills, the crystal *distillery* has three major components. These are the boiler, the condenser, and the collection flask. Each of these vessels has been fashioned from a single large piece of volcanic crystal.

### Use

As with many other magical items, the *crystal distillery* can be used as a mundane still. However, to use the *distillery* as a magical item, its boiler must be filled with at least a gallon of holy water. Once the boiler is filled, the character adds the herbs or flowers to it. As a rule, one or two small handfuls will suffice. Once all is ready, the boiler must be sealed tightly and a steady flame must be applied to it.

The liquid in the boiler must be continually kept at a low boil. The steam that rises from this boiling liquid passes through the condenser. The water drips out of the condenser while the magical essences of the flowers or herbs pass through into the collection flask, which is quite small.

When all is said and done, the holy water and the other ingredients in the boiler boil down to no more than an ounce of fluid. The distillation process takes about six hours to complete.



### Powers

The exact powers of the liquids created by the *crystal distillery* vary with the items added to the boiler. Some commonly available items and the extracts known to be manufactured from them are shown on the next page.

As with Kren's *brazier*, Dungeon Masters are encouraged to allow the characters in their campaigns to experiment with the tinctures produced by the use of different plants than are listed below. Again, books of plant folklore can be helpful in compiling a list of magical fluids that can be manufactured with this most unusual *distillery*.

### Curses

While Kren's *crystal distillery* can turn many plants and herbs into beneficial liquids, it can also transform other plants and herbs into dangerous—and often deadly—concoctions.



# THE POWERS OF NATURE

Whenever a new type of plant or herb is used in the *distillery*, the DM should roll percentile dice. If the roll is between 01 and 25, the liquid created in the *distillery* has no magical properties at all. A roll of 26 to 75 indicates that a liquid with a beneficial magical property has been distilled. On a roll of 76 or higher, a dangerous magical property has been distilled. With any magical liquid, the DM decides its exact nature and its effects.

## Destruction

One might expect the *crystal distillery* to be a fragile object. In truth, it is very nearly indestructible. Physical attacks, magical spells, and even psionic powers are utterly powerless to harm this magical object.

This is not to say that the *distillery* is without its weaknesses. As with other crystal objects, it can be shattered by extremely high-pitched sounds. A *shatter* spell cast by a wizard of 6th or higher level will do the job. How well sounds from other sources may work on the *distillery* is up to the discretion of the Dungeon Master.

## Legends

Legend has it that Kren was seeking the secrets of the *elixir vitae*, the potion of eternal life. In all of her years it is never recorded if she did indeed discover the secret of life, though she did learn to brew potions that could render their drinker permanently invisible, invulnerability to all attacks save one and a potion that could revive the newly dead. But the secret eluded her.

Doctor Victor Mordenheim and Dominic D'Honaire have both sought to gain this miraculous apparatus, Mordenheim seeking the secret of life, D'Honaire lusting after the power to control others. The *distillery* twice was nearly in Dr. Mordenheim's grasp. But once D'Honaire discovered his rival's goal, he hired a band of mercenaries to retrieve it. They succeeded in stealing it away from Victor's agents, but instead of honoring the bargain, they sold it to the Vistani for a pretty price, their lives. The second time, Adam, that golem of patchwork flesh sought to deny his creator the victory and so he slew the couriers and sunk the still deep in a marsh.

## Liquids Created With Kren's Crystal Distillery

Allspice	<i>Potion of vitality</i>	Lily of the Valley	Type H Poison
Anise	<i>Potion of clairvoyance</i>	Lotus	<i>Potion of extra-healing</i>
Apple	<i>Potion of animal control</i>	Mimosa	<i>Potion of ESP</i>
Bay	<i>Philter of glibness</i>	Mistletoe	Type J Poison
Belladonna	Type C Poison	Monk's Hood	Type A Poison
Bergamot	<i>Oil of disenchantment</i>	Morning Glory	Type L Poison
Buttercup	Type M Poison	Nightshade	Type B Poison
Cedar	<i>Potion of heroism</i>	Poinsettia	Type F Poison
Cinnamon	<i>Potion of invulnerability</i>	Poppy	Type N Poison
Dumbcane	Type E Poison	Privet	Type P Poison
Elderberry	Type O Poison	Rose Geranium	<i>Potion of super-heroism</i>
Foxglove	Type K Poison	Rue	<i>Potion of longevity</i>
Frankincense	<i>Sweet water</i>	Stephanotis	<i>Potion of undead control</i>
Gardenia	<i>Philter of persuasiveness</i>	Sweetpea	<i>Potion of human control</i>
Goldenchain	Type D Poison	Tuberose	<i>Potion of clairaudience</i>
Horse Chestnut	Type G Poison	Vanilla	<i>Oil of timelessness</i>
Jasmine	<i>Philter of love</i>	Vervain	<i>Starella's aphrodisiac*</i>
Larkspur	Type I Poison	Violet	<i>Potion of healing</i>

\*from the *Tome of Magic*

## Lost Arcana Newly Unearthed

It is possible to create your own grim magical items for use in a RAVENLOFT campaign following the examples presented herein and aided by the charts on the cover of this product. The following items have been culled from the pages of published adventures and expanded upon using the charts on the inside covers of this accessory to provide you with an example.

### Bonespur's Ring of Spellturning:

Bonespur was a heartless bounty hunter who accepted this plain platinum ring as payment for services rendered to the Highmaster of Bluetspur.

**History:** Observers report that it reflected the full brunt of spells cast at Bonespur. Protected by this powerful item he was more fearsome than ever before... until one day, when he just vanished without a trace: His companions found his bed empty, and his prized ring on the floor.

**Apparent Powers:** This ring functions as a normal *ring of spell turning*, as described in the DUNGEON MASTER® Guide, with the exception that it always turns back 100% of spells it can intercept. However, the wearer must still roll 1d10, as if determining a percentage of magical energy that is turned back. The DM should record how far from 10 the player rolled. (If the roll was 8, then the DM should record the number 2.)

**Hidden Powers:** See below.

**Triggers:** See below.

**Curse:** The DM should keep a running total of the player's d10 rolls in relation to Bonespur's ring. When that number totals 50, the ring's curse (and true primary function) is triggered, and the wearer is plane shifted into the lair of the illithid god-brain deep under Mount Makab, where the victim is swiftly absorbed into the hive intellect. The ring remains at the victim's last location, waiting for some unsuspecting fool to use it.

**Destruction:** Bonespur's *ring of spell turning* is comprised of the essence of the god-brain itself. As long as it lives, the ring will exist to send the unsuspecting to it. Destroying the god-brain will free the spirits of those it has absorbed.

**Last Known Location:** Bonespur's traveling companion Loie Hunn claimed it after his disappearance. Hunn was last reported in Sly-var, Hazlan.

### Gabrielle Aderre's Wolfkillers:

When the witch Gabrielle Aderre of Invidia disappeared a few years ago, an even greater evil claimed Castle Loupet. This new lord disposed of Gabrielle's belongings by dropping them from the sky over Karina, and among these was a dagger of exceptionally fine quality. It has a blade that is slightly curved and engraved with Vistani symbols that are normally associated with wards against the evil eye. "You have hunted your last" is carved into the handle in Falkovnian.

**History:** Deathly afraid of lycanthropes, Aderre forced a Vistani smith to forge and enchant this dagger for her. When he was done, she had her henchmen murder the man. With his dying breath he cursed the dagger, but Aderre—already cursed by her own mother—simply laughed and spat in his face.

**Apparent Powers:** Wolfkiller is a *dagger +1, +3 vs. lycanthropes*.

**Hidden Powers:** The wielder can cause the dagger to convey an effect similar to the *protection from evil* spell, except only lycanthropes are affected by it.

**Triggers:** The wielder must boldly declare, "You have hunted your last" as combat begins for the hidden power to activate.

**Curse:** As he died, the Vistani cursed the dagger, so it radiates an effect similar to a *sympathy* spell. Any lycanthrope within 10 yards of the dagger's possessor (whether in human or beast form) must roll a successful save vs. Spell at -2, or fall hopelessly in love with him. The lycanthrope will do anything to be with the character, and will protect the dagger's owner, and two or more lycanthropes will fight to the death over the character. Some might even try to kill the dagger's possessor, because, "If I can't have you, no one can have you!"

**Destruction:** Wolfkiller is easily destroyed with a *disintegrate* spell, or with a *rod of disenchantment*.

**Last Known Location:** Wolfkiller was purchased by Commander Anton Regess, leader of the Falkovnian "colony" in Karina, Invidia.

## Table C: Curses

Each magical relic of awesome power also carries a dread price that the unwary must pay for its use.

- 2 Causes members of a race hated by the user to behave as if under a *sympathy* spell toward the possessor.
- 3 Causes the gradual loss of sight. After two uses the wielder's vision is blurred (he suffers a -2 penalty with missile weapon attacks). After four uses, the hero cannot use missile weapons, and suffers a -4 penalty when fighting in dimly lit areas. After six uses, the hero is completely blind. A remove curse will lift the blindness until the hero uses the item again.
- 4 The item grants the hero success in all things, but others always pay a terrible price.
- 5 After three uses, the owner gains the ability to assume *wraithform* at will. After nine uses, the owner must make a System Shock roll or become a wraith permanently. *Remove curse* lifts the curse, until used again.
- 6 The item instantly pollutes all holy water or disrupts all *blessings* and beneficent spells within 10' when used.
- 7 User becomes forgetful, small details at first progressing to full amnesia. Effect cured only if item is destroyed.
- 8 Afflicts the user with specially activated lycanthropy. Only the destruction of the item can reverse the effect.
- 9 After five uses, the owner's touch rots wood, leather and flesh if fails an item save vs acid in 1d6 days.
- 10 After one use, the owner becomes sensitive to the sun, and suffers a +1 penalty to all rolls during daylight. After three uses, the rays of the sun are painful and owner suffers 1 point of damage per round exposed to the sun, and suffers a +2 penalty to all rolls. After five uses, the sun causes burns—smoke rises from his body and owner suffers 1d8 points of damage per round exposed. Only the destruction of the item can reverse this effect.
- 11 The owner's possessions gradually disappear. Little things disappear first, then larger items, until the all that is left is the cursed item. This is an irreversible process, and can only be stopped by the destruction of the item.
- 12 Upon the third use, the owner is subjected to the effects of a permanent *clairaudience* spell, and always hears every sound within 60. Remove curse negates the effect, but it returns after three additional uses of the item.
- 13 The owner experiences random prophetic visions that feature friends and loved ones dying hideously. Only the destruction of the item can remove this effect.
- 14 The owner suffers from the benefit and curses of the undead—immune to poisons, charms and mental attacks, but subject to turning, holy water, and immune to curative spells. This effect is permanent, and can only be negated by a wish.
- 15 With each use the owner is gradually transposed with a succubus or incubus or other fiend. After nine uses, the owner must make saves vs. Death Magic each time it is used by anyone or he is completely replaced by the fiend. This possession is irreversible. Destroying the item before the thirteenth use prevents eventual transposition.
- 16 The owner behaves as if under the influence of a *confusion* spell (cast at 12th level) whenever a good cleric casts a spell within 20'. Destroying the item reverses this effect.
- 17 Owner suffers maximum effect from spells cast at him. (Saves for half effect) Destroying item removes curse.
- 18 Undead always attack the possessor in preference to others. Getting rid of the item removes this effect.
- 19 After one use the owner's touch kills plants. After three uses, the touch inflicts 1d6 points of damage to living things. After nine uses, the owner's touch *disintegrates* anything that is touched. To lift curse, destroy the item.
- 20 Roll twice on this table.

## Table D: Methods of Destruction

This lists the fabled methods for destruction

- 2 Must be given to the ghost of a hanged murderer.
- 3 Must be fed to the Guardian of the Threshold.
- 4 Must be thrown into a river as it flows into oblivion.
- 5 Must be driven through the chest of a vampyr.
- 6 Must be carried in a kender's pocket for one full year.
- 7 Must be buried in a cemetery on another world.
- 8 Must be buried under a living tree by a druid of Forlorn.
- 9 Must be thrown from Castle Avernus in Darkon.
- 10 Must be thrown into a burning forge by a paka.
- 11 Must be washed in the tears of an innocent.
- 12 Must be thrice-blest by a priest of Set, then thrown against the wall of a tomb.
- 13 Must be placed under the mattress of a faithful couple's bed for one month.
- 14 Destroyed only if a specific person or creature is killed.
- 15 Must be thrown into the heavens, the moons or the sun.
- 16 Must be kissed by a succubus or incubus.
- 17 Must be thrown into the Sea of Sorrows by a Dukkar.
- 18 Must be given to a woman who was not born, yet lives.
- 19 Must be shattered by a banshee's wail.
- 20 Must be sunk in Souragne's swamp by Lord of the Dead.

## Table E: Last Known Location

This lists which country, place or with whom the relic was last located as it forged a new legend or tale of tragedy.

- 2 Sea of Sorrows (Lord: Capt. van Riese) — The Sargasso
- 3 Lamordia (Lord: Adam) — Death's Glacier
- 4 Tepest (Lord: The Three Hags) — The Grotto
- 5 Har' Akir (Lord: Anhktepote) — The Pyramid
- 6 Forlorn (Lord: Tristan ApBlanc) — Ancient Ruin
- 7 Mordent (Lord: Godefroy) — Haunted House
- 8 Darkon (Lord: Azalin) — The Tomb
- 9 Invidia (Lord: Gabrielle Aderre) — Gypsy Vardo
- 10 Dominia (Lord: Dr. Dominiani) — The Asylum
- 11 Dementlieu (Lord: Dominic D'Honaire) — The University
- 12 Falkovnia (Lord: Vlad Drakov) — The Prison
- 13 Kartakass (Lord: Harkon Lukas) — Wayfaring Inn
- 14 Barovia (Lord: Strahd von Zarovich) — Lost Chapel
- 15 Borca (Lord: Ivana Boritisi & Ivan Dilisnay) — Alchemist
- 16 G'Henna (Lord: Yagno Petrovna) — The Outland
- 17 Hazlan (Lord: Hazlik) — Wizard's Tower
- 18 Keening (Lord: The Banshee) — Crystal Chamber
- 19 Souragne (Lord: Anton Misroi) — The Merrows
- 20 Sri Raji (Lord: Arijani) — The Accursed City

Advanced  
**Dungeons & Dragons®**

# Ravenloft®

Official Campaign  
Accessory

## FORGED OF DARKNESS

by William W. Connors



### Absolute Power.

In the bewitched domain of Tepest, under the pale amber light of a full moon, a wandering band of adventurers comes across the severed hand of a hanged man. Far beneath Darkon's dread Castle Avernus, a mysterious Black Vault is sealed, locking away an assortment of magical arms and armor until such time as the cause of evil demands their service. Across the dread domains of Ravenloft, sinister craftsmen created magical items of unequalled power—and absolute evil.

### Absolute Corruption.

*Forged of Darkness* presents players and Dungeon Masters with a collection of magical items, each of which carries the distinctive taint of the Demiplane of Dread. This 64-page omnibus of diabolic devices is certain to add an element of the macabre to any RAVENLOFT® campaign

TSR, Inc.  
201 Sheridan Springs Rd.  
Lake Geneva  
WI 53147  
U.S.A.



TSR Ltd.  
120 Church End  
Cherry Hinton  
Cambridge CB1 3LB  
United Kingdom

U.S. \$12.95

Sug. Retail  
CAN \$16.95

U.K. £7.99

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS and RAVENLOFT are registered trademarks owned by TSR, Inc.

The TSR logo is a trademark owned by TSR, Inc.

©1996 TSR, Inc. All rights reserved. Made in the U.S.A.

ISBN 0-7869-0369-4



9 780786 903696