

THE BOOK OF SORROWS

A Netbook for the **Ravenloft**
and **Gothic Earth** settings

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Notes from the Kargatane:

All submissions have been edited to use Americanized spelling. This was done simply to give **THE BOOK OF SORROWS** a more coherent appearance, and should not be meant as a slight against our Anglicized authors. The Kargatane would like to thank Kargatane alumnus Barry Trevelyan for his contributions to our first, formative year of releases, and wish him the best in the future.

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Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December;
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Nameless *here* for evermore.

Edgar Allen Poe
***The Raven* (1845)**

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A Disclaimer From a Kargat Concerning Canon

Normally I don't like to step out from behind the curtain like this, but there is a matter which needs to be explained before we begin. In the year since the release of the *Book of Souls*, I have been given the opportunity to write for the official RAVENLOFT line, and as such I could arguably be considered a member of the Kargat. This may raise a question: If I have the ear of the TSR design team, and if some of what I write elsewhere is can be considered canon, could what I write for the Kargatane netbooks be considered canon as well? The answer is quite simple:

No.

Some real bombshells are dropped in this year's framing fiction, and it's important to understand that they do not represent the direction of the official game lines or the intent of their designers. These tales may be dressed up to *look* as true to canon as they possibly can, but they aren't. In deciding the topics of these framing pieces, I did not consult with the Kargat to see if my concepts clashed with their plans. Because I did not consider the plans of the TSR design team, it is simply fair play that their materials need not consider anything revealed here. Any similarity between these revelations and the eventual directions of the official RAVENLOFT and MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH game lines is entirely coincidental. Credit is due to the Kargat for continuing to assist me once they did learn of the evil schemes hatching within my brain, helping me to produce tales which,

although entirely unofficial, could still ring true in the little details.

Thanks for your time and—ah, I see someone's tugging at the far end of my chain.

I'd better go see what they want. Enjoy the netbook!

John W. Mangrum

BOOK OF SORROWS: PREFACE

“Sorrow is the future tense of love.”
—Leonard Levinson

Sorrow, a most piquant emotion. Not the ebullience of grief, nor the pleasing tang of regret, sorrow is resignation to what must be in the midst of longing for what might have been.

We of the Kargatane dine on the sorrows of the night. A man kills his lover in a jealous rage, then collapses under the weight of what he has done. A mother puts her children to bed and walks out of town, never to return, never looking back. A boy raises his blade, takes one last look at his beloved yet rabid pet, and strikes down.

Ravenloft is about sorrow made manifest: From the sorrow of Strahd, as he stands on the battlements and contemplates his lost love, to the sorrow of Rudolph van Richten as he slays the unliving body of his son, the Demiplane of Dread thrives on sorrow.
Feeds on sorrow. Lives on sorrow.

Here you have shared your sorrows with us, and we now return them to you, for each man’s sorrow is truly only his own to bear. Turn the pages carefully, friend, for they are wet with the tears of those who have read them before you, and those tears will burn your soul.

Andrew Hackard, *Kargatane*

October 31st, 752.

MORDENTSHIRE.



The Sea of Sorrows lashed itself against the rocky shores, as flashes of lightning in the stormy skies above caused the looming cliffs to dance like flickering ghosts. As the heavy tears of rain trampled the sodden earth, a dark figure approached the simple house which stood at the meeting of Heather Way and Farmer's Walk.

The ebon rider reined his sable steed to a halt at the intersection and dismounted, keeping his eyes trained on the warm lights in the windows of the humble abode. Neither the coal-black horse nor the two massive hounds which accompanied the rider seemed to acknowledge the autumn storm which beat down mercilessly upon them, and the rider stayed his beasts with a word and a simple gesture.

The inky figure stood in the darkness for several minutes, unmoving, as oblivious to the storm as his beasts. As the rider silently observed the house, his thick hand squeezed the hilt of the sword at his side. Finally, the dark figure let out a deep breath and strode forward. A simple wooden sign swayed in the wailing winds; as the dark rider passed under the sign, he offered it one quick glance before opening the door.

"Herbalist, Dr. Rudolph van Richten."

Inside, a slender young woman sat behind the counter, intently studying a scattered collection of papers. As the bell above the door chimed, the young lady's pale blue eyes darted up from their study to take in the new visitor to the shop. The visitor slipped into the doorway like a patch of living darkness, his flowing black cloak masking his shape, but not quite hiding the weapon on his belt. Water dripped from the wide, black rim of the visitor's hat, which veiled his face in shadows. The dark visitor and the young woman remained still for several moments, staring at each other in stunned silence. Just as recognition began to creep into the young woman's face, the visitor finally spoke.

"You... you look so much like your mother."

As the visitor removed his hat, the woman reflexively rose to her feet and brushed the long, dark brown hair from a face suddenly beaming more brightly than the lanterns which lit the room.

"Uncle George?" she declared, with equal measures joy and disbelief.

George Weathermay let his gaze fall to the floor as he smiled awkwardly, but he looked up again a moment later as a second figure burst into view, darting in from the door behind the counter. The second young lady was identical to the first in all respects; the same dark hair, the same ice-blue eyes, the same delicate features and upturned nose.

"Did I hear you say," she asked as she stepped into the room and suddenly saw the visitor, "Uncle George!"

George smiled at the new arrival as both women ran around the counter to greet him, their long skirts rustling. "Hello Laurie." He turned back to the woman who had first greeted him. "Hello Gennifer."

The twins both smiled knowingly as they darted up to him. "You always could tell us apart, couldn't you," teased Laurie.

"We could even fool father sometimes, but never you!" chuckled Gennifer.

Without further delay, both girls fell upon their towering uncle, hugging him tight despite his sodden clothes. George froze, his arms held out like the limbs of a tortured tree. When he did awkwardly return the girls' affections, his squeezes were hesitant and delicate, as if he feared his nieces might crack like eggshells. Finally the girls released George from their grip, and stepped back to take him in, a hint of sadness apparent in their features.

"It's been so long," started Gennifer.

"So very long," finished Laurie.

George forced a smile. "And you've both changed so very much. You were still children when I last saw you."

Laurie grinned wryly. "You've changed a bit too," she said, running her fingers through George's gray hairs. The twins shot each other a momentary, worried glance, and the specters in George's eyes went unmentioned.

"Why haven't you visited us?" asked Laurie.

"We've missed you so much. Grandfather does too."

George's eyes withdrew, and his response was quiet, almost whispered. "I... I... I've been very... There's

BOOK OF SORROWS: INTRODUCTION

been a lot I needed to... Something very important that..." He trailed off, his mind racing, the explanation unfinished.

Gennifer frowned at Laurie, who winced in reply. "What's important now," offered Gennifer, "is that you're finally home with us again."

"Yes," said Laurie. "That's all that matters." She took a long look at her uncle, taking him in from head to toe. "Oh, but just look at you! You're soaked to the bone! Here, give me that wet cloak." She snapped her fingers, gesturing for George to hand it over with all haste. George surrendered the cloak, and Laurie folded it over her arm. "I'll go put this by the fire to dry." She grinned impishly. "And wait right here. There's something I want to show you." Without further explanation, she hurried out of the room.

As Laurie disappeared from view, Gennifer turned back to her uncle.

"You didn't have to stay away." Her voice was quiet and gentle, but George's gaze fell to the floor again. She delicately put a hand on his arm. "It wasn't your fault."

George flinched as though he'd been struck, but Gennifer would not release him from her grip. "It was eleven years ago, and it was *not* your fault. I know that. Laurie knows that. Even father knows that." Gennifer saw George's gaze turn in upon itself, but she continued all the more urgently, tugging her collar away from her pale throat.

"There's no scars. See?" George's frightened eyes flickered to her smooth skin, but would not linger. She let her collar slip back into place and cupped George's face with both hands, forcing him to meet her gaze.

"There's *no* scars." Her voice was hushed but firm.

George's eyes sank downward again, unable to bear looking into Gennifer's gaze. "All right," he murmured, with a voice full of surrender. Suddenly, his eyes darted up again, curious.

"By... by the way, what? What *are* you two doing here?" George asked, as his hands fumbled for something tucked in an inside pocket. A moment later, he produced a tiny bundle wrapped in a handkerchief, and Gennifer grinned.

"Is that a present for us, Uncle George?" she asked, with coy amusement. The response was not what she'd hoped for. George seemed to freeze solid, his eyes wide and searching for an answer.

"No... no. It's something I brought to..." George paused, as if giving himself time to make up the rest. "...Something I brought to show Dr. van Richten. It's... it's a flower."

George delicately curled his finger around the edge of the handkerchief, and paused again, holding his breath as if unwrapping the handkerchief would be the most

difficult act of his entire life. Finally he released the breath, concluded with, "a very rare flower," and peeled open the bundle to reveal a large, wilted blossom of blue and white.

In the instant George unveiled the blossom, Gennifer went green, staggering backwards and throwing her hand over her mouth. Leaning heavily on the counter, unable to face the putrescent blossom in George's hand, she struggled to speak without gagging.

"I think I'm going to be sick! That thing reeks of a month's worth of rancid meat! Put it away, put it away!"

The stench was snuffed out, and Gennifer weakly turned to see George quickly stuffing the bundle back into his coat. At first, glancing at his ashen face and shaking hands, she thought that he too had been made ill by the flower's foul stench. But she quickly realized this was not the case. George was terrified.

"I-it's a v-very r-rare flower," stammered George, barely able to spit out the words. "Only g-grows in K-k-k-kart-ta-ta... H-had to... I-I had to... I r-rode st-straight here..."

Gennifer stared at George in wide-eyed horror. She remembered from years ago, seeing him flustered around women, seeing fearless Uncle George collapse upon seeing a pretty face—but never in this wild panic. And he had never, *never* been flustered around her or Laurie. *Ever*. In an instant, she knew. In his mind's eye, George was watching the attack all over again. She ran to his side and squeezed his arm tight, tight so he couldn't run out the door and away for another decade.

"It's all right! Uncle George, it's all right! I'm all right! No harm done! None! You just might have warned me about that stench!"

George turned to look at Gennifer, and let out a single, nervous bark of laughter. He offered a smile, for Gennifer's sake, but his eyes were still those of a trapped animal. "I... I—I'm... I mean... I... I'm so—"

"So what do you think?" proclaimed Laurie.

Both Gennifer and George turned to look at the returned twin. Laurie stood in the doorway, her fists proudly planted on her hips. Gennifer merely smirked, but George stared at her legs with a shock sufficient enough to banish his terrors for the moment, and allow the slightest hint of amusement to creep into his face.

"You're wearing trousers?" George asked, incredulously.

Laurie beamed, and Gennifer's grin widened. "We hear this style is the latest fashion in Lamordia."

The ghost of a smile played on George's lips. "For the men, yes." Finally, his brow furrowed and a true, mischievous grin curled across his face. "What does your father think of you wearing those?" he asked, knowingly.

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Laurie rolled her eyes as she walked into the room. “I think Father wanted both of us married off last year.”

“Oh, and he *hates* our current occupation,” continued Gennifer.

“I swear, he treats us like porcelain dolls. He still thinks we can’t take care of ourselves,” concluded Laurie. She leaned forward to George, and spoke in a more conspiratorial tone. “But do you remember those sword lessons you gave me?” She smiled. “I’ve been keeping up.”

George’s brow furrowed again as he looked back and forth between the twins. “What... what *have* you been doing lately? And... and if—if you don’t mind, where is Dr. van Richten? I need to speak with him about... ab-bout the f-flower.”

Laurie started at her uncle’s slip back into stuttering, but was able to hide her shock. “What flower?” she asked, as a cover.

Gennifer waved a hand of warning. “Believe me, you don’t want to see it. It reeks ten times worse than Fisherman’s Alley on a hot afternoon. George can take it better than I can, though.”

George blanched, and stammered out a quick explanation. “I... I’ve... g-gotten used to it.”

Laurie shrugged, and turned back to her uncle with a sad expression. “I’m sorry to have to tell you this, George, but we haven’t been able to find any trace of Uncle Rudolph for more than two years now.”

George sagged, and the panic started creeping into his eyes again.

“But we mustn’t ever give up hope,” interjected Gennifer.

Laurie nodded in agreement. “That’s true. We mustn’t ever give up hope. But until we *do* find him, we’re keeping up his good work!”

George’s eyes narrowed. “W-what do you mean?”

Gennifer beamed. “Well, just last month we were able to solve the Case of the Hobson Haunting.”

George’s brow furrowed. “Hobson? ... You mean the bakery? Oh, yes, I remember hearing about that ghost when *I* was just a boy.” He pondered this news for a moment. “That must have been going on for nearly a century. And you solved it? ... That *is* impressive.”

“And,” chimed in Laurie, “we’ve been busy editing Uncle Rudolph’s notes. Have you ever read his correspondence with Wy...”

“Oh, I don’t think we need to bother Uncle George with all that right now,” interrupted Gennifer. “He didn’t come all this way in the rain just to talk about Uncle Rudolph’s old letters.”

George frowned. “Well, in a way, I—I think I did.”

The twins both stared at him with the same puzzled expression on their faces.

“I mean... I was—I *was* going to visit you two as well, of course,” George quickly corrected, “But I had some very pressing matters to—to discuss with the doctor. If he’s not here any more, then—then I really do need to go through his notes.”

“Well, his library was in a terrible clutter when we found it,” offered Laurie, “but we’ve got most of it sorted out now.”

“Yes,” chimed in Gennifer. “We can help your studies! All three of us can search together! What is it you’re looking for? It was about your flower, wasn’t it?”

“Do you know what the flower’s called?” offered Laurie.

“No,” interrupted George, a little too firmly. Immediately he shrugged. “I’m sorry. But—but I need to work alone. I’ll—I’ll concentrate better that way, and... and...” His eyes glanced at Gennifer, but he immediately tore them away. “And this is very, very important.”

The twins looked at each other, a dozen unspoken concerns passing between them. In a more somber mood, they turned back to their uncle.

“All right,” said Laurie, disappointed, and reaching out to put a hand on George’s arm. “You know Uncle Rudolph’s library is just up the stairs, right? Just remember we’ll be right here if you need us.”

Without warning, Gennifer pressed the palm of her hand against George’s forehead. “And if you don’t mind, I’m going to brew you up some herbal tea. After being out in that storm, I wouldn’t be surprised if you were coming down with a fever.” She smiled wryly, keeping her hand pressed against George’s brow. “A cold would certainly explain how you can bear to carry that rancid-smelling flower in your pocket.”

George nodded in silent agreement, and the twins escorted him up to the library, promptly retreating again. George had no doubt that even as they left the room, his nieces were conspiring to keep their tortured uncle close, close so they could watch over him.

But for now, George was alone in Van Richten’s library. His gaze slowly slid across shelf after shelf bulging with diaries, notebooks, and stacks of loose letters and papers.

“A hundred times I came to you when I needed help,” whispered George under his breath, “when I needed information I couldn’t find anywhere else. And a hundred times you helped me find what I needed. Rudolph, old friend, I need your help one more time.”

George briefly glanced at some papers lying on a chessboard near the hearth, then moved on to the shelves. Putting all other thoughts aside, he plucked out a random journal, and started to read...

✻

MORE FUN AND GAMES

Further Recreations from the Demiplane of Dread

by Andrew Hackard
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“Life is nasty, brutish, and short.”

Frantisek Markov (among others)

While this may well be a fairly accurate description of life in the Demiplane of Dread, its natives do manage to enjoy themselves from time to time. Frequently, they divert themselves with games, reminders that not everything is a matter of life and death, not even in Ravenloft.

In the *Book of Souls*, I detailed several card games played by the Vistani. But the Vistani do not have a monopoly on games, and there are games to be played even when cards are not available. Here are several new games to pass the long nights when the wind is howling outside your window.

Or, at least, you hope that’s the wind...

is a tie for the high card, then the tying players place one card face-down and another face-up until the tie is broken. The player who wins this “trade war” looks at the hidden cards but need not show them to any other players. (If there is a tie for cards below the top card, the tie is not broken.) A crown card automatically ties the high card, forcing a trade war.

When one player plays her last face-down card, all players shuffle together their remaining face-down cards, together with any tricks they have won, and play continues. When a player runs out of cards, she is out of the game. Play continues until there is only one player left.

Vistani parents like this game because it can go on for hours, and for some reason, children love it. The rules are clear enough that there are almost never any disputes, an added benefit.

CREIGHAND

(“Trade War”)

A Vistani card game

This is a game for smaller children. Typically, there are two players, but any number may play, combining several lesser decks if necessary. It uses the four suits of the lesser deck, ranked from the archetype down to the 1 (the suits themselves are not ranked). It also uses two crown cards, typically the *Temptress* and the *Esper*, although the precise cards are not important.

Shuffle the cards, and then deal one card in turn to each player until the deck is exhausted. (If some players get one more card than others, this does not matter, but extra crown cards may be used to bring the total number up to one that is divisible by the number of players.) Each player then shuffles her deck and places it face-down without looking at the cards.

The game play is simple. Each player turns over her top card; the highest-ranking card gets the trick. If there

DROTCHÉ

Vistani Chess

Drotche is a game of chess the Vistani brought with them when they entered Ravenloft; it has changed somewhat since then, and the original form of the game is known only to the most scholarly residents of the Demiplane. Some gorgios have picked up the game, but it is still almost exclusively played by the Vistani.

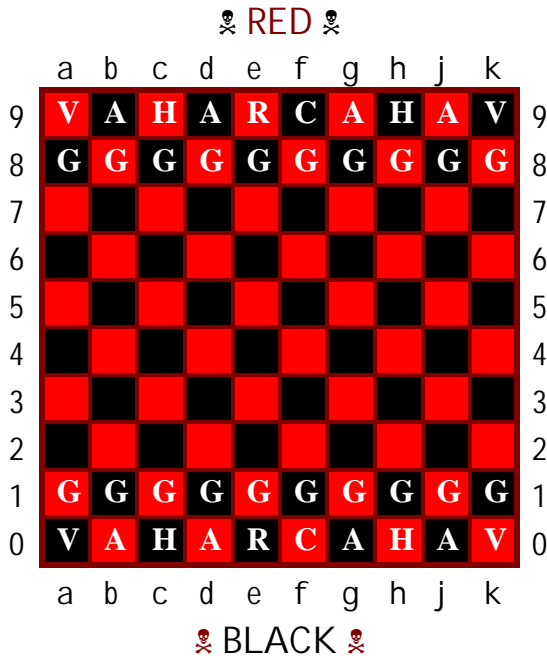
Drotche is played on a 10-by-10 board, with squares and pieces usually made of cherry and mahogany. However, any red and black materials may be used; Anton Misroi is said to have a drotche set made of wood carved from a bloodwood, a type of tree found only in the swamps of Souragne, and a fire-blackened oak that formerly housed a dryad. Other sets found in the demiplane have been made of leather, black and red marble, and even one made entirely of metal, found by a sailor who was shipwrecked in the Nocturnal Sea and later rescued. This set has been linked to a strange magical curse, so players are warned to avoid metal

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drotche boards! (The red squares and pieces are made of Mysteran Red Steel; DMs without access to the Red Steel setting can substitute another magical curse of their own devising.)

Perhaps the grisliest rumor surrounding a drotche set concerns one that was supposedly owned by Azalin. This set was made of cypress wood taken from a tree used to hang a murderer, covered with cured human skin, and had pieces carved from human bone. The red squares and pieces were stained by immersion in fresh human blood; the black squares and pieces were rubbed with ashes from a child's funeral pyre. Drotche was not a popular game in Darkon (though it is rapidly gaining ground in Necropolis).

The Vistani normally do not record individual games, and when they do, they use rather complicated notation, so we will instead use the notation developed by a Sri Rajian sage, Hamid Akbani. He calls the files "a" through "k" (skipping "i" to avoid confusion) and the ranks "0" through "9". Black, who plays first, is always at the bottom of a drotche diagram, with red at the top. Here, in Akbani's notation, is the starting setup of a drotche game:



(The board is always oriented so that squares a0 and h9 are black.)

Each player has one move or capture per turn. The various pieces, and their types of movement and capture, are explained below:

The **Giorgio** (G) moves one square forward. (It may not move two squares on its opening move.) Giorgios capture either by a forward move onto an

occupied square, or by capturing a piece diagonally one square ahead without actually moving. A giorgio which reaches the last rank (9 for black, 0 for red) may promote to any adventurer type.

The **Adventurers** (A) is the collective term for four pieces: the **Warrior** (W), **Mage** (M), **Priest** (P), and **Thief** (T). In the standard drotche game, each player has one of each piece, with warriors starting on b0 and b9, thieves on d0 and d9, mages on g0 and g9, and priests on j0 and j9. However, in games between masters of drotche, often any set of starting squares is allowed, and on occasion different sets of four adventurers may be used. (A Vistani legend tells of a drotche game between Madame Eva and Count Strahd von Zarovich, in which Eva used four thieves—called “traders” then—to defeat Strahd, who was using four mages. Supposedly, this victory sealed the pact giving the Vistani unfettered access to Barovia, including the secret of its choking fog.) The adventurers move and capture as follows:

- ◆ The Warrior moves and captures exactly as a rook.
- ◆ The Mage moves by “teleporting” to any unoccupied square of the opposite color. Mages do not capture directly; instead, they use “spell” powers to capture opposing pieces. Many different spells have been devised for the game, but the most typical is a set of three spells, each usable once. The mage may cast a *magic missile* spell to capture an opposing giorgio on any rank, file, or diagonal in common with the mage (a “queen move”). A *lightning bolt* spell can capture a giorgio or adventurer sharing a rank or file with the mage. Finally, the mage may use *touch of death* to capture any opposing piece, except the raunie, which is in an adjacent square. The mage does not move when it uses its spell powers.
- ◆ The Priest moves and captures exactly as a bishop.
- ◆ The Thief has a “hide in shadows” move. Thieves move along any rank, file, or diagonal, any distance, but they may not cross a square threatened by an opposing piece (except a mage). The thief can capture directly, but may also capture without moving by employing a “backstab” attack on a giorgio, adventurer, or captain in an adjacent square, even one that is threatened.

The **Horse** (H) moves and captures as a knight on its own. It may also join with one or two vardos to form a caravan (described under the vardo), in which case it cannot capture.

The **Captain** (C) moves and captures exactly as a queen.

The **Vardo** (V) can move one or two squares either horizontally and vertically, but may not “turn a corner”

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after moving one square. Vardos do not capture as such; rather, they may move onto a square containing another piece, belonging to either player, and “imprison” it. (Vardos cannot imprison horses or other vardos, and a vardo may not move one square, imprison a piece, and then move another square.) Imprisoned pieces are immune from direct capture, but are not immune from a mage’s spells or the raunie’s evil eye, and may not themselves threaten other pieces; they move with the vardo. A piece which has been imprisoned must be released by the vardo’s owner before it may be moved (releasing an imprisoned piece does not count as a move in itself, and the release may take place before or after the vardo owner’s move). Vardos may only imprison one piece at a time.

If a vardo is captured while a piece is imprisoned, the imprisoned piece is not captured, but is immediately released. Two pieces may not occupy the same square for more than one turn, however, or one is considered to be captured.

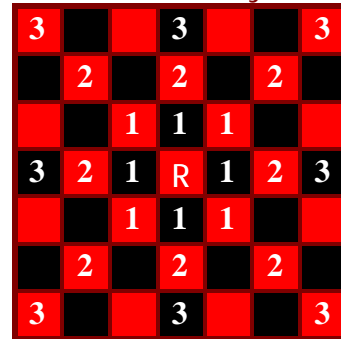
Example: *Red has used his vardo to imprison a red giorgio. Black’s warrior captures the red vardo; the giorgio “appears” on the square where the vardo used to be. If Red does not move the giorgio on his next turn, it is considered to have been captured by the black warrior; Black need not use a move to effect this capture. If it had been a black giorgio instead, Black would have had to use his next move to take one of the pieces off the square, or one of the pieces (Black’s choice) would have been captured.*

Vardos may form a “caravan.” If two vardos of the same color are in adjacent squares sharing an edge, not merely a corner, they may move as a unit. For example, if Black has vardos occupying c3 and d3, the first vardo may move c3–c5, and the second vardo will follow d3–c3–c4 (the only case in which a vardo may “turn the corner” while moving). A player is not obligated to form a caravan with adjacent vardos and is not required to maintain one once formed; two vardos may move as a unit for one turn and then one may move separately the next.

Finally, if a horse is next to a vardo, it may also form a caravan (possibly even linking three pieces together!). Rather than take its normal move, the horse moves three squares horizontally or vertically, with the vardo or vardos following behind. Two horses may not link up in this fashion, however.

The **Raunie** (R) moves as a king, but does not possess a castling move. She cannot capture directly, instead employing the “evil eye” power on any piece except a horse or vardo on an adjacent square, an adventurer or giorgio in a “line of sight” two squares away, or a giorgio on a “line of sight” up to three squares distant. (See the following diagram.)

The Raunie’s “Evil Eye” Capture



The Raunie is located on the square marked **R**. Her “evil eye” threatens opposing pieces on the numbered squares as follows:

- 1: threatens any piece but a horse or vardo
- 2: threatens any adventurer or giorgio
- 3: threatens a giorgio only

The game ends when a player captures the opposing raunie. There is no “checkmate” as in regular chess; however, it is customary to say “Drotche!” when one threatens to capture the opposing raunie, unless the threatening piece is the thief. There are no formal rules for drawn games; stalemate is so rare that the stalemated player is supposed to have lost. A draw for reason of insufficient material is likewise considered to be a loss for the last player to have a piece captured (although, in truth, there has been so little formal study of this game than no one is quite sure what “insufficient material” is). The only common form of a draw is by mutual agreement.

There are some variant forms of drotche which bear mention. The most common variants use new types of pieces. Some of these are:

- ◆ The *Bard*, which moves like a giorgio but can avoid capture by “charming” the opposing piece into stopping one square early.
- ◆ The *Berserker*, which may move directly forward any number of squares to capture an opposing piece but cannot move backwards.
- ◆ The *Werewolf* (or *Wolfwere* in Kartakass), a giorgio secretly designated by its owner at the start of the game; it is immune to capture but cannot promote.
- ◆ The *Ghost*, another piece secretly designated by its owner; this piece can move *through* other pieces but cannot capture at all; pieces trying to move through the ghost are captured instead.
- ◆ And many others too numerous to list here.

By far the most popular variant, however, is a game which uses the tarokka deck in addition to the drotche

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set. It is known as **Toll-drotche** (crazy chess) and is extremely fast-paced. It is most popular with players who know regular drotche so well that they have grown bored with it. The tarokka cards are used to modify game play; the entire deck is shuffled and three cards are dealt to each player as a starting hand. A player may play or discard one card on any given turn (where “turn” is defined to be a pair of moves by each player); he may also play a card on one move and discard on the other. Cards numbered 2–9 are nulls, and playing them has no effect (equivalent to a discard). The 1s of each suit may be used to cancel a card played by an opponent, if played immediately and if the player has not previously played a card that turn. The other cards modify game play as follows:

- ◆ **The Warrior:** The player’s warrior, if he possesses one, may make two moves in succession; the first move may not be a capture.
- ◆ **The Wizard:** The player’s wizard, if he possesses one, may cast two spells on the same turn; the spells may come in any order.
- ◆ **The Rogue:** The player’s thief, if he possesses one, may make two moves in succession; the first move may not be a capture or backstab.
- ◆ **The Priest:** The player’s priest, if he possesses one, may make two moves in succession; the first move may not be a capture.
- ◆ **The Darklord:** The player secretly chooses and writes down one of his surviving pieces to be his “darklord”. The game is no longer over when the raunie is captured; the darklord must be captured instead.
- ◆ **The Artifact:** The player plays this card when one of his pieces has just been captured. Instead of being captured, it is returned to its starting square (or one of its starting squares, if there is more than one possible).
- ◆ **The Horseman:** The player may move one of his horses twice, if the first move does not result in a capture. Alternatively, he may move both of his horses once, but neither may capture. A horse moving under this card may not pull a caravan.
- ◆ **The Marionette:** This card is played immediately before the opponent’s move. The player may dictate a giorgio move instead, which the opponent is required to make.
- ◆ **The Innocent:** This card is played when the opponent captures a piece. The opponent, as penance, must sacrifice one of his giorgios or forfeit the capturing piece.
- ◆ **The Temptress:** This card may be played after a regular move. If a player’s mage is next to an

opposing giorgio, the mage may “charm” the giorgio into switching sides.

- ◆ **The Mists:** Instead of a regular move, the player may remove one of his own pieces from the board. It returns the next round on any empty edge square after the player’s regular move.
- ◆ **The Donjon:** The player plays this card before his opponent’s turn. He throws one of the opponent’s pieces into stocks; it cannot move on this turn.
- ◆ **The Hangman:** This card is played instead of a player’s regular move. One of his own giorgios has committed a crime, and the punishment is death! The player chooses one of his giorgios to sacrifice to the leafless tree.
- ◆ **The Ghost:** This card may be played immediately before a player’s regular move. One of his pieces becomes insubstantial, and may move through occupied squares. It may not capture or end its move on an occupied square, however.
- ◆ **The Broken One:** One of the opponent’s adventurers turns into a giorgio. This card may be played at any time.
- ◆ **The Raven:** The player may play this card after his move. Rather than simply draw the top card as a replacement, he looks at the next three cards and selects one; the other two cards are “buried” in the deck.
- ◆ **The Beast:** One of the player’s giorgios becomes a werebeast! It may move any number of squares forward, provided its move ends in a capture. The werebeast is also removed from the board.
- ◆ **The Esper:** This card may be played at any time. The opponent must lay his hand face up on the table and leave those cards there until they are played. Cards drawn to replace these need not be displayed, and the opponent may discard face-up cards normally.

This is typically a very fast-paced and bloody game, with captures every move for several turns not uncommon. It is a favorite of the caravan captains, but nearly unknown among the Vistani women (who think that this game is far too close to fortune-telling for comfort).

Thanks to Steve Jackson Games, from whose *Knightmare Chess* Toll-drotche was inspired.

TESSARATRI

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A Dice Game From the Amber Wastes

There are several games which are based on the dikesha of Har' Akir. Two of the most popular both use the same underlying method of play; forming "tessaratri," or sets of three dice with specific faces on them. The tessaratri are:

- ◆ **Divine Right:** Pharaoh, Sword, Courage
- ◆ **Knowing One's Place:** Commoner, Town, Stasis
- ◆ **Obfuscation:** Magister, Illusion, Curiosity
- ◆ **Sudden Death:** Fiend, Cave, Terror
- ◆ **Futile Strength:** Warrior, Shield, Destruction
- ◆ **Circle of Life:** Innocent, Tomb, Ring
- ◆ **The Quest:** Mountain, Metamorphosis, Passion
- ◆ **The Cavalry:** Road, Chariot, Mercy
- ◆ **The Portal:** Mists, Key, Transient
- ◆ **Greed:** Gem, Creation, Anger

Here are two games which use the tessaratri:

Fingers and Thumbs

This game is usually played for money and may have any number of players. Each player puts 10 silver pieces into a pot. Each player throws all five dice once; the one who gets the highest number of "master" faces (Pharaoh, Tomb, Sword, Destruction, Passion) rolls first, with the play proceeding anticlockwise from him. The first player gets three throws of the dice to try and get a tessarat (the second and third throws may be of all the dice or just some). If he fails, the dice pass to the next player. If he succeeds, he takes one silver piece out of the pot and gets to try for another tessarat. The first player to successfully get all ten tessaratri wins all remaining money in the pot.

Locusts at Night

This game is more complicated; while it can be played for money, it is just as often played for fun. It is almost always a two-player game. Each player throws the dice three times, trying to form a tessarat. Once one player throws one, he may collect points by continuing to throw that tessarat. Each successful throw nets him another point, until the other player (or all players in a multi-player game) have also formed that tessarat.

Example: *Rashid throws Quest. Until his opponent also throws Quest, Rashid earns a point for every Quest he throws after that.*

When a player throws all six tessaratri containing one of the dice (for example, all six tessaratri which contain the red die), he "retires" that die from play. He

may continue to throw it, to try and earn points, but no other player may throw it.

The game is over when either one player has thrown all ten tessaratri or enough dice have been retired so that there is no way for either player to complete the remaining tessaratri. When this happens, the players earn one point for each tessaratri formed and three points for each die retired, adding them to their previous scores, and the player with the highest score wins.

Using Regular Dice as Dikesha

The dikesha were produced for the *Forbidden Lore* boxed set, and have not since been re-released. As this set has become harder and harder to come by, the dikesha have been increasingly ignored. For the purposes of this article, a player may easily substitute five regular six-sided dice of different colors. (This also works if, for some reason, you have the *Forbidden Lore* set but have mislaid the dice.)

The five dice, with their colors and face equivalents, are as follows:

Red Die:	1-Pharaoh	4-Fiend
	2-Commoner	5-Warrior
	3-Magister	6-Innocent
White Die:	1-Tomb	4-Road
	2-Town	5-Cave
	3-Mountain	6-Mists
Orange Die:	1-Sword	4-Ring
	2-Shield	5-Chariot
	3-Gem	6-Key
Yellow Die:	1-Destruction	4-Stasis
	2-Creation	5-Illusion
	3-Metamorphosis	6-Transient
Green Die:	1-Passion	4-Mercy
	2-Anger	5-Curiosity
	3-Terror	6-Courage

Using Regular Cards as Tarokka

The tarokka cards are not quite as difficult to find as the dikesha, but there are still many Ravenloft players and DMs who do not have their own sets. It is quite easy to substitute a regular deck of playing cards (including the two jokers; ideally one is colored and one is not) for the tarokka deck in any situation where it is required.

The suit equivalents are: spades for swords, clubs for coins, hearts for glyphs, diamonds for stars. Aces count as 1, deuces as 2, and so forth, up to the 10s which are the "master" or archetype cards of each suit.

The face cards and jokers are used in place of the high deck (or "crown cards"), as follows:

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- ◆ **Darklord:** King of Spades
- ◆ **Artifact:** King of Diamonds
- ◆ **Horseman:** King of Clubs
- ◆ **Marionette:** Jack of Hearts
- ◆ **Innocent:** Queen of Hearts
- ◆ **Temptress:** Queen of Diamonds
- ◆ **Mists:** Joker (plain)
- ◆ **Donjon:** Joker (colored)
- ◆ **Hangman:** King of Hearts
- ◆ **Ghost:** Jack of Diamonds
- ◆ **Broken One:** Jack of Spades
- ◆ **Raven:** Queen of Clubs
- ◆ **Beast:** Jack of Clubs
- ◆ **Esper:** Queen of Spades

✕

THE BROTHERHOOD OF MORTIS

A New Threat in Paridon, and Those Who Would Oppose It

by Mark "Mortavius" Graydon

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Author's Note: The inspiration for this article came from the Activision/Kalisto game *Nightmare Creatures*, for the Sony Playstation.

When scientists create life from the unliving, such as with golems and the like, they condemn themselves and their creations to a truly horrible fate. In Lamordia, this act seems all too common. Perhaps it is because of the scientific nature of the people, of their unwavering disbelief in magic and all things supernatural.

Perhaps it is the culture that they live in? Who is to say whether or not one who is born into an advanced culture will be more likely to explore areas that "simpler" people would know not to venture into?

Whatever the cause, it does seem that culture has a card to play in the creation of these "madmen," as they are termed. For it is only possible through the use of advanced techniques and equipment that one can obtain the measurements and statistical data that one may need in a search for the unknown.

But what of the other lands of the Demiplane that share the same cultural level of famous Lamordia? What of Nosos, Mordent, Dementlieu, and most importantly, Paridon?

Paridon, apart from all of these lands, is, with the possible exception of Nosos, is the most advanced of the lands of Demiplane. It is known already for a horrible menace that presides in the city: the doppelgangers. Apparently no person in the city is safe or very far from these creatures, and now with monsters rising from the depths of the sewers to attack the living, Paridon has become a very dangerous place. But a new evil has reared its head in Paridon: the Brotherhood of Mortis.

The Brotherhood of Mortis has been present in Paridon since well before the city became part of the Demiplane of Dread. The Brotherhood came into being

when Paridon first started making advances in its technology. Along with the advent of wondrous things such as guns, and the decline of items such as armor and the like, a new science became prominent, that of medicine. People were being saved from ailments that claimed their lives by the dozens before, and life seemed good.

But as ever from good must come an evil, so was created the Brotherhood of Mortis. This group of wealthy individuals wanted to create a race of super-beings under their control, so that they could rule the city. They were headed by Carl Folkare, a brilliant scientist turned to this dark path by an ancient book he discovered. The book was a diary of a man named Samuel Underl, and contained a record of a previous Brotherhood of Mortis that tried for the same goal. They failed when the law discovered them, and were all put to death. Carl vowed that this would not happen to his Brotherhood, and so enlisted the help of businessmen, bankers, doctors and others to help him. They sank into an evil miasma, working in basements, creating foul monstrosities from the bodies of the dead. They also mixed noxious chemicals and toxins together, creating potions and tonics that not only twisted the body, but the mind and soul as well.

But on the darkest night of the year, when the group was ready to release their creations on the city of Paridon, fate intervened once again. This time it was in the form of a detective who had been posing as a cult member. He slipped out, and when everyone was gathered in a basement to mark their victory, he set fire to the building. Unable to live with what he had done or what he was doing to the people trapped and screaming in that building, the detective then threw himself onto the great funeral pyre, embracing his fellows one last time.

Then history took its course. Paridon was drawn into the Demiplane when Sodo committed his heinous

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acts against his clan, and the city became an island floating in the Mists. Then, with the coming of the Grand Conjunction, the country around the city vanished, leaving it a stinking place of starvation and desperation. Even amidst this, the good tried to survive, and many efforts were made to keep people from dying left and right.

Life found a way, and kept going as before. Then came the time of changing, in 744 BC when the sewers mysteriously changed shape and creatures right out of one's darkest nightmares arose to steal away with the living.

But even amongst all this horror, life kept going. People were much more on their guard, and disappearances became much more common, but life kept on. In time, the people started to adapt.

In the year 750 of the Barovian calendar, all this took a turn for the worse. Scientist and prominent doctor Alec Lawrence awoke and stepped outside of his house one morning to find an odd black book lying upon the step. He questioned a drunk in a nearby alley about who had left the book, but Alec could draw nothing from the fellow's stupor. Alec took the book inside and started to read it, changing his life forever.



Father Morlington, a priest in the Temple of the Divine Form, was in his room when he heard about an attack on an elderly woman by a dead man, stopped only by the timely intervention of a constable. Although he had heard of the living dead, he had never seen one, and so went to Morton von Keller's funeral home to oversee the inspection of the corpse.

He didn't learn much. The corpse was that of a young man who had been buried a few months earlier, said the aging mortician, and nothing unusual was found. Why it should be walking about though, was a total mystery to both of them.



Alicia was in her room, reading a book on fencing when she heard the front door slam. She thought this strange, as her father, Dr. Orson Fritz, was supposed to be in his library, reading. She got up to see what was wrong, and found her father, dead on the floor. His throat had been quite efficiently sliced.

A note lay in his clutched hand; written upon it were the words, "The Brotherhood of Mortis does not tolerate deserters."



Later, Alicia and Morlington met at Dr. Fritz's funeral. Morlington had talked with him several times, on the physiology of the human body and other matters. Thus, when Morlington heard what Alicia had to say concerning his death, he was shocked. He left in a hurry, and ran back to his house to his modest library.

It was Morlington's habit to study the occult and strange occurrences in history. He was a firm believer in the idea that one should always learn from the past. Apparently, he mused, someone didn't like that particular lesson, as he pored over records of the two previous incarnations of the Brotherhood.

Morlington told Alicia his findings, and since then, the two have joined forces to battle the encroaching evil of the Brotherhood. Since that time, they have learned a great deal about their enemy, including his name. They still do not know where he resides, but are getting closer. Morlington, in his belief that the human form is perfect, finds Alec's creations to be hideous monsters indeed, and Alicia is driven by pure hate and anger, with revenge her sole thought.



Alec Lawrence is a brilliant scientist, and his creations are mad reflections of this skill. He does create things like flesh golems, but also works with simple corpses, animating them. Finally, he has found a use for mutagens in his work, and this can make his monstrosities horrible indeed.

Alec Lawrence

**6th-level Human Necromancer (Anatomist),
Lawful Evil**

Armor Class	9 (10)	Str	7 (17)
Movement	12 (13)	Dex	15 (9)
Level/Hit Dice	6	Con	11(15)
Hit Points	13 (26)	Int	17
THAC0	18 (13)	Wis	16 (6)
Morale	7 (18)	Cha	11 (4)
No. of Attacks	3/2 (2)	XP	1,400
Damage/Attack	1d3+2 (knife) (1d3+3 in brute form)		
Special Attacks	+1 damage in brute form, Spells		
Special Defenses	+1 bonus to save vs. necromantic spells		
Special Vulnerabilities	-1 penalty to save vs. mind-affecting spells in brute form		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

Note: Statistics in parentheses refer to Brute form.

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Alec Lawrence is a sinister man, and has a drawn, pinched face. His black hair hangs around his head like a hood, and his eyes seem to bore into one's being. He speaks in a menacing but educated tone, choosing words that sound confident but are not true to his inner cowardice.

When Alec is enraged and in Brute form, his physique changes quite a bit. His clothes burst from the sudden increase in muscle mass, and he grows from his six feet of height to a massive eight feet. He gets a feral look in his eyes, and his skin gains a sickly greenish tint.

Alec Lawrence was a successful scientist, until he found an ominous black book on his doorstep. Glancing through the book, he learned of the ancient Brotherhood of Mortis, and decided to re-create this lost society.

After much study, he learnt the dark magic within the book, and also the lost science it contained. He learnt how to mold the flesh through the use of mutagens, rituals, spells, and surgeon's tools.

But too soon, Alec realized that he might have to be stronger than he was to be able to deal with those who would oppose him. So, using a virus that he had perfected, he gave himself a powerful boost. Now, whenever Alec Lawrence is subject to stress or anxiety, the chemicals that are released cause a reaction to occur in the virus, and it takes over his body. Using a combination of adrenaline, steroids, and mutagens, it causes his muscle mass to increase tenfold. It has some detrimental effects upon his brain, but he doesn't really realize this yet.

When he is in his normal form, Alec prefers to fight (if he has to) with his surgeon's knife. As an Anatomist, he has specialized in the use of this weapon and gets the standard +1 to hit and +2 to damage bonuses. He can also cast a few spells, and being a necromancer his enemies suffer a -1 penalty to saving throws vs. his necromantic spells.

While in his brute form, Alec always fights with the knives he keeps on his person. He will also draw a second blade, and can now attack with each knife once per round, instead of his usual three attacks every two rounds. Alec cannot cast spells while in his brute form, due to the degeneration of his mind.

Alec has the Healing and Anatomy proficiencies, among others, which allow him to heal himself should he need to flee. In addition, any Scientific Zombies (see below) he creates receive a +2 hp bonus per hit die.

Alec also has all the regular bonuses of the Anatomist kit, but these will probably not come into play, and are thus not described here. For a complete ruling, see the "Anatomist" kit in *The Complete Necromancer's Handbook*.

Alec's Spells: (5 / 3 / 3)

Spells listed in Bold come from the *Complete Necromancer's Handbook*.

Spells marked with an asterisk (*) are ones that he tends to keep memorized.

Level 1: *corpse link**, *detect magic*, *enlarge**, *locate remains**, *mending**, *read magic*, *shocking grasp**

Level 2: *ESP*, ***embalm***, *knock**, *Melf's acid arrow**, *spectral hand**, *summon swarm*

Level 3: *blink**, ***false face****, *feign death**



Father Morlington Colaber is a devoted priest of the Divinity of Mankind philosophy, and a pacifist at heart. Yet he has studied the lost art of staff fighting, and has used it on more than one occasion to send one of Alec's misbegotten creations to its final rest.

Father

Morlington Colaber

5th-level Human Priest of Divinity of Mankind, Lawful Good

Armor Class	7 (9)	Str	12
Movement	12	Dex	15
Level/Hit Dice	5	Con	12
Hit Points	21	Int	14
THAC0	17	Wis	12
Morale	15	Cha	13
No. of Attacks	3/2	XP	420
Damage/Attack	1d6+2 (staff)		
Special Attacks	Spells		
Special Defenses	Spells		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

Father Morlington Colaber has been a priest of the Divinity of Mankind philosophy for as long as he can remember. He served as an altar boy when he was very young, and eventually worked his way up through the ranks, becoming a full-fledged member of the priesthood.

Morlington always held a special curiosity for topics of the arcane and occult. He is a master linguist, and has studied many ancient languages, as well as the legendary arts of shamanism. But he has always held true to his clerical beliefs.

When Morlington first learned of Alec's horrible brood of creatures attacking the city, he took up arms against the monstrosities. When he first sighted one of

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the horrible abominations, it struck a cord within him. He knew that these creatures went against all of his beliefs of perfection and self-betterment, and so now he goes out to battle not for the terrified citizens of Paridon, but for himself and his philosophy.

Even though Morlington has learned a weapon which is disdained by his order, his mastery of it and his single-minded devotion to fighting this enemy of the priesthood has allowed him to keep his priestly spells intact. It is likely that after the threat of Lawrence is over though, that his order will ask him to give up his weapon.

Father Morlington has mastered the staff to such an extent that he knows no other weapons. But he is considered to be a specialist in the weapon, gaining the appropriate bonuses. He goes into battle wearing a suit of archaic leather armor, donning his robes on top of that.

Morlington can cast spells from the following spheres: All, Charm, Combat (minor), Creation (minor), Divination (minor), Healing, and Protection (minor). His favored spells are:

Level 1: *bless, cure light wounds, shillelagh*

Level 2: *barkskin, find traps, hold person*

Level 3: *magical vestment*

Finally, Father Morlington also has the standard ability of a priest of the Divinity of Mankind: the ability to speak a Soothing Word three times per day. This Word will remove the effects of a *fear* spell or a failed fear check on one person, can end a berserker rage, or can momentarily calm down a number of people equal to Morlington's level.

Morlington cannot turn undead.



Alicia Fritz is a young, pretty woman whose soul bears the anger and hatred of Alec Lawrence. She has vowed to not rest till this man is brought down, and lives on only to see his destruction. Before her father was killed, sending her on this task, she studied an art that serves her well in her current quest: fencing.

Alicia Fritz

6th-level Human Fighter, Neutral Good			
Armor Class	7	Str	9
Movement	12	Dex	15
Level/Hit Dice	6	Con	11
Hit Points	35	Int	18
THAC0	12	Wis	16
Morale	15	Cha	15
No. of Attacks	3/2	XP	420
Damage/Attack	1d6+4/1d8+4 (saber)		
Special Attacks	Nil		
Special Defenses	Nil		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

Alicia Fritz is an athletic young woman whose heart is twisted by rage. She usually wears a white high-necked blouse, worn loose, and dark blue riding skirt, allowing her freedom of movement. Black riding boots complete the attire. A snaplock pistol is strapped to her waist. Her hair is black, and drawn tightly back in a ponytail.

Alicia had just started an investigation into the sciences when her father was killed. Thus, she has knowledge of viruses and sickness, and some anatomy. She is by many accounts, a brilliant woman.

Alicia is specialized in the saber, a fencing weapon that she prefers. Thus, she receives a +1 bonus to hit and +2 bonus damage. She can also use the snaplock pistol and owns one of these with enough ammunition for five shots. She doesn't use it often though, preferring to vent her rage through her blade.

Also, in training her fighting skills, Alicia has disdained the use of armor, concentrating instead on dodging blows. Thus she receives +2 bonus to her AC whenever she goes without armor.



In the Zherisia cluster, there are numerous creatures that already stalk the land. The dreaded Doppelgangers are everywhere, and recently new terrors have been springing out of the depths of the strange sewers, seeking to rend and destroy their prey. How does the Brotherhood defend against these monstrosities?

In the case of the Doppelgangers, they would not try an all-out attack anyway. But, Alec knows about the Doppelganger menace, and has acted accordingly. He never keeps any one guard close to him. He always has at least two, and then they are never permanent. The only permanent servant he has is the Render, and Alec checks that servant's mind with an *ESP* spell every so often just to make sure he's loyal. The Render's child-like mind fails against this spell, so that any resistance would alert Alec to an impostor. As to other members of

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the Brotherhood, they are not so lucky. Indeed, there are Doppelganger agents within the cult, but they are very rare and keep a very low profile. A member of the cult would have magical abilities and this is knowledge the Doppelgangers do not possess. Thus, they would be found out, were they to take an active hand. Besides, Doppelgangers are essentially lazy creatures, and prefer taking over the lives of the rich and powerful, and none of the cult are that rich or powerful, only moderately wealthy.

As to the Marikith threat, they are a much more immediate concern. Since the cult conducts many of its operations in basements and other areas that are close to the sewers, it is in more danger than the average citizen of Paridon. Thus, most members of this cult have a Scientific Zombie guard. Such a being can be controlled by its creator, and thus can wear a long coat and hat and travel abroad with its creator, as long as the creature isn't too desiccated. An *embalming* spell is usually used to cover up decomposition anyway. With this guard, most members have time to escape the Marikith if they attack, and some of the more powerful creations of the cult (The Knarled and Huskless) are strong enough to deal with a Marikith hunting party. Another interesting fact surfaces however. The Marikith primarily search through the use of a fear sense. All the creations of the Brotherhood are incapable of fear however, and thus do not attract the attentions of the creatures. It is only when a Marikith senses a living member of the Brotherhood that it will attack.

Another interesting note is that some of the creations of the Brotherhood have been allowed to roam the sewers, attacking all they find. Thus, in his own perverted way, Alec Lawrence is fighting for Paridon against the evils of Timor! These creatures usually destroy a number of Marikith before they are brought down by superior numbers. Also, Alec's creations that attack the living are depriving both the Doppelgangers and Marikith of potential victims, again limiting the spread of these creatures. Unfortunately, they create more raw materials for Alec's experiments. However, they are depleting the surplus population, causing food to be not such an issue. But this is small consolation to the families that have lost their members to the razor-claws of a Knarled or the unearthly fists of a Huskless.

Sodo, the overlord of Paridon, has a hatred of Alec. He hates the monsters he builds that rob his minions of their prey. But, as is Sodo's nature, he cannot directly harm the Brotherhood, and thus sits brooding and trying to outsmart Alec in mind games. So far though, Sodo's Doppelgangers have been unable to penetrate the ranks of the Brotherhood to the extent that they could cause any damage, and so he waits and contemplates in his ever-changing form. If something were to happen that would

disrupt the Brotherhood and cause a distraction, the Doppelganger agents would very likely use the opportunity to cause more havoc, and any players invading the Brotherhood may find unlikely allies in these fell creatures. Of course, after the threat of the Brotherhood is eliminated, the creatures may very well destroy the players...



Alec's Bestiary

Alec Lawrence has created a number of monsters over the months, and this treatise will discuss his more common types. There are more horrors than this list can offer, but these are the ones that Morlington and Alicia have fought together.

SCIENTIFIC ZOMBIE

Climate/Terrain	Paridon
Frequency	Uncommon
Organization	None
Activity Cycle	Always
Diet	Carnivore
Intelligence	Semi- (2-4)
Treasure	Nil
Alignment	Neutral
No. Appearing	1-6
Armor Class	7
Movement	9
Hit Dice	1 (10 hp when made by Alec)
THACO	19
No. of Attacks	1
Damage/Attack	1d6
Special Attacks	Nil
Special Defenses	Immune to sleep, charm, hold, death magic, poison, cold, holy water, and turning, Regeneration
Special Weaknesses	Nil
Magic Resistance	Nil
Size	M
Morale	Fearless (20)
XP Value	120

Scientific Zombies are ugly creatures, usually gaunt and sickly looking, and some may be in a more horrid state of decay. Their hair hangs limply from their heads and they groan when they see the living. They exist only to kill and cause harm.

These monsters attack by clawing and biting, but it is all treated as one attack. All the creatures have the same hit point total, 10. (If these creatures were to be created by someone without the Anatomy non-weapon proficiency, then they would have a total of 8.) This is a

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byproduct of their creation, which is discussed more below.

Because of the regenerative mutagens at work in their bodies, these creatures regenerate 1 hp per round, and they are very difficult to kill. If they are reduced to 0 hp, they will fall, but continue to regenerate. When they have reached full hit points, they will rise again. Only if they are reduced to -10 hp will they cease to regenerate. They cannot regenerate limbs and the like, but if their arms are cut off they will still try to bite, causing 1d2 damage. However, if their heads are cut off, their bodies will wander aimlessly, attacking anything they contact (1d4 damage), and if their torso or legs are cut off, they will lie where they are and attack whatever comes near.

Because these creatures are created by science and not magic, they are immune to holy water and priestly turning attempts.

These creatures are made by Alec Lawrence from secrets he learned from an ancient book of the Brotherhood of Mortis. They are corpses stolen from morgues and the like, and injected with mutagens and toxins, which when combined with a burst of electricity, cause an active regenerative virus to spread throughout the body. The corpses are animated by something unknown; the Brotherhood suspects that they are brought to life by a dark spirit. Whatever the reason, these creatures are uncontrollable.

The creatures must feed on flesh at least once every two days; otherwise they will collapse as the regenerative virus throughout their body ceases to function.

Activity Cycle	Always
Diet	Carnivore
Intelligence	Low (5-7)
Treasure	Nil
Alignment	Chaotic Evil
No. Appearing	1
Armor Class	6
Movement	12
Hit Dice	4+5
THACO	15
No. of Attacks	3
Damage/Attack	1d6+2, 1d6+2, 1d6+2
Special Attacks	Nil
Special Defenses	Immune to same spells as normal flesh golem
Special Weaknesses	Nil
Magic Resistance	Nil
Size	L (9')
Morale	Fanatic (17-18)
XP Value	270

The Knarled are horrible creations, unique to Alec Lawrence. They resemble flesh golems in the aspect that they are stitched together from dead bodies. However, the Knarled are also altered with toxins and poisons, causing them to become unlike the corpses they were taken from.

All of the Knarled are made the same way. They all have brown leathery skin laced with stitches, huge white eyes, and large mouths filled with jagged teeth. They have three heads and three arms, but only two legs. Two of their arms are on one side of the body, the third is on the other side. The heads all face forward, as much as they are able. The creatures shamle about, roaring when they see something they can eat. Their hands have only two fingers and a thumb, and each finger ends in a huge claw.

The Knarled attack by slashing with their long, gangly arms. These claws can slice through flesh quite easily, causing great damage if all three arms were to hit. Plus, with the creatures' state as a type of flesh golem, they are immune to and affected by the same spells as those creatures. These creatures are considerably weaker however, due to the chemicals that course through their blood.

The Knarled are created in much the same ways as a normal flesh golem, although without so much magic. They must be created from a minimum of six bodies, like a normal golem, but since the number of heads and limbs often makes this improbable, Alec has no problem harvesting additional corpses for his needs. Alec uses his customary spells in the creation of these creatures, as well as his lost science.

The Knarled feed upon flesh of any kind.

THE KNARLED

Climate/Terrain	Paridon
Frequency	Rare
Organization	Solitary

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THE HUSKLESS

Climate/Terrain	Paridon
Frequency	Rare
Organization	Solitary
Activity Cycle	Always
Diet	Carnivore
Intelligence	Animal (1)
Treasure	Nil
Alignment	Chaotic Evil
No. Appearing	1-3
Armor Class	8
Movement	15
Hit Dice	6
THAC0	15
No. of Attacks	2
Damage/Attack	1d8+3, 1d8+3
Special Attacks	Smash
Special Defenses	Immune to sleep, charm, hold, death magic, poison, holy water, turning
Special Weaknesses	Nil
Magic Resistance	Nil
Size	L (10')
Morale	Fearless (19-20)
XP Value	650

The Huskless are horrible creations of Alec Lawrence that only involve one body. The creatures are very big, being some ten feet tall. They have no skin, only bare muscles. Their entire bodies are colored a putrid blue instead of the red of normal, healthy, muscle. This is because of the noxious liquids that burn through their veins. Their hair hangs limp, and their eyes are nothing but orbs of whiteness. Their teeth bulge, and they often try to bite immobilized victims. The Huskless usually have a pair of cloth shorts stitched directly into their flesh by Alec, an incongruous note of modesty.

The Huskless enjoy bursting through walls and scaring their victims with their sudden appearance, then attacking with surprise. They are very strong, and usually have a Strength score between 19 and 21.

The Huskless also feel constant pain. This is because anything, from a slight breeze to a sliver of wood that lands on their exposed muscles causes them suffering. However, they have found that by causing destruction, they can focus their minds on something other than the pain.

The creatures attack with a set of punches that can kill a man easily. They can also perform an overhead smash that causes the ground to shake. When this attack is made, the DM should determine if anything within a twenty-five foot radius is unstable enough to fall. If so, then it collapses, hurting the victims of the Huskless, or the creature itself. Also, if anyone is hit by the smash itself, they take 2d10+3 damage. A Huskless can only

make one smash attack per round, in place of its normal two punching attacks. If a Huskless has its prey immobilized or is somehow able to bite it, then it can cause 1d4 damage with such an attack.

Even though Huskless are created from the bodies of dead humans, they are not considered to be undead. Thus, they are not damaged by holy water, and not subject to turning.

The Huskless are created, as mentioned before, by Alec Lawrence. He flays a corpse, taking all the skin off, except for the scalp. Then he casts an *enlarge* spell upon the body, and shortly afterwards injects a number of chemicals into the body that cause it to stay in its enlarged form. The chemicals also turn the muscles a rotten blue color.

The Huskless feed on meat of any kind.

ALEC'S HARPIES

Climate/Terrain	Paridon
Frequency	Rare
Organization	Solitary
Activity Cycle	Always
Diet	Carnivore
Intelligence	Low (5-7)
Treasure	Nil
Alignment	Neutral Evil
No. Appearing	1-3
Armor Class	8
Movement	Fly 9 (D)
Hit Dice	4
THAC0	17
No. of Attacks	1
Damage/Attack	1d3
Special Attacks	Shriek
Special Defenses	Immune to sleep, charm, hold, poison, death magic, holy water, turning
Special Weaknesses	Light
Magic Resistance	Nil
Size	M (5'-6' tall)
Morale	Steady (11-12)
XP Value	650

Alec's Harpies are horrid creations that he looks upon with great fondness. Alec does not know that in other worlds, real Harpies do exist. All he knows of them comes from fairy tales. Thus, he thinks of it as a great act of benevolence that he has introduced a mythological species to the world.

The creatures appear as women with bone white skin patched with grey rotting spots. Their legs are stitched together, forming something of a tail, and their arms have been changed into large black bat wings. They swoop and whirl through the air, shrieking their horrid cries.

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Alec's Harpies attack by biting, the only damaging attack they can make. However, they like to utter their piercing shriek first, which may cause their prey to flee. Anyone hearing the shriek must make a *fear* check. Then the Harpies will try to attack while the victim is stunned or running away and his back is turned. They can shriek an unlimited number of times, but they must wait two rounds between each shriek for their rotted vocal cords to recover.

These creatures are created in a manner similar to the Scientific Zombies (see above). That is, a dead body is injected with a regenerative virus, an *embalming* spell is cast, and it is then animated with a shock of electricity. But there are a few changes with the Harpies. Their legs are stitched together, and the arms are switched with a bat's wings. However, the corpse of the bat must also be magically *enlarged* and then frozen in that form with Alec's drugs. After a suitable size is reached, then the arms are cut off and the wings attached.

Like the zombies, the harpies must feed every two days or the regenerative virus stops working, causing them to fall lifeless.



The Brotherhood

The Brotherhood of Mortis is an ancient and yet new organization. Its beginnings stretch into the ancient past of the world that Paridon came from, but every time it has appeared it has been destroyed. Thus, the next incarnation of the Brotherhood has nothing but a few journals or an ancient book to go on to follow the cult practices.

The current cult is led by Alec Lawrence, detailed above. It also has some twenty other members however, and has connections everywhere. Its members all share two things in common: they are influential and knowledgeable. Bankers, Doctors, Merchants, there is someone from almost every station in life in this organization.

They work in back alleys and forgotten basements, robbing the charnel houses of their charges and the dead of their bodies. Although the spirit of the dead person does not come back to fill its rotting shell, it's believed that the spirit cannot rest while the body is in use, and thus the Brotherhood has been looking for ways to gather these spirits together, to leach off of their power. So far they have been unsuccessful. However, this may change, should a Ghostwatcher or Spiritualist (see *Champions of the Mists* for information on these kits) enter the land of Paridon.

Most of the cult members of this Brotherhood are mages or necromancers to some degree. None surpass Alec Lawrence, but none deviate from him either. Because of the scarcity of magic in the lands, all the members of the cult have access to the same spells that were contained in the original diary that Alec found. The Brotherhood is under a constant search for more magic, and thus any wandering being with supernatural power is likely to become a target for their attentions.

Alec has one trusted servant, John Morgan, who is known throughout the cult as "The Render." This being was at one time a butcher who Alec contacted as a way to get a hold of raw materials for his experiments. John was such a good follower ("like a puppy dog," Alec was once heard to remark), that Alec awarded him by testing out his serums on the poor man. Now, robbed of his free will, John slavishly follows his master's orders, and due to his particularly brutal nature, has been renamed "The Render."

John Morgan a.k.a. "The Render"

Altered Human, Lawful Evil

Armor Class	5	Str	16
Movement	12	Dex	14
Level/Hit Dice	5+3	Con	13
Hit Points	26	Int	7
THACO	15	Wis	5
Morale	15	Cha	4
No. of Attacks	2	XP	420
Damage/Attack	1d6+1/1d6+1 (Cleavers)		
Special Attacks	Nil		
Special Defenses	Immune to poison, paralysis, and certain mind-affecting spells; Regeneration		

Magic Resistance

Nil

The Render is a hideous creature. He has a long thin face, covered in wrinkled and scarred tissue. His face seems curled in a perpetual snarl, and his teeth are broken and crooked. His bloodshot eyes blaze with fury. His skin is very pale, and has a greenish tinge.

The Render wears odd clothing, which seems to intensify his frightful appearance. He dons a faded black top hat, and wears ripped clothing of a man of the middle classes. Over this he has a long black cloak that was given to him by Alec. This flows around him, and when he runs at a victim it seems to billow out behind him like some huge set of wings, making him even more horrible to look at.

The Render's mind has regressed to that of almost a child, due to the things he has witnessed and the effects

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of the drugs on his mind. However, these drugs have increased his strength and stamina, and given him immunity to poison and paralysis. He also has a limited regeneration ability, regenerating 1 hit point per turn.

Because of the single-mindedness that has changed his mind, the Render is immune to all mind-affecting spells which would try to alter his behavior.

The Render attacks with his two favorite weapons, two large meat cleavers. He cares for these items lovingly, and if ever an enemy were to get a hold of them, he would go berserk trying to get them back, as Alec once almost fatally found out.

The Render does not speak, but grunts and snarls almost constantly. When in battle, he unleashes a great roar of fury. Those seeing the Render rushing at them may need to make a fear check at the DM's discretion.



VOICES OF THE PEOPLE

A Treatise on the Songs and Music of the Vistani Culture

by Matthew Ball
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By Gahlaerd K iriag,
Harmonia, K artakass; 751

In my years studying under the Meistersingers of our people, the songs and melodies of our own people as well as the divine *mora* remained by prominent concern. The music brought by strangers was always inferior to our own, the voices of their greatest bards always weaker to the harmonies of our choirs, and the instruments always of lesser quality. I became secure in the thought that the music of Kartakass would never be rivaled by any other domain throughout the Land. My convictions remained firm until 743, when I met a newcomer to Skald who introduced me to an hitherto unknown treasury of songs which had remained inaccessible to our people, and in some instances rivaled our greatest works.

I met Latcho Drom at a choir rehearsal in Skald where the man sat listening to the voices of the townsfolk being raised in a hymn of the *mora*. I noticed the man was keeping perfect rhythm with his hands as the singers sang the heartfelt lines. He saw that I had noticed his time keeping—rhythmic and steady as any metronome—and smiled. After the singers finished and momentarily paused before beginning anew, he whispered in my direction that the songs of my people were greatly similar to his—only the songs of his people had a greater pathos. Noticing for the first time the man’s appearance (dark of both skin and hair), I was intrigued to hear more of these songs he considered as rivaling our own. At the end of the rehearsal I pressed him for more details, but he gently rebuked my approaches. Over the next few weeks as I spent the season in Skald, I learned more of this man Drom. He had arrived in town not too long before and was working as an apprentice with one of the city’s famed craftsman—Maerun Dantras, maker of stringed instruments. Apparently Drom showed quite a talent for such a position, considering how he was an outsider. Over the course of weeks, I made an effort to speak to Latcho whenever the opportunity arose, and finally after a month of acquaintance, he was ready to confide to me. One night, as we shared a meekelbrau, Latcho asked if I

wished to know of the songs of his people. When I readily answered that I was ready, he began a story that would require some weeks in the telling, but it left an indelible impression upon me. Although at times shocking, I hung to Latcho’s every word, and at the end I was left with insight into a musical culture hitherto unconsidered by the Meistersingers of our people, and indeed as Latcho had said, perhaps a worthy rival to the music of Kartakass.

Latcho told me that he was once a member of the Vistani—the traveling caravans that roam throughout the Land. His tribe was of the Naiat tasque, and he spent many years journeying from village to village entertaining alongside his family for the offerings of strangers. Latcho learned a great deal of musical knowledge from the members of the Naiat, who are regarded as the most skilled musicians of the Vistani—especially their talent for creating instruments. As he grew older, Latcho’s love for the creation of the instruments began to become stronger in his soul than any other need, even the urge to travel. By his own choosing, he gave up his place in his tribe as they passed through Kartakass and became what he called a *mortu*. With his knowledge of crafting stringed instruments, Latcho soon had earned a place amongst the apprentice craftsmen of Skald, and his knowledge of creating the particular forms of instruments popular amongst the people of the Land was increased by our Meistersingers as well as his general knowledge of music.

Latcho told me that amongst the Vistani, especially the Naiat, one was never far away from a song or tune. Songs existed to be sung during work, as the tribe traveled, at functions, and most of all, at the nightly *prastonata*. Latcho’s depiction of the nightly dances around the campfire, filled with the spirited music and skilled choreography of the swirling dancers filled me with a desire to see such an event at least once before my death. Sadly, Latcho informed me that it would be highly unlikely for an outsider such as myself to ever bear witness to the complete *prastonata* or to even understand what I was witnessing if I was so privileged.

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Over the course of several days, Latcho described the numerous instruments members of the Naiat used in both their performances and *prastonatas*. Basically, the Vistani utilize three major types of instruments: stringed instruments; wind instruments; and perhaps the most predominant group, percussion instruments. The stringed instruments are a mainstay of Vistani music. Latcho told me that he had never encountered a single tribe where at least one member did not possess and play some sort of stringed instrument. The viol class of instruments is perhaps the most common, with the violin, viol, and bass viol or gamba, being the prominent instruments that are played with a rosined bow. A number of Vistani caravans also sport members who play a guitar similar to our own here in Kartakass, but often not as elegant although still quite mellow in sound according to Latcho. The Vistani also commonly play a smaller stringed instrument they call a rebec that is perhaps two feet long with a rounded pear-shaped body. The rebec sports three strings and is either played with like the viol with a bow or plucked like the guitar depending on the musicians' particular fancy. Perhaps the rarest of the string instruments amongst the Vistani are the psaltery and the dulcimer. Latcho showed me a psaltery he had constructed since residing in Skald. The instrument looked very similar to one of our harps—bearing perhaps sixteen to twenty strings. Like the harp the instrument is wing-shaped and the musician strums the strings. However, unlike the harp, the psaltery bears a soundbox that causes the strings to resonate in a fashion very similar to our guitars. The dulcimer is for all purposes a psaltery that is played by laying the instrument flat, and striking the strings with two mallets. This creates perhaps a more metallic, ringing, sound than the smooth soft tones of the psaltery but the range of the instruments is practically the same.

The wind instruments of the Vistani are nowhere near as varied as the other major groups of instruments. In fact there exist predominantly two variations—the flute and the pipe. The flute and its relatives are comprised of a thin hollow tube made of metal with finger holes that are covered and uncovered to produce variations in pitch. Latcho told me that such metallic instruments are highly prized amongst the Vistani, and are often treated as heirlooms amongst his people with the instrument being handed down from teacher to student. The pipe is similar to the flute in structure and function, but where the flute is made of metal, the pipe is often composed of wood or a hollow reed. The pipes come in several varieties including instruments similar to our recorders and a series of small pipes of varying lengths that are joined together into a single instrument. Latcho said that the pipe is perhaps the most common instrument made by his people. Young children are

taught the techniques of fashioning a pipe and many practice it throughout their life until practically any Vistani can fashion a pipe given the materials and the time.

Amongst the music of his people, Latcho told me that no instrument is as important as the percussion instruments. The Vistani use the percussion instruments to provide a beat and rhythm to which every song is sung. If there is no true instrument, the Vistani improvise with their own bodies—the snapping of fingers, clapping of hands, and stomping of feet often serve as impromptu instruments to provide the backbone for the songs and dances of the Vistani. Drums can be fashioned out of just about any household material—clay jars have skins stretched over them to provide a makeshift drum, and table tops and counters can be thumped upon. Eating utensils such as spoons are provide a clacking rhythm when played by one who has learned the talent of clacking such crude instruments together properly. Latcho said that even the jewelry that is so predominant amongst his people can be utilized as an instrument as it provides a light tinkling rhythm when shaken in the proper fashion. This is so popular amongst some of the Vistani caravans that the members often fashion tiny silver or golden bells that are purposefully attached to wrist and ankle bracelets. Some other prominent percussion instruments the Naiat, and to a greater extent, the rest of the Vistani, utilize include tiny cymbals or castanets which are worn on the fingertips and often used by dancers. Tambourines are also a common sight amongst the Vistani musicians as they provide a lively rhythm of both bells and the drum. Latcho also spoke of xylophones that his people sometimes play striking metal or wooden blocks with mallets to provide a lively accompaniment to any singer.

As our conversations turned more towards the songs of the Vistani themselves, Latcho told me a few fascinating facts about his people's respect for music. The most revealing insight perhaps, is the fact that the Vistani have an entirely different set of songs they play when they perform for outsiders or as they call us—giorgios. Latcho said that these songs seldom mean anything—but are in fact the equivalent of our children's rhymes and counting verses. Little is revealed about the Vistani even if an outsider can understand their language. The Vistani also learn the songs of the people they are amongst and often perform local favorites rather than the songs of their own culture. When the Vistani are amongst themselves, their songs take on an entirely different tone. Members of a Vistani tribe will often announce their intentions to perform for their own tribe or other tasques by leaving a signal to other caravans that may be in the area. Latcho spoke of one commonly used signal, that being bunches of wildflowers tied upside-

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down along the rode side marking a trail to the site where such a *prastonata* will be performed. Latcho also spoke of the traditional roles of the members of the Vistani. Men are often relegated to the roles of musician, with the younger males often providing the singing voices for the Vistani songs. Amongst the Vistani, women are predominantly involved in the dances, and as such rarely play any instrument other than percussion instruments. As they grow older, the Vistani women also figure more predominantly in the voices present in the Vistani songs. Although these are not set rules Latcho explained, they are traditions, and as such the Vistani rarely deviate from them.

Even though Latcho Drom was no longer considered by himself or his people as a member of the Vistani, he was reluctant to part with many of the songs of his people. Latcho feels that the soul of his people resides in their music, and revealing too much of one's soul can often provide an opening for one's enemies. Finally, after much deliberation I was able to convince Latcho to translate a small portion of the songs he knew for me. Although the songs lose some of the poignancy in the translation, and the rhythm and subtle intricacies of the harmonies and melodies in the Vistani singing cannot be appreciated by reading my literal translations, I believe we have captured a sense of the spirit that drives the Vistani and perhaps offer a glimpse of something we have never before seen. Read these verses with understanding, compassion, and an open heart—the words of the Vistani bear the marks of a genius lyricist—one who can evoke a spectrum of emotions with a single verse. The sense of loss and betrayal has seldom appeared so strong in any song of our own, and the insight the lyrics provide is a great tool for understanding the misunderstood. For his kindness in parting with this portion of his soul, I will always owe Latcho a great debt. These then, are the fragments of the Vistani soul.

Songs of Love

When I expressed astonishment over the fact that the Vistani followed our practice of marrying for life, Latcho laughed in a mildly derisive fashion. He informed me that all the *giorgios* merely imitated the true wedding of the spirit that takes place when a Vistani couple bonds for life. The following songs are representative of the romantic songs the Vistani share with their beloved.

The Groom's Song

I have prepared foods and fruits

*From all nations just for you.
I have placed my bed
In a delicious spot.
How can I sleep alone without you?
My eyes can see only you.*

The Bride's Song

*In the wasteland, the wagon moves slowly.
It brings me towards my new family.
Ask the seer why I was destined
To be married so far away.
I will burn my fortune
Which has exiled me
From those I love.
I want to go back to my family.
I want to run barefoot.
Cover my feet with the leaves of a tree
And my body with delicate foliage.*

The Wedding Blessing

*The fiancé is handsome
Like the petals of the marigold—
Beware the evil eye.
You are like the third petal
Of the green flower—
Protect yourself from the evil eye.*

The Husband's Song

*Oh, my nights! Oh, my eyes!
The fire that burns inside me
Drives my soul crazy!
When I think of those I love
Who are so far away,
I cry.
I see your face
In the lines of my hand.
Your image drives me mad with love.*

Songs of the Children

Latcho said that as a young child, he was taught many songs that the Vistani would sing later in life. When not learning songs, his music lessons mostly consisted of learning how to properly play and construct the instruments common to the Vistani. The following song is the one Latcho can first remember learning at the foot of his caravan's captain.

*We Vistani,
We're like the lost sheep.*

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*No Giorgio
Will ever change our way of life.*

Songs of Torment

The greater the number of songs I heard of the Vistani, the more I came to realize that they see themselves as a persecuted people. Through no fault of their own, they are hated and tormented—thus their life of endless travel as they search for a place where they can belong. The following selection of songs are from different tribes and backgrounds according to Latcho. Some are fairly recent compositions while the origins of the others are lost into the mists. Still, the common thread of an outcast people links the greater portion of the Vistani songs.

The Vistani's Lament

*The whole world hates us.
We're chased and we're cursed.
Condemned to wandering through life.
The mountain is green
The forest as well
Fortune takes flight and returns again.
The sword of anxiety
Cuts into our skin.
The world is hypocritical.
The whole world stands against us.
We survive as hounded thieves
But barely a nail have we stolen
At the foot of a bloodied savior.
The gods have mercy!
Deliver us from our trials.*

The Ballad of Drakov

*In Lekar, we die of hunger.
In huge sheds they imprison us.
In Silbervas, the king is cruel.
We can't find food anywhere.
Life is so far off
And Death is so close.
The black hawk wants to tear out my heart.
Fate has condemned us to wandering.
We have come very far.
One misfortune leads to another.
We have fled from misery and hate.
We go towards Barovia.
Never again will we be treated like dogs.
Towards Barovia we are traveling.*

*Green leaves, flowers of the field—
What are the Vistani doing?
They're taking to the streets
Yelling and crying for freedom.
Green leaves, flowers of the field—
What are the Vistani doing?
They're marching on Karina
Crying and yelling "Sweep away the Dukkar."
Green leaves, a million leaves on this day
The time for life has returned.
The time to live in freedom.
Green leaves, flowers of the field—
In Curriculo the people are taking to the streets
Yelling, "It's all over for the Dukkar!"
What are the soldiers doing?
They're taking out their weapons
And killing the Vistani.
The Dukkar hears their cries.
Tyrant, you have destroyed Invidia.*

To the Giorgios

*You—you're a stork who has landed on the ground.
Me—I'm a black bird who has taken flight.
Why does your wicked mouth spit on me?
What harm is it to you
That my skin is dark
And my hair black as night?
Why does your wicked mouth spit on me?
From Gabrielle the Witch, from Drakov to Lord
Azalin.
We have been the victims of their wars.
Some evenings, like many other evenings
Some evenings, I find myself envying
The respect you give to your dogs.*



Mallochio the Dukar

LOST TOMES OF THE ARCANE

Modifications to Spells Found in TSR's *The Complete Wizard's Handbook*, *The Complete Book of Necromancers*,
and *Player's Option: Spells & Magic*

by Andrew Hackard
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The various campaign settings, most recently *Domains of Dread*, have covered modifications to the wizard and priest spells found in the *Player's Handbook* and *Tome of Magic*. Another excellent article by Joe Bardales in the *Book of Sorrows* details MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH modifications to the *Tome of Magic* spells and new wizard classes.

However, three prime sources of spells have been completely overlooked: the *Complete Wizard's Handbook* (CWH), the *Complete Book of Necromancers* (CBoN), and *PLAYER'S OPTION: Spells & Magic* (Sp&M). This article attempts to rectify that horrible oversight, providing alterations and supplemental notes for these spells on the Demiplane of Dread and Gothic Earth.

Gothic Earth: Note for spell effects in the MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH setting will appear in shaded boxes.

The Complete Wizard's Handbook

While this handbook did not contain many spells, quite a few of the spells it did contain were necromantic in nature. This should make any RAVENLOFT DM salivate. Here are some level-by-level alterations to the CWH spells:

First-Level Spells

Chromatic Orb: Casting the "death orb" version of this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

GE: This spell does not exist on Gothic Earth.

Corpse Visage: Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Second-Level Spells

Choke: This spell does 2d4 points of damage, rather than the normal 1d4 points; a saving throw is still allowed for half damage. Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

GE: The "ghostly hands" created by this spell are invisible; it otherwise functions as described above.

Death Recall: Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Filter: This spell has no effect on manifestations of the Mists, noncorporeal monsters (including vampires in gaseous form), or any gaseous effects caused by domain lords (e.g., Barovia's choking fog). It otherwise functions as described in CWH.

Ghoul Touch: The duration of this spell is doubled to two rounds per level of the caster. In Ravenloft, this spell affects all races. Casting it requires a Ravenloft powers check.

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Third-Level Spells

Bone Club: Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Delay Death: There is a 1% chance per caster level that the creature will instead rise as an undead creature of the appropriate HD per original level, although never more powerful than a vampire. (DMs are referred to the *Requiem* rules for undead PCs if they wish to keep the undead character in the game.) Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Hovering Skull: Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

GE: The skull created by this spell is invisible, but otherwise this spell functions as described in *CWH*.

Pain Touch: Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Note: In some printings of the *CWH*, this is listed as a Divination spell; it should be Necromancy.

Snapping Teeth: The teeth created by this spell are invisible at all times; it otherwise functions as described in *CWH*.

Fourth-Level Spells

Fire Aura: This spell does not exist on Gothic Earth.

Halo of Eyes: The eyes created by this spell are invisible; it otherwise functions as described in *CWH*.

Otiluke's Dispelling Screen: This spell does not exist on Gothic Earth.

Fifth-Level Spells

Force Shapechange: True lycanthropes and shapechanging undead always make their saving throws against this spell. Casting it requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Mordenkainen's Private Sanctum: Domain lords are able to see or sry into the *sanctum* normally. This fact will not be known to the caster!

GE: This spell is known on Gothic Earth by the name *sanctum sanctorum*; it functions as described above.

Mummy Rot: This spell does 4–24 (4d6) points of damage and inflicts a disease which will be fatal in 1–3 months; it otherwise functions as described in *CWH*. The caster of this spell must make a Ravenloft powers check.

Rary's Telepathic Bond: This spell is unknown on Gothic Earth.

Throbbing Bones: This spell is greatly enhanced by the dark powers (or the Red Death). It lasts for two rounds per level of the caster, inflicts a +4 penalty to AC each round, halves the movement rate of the victim, imposes a –4 penalty to hit, and causes 2d4 points of damage each round of the spell. Casting it requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Wall of Bones: This spell has a 10% chance of summoning a living wall instead (see the *Ravenloft MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Volumes I & II* for details). Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

GE: This spell is unknown on Gothic Earth.

Sixth-Level Spells

Blackmantle: On Ravenloft, this spell is more potent; any healing magic actually inflicts 1 hit point of damage for every spell level of healing magic applied. (For magic items, assign the nearest equivalent spell level.) Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

GE: The *blackmantle* is invisible when cast on Gothic Earth; it otherwise functions as described above.

Dead Man's Eyes: This spell carries a 10% chance of permanent blindness, rather than the temporary chance listed in *CWH*. The caster must make a Ravenloft powers check.

Dragon Scales: This spell is unknown on Gothic Earth (due to lack of the material component).

Seventh-Level Spells

Zombie Double: There is a 50% chance that the double will immediately attack the caster of the spell. Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

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Eighth-Level Spells

Defoliate: Sentient plants get a save vs. death magic to negate this spell, and evil plants save at +2. Casting this spell requires a powers check.

Shadow Form: There is a 20% chance that the caster remains a shadow permanently (consult the *Requiem* rules). People killed by a caster in *shadow form* turn into shadows themselves and attack. Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Ninth-Level Spells

No altered spells.

The Complete Book of Necromancers

Wizard Spells

First-Level Spells

Animate Dead Animals: As with the regular *animate dead* spell, this spell is more potent in Ravenloft, animating up to twice the normal number of animals. However, the caster may not “boost” the Hit Dice of the animated animals as with *animate dead*. Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Corpse Link: The caster must make a Ravenloft powers check; further, the caster has a 10% chance of losing the senses linked by this spell for a period of 1–6 turns (checked separately for each).

Exterminate: This spell has a doubled area of effect in Ravenloft. Casting it does not require a powers check unless the spell is used to kill inoffensive creatures (the DM may use her discretion to decide what creatures are and are not inoffensive).

Locate Remains: This spell does not require a powers check in Ravenloft unless it is used to find remains for the purpose of animating them or grave robbing, both of which are inherent evil acts themselves.

Second-Level Spells

Skeletal Hands: Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Third-Level Spells

Bone Dance: Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Skulltrap: The range of this spell is extended to 15 feet; the spell causes 3d4 points of damage plus 2d4 points per level of the spell caster, to a maximum of 23d4. A saving throw vs. breath weapon is still permitted for half damage.

GE: This spell does not emit light when it discharges, but is otherwise as described above.

Fourth-Level Spells

Brainkill: This extremely evil spell requires an 8% powers check in Ravenloft, and a 16% check on Gothic Earth.

Summon Spirit: This spell is substantially modified in Ravenloft. First, the chance of successfully contacting a desired spirit is halved, while the chance of contacting a hostile spirit is raised to 10% (cumulative per failed attempt). Every spirit is entitled to a saving throw vs. spell to resist the questioning; a spirit whose alignment is diametrically opposed to the caster’s saves with a +4 bonus.

Additionally, the optional rule about summoning 1–20 other spirits which must *also* be placated by the wizard is in effect, and each of these spirits has a flat 10% chance to be hostile. Obviously, casting this spell is a *very* risky proposition! The wizard must make a Ravenloft powers check, regardless of the success or failure of the spell.

Fifth-Level Spells

Bind Undead: All undead receive a saving throw vs. spell to resist the effects of this spell; free-willed undead save at +2. Intentionally using this spell to hurl undead into battle merits a Ravenloft powers check.

GE: This spell may be used to bind a single undead creature, but the saving throws are as described in *CBN*, not as above.

Bone Blight: Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check. (Casting the reverse, *bone growth*, does not require a powers check on Ravenloft, but of course still does on Gothic Earth.)

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Graft Flesh: Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Sixth-Level Spells

Corpse Host: Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Ghoul Gauntlet: Casting this spell is an Act of Ultimate Darkness, automatically resulting in a failed powers check.

Transmute Bone to Steel: This spell and its reverse are unknown on Gothic Earth.

Seventh-Level Spells

Wound Conferral: If either the donor or the recipient of the hit points is unwilling to undergo the conferral, the caster must make a Ravenloft powers check.

Eighth-Level Spells

Death Shroud: Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

GE: Thankfully, this spell is unknown on Gothic Earth.

Life Force Transfer: Both this spell and its reverse require a Ravenloft powers check, as both of them are tampering with the life force of a creature.

Ninth-Level Spells

Death Ward: Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Life Force Exchange: Both this spell and its reverse require a Ravenloft powers check, as both of them are tampering with the life forces of two creatures.

Priest Spells

First-Level Spells

Ebony Hand: This spell is enhanced in Ravenloft, causing 1 more point of damage than is listed in the description to a maximum of +5. Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

GE: This spell has no visual manifestation on Gothic Earth.

Skeletal Servant: Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Spectral Senses: Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Undead Alacrity: Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Second-Level Spells

Resist Turning: Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Third-Level Spells

Death's Door: Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Life Drain: This spell drains twice the number of points stated, but only provides the actual number to the recipient. The remaining points are simply lost. Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Spirit Bind: This spell and its reverse both require Ravenloft powers checks. The reversed form, *spirit release*, grants a saving throw to noncorporeal undead when cast for the specific purpose of dispersing them.

Fourth-Level Spells

Cause Insanity: Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check. (Casting the reverse does not.)

Heart Blight: Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check; even if the recipient makes a saving throw against this spell, he is incapacitated for one day per level of the priest.

Plague Curse: In Ravenloft, the recipient of this spell contracts the disease but is kept alive by the power of the magic. Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Fifth-Level Spells

Undead Spell Focus: Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Scourge: In Ravenloft, the chance for transmission of the disease rises to 5% per caster level. The priest casting this spell must make a Ravenloft powers check.

Undead Regeneration: Both this spell and its reverse require a Ravenloft powers check.

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Sixth-Level Spells

Asphyxiate: The priest casting this spell must make a Ravenloft powers check.

Summon Undead: Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

GE: On Gothic Earth, this spell will only summon a single undead creature, regardless of type. It otherwise functions as in *CBN*.

Seventh-Level Spells

Death Pact: The dark powers (and Red Death) do not reveal themselves casually, and so this spell is unknown in both Ravenloft and Gothic Earth. Should a nonnative spellcaster who knows of this spell attempt to cast it, it will fail utterly.

PLAYER'S OPTION: Spells & Magic

Wizard Spells

First-Level Spells

Detect Phase: The glow caused by this spell is visible only to the caster; it otherwise functions as described in *Spells & Magic*.

Detect Secret Passages and Portals: The glow caused by this spell is visible only to the caster; it otherwise functions as described in *Spells & Magic*.

Ray of Fatigue: Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

GE: There is no visual component to this spell on Gothic Earth.

Second-Level Spells

Moon Rune: In addition to the conditions specified in the spell, the *rune* is also visible to all true lycanthropes, who will recognize it for what it is.

Wall of Gloom: The wall has a 10% chance to animate as an oversized shadow (15 HD, THAC0 5, Damage 5d4+1, other statistics as a regular shadow), attacking the caster immediately.

Third-Level Spells

Bands of Sirelyn: The target is immobilized by invisible bands of force; the spell otherwise functions as described in *Spells & Magic*.

Wall of Water: This spell has a 25% chance of conjuring a wall of blood instead; otherwise, it functions as described in *Spells & Magic*.

GE: This spell is unknown on Gothic Earth.

Fourth-Level Spells

Conjure Elemental-kin: This spell will summon an elemental grue (*Planescape MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Volume I*) rather than the desired elemental-kin 50% of the time. Grues are not under the caster's control when they arrive. Further, half (25%) of these grues are Ravenloft elemental-kin; for example, instead of a water grue, the caster will summon a blood grue. Ravenloft grues have an additional Hit Die. (More information on Ravenloft elementals may be found in the *Ravenloft MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Volumes I & II*.)

Lesser Geas: The caster may choose to impose an embarrassing or frustrating curse in lieu of the sickness normally caused by this spell.

Mordenkainen's Force Missiles: This spell is unknown on Gothic Earth.

Vitriolic Sphere: This spell is unknown on Gothic Earth.

Fifth-Level Spells

Leomund's Hidden Lodge: This spell is unknown on Gothic Earth.

Tenser's Destructive Resonance: This spell is unknown on Gothic Earth.

Prying Eyes: The eyes conjured by this spell are invisible; it otherwise functions as described in *Spells & Magic*.

Vile Venom: Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check (at 10% on Gothic Earth).

Sixth-Level Spells

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Arrow of Bone: Any creature killed by this arrow has a 20% chance of rising as an undead creature of the appropriate HD (see the *Requiem* rules for more details). Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check.

Etherealness: The wizard may not cross a closed domain border and certainly may not leave Ravenloft using this spell; the caster and any companions may not move beyond the Border Ethereal. In addition, many incorporeal undead and other monsters can see into the Ethereal Plane and attack characters there.

GE: The caster may only move himself into the Border Ethereal; this spell otherwise functions as described above.

Trollish Fortitude: This spell has a percentage chance equal to the total hit points regenerated of turning the caster into a troll over the following seven nights; a remove curse will halt this transformation. Casting this spell requires a powers check.

GE: This spell is unknown on Gothic Earth.

Seventh-Level Spells

Descent Into Madness: Casting this spell requires a Ravenloft powers check. (On Gothic Earth, the check is made at 14%.)

Neutralize Gas: This spell has no effect on the Mists or effects caused by the domain lords.

Seven-Eyes: This spell conjures up seven invisible eyes, but otherwise functions as described in *Spells & Magic*.

Eighth-Level Spells

Analyze Dweomer: This spell fails to detect any unusual aura on a domain lord or on any items he wields.

GE: When the adept casts this spell on an item or person tainted by the Red Death, she must immediately make a powers check at 16% or suffer the effects of a failed check, due to her close exposure to the Red Death's evil.

Heart of Stone: This spell has a cumulative 5% chance per month of duration of actually paralyzing the caster, who will continue to "live" as long as his

real heart lives, but cannot move or otherwise protect himself or his real heart.

Iron Body: This spell is unknown on Gothic Earth.

Ninth-Level Spells

Programmed Amnesia: This spell, if used carefully, may erase the continuing effects of failed fear or horror checks. However, using it with nefarious motives is definitely cause for a powers check (and destruction of a personality is never wholly good, regardless of the motivation).

Sphere of Ultimate Destruction: This spell is (fortunately!) unknown on Gothic Earth.

Priest Spells

First-Level Spells

Astral Celerity: This spell's only effect in Ravenloft is to increase the speed of a character who has slipped over to the Border Ethereal. This spell may not be used to cross domain borders or to leave the demiplane.

Protection From Chaos: Unlike *protection from evil*, this spell functions normally in Ravenloft, except in the presence of a domain lord.

Sunscorch: The sunray created by the spell is invisible, but otherwise has the same effects as given in *Spells & Magic*.

Second-Level Spells

Astral Awareness: If a character is on the Border Ethereal, he gains the extra chance to detect an ethereal creature's special attack before he is in range. Otherwise, this spell has no effect.

Chaos Ward: This spell will only function for the caster on Gothic Earth. In addition, the ward's effects are invisible.

Ethereal Barrier: This spell has no effect on creatures entirely within Ravenloft. Domain lords are never constrained by this spell.

GE: This spell is unknown on Gothic Earth.

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Third-Level Spells

Control Animal: Animals under the direct control of a domain lord are immune to the effects of this spell.

Detect Spirits: This spell forces the caster to make an immediate madness check, as he is given a brief glimpse of the full horror of Ravenloft. Even if the check succeeds, the caster is stunned for 2d4 rounds and retains no clear memory of what he saw. No one else sees anything. The spell lasts for only one round.

Etherealness: This spell, unlike the wizard form, simply fails (the caster must begin on the Prime Material Plane).

GE: This spell works normally on Gothic Earth, which is part of the Prime Material Plane.

Summon Animal Spirit: There is no guarantee that the summoned spirit will be friendly to the caster, and in fact the caster has a 25% chance of summoning a spirit that is actively hostile and attacks at once. Note that a cleric cannot summon a minor elemental with this spell.

Fourth-Level Spells

Adamantite Mace: This spell only works on a bludgeoning weapon; firearms and their ammunition are not affected by this spell.

Dimensional Anchor: This spell may be cast on corporeal undead to force them to maintain a material form, but they receive a save vs. spell to negate the effects (and domain lords are totally immune).

Omniscient Eye: This spell cannot penetrate illusions or other magical barriers created by domain lords and cannot cross a closed domain border.

Suspended Animation: There is a flat 25% chance that the suspended creature's body has been possessed by an immaterial undead being. This will not be known to the priest casting the spell. A person who has been possessed must make a system shock roll upon revival, or the spirit takes over the body and the original soul is lost forever.

Fifth-Level Spells

Animate Flame: This spell has a 25% chance of actually calling into existence a 12-HD pyre elemental, which is not under the caster's control.

Dimensional Translocation: This spell can only force an extradimensional creature fully onto Ravenloft, and domain lords are immune to its effects.

Produce Ice: This spell creates only one cubic foot per level of the caster.

Sixth-Level Spells

Command Monster: Domain lords and creatures under their direct control are immune to this spell.

Entropy Shield: Because of the spell's material component, it is unknown on Gothic Earth.

Seventh-Level Spells

Conjure Air or Water Elemental: This spell has the same alterations as other conjure elemental spells, including the 25% chance of summoning a Ravenloft elemental instead.

Tsunami: This spell may only be cast on the shores of the Sea of Sorrows or the Nocturnal Sea. It has a 75% chance of summoning a gargantuan blood elemental in place of the tsunami (with devastating effects). The blood elemental has 36 HD, a THACO of 1, and does 3d20 points of damage on a successful hit. It conforms in all other ways to the description of the blood elemental in the *Ravenloft MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Volumes I & II*.

GE: This spell may be cast only on the shores of a sea or ocean (subject to interpretation by the DM). Lakes, even huge lakes such as Superior, are simply not large enough to power this spell. Otherwise, it functions as above.



SPIRIT POINTS

An Alternative to Level Draining

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Spirit points measure how much life force or spirit a character has. Every time an adventurer is hit by an energy-draining monster, some part of his life force or spirit is lost, and sufficient energy draining can result in loss of the “adventuring” spirit or even death. Spirit points are only lost to energy draining attacks, not attacks that drain ability scores (the Strength drain of a shadow for example). Spirit points have other uses too; they are part of the will and ability of the character. Expending these points, which represents sacrificing part of the adventurer’s life force, can result in actions that would otherwise be impossible. For example, a musician composing his greatest masterpiece can expend points to make it truly great (the author has literally put his “soul” into it).

Starting Spirit Points

After a character’s six ability scores have been rolled, add the Constitution (strength of body) and Wisdom (strength of mind or willpower) of the character together and divide the result by two. For example, let’s say that Sara’s character has a Con of 14 and a Wis of 11. This gives her character 13 spirit points ($14+11=25$, $25/2=12.5$). Always round fractions up.

After determining the starting spirit points score, a series of modifiers for class, race and domain are applied. See the text below for details.

Character Class Modifiers

Warriors

Paladins are known for their strong dedication and spirit, hence their +2 bonus to spirit points. Rangers have to sacrifice a little of their humanity to stay closer to nature, which imposes a -1 penalty for this class. The thirst for vengeance of an avenger leads to a greater loss of spirit (-2 penalty). Fighters have neither stronger nor weaker spirit than the average person.

Fighter:	0	Avenger:	-2
Ranger:	-1	Paladin:	+2

Clerics

Specialty priests have a strong sense of duty that is compatible with a strong spirit, placing their god(s) before personal interests (+1 bonus to spirit points). Priests who serve a power of healing or guardianship are further blessed by their god(s) with stronger spirits (+2 bonus). On the other hand, specialty priests that are of evil alignment, or specialty priests that serve powers of the dead or death, have all sacrificed some part of their spirits to their evil masters (-1 and -2 penalties respectively). The same reasons given above for the ranger hold true for the druid.

Specialty Priest:	+1
Specialty Healing/Guardianship:	+2
Cleric & Anchorite:	0
Druid:	-1
Specialty Evil:	-1
Specialty Death:	-2

Wizards

Wild mages are known for their strong spirits, which are needed to cope with the erratic nature of their spellcasting, and they receive a +2 bonus to spirit points. Generalist wizards and all the specialists (except for necromancers and shadow mages) have a stronger spirit than the average person does, while the elementalists have a normal spirit. By their very nature, the shadow mage (sacrificing some part of their body to the shadow), the arcanist (giving something to the dark powers in their quest for knowledge) and the necromancer (for obvious reasons) have lesser spirits (-1 penalty).

Generalist Wizard & Specialist*:	+1
Elementalist:	0
Necromancer, Arcanist, & Shadow Mage:	-1
Wild Mage:	+2

* Other than Shadow Mages and Necromancers

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Rogues

Only a strong spirit can survive a life of wandering in the Demiplane of Dread, hence the gypsies have a +2 bonus to their spirits. The passion of a bard grants a +1 bonus to their spirits, while the thieves have none. The ninja, even those who are not evil, suffer from a lack of spirit, resulting in a penalty of -1.

Thief:	0	Bard:	+1
Gypsy:	+2	Ninja:	-1

Psionicist

Psionicists use their nexus (union between the body and the spirit) to power their disciplines. Years of training in the use of both body and spirit result in a bonus of +2 to their spirits.

Psionicist: +2

Character Race Modifiers

Elves and gnomes (including those who have entered Ravenloft for the first time) suffer a -1 penalty to their spirits because of the way in which nature is tainted on the Demiplane of Dread. Dwarves and Halflings tend to have stronger spirits than the average human does and receive a +1 bonus. Half-elves also receive this +1 bonus because of their harsh upbringing. Kenders, because of their fearlessness, and half-Vistani, because of their ancestry, both get a bonus of +2 to their spirit.

Elf:	-1	Half-Elf:	+1
Dwarf:	+1	Halfling:	+1
Gnome:	-1	Half-Vistani:	+2
Human:	0	Kender:	+2

Native Domain Modifiers

Natives of a domain that has a tyrannical ruler who demands absolute obedience or exceptional sacrifices, or natives that have a monster(s) (real or imaginary) that is always menacing them, have less spirit than other people resulting in a -2 penalty to their spirits. Those domains include: Barovia, Borca, Cavitius, Falkovnia, Forlorn, G'Henna, Ghastria, Hazlan, Invidia, Kalidnay, Kartakass, Necropolis (but not Darkon), Nosos (-1 for peasants, -2 for nobles) Nova Vaasa (lower class only), Pharazia, Richemulot, Sithicus, Sri Raji, Tovag, Vechor, Vorostokov, Zherisia.

The natives of Har' Akir, Mordent, Lamordia, and Tepest have stronger (+1 bonus) spirits than others because of their living conditions, and the apparent absence of tyrants or lots of supernatural monsters. In fact, the people of these four domains think of their lords

as bogeymen, not real rulers (or if real not dangerous unless crossed). The peasants of Blaustein also receive this +1 bonus because of their loyalty to their lord and the lack of real danger to them within the domain.

In Odiare, because their parents were killed when they were little and they were left to fend for themselves, the natives of this domain have some of the strongest spirits of Ravenloft (+3 bonus).

All the bonuses and penalties are cumulative and it is possible to start with a score higher than 18. Multiclassed characters receive the least favorable modifier reflecting the fact that they have to divide their spirit between two professions.

Continuing with our example, Sara's character is an elf fighter/wizard native of Sithicus, and thus has 13 starting spirit points. Adding the modifiers, -1 for being an elf, 0 for being a fighter (least favorable class) and -1 for being from Sithicus, her character starts with a total of 11 spirit points.

Losing Spirit Points

There are only four ways of losing spirit points:

- ◆ Being hit by an energy draining attack (spell, vampire, object)
- ◆ Failing a powers check
- ◆ Dying
- ◆ Using them (see Using Spirits Points below)

The first way to lose spirit points is usually the simplest. Whenever an adventurer is hit by an energy draining attack, he loses the appropriate number of spirit points (2 for a vampire, 1 for a wraith, etc.). Once the character is drained of his last spirit point, he must successfully roll a system shock at -25% or die. If the system shock is successful, the character becomes 0-level and will never be an adventurer again, except through the direct intervention of his deity (if he has one), but this is a highly unlikely event in Ravenloft. Another way to return to adventuring is to use a wish, but again in Ravenloft that spell is dangerous. Any of these methods will return the character to his original adventuring class, but he will be half the level he was when he died, and he will also have half his original starting spirit points (a 14th-level wizard who began with 18 points returns as a 7th-level wizard with only 9 points). Round all fractions up.

The second way to lose spirit points, failing a powers check, results in the loss of one spirit point per step in darkness the character falls. For example, failing the first check results in a one-point loss, but failing the fifth results in the loss of five points. If the character loses his last point because of a failed power check, he is

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transformed into a creature of darkness and becomes a NPC.

If the adventurer dies from other reasons other than from spirit point loss and is later resurrected or raised, he loses $\frac{1}{4}$ of his remaining spirit points. Round fractions up.

Using Spirit Points

Spirit Points are similar to the “Inner Strength Points” presented in the Nightmare Lands boxed set. They are used to overcome certain kinds of obstacles that the adventurer normally would not be able to otherwise face.

- ◆ **For one point**, the character can recover from a failed fear check or from magical fear. Using that point is his only action during the round (in a sense it is overcoming the fright).
- ◆ **For two points**, the character can become immune to natural and magical fear for two turns. If the fear source is extremely potent (in other words, it imposes a penalty to saving throws greater than -2), the points are used to eliminate the penalty to the saving throw.
- ◆ **For three points**, the character can recover from a failed horror check or becomes immune to horror (need not make horror checks) for two turns. If the horror source is extremely potent (it imposes a penalty to the saving throws greater than -2) the points are used to eliminate the penalty to the saving throw).
- ◆ **Expending four points** allows the adventurer to free himself of a *charm* spell or psionic compulsion (charm spells, domination, telepathic abilities).
- ◆ **Five points** will make the character immune to any form of madness, or they can be used to cure insanity whether it is natural (a failed madness check) or magical (*chaos, confusion, feebleminded*).
- ◆ **For six points**, the character can have a bonus of +4 to all his die rolls for 24 hours. Any proficiency check roll above 18 during this period means that it is a “special” success.

None of the above effects are cumulative, so if the character want to be free of madness and be immune to fear he has to expend 7 points. All the above uses of the points are possible if the character is aware of its condition. If he was charmed but didn't know about it, he could not “cure” himself.

If a character suspects he is, for example, charmed, and attempts to free himself of this effect by spending spirit point, he loses the points even if he was not charmed.

It is not possible to lose a character's final spirit point by using it. The last point can only be lost through energy draining or through failed powers checks.

Spirit Point Recovery

Recovering spirit points is not easy.

- ◆ Every *restoration* spell cast on the character gives back two spirit points.
- ◆ Every two levels gained after ninth level gives 1 spirit point. In other words, a character will gain a spirit point at 11th level, 13th level, and so on.

A really heroic action can give a random (determined by the DM) amount of spirit points. For example, ending the Grand Conjunction could be worth as much as five points. (Of course causing this event could result in the loss of three points if the character knows what he has done.)

It is not possible to recover more spirit points than the character originally had.

Campaign Use

The spirit point system can be used as an alternative to replace the level loss caused by the draining attacks of certain undead.

A common complaint among players is that energy-draining attacks are unfair, especially at low levels. They leave the characters weak and the levels lost are very difficult to recover, unless the DM is kind enough to leave restoration scrolls lying around.

With the spirit point system, the attacks do not drain levels but they drain spirit points instead. This does not mean that undead are less dangerous because an adventurer can die if he receives enough drains. The threat of death is still there and the system gives the characters a fighting chance, especially at lower levels.

✖

A KARGATANE BOOKSHELF

Broken Spines and Other Abuses

by Andrew Hackard & Stuart Turner

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Over July and August 1998, the Kargatane ran a competition asking entrants to detail a book that might be found on the shelves of the Kargatane Bookshop. Over fifty entries were received and voted upon by the Kargatane. The ten books detailed below represent the Kargatane's favorite submissions.

A Letter Home

My Dearest Sister Kazandra,

I must admit that I am perplexed by the untimely demise of yet another of my couriers. Perhaps in the future I shall send them in a guarded train, to be certain of their safe arrival in Martira Bay.

You have asked me to keep you informed of the activities of the other Kargatane here in Vallaki. Frankly, I find this sort of spying beneath my station, but as it provides me with useful insight for my epic (I may have mentioned this before), I am willing to continue for the nonce. I trust that the information I am sending is useful.

First, I must again request a replacement for Ryven. As I believe I have reported in my previous missives, Ryven is, to put the matter as delicately as possible, most assuredly not among the living. My comments to that effect, however, have gone unrewarded by the others, and I have taken to perfuming my nostrils just to avoid the stench. Herewith, I enclose a recent conversation with Ernst:

"Ernst, I tell you, Ryven is stone cold dead!"

"How could you say such a terrible thing about our friend? Can you not see that he is merely resting? Haven't you see him do that every afternoon?"

"Ryven is an ex-Kargatane!"

"Why can't you be a little more patient, until he warms up to you?"

At which point I broke off the conversation. I don't know what to make of Ernst; he really should see a physicker for that voice. I think there's something caught in his throat. I must admit that I, myself, am somewhat fond of the effect it has on me—so little unnerves me that I find it refreshing—but it's driving off the customers. Only yesterday, a man with fear in his

eyes asked Ernst (very quietly) whether he knew anything about witches, of all things. Ernst led him across the floor, and selected *The Fullie Research'd Treatise on... Howe to Knowe a Foul Witch*, and then leaned down to utter something in the man's ear—at which point he fled from the shop! If this happens often, I fail to see how they turn a profit, let alone surreptitiously gather information.

Gruhman (I cannot call him William) is easily the most violent man it has ever been my displeasure to meet. Why, just yesterday he caught a young lad turning down the corners in one of our books, and dismembered him! Then he threw the pieces at children in the street, saying, "That will teach you not to mutilate the merchandise!" I don't know what came over him, and the other Kargatane seemed to just ignore his outburst. "That's just his way," they told me later. "You have to get on his good side; he's really quite a lovable chap." Personally, I would prefer to do any dismemberment myself; I don't fancy having it applied by another.

Crosspen... oh, Holder, would that I had known you sooner. He spends nearly all of his time poking through dusty books, searching for obscure knowledge, but then fritters it away in petty pursuits. His current fascination seems to be with a large jigsaw puzzle of *Bronze Squares* that litter the floor of his room. He's obviously not very good at it—it never looks finished. He would have made such a fine poet, if he hadn't let his literary talents atrophy.

Jaerdaph, I'm sorry to say, is not well at all. He is so pale that I fear for his health; I keep urging him to get out in the sun more, but he claims he burns too easily. He spends his time clothed in this enormous robe; were he not an employee I'm sure Gruhman would have killed him as a thief by now. I don't know quite what to make of Jaerdaph yet. The other day I was admiring a lovely web that was strung between two upper shelves. I called this to his attention and he froze, then bolted out of the room. Perhaps he was only protecting the books.

I like Drawden quite a bit—he is a font of information as yet unparalleled in my experience—but he really needs to get over himself. Frankly, I'm getting

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tired of asking him to do something and having him do the complete opposite; it's quite perverse, really, and were it not happening to me I might find it amusing. As it stands, though, he's utterly unreliable and can't be counted on in any circumstances. Strangely, though, he seems to be the linchpin of every plan the other Kargatane concoct.

As for the bookshop, it seems to me to be a highly ineffective cover for the Kargatane's operation here. If the aforementioned experiences with Gruhman and Ernst are anything to go by, I'm at a loss to explain why lynch mobs didn't form at their door years ago. I will confess to finding the shop's contents quite fascinating, however. I discovered some poignant Vistani rhymes in a book supposedly owned by Rudolph van Richten! Knowing your interest in all things Van Richten, I shall have Gruhman scribe you a copy of *Triah's Rhymes* and forward it later. My favorite, however, is an *Untitled* work that literally broke my heart. For reasons I cannot explain, I will be unable to send you a copy, but I shall try to bring you the book in person when I return.

In sum, this cell is far too ineffective to be allowed to continue. I must request an immediate reassignment to some more civilized land, say Martira Bay, where I may work at your lovely side. I would suggest that this group be dissolved and its members placed in other cells where they might perhaps find a better use for their unique talents. In any case, I eagerly await your affirmative response, calling me home.

Your loyal friend, Mynilar.

Ernst's Diary 18th September, 752

It's now four days since Lady Kazandra's new recruit arrived on our doorstep. I must say that I'm somewhat hurt to know that Mistress Kazandra felt the need to send a spy into our midst—I shall take it up with her in my next report. For the moment, I do not think that Mynilar yet realizes that I know his thoughts, so I shall use this to our advantage.

The reaction of the others to Mynilar's presence has been mixed. Poor Jaerdaph refuses to go near him, and as usual I cannot seem to extract the truth of the situation from Jaerdaph's mind. Holder is too absorbed in his work to even notice his presence (which reminds me that I must ask Holder to sort our latest deliveries—I suspect that *On the Fey* has arrived with this latest order, and I'm keen to learn of what the Inquisitors have found).

For myself, I do not approve of Mynilar's attire, it being entirely unfitting for our shop. I suspect that once the Barovian winter closes in, however, he shall begin

wearing shirts at the very least, returning us to at least a modicum of respectability.

I'm most disappointed, however, with the relationship between Mynilar and Ryven—the pair just do not get along at all, and Mynilar has repeatedly refused to even speak to Ryven! I completely fail to understand why. Mynilar keeps rambling on about empty eye sockets this and atrophied skin that... But it's not like we don't *know* about his skin condition—it's exactly the reason he doesn't venture into the sun very much! And I'm sure Ryven will see fit to reattach his hand the first moment he wants to use it.

Ryven, of course, holds his tongue—he's never been one to speak his mind, even when angry. He's currently engrossed in a book I recommended to him—*The Fall of Lady Owen*. It's a sordid little potboiler that I quite enjoyed just recently. I fear for his eyesight, however, since his reading is slow. Never mind—I'm sure he'll progress to the second page with time.

Mynilar has brought at least one rarity for our collection, though. I'd heard rumors of *Maligno's Friends* from others, but have never actually seen a copy. It's obviously a copy of the original, but will be prized nonetheless. Unfortunately, Gruhman found nothing else of interest on a search of Mynilar's room except a half-written letter to Lady Kazandra. Commoners, are we? Well, it's not like *we're* the ones baring one's chest like a common farmhand, is it? It astounds me that Lady Kazandra should send such a poor judge of character to mingle with a group of such profound evil as us.

Nevertheless, I shall have to check our volume of *Taxation Under Von Zarovich Law* to see whether undeclared literary imports such as the one Mynilar has brought with him are taxable. Actually, it occurs to me that we should return this to Burgomaster Kryvich before Lord Strahd's next collection begins—but then again, it could be entertaining to watch him squirm. I suspect he's working for Bartholomew Nylreave anyway, so I can't say I'd be too concerned should he disappear.

I'm unsure whether I'm ever going to be able to get Mynilar to do any work around the bookshop. Yesterday, when I asked him to feed the Tentacled Thing in the Vase, he launched into some dire poetry about the failing of will and the need for submission. He seemed quite disappointed when I only reacted with a frown. Not ten minutes later, I heard him uttering the same verse to Drawden, who simply shook his head and walked away. I don't think he ever did feed the thing, as it ate far more than its usual share this morning. I'll have to send Gruhman to the morgue again tomorrow.

Speaking of the morgue, I'll have to check the obituaries in coming days. We're going to have to reclaim *Treatise on the Speculative Morphology and Behavior of the Pathogen Suspected to Cause*

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Lycanthropy again. Quite a tidy little earner, that one, as long as we find the individual after they've taken the "cure" so we can get the book back.

As for Mynilar, I shall certainly need to complain to Kazandra about his presence. The Vallaki Kargatane are six, and six only! We are all quite healthy, there being no need for a seventh in this shop (especially one whose contribution is nothing more than stultifyingly boring poetry). Still, revenge comes in small doses, and Mynilar will take his first sip tomorrow. For one who is forever talking of his insight into the heart of darkness, he seems to be naïve about the truth. Tomorrow, I shall leave *Lives Taken*, by Zark Valemspur in his room. With luck, I'll be able to sense the fear build in his mind from this very desk...

The Fullie Research'd Treatise on... Howe to Knowe a Foul Witch

*Submitted by Ron Laufer
Contest Winner*

This book was written by Natasha Kolenvaare, an elderly native of Tepest. Convinced that her lack of children was due to a witch's curse, and inspired by her discovery of a fragmentary, thrice-translated copy of *Van Richten's Guide to Fiends*, she devoted her later days and her small life's earnings to researching and publishing fifty copies of this book.

The book contains numerous observations on the nature of witchcraft and those who practice it. It includes warnings against women who are obsessed with frivolous practices such as sensual dancing ("a form of fiend summoning") and those who keep pets ("the witch's familiar, her most powerful ally"). It also contains a chapter on methods to dispose of witches, from the mundane stake burning and stoning, to the more mystical sprinkling with a virgin's tears.

The Bronze Squares

Submitted by Shelby "D. J." Babb

The Bronze Squares are a series of twenty-four bronze plates, each side bearing a unique rune, believed to originate from Bluetspur or some other alien domain. The twenty-four plates can be joined to form a cube, with four tiles to a side; and it is assumed that variations in the arrangement tell a different (or a continuing?) story.

All attempts to decipher the plates have proven futile, as each arrangement only gives a small part of the

entire story, and the parts can't be interpreted until the whole is known. Considering that there are possibly millions of different combinations, no one expects to translate it soon.

Some speculations are that it's a gateway out of Ravenloft, others believe it to be an Illithid bible of sorts. A few speculate that it is a living map to all the lands of Ravenloft. In truth, no one really knows what it says.

Triah's Rhymes

Submitted by Jiranon

Triah's Rhymes contains nursery rhymes that have been handwritten into the book. In truth, these are common nursery rhymes Vistani mothers sing or recite to their children, which have been compiled into a single volume. The first page has a message from Rudolph van Richten: apparently the book was a gift from the doctor to a woman named Triah.

Untitled

Submitted by Jamie McGarty

It's difficult to keep this timeworn book from falling apart entirely. The frayed leather cord once bound thin covers to the book, but they have, for the most part, long since flaked away. On the remnants of the front cover can be read:

*Go, little book
To she who needs you,
To she surrounded by those unlike her,
To she unattended, forgotten, alone.
May she find solace in your pages
That offer release from an inescapable prison
And restore innocence to those who may falter.*

Upon opening the book, one finds pages tattered from overuse and smudged from the perusal by dirty hands. The yellowing pages are tinged with gray, the charcoal script having smeared to near obscurity long ago. The script itself appears to be the illegible scrawl of a child. The book is full of fairy tales—a book of forests, streams, and light; a book of heroes, friends and games. And hope. The author, neglected by the cold Mists, penned this priceless text as but a transient escape from the foreboding world in which she was born. The reader's faith in all is restored at the thought of such innocent hope, yet the pain of discovering the last page—spattered with blood—is unbearable.

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Author's Note: This is based on the poem "An Inscription" by Oscar Wilde:

*Go, little book
To him who, on a lute with horns of pearls,
Sang of the white feet of the Golden Girl:
And bid him look
Into thy pages: it may hap that he
May find that golden maidens dance through thee.*

On The Fey:

**Being a Treatise
On the Creatures of Night
Known as the Fey and their Foul Magicks,
As well as proven Methods
Of Defense against them.**
Submitted by Eric C. Daniel

In appearance, this is a thin volume, 12" by 8" by ½", covered in red leather with the main title stamped on the cover. On the inside, the first page shows the longer title seen above.

The rest of the volume is lavishly illustrated, as much a picture book as a scholarly treatise. This book was created by High Inquisitor Wyan of Tepest after the events chronicled in the adventure *Servants of Darkness*. He was so distraught that his daughter was nearly killed because of a plot by the "fey," as he calls them, that Wyan decided to redouble his efforts to eradicate them. To this end, he and his fellow priests decided to create "On the Fey" as a means of distributing their knowledge throughout the Land of Mists and warn and educate others. The illustrations are so even the illiterate may be warned.

Wyan, however, is grossly misinformed about the faerie of Ravenloft and his book largely consists of misinformation. It could be used by the DM as a red herring, throwing players off the true trail of the fey.

As a side note, the actual faerie of Ravenloft, the Arak of the Shadow Rift, have gained a copy of this book and consider it absolutely hilarious.

The Fall of Lady Owen

Submitted by Marco A. Torres

This novel depicts the descent into madness of a noble woman. Set in the city of Paridon, the novel is written in journal format, and told from the perspective of Lady Owen herself. Occasionally, the journal entries switch to a gentleman's writing. In Lady Owen's entries, she tells of memory losses, and how she suspects someone is stalking her. The gentleman's entries tell how he yearns to remain in control, and his hatred of Lady Owen. In the

end, the reader discovers that the gentleman and the Lady are the same person; Lady Owen suffers from multiple personalities, and does not become aware of this until the end, when she decides to end it by committing suicide.

Although believed to be a work of fiction, the book is the actual journal of a real Lady Owen. In truth, she had been killed and replaced by one of Paridon's doppelgangers. However, he maintained her form too long, and eventually, her personality became dominant. It is unknown what became of it, but the journal was found in the year 744, near one of Paridon's sewers. It was edited and published as a historical novel, recently reaching the Core.

Maligno's Friends

Submitted by Shelby "D. J." Babb

This book is a small, leather bound story book with large, detailed woodcuttings and simple text. It details the heroic exploits of the puppet Maligno, in saving the children of Odiare from the evil Grown Ups, by killing them all. The book's only copy is in a gutter in Odiare, slowly rotting away.

Once upon a time, Maligno thought it would make the children happy if he gave them a story book to read. Unfortunately, *Maligno's Friends* became a source of sadness and fright for the children, as they looked at pictures of their parents beating them, their parents getting chopped up, and the text always saying how nobody ever loved them. When Maligno kept finding the book lying in the gutters (the children were too scared to destroy it), he became frustrated and angry, but swore he'd find some other way to make the children love him.

Taxation Under Von Zarovich Law

**An Exchequer's, Burgomaster's
and Boyar's Guide to Tax**

Submitted by Matthew Tecchio

This is a taxation guide for the land of Barovia (including the former Gundarak), written by the hand of Strahd's most trusted aide, Vasili von Holst. The guide starts with an introduction as to why Barovia needs taxation, outlining reasons such as maintenance of the Svalich road and paths between the Village of Barovia and the town of Vallaki, the supplement of food and pay for the trained soldiers that patrol the borders, plus the protection from whatever evils may lurk within the nearby lands such as Darkon.

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Within the pages of the tome, the tasks each of the classed citizens must carry out are described. Exchequers are required not only to audit tax payments, but also to count and compile figures at tax time. Burgomasters must be honest with the storage of tax monies, and forthright in dealing with any who try and cheat Lord Strahd of his taxes and break his laws. Lastly, Boyars must act as an example to the rest of the lesser class Barovians.

Treatise on the Speculative Morphology and Behavior of the Pathogen Suspected to Cause Lycanthropy

By Dr. Spencer Lysek

Submitted by Jon "kitsune" Stacey

This manuscript was intended for publishing in a medical journal, and is simply a collection of pages loosely bound together. Many copies were destroyed by the publishers who received them; only a handful survived. Lysek was clearly insane as is apparent from the strange ideas and methods discussed in his writing.

The manuscript describes the morphology of a minute parasite which Dr. Lysek claims to be responsible for lycanthropy. Lysek claims the parasite has a dodecahedron-shaped "head," a cylinder-shaped "body," and six long "legs." Most amusingly, he claims these parasites are too small to be seen by the human eye. Lysek says the parasites inject a portion of themselves into the host's cells, which infects the host with lycanthropy. Lysek also describes various experiments and used in his research. All of his experiments involved infecting human subjects with lycanthropy and a few involved vivisectioning those same subjects. Lysek also details what he believes is a cure for lycanthropy. (The "cure" is actually a deadly poison.)

and some crack when turned, but their odd thickness gives them a sturdier feel. The book is opened by a buckle, which can be locked, but isn't. The first page displays the title, in a rough yet intricate handwriting used throughout the rest of the tome. From then on, each two-page spread is done in the same format. On the left page, a blood stain (presumably what the thick paper was needed for). Under that, notes about the person, the reason for their death, the price that was paid, and the date on which the person was murdered. On the right hand page, the plans and actions taken out for the assassination of this person are detailed, with a sketch of their former persona.

Also, by staring into one of the blood stains (which take up roughly half of the page they are on) one can see a grisly image of the person's face, begging for life once more. This book thus records the assassinations of one Zark Valemspur. The workings of the bloodstains are unknown.



Lives Taken

By Zark Valemspur

Submitted by Joe Vilella

This large, dusty book has an aged leather cover bearing the design of a fiery crimson stiletto. Its pages are old

SIMON LAFLEUR

A Tool of Vengeance for Ravenloft

by Andrew Cermak
a_cermak@hotmail.com

Biography

Vengeance is a commodity craved by many, and the tools with which it has been achieved are limitless in number. Simon LaFleur is one such tool, a fate brought about through his own selfishness and foolishness.

Appearance

For a walking corpse, Simon is fairly well-preserved. His skin is coarse and brittle, and bone white, but there are no open wounds on his body and his state of decay is relatively mild. His collar-length black hair is long, thick and unkempt. His eyes are solid white, the pupils and irises vanished as a side effect of his reanimation. He wears the clothing he wore at the time of his death, a pair of fine quality breeches and a silk tunic, both of which have been tattered and soiled considerably over his years of undeath. Around his neck is a silver amulet hung on a loop of black rope. The amulet is engraved with the image of a bone, which runs from the upper right side of the amulet to the lower left. An engraving of a snake coils tightly around the length of the bone. The amulet is bright and untarnished.

Background

Simon LaFleur's last day among the living fell over eighteen years ago. Simon was nineteen, handsome, and wealthy, born into Port d'Elhour's landed class.

Souragne is a poor land, and the lot of its people a difficult one, but Simon felt little of this adversity. This relatively easy lifestyle combined with his father's permissiveness and his own natural disposition to result in a very spoiled, very selfish, very immature young man.

Perhaps Simon's greatest fault was his inability to be satisfied; he was always most interested in what he could not have. The best example of this flaw was his romantic interest in one Stephanie Delautre. Stephanie was lovely and kind, and Simon's interest in her was understandable, but Stephanie already had a beau, one

Simon LaFleur

Ju-Ju Zombie, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class	6	Str	18/00
Movement	12	Dex	15
Level/Hit Dice	5	Con	18
Hit Points	46	Int	5
THAC0	15	Wis	3
Morale	20	Cha	0
No. of Attacks	2	XP	3,000
Damage/Attack	2d8/2d8		
Special Attacks	Grapple		
Special Defenses	Undead immunities, regeneration, +1 or better to hit		
Special Vulnerabilities	Gold amulet, holy water		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

William Lunny. Lunny was, like Simon, wealthy and handsome, but was also regarded as a hard-working, honest, respectable young man. Simon's clumsy attempts at courtship were wasted; Stephanie was too enamored of William to give Simon any notice.

Despite his flaws, Simon was hardly starved for companionship; his wealth and good looks drew him the attention of a large number of young ladies. Simon, however, stubbornly refused to accept the reality of his situation, and busied himself with plans to capture Stephanie's attention, all of which came to naught.

The morning Simon learned that Lunny had asked Stephanie for her hand, and she had joyously accepted, Simon's plans took a turn to the dark. Enraged by the perceived insult and seeking any way to assuage his wounded pride, Simon embarked on a journey that few had the determination to make.

Simon LaFleur entered the swamps in search of Chicken Bone.

The old Voodan had appeared in the swamps outside Port d'Elhour only a few years ago, but he had already acquired a formidable reputation as a master of

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dark magics and a provider of vengeance to the wronged... if they were willing to pay the price.

How Simon managed to reach Chicken Bone's home alive is a matter for conjecture; certainly the spoiled young man had developed no skills that would aid him in surviving the dangers of the swamps. Perhaps it was merely the luck of the young and foolish. Regardless, Simon made it to the old man's island shack.



Chicken Bone emerged from behind the curtain, beads of sweat on his face and an empty look in his eyes. He turned his head to regard Simon.

"It is done. De boy will be dead in a day."

Simon raised an eyebrow skeptically. "That's it? You disappear in the back room for an hour and I'm to believe that a man a mile or more away is going to die from it?"

Chicken Bone gave Simon a long look before speaking. "What did you expect? Did you expect dis crippled old man to walk 'a mile or more' an' stab de young man on de street? You came to me askin' for vengeance. I have cast de spell. Vengeance is yours."

The old man's words and tone left Simon feeling foolish. "Very well. What do you ask in return?"

Chicken Bone hobbled across from Simon and lowered himself slowly into a chair. He locked eyes with Simon.

"My price is dis. You must bring me de heart of a young woman in Port d'Elhour."

Simon's jaw dropped.

"De girl's name is Stephanie Delautre."

Simon roared in anger and fairly leapt to his feet. He reached across the wooden table and grabbed the old man by the shirt.

"You dare to mock me?! You dare to make me the target of a sick joke?!" He threw the old man roughly to the floor. "What kind of game are you playing, old man? How do you know about Stephanie Delautre?"

Chicken Bone, laying sprawled on the floor, said nothing. He merely looked up at the enraged young man, a slight hint of pain in his eyes.

Simon grew angrier at the old man's silence. "ANSWER ME!" he screamed as he started to advance.

Chicken Bone shifted his gaze away from Simon, looking instead over the young man's shoulder. In his rage, Simon didn't notice. He gripped one of the shack's rickety chairs in both hands and lifted it over his head.

It was then that several pairs of hands grabbed him roughly from behind. The chair crashed to the floor as Simon was yanked from his feet. Ghastly, rotted faces leered down, grasping him with their dead, cold hands. Chicken Bone's protectors had arrived, and Simon found

himself immersed in every Souragnean's worst nightmare. While most of the zombies held the thrashing young man down, another, seemingly following specific commands, clamped one wormy hand over Simon's screaming mouth, and used the other to tightly pinch his nostrils closed. Simon struggled vainly for a few moments, and then surrendered to oblivion.

Chicken Bone rose to his feet with the aid of two of his undead guardians. He stared down at the body of Simon LaFleur, a look of terror still frozen on his dead face. He turned to his protectors. "Take de body behind de curtain and lay it on de floor. Dis one may yet be of use." The zombies shambled in obedience.

Current Sketch

Chicken Bone used a necromantic ritual of great power to reanimate Simon LaFleur as a powerful zombie. Part of the ritual involved the creation of a pair of amulets. One, made of silver, is hung around the neck of LaFleur. The other, made of gold, Chicken Bone keeps in his possession. So long as Simon has the silver amulet around his neck, the wearer of the gold amulet can command him at will.

When people of Souragne come to Chicken Bone seeking vengeance, occasionally, rather than casting a Voodan spell upon the target, Chicken Bone will instead give the supplicant the gold amulet and inform them of its power. He will send them off, with Simon, to gain their vengeance on their own. In return, he asks that they return to him, with Simon and the amulet, once their vengeance has been achieved. Upon their return, they must return the amulet to him, and must, as usual, perform a service; he will not tell them what the service will be until they return with the amulet.

Chicken Bone will also inform them of several caveats regarding the use of Simon. They must have the zombie and the amulet returned to Chicken Bone within three days. They must not remove the silver amulet from Simon's neck. And they must not use the zombie injudiciously (he is exceedingly vague on this final point). If any one of these events occurs, Chicken Bone informs them, the results will not be... pleasant.

What Chicken Bone does not tell the supplicants is that Simon is bound to him through the silver amulet. So long as Simon wears the silver amulet, Chicken Bone can reassert control at any time, without the use of the gold amulet. Furthermore, he is mystically aware of the zombie's surroundings and its actions through the silver amulet, regardless if its distance. If the supplicant fails to return Simon and the amulet within three days, Chicken Bone will simply reassert control, and use Simon to punish the offender and retake the gold amulet.

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If the supplicant attempts to remove the silver amulet, Chicken Bone will immediately reassert control and use Simon to prevent them from doing so, and punish them for attempting to break the agreement. If they use Simon “injudiciously” (for example, use Simon in any way that Chicken Bone deems unacceptable), the same thing will occur.

Personality

While he wears the silver amulet, Simon has no appreciable personality. He is completely under the thrall of the wearer of the gold amulet (and, of course, Chicken Bone), and will obey his commands to the best of his ability. The wearer of the amulet need not be present to give Simon commands; all commands are communicated mentally through the amulet. The wearer of the gold amulet will be mystically aware of Simon’s actions and surroundings, just as Chicken Bone is, and can easily direct his actions from afar.

If the silver amulet is somehow removed, Simon will regain control of his own body. Even so, his personality and intellect have been for the most part destroyed by his death and reanimation. With the silver amulet removed, he will first be compelled to murder who ever was last wearing the gold amulet. Nothing will keep him from this task. Once this is accomplished, there is no telling what he will do next. He may amble around confusedly, or he may go berserk. He may even attempt to return to his home in Port d’Elhour.

If the silver amulet is removed, Chicken Bone will make no attempt to recover it or regain control of Simon; the risks are too great. If he were to approach Simon, the zombie would certainly seek to kill him just as he killed the wearer of the gold amulet.

Combat

Although not strictly a ju-ju zombie, Simon resembles these creatures more so than he does any other form of undead.

Unlike normal zombies, Simon is not slow or clumsy; in fact, he is frighteningly quick. Use normal initiative rules for Simon.

Simon attacks with his bare hands. He makes two attacks per round, each inflicting 2d8 points of damage. If both attacks hit, Simon has grabbed the victim and will begin to crush or strangle him. This ability works the same as the Grapple ability from *Van Richten’s Guide to the Ancient Dead* (though, of course, Simon is not one of the ancient dead). Each round, the victim will sustain 2d8 points of damage, until he can break free, either by scoring a throw or gouge on the wrestling table (Simon’s Strength is 21 for this purpose) or until the victim makes

a successful weapon attack on the zombie (with a -4 penalty due to the zombie’s crushing grip).

Simon can Climb Walls, as the thief ability, with 92% facility.

Simon is frighteningly difficult to destroy. He can only be harmed by +1 or better weapons. He has the standard undead immunity to spells; additionally, he is immune to psionics, illusions, electricity and *magic missiles*. He takes only half damage from fire, blunt weapons, or piercing weapons. He regenerates 3 hit points per round regardless of the source. If any of his limbs are severed, they can be reattached simply by holding them against the stump for a round (Simon must be commanded to do this). He will regenerate even past death.

As long as he wears the silver amulet, Simon cannot be turned or commanded by anyone save Chicken Bone or the possessor of the gold amulet. Holy water causes him 2d4 points of damage.

The only way to put Simon to rest is to place the gold amulet around his neck. So long as the amulet remains there, Simon will remain inert, and he can be buried. As soon as the amulet is removed, however, Simon will reawaken. Because of this, cremating Simon is a bad idea; there is no way to keep an amulet around the neck of a pile of ashes.



FACES OF DECEPTION

The Dementlieu Council of Advisors

by Stuart Turner
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The politics of Dementlieu are anything but simple. On the surface, the Lord-Governor Marcel Guignol rules with a firm, but fair hand. Those in the aristocracy, however, will tell you that there are other forces at work.

It is rumored that to achieve *real* progress with matters of the state, one should speak to the head of the Lord-Governor's Council of Advisors, Dominic d'Honaire. For one at such a high level of the political landscape, d'Honaire is notoriously difficult to contact, however. Instead, those wishing to get a word or two in Marcel Guignol's ear are best advised to track down one of the four remaining members of the Council of Advisors.

Helene DuSuis

0-Level Human, Neutral

Armor Class	10	Str	11
Movement	12	Dex	13
Level/Hit Dice	0	Con	9
Hit Points	4	Int	17
THACO	20	Wis	12
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	15
Damage/Attack	By weapon		
Special Attacks	Nil		
Special Defenses	Nil		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

Of the four advisers on the Council with Dominic, Helene is the only one with any real desire to further their own position in the government of Dementlieu. Despite this, Dominic continues to endorse her position on the Council, possibly to his own detriment.

Appearance

Helene DuSuis is a svelte woman, and stands at a little less than six feet tall. Her long black hair is always kept perfectly straight, framing her face with hard lines. Her features are generally sharp, from her slender nose to her

thinly plucked eyebrows. She disdains the overuse of makeup among the gentry, preferring to simply paint her thin lips a bright red.

As is the fashion among the aristocracy, Helene usually wears long, somberly-colored dresses. Unlike most other women, Helene prefers not to wear a hat, feeling that it accentuates her height.

Background

Helene grew up as the only daughter of Alphonse and Lucia DuSuis, a wealthy couple that were well known among the nobility of Port-a-Lucine. Once Helene was old enough to be taken to the soirees enjoyed by those with political power, she marveled at the backstabbing and betrayal that went on within the court. Being young and female, she was easily able to position herself to eavesdrop on the many plots and deals that were conducted at these gatherings.

Despite her obvious interest in the workings of the nobility, Helene's father was dismissive of her potential, stating that her role was to find a suitor capable of taking on the businesses once she was married. Of course, Helene was not going to accept such a submissive role, and continued to learn all about the workings of the upper echelons of society.

When Helene turned nineteen, Alphonse found that he no longer had to worry about finding an heir to his fortune. An attempt to further the growth of his business had backfired, the result of a single ill-considered remark to one of the advisers to the Lord-Governor. Watching her father's business collapse around him, Helene was disgusted at his most basic of errors, and vowed that she would never let herself slip up in such an ignominious fashion.

Fortunately, her years spent among the rich had allowed her to distance herself sufficiently from her father to be relatively unaffected by the crisis. As she watched him turn to drink, and saw her parents evicted from their expensive house near the Lord-Governor's own residence, she continued to climb the social ladder.

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Current Sketch

Helene is now one of Dominic's most trusted members of the Council of Advisers. She realized quickly that Dominic was the centerpiece of many of the courtly schemes and plans, and has worked hard to become one of his confidants.

Unfortunately for d'Honaire, however, she bears no real sense of loyalty to him or the Lord-Governor. Helene is, in truth, ruthlessly self-serving, and regards Dominic and the other advisers as simply tools that she can use to prove her self-worth. Were it anyone else, d'Honaire would have picked up these traits long before they reached such a position of power. But d'Honaire has been hampered by the curse he labors under.

Dominic's romantic feelings towards Helene have grown out of the respect he has for her political acumen. As his love has grown, his curse has made him increasingly repulsive to Helene. Most women presented with this situation have reacted badly, making their feelings obvious to Dominic, but in her determination for political success Helene has managed to suppress any reaction to his increasingly ugly appearance. Dominic, interpreting this as a return of his own feelings, has placed more trust in Helene than he perhaps should.

This has led to Dominic taking what is perhaps the biggest risk of his life. For years now, he has been tormented by the apparent presence of another in Port-a-Lucine—a being known only as "The Brain." (See the *Ravenloft MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendices I & II* for more information.) In the past, Obedients (*RLMCIII*) sent to infiltrate the Brain's people were detected immediately, and (in many cases) suffered a cruel death. Dominic concluded that the Brain could detect his control over people, and that he needed to send an independent agent to investigate this individual. Until Helene came along, he did not trust anyone enough with this information, but his misplaced faith in her has resulted in her being used to infiltrate the Brain's people.

For the past six months, Helene has been dutifully, and surreptitiously, finding out about the activities of the Brain. As she investigated, she was astounded to discover the large number of people potentially involved with this underworld figure. She was even more intrigued by their apparent interest in staging a coup against the Government of Dementlieu.

Helene is, as always, protecting her own self interest. While she is passing much of the information she discovers about the Brain to Dominic, she withholds occasional pieces of information that she thinks may be useful in the long run. On the other side, she has revealed much to the forces of the Brain about the operation of the Government, aiding them in their cause. Helene is playing the two against each other, waiting for

the inevitable conflict when she will choose the winner as the side where her allegiances really lie.

Personality

Helene conducts her life in the interest of herself only. She carefully considers her every action, looking for situations or people that could have or know something that could help her. She is a merchant of information, keeping useful tidbits of information about almost every sufficiently important member of the upper classes.

Oddly, this can actually lead to quite positive first impressions upon meeting Helene. If one has the appearance of importance, Helene will be sure to take the time to talk, and will be as helpful as possible in the hope of being able to claim a "favor" at a later date.

Helene is dismissive of both of the other male members of the Council, seeing their lack of ambition as a terrible character flaw. She considers Josephine Chantreaux a formidable woman, but feels that her narrowly focused aims will lead her nowhere.

Despite her perceptive nature, Helene does not realize the truth about the relationship between d'Honaire and the Lord-Governor. Dominic manipulates the Lord-Governor so well that even Helene is unaware of the situation, considering Dominic simply another stepping-stone on the way to the top.

Combat

Port-a-Lucine is not a violent city—battles are conducted with one's words, not one's fists. As a result, Helene has had little need to defend herself in the past, and has no appreciable skill with any weapon (except the aforementioned words).

As one of the Council of Advisers, however, a small entourage of guards and officials are usually close by to defend her, if need be.

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Jean-Pierre Mont-Michel Theroux

0-Level Human (Obedient), Lawful Good

Armor Class	10	Str	9
Movement	12	Dex	10
Level/Hit Dice	0	Con	11
Hit Points	3	Int	17
THACO	20	Wis	12
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	10
Damage/Attack	By weapon		
Special Attacks	Nil		
Special Defenses	Nil		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

Jean-Pierre is the most public member of the Council of Advisers, due to his role as the Government's coordinator of the arts. Extremely conscious of his public appearance, Jean-Pierre would attend the opening of a snuffbox at the promise of a few spectators.

Appearance

Jean-Pierre is a tall, skinny man, with a long narrow face that on occasion may seem slightly emaciated. He has a shock of dark brown hair, which usually appears unkempt when not hidden under some sort of elaborate headwear. These physical aspects, however, are not what makes him stand out in a crowd.

Jean-Pierre considers himself quite a leader of fashion, and so can often be seen wearing outlandish affairs that contrast sharply with those of his peers. While the men of Dementlieu currently favor dark pants and coats, Jean-Pierre tends to draw attention in turquoise silk coats with lace cuffs, or mauve pants. He has also begun to abandon the top hat in favor of short curled white wigs.

When appearing publicly, Jean-Pierre will usually be quite pale due to the large amount of makeup he applies.

People are often forewarned of Jean-Pierre's arrival by the sound of his voice, which lurches dramatically from low to high pitches and carries easily across the murmuring of a crowded room. He is at his most irritating when he releases his screaming laugh, which has been known to stun small children at twenty paces. This cacophony is made all the worse by the fact that Jean-Pierre considers himself quite the comedian, usually sending himself into fits of laughter before he can complete his joke.

Background

Brought up by his wealthy parents on an estate halfway between Port-a-Lucine and Chateaufaux, Jean-Pierre used to love getting taken to the theater in the city. He enjoyed the glamour of the arts community and the respect that seemed to be bestowed on those who frequented the art galleries, opera houses, and ballets.

Despite his chronic inability to produce anything of artistic merit (although not for lack of trying), Jean-Pierre became increasingly recognized in the cultural community as having a fine eye for art. Riding on the coattails of his parents' financial success, he spent his twenties building his reputation to the point where a new operatic production could succeed or fail on the basis of his opinion.

Not long after his 35th birthday, Jean-Pierre heard that the director of the Opera, and adviser to the Lord-Governor, Phillippe Muliere had died. In true aristocratic fashion, he managed to let the right people know that he was interested in the position, and was soon selected and appointed to the Council of Advisors.

Current Sketch

Jean-Pierre's primary role on the Council is the coordination and sanctioning of all artistic endeavors within Dementlieu. He is the Patron of the Grand Opera of Port-a-Lucine, and frequently opens new exhibitions at local art galleries.

This role appears to be a frivolous one, but Dominic is not one to keep someone like Jean-Pierre in his company without good reason. In a land where art is so popular, its messages can have a profound affect on the mood of the people. This is something that Dominic needs to manage.

To that end, Jean-Pierre keeps an eye out for any play, opera, ballet, or other artistic activity that promotes violence between the classes. Many of the writers, authors and other members of the artistic community do not completely support the Lord-Governor, and try to raise awareness of the conditions of the poor through their works.

The opera *Des Yeux Ouvrir de Sophie* (The Open Eyes of Sophie) told the story of a well-to-do woman who, through an extraordinary series of circumstances, was forced to see the world as her servants did, which changed her attitude towards the poor. It closed after only two performances, due to Jean-Pierre uttering some unfavorable words after its premiere. It's rumored that other works, such as *Boundaries of Love* by the renowned William On-Arden, haven't made it out of rehearsals because of a disapproving comment by the Councilor.

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Alternatively, works that support the status quo, or cast a favorable light on the work of the Lord-Governor are likely to receive high praise from Jean-Pierre. It is in this way that Dominic keeps the undercurrent of rebellion at bay within Dementlieu.

Jean-Pierre is largely correct in his assumption that he is a leader of fashion. Jean-Pierre is considered *the* person to be seen with, and despite the ridiculousness of his clothes, people are often compelled to follow suit, if only to be seen to be a close friend of Jean-Pierre's. Fortunately for the local clothing merchants and guilds, Jean-Pierre's taste changes frequently, leading to a large turnover of styles among the upper classes.

Personality

Jean-Pierre is obviously not an individual with whom people would form long-lasting and fruitful friendships. Instead, he is simply a person to be seen with, and is almost solely used as a status symbol among the upper classes.

Unfortunately, Jean-Pierre is keenly aware of this. He maintains a constant façade of happiness and joviality, but when he returns to his large townhouse he feels acute loneliness. This is a side of him that is almost never seen by others.

Combat

As with Helene, Jean-Pierre rarely has needed to use force, and has little skill with arms. He has been known to carry *smokepowder* weapons, but he has no real training in their use.

In most public situations, Jean-Pierre will be accompanied by bodyguards that serve as his only protection.

Josephine Chantreaux

2nd-level Human Fighter (Pistoleer) (Obedient)

Neutral Good

Armor Class	10	Str	9
Movement	12	Dex	17
Level/Hit Dice	2	Con	14
Hit Points	16	Int	15
THACO	16	Wis	13
No. of Attacks	½ *	Cha	11
Damage/Attack	1d8 *		
Special Attacks	Nil		
Special Defenses	Nil		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

* Snaplock Belt Pistol. On a roll of 8, roll again and add the damage

Josephine is Marcel Guignol's war and defense advisor. She is a strong and competent leader, but her actions are driven by a deeper and more dangerous desire for revenge.

Appearance

Josephine Chantreaux is not remarkable in appearance, being of average height and slightly heavier than most women her age. She wears large amounts of makeup, although most in Port-a-Lucine don't realize that she does this to hide the scars that mar her cheeks.

Josephine's graying hair falls in tight curls past her shoulders. Her dresses are usually quite elaborate, spreading out at the waist in a large skirt. She finds her heavy makeup hot to wear, and so is often seen cooling herself with a small fan decorated with roses.

Background

Josephine Chantreaux's life is dominated by a stark, horrific memory from her childhood. In the year 709 on the Barovian calendar, Josephine was only eight years old, and Dementlieu had only recently appeared to the west of Falkovnia. It was at this time that Drakov decided to make his first attack on Dementlieu.

The farm Josephine's parents owned was on the outskirts of Chateaufaux, and was thus one of the first residences the wave of Falkovnian soldiers came across. Josephine had been told to hide in her parent's bedroom, but it was not long before two Falkovnian soldiers dragged in her unconscious father, Jacob, and tied him to the closet doors. Unfortunately, Josephine's whimper at the sight of her father brought the soldiers' attention to her, and she was soon tied to the bed, facing Jacob's limp body.

The soldiers were vengeful, for Josephine's father had killed one of their comrades using his wheellock horse pistol, a weapon the Falkovnians were not used to facing. They roused Jacob from unconsciousness, only to strike him with their mailed fists and send him back into oblivion. Josephine's screams were met with strikes across the face with the hilt of their swords, leaving deep scars in her cheeks. This seemed to continue for an eternity for Josephine, until they finally pinned Jacob's wrists to the closet doors with daggers, crucifying him in front of his daughter.

They left, leaving a screaming Josephine to watch her father die. Only the following day did help finally come, releasing Josephine's raw wrists from her bonds. Of course, the Falkovnians had been soundly defeated, having never faced the likes of the matchlock calivers and cannons that are quite common in Dementlieu.

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Since then, Josephine's life has been devoted to all things military. She has studied Drakov's invasions of Darkon (now Necropolis) and other domains, and has a keen sense of military strategy. This knowledge has led to her appointment as the Dementlieu Advisory Council's advisor on defense and military matters.

Current Sketch

Josephine has a very well defined role within the Government of Dementlieu. She retains complete control over the militia, and also maintains all diplomatic agreements with surrounding nations. She can frequently be found traveling to other domains to secure trade agreements, or to cement the mutual defensive pact against the ongoing threat of Falkovnian invasion.

Josephine is not willing to just sit and wait for another invasion to come from Falkovnia, however. She is actively involved in a number of covert activities designed to infiltrate the ranks of the Falkovnian military. This is, of course, extremely difficult, taking years to enact. Josephine is patient, however, and is sure that Drakov will make a mistake sooner or later.

It is rumored that Josephine is currently hiding a Falkovnian defector within her own estate. If this is true, she may have access to crucial information about Drakov's future plans for attack on the surrounding domains. As a keen military strategist, Josephine is sure to use the knowledge to its most devastating effect.

On more internal matters, Dominic has asked Josephine to investigate the whereabouts and activities of one Donovan Kaiser, an underworld crime lord who has Dominic in fear of his life. In order to get Josephine enthusiastic about his capture, it has been suggested that Donovan may be a spy of Drakov's.

Josephine is married to guildmaster Renauld Chantreaux. Renauld rarely makes public appearances with Josephine, however, usually citing business commitments as an excuse.

Personality

Josephine is a very driven person. She has an underlying darkness and hatred in her nature, a constant bleeding wound from her traumatic childhood experience that compels her to work against the menace to the east. As a result, she often seems distracted when forced into small talk, her thoughts running away with more important matters.

It is quite possible for Josephine to get carried away with her need for revenge. She does, however, realize the futility of an attack on Falkovnia, and is unlikely to resort to such drastic measures. Instead, she aims to

work away from within, and rot the support behind Drakov's armies.

This preoccupation with war makes Josephine a fairly uninteresting person to talk to. While pleasant enough, she is obviously uncomfortable in social public situations, and will quickly attempt to escape frivolous events.

Combat

While not extremely skilled in individual combat, Josephine has managed to pick up a few skills in her studies. She is quite a skilled marksman, and usually carries a snaplock belt pistol under her voluminous skirts.

Being a prime political target for assassination, Josephine always ensures guards accompany her when in public.

Claude LaGrange

8th-level Human Arcanist (Obedient)

Lawful Neutral

Armor Class	10	Str	12
Movement	12	Dex	14
Level/Hit Dice	8	Con	11
Hit Points	24	Int	17
THACO	18	Wis	15
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	10
Damage/Attack	1d4 *		
Special Attacks	Nil		
Special Defenses	Nil		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

* On a roll of 8, roll again and add the damage

Claude LaGrange is one of the older members of the Council, and maintains a stately appearance that makes him a well-respected member of the Government. Unbeknownst to most, however, he is also a high-ranking member of La Societe de Legerdemain.

Appearance

Unlike Dominic d'Honaire, Claude has managed to avoid the paunch that comes with old age. Instead, he appears strong and fit despite his fifty-four years. Slightly taller than Dominic, he has a round face that is accentuated by his lack of hair. The few long strands of graying hair he has left are combed carefully across the top of his head, and a thin, carefully trimmed moustache sits delicately on his lip. Claude has remarkably blue eyes, which often surprise people with their youthfulness and drive.

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Claude always dresses in an appropriately stately manner, standing strong against the fleeting whims of fashion. His shirts and coats are always high-necked, hiding the results of his dark studies. He never ventures outside without a top hat, and is also usually seen wearing gloves of some kind. When reading, Claude uses a pair of pince-nez that sit in his top pocket.

Background

When Claude began performing on street corners juggling knives, only to receive a few coppers from passers by, his parents strongly disapproved. Claude persisted, however, and quickly became a skilled knife-thrower, just managing to earn his keep from the money thrown to him.

The promise of tuition and the possibility of *real* performances led him to La Societe de Legerdemain. After a number of years improving his skills, he was offered the opportunity to venture into the Library. Until then, LaGrange had preferred not to think about the future, instead reveling in the freedom of his craft. He had come to realize, however, that he would never be a *great* entertainer, for he seemed to have reached the limits of his talents. Presented with the opportunity to try something new, he grabbed it.

Claude surprised himself at the ease with which he grasped the knowledge available to him in the Library. For years to come, he became completely absorbed by the information in the Library, forsaking his life as an entertainer for the life of a scholar. He did so to the detriment of his wealth and health, becoming withdrawn in his search for understanding. His status within the Societe grew during this time, until he was regarded as one of the Elders of the organization.

It was around this time that Dominic d'Honaire became aware of the Societe. Understanding the potential power of such a group, he began to make inquiries through one of his obedient, Ubaldo van Mesmer (a stage name, of course). Ubaldo, knowing most of the members of Societe, eventually recommended Claude LaGrange to Dominic. As is usually the case, Dominic's desire for Claude to join the Council soon resulted in his appointment to the position.

Since then, Claude has provided Dominic with assistance on matters preternatural, and on more than one occasion used his powers to take care of individuals proving problematic for Dominic to deal with.

Current Sketch

The only people in Dementlieu who know that Claude is connected with La Societe de Legerdemain are Dominic and some of the members of the Societe. Claude was

picked as a Council member for that very reason—his isolation from public life meant that virtually no one remembered anything about his connection with the gentleman's club.

His role on the Council relates to trade and commerce within the city. Claude regulates the various guilds that operate in the *Quartier Marchand*, and keeps an eye on the affairs of the docks.

Claude is still an Elder of the Societe, and so must make his way to the Library at times to fulfill his role. He usually does this in disguise, entering the Library through one of the many secret entrances. Of course, he also has his magic to help him conceal his passage.

Claude's studies have made him a darker man. As an arcanist, he has slipped towards the darkness that pervades the books he reads. His striking blue eyes are the result of his power to read any language, including magic, at will. Claude also has the strange ability to turn his head a full 180 degrees. Unfortunately, this has made the lower half of his neck appear covered with reddish veins and tendons that reach out like guy-ropes to his shoulders. Claude always wears high-collared shirts and coats to hide this deformity.

Claude's forbidden knowledge skill is drawn on often by Dominic, as he has a 40% chance to know something about things supernatural.

Personality

Claude is a pleasant enough person to be around, and is well respected among the aristocracy. He likes to be very approachable by the people of Port-a-Lucine, and is widely considered to have a fair ear towards any disputes that may arise.

Claude is indifferent to the other Council members. For a time, he disdained them for having personal agendas to serve rather than acting in the best interests of the people. Time, however, has shown him that even he has a personal agenda, for his position has provided him with several opportunities to further his arcane knowledge, each of which he has gladly pursued.

He does not, however, hold any ambition to progress his political career. His position provides him with the opportunity for further study, which is his primary aim.

Combat

Years of knife-training have served Claude well, and he is skilled with a thrown or wielded knife or dagger. He possesses the knifemanship proficiency (see the *Circus Performer* kit), which conveys a +1 to hit and damage for thrown weapons.

Claude also possesses the ability to Turn Undead as a priest of 8th level.

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Claude's spells are generally not of a combative nature, more frequently being useful for the intrigue and plotting of the upper classes. He rarely, if ever, uses his spells in public. Extreme circumstances would be required for him to reveal his knowledge of the wizardly arts to anyone, lest he become despised and feared by the people of Dementlieu.

As an arcanist, Claude receives a +2 bonus to saves vs. necromancy or greater divination spells. Similarly, those saving against Claude's necromancy or greater divination spells receive a -2 penalty to their saving throw.

Spell List (4/3/3/2): 1st – *alarm, animate dead animals***, *chill touch, detect magic, protection from evil, read magic, unseen servant*
2nd – *choke**, *ESP, locate object, spectral hand, summon swarm*
3rd – *clairaudience, dispel magic, feign death, vampiric touch*
4th – *brainkill***, *contagion, eyes of the undead, magic mirror, mask of death, remove curse*

* from *The Complete Wizard's Handbook*

** from the *Complete Book of Necromancers*

(See the article *Lost Tomes of the Arcane* for information on how these spells are altered in Ravenloft)



THE GARGOYLE OF THE GREAT CATHEDRAL

Art is Life in the Lands of Mist

by Andrew Cermak
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Biography

Every day, hundreds of Ravenloft's desperate and deprived seek a moment's solace in the Great Cathedral of Ezra. Some go with heads bowed in contrition, the weight of their goddess' gaze resting heavy upon them. Others go with heads raised, the dangers and difficulties of life in the demiplane leading them to dare to meet their goddess' eyes and ask for her aid. None, however, notice a second pair of eyes upon them all, eyes as aged, hard and cold as the walls of the Cathedral itself.

Appearance

The Gargoyle is a hulking nightmare, standing nearly seven feet tall and weighing well over to 500 pounds; its large, bat-like wings only add to its apparent massiveness. Carved and sculpted from stone, the Gargoyle's "skin" is a deep gray and is riddled with small scratches and chips. Its features are more human than those of most gargoyles, but they still have a decidedly fiendish influence. Long horns curl slightly back from the crown of its head. Despite the creature's having been carved from a solid block of stone, its features are remarkably mobile and expressive, and its slate gray eyes fully capable of revealing emotion.

Background

When the Great Cathedral of the Church of Ezra in Levkarest was commissioned to be constructed, the priesthood spared no expense. The greatest architects and artisans from across the Core were hired and supplied with the finest materials in whatever amounts they deemed necessary. The Cathedral was to be the center of Ezra's worship across the demiplane, and the anchorites deemed it only fitting that it be as nearly

The Gargoyle

Gargoyle Golem, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	0	Str	22
Movement	12 Fl 15 (C)	Dex	18
Level/Hit Dice	15	Con	20
Hit Points	80	Int	13
THAC0	5	Wis	9
Morale	20	Cha	7
No. of Attacks	2	XP	16,000
Damage/Attack	3d6/3d6		
Special Attacks	Petrification, Shattering, Surprise		
Special Defenses	Spell immunity		
Special Vulnerabilities	<i>Earthquake</i> and <i>transmute rock to mud</i> spells		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

impressive and as beautiful as Ezra herself as was possible.

One of the artisans the anchorites approached was the famous Borcan sculptor, Nikolai Pyotrovich. Nikolai was widely regarded as the most proficient sculptor of his time, and perhaps the most gifted ever to grace the Core. While Nikolai was only one of several talented sculptors approached by the anchorites, it was Nikolai whom they intended to sculpt the grandest of the Cathedral's statuary.

It worked to the advantage of the Ezran clergy that Nikolai was a strongly devout and devoted worshipper of Ezra; many of his most famous works had been in praise of the goddess. Nikolai considered to his duty to assist in the creation of Ezra's house of worship. He had only one condition to his assistance: the other sculptors were to no longer be needed. Nikolai insisted on sculpting all the Cathedral's statuary himself. He had no false humility

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regarding his ability as a sculptor, and was adamant about his goddess receiving the very best.

Although they were concerned by the amount of work Nikolai had taken upon himself, the anchorites agreed to Nikolai's proposal. Thus it fell to Nikolai to carve all of the Cathedral's dozens of sculptures, figurines and gargoyles.

Driven by religious fervor, Nikolai threw himself into the work with a feverish passion. Working all his days and nights, eating only when hunger prevented him from working further and sleeping only when he passed out from exhaustion, Nikolai drove himself ever harder as the months and, eventually, years passed. Despite his lack of rest and his hectic pace, Nikolai's fervor led him to new heights of inspiration, and every completed statue was a marvel.

It was after he had finished carving the second to the last of the Cathedral's statues, a double scale statue of Ezra that was to be the centerpiece of the cathedral, that Nikolai's unrelenting efforts began to affect his mind. Lacking in food, deprived of sleep and thinking of nothing but his love and devotion to Ezra, Nikolai began to hallucinate. Looking up at the hauntingly beautiful and remarkably lifelike statue of Ezra carved by his own hands, in his mind Nikolai saw the lips of the statue move, heard its melodious voice in his head admonishing him to finish his work, urging him to pour the entirety of his being into the Cathedral's final statue, a large gargoyle.

As he struck at the slab with the tools of his trade, the metal clanging loudly each time it hit the stone, Nikolai heard only Ezra's voice echoing in his head, driving him further and further. Impelled by his hallucinations and his obsession with his work, Nikolai's focus and altered state of consciousness were sufficient for him to unintentionally impart a spark of life to his final creation. As Nikolai brushed the last specks of shattered stone from the completed gargoyle, it opened its stone eyes and regarded him. Already severely weakened and in an odd state of mind, the shock of this was too much for Nikolai to withstand, and his heart failed him.

The gargoyle felt Nikolai's shock, fear and pain through its link with its creator's mind, and felt Nikolai's thoughts and breath cease. Confused and frightened by its surroundings and the sudden absence of its creator in its mind, and unsure where to go or what to do next, the gargoyle froze, motionless...and remained there.

Nearly a week later, anchorites from the Church of Ezra arrived at Nikolai's workshop to pick up the last set of Nikolai's sculptures for the Cathedral, and were surprised and saddened to find the master artisan dead at the feet of his final piece. They gathered up both the sculptor's work and the sculptor's body and returned to

the Cathedral, now nearly completed. The statues were installed in their proper places, and Nikolai was interred in a place of honor on the Cathedral's grounds. The gargoyle, still motionless in contemplation, was placed at the Cathedral's summit.

That night, curiosity and boredom led the gargoyle to stir from its resting place. Intrigued by its new surroundings, the gargoyle took leapt from the roof and glided down to the Cathedral's massive entranceway, entered, and began to explore.

No one had remained at the Cathedral after nightfall; spending the night unprotected, in a not yet fully consecrated cathedral, would have been folly. The gargoyle was therefore free to wander without fear of discovery.

While exploring the Cathedral's interior, the gargoyle quickly came upon the large statue of Ezra his creator had sculpted. Unfamiliar feelings pulled at the creature's mind as it stared in awe at the beautiful image. Nikolai had been both fanatically devoted to Ezra and obsessed with the completion of the statuary; both of these feelings had been transferred in some form to the gargoyle through their linked minds. Having no knowledge of Ezra or education in theological concepts, the gargoyle felt Nikolai's faith instead as an obsession toward the statue itself. It is that obsession that drives the Gargoyle to this day.

Current Sketch

The Gargoyle still "lives" on and in the Great Cathedral. During the day, it usually "sleeps" atop the Cathedral, though occasionally it remains active atop or inside the Cathedral, taking advantage of its intimate knowledge of the Cathedral and its labyrinthine interior to observe the proceedings unnoticed. At night, when everyone is away or asleep, the Gargoyle visits the Statue and pays it homage. Occasionally, driven by curiosity or a desire for action, the Gargoyle will take flight over Levkarest and the surrounding lands.

Personality

Instilled with twisted aspects of its creator's personality, the Gargoyle is fully devoted to the statue of Ezra in the Great Cathedral. It has no knowledge of the goddess Ezra or any of her tenets; it is interested only in her iconic representation, the statue, of which the Gargoyle is very protective and very jealous. Several times in the past he has murdered individuals in the night for showing disrespect to the Statue, or for spending too much time in devotion to it.

Also, the Gargoyle has a perverse fascination with women who resemble the Statue in some way. He fully

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believes that the Statue represents a living, breathing woman, and has kidnapped several women in the past who he thought might be her. They have all been killed quickly after they failed to live up to his expectations.

Most of the time, the Gargoyle is grim and silent. It is not used to social interaction, and therefore does not bother with it. It still remembers the sudden death of its creator, an event it associates (quite rightly) with its own frightening appearance. This leads to no small amount of shame on the Gargoyle's part, and it does its best to remain unseen by others.

Combat

The Gargoyle has the standard combat abilities of a gargoyle golem (see *Ravenloft Monstrous Compendium I* or the *Monstrous Manual* for details). The only differences are that he is capable of flight, and that he is no mindless combatant. In combat the Gargoyle will make full and intelligent use of his own capabilities and his knowledge of the Cathedral's layout. This makes the Gargoyle a horrifically dangerous opponent.



THE TALE OF THE RAGMAN

A Candle Against the Darkness

by Ehren Bradbury
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Many years ago, although some say more years than others, there was a young doctor. Having newly graduated from his medical academy, this man returned to his native city and set up a practice, healing others and bringing many children into the world. Many men would have thanked their gods for such a life, but not this man, for he was one of ambition. He did not see the good he was doing in the world, and smiled when a patient was made well not out of pride in his work, or human kindness, but out of the knowledge that he would soon receive more gold to add to his coffers, and word of his skill would spread, bringing other sources of wealth to him. Eventually, he was indeed recognized as the best physician in the land, and other doctors much older and more experienced than he consulted him for advice. Then the plague came.

First only the immigrants from other lands became ill, and when the blood poured from their mouths, the people were not afraid. They said, "The dying are not us, they are not our friends, our family, let us cast them away." The doctor was one who spoke thus, for the immigrants came with no gold, and he had little use for patients who could not pay him for his services. So the city gathered these outsiders, and hurled stones at them to drive them from their city. Of course it was only time before the citizens of the city became ill. The people wailed, "Now our friends bleed from the mouth," and "now our loved ones' skin splits," and they demanded a cure. Since they had money, the young physician listened to their woes, and heard their concerns. Now he worked for a cure.

Though the young doctor did work hard, he did not find the answers he sought. He mixed powders, herbs, and chemicals. He bled patients, gave them alternating baths of hot and cold, and gave them purgatives. The young man consulted old tomes, and modern medical journals, and still he could find no cure, or answers to the people's demands. With the dead piled high in the streets, and the cries of the dying keeping the healthy awake at night, the future looked bleak for the city. Then the monks arrived.

They came from a far off land, flailing themselves and singing praises to an unknown god. The lord they worshipped was Ilmater, the god of suffering, and they had received a vision of a city in the throes of a most agonizing pain. They came to alleviate this suffering, as mandated by their god. At first they were not well received, for what kind of being would worship the god of suffering? The holy men established their church in the worst part of town, and began ministering to the ill. It was not long before those who had scorned the monks earlier noticed that the formerly sick people who went to worship with the monks returned healthy. Soon people rejoiced at the monks arrival, and flocked to the temple, begging to be healed.

Unfortunately the solution to the plague menace was not that simple. The monks could only heal a few individuals per day, yet hundreds came. The monks barricaded themselves inside their temple. They allowed only a few individuals in each day, and tried to ignore the masses outside who clamored for mercy.

The young physician became jealous of the monk's attention. He could not understand how they could reject people's offers of money for healing, or why they would not give their names so their deeds could be recognized. They claimed that they healed through the mercy of their divine lord, though he knew that was impossible, for the gods were just myths made to comfort children and the dying. He became sure that they had a medical cure, one which if he had, he would put to full use, healing any number of people per day. So the young physician approached the people, and told them of how the monks had the ability to cure all of them at once, but were allowing their suffering to continue so that they would have no choice but to convert to their new religion. The people were diseased; their minds were not stable. They did not consider that the monks never asked anything of those they healed, even conversion, and so the temple fell.

The young doctor lead the charge into the sanctuary, backed by mobs of incensed, screaming disease-ridden people. He approached a terrified priest, and demanded to know what pills to give the people to cure their

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disease. The priest looked confused, and so the doctor hurled him to the angry crowd. He led the group further through the temple, and met another priest. Again he demanded to know the herbs he used to cure the plague. Again, the priest had no answer, so he too was given over to the masses. This was repeated for over an hour, with the doctor and his horde searching every part of the temple, destroying holy relics and defiling the sanctity of the place in the process.

At last the doctor discovered a small hidden room, and entered it unnoticed by the others. Inside he found the eldest priest in deep meditation, praying over the body of a young girl. The physician went to him, roused him, and once again demanded to know how to heal the sick people of the city. The old man answered that it was no mundane cure, but a miraculous one. The priest did not know how to heal, he merely served as a vessel for Ilmater's will. To demonstrate, he finished the petition he was making on the child's behalf, and an unearthly presence filled the room. A white light emanated from the priest's eyes and hands, and the doctor had to look away. When the light faded, and the doctor examined the child, he found no sign of infection, for she was truly healed.

He asked again if the priests' god had wrought this change, and the priest answered that it was so. Leaping upon the altar, the physician raised his arms and cried, "Ilmater, if you gave me the power to heal as such, I would remove this plague from the city within the week. Ilmater, the people are suffering, and you are allowing them to do so. Give me the power these monks possess!" all the while ignoring the monk's pleas to stop his blasphemy. The doctor's form became wracked by agony, and he screamed aloud. His strong back bent, his handsome face became covered in pockmarks, for what the monks begged in humility, the young doctor demanded in hubris, and for that he was struck down by the god. Before passing into oblivion, the young man heard the priest whisper, "May you learn human kindness, walking the corners of the world."

Some would say the story ends there, but those who do so are wrong. Ten years to the day the temple was razed, a lone figure, that of an emaciated man wrapped in all manner of rags, emerged from the charred walls. He paused for a moment, and set off for the south. Less than a block away, he was savagely beaten to death by a band of ruffians.

One year later, the same lone figure appeared, and set out for the west. As he was walking, he came upon a woman suffering from a large growth protruding from her neck which she tried, in vain, to hide behind a scarf. The figure looked at her, confused, then held out a scarf and said, "New rags for old." The woman untied her moth-eaten scarf, and traded it to the man for his clean

one. As she did, the lump on her throat vanished, and the Ragman tied the scarf round his neck to hide his new deformity.

He continued his southern path, leaving the gates of the city, and continued onward where he encountered the remains of a fresh battle. Blood still soaked the ground, and the cries of dying men abandoned by their companions rang in his ears. The Ragman approached the mortally wounded, saying, "New rags for old," and removed their blood soaked dressings; he then replaced them with his fresh rags. As he tied the fallen warriors' bandages on himself, the brown-stained rags grew even darker as fresh blood seeped onto them. The soldiers stood amazed, for their wounds had closed over, leaving no trace of a scar.

The Ragman said not a word, and continued eastward, where he met a small group of lepers begging for alms. He said to them, "New rags for old," and the lepers removed the socks and mittens hiding their ashen flesh and missing digits. He handed them new ones, his flesh shriveling away, and growing pale as theirs grew young and healthy. They thanked him, and he walked away wordlessly.

He entered Falkovnia, and when the soldiers saw the Ragman; bleeding, diseased, and leprous, they had their sport with them before impaling him on a pike. As he slid down, suffering in quiet, he noticed one soldier wearing an eye patch. Struggling, he tore free a strip of cloth and extended his hand to the mocking soldier, whispering, "New rags for old."

The Ragman has appeared every year since the year 700. He appears in an abandoned church in Martira Bay. Each year he tries to wander to the four corners of the Core: Darkon, Valachan, Nova Vaasa, and Eastern Darkon. He has never completed his journey, though it is believed that once he was quite close. He was approaching the coast of Nova Vaasa when he saw a small girl being carried by her father, as her legs were withered stumps. The Ragman approached her, offering her two stockings. She slipped them over her twisted legs. He took her old ones, and slipped them over his rapidly withering legs. The girl rejoiced, and ran off laughing with joy.

The Ragman continued his journey, crawling towards the sea. As the plains cats of Nova Vaasa were tearing him to shreds, he could taste the salt air upon his lips.

Appearance

The Ragman begins his yearly journey looking much like any other homeless derelict, a dirty unkempt man wearing a variety of raggedy clothing. His large eyes are piercing blue, and reveal his compassion for others. As

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time progresses, he may appear with any number of afflictions, which will lower his Charisma accordingly. This may cause confusion among those who have encountered him on a previous pilgrimage, where he was more maimed than his current state.

Personality

The Ragman is a quiet, gentle soul and despite his appearance, means no harm. His primary desire is to complete his journey. Though he is often hurt by others, he only feels sympathy for these lost souls. His empathy for the suffering is so great that he cannot see an injured being without attempting to remedy its situation, even if it means his temporary death.

The Ragman (formerly Dr. Allandris Murdock)

Cursed Human, Neutral Good

Armor Class	10	Str	12
Movement	12	Dex	12
Level/Hit Dice	5	Con	18
Hit Points	40	Int	12
THAC0	20	Wis	18
Morale	20	Cha	12
No. of Attacks	0		
Damage/Attack	Nil		
Special Abilities	See below		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

Special Abilities

The Ragman may absorb the wounds and afflictions of others, though always at a cost. He may heal any wound, but in doing so takes a like amount of damage. By curing such an affliction such as blindness or deafness, he acquires that status. He may cure any disease, but in doing so, contracts it. Each debilitating disease lowers his Constitution by one, each fatal disease lowers his Constitution by 3. Should the Ragman absorb a mental illness, his Wisdom is reduced by 3, though he does not suffer from the madness until his Wisdom reaches 0. The Ragman is immune to all healing spells, healing only at a rate of 1 hit point per day, modified by any positive hit point bonus he receives from his high Constitution (if it has not yet been reduced by his healing of disease).

Lost points of Constitution are regained at a rate of one per week, though lost Wisdom is permanent for this

manifestation. Should the Ragman die, he will reform one year later in the burned out temple in Martira Bay.

Combat

The Ragman makes no attacks, nor does he attempt to defend himself should he be accosted. No animals will attack him, and if they make a morale check, they will come to his aid. Should this be the case however, the Ragman will attempt to cure any wounds afflicted on his behalf, as he cannot stand to see suffering, even upon those who intend him ill.

Campaign Use

Even in the Land of the Mists, there are bright spots of hope, and the Ragman offers such an opportunity. When the players seem especially down, or seem to lose all hope, the Ragman presents a way to instill some faith back into the player characters, to allow them to continue their grim struggle. DMs needing to save a wounded or diseased player character might also have him run across the Ragman. Also, at a later date, if the party witnesses the Ragman die at the hands of misunderstanding or evil NPCs, they will feel his loss acutely.

A longer adventure might evolve out of the party trying to protect the Ragman through his journey, healing the sick they encounter so the Ragman might save his strength for the long road ahead. Should the Ragman make it to each of the four corners of the core continent, his journey is finished. He becomes a 5th-level priest of Ilmater, possibly offering to accompany the party throughout their adventures, so that he might continue his good work.

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WILL O' THE WOODS

A Troublemaker for the Inquisitors of Tepest

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Appearance

Will o'the Woods looks much like others of his race, the baobhan sith. He stands slightly more than two feet tall, with a slender, elven build. His features are likewise elvish, save for his ears, which are long and nearly bat-like. Insectoid wings sprout from his back. His hair and his eyes are raven, and contrast sharply with the brightness of his clothing. He has a crooked, manic smile and a cackling laugh. He has a fondness for hoop earrings like those worn by the Vistani, and wears several in each ear.

Unlike others of his kind, Will can take the form of a Will o'Wisp. In this form, he normally appears as a globe of white light two feet in diameter, though he can alter his color, shape and size if he so chooses.

Will o'the Woods

Baobhan Sith, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	6 (-8)	Str	7
Movement	6 Fl 12 (B)	Dex	19
	(FL 18 (A))	Con	9
Level/Hit Dice	2	Int	15
Hit Points	12	Wis	11
THACO	17 (11)	Cha	16
Morale	11	XP	1,400
No. of Attacks	1		
Damage/Attack	1d4 (by weapon) (2-16)		
Special Attacks	Laughter, Wisp form		
Special Defenses	Invisibility, Wisp form		
Magic Resistance	25% (See below)		

Background

If asked, Will o'the Woods (not his true name, but a pseudonym; his true name is unknown) would likely claim to be the lost prince of the pixies who would become the baobhan sith, or perhaps that he is a prophesied messiah destined to lead the baobhan sith to greatness, or some other such nonsense; he is, after all, a

liar and a trickster who takes great delight in misleading others.

The truth is that Will o'the Woods was merely a normal baobhan sith, remarkable only in that the depths of his cruelty and deviousness were even greater than normal for his kind. Born into a large tribe of the black pixies that dwelled in the forests of northern Tepest, Will's appetite for power and the spread of misfortune lead him to desire the leadership of the tribe. Eventually, after years of plotting and scheming, attempting to develop the perfect means of eliminating the chief while at the same time being in position to assume leadership for himself, Will's impatience eventually won through and he opted for the direct approach, spearing the chief through the chest during a tribal gathering.

It is likely that Will would have been torn apart by the other members of the tribe, had the dark powers not taken notice of his brutal and evil act and decided to reward him appropriately. After the Mists descended and withdrew, Will found that he now had the power to take on the form and impressive powers of a will o'wisp, but at the same time now needed to feed on negative energies to survive. The members of the tribe had no means of dealing with someone of Will's newfound power, and that power and his need for negative emotions have led Will to embark on a veritable crusade of maliciousness.

Current Sketch

Will o'the Woods leads a band of roughly thirty baobhan sith. They make their home in the woods north of the village of Kellee in Tepest. Their "pranks" have caused over a dozen deaths among the villagers there over the years and the actions of his little band have contributed strongly to the ever-increasing paranoia of the Tepestani people. He and his followers have been feverishly increasing the pace of their pranking as the years go by, and soon the people of Kellee may have to send for some kind of aid.

Will and his band venture into Kellee once every one or two months, most often on nights of the new moon.

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The pranks that Will's little band play vary in intensity from spiteful to monstrous. Defiling crops and food stores, killing and injuring livestock, stealing children, leading lost travelers into the dens of monsters, stealing goods only to break them and leave them in the town square, setting fire to homes, and "accidental" deaths are all considered fine "pranks" by this band of little monsters, and it is invariably Will who orchestrates the night time revelry. Worst of all is the sound of the band's maniacal laughter echoing through the benighted streets.

Will and his followers have not yet encountered the Three Hags of Tepest, to their good fortune. The Hags would no doubt consider the baobhan sith to be excellent appetizers, and it is doubtful Will could offer the Hags anything to persuade them to spare his life. They have, on the other hand, had limited encounters with the Arak of the Shadow Rift, few of them friendly. The tribe has a particular enmity for the powrie, and several of the baobhan sith have been killed fighting those tiny assassins.

Personality

Will is a malicious, sadistic little beast. Though he would claim to only be interested in having fun, he is just as interested in spreading misfortune and cruelty. Will is also rather insane. He is manic and paranoid to a degree that even the baobhan sith find somewhat extreme; his insanity is partly fueled by his need to feed off the negative emotions of others, a need which drives him to create fear, frustration and humiliation in those nearby.

Will rules his little tribe with an iron fist. He is intolerant of any challenge to his leadership, and he has slain more than one among the baobhan sith who have provoked him. He takes great delight in telling mocking tales of his deceased rivals and the brutality of their deaths. His malice, insanity and cruelty are usually more than sufficient to keep his followers in line, and he knows it, but he often randomly accosts and bullies his underlings because he enjoys the sensation of power and because he feels it reminds them of their place. He is universally hated by his tribe, but they are too thoroughly cowed to do anything about it. And, admittedly, they greatly enjoy the night-time activities Will leads them in.

When encountering larger folk, Will's inferiority complex kicks in, and this fuels him to be even more sadistic and cruel than he would normally. Should he encounter a foe he is incapable of beating, bullying, or pranking, Will will wilt like a leaf. Such a turn of events would likely sound his death knell, for his tribe would immediately detect such a weakness and turn on him.

Combat

In his normal form, Will is rather ineffectual in combat due to his small size and slight frame. He has the normal abilities of a baobhan sith, though his THACO and hit dice are slightly better. He will never fight alone in his true form, instead attacking along side his band of followers.

As mentioned earlier, Will o'the Woods can take the form of a will o'wisp. He may do so only once a day, so he generally reserves the change for compelling reasons.

When in the form of a will o'wisp, Will gains their powers. His THACO improves to 11, and he gains the shock attack of the wisps, doing 2d8 damage per attack. His flight movement improves to 18 (A), and his AC improves to -8. He also gains their spell immunity: he is only effected by protection from evil, magic missile, and maze spells. However, his hit points do not change, and he cannot use the special abilities or magic resistance of the baobhan sith, with the exception of invisibility, which he can use at will. Will cannot stay in the wisp form for more than 15 minutes.

Will and his followers are highly familiar with the forest in which they live, and their small size makes them adept at concealing themselves within its vastness. They will always seek to attack from surprise whenever possible.

Adventure Ideas

Will's predations are quickly leading the people of Kellee to become desperate. It is only a matter of time before they seek outside assistance, for the Inquisition has proved unable to halt the mischievous attacks. If the characters are well known as monster hunters, and particularly if they have come to the aid of any of the people of Tepest before (for example, by participating in the events of *Servants of Darkness* or *The Shadow Rift*, then they are perfect candidates.



THE HAUNTS OF LOCKWOOD MANOR

A Family That's Slain Together, Stays Together

by Daniel J. Bandera
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In the year 579 of the Barovian calendar, the lich Azalin entered the Mist north of Barovia. In response the Mists parted and revealed a vast domain created for the lich. In order to create this vast expansion of land, the Mists reached out into other lands looking for the most accursed and evil locations from each land to populate this vast new domain. It found one such depraved place on a small prime material plane, and welcomed it into its embrace.

In western Darkon on top of a lonely hill lies an old mansion, much older than the Land of Darkon itself. During the day, the place appears abandoned. However, once the sun has set, the ghosts of the Lockwood family awaken to haunt the estate. The Lockwoods were a noble family from a distant plane that suffered under the plight of an ancestral curse. Angelique, the ghostly matriarch of the Lockwood family, has haunted the estate for centuries. Her evil mischief has given rise to other ghosts as she murdered her descendants forcing them to join her in undeath.

What follows are descriptions for the fourteen ghosts that haunt the family's abandoned estate. Following that is a suggested adventure summary to be used with the haunted Lockwood estate.

THE GHOSTS

All of the ghosts have the following powers: All ghosts can become invisible at will, and can rejuvenate themselves to full hit points. All are immune to the following spells: *blindness, cloudkill, contagion, deafness, death, death fog, energy drain, finger of death, haste, hold, irritation, magic jar, dance, polymorph, power words, sink, sleep, slow, vampiric touch, growth, shrink, regenerate, wither, restoration/energy drain.*

Garland and Claudette

Married in life, they blame each other for their unlife.

Background

Claudette and Garland had a loveless marriage. They could never agree on anything, and most of their discussions lead to loud arguments. As their marriage dragged on Claudette's mind began to slip and she became convinced that Garland was having an affair, however, she could never find any proof.

In order to catch him, she found a beautiful young girl of eighteen named Jeannette and hired her as a housemaid. Claudette then placed Jeannette in numerous situations where she would be alone with Garland, hoping Garland would pursue her. But her plot was not successful, for Garland was not interested in the young girl. Claudette's suspicion was all consuming and she would not give up until her suspicion was justified. So she plotted to catch the two together.

One night, Claudette sent Garland to get her dress from the washroom when she knew that Jeannette was bathing in the washroom. Meanwhile, Claudette hid in the next room to see what transpired. When Garland walked in on the bathing Jeannette, he tried to apologize, embarrassed. Claudette, her own plot confirming her suspicion, burst into the room violently accusing Garland of adultery. Before either Jeannette or Garland could explain, Claudette drew a large butcher's knife and attacked Jeannette. Garland stopped her and wrestled the knife out of her hand.

Garland and Claudette continued to argue violently, as the spirit of Angelique entered the room and picked up

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the knife. With a single thrust, she drove the knife through both of them, killing them and turned them into ghosts.

Appearance

Now both are malicious spirits bent on the destruction of the other. Garland is incorporeal and appears as a transparent ghostly image of a man, though his hands and feet cannot be seen. His apparition ends at the end of his coat sleeve and the bottom of his pants legs, making him appear to hover above the ground. With effort he can make his right hand appear for up to three rounds, to point or make other hand gestures or to attack. The hand, when it appears, is rotten and decomposing. Otherwise the image of Garland is the same as when he died.

Claudette is a mutable ghost who appears slightly larger than she did in life. Originally a short plump woman of 5'2", in death she has grown to 5'9". Usually her image is very condensed and not transparent though still ghostly white.

Combat

Both the spirits are anchored to the washroom, Garland's bedroom beyond, and Claudette's sitting room, from which she spied on Garland with Claudette. Neither Garland nor Claudette can harm the other.

Garland is accompanied by half-dozen young innocent looking spirits, all whom bare a strong resemblance to Jeannette. Claudette despises them and attempts to convince anyone she meets to kill them. For each of the images of Jeannette killed Garland loses 1 HD. Claudette can not attack the other spirits but if threatened she can inhabit the butcher knife to attack the living.

Garland, if attacked or to defend the six female ghosts, causes his right hand to appear and attempts to strike with it. If successful he drains one level of experience from his victim. Garland is not attracted to the six female ghosts and never was in life, but cannot stand to see them killed, and attacks ruthlessly when they are threatened.

During the day, Garland remains in his bedroom and Claudette remains in her sitting room; until nightfall, when they both enter the washroom and begin a verbal argument that lasts till dawn. Their arguments can be heard from most parts of the first floor of the mansion.

Garland, 2nd-magnitude ghost, incorporeal:

AC -1 (6 vs ethereal); MV 9; HD 6; hp 24; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg energy drain (1 level); SD +1 weapons to be hit; SZ M (5'9"); ML elite (14); AL NE; XP 2,000.

Notes: Rejuvenate to full hit points in 1 round, but must rest for 45 minutes afterwards.

Claudette, 2nd-magnitude ghost, mutable:

AC -1 (6 vs ethereal); MV 15; HD 6; hp 28; THAC0 15; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA Inhabit knife (2-5 dmg); SD +1 weapons to be hit; SZ M (6'2"); ML steady (12); AL CE; XP 1,400.

Notes: Rejuvenate to full hit points in 1 round, but must rest for 45 minutes afterwards.

Jeannettes, 1st-magnitude ghosts,

incorporeal: AC 0 (8 vs ethereal); MV 9, FI 15 (B); HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 0; Dmg 0; SD +1 weapons to be hit; SZ M (5'5"); ML unsteady (5); AL N; XP 120.

Notes: Rejuvenate to full hit points in 2 rounds, but must rest for 1 hour afterwards.

Cornell Lockwood

The Enchanting Beauty of the Garden

Background

In life Cornell Lockwood strove to maintain her beautiful good looks and used them to toy with men's affections. She would show favor towards a man and lead him on, play with his feelings, use his jealousy, accept his gifts and flattery, and finally reject him.

Cornell met her end late one night. She was strangled by McIntyre, a suitor, who believed he had earned Cornell's hand in marriage. McIntyre was a business associate of her father and almost fifteen years older than Cornell. A short, pudgy, balding man, he was surprised and delighted when Cornell first responded to his courtship.

McIntyre asked her to accompany him on a midnight stroll in the garden. She agreed, and when they reached the fountain at the middle of the garden, McIntyre proposed to her. Cornell, laughing, rejected his proposal, telling him she could never marry such a disgusting little man as he. Angelique was near the scene and was attracted by Cornell's scowling laughter. When the spirit saw the hurt and angry in his eyes, she enhanced McIntyre's anger. In an induced rage, he

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strangled Cornell and dropped her body beside the pool of the fountain. One year later, Cornell rose from her grave to haunt the family's garden.

Appearance

Cornell is a second magnitude semi-corporeal spirit whose appearance, though lovely in life, has become beatific. She has golden hair that reaches halfway to her waist, pale skin, and bright blue eyes that sparkle with mischief. She wears a long flowing dress, with a sash tied around her waist. In the sash is tucked a jeweled dagger. She always appears barefoot, and seems to float above the ground as she moves.

Combat

Now as a spirit Cornell leads men on still, often to their deaths. When Cornell spots a male victim walking alone in the garden, she will approach from behind, and whispers lovingly into his ear while caressing him gently. The victim upon turning sees the enchanting vision of Cornell who then turns laughing and runs teasingly away. (A save vs. spell is required or the victim will chase recklessly after her.) She will usually lead him into one of the pit traps she has set in the garden. These pits are five feet deep and filled with sharpened wooden stakes. Anyone falling into a pit is struck by 1d6 of these stakes and takes 1d4 points of damage from each stake.

Her arms, hands, and torso can become corporeal. If forced into combat from which she cannot flee, Cornell draws a jeweled dagger from her belt, which cannot be forced from her hand. The dagger does 3-6 points of damage and if her attack roll is two higher than the number she needs to hit, she drains an energy level from her victim. Cornell is anchored to the garden and is vulnerable to the water in the fountain, taking damage as if it was holy water.

Cornell, 2nd-magnitude ghost, semi-corporeal: AC -1 (6 vs ethereal); MV 15; HD 5; hp 25; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+2 (dagger); SA If hit roll is 2 higher than number needed then she drains 1 level from the victim, Lure victim; SD +1 weapons to be hit; SZ M (5'11"); ML average (9); AL CE; XP 2,000.

Notes: Rejuvenate to full hit points in 1 round, but must rest for 45 minutes afterwards. Water from fountain causes 1-8 hp damage.

Cortland Lockwood

Ghostly Musician of the Battlements

Background

In life, Cortland was a musician. He was the first to discover the body of his son, a soldier killed in battle when the neighboring baron invaded the land. Grieving at the loss, Cortland became obsessed with writing a song about his dead son. He strove long and hard on his labor.

After two years, the partially finished piece would have been considered a masterpiece by others, but Cortland was unsatisfied. He was looking for something extraordinary, something that would capture the essence of death and allow the listener to get a brief glimpse of death itself.

Cortland began to conduct dark research. He would slaughter small animals, cats, dogs, and sheep, to see if he could find what he was looking for. These experiments were unfruitful. As he was contemplating using larger animals, perhaps the horses from the family's stables, the spirit of Angeliqwe came to him and offered him the secrets of death to use to finish his song. Although at first frightened by the ghost, Cortland was quickly intrigued by the offer, and he agreed. Angeliqwe lead him to a secluded area on the wall, which had been newly constructed around the estate, and instructed him to open himself up to her. The next morning, he was found high up in the wall tower, dead. Angeliqwe had entered his body and killed him.

Appearance

Cortland's spirit appears skeletal and transparent, with his image appearing to fade near the edges. He still wears the tattered remains of his burial suit, and holds a set of bagpipes. Cortland and his possessions are completely incorporeal.

Combat

Every night, Cortland plays his bagpipes continuously. The melancholy sound of his music causes a strange mist to roll in and surround the estate. The mist is spectral and glows with a greenish light. It is the spirits of others who died at the Lockwood estate, but who did not become full ghosts. A person entering the mist cannot see more than two feet in any direction, and the only sounds they hear are the whispers of dozens of bodiless voices surrounding them. The person eventually

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wanders out of the mist back at the Lockwood estate. There is no escape from the mansion at night.

If attacked, Cortland can use his song to *cause despair* in those nearby. However, his bagpipes are a vulnerability. They constantly play even if he leaves them to fight. If the pipes are struck, they stop playing and the ghost will fade away. But for that night only, as Cortland returns on the next night. If the bagpipes are destroyed, they slowly reform themselves and Cortland will not reappear until they have reformed completely.

His touch causes damage and leaves red welts where he touches his victim. Cortland's great weakness is the song he was trying to finish. If a bard finds his partially written song (which is in the library folded inside of a music composition book) and finishes it, and then plays the song on the battlements at night, Cortland's ghost would be put to rest.

Cortland, 3rd-magnitude ghost, mutable: AC -2 (4 vs ethereal); MV 15, FI 30 (B); HD 7; hp 40; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA Cause despair; SD +2 weapons to be hit, -1 on all turn attempts; SZ M (5'7"); ML champion (15); AL NE; XP 3,000.

Notes: Rejuvenate to full hit points in 1 round, but must rest for 30 minutes afterwards.

Hindel Lockwood

Guardian of the Family Crypt

Background

Hindel Lockwood was a soldier in life. When the neighboring baron attempted to invade the Barony of Earonshire, Hindel was called to service in Earonshire's army. He unwillingly left his pregnant wife, Isabella, at the estate to go off and fight the invaders.

On the eve of an important battle, Hindel received word that his wife, Isabella, was in labor that was causing her complications. Abandoning his post, Hindel left in the night to return to his wife. He traveled throughout the night, and near morning collapsed exhausted in a barn, unaware that he was only a half-mile from the Lockwood estate.

As he slept, the invaders crushed the forces of Baron Earonshire. The baron's forces retreated and reformed to meet the invaders in the fields of the Lockwood estate. Hindel awoke in the late afternoon to the sounds of battle. He was on the opposite side of the battle lines from the estate and attempted to sneak around the battle to reach his wife. He did not succeed in sneaking past

the invaders and was wounded by a sentry, who Hindel subsequently killed.

Badly wounded, Hindel staggered back to the barn. From the shadow of the doorway he watched the invaders rout the baron's troops. As the defenders fled, Isabella, having survived the delivery, rushed from the house and across the fields trying to locate Hindel among the fleeing soldiers. She was crushed by a cavalry charge made by the invaders. Hindel screamed in helpless agony. Angelique was present in the barn at the time, and watched the torment Hindel went through. On a whim, she broke the support holding up the loft above Hindel, crushing him.

Appearance

Hindel now leads the ghostly sentries of the Lockwood crypt. He can become incorporeal at will. When corporeal, he appears as he did just after he died. He walks with a stiff gaunt, and a large sword wound is visible in his left side. His left hand is held constantly over the wound, as if holding back blood that no longer flows from the wounds. His neck was broken by the collapsing loft, giving his head a slant to the left.

Combat

Hindel causes fear in those who see him. The touch of his right hand drains two points of Con. If presented with his dead wife's dress, Hindel will stare fascinated at it for 2-5 rounds. He is also highly vulnerable to magical fire; he always fails any saving throws vs. magic fire-based attacks.

Hindel leads a squad of six ghostly sentries in the family crypt below the Lockwood estate. They all appear as shades of their former selves. Each died when the house was overrun by rebels intent on overthrowing Baron Earonshire and all his loyal nobles. Angelique did not kill them, but was near at hand when they died, and she snatched up their spirits and formed them into the ghosts they are now. Their names are James, Michael, Patrick, Joseph, Edward, and Kenneth. Each wields a black sword of vaporous mist, which drains one point of Strength with each hit. If any one of the ghosts is struck by the weapon that lies next to his body in his crypt, he is instantly destroyed.

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Hindel, 3rd-magnitude ghost, mutable:

AC -2 (4 vs ethereal); MV 9; HD 8; hp 48; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg drain 2 Con; SA cause fear (-2 to save); SD +2 weapons to be hit, -1 on all attempts to turn; SZ M (6'2"); ML champion (16); AL NE; XP 6,000.

Notes: Rejuvenate to full hit points in 1 round, but must rest for 30 minutes after. Always fails save versus fire magic.

James, Patrick, Michael, Joseph, Edward, Kenneth, 2nd-magnitude ghosts, semi-corporeal:

AC 3; MV 9; HD 6; hp 36; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (sword); SA Str drain; SD +1 weapons to be hit; SZ M (6'); ML champion (15); AL LE; XP 1,400.

Notes: Rejuvenate to full hit points in 1 round, but must rest for 45 minutes after. Destroyed if struck by weapon that he was buried with.

Edgar Lockwood

The Miser

Background

Everyone who knew Edgar considered him a miser. He did not care, as long as he continued to make money. During his time as head of the Lockwood family he amassed a large fortune. As Edgar grew elderly, he became more obsessed with his money, spending all his time either counting his money or staring mesmerized at his fortune.

In his obsession, Edgar became convinced that his children wanted him dead so they could inherit his fortune. Edgar did not consider his children worthy of anything, believing them lazy, greedy burdens on him and a drain of his precious wealth. He decided to make sure his children would not get his money when he died. He hid most of the money in a secret room in the family estate's tower. By this time he was heavy with age and very weak both physically and mentally. He began to believe the money spoke to him.

One stormy night, Edgar was awakened from his sleep by what he thought was his money calling to him. The money cried out that his children had found it, and were busily dividing up his fortune. Edgar rushed to the staircase that lead to his secret treasure room.

By this time he was accustomed to climbing stairs with his manservant's help, as he was too weak to do it himself. But he had to get to his money, so he started slowly up the stairs. He was exhausted when he had only climbed half way up and stopped to rest. However, he

heard his money call out again and he pressed on quickly, pulling himself up by the banister, desperate to reach it before his family had stolen it all.

As Edgar neared the top, Angelique flew down the stairs. Her passage caused him to lose his balance. Edgar desperately grabbed the banister but was too weak to hold himself up; he tumbled down the stairs, the fall breaking his back and killing him.

Appearance

Edgar remains invisible most of the time. When he does appear, he looks as he did on the night he died, wearing his nightclothes and a nightcap. He looks ancient, with cracked, wrinkled skin. He leans forward, and his bent frame makes him look much shorter than he actually is.

Combat

Now Edgar is a semi-corporeal 3rd-magnitude ghost who haunts the stairwell where he died. When someone steps on the stairs Edgar rushes down from the top and smashes into that person, (remaining invisible when he does this) knocking the victim back down the stairs. Edgar can also animate the staircase causing it to buck or swing, or even break.

To confront Edgar one must first pass through the test of greed. Edgar appears halfway up the stairs holding a gleaming lantern in his right hand. In his left are five gold coins. These he tosses into the air where they rotate in a circle as if juggled by invisible hands. The person confronting Edgar must make a save vs. spell or stare enthralled at the gold coins and the way the lantern light gleams off them. The victim's mind is filled with thoughts of what they could do with the money. The victim remains entranced while Edgar attacks. Anyone who passes the test is immune to Edgar's attacks. The lantern and coins are not corporeal and cannot be touched by human hands.

Edgar, 3rd-magnitude ghost, semi-corporeal:

AC -2 (4 vs. ethereal); MV 6, FI 30 (B); HD 7; hp 30; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg special (falling damage); SA inhabit staircase, entrance victims; SD +2 weapons to be hit, -1 on all attempts to turn; SZ M (5'2"); ML elite (14); AL NE; XP 3,000.

Notes: Rejuvenate to full hit points in 1 round, but must rest for 30 minutes after.

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Hareton Lockwood

The Library Haunt

Background

Hareton Lockwood was truly an evil man in life. As a boy of eight he killed his younger brother by drowning him in the bathtub. He resented the attention his parents lavished on his baby brother. When he read a story about a man who drowned his wife and made it look like an accident, Hareton decided to do away with his sibling.

Most of Hareton's young life was spent reading in the family library. His favorite book was *Tales of Mystery and the Macabre* by E. A. Petry, a book of horror and murder stories that young Hareton delighted in.

When he was eighteen, Marie Inston attracted Hareton's desire. However, Hareton was not Marie's only suitor. Heathcliff was in love with Marie as well. So, Hareton planned his rival's murder. After Heathcliff had brought his horse in from a ride and was unsaddling it, Hareton locked the stable-stall door behind him. Hareton then spooked the horse, using a flaming torch and loud noises. The horse reared up and crushed Heathcliff's skull with its hooves.

Hareton was not the first in line for the position of head of the family, but his older brother, Torrence, was. Unwilling to accept this trick of fate that had made his brother first born, Hareton schemed to remedy this. Hareton tricked Torrence into the crypt beneath the house and then locked him in. To cover Torrence's disappearance, Hareton pretended to find a note from Torrence proclaiming that he had run off to marry a peasant woman. Torrence died in the crypt and five months later his elderly father died as well. Hareton was the most direct male heir, and he became head of the family.

Hareton murdered many other people during his life, but was never caught. It is not clear when he learned of Angelique or when they became allies, but it was with Angelique's help that he conducted his last murder. A business rival named Godfrey was causing too much competition for Hareton's taste. Under the guise of conducting a business meeting to resolve their grievances Hareton invited Godfrey to the Lockwood estate and imprisoned him inside a small cell built in the cellar. There, Hareton sealed him in behind a brick wall.

Godfrey died shortly there after, but Hareton continued to hear his screams days later. After almost two months of this, Hareton's sanity began to crack and he rushed down to the cellar. He labored to bring down the wall that sealed Godfrey in. When he finally broke

through, he came face to face with Godfrey's animated corpse. Godfrey's decaying hands reached out and pulled Hareton into the cell. Hareton died screaming in the little cell, with the decaying body of his old business associate lying on top of him. Godfrey's body became inanimate again once Angelique left it.

Appearance

Hareton's features are only slightly altered by death. He wears a ruffled business suit that is covered with dirt and he appears in a state of constant exhaustion. Hareton still appears to be forty-seven, his age at the time of his death.

Combat

Now Hareton haunts the library as a 3rd-magnitude ghost. Hareton can close and lock the doors of the library at will, and attacks anyone entering the library at night. Through use of telekinesis he hurls books at his victims and can cause the fire in the hearth to roar out.

All of the murders Hareton performed in life came from ideas taken from the book, *Tales of Mystery and the Macabre*. If this book is burned the smoke causes Hareton damage (1d10 per round).

Most of the time Hareton is incorporeal. In the library is a large grandfather clock, which has thirteen numbers on it. Only at night will it strike thirteen. When it does Hareton becomes corporeal. During this witching hour Hareton's touch causes energy drain, draining an experience level with a successful attack.

Hareton, 3rd-magnitude ghost, mutable:

AC -2 (4 vs ethereal); MV 9, Fl 15 (B); HD 8; hp 40; THAC0 13; #AT 5 or 1; Dmg 1-3 (flung books), 1-6 (fire), or energy drain (1 level); SA telekinesis; SD +2 weapons to be hit, -1 on all attempts to turn; SZ M (5'11"); ML champion (15); AL CE; XP 6,000.

Notes: Rejuvenate to full hit points in 1 round, but must rest for 30 minutes afterwards. Weaknesses: burning book causes 1-10 hp per round; can only fly when incorporeal.

Catherine Lockwood

The Widow

Background

During a revolt against Baron Earonshire, the estate was left under-defended and was overrun by the rebels. Catherine was the wife of Gregory, who was the current head of the family. Both were taken prisoner by the

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rebels. During their imprisonment the rebels treated them cruelly, but their love grew stronger.

Eventually the baron's troops drove the rebels off and liberated the Lockwood mansion. The captain, who retook the estate from the rebels, accused Gregory of aiding the rebellion. The captain ordered him executed on the spot. Troops entered Gregory's bedroom and slew him in full view of Catherine and their children.

On that day Angelique was in the bedroom. When Gregory was killed she whispered thoughts of despair to Catherine and gave her the suggestion to kill herself. The master bedroom of the Lockwood estate overlooks the moat. In a state of grief, Catherine threw herself out of the window and plunged to her death.

Appearance

Now Catherine haunts the master bedroom. Those who enter hear her screams coming from the window as if she were still falling. Catherine appears now as the beautiful woman she was, but the grief that she was expressing in her death has become exaggerated in undeath, distorting her features and making her face appear to be elongated.

Combat

Catherine is a 3rd-magnitude incorporeal ghost. Her touch causes 1d8 points of damage. She has 30% magic resistance. Two times per night, her wails can become a keen that causes death to anyone within thirty feet who does not successfully save vs. death magic.

Gregory's skeleton still lies in the room, and Catherine will protect it at all costs. Heroes may mistake the skeleton for Catherine's and attack it. If so, Catherine becomes enraged and gains a +4 to hit and damage and one extra keen attack. The sword used to kill Gregory lies next to his body. It causes double damage when used against Catherine.

Catherine, 3rd-magnitude ghost, incorporeal: AC -2 (4 vs ethereal); MV 15; HD 7; hp 35; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA keen 2 per night; SD +2 to be hit, -1 on all attempts to turn; MR 30%; SZ M (5'7"); ML elite (14); AL NE; XP 5,000.

Notes: Rejuvenate to full hit points in 1 round, but must rest for 30 minutes after. Weakness: takes double damage from sword used to kill her husband.

William Rayus

The Doomed

Background

William was not a Lockwood. His father, Stanton, was a very famous and powerful cleric for a church of good. William was expected to follow in his father's footsteps and did so. Upon the retirement of his father, William inherited his father's powerful clerical robes, mace, and holy symbol. With these artifacts he set out to crusade against evil. William was very successful, due completely to his father's gifts.

With his many successes, William's reputation grew. He was able to take as a wife a wealthy noblewoman, who happened to be a Lockwood. At that time, Angelique had possessed the body of a child at the Lockwood estate. The family believed the child, Gertrude, was possessed by demons and sent for William. William had always relied on the holy relics received from his father. In actuality, his faith was very shallow. Thus he was no match for Angelique. After defeating him, Angelique turned him into a doomed spirit, so that he could contemplate his failure for eternity.

Appearance

William appears as he did in life. He was a middle-aged man, with thick brown hair, just beginning to gray. He is very skinny, and dresses in brown priestly robes. A sad, depressed look of the acceptance of an unwanted fate is always on his face.

Combat

Now William is a doomed spirit. He will not directly attack anyone, but that does not make him harmless. He constantly speaks of despair and doom. When encountered, William will target one person, preferably a cleric or priest, and follow him around, appearing always at his shoulder. From there he whispers over and over warnings of doom and despair into his victim's ear. This can cause either despair, fear, or insanity in the victim; William's choice. William has magic resistance of 30%, and attempts to turn him are made at -4.

His father's magical mace is very effective against him. The mace is in William's crypt under the family estate. William always fails his save when struck by it. William haunts Gertrude's room but can leave it once he has chosen a victim in order to follow his victim throughout the house.

William's mace is a Lawful Good *Mace of Disruption*. All 1st-magnitude ghosts save at 10%, 2nd-

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magnitude save at 35%, 3rd-magnitude save at 50%, and Angelique as fourth magnitude saves at 75%.

William, 2nd-magnitude ghost, incorporeal:

AC -1 (6 vs ethereal); MV 15; HD 4; hp 16; THAC0 17; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA cause despair, fear, or insanity; SD +1 weapons to be hit, -4 on all turning attempts; MR 30%; SZ M (5'9"); ML unsteady (7); AL N; XP 1,400.

Notes: Rejuvenate to full hit points in 1 round, but must rest for 45 minutes after.

disease as mummy rot, and the sight of her causes horror checks. If her locket is taken from underneath the bed, she will stare at it, fascinated.

Agnus, 3rd-magnitude ghost, mutable: AC -2

(4 vs ethereal); MV 15, FI 30 (B); HD 7; hp 28; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg special (cause disease); SA +2 weapons to be hit, -1 on all attempts to turn; SZ M (5'1"); ML elite (14); AL NE; XP 3,000.

Notes: Rejuvenate to full hit points in 1 round, but must rest for 30 minutes afterwards.

Agnus Lockwood

The Diseased One

Background

All her life, Agnus was forced to deal with her debilitating disease. She first contracted the disease as a child and it became worse as she grew older. The disease ate away at her strength and life.

She was in love at twenty. Matthew was the son of the neighboring nobleman. At first he showed interest in Agnus, and began to court her. As a token of his love Matthew gave her a golden locket. But as he became aware of her disability, her beloved left her, leaving behind only the locket. The next twenty years the locket never left her, as Agnus dreamed of her one and only love.

As the years went on she became weaker and weaker, eventually being confined to her bed. Finally, after forty years of facing the pain alone, she could stand no more and decided to kill herself. She tied a noose to the rafters in her room and was prepared to hang herself, but at the last instant she changed her mind. As she began to untie the noose Angelique entered the room and spied the locket around Agnus' neck. Enchanted by it, Angelique reached out and pulled. Agnus' nurse discovered her body hanging from the rafter later that day.

Appearance

As a spirit, Agnus' appearance is that of someone suffering the advanced stages of a skin disease. Her skin, a sickly grayish color, is stretched taunted over her thin body. All that remains of her hair are a few strains. Her features are distorted as if wasted away.

Combat

Now Agnus haunts her room, protecting her locket. She is a 3rd-magnitude mutable ghost. Her touch causes

Linton Lockwood

King of the Ball

Background

Linton was an intelligent man, who enjoyed using his intellect to cause people harm. In his teens he enjoyed living extravagantly, and threw many balls at the Lockwood estate. But at the age of twenty, his father refused to support him or his wild lifestyle any longer and cut him off financially. Realizing he needed a new source of funds, Linton acted quickly. Before word could spread of his father's disowning him, he tricked a nearby landowner into entering a high stakes game of chance. Linton, after pledging his father's lands to cover his side of the wager, ensured that the game was fixed, and the landowner lost his entire estate to Linton. When the landowner attempted to resist the loss of his lands, Linton accused him of practicing witchcraft and went to the authorities with fabricated evidence. The landowner was arrested, tried, and convicted on the strength of Linton's testimony.

With his financial security assured, Linton turned to taking revenge on his father. His first step was to pretend to reconcile with his family, to make them believe he regretted the sorrow he had caused. Once back in their good graces, he was able to plant false evidence to convince his father that his mother was having an affair with the man's best friend. Linton arranged to have his father witness a "secret lovers' meeting," though both his mother and the other man attended the rendezvous upon receiving forged notes sent by Linton. In a fit of rage, Linton's father slew his wife and his friend. Linton called the constable, and his father was arrested and later hanged for his crime.

Linton enjoyed tormenting children especially, and was responsible for Suzanne's death (see below). This fault also led to his own death. Linton set up mirrors to make it appear he was a ghost to scare his young cousin, Maxwell. As his scared cousin ran off, Linton stood

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laughing at him. His laughter stopped when the apparition of Angelique came through the mirror. The sight of her scared him to death.

Appearance

Linton was only twenty-eight years old when he died. His body still appears trim and fit. Linton could pass for human, if it was not for his face. All that remains of his head is the skull. Linton typically covers his face with a large mask. The mask is an elaborate affair, typical of those worn to masquerade balls. The mask is that of a golden skinned man with an impossibly wide grin. Linton dresses in proper costumed attire as if to attend a high-class masquerade ball.

Combat

Linton is now a powerfully malign ghost. He is anchored to the ballroom of the estate, where he enjoyed many balls and parties in his life. Linton can create illusions that have sight, sound, and touch. Each night he uses this ability to relive a masquerade ball, populating the ballroom with illusions of those partygoers from years ago.

The noise of the music and conversation can be heard throughout the house. Anyone who enters the ballroom to investigate discovers a masquerade ball in full swing. Note that Linton does not always extend the energy to create full illusions, thus visitors may walk in on a ballroom filled only with the voices of the revelers or a room filled with ghostly quiet partygoers. In either case, Linton is always among the revelers, always at the center of attention. He will quickly move to greet any newcomers. Linton loses his patience with anyone who refuses to get into the spirit of the party. He will enlist the aid of the illusionary “guests” in throwing such offenders out.

Linton, 3rd-magnitude ghost, mutable: AC -2 (4 vs ethereal); MV 15, FI 30 (B); HD 8; hp 45; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA create illusions with sight, sound, and touch; SD +2 to be hit, -1 on all attempts to turn; SZ M (5’8”); ML champion (15); AL CE; XP 5,000.

Notes: Rejuvenate to full hit points in 1 round, but must rest for 30 minutes afterwards.

Suzanne Gordeaux

The Ghost Child

Background

Suzanne was seven years old when her uncle Linton asked her to play hide and seek. Linton had set up an elaborate pulley system to cause a suit of armor to appear to move, making Suzanne believe he was inside and look in. Hiding himself nearby, he waited for Suzanne.

When she searched the hall for her uncle, Suzanne did not see the armor move. Linton became angry that his trick was not working and pulled hard on the ropes that controlled the armor, trying to bring her attention to it. This caused the armor to topple over onto Suzanne, crushing her.

Appearance

Suzanne looks as she did in life, with golden curls. She wears a blue dress, and often giggles at her pursuers.

Combat

Now an incorporeal spirit, Suzanne can use telekinesis at will. Suzanne constantly wants to continue to “play” hide and seek. She will often use her ability to snatch an object and try to get the owner to search for her. Suzanne leads her pursuers through a small maze of rooms filled with traps. These traps tend to involve large objects that fall onto anyone triggering the trap, and will reset by themselves. If physically attacked Suzanne cannot defend herself and attempts to flee.

Suzanne, 2nd-magnitude ghost, incorporeal:

AC -1 (6 vs ethereal); MV 15; HD 4; hp 12; THAC0 17; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA telekinesis; SD +1 weapons to be hit; SZ S (3’10”); ML unsteady (6); AL CE; XP 975.

Notes: Rejuvenate to full hit points in 1 round, but must rest for 45 minutes afterwards.

Ferdinand

The Ghostly Butler

Background

Ferdinand was a butler of the Lockwood family, just as his family had served the Lockwoods for years. Angelique killed him just before the estate entered Ravenloft. He is now a 1st-magnitude ghost, and corporeal. As a ghost all he does is welcome people to the estate and see them to their rooms. If someone attempts to leave, he appears and tells them the master

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has asked them to stay longer, but does not restrain anyone who attempts to leave.

Appearance

Ferdinand looks as he did in life. He is in his mid-fifties, with thin graying black hair, and a slightly stooped posture. Ferdinand dresses in the formal black suit of a butler, complete with white gloves.

Combat

If attacked Ferdinand screams for help and tries to flee. If killed in combat Ferdinand will reappear the next time someone seeks admission to the house.

Ferdinand, 1st magnitude ghost, corporeal:
AC 8; MV 9; HD 2; hp 8; THAC0 19; #AT 1;
Dmg by weapon; SZ M (5'11"); ML average (8);
AL LN; XP 65.

Victoria Lockwood

The Sister

Background

Victoria was Angelique's sister and her story will be told with her sister's.

Appearance

Victoria will be reincarnated into Corin's body, and thus has no physical appearance different than Corin.

Combat

Victoria's spirit will be reincarnated in the body of her descendant Corin as soon as Corin enters the estate. Corin, a young woman of twenty, is the sole remaining Lockwood. She currently lives in the domain of Dementlieu, and has only recently discovered that she is a Lockwood. Corin is interested in researching her ancestry, and when she learns of the family estate will need escorts to travel to the estate in Darkon.

Once Victoria has inhabited Corin, she will remain in Corin's body until Angelique is destroyed. All of the ghosts except Angelique will ignore Victoria, but Angelique will attack her on sight, attempting to kill Corin's body.

Victoria will try to get the party to retrieve the book of the family's history believing this is the first step to

finding a way to destroy her sister. Victoria can *charm person* with her singing and will attempt this on the party if they will not help her.

Victoria, 2nd-magnitude ghost: AC: varies (Corin's); MV 12; HD 5; hp 25; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA charm person, inhabit descendant; SD +1 weapons to be hit; SZ M (Corin's); ML champion (16); AL NG; XP 0.

Angelique Lockwood

Queen of the Damned

Background

Angelique's story starts many centuries ago, when the head of the Lockwood family was Jeremiah Lockwood. Jeremiah had two daughters, Angelique, the elder, and Victoria, the younger. As he entered the twilight of his life, Jeremiah planned to retire and divide his estate between his two daughters. Angelique had pleased her father when she married a minor noble named Benjamin. However, Victoria ran off to marry a traveling bard. Furious that his daughter could be so disrespectful to him, he disowned her, and even refused to see her when she returned to apologize. The elderly Jeremiah gave the entire estate to Angelique and her husband.

Jeremiah enjoyed his retirement for the next few months. During this time Angelique and Benjamin began to assert more control of the management of the family's affairs. Over a two-week period, Angelique fired all of her father's faithful old servants and replaced them, mostly with young able-bodied men, with whom she took to having affairs. When her father complained to her about this, Angelique scolded him, and told him that he was a burden to her. Upset and frustrated with his daughter, Jeremiah tried to leave, but Angelique locked him in his room and kept him prisoner there.

A month later Benjamin and Angelique were invited to stay at Baron Earonshire's estate. They spent the night in a room just down from the baron's. Angelique sensed an opportunity to seize power for herself and her husband. She told her husband to kill the baron and take his place. Too frightened to kill a man, Benjamin refused. Angelique was furious with him, but hid her anger for the remainder of their stay with the baron. Once they returned to the Lockwood estate, she had two of her young lovers take hold of Benjamin and cut out his eyes. She then circulated a story that the wounds were due to a terrible accident. From then on Angelique led the blind Benjamin around by a length of rope tied around his neck. With this humiliation on top of her

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cruel treatment, Benjamin became sullen, and resentful. He drew into himself, and spoke little.

Six months later, Jeremiah managed to escape from the estate with help from a faithful old servant, Christopher. However, during the time of his imprisonment Jeremiah's health had deteriorated. The shock of his daughter's betrayal and harsh treatment of him was too strong a shock to his system and he became mentally as well as physically ill. Christopher could not stand to see his old master in such a state, and sent word to Victoria. Victoria returned and was reunited with her father. Determined to get back at her sister, Victoria brought a case before the baron's magistrate against her sister, charging her inheritance was not valid. After a quick trial, in which Angelique bribed the magistrate, Angelique's inheritance was declared valid and her father declared mentally deranged.

After this victory, Angelique was not finished yet. She then plotted to have Victoria murdered. She asked one of her trusted servants to kill Victoria. The young man kidnapped Victoria in the night and locked her in the tower room of the Lockwood estate. Angelique had planned to allow her father to see Victoria one last time before he was taken to the sanitarium, but her servant misunderstood her instructions and murdered Victoria early. Jeremiah and Angelique, with Benjamin in tow, showed up at the tower room to find Victoria slain. When Jeremiah saw the body, he collapsed sobbing on the floor and died; his heart burst. Before he died, Jeremiah cursed his daughter's soul to everlasting damnation for her deeds.

Angelique stood fascinated by these events, and did not notice Benjamin slip his leash from her grasp. He had suffered his wife's abuse and humiliation for too long and sensed an opportunity to seek vengeance. Benjamin slipped up behind his wife, and used the leash to strangle Angelique. Once his dreaded wife was dead, he threw himself from the tower window. One hundred years later, Jeremiah's curse caused Angelique to rise as a ghost.

Appearance

Angelique's ghost normally appears as she did in life. When in this form, she is quite calm and if communicated with she will respond reasonably, though she has trouble concentrating on a conversation and is easily distracted. However, when angered her ghostly flesh melts away and her appearance become skeletal. In this skeletal apparition Angelique cannot be reasoned with and is very aggressive. It is in this form that she wreaks her mischief.

Combat

Angelique has let her essence drift off, and will be neither aware of nor concerned about any trespassers unless they have permanently killed two of the ghosts or entered the crypt below the house. Once she perceives a threat, Angelique begins to reform herself. This process takes her a full hour.

Once fully formed, she will track down the interlopers. Once she has found them Angelique will shadow the group, attacking lone characters, or using her abilities to attack for a round or two and then flee. She will continue with these tactics until destroyed or until she has driven off the intruders. If a group of trespassers has recovered William's *Mace of Disruption* from the family crypt, Angelique will be very cautious in her attacks, only attacking when the group is in combat with other of the ghosts of the mansion.

Angelique is anchored to the family estate and the surrounding area. She cannot leave an area of a half mile radius around the estate.

Angelique, 4th-magnitude ghost, mutable:

AC -3 (2 vs ethereal); MV 15, Fl 30 (B); HD 11; hp 70; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 + drain 2 levels; SA dominate victim (-2 to save), heighten emotion, death keen causes death to all those in a 40' radius two times per night. All victims suffer a -1 on the save vs. death magic; SD +3 or better to be hit, -2 on all attempts to turn; SZ M (6'); ML champion (15); AL LE; XP 13,000.

Notes: Rejuvenate to full hit points in 1 round, but must rest for 20 minutes afterwards.

THE ADVENTURE

The Lockwood Estate

The estate rests on a low hill. The area for five miles around it is clear of trees and crops. A twenty foot wall surrounds the manor house on three sides, and the fourth side connects with the back wall of the manor. A twenty foot wide moat circles the outer wall. The moat is also twenty feet deep but is empty of water. The estate appears in slight disrepair and abandon. The courtyard is overgrown. There is a lush garden between the house and the western wall, with a small hedge maze and fountain in the middle.

The manor house faces south and is roughly rectangular in shape. The manor has three stories, a basement, and below that a crypt, as well as one square tower. Important locations in the manor are:

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- ◆ **First Floor:** The library, Garland's and Claudette's area, entrances to the cellar and the crypt.
- ◆ **Second Floor:** The ballroom, Suzanne's play area.
- ◆ **Third Floor:** Agnus' bedroom, Gertrude's bedroom, the master bedroom, Isabella's bedroom.

Adventure Summary

This adventure is for 4-6 characters of 5th-7th level.

The adventure begins in Chateaufaux, with the characters meeting the famous monster fighter, George Weathermay. One of George's companions is a young woman named Corin, who is searching the town's birth records. Corin has been researching her ancestry. Recently she has learned that she is a Lockwood and has been searching archives for any traces of relatives. Corin discovers that she is the last known living Lockwood and also learns of the existence of the family estate, which has been lying abandoned for thirty years since the death of Brandon Lockwood. Brandon was the last Lockwood to live at the estate and died without any heirs. Corin is Brandon's niece, and she wants to travel to the estate and claim it as her inheritance. It is her desire to donate any funds recovered from the estate to George Weathermay, to use in his quest to againt evil. George asks the characters to accompany Corin to the estate to see what can be recovered for sale, as he has been called away to help with a werewolf problem in Mordent.

The estate lies in western Darkon. On the road from Rivalis west to Lamordia, a small dirt road leads north. The estate is a half-day's travel down this road.

When the party arrives, the gates of the estate lie open, though the front doors are shut. It should be mid to late afternoon when the heroes first arrive. Three rounds after entering the courtyard, Corin faints dead away and cannot be revived. The next round, Ferdinand, the butler, opens the door. Upon seeing the prone form of Corin, he escorts the group in and leads the characters to a room with a bed to place Corin on. The room he leads them to is Gertrude's.

If the party members question Ferdinand, he will only tell the party the following: he is the family's butler, directions to a specific room in the manor, and that he has work to do.

During the day only Ferdinand is able to materialize. Until sunset the characters can safely explore the manor. Once night settles, at 6 PM, the manor comes "alive," as the ghosts come out. Cortland plays his ghostly tunes on the battlements and the spectral mist rolls in. William appears and chooses as his victim one of those tending to Corin. Those characters on the first floor can hear Garland and Claudette arguing in the washroom. Cornell may be glimpsed from a window, running through the garden. Anyone passing the master bedroom can hear

Catherine screaming within. Those on the second or third floors can hear the sounds of a masquerade ball taking place in the ballroom.

After the characters have killed two of the ghosts or entered the crypt, Angelique becomes aware of their presence and begins to reform herself. She will then stalk the party as they explore the manor using guerrilla tactics to eliminate them.

At 10 o'clock, Corin will appear to awaken. In reality, Victoria is now in control of Corin's body. Victoria tells the characters who she is and the story of her death. She asks them to help her defeat her sister, Angelique.

Victoria tells the characters of a book in the library that magically records the lives of those who live in the estate. The book tells the histories of each of the ghosts as documented in the background section for each, above. Using this book she hopes to find a way of destroying Angelique. The book is written in an ancient language, and can only be read by Victoria or a character with the ancient language proficiency. Victoria asks the characters to retrieve the book, before they attempt anything else.

After reading the book, Victoria learns of William's *Mace of Disruption* and suggests the party use it to destroy Angelique. If the characters defeat Angelique, either using the mace, or through their own means, Victoria immediately leaves Corin's body, and returns to her rest. Corin is disoriented for a couple of minutes but is otherwise unharmed by the experience. As for the remaining ghosts, their fate is up to the DM. They are either destroyed as well or are freed to leave the house and roam the countryside.

Corin Lockwood, hf, B5: AC 6; MV 12; hp 25; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA spells; SD spells; SZ M (5'8"); ML elite (13); AL NG.

S 8 D 16 C 10 I 15 W 12 Ch 15.

Thief abilities: CW 70, DN 40, PP 30, RL 25; Inspire. Identify items 25%.

Spells: (3/1)

Equipment: leather armor, short sword, silver dagger, short bow, 12 arrows.



BLACKBLADE

An Unnatural Born Killer

by Andrew Cermak
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Appearance

Blackblade (his true name is unknown; he goes by this self-given appellation, or by any number of aliases appropriate to his disguises), in his true form, appears much like other cambions. He stands 6'2", with a slender yet strong physique. His skin is a deep black, and is slightly scaled; however, his complexion is much clearer than most cambions, and he has relatively few pockmarks. His ears are sharply pointed, far more so than any elf. His mouth is filled with fangs, but they are very straight and brilliantly white, as opposed to those of most cambions. His lips are usually drawn in a smug grin. He wears a suit of black studded leather, and usually wears a black cloak and boots. With his ability to polymorph, he can appear in virtually any form he wishes, and frequently takes nondescript human forms (he takes female forms as often as male, though he is himself male, the better to confuse his identity). He may change his attire to better suit these forms.

Blackblade

Baron Cambion (Lesser Tanar'ri), Chaotic Evil			
Armor Class	1	Str	19
Movement	15	Dex	20
Level/Hit Dice	6	Con	16
Hit Points	32	Int	18
THACO	15	Wis	13
Morale	16	Cha	21
No. of Attacks	2	XP	7,000
Damage/Attack	By weapon		
Special Attacks	Spells, spell-like abilities		
Special Defenses	Spells, spell-like abilities		
Magic Resistance	30%		

Background

Blackblade is unique among known fiends in that he was taken in by the Mists rather than being summoned or entering through transposition; born to a human female

who had been raped by a disguised tanar'ri, he resided in an unknown Prime Material world and thus was vulnerable to the Mists' entrapments. He was eighteen by human reckoning when taken; that was three years ago.

Blackblade was left in the wilderness to die after his birth due to his monstrosity (which resulted in the death of his mother during the birth), but the villagers who abandoned him had not taken into account the incredible constitution granted by his fiendish heritage. Blackblade survived, and quickly gained the use of his magical abilities; with them he was able to hunt for food and survive the occasionally harsh climate. His isolated childhood understandably left him somewhat detached from other beings, but he was not feral; his tanar'ric heritage granted him a kind of racial memory that enabled him to both speak and understand the basics of interaction (of course, all this was horribly tainted by the fiendish perspective). He supplemented this intrinsic knowledge by stealing books from nearby towns and secretly observing the practices of humanity.

When he had learned all he felt he needed to know, and grown sufficiently proficient in both the use of his magical powers and the weapons he had stolen over the years, he took his revenge on the villagers who had abandoned him to die (an event he, somehow, remembered vividly despite his infancy; it is likely this again is related to his fiendish heritage). In a single evening he slaughtered half of the village's people, and would have finished his grisly work had the Mists not descended and robbed him of the opportunity.

When the mist cleared, Blackblade found himself in completely unfamiliar surroundings (he had been deposited in Borca). He was thoroughly confused, but had long since grown accustomed to adapting to unusual circumstances.

After wandering the Core for a time and gaining some familiarity with the land, he found himself utterly without goal or purpose. Ultimately, he decided to do that which he had proven best at: murder. Blackblade has in a short time become perhaps the most infamous

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assassin in the Land of Mists, though no one truly knows anything about him.

Current Sketch

Blackblade is frustrated that he has been deprived of the opportunity to finish taking his vengeance, but that frustration does not drive him to distraction. Were he to find a portal out of Ravenloft, he would gladly use it, but he is not actively searching for one.

Blackblade has developed numerous contacts among the criminal element of the various Core domains; it is through these contacts that he finds his “jobs.” He prefers assassinations, but is not above taking other jobs if he finds them suitable; in the past he has committed both thefts and kidnappings for pay. He is making a very comfortable living taking care of the “problems” of those who are willing to pay his exorbitant fees. None of his clients have ever been made aware of his true nature.

He has not yet been employed by any darklord, nor has he been employed to eliminate a darklord, a task which may be beyond him at any rate, considering the lords are able to recognize him for what he is regardless of what form he takes (as they can sense the loss of control of their lands in his vicinity). It is likely his lack of contact with darklords will change as his reputation grows; either they will use him as a means of reaching beyond their borders, or they will destroy him as a possible threat.

Personality

Blackblade is an utter sociopath. He does not develop emotional attachments of any kind, and truthfully feels very few emotions at all. He can feel jealousy, spite, pride, boredom and every once and a while anger or hatred, but these are about the limits of his capacity for feeling. He certainly does not feel guilt about the murders he commits. He has no real interest in wealth; assassination for hire is merely a way of passing the time, and working out occasional aggressions while he does so.

Blackblade is utterly contemptuous of humans (and demihumans), seeing them as weak and incompetent. Truth be told, he is also rather envious of them and their capacity for feeling. He channels this contempt and envy into his work.

Blackblade always leaves a small dagger coated in weapon black on the bodies of those he kills, unless specifically instructed to keep the death unobtrusive; he is not fanatical about his calling card, he merely finds it amusing.

Combat

Except where noted, Blackblade has the usual combat abilities of a baron cambion.

Blackblade wears a suit of studded leather, and usually wields a short sword; he finds the short sword to be the perfect balance of concealability and combat effectiveness. He typically coats the blade in weapon black (see the *Complete Thieves' Handbook*); he has been known to mix the black with various poisons, but does so infrequently, preferring to directly cause his victims' deaths. He may occasionally use other weapons, such as crossbows and blowguns, if he thinks them necessary; he can be considered to be equally proficient with all weapons.

Blackblade also has the spell abilities of a 6th level wizard; the DM should choose appropriate spells for his spell book. Additionally, as a chaotic fiend in Ravenloft, he has the ability to cast up to four levels of 1st and 2nd level spells from the school of Invocation/Evocation; he uses this power to supplement his own magic.

Blackblade, like all cambions, has several thief abilities: climb walls 95%, hide in shadows 90% and move silently 90% (note that these abilities are higher than those of most cambions). These abilities are never reduced by armor. Unlike most cambions, he has also developed a few additional thieving skills: Detect Noise 60%, Pick Locks 70%. Blackblade's reality wrinkle is ten feet in diameter (note that, as with all reality wrinkles, it enables him to freely cross domain borders in pursuit of a victim, regardless of closures). He has no land-based powers, and his corruption index is 0. This may change in the future as he becomes more familiar with the demiplane.

Adventure Ideas

Blackblade is one of the few fiends a party might encounter and actually have a fair chance of defeating. He is nowhere near the combat monster most other fiends are (though he is still an incredibly dangerous opponent). Also, using him is fairly uncomplicated, compared to some of the other fiends.

The most obvious way to use Blackblade is to send him against the party. If the characters foil the schemes of any powerful or influential NPC that NPC may very well send Blackblade against the party as punishment. Blackblade will attempt to pick the characters off one at a time over a series of nights; surviving his assassination attempts will be no small feat.



MYNILAR SANNOM

A New Face in the Vallaki Bookshop

by Andrew Hackard
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Biography

Mynilar Sannom was raised to appreciate the finer things in life; wine, women, and song. Unfortunately, he's allergic to wine. Fortunately, he can use his song to get the women without it. He is a new addition to the Vallaki cell of the Kargatane, and frankly isn't quite sure what to make of his compatriots as yet.

Appearance

Mynilar has a habit, unusual for Barovians, of going around shirtless. The other Kargatane are not especially pleased at this aberrant behavior, especially as it displays his tattoos and body piercings. It was this habit that convinced Kazandra to send him off to Vallaki—that and his depressing poetry.

Mynilar Sannom

8th-level Human Artiste, Neutral Evil

Armor Class	10	Str	12
Movement	12	Dex	16
Level/Hit Dice	8	Con	14
Hit Points	34	Int	13
THACO	17	Wis	12
Morale	15	Cha	16
No. of Attacks	1		
Damage/Attack	By weapon		
Special Attacks	Spells		
Special Defenses	Spells		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

Background

Mynilar was born to wealthy parents in a small town on the Vuchar River in Darkon. His parents never really seemed to grasp that their great wealth didn't matter to the farmers in their town, and as a result Mynilar suffered great indignities at the hands of the local children. Shortly after he began adolescence, in fact, several of the

older children tied him down one night and tattooed an obscenity on his chest. To their astonishment, Mynilar loved it, and they quickly accepted him as part of the group.

Early one fall, Mynilar was invited to a harvest festival by the other youths. There, he had his first taste of wheat beer—and promptly lost his dinner into a hayrack occupied by a young lady and her beau. This did not improve his status. In fact, Mynilar discovered that he was violently allergic to alcohol of any sort, and avoids cocktail parties and such. Ironically, he has earned a reputation for shrewdness and clarity of thought because of this.

Eventually, he grew up and moved to Martira Bay, where he mingled with the other young men and ladies of high society. Mynilar soon realized, though, that they considered him an outsider, and he took to writing extremely depressing sonnets to soothe his tortured soul. Once, he showed one of these sonnets to a comely young lass, who became suddenly pliant to his will. Mynilar saw the possibilities inherent in his poetry, and has been honing his craft ever since. Recently, he attempted to win over a young pupil of Lady Kazandra; as a result, he was quickly inducted into the Kargatane and charged with finding out the truth about the activities of the Vallaki cell. So far, he seems quite perplexed by his fellow Kargatane, who are running a bookshop but have no idea what they are doing. They don't have anywhere near a representative sample of the major poets of the demiplane, for Azalin's sake...

Personality

You might think that a lifetime of ostracism and solitude would make Mynilar a bitter man. Yup. Fortunately (from some twisted point of view), this isolation has fueled his poetry, and Mynilar has become quite the accomplished poet. Further, he has continued his exploration of the sensual pleasures of self-mutilation, and now sports several tattoos and at least three pierced body parts. He has a habit of going shirtless to display

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his piercings and tattoos, which unsettles the natives and the Kargatane alike. Mynilar is fine with that.

He still considers himself a member of the upper class, despite having been disowned by his parents and shunned by the nobility of Martira Bay, and thoroughly resents having been thrust into such a hive of commonness as Vallaki. Further, he refuses to have anything to do with the day-to-day operation of the bookshop, counting his ever-increasing poetic output as his contribution to the business.

Combat

Mynilar is not an impressive fighter, and normally chooses to use a wheellock pistol when forced into combat. Assuming he has time, however, Mynilar much prefers to indulge his talent and recite some of his more somber sonnets, casting spells in the process. He may cast from the schools of enchantment/charm, abjuration, conjuration/summoning, and divination, and normally has the following spells (poems) memorized:

First Level: *charm person, friends, comprehend languages*

Second Level: *forget, ESP, glitterdust*

Third Level: *suggestion*

Mynilar is not above using his spells to woo a young lass into his bed, or to coerce someone else into doing a job for him. He has been distressed by the singular lack of success his poetry has had on his fellow Kargatane, who have noticed his lack of enthusiasm for his work and seem rather put out by it.

As an artiste, Mynilar has several roguish talents. He has let them fall into disuse, however, and so his scores are lower than might be expected. He may climb walls with a 25% chance of success, pick pockets (often slipping a love note or small trinket into a lady's bag) at 60% chance of success, detect noise at 35% chance, and read languages at 80%. Unlike many artistes, Mynilar has made a special study of languages for his poetry, and so he has a 40% chance of reading any language found in the Core, even those unknown in Necropolis. He still cannot read a language that is not native to the Core, however. Mynilar can also influence the reactions of others, and usually chooses to do so negatively (as fits his general demeanor). Presumably, he could also bolster his allies' spirits, but as Mynilar is not a particularly courageous man himself, this is not an ability he has ever seen fit to use.

The artiste's ability to know a little of everything has been modified in Mynilar. He knows a great deal of literary trivia, and has the usual chance to know any piece of information relating to the literature of the Core.

He also has the same chance to know bits of information which have ties to this literature; he might know an obscure bit of Barovian history, for instance, because it is discussed in one of Van Richten's journals. However, Mynilar has long since given up any study of non-literary topics, and has no chance to know any trivia about them.

Mynilar has used his counter magic ability before, but prefers not to do so, as the stress of improvising verse takes quite a toll on him and he must rest for a turn after each such attempt, successful or not. Further, Mynilar slips into a depression, as he feels that his improvised verse is not up to his usual standards; this causes a -1 reaction penalty for the next day, until he snaps out of his funk. (Not that it's easy to tell.) Mynilar also receives the +1 bonus to horror checks and -1 penalty to madness checks common to all artistes.

Current Activities

Mynilar is taking his injunction to find out the truth about his fellow Kargatane quite seriously, and has been sending a lengthy missive to Kazandra with every courier heading for Necropolis. As a result, he spends much of his time skulking around the back room of the bookshop, poking into the shelves and ledgers and making a general nuisance of himself. When confronted, he always claims that he is doing research for his great epic poem, but as yet no sign of this work has made itself apparent.

✖

SIR BARTHOLOMEW NYLREAVE

A Kargat of Disquieting Ancestry

by Christopher Dale Nichols
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Biography

Born of a corrupt line of Darkonian nobles, Sir Bartholomew Nylreave serves as Lady Kazandra's chief lieutenant. With his networks of ghoulish spies, Nylreave gives a new twist to the phrase "underground intelligence." But, for all his influence, Nylreave can not harm the foes he hates the most, a certain cell of exceptionally inept Kargatane in Barovia.

source of Nylreave's unattractive quality is subtle—the feeling that his muscles move in ways they should not, the subtle grayness of his skin-tone, the slight misshapeness of his skull, the hulking, crouched posture of his walk, the length of his nails, the look of his eyes and teeth when he grins. Each factor adds up to a whole which many are uncomfortable around. Nylreave keeps himself well groomed, immaculately clean, dressed in tasteful but austere suits worthy of a high-ranking business man.

Sir Bartholomew Nylreave

9th-level Human-Ghoul Hybrid Fighter, Lawful Evil

Armor Class	6	Str	18
Movement	14	Dex	18
Level/Hit Dice	9	Con	17
Hit Points	79	Int	14
THACO	11	Wis	10
Morale	15	Cha	7
No. of Attacks	1	XP	2,000
Damage/Attack	1d4 or By weapon		
Special Attacks	Nil		
Special Defenses	Nil		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

Appearance

Bartholomew Nylreave is a huge man, as much as he can be called a man. Standing nearly seven feet tall, Nylreave is broad of shoulder, every inch of him bulging with muscles, capable of great feats of near super-human strength and dexterity. Unfortunately for Bartholomew, he is in some bizarre way physically unattractive. The

Background

Bartholomew comes from the Nylreave family, a noble family headed by the Baron of Nylreave. The family is sprawling, having existed and grown since the domain of Darkon first appeared. The lands northeast of the Lake of Lost Dreams in the Mistlands of Necropolis are held by the house of Nylreave, and the loathsomeness that lurks beneath the hills of this region belongs to the Nylreaves as well. To survive as long as they have, the Nylreaves have had to bind themselves to the will of Azalin, often serving a favored members of the Kargat. But, their loyalty to Azalin was the least of their crimes in the name of survival, and since the loss of Azalin, the dark secret of the Nylreaves has grown.

The secret of the Nylreaves is that beneath the Nylreave lands, in their cemeteries and charnel houses, a large congregation of ghouls, ghosts, and similar creatures reside. The Nylreaves have made dark pacts with these sub-human undead things, through the intervention of powers of the utmost darkness, binding the two groups in mind, soul and body. Indeed, over the centuries, the unholy forces of the universe have caused these two groups to become thoroughly mingled. The results of this unholy communion occasionally results in

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something greater than both, but typically are rather lesser.

Into this vile background, Bartholomew Nylreave was born in 719. Son of a ghoul and a Kargat mother, Bartholomew was raised in the cellars of the Nylreave manor until the age of ten. In his tenth year, a selection of Kargat leaders paid a visit to the Nylreaves, seeking new recruits for the Kargat. Among these ranking visitors was Lady Kazandra, the vampiric leader of the Kargatane. While touring the Nylreave lands, Kazandra discovered young Bartholomew. In him she saw a potential servant, whom she could mold into her willing tool.

So, when Kazandra left the Nylreave lands, Bartholomew Nylreave left with her. Over the next eight years, Kazandra sponsored him among her confederates in the secret societies of Azalin's political machine and in the educational institutions of Il Aluk and Martira Bay. Growing in position, Nylreave entered the ranks of the Kargat, and in 734 was knighted for his service to king and country. The day he was knighted, Lady Kazandra offered Bartholomew the position she had been training him for—that of her chief lieutenant. Already hopelessly enamored with Kazandra, Bartholomew readily accepted. Since then, Nylreave has loyally served as Lady Kazandra's right hand man. For all the time he served her, Nylreave has been content—save for the thorn in his side that is the Vallaki cell of the Kargatane.

Personality

At his core, Nylreave is corrupt, a cauldron of perverse desires, built on foundations of evil centuries old. However, Kazandra has trained him to cover his mind in a veneer of normalcy, seeming to be a up-standing Necropolitan noble most of the time. Of all the Kargat, Bartholomew is one of the most able to act normally in public in polite society. Due to this, Bartholomew is one of the most liked nobles with the citizens of Martira Bay...not that that's saying much. His public image is one of seriousness coupled with fairness, an impression that brings requests of intercession in matters of government from many quarters, from middle-class families and merchants. Nylreave grants those that hold an advantage for the Kargat and his mistress, favors to be called in later. To bolster his image as someone people can approach, Nylreave almost always insists that that people not use his title when addressing him, save for the Kargatane, whom he insists must call him nothing else. Unfortunately, other members of the Kargat, save a few close to Kazandra, have little tolerance or respect for Bartholomew, viewing him more as an obstacle for their plans to circumvent than anything else. Nylreave doesn't particularly mind this. After all, the enemy you ignore is the enemy that can empty your vaults all the easier...

Beyond the bickering of the Kargat, Nylreave manages many details of the Kargatane. He is fanatically loyal to Kazandra, and devotes much effort to watching the Kargatane for any signs of disloyalty. In fact, Bartholomew holds something akin to unrequited love for Kazandra, although he still remains aware of how futile that feeling is. Still, he can not help but harbor this feeling, and, if no one is looking, will take a few moments to reflect on the magic cameo granted to him by his mistress, a cameo which he always carries in his suit's breast pocket.

Beyond the political realm, Nylreave enjoys physical activity and will often take long walks in the countryside around Martira Bay. Further, he is a collector of weapons, having a goodly collection from the Core and many Islands of Terror. Nylreave has studied many of the cultures associated with his collection, and keeps a small number of tasteful items from foreign cultures in his home. Finally, because of his ghoulish heritage, Bartholomew must consume human flesh at least once a week, lest he become dangerously ill. Thus, his larder is always stocked with a large supply of unwholesome meat.

Combat

In combat, Bartholomew Nylreave wields whatever he can lay hands on, but always keeps a short sword on hand for combat situations. However, if given a choice, Nylreave enjoys using exotic weapons, enjoying the style of carnage they create. He is also a decent shot with smokepowder weapons, owning a wheellock belt pistol. Given the unnatural physical abilities given to him by his tainted genes, Bartholomew's attacks are to be greatly feared.

Even without a weapon, Nylreave is a dangerous opponent. His ghoul-tainted physiology has given him claw-like nails, which do 1d4 damage per strike. Similarly, he can bite for 1d6 damage with his pointed, serrated teeth. Further, due to his ghoulish heritage, he can produce a gibbering scream which summons 1d6 ghouls within 1d100 minutes.

Current Sketch

Currently, Bartholomew serves Lady Kazandra to the best of his considerable ability, managing many plots in various cells of the Kargatane, and gathering information from the underground networks of the ghouls. Further, he often attends functions in Lady Kazandra's place, passing information to Kazandra via a magic cameo crafted in her image. In addition, Nylreave has connections through his family with the many clans of ghouls scattered throughout the Core. Through networks

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of ghoul informers, Nylreave can find out about a wide variety of secret dealings. While a wonderful system for relaying news of necromancy, grave-robbery, and interesting murders, the ghoul couriers tend to ignore important news that doesn't affect them. Still, the network Nylreave controls has served the Kargat well, and serves well in delivering messages and packages, provided that both the sender and receiver supply the ghouls with a sizable payment of meat.

In Martira Bay, Nylreave owns a large town-house in a fashionable section of town. Spartan and clean, this is where he conducts most of his duties. Here, is also where he has collected a number of files on the members of the Vallaki Kargatane. Nylreave hates each one with a passion, considering each a personal enemy. Able to summon a list of grievances against these Kargatane in an instant, Nylreave has sought to personally ensure their deaths. While the Vallaki Kargatane are universally despised by their masters, the Kargat has been content to simply give them enough rope to hang themselves and ignore them. Nylreave, however, can not leave them be. His hatred demands that the Vallaki cell be ground into the dust, utterly defeated, and specifically by his hand. He has taken the rather counter-productive route of stymieing the Vallaki Kargatane's every effort to ship the collected items from their assignment back to Necropolis, both depriving the Kargat of possible resources and leaving useful materials in his enemies' hands. Somehow, in spite of all his efforts, the Vallaki Kargatane haven't taken a scratch.



THEOKOS

An Agent of Deception in the Land of the Deceived

by Andrew Cermak
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Biography

Despite their incredible power and pervasive influence, the darklords of Ravenloft do not pull all of the strings that crisscross their domains. In fact, there are a few beings of such power and evil that they can make even a darklord dance like a marionette.

Appearance

In his true form, Theokos is nightmarish. He is a twelve foot tall insectoid monstrosity. However, he almost never appears in this form. Like all gelugons, Theokos can polymorph self at will. His usual form is that of a wizened old man, with a hawkish nose and deep-set eyes that seem to glitter in the light. The baldness of his head is more than compensated by the length of his gray beard, which reaches to his stomach. Despite his obvious age and apparent infirmity, he carries himself boldly and speaks with strength and authority.

Theokos

Gelugon (Greater Baatezu), Lawful Evil

Armor Class	-3	Str	18/76
Movement	15	Dex	16
Level/Hit Dice	11	Con	18
Hit Points	63	Int	18
THACO	9	Wis	21
Morale	15	Cha	15
No. of Attacks	4	XP	21,000
Damage/Attack	1d4+4/1d4+4/2d4+4/3d4+4 or by weapon +4		
Special Attacks	Tail freeze, Fear, Spell-like abilities		
Special Defenses	Regeneration, +2 weapons to hit, Spell-like abilities		
Magic Resistance	50%		

Background

Elena staggered out of the heavy mists, disoriented but still tensed with the readiness of a trained warrior. She blinked the last lingering threads of fog from her eyes and gazed up at the monumental castle that loomed before her. She firmed her two-handed grip on her mighty sword Caitlin and walked purposefully forward, prepared to bring the holy wrath of Belenus upon whatever heathens lay within. The mists that Belenus sent never failed to lead her to pits of iniquity and immorality, but up until now they had always been mere villages. This was a mighty fortress, and whoever ruled from within must certainly be the black well from which all the evil of these lands had sprung.

Upon reaching the mammoth gateway, she scornfully pounded the hilt of her great sword against the wood, so confident in the righteousness of her cause and the power of her faith that she felt no need to disguise her presence. As the last echo of her knocking faded, she prepared herself to meet whatever evil poured from within.

The huge doors creaked and slowly opened inward, and a single shape appeared out of the blackness within. Elena hefted Caitlin and prepared to greet her destiny... and then the shape spoke.

“Ah, so Milady has returned.”

Elena froze in momentary surprise, then lunged forward with her hand. Her gauntleted fingers closed around the shadowed figure’s heavy robe and pulled the figure out into the light. She looked down at the small, wizened man she now held roughly before her.

“Is something not to your satisfaction, Milady?” The old man’s voice was much stronger than his body, even draped as it was in servitude, and he spoke with a slight, unidentifiable accent.

“Who are you?” she demanded. “How do you know me?”

“My name is Theokos. I know you, Milady, because this is your castle and I am your servant.” He gently pulled himself from her grasp. “If you would please enter that you may enjoy a proper reception, I’m certain

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all your questions can be answered. For now, please simply accept and acknowledge the hand and will of holy Belenus in this, Lady Faith-hold.”

Recognition tugged at the back of Elena’s mind. She knew that the old man spoke truth; this was her castle and he was her servant. Belenus had seen fit to reward her faith. Tears gently fell down her cheeks as she strode inside her new home.

Theokos stepped inside behind her and shut the massive gates with an ease that belied his shriveled body. A malicious grin spread across his face as he watched Elena walk purposefully into the shadows.

Current Sketch

Theokos is a true enigma, even more so than most of Ravenloft fiends. His true origins are a mystery. Is he a traveler from the Outer Planes? A construct of the Mists? There is no way to know, and ultimately it does not matter. What does matter is that Theokos is a powerful source of evil on par with the fanatic he serves.

Theokos acts as Elena’s most trusted servant and advisor. He plays the part of the wise old father figure, and Elena trusts him completely. Although he feigns love and devotion to Elena, he truly feels little more toward her than mild contempt. This is insufficient for Elena to detect him as “evil,” so she believes her trust well-founded. She is completely unaware of his true, fiendish nature.

Theokos also acts as the castle’s chaplain, and as its chief torturer. He makes good use of both positions. His twists and turns the teachings of Belenus freely in order to manipulate Elena and drive her to greater and greater acts of evil, and the fiendish ministrations he uses on prisoners never fail to result in confession and contrition. He has taught Elena many of his “techniques,” the better to further her evil.

Theokos is well known to the people of Nidalia, and their feelings toward him are rather conflicted. They respect and admire him for his obviously high estimation in the eyes of both Belenus and Lady Faith-hold, but his persecution of supposed heretics is also well known and the cause of no small amount of paranoid fear. Still, the people know that Elena’s will backs his words and they do not hesitate to aid him or do as he asks in any situation.

Does Theokos have free will and his own agenda, or is he a soulless tool of the dark powers? The truth behind Theokos is up to the DM to decide. If he does have his own agenda, then it is possible that he is merely stringing Elena along until he can make a power play of his own. Or perhaps he simply enjoys being an element in the downfall of the former paladin.

Personality

When encountered in his disguised form, Theokos seems wise and paternalistic. He is unfailingly pious and proudly spreads the holy word of Belenus (though any true priest of Belenus, or any good Celtic god, would be shocked by how subtly twisted Theokos’ doctrine is). However, this masks an inquisitor’s mentality. Theokos is quick to root out any “heretics” (those who preach or behave in a manner consistent with the true teachings of Belenus); not only does he find such behavior personally distasteful, but he also does not want Elena to realize how far her beliefs have drifted from what they once were through exposure to such individuals. He is not certain that she is yet irredeemable, and he does not believe in taking chances.

Combat

In the unlikely event that Theokos is forced into combat, his actions depend on whether there are any witnesses present whom he does not wish to know his true nature and whom he cannot simply kill. If there are, he will chant a “prayer to Belenus” for deliverance and teleport without error to safety. If he can act with impunity, he will reveal his true form and fight with unrepressed savagery. He has the normal combat abilities of a gelugon. He has no land-based powers; in fact, he has no reality wrinkle at all, perhaps giving credence to the idea that he is merely a tool of the Dark Powers.

Theokos is unusual in that he can cast clerical spells, as if he were an 11th level druid, with the addition of Major access to the Necromancy sphere. His spells mimic those of priests of Belenus, though they certainly are not granted by that deity.

Adventure Ideas

Any adventurers in Nidalia might encounter Theokos. Though he is found most often within Castle Faith-hold, he occasionally sees fit to travel the domain and personally deliver Elena’s decrees and to search for malcontents. If he judges the PCs to be potential troublemakers, or if he feels he might have some use for them, they may find themselves forced to accompany him to Faith-hold.

Also, any adventurers who attempt to cross Nidalia’s closed borders may very well find themselves delivered right to Theokos. This is most definitely not an enviable situation in which to find oneself.

Theokos could decide to use the players as pawns in whatever game it is he is playing. If Theokos desires to take power in Nidalia, he may decide it is best to use a third-party (such as the characters) to eliminate Elena, rather than doing it himself and risk losing support from the populace. Drawing the characters in would be no harder than telling them the truth about Elena and the crimes she has committed. Or, conversely, the players might somehow discover Theokos’ true nature, and force the gelugon to attempt their elimination before they can take the information to Elena. ☠

THE RETURN OF URDOGEN

Drowned But Not Forgotten

by Jon "Kitsune" Stacey
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With thanks to Curtis Scott, who introduced the long-forgotten Urdogen "the Red" in *Pirates of the Fallen Stars*.

The Land

Urdogen's domain consists only of his ship, the *Raging Tears*. It is a floating pocket domain capable of appearing within any sea in Ravenloft, and on occasion even outside the boundaries of the Demiplane of Dread.

The *Raging Tears* is a spectral caravel. It runs seventy feet long and twenty feet wide with multilevel castles fore and aft and three masts. The wood of the ship appears rotted and water-logged. Its torn sails flutter as if blown by the wind even if there is not a breeze in the air. The ship is overgrown with seaweed and barnacles, giving the appearance it as been under the sea for a long time. The *Raging Tears* gives off a faint, sickly green glow and is semitransparent.

Cultural Level

Medieval.

The Folk

The only inhabitants of the *Raging Tears* are Urdogen's crew of forty spectres. When not in combat, they act out the day-to-day duties required on a ship, although on the ghostly *Raging Tears*, such activities are largely unnecessary. They are very well trained sailors (considered "crack" sailors if using *Pirates of the Fallen Stars*, or "Old Salts" if using *Of Ships and the Sea*).

The Law

As captain of the *Raging Tears*, Urdogen "the Red" is the master spectre of his crew of spectres, as described in the MONSTROUS MANUAL. As a result of their ties to the ship and Urdogen, all members of the crew are unable to even think of mutiny.

Native Player Characters

There are no native player characters from the *Raging Tears*.

Encounters

The only encounters characters on board the *Raging Tears* will have is a fight with the spectre crew or Urdogen himself immediately upon boarding.

Further Reading

Urdogen was introduced in the FORGOTTEN REALMS accessory *Pirates of the Fallen Stars*. Rules for ships and nautical combat can be found in the accessory *Of Ships and the Sea*.

Demilord of the *Raging Tears*

Urdogen "the Red"

Spectre, Lawful Evil

Armor Class	2	Str	—
Movement	15 Ft 30 (B)	Dex	—
Level/Hit Dice	7+3	Con	—
Hit Points	59	Int	13
THACO	13	Wis	9
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	9
Damage/Attack	1d8		
Special Attacks	Energy drain		
Special Defenses	Undead immunities, requires +1 or better weapon to hit		
Magic Resistance	Undead immunities		

In his day, Urdogen "the Red" was a much-feared pirate lord on Abeir-Toril's Inner Sea, also known as the Sea of Fallen Stars. When the nations of the Inner Sea

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united and then defeated his fleet of pirate ships, Urdogen fled—directly into the Mists of Ravenloft.

In life, Urdogen was a huge, powerful man with flaming red hair and beard. He was well-known for his viciousness and showed no mercy to anyone, be they foe or innocent.

Now in Ravenloft, Urdogen is a spectre. He appears as he did in life: flame-red hair, pirate clothing, and a savage scowl on his face. He appears semitransparent.

His ship, the *Raging Tears*, also appears semitransparent and is shrouded in an unearthly green glow. The *Raging Tears* is fully corporeal, however. The ship always sails as if in a strong favorable wind no matter the true wind direction or speed.

Background

In the years after the death of the pirate lord Immurk, the pirates of the Inner Sea squabbled amongst themselves. Out of this infighting, Urdogen “the Red” came to power. A man well known for his viciousness, he was known to cut off the ears, nose and lips of his captives, then force them to eat those severed body parts. His victims were then released as living examples of Urdogen’s wrath.

By 1204 Dale Reckoning, Urdogen dominated most of the pirates of the Inner Sea and began plundering coastal villages and ships at an alarming rate. In 1209 DR, the nations of Cormyr, Sembia, Impiltur, and the Vilhon Reach formed a coalition against the pirate lord Urdogen and sent a fleet of 200 ships to end the pirate threat in the Inner Sea.

Urdogen would not go without a fight, however. Before the fleets from the different nations could meet, he sailed with ninety ships and attacked the Sembian fleet, which was the smallest with only fifty ships. Only fifteen Sembian ships survived, but they would be able to stall the pirates until the rest of the fleets arrived, cutting off the escape route for Urdogen’s pirates. The 160 ships of the alliance made short work of the remaining pirates.

Faced with defeat, Urdogen fled in the *Raging Tears*. However, his life of piracy had attracted the attention of the dark powers of Ravenloft. As a Cormyrean ship closed in to ram Urdogen’s ship, a thick mist rose up from the sea around the *Raging Tears*. The ramming vessel sailed though the bank of fog without hitting anything, much to the surprise of the Cormyrean captain.

Urdogen found himself sailing though a sea completely shrouded by mist. Within minutes of the mists rising, the *Raging Tears* struck a hidden reef. The ship sank quickly, with Urdogen swearing vengeance against the nations that defeated him.

As the sun set that night, the *Raging Tears* surged out of the depths in a cold, fog-shrouded sea—the Sea of

Sorrows. The *Raging Tears* was now a ghost ship and the domain of Urdogen, now a spectre.

Current Sketch

The great and feared pirate Urdogen is now a minor demilord, and a weak one when compared to other domain lords. His ghost ship is only one of several sailing the seas of Ravenloft.

Urdogen desperately wants to reclaim the status he had as pirate lord on the Inner Sea, but the dark powers thwart his every attempt. He had built his reputation by systematically pillaging village after village on the coast of the Inner Sea. In Ravenloft, however, he is cursed never to come within sight of land, preventing him from raiding the coastal settlements. This also leaves him with few ships to plunder, as only the bravest of captains sail beyond sight of the coast. He has no special ability to locate ships and must rely on luck and the whim of the dark powers. On occasion, Urdogen will allow a few sailors on a ship he catches to live with instructions to return to port and spread the warning that Urdogen “the Red” once again rules the seas. As part of Urdogen’s curse, those sailors will have forgotten Urdogen’s name by the time they dock, and warnings from nameless pirates arouses more laughter than fear.

The *Raging Tears* can appear in any sea or ocean domain in Ravenloft, the most prominent being the Sea of Sorrows, the Nocturnal Sea and Saragossa. In the moments after sunset in an area out of sight of land, the *Raging Tears* will surge out of water, bow first, like some great leviathan, then crash down into the surf. The *Raging Tears* reforms with no damage and with every member of the crew, no matter how badly damaged or how many of the crew were destroyed the night before. Urdogen will give chase to any ship he spots immediately after appearing. If no ship is visible, he will set off in a random direction searching for one.

Whether he is successful or not, in the minutes before dawn the *Raging Tears* begins to sink quickly, as if a large hole had been punched in its hull. (And indeed there is: a remnant of the original *Raging Tears* having run aground on a coral reef.) The last of the *Raging Tears* will have disappeared beneath the waves at the moment the sun appears on the horizon. Divers searching beneath the waves for the *Raging Tears* will find the ship has completely vanished.

During moonless nights on the world of Toril, when the Inner Sea is shrouded in fog, the dark powers allow Urdogen to pass beyond the misty borders of Ravenloft and once again spread terror on the Sea of Fallen Stars. No ship is safe when he returns to have his vengeance—he pursues every living soul he finds. But Urdogen remains connected to the Demiplane of Dread during his

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forays into Toril, and as dawn nears, his ship is once again pulled beneath the waves and back into Ravenloft.

The ghostly *Raging Tears* is not the real ship but simply an apparition. The real *Raging Tears* lies in a coral reef at the bottom of the Sea of Sorrows. Although heavily damaged, it is remarkably well preserved. In fact, it appears nearly identical to the apparition that sails the seas of Ravenloft. During the daylight hours, the domain returns to inhabit the shipwreck. The essences of Urdogen and his crew are present, but dispersed in the sea water around the shipwreck, unable to materialize or affect the environment around them.

Those wishing to completely end the terror of Urdogen have no easy task. The remains of the *Raging Tears* must be brought up from the depths of the Sea of Sorrows and pulled upon dry land to separate it from the sea—not so simple as the shipwreck lies many hundreds of miles from any land. The ship must then be burned in a funeral pyre, reducing every bit of its wood to ash. As the fire burns, Urdogen’s voice can be heard raging against those who have dealt him his second defeat.

Closing the Borders

When Urdogen wishes to close the borders of his domain, the waters around his ship become rough and shark-infested. Those brave enough to jump overboard are quickly devoured. Those attempting to fly to safety slowly sink into the water.

Combat

Urdogen avoids entering combat himself, letting his crew of forty spectres deal with intruders. As a master spectre, they have no choice but to obey him. If forced into combat, Urdogen has all the powers, immunities and vulnerabilities as described in the “spectre” entry in the *MONSTROUS MANUAL*. However, a *raise dead* spell cast on Urdogen will have no effect on him. *Raise dead* will destroy one of his crew, but the spectre will have reformed at the next sunset when the *Raging Tears* surges out of the water once again. Although Urdogen cannot leave his ship, his crew can freely board other ships. Should Urdogen be defeated in combat, the *Raging Tears* will start sinking as the captain’s form dissipates. He will reappear the next night as his ship once again rises from the depths.

Although it is a ghost ship, the *Raging Tears* is fully corporeal and can be damaged in a battle. However, to damage the spectral caravel, spells or enchantments of at least +1 (on a ram, etc.) must be employed. In the unlikely event that the *Raging Tears* is defeated, it sinks quickly, and the domain returns to the shipwreck of the original *Raging Tears*. The next night, however, the

Raging Tears once again rises from the depths with all damage gone and Urdogen hunting those who defeated him.

The spectral *Raging Tears* has been sunk only once, a result of an encounter with Captain Pieter van Riese, darklord of the Sea of Sorrows, who mocked Urdogen as the *Raging Tears* sank. Urdogen holds a special hatred for the more powerful ghost, but knows he is far too weak to defeat the darklord.

Although a caravel is not designed for ramming, Urdogen often steers the *Raging Tears* into the ship he is attacking. The *Raging Tears* takes no damage from the mundane collision, but the other ship is affected as if *warp wood* (1d4 points of hull or crippling damage) was cast upon it at the point of impact. This effect occurs even under a light impact between the *Raging Tears* and the target ship. Because of this, Urdogen will steer his ship into close proximity with the other ship so the wave action rocks the two ships against each other. (One contact per round until the captain of the attacked ship takes evasive action.)

When pursuing a ship, Urdogen can cause his ship to fly. The *Raging Tears* will crash through the waves, bobbing up and down as it sails after the fleeing vessel. In a spray of sea water as it crashes through one final wave, the *Raging Tears* will be launched into the air, flying about ten feet above the surface of the ocean. No matter what speed the fleeing vessel is sailing at, the *Raging Tears* catches it within five minutes. Once he catches up to the vessel, the *Raging Tears* will splash down immediately before colliding with the other ship, crippling it with the *warp wood* ability.

A terrible curse awaits ships that escape Urdogen’s wrath. The spirits of any sailors killed during the encounter with Urdogen return to haunt their former ship as bowlyns. The bowlyns blame the survivors for allowing them to die and desire to kill the rest of the crew in revenge, thus finishing what Urdogen started.



ROMAGNA

Where Love Springs Eternal

by Nathan E. Irving
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The Land

Romagna is a small, pastoral domain approximately 30 miles in diameter. The Talis River runs from the northwestern edge to the southeast, scribing a semi-circular arc that roughly follows the domain border. The land to the west of the river is low, wet forestland; that to the east of the Talis is higher, and most has been cleared as farmland and pastureland for the two villages and multiple steadings of Romagna. A small oak forest flourishes in the northeastern corner of the domain.

Romagna enjoys a mild climate, with a warm summer, mild winter, and spring and autumn marked by copious rainfall. The farmers generally grow more food than they can consume (in years past, Romagna supported a much greater area than it does now), and have built up a healthy reserve over the years.

Romagna is a much safer domain than many others are. The militia and guard keep the settled area of the land clear of most dangers, but do not venture into the swampy forests to the south and west, areas that may in time attract less civilized creatures like lycanthropes. The Baron often hunts in the oak forest to the northeast, and the most dangerous creatures here are the few wild boars.

The village of Laines sits a few miles from the southeastern border, astride the Romagna Road. Travelers venturing into the Mists via the road here most often arrive in the domain of Nova Vaasa. Travelers arriving in Romagna likewise arrive here.

The second village, Fer, is closely associated with Castle Romagna and is located in the northwestern portion of the domain, twenty-three miles from Laines by the Romagna Road. The Groaning Ox, a well-kept roadhouse, sits mid-way between the two. Fer is slightly smaller than Laines and more isolated.

Cultural Level

Chivalric. Characters can find almost any general-purpose or agricultural equipment appropriate to a chivalric period, but other items are at the discretion of

the Dungeon Master. Romagna has only one smith capable of constructing weapons or armor, and he lives at the castle with his two apprentices.

The Folk

The people of Romagna are human, and have little experience with demihumans. Unless informed otherwise, most of the folk will believe demihumans to be deformed humans. They have dark hair with brown or blue eyes, tanned skin, and a reserved manner discarded only for extraordinary occasions. They have discovered over the years that visible shows of affection can sometimes cause any one of them to fly into a murderous rage.

Nearly all of Romagna's inhabitants are serfs, bound to the land of their lord, Baron Etain. Since this encompasses the entire domain of Romagna, most have no interest in going anywhere else. They are skilled farmers and shepherds, and generally contented with their lot—compared to other places, they have it very well, since Baron Etain is a fair ruler and few monsters exist in Romagna to torment them.

The people of Romagna grow and age normally, with two exceptions. Each year, a week before the Spring Festival at the equinox, the lives of Baron Etain and his bride Fialle “reset.” Suddenly, Fialle is just arriving in Romagna for her wedding, and Etain is the eager groom. The week until the wedding is filled with feasts and celebrations capped off by a non-stop, three-day revelry beginning on the wedding day. Then life resumes its normal course, and Etain and Fialle conceive an heir after six months. Then, a week before their anniversary, the clock resets once more.

This unusual condition is part of the darklord's curse. To the natives, each wedding is the first one, and the events of the past year are made to fit their baron's unmarried status (Fialle's role in the events of the past year are taken over by Etain's younger sister or his aged mother in the minds of the Romagnians). Only foreigners are aware of this peculiar loop, and few that stay for the celebration survive it (and the attentions of

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Serenissa, who is driven to jealousy and envy at this time every year).

The Law

Lord Etain and his bride are the law in Romagna, served by the Castle Guard and the Romagna Militia. Baron Etain rules firmly but fairly. He allows the villages to conduct their own affairs for the most part, involving himself only in matters of high justice (involving capitol crimes such as murder or arson), and allowing his magistrates to settle the simpler disputes of the domain.

Native Player Characters

Characters from Romagna may be of any class, though the generally peaceful and agricultural nature of the land makes highly sophisticated livelihoods unlikely. Natives of Romagna suffer a 1-point penalty to saves vs spell and effects that influence or control emotions, due to their long exposure to Serenissa's powers.

Personalities of Note

Baron Etain is the most famous resident of Romagna. He is a cheerful, pleasant man, much given to hunting, hawking, and riding around his lands. Fialle, his bride, is likewise outgoing and merry, and she has established an excellent rapport with the villagers in her short time in Romagna.

Encounters

Travelers in Romagna will rarely encounter truly dangerous creatures. Encounters in the settled areas of Romagna will be with farmers, shepherds, or cattlemen 80% of the time—the remaining encounters will be with normal game or wild dogs. In the oak forest to the northeast one may encounter deer, boar, the Baron's Rangers, and a variety of small game. Hunting of large game in this woodland is not permitted, and trappers must be approved and monitored by the Rangers.

The wet woodland to the west and south provides the most danger. A small group of werewolves have established themselves in the southwestern corner, and a family of wereboars ekes out a living in the northwest. The damp forest spawns several breeds of molds and spores, and a number of carnivorous plants.

Lord of Romagna

Serenissa D'Aubliet

Spectre (third-magnitude), Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	-2	Str	— (8)
Movement	15 Fl 30 (B)	Dex	— (15)
Level/Hit Dice	9	Con	— (12)
Hit Points	60	Int	13
THAC0	12	Wis	8
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	17
Damage/Attack	1d8		
Special Attacks	Level drain, Emotion control		
Special Defenses	Undead immunities, requires +2 or better weapon to hit		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

Note: Attributes in parentheses are for the few moments Serenissa is corporeal.

Serenissa Marie D'Aubliet is a strikingly beautiful young lady of 19 or 20 years of age, with skin the color of ivory, deep green eyes, and jet-black hair. She wears an elegant gown at all times, donning a bonnet and wrap to venture outside. While her mannerisms are refined, she is easily frustrated and becomes petulant and prone to tantrums when things do not go as she wishes.

Background

Serenissa Marie D'Aubliet was born, so to speak, an orphan. Her father, a miller's son, had died in battle a short while after her conception, and her mother, little more than a girl, had died in the birthing. Bereft of a family, Serenissa was taken in and named by the family of the local lord as a companion to his own two daughters, Micelle and Nalia. As their playmate, Serenissa was given all the benefits of a noble upbringing, but it was not many years before she began to realize the differences between herself and her compatriots. As the girls grew older, a rivalry that had begun in fun and friendship turned bitter, as the two noble girls distanced themselves from their lowborn companion.

In her twelfth year, Serenissa was sent from her home to the family of an allied lord whose wife had recently been blessed with two children at once, an unexpected and somewhat overwhelming gift from the gods. Serenissa took to the children at once, and devoted her waking hours to them, singing, walking and telling them long and fanciful stories of her "real" parents. In her stories, they were always alive and searching for her,

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wealthy nobles whose precious daughter had been lost by a cruel mischance of fate.

As the children grew older, so did Serenissa, and gradually her attention was drawn away from her charges by the young men of the castle, attentions which were more than reciprocated, for Serenissa, always attractive, had begun to blossom into a truly stunning young woman. As she flirted and teased with her suitors, she invented even grander and wilder tales of her “true” birth and parents, using each to test the worth of the men, seeking vows of love and loyalty, promises to set things aright and repay long-ago misdeeds. Those who gave her what she wanted were rewarded with her kisses and other, more intimate clasps.

It is in this time that the stalk of Serenissa’s secret madness came into flower, for the more she repeated her fanciful tales, the more she believed them. Raised in a noble household, surrounded by riches, the truth of her lowborn origins was more than she was willing to acknowledge.

On the eve of the twins’ fourth birthdays, she sat with them atop the Eagle’s Tower, the highest point in the countryside and a favorite retreat for the three of them. As so often before, she began a tale of her noble parents, only to be interrupted by her charges.

“T’ain’t so,” one spoke, innocent face scowling at the lie uncovered, while the other finished.

“Your mama was a simpleton, and your da was naught more than a millerboy who was killed.”

Serenissa went cold as her two darlings, the two who would never wrong her, divulged this awful truth.

“Who says such?” she asked, rising gently.

The twins turned to look out over the courtyard and castle.

“Everyone says it, Serei,” they spoke in unison, and Serenissa pushed them over.

Years of lies and falsehoods stood her in good stead as she rushed downstairs, screaming and crying. Between sobs she told of how the children had leaned out to look over the courtyard while her back was turned, and fallen to their deaths. For two weeks she took to her bed and was ministered to for grief, even as the nobleman’s wife was. And for two weeks, she plotted. Everyone in the castle spread these lies about her, she thought, denying her the truth of her blood, the noble rights that called out to her. And two months later, she lit the hangings in the Great Hall afire in the night, and watched from outside as the great wooden keep, built in a bygone era and for two hundred years a castle of peace, burned.

Freed from obligations and shadows of the past, Serenissa crept away in the darkness, crossing the kingdom in a few weeks, stealing food and shelter when she could, and going hungry and sleeping out of doors when she could not, until she came to the keep of Baron

Etain of Romagna, a young and able man not yet wed. Here she sought and found employment, climbing the ladder of servants through her graces and charm, from kitchen help to chamber maid to lady’s maid to the Baron’s younger sister. Likewise she climbed the ladder of men, flirting with the stablehands until she came to the attention of the soldiers; from the soldiers to their commanders and the seneschal, and thence to Baron Etain himself, whispering and teasing each, loving each until the next came along, but never surrendering all her charms. Those she kept for the lord of the castle, and when at long last he took her to his bed, it was willingly that she went.

They dallied for a few months, until Etain told her he had a surprise, and gifted her with a gemstone brooch. The following day, she stood erect and proud at his sister’s side, as he stood before the court and announced his upcoming nuptials—to Lady Fialle, the daughter of a nearby lord.

Serenissa grew cold as history repeated itself, and she was scorned by the one she loved, as she had been scorned, she believed, by her parents, by the family that raised her, by the twins she had raised, and now by the man she loved. As the court roared at the news of Baron Etain’s engagement, Serenissa smiled and cheered with the rest, while her heart and soul plotted final vengeance.

She drew him to a high tower sometime later, with low looks and breathy sighs that promised much. As he came for her, she opened her arms and clasped him to her, and with the strength of the mad, leapt from the tower.

“Tis better,” she thought, “that we should die together than I should live alone.”

And the dark powers plucked them from the air, and drew Romagna into the Mists.

Current Sketch

Serenissa got her wish, though not how she had desired. Her own body cushioned Etain’s fall and allowed him to survive, albeit gravely injured. Serenissa died so she would not live alone. When she awoke, it was six months later, and a week before the wedding. Powerless, unable to influence events, she watched helplessly as Etain married Fialle.

Serenissa D’Aubliet is quite mad. All her life she desired closeness and a sense of worth, someone to love her and stand by her as she feels her parents did not stand by her. Her death ended all chance of that. She cannot be seen, touched, heard, or felt by the natives of Romagna, and she can influence them only indirectly. Most of the time they continue on as always, with no inkling of any change in their lives, while Serenissa floats unnoticed through their lives. Every year the clock resets

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to seven days before the wedding, and Serenissa is forced to watch as Etain and Fialle pledged their undying love to each other, a love clear and unmistakable to Serenissa's spectral awareness.

It is only to visitors to Romagna that Serenissa is truly dangerous, for they can see and interact with her. She can choose to appear as alive as she once was, though she retains her intangibility, and always attempts to pass herself off as one of the living. She can disappear at will, and often chooses to “duck out of sight” when a native is nearby, so as to avoid uncomfortable explanations as to the lack of response or acknowledgment. Her favorite ploy is to pass herself off as Lady Fialle's cousin, and will usually encounter the party while “out riding” or “walking.” She may create the appearance of nearly anything she wishes to reinforce her tales—these do not detect as illusions, nor may they be disbelieved.

Serenissa is desperate for affection, and will coyly flirt with anyone available and male, regardless of race or appearance. She avoids physical contact, but those who respond favorably to her and her tales of her “lost noble parents” will be encouraged to slip away from the rest of the party for a secret rendezvous.

Once there, the last of Serenissa's curse takes effect. For short while, she is granted a corporeal shape with which to touch and feel alive again. She gladly abandons herself to the sensation, desperately seeking physical contact with her chosen romance. Every two rounds in contact with her bare skin, though, results in the victim's loss of one level, until they break free or die, crumbling to dust a few moments later. Those who break free invoke Serenissa's rage as they reject her advances, and she loses her corporeal form, becoming a powerful spectre and attacking.

In this fashion she will work her way through a party, seducing and destroying man after man in her endless quest for true love. Her victims do not rise again as spectres. Naturally, she feigns unawareness of each accident, eagerly supplying excuses and reasons why she could not be or was not involved in the death if questioned, and she is always grief-stricken by the news of each death.

Closing the Borders

The Mists aid Serenissa in sealing her realm. Whenever she wishes the borders closed, anyone seeking escape through the Mists is enveloped and transported away—only to be deposited near the center of the domain.

Combat

Serenissa has all the abilities of a powerful spectre, and is roughly equal in power to a third-magnitude ghost (see *Van Richten's Guide to Ghosts*) When incorporeal, she attacks by touch, inflicting 1d8 points of damage and draining two levels with every successful strike. Victims drained to 0-level die, and cannot be raised or resurrected within Romagna by any means.

Serenissa is not limited to her physical powers, however. The dark powers have granted her the ability to sway the emotions of the Romagna natives, inspiring them to acts of terror and hatred. She is not wholly aware of this ability, and uses it only rarely. She may utilize it if she witnesses an act of extreme devotion and caring from one person to another—her anger about the love she was denied manifests itself, and the innocent victims lash out in hatred and spite at one another. Heartbreak and anguish quickly replace the heady thrill of revenge and power she gains from this as she recalls the pain she was caused by rejection. More often, however, she calls upon this ability when frustrated or repulsed in her attempts to seduce a visitor to Romagna. If her physical charms are refused and her violent, incorporeal attacks thwarted, she retreats and incites the natives to a violent, murderous rage. Mobs form and weapons are unsheathed as the folk of Romagna, not knowing why, hunt the intruders in their land. The range and duration of this ability are as of yet undetermined—the villages return to normal as Serenissa forgets the cause of her anger (usually within a day or two), and she has shown no limit to the number of natives she may incite to anger at one time. This ability does not function against Baron Etain or Fialle—no native of Romagna can be compelled to hurt or hate the baron of the land.

Serenissa is immune to all enchantment/charm-type spells that affect the mind, body, or emotions, including *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold*. She is also immune to cold-based spells, poison, paralyzation, and weapons of less than +2 enchantment. *Raise dead* disperses her spirit for one month, after which it reforms. *Resurrection* disperses her until one week before the spring equinox, when she reforms. She retains these immunities even when corporeal. When wounded or “slain” by conventional means (including enchanted or golden weapons and spells), Serenissa recovers within twenty-four hours.

Serenissa may be harmed by weapons of +2 enchantment or greater, holy water (which inflicts 1d6 points of damage per vial splashed upon her), and weapons of gold (the metal of love in Romagna). Gold weapons must be functional—the metal merely allows one to strike her without an enchanted weapon, it does not inflict damage upon her in and of itself. Serenissa cannot be turned by conventional holy symbols (though the attempt is very likely to provoke her into a towering

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rage as she is “rejected”), but she is vulnerable to symbols of love and matrimony. These objects must be symbols of a “true” love—a ring of gold is not a wedding ring until it has been used to join two people in matrimony. One of these symbols, strongly presented, will allow the wielder to turn Serenissa (characters without the Turn Undead ability act as a cleric five levels lower; paladins roll as a cleric of one level lower; and priests with the Turn Undead ability act normally.) Daylight weakens her—she cannot become corporeal or inflict damage, but she retains control of her appearance and visibility.

Destroying Serenissa is not an easy task. She is not a particularly powerful spirit, but she is a persistent one. Conventional methods will only enrage her, and unconventional ones will at best disperse her spirit for a period of time (she always reforms in time for Baron Etain & Fialle’s wedding at the spring equinox). Weapons forged from symbols of love (such as rings, charms, wooden wands, or ceremonial ropes used to bind a man and woman together at their wedding) may have greater effect, rendering her helpless or immobile. Her final death is likely to involve elements of her first experience; rejection, a long fall, and/or a noble lover. Heroes should beware, though—the dark powers may look with interest upon anyone who willingly transforms a symbol of love into a weapon of war.

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WHÄL

A Sea-bitten Domain for the Demiplane of Dread

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The Land

Resting in the Sea of Sorrows, Whäl is a domain that consists of two parts, an island that is 150 miles long running north-south and 50 east-west, and the surrounding 13 miles of ocean. The island is mountainous with forested hills consisting of northern firs. The capital city of St. Hallen lies on the western side of the island. The city's population contains about 15,000 people. A smaller trade village has begun to take form on the eastern beaches. On either end of the island is a light house to help ships around the island's treacherous reefs. In the mountains, hermits and a few cultists eke out a living in the forested wilderness.

In the domain's other half, the only native residents of the cold waters are wereorcae and a few groups of sea wolves, who are hunted by the wereorcae. The cold sea is also home to pods of whales and seal colonies, making up the harvest of the hunters and whalers of the domain.

Whäl has a short summer and a moderately long winter. During the winter, the domain's waterways clog with icebergs and the nights become long and cold with only scant hours for daylight.

Cultural Level

Renaissance.

The Folk

The residents of Whäl are of fair skin, light hair, and strong build. All things nautical can be found among the residents. Whaling, seal hunting, and fishing are the primary means of survival with an occasional export of whale products to the mainland. Shipbuilding is also a primary commodity. It is said that the ships of Whäl can only be rivaled by the ships of Darkon/Necropolis.

During the winter, the people survive on stores and a little bit of the wild game that inhabits the island.

The tongue spoken in Whäl is unlike anything spoken in the Core. However, contact with the

remainder of the Core has brought a few non-native tongues as well as goods.

Native Player Characters

Whälites are a sturdy people; PCs gain the Endurance proficiency at no cost and a +1 to their Constitution score. In addition, player-characters are required to spend at least half their non-weapon proficiency slots on nautical-oriented proficiencies. Humans and half-elves are the only races found in Whäl. All classes listed in *Domains of Dread* are found in Whäl with the exception of the gypsy and wizard classes. Among the wizard class, only water elementalists and frost (or ice) mages are found in Whäl. Specialty priests other than anchorites should be devoted to a deity of the sea or weather.

Personalities of Note

The former whaling captain, Jacobi Robertsonn, lives on a small island connected to the western side of Whäl by a bridge spanning a perpetual maelstrom. He currently lives as a hermit in his mansion of whalebone.

The Law

The only law is the one of the sea. The government is that of the ship captains. Their word is law on the ships. Once a year, the native ship captains, or captains who make regular port in Whäl, elect one of their own to oversee the affairs of the cities of Whäl. However, even the elected official must follow the commands of Captain Robertsonn, or that the very least, seriously consider his advice. Many sea captains have died ignoring his commands.

Encounters

The island itself has very few predators, and most of them are small, and only feed on other small animals. A group of cultists who worship a dark god hide

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themselves away in the mountains that is their home. The sea, however, is stocked with whales, seals, fish and a variety of cold-water creatures.

Darklord of Whäl

Captain

Jacobi Robertsonn

16th-level Wereorca Avenger, Neutral Evil

Armor Class	By armor/2	Str	21
Movement	12 Sw 30	Dex	14
Level/Hit Dice	16	Con	15
Hit Points	107	Int	12
THACO	5	Wis	14
No. of Attacks	2/1 or 1	Cha	15
Damage/Attack	By weapon or bite (5d6)		
Special Attacks	Ice ram, automatic bite damage on rounds following successful bite.		
Special Defenses	+1 or whalebone to hit, immune to cold-, ice-, water-based attacks.		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

Note: The numbers after the slash are for his whale form.

Captain Robertsonn is a tall, powerfully built, middle-aged man with a weathered face and long, white hair. A long scar on his face running from above his brow, over his right eye, and down the right cheek to below his jaw can be prominently seen. He wears breaches and a waist coat, covered with a water-proofed overcoat. He carries an *iron harpoon* (+1, +5 vs. whales and whale-kin).

Background

Jacobi Robertsonn is the son of a fisherman, born on an unknown Prime world. On that world, Jacobi grew up with his father, who was teaching him the ways of the wind and the sea. The fish were plentiful and there was always a good catch. Nothing could be better.

While he was still a young lad, Jacobi and his father went out to sea like any other day. Halfway through the day, a storm began to blow in, and the pair began to head back to port. As they headed back, Jacobi saw a large shape in the water. It was a whale, that he knew, but it was the largest he had ever seen. He had heard of leviathans, but Jacobi never expected to see one. The whale was breaching, playing in the storm and rough

seas. Then one of the whale's breaches came too close to the small fishing boat and landed right on top of it, disintegrating it. Jacobi awoke to find himself on the beach of his home along with debris from his father's craft. A long scar ran down the side of his face. His father was nowhere to be found.

Years later, Jacobi commanded a trading galleon, the *Sailor's Blessing*, along with his son, Abram. His son had no mother, who had died in childbirth. Jacobi was a stern taskmaster to his crews and his son, but he was a fair man, and gave all the love he could to his only child. During a return trip from the western lands of his home world, heavy with spices and exotic items, a tropical storm arose and pounded into the ship. The storm lasted for days, as the *Blessing* fought its way through the pounding surf, wind, and rain. During the fourth day of the storm, the ship hit something hard and began to sink. As sailors began preparing lifeboats, Abram was swept over the side, never to be seen again. Jacobi was grief-stricken. He had lost his only joy in his life. His grief turned to rage when he spotted a leviathan through the stinging rain, and in his mind he believed it to be the same one that killed his father.

Jacobi vowed vengeance if he survived. He and the surviving crew were picked up a few days later and returned to their home port. Jacobi purchased a new ship, the *Retribution*, and crew and took up the trade of whaling. Slaying any whale they came across for goods and profit, Captain Robertsonn kept his eyes out for the whale that stole his father and his son. The captain and his crew hunted for over a decade, steadily decreasing the whale population. Eventually, Captain Robertsonn was about to give up on his quest for vengeance. The lookout spotted a whale, the largest one ever. A spark of hope began in his heart and became a flame when he realized it was the same whale that had caused him so much misery through his life. He would slay this whale personally. In the boats, whalers poured their hearts into catching up with this prize. Captain Robertsonn threw his harpoon into the monstrosity, embedding it in the blubbery hide. Wounded, the whale turned on the whalers and smashed the little boats to pieces. Jacobi raged, he would not be denied his vengeance. Pulling himself onto the great beast with the rope from the imbedded harpoon, he continued to spear the beast, cursing it, himself, and his crew with all his soul. Eventually, his consciousness passed into oblivion.

Captain Robertsonn awoke to find himself on a strange island that seemed vaguely familiar. He was intrigued by the fact that the communities were whaling communities and even surprised when other sea captain deferred to him with problems. He has since learned that he rules this island and the surrounding sea but can never leave its confines.

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Current Sketch

Jacobi is still obsessed with killing the leviathan that had destroyed his life. Since he was a whale hunter by trade, the dark powers cursed him with the lycanthropy of a wereorca (killer whale). To insure the curse, the dark powers have also cursed him with severe sea-sickness anytime he steps onto a water-borne vessel. He can continue to hunt whales, but only in the form of another whale.

Jacobi has mixed feelings toward this predicament. The orca form is appropriate in his mind, but he loathes the thought of having to be associated with a whale. He enjoys the freedoms the form offers, but terribly misses the thrill of the hunt from aboard a ship. He currently keeps a pod of wereorcae with him whenever he hunts, all are sea captains that have sworn loyalty to him.

The dark powers have granted him the ability to control his shapechanging; however, on the anniversaries of his father's and his son's deaths, he is forced to assume his alternate form. During these times the domain is hit with severe weather.

Closing the Borders

When Captain Robertsonn wants to seal the borders, the sea separates all the way to the ocean floor with a width of about 300 feet. (The effect is identical to the parting the Red Sea seen in the movie *The Ten Commandments*.) The air won't support flying of any kind, sending them crashing into the watery trench.

Combat

In his human form, Jacobi favors using his saber or his harpoon. The dark powers have given his human form the strength of his whale form (+3 to attack, +9 to damage), and he typically wears leather armor. He can fight underwater and swim without any penalties and can hold his breath equal to twice his Constitution score. He also has all the standard abilities of an avenger.

As a wereorca, Robertsonn fights with the speed and ferocity of his totem animal. He usually attacks from below if he is able and his bite does the damage listed above. His bite does carry the contagion (apply standard Ravenloft rules to lycanthropy). On any successful bite, Jacobi has the option of continuing to hold on, doing automatic bite damage on successful rounds.

Beings who manage to survive an attack in this form will most likely become wereorcae under his control. Jacobi has control of his shapechanging. In either form, Jacobi is immune to the effects of normal and magical cold, water, and ice attacks. In addition, he can summon

either 1d4 wereorcae or 5d8 killer whales to aid him in battle. However, he is usually accompanied by a mixed pod of wereorcae and regular orcae.

LYCANTHROPE, WEREORCA

Climate/Terrain	Any/Oceans
Frequency	Rare
Organization	Pod
Activity Cycle	Any (see below)
Diet	Carnivore
Intelligence	High (13-14)
Treasure	Nil (incidental)
Alignment	NE
No. Appearing	1-10
Armor Class	2
Movement	Sw 30
Hit Dice	14
THAC0	7
No. of Attacks	1
Damage/Attack	5d6
Special Attacks	See below
Special Defenses	+1 or whalebone weapon to hit
Magic Resistance	Nil
Size	H-G (15'-30' long)
Morale	Elite (14)
XP Value	8,000

Perhaps the largest and most dangerous lycanthrope in the sea next to a wereshark, wereorcae look like their normal animal kin in animal form. Their human form tends to be big and strong with dark hair. The size variation in animal form is a result of demihuman and humanoids being infected with the disease/curse. There is no hybrid form.

Combat

Wereorcae in combat resemble normal orcae in combat and tactics. Whenever a successful bite is made, the wereorca has the option of maintaining the bite the next round, doing automatic bite damage. On a roll of 20, the victim is swallowed whole and unable to perform any action due to the pain of digestion. Victims risk drowning (per normal rules) and suffer from Str and Dex loss (1 point each per round) due to hypothermia. If either reach 0, the victim dies.

A wereorca can summon 5d6 killer whales to aid it when necessary.

Habitat/Society

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A wereorca will occasionally travel with regular killer whales, acting as the alpha and hunting larger whales, seals, fish, and occasionally smaller ships, ramming them with their noses (1d4 hullpoints of damage). Wereorcae will usually take residence in seaside villages, where there is easy access to the ocean. Wereorcae are mortal enemies of seawolves and will actually go out of their way to hunt seawolf packs.

Ecology

Wereorcae hunt whales for food and pleasure, sometimes following the larger whales migration patterns when it suits them. Occasionally there is contact between wereorcae and weresharks with the whales winning due to numbers.

Simply put, wereorcae are at the top of the food chain in the ocean.



VAMPIRE, PISACHA

The Sleeper in the Grave Does Not Always Rest Quietly

by Bil Boozer

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VAMPIRE, PISACHA

Climate/Terrain	Sri Raji (most commonly)
Frequency	Very Rare
Organization	Solitary
Activity Cycle	Night
Diet	Special
Intelligence	Very (11-12)
Treasure	K, U (no gems)
Alignment	Chaotic Evil
No. Appearing	1
Armor Class	10 (See below)
Movement	0 (See below)
Hit Dice	N/A
THAC0	N/A
No. of Attacks	1
Damage/Attack	Special
Special Attacks	See below
Special Defenses	Spell Immunity
Magic Resistance	Nil (See below)
Size	M (6' tall)
Morale	Average (8-10)
XP Value	420

A pisacha is a dangerous, nearly undetectable vampire that slowly drains away its victim's health without actually coming into contact with the victim. All pisachas are undead males whose bodies do not decompose after their interment. They are often mistaken for invisible ghosts, but defenses normally employed to combat ghosts are ineffective against these killers.

Combat

A pisacha can attack any human, half-elf, or half-Vistani within five miles of its interred body. The target must be asleep, and usually the young are favored over their elders; the target may be either male or female. Once a pisacha has attacked a particular target, it will continue to attack that same target until the target dies or the attacks are deterred. A character who is protected from scrying and similar detection effects will not be selected

as a target by the pisacha, but gaining such protection after being selected will not deter the pisacha or prevent subsequent attacks.

Once the pisacha has located a sleeping target, it begins to consume the victim's breath as he or she exhales. Anyone observing the target will see his or her chest rising and falling with each breath, but no flow of air can be discerned emerging from the victim's nose or mouth. After at least one hour of having his or her breath stolen, but only once each night, the victim must make a Constitution check. If the check is successful, the victim wakes the next morning feeling unusually weak and suffers a -2 Dexterity penalty for 2d4 hours. If the check is unsuccessful, the character awakes feeling cold and weak, suffers a -2 Dexterity penalty for 4d4 hours, cannot memorize or receive any spells without an additional six hours of rest, and permanently loses 1 point of Constitution. When a character's Constitution reaches 0, the character dies. Characters killed by a pisacha do not necessarily become vampires themselves.

On a second or subsequent feeding, if the pisacha's victim is under the effects of *feign death* or a similar spell, if the victim is sleeping in a sealed (not necessarily air-tight) coffin, or if the victim sleeps with a ripened coriander fruit on his or her chest, then the vampire will pass over the target in favor of another. The following night, the pisacha will try again for its first target; if it is again deterred, it will settle on the second target as its victim thereafter. If there are no eligible targets sleeping within five miles of the pisacha's body, it goes without feeding but suffers no ill effects.

A pisacha typically resides in the coffin in which it was buried; it has no ability to move its own body. The body itself remains just as it did at death. If struck by a piercing weapon, the body will bleed in a steady flow that continues for 3d10 rounds. This blood is a mild poison that does 4d4 damage to anyone who comes in contact with it (or 2d4 to those who make a successful save vs. poison). If the pisacha's body is dismembered and its parts scattered, any one of these could continue to serve as its lair. The individual dismembering the body must make a Dexterity check during each round of such

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activity or come in contact with the poison. This roll may be modified if appropriate precautions are taken, but dismembering a corpse does require a powers check.

Once every three months a pisacha may transfer to a different lair, provided parts of its body have been appropriately separated. However, the pisacha cannot transfer in this fashion to a body part outside the domain it is in.

If all parts of the pisacha's body are burned to ashes then the vampire is destroyed. This fire must be natural, as pisachas are immune to magical fire. Additionally, pisachas are unaffected by *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells, and they are immune to poison, paralysis, petrification, and death magic. They take no damage from damage-causing spells and magical effects. A pisacha whose body is splashed with at least two vials of holy water cannot feed for 2d4-1 days but is otherwise unaffected.

Only characters and creatures with the ability to speak with undead can communicate with a pisacha. They are likely to find the vampire intelligent and polite, and, though the pisacha will enjoy the rare opportunity for conversation, it will do whatever it can to protect itself, such as suggesting false means of destroying itself. A *raise dead* cast on a pisacha will not bring it back to life but it will restore the memories (but not the personality) of its former life. No one has yet reported the effect of casting *animate dead* on a pisacha's body.

The pisacha is undetectable at the site of the feeding, but *detect charm* and similar spells can determine that the victim is under some unnatural influence during the feeding. *Detect undead* will reveal the presence of an undead creature during the feeding, provided the pisacha fails its saving throw. The spell will also reveal the presence of the vampire if it is cast directly on the pisacha's body. During the feeding, the victim's body temperature becomes abnormally low. He or she lies generally still and cannot be awakened until the feeding is complete. As described above, the victim's exhalations produce no breath. The feeding can be disrupted by a priest who successfully turns the vampiric attack within one hour of its beginning. In this case, the pisacha is turned as a wraith, and the priest becomes the pisacha's next victim.

If the victim is killed while the vampire is feeding (within the first hour) in any way other than the vampire's Constitution drain, the pisacha ceases feeding and will be unable to feed again for 2d8+1 days. At the end of this period, there is an 80% chance the pisacha will select the killer as its next victim, provided the killer qualifies. This chance is decreased by 5% for every day beyond the seventh.

Habitat/Society

Pisachas form in one of two ways. Any male human, half-elf, or half-Vistani who dies and is buried in a coffin in Sri Raji transforms over the next 3d6 nights into a pisacha. The newly formed undead creature possesses no knowledge of its former life; it knows only its hunger. The pisacha's treasure consists of those items buried with it; it has no use for them and will be unconcerned if they are taken.

The second way for a pisacha to form is for a native of Sri Raji who is also a worshiper of Kali to die and be buried outside of Sri Raji. Native Sri Rajians typically burn their dead in great pyres (except those eaten by Arijani). Both types of pisacha possess the same characteristics and abilities.

Generally, pisacha are formed from deceased adventurers who have traveled to Sri Raji from elsewhere in the demiplane or from outside the demiplane. Killed in Sri Raji, they were buried by their companions and left to become vampires. The natives of Sri Raji discourage foreigners from burying their dead there, but they do not prevent it.

In the unusual case that there are two pisachas within the same feeding area, neither will feed on the other's target, but otherwise they will not interact.

Ecology

Clearly, there is some connection between the creation of pisachas and Sri Raji itself; however, what that relationship might be is unclear. Arijani has recently taken notice of the few pisachas in his domain, but he has taken no action regarding them. So long as they don't present a substantial threat to his food supply, he sees no reason to interfere with them. No one is certain why only males become pisachas.

Because a pisacha's feedings kill the victim slowly over a couple of weeks, the victim is often thought to be suffering from some type of illness or disease, as there are no outward signs of injury. Pisachas usually select victims within some proximity to recently consumed ones, as doing so helps perpetuate the suspicions of contagion and makes it more difficult for others to locate their lairs.

Scholars have pointed out that it is easier to defeat a pisacha in Sri Raji than elsewhere because the scarcity of grave sites makes the pisacha's lair easy to find once it has been determined that that is the nature of the danger. On the other hand, most other domains (excluding Souragne) feature a large number of grave sites which could be lairs of pisachas, and the stones that mark these graves do not always reveal their true inhabitants. Of course, a pisacha's body could consist of as little as one of its teeth, and finding and destroying such a thing in any domain would be difficult. ☠

LESSER BREEDS OF THE ARAK

Two New Races from the Shadow Rift

by René Littek

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VILAY

The Dryads among the Arak

Climate/Terrain	The Shadow Rift
Frequency	Rare
Organization	Solitary or groves
Activity Cycle	Any or night
Diet	Omnivore
Intelligence	Exceptional (15-16)
Treasure	Q
Alignment	Neutral (good)
No. Appearing	1-6
Armor Class	5
Movement	15
Hit Dice	7
THAC0	17
No. of Attacks	1
Damage/Attack	1-4
Special Attacks	Charm, Energy drain, Spells
Special Defenses	+1 or better magical weapon to hit, Immune to wooden weapons
Magic Resistance	30%
Size	M (6' tall)
Morale	Average (8-10)
XP Value	4,000

The vilay are one of the so-called lesser breeds of the Arak and are the shadow elf equivalent of dryads. They sometimes even refer to themselves as dryads. Vilay look like very pale elfmaids with long white hair and sparkling green eyes. All vilay can change into nightingales at will.

Combat

The vilay almost never fights herself, for she is usually well-protected by her loved ones' spirits. If she is forced

into combat she relies on her ability to cast *charm person* three times per day, enforcing a -3 penalty to the target's saving throw. In addition, she has the ability to cast spells as a 5th-level cleric (3/3/1).

If the vilay can lure her target into an embrace, she can also drain one level with her kiss. A victim killed via this energy drain will be not transformed into a "spirit love," unless they are willing to become vilaykin (see below).

A vilay can only be harmed by spells or magical weapons of at least +1 enchantment, and is immune to weapons made of wood even if they are enchanted. However, any bone weapon can hurt a vilay, even if they are non-magical. Note that the crystalline skulls the vilay collects do not count as bone. Exposure to direct sunlight is very harmful to the vilay, doing one point of damage each round. If the light is somehow dimmed the damage slows to one point per turn.

Habitat/Society

A vilay chooses a large tree for her home, which can be identified by the circle of crystalline skulls which surrounds it. The more skulls on display, the more the vilay is honored by the others of her kind; thus stealing any of these skulls is one of the greatest crimes a vilay can imagine, perhaps other than the loss of one of her prized lovers. Vilay sometimes meet to celebrate one of their "great days," but when asked they don't even seem to know when the next of these days will be. Most vilay tend to live alone, but some gather in so-called "groves" living tree to tree.

Ecology

Vilay fill the same ecological niche as normal dryads, protecting the woodlands and the creatures that live

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within them. Other Arak rarely do any serious business with them; often they only visit to hear the stories of the vilay's loves and marvel at the beauty of their hostess.

Vilaykin

Vilay only rarely create changelings in the traditional sense. They rather prefer to literally love their paramours to death and keep their spirits, creating beautiful incorporeal undead. These undead are bound to the vilay through their skulls, now crystalline and as hard as adamantite thanks to the vilay's magic, which are all that remain of their former bodies. The vilaykin are still free-willed, but most prefer to stay with "their" vilay. Even those who are allowed to travel the world, collecting gifts and stories for their love, must return to their skull a least once a year, with no chance of resisting the call.

Vilay chose their kin because of their beauty or their exceptional skills in the field of romance and love. Vilay are not very choosy when it comes to the question of gender, they tend to select females as often as males.

To create a new spirit, a vilay's lover must be a willing subject. She then engages in acts of passion with her loved one and drains his or her life-force; no saving throw is required because the loved one must be absolutely willing to even start the ritual.

HULDROW

The Children of Lolth

Climate/Terrain	The Shadow Rift
Frequency	Rare
Organization	Clans
Activity Cycle	Any or night
Diet	Omnivore
Intelligence	Exceptional (15-16)
Treasure	Q
Alignment	Neutral (Evil)
No. Appearing	1-12
Armor Class	5
Movement	15
Hit Dice	7
THAC0	17
No. of Attacks	1
Damage/Attack	1-4
Special Attacks	Spells (4/3/2)
Special Defenses	+1 or better magical weapon to hit, Immune to stone weapons and spider poisons
Magic Resistance	50%
Size	M (6' tall)
Morale	Average (8-10)
XP Value	4,000

Huldrow are the legacy of the three drow who lived with the Arak so long ago. Most were slain and transformed into the undead Umbra when the domain of Keening was formed, but a handful of their number still exist. A lesser breed of the Arak, the huldrow were created when the three drow arrivals began to lure the Arak into their cult dedicated to Lolth. As these Arak behaved more and more like drow, their shapes slowly changed, until they came to resemble the dark elves they emulated. Huldrow greatly resemble drow elves, except for their eyes, which are orbs of a luminous white, and their skin, the color of which can range from light brown to obsidian black. Huldrow have the ability to change their appearances to mimic other demihuman races and humans, but always retain a small hint of their true nature. The huldrow still try to follow the teachings of their long-dead drow leaders, mimicking drow culture. However, the fact is that, due to the assassinations the drow brought upon themselves, the huldrow have never quite understood all the nuances of drow life. Nonetheless, they are regarded as renegades by the other Arak for breaking the law of Arak and their veneration of the goddess Lolth; thus those huldrow who are still alive have all been forced into hiding, some even leaving the Shadow Rift to wander the Core.

Combat

Like the drow they mimic, the huldrow are merciless warriors, combining weapons and spells in a deadly concert. Huldrow almost always try to ambush or trap their enemies, attacking in groups of 3 to 8.

Sunlight is extremely harmful to huldrow, doing three points of damage per round. Filtered light reduces the damage to three points per turn. Only magical weapons and those crafted of cold-forged steel can harm huldrow, and they are immune to attacks from stone weapons, even if they are magical. Huldrow are also entirely immune to spider venom of any kind.

Habitat/Society

In imitating the drow, huldrow live in the caves of the Shadow Rift or other cave systems of the demiplane, decorating them in what they consider to be a drowlike style. The caves of the undead umbra in Keening are a good example of the huldrow aesthetic. They still try to improve their copy of drow life, catching surface dwellers and drow to learn about this way of living. The one problem is, if they learn of something they don't like about their chosen society, they simply consider it a lie and remodel it to their liking. Huldrow live in small clans, all led by the most powerful female who sometimes is a 6th-level cleric to Lolth.

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Ecology

Being something like bastard Arak they live secluded lives, and offer their offspring few chances to deviate from existing patterns of behavior; thus their children are always huldrow. They can still mate with other Arak, but these children are rarely raised by huldrow, and thus usually develop into other breeds. Trying to be like drow, they are raiders of the night and commonly kill in the name of Lolth. The other Arak shun the huldrow for their crimes but rarely kill them because of the Law of Arak.

Huldrowkin

It seems that there are no huldrowkin, but a handful of the huldrow have mated with the true dark elves; these offspring are simply drow who have the extra ability to take on *shadowform* three times per day, and to *shapechange* into a human or demihuman form twice a day. These drow look like huldrow and are as susceptible to the sun as their shadow elf parents. With the DM's permission they could be used as PCs.



CHILDREN OF THE BAYOU

New Horrors for Souragne

by Andrew Wyatt
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From the Writings of
Lady Marie-F élicité St. Croix,
Amateur Folklorist and Priestess to
the Maiden of the Swamp:

... When one examines the tall tales and popular superstitions of the largely unlearned common folk in Souragne, one quickly notices the predominance of stories regarding creatures of a malicious nature. One might even begin to suspect that there is a kind of grisly fascination with the unholy and the unnatural. Most tales about the demonic things which lurk in Maison d'Sablet are quite popular at fireside story sessions, even among children. This is because belief in the monstrous is not the result of a broad, generalized enculturation, but rather repeated anecdotal evidence filtered through numerous retellings. Commoners learn of a vast array of malignant creatures from tales which are generic in form, but whose details vary from locality to locality. This more personal approach to maintaining oral tradition has resulted in a wider acceptance of the supernatural. Thus, a poor sugarcane farmer may not believe in nzambis per se, but his great-uncle Louis' famous experience with the walking dead will in all likelihood deter him from unnecessary forays into the swamp...

... Foreigners who happen to overhear such anecdotes often comment that they are unfamiliar with the devils and phantasms about which numerous tales are told in our land. This leads me to believe that the beliefs of Souragne's common folk are a highly specific product of the cultural conditions in which they live. Alternately, one might apply a more liberal and fantastic interpretation, implying that such entities are simply endemic to our land. In such a case, the careless foreign traveler may find himself the tragic subject of yet another local tale about the dire appetites of Maison d'Sablet's minions...

LYCANTHROPE, WEREPOSSUM

Climate/Terrain	Temperate to subtropical swamps and forests
Frequency	Very rare
Organization	Solitary
Activity Cycle	Night
Diet	Omnivore
Intelligence	Highly (13-14)
Treasure	V, X
Alignment	Chaotic Evil
No. Appearing	1
Armor Class	7
Movement	12
Hit Dice	4+2
THAC0	17
No. of Attacks	1
Damage/Attack	1d4+1 or By Weapon
Special Attacks	Nil
Special Defenses	+1 or Dogwood to Hit, Feign death
Magic Resistance	Nil
Size	M (6' tall)
Morale	Steady (12)
XP Value	420

A werepossum in human aspect usually appears to be a drifter type with a touch of mental instability. "Low profile" has little meaning for a werepossum; the common folk may in fact be quite familiar with the cackling old man who lurks by the swamp's edge. A werepossum dresses as well as its simple means allow, normally a single filthy, moth-eaten outfit. In beast aspect, a werepossum resembles an ordinary, if chunky, opossum. In their hybrid aspect, the creature reveals its true, startling shape. The build becomes thicker, except for the thin, too-short legs and arms. The hands and feet bear tiny, hooked nails and ratlike digits. The werepossum's head grows an opossum's snout, ears, and toothy leer, although the eyes and facial structure remain disturbingly human. The creature sprouts a naked,

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prehensile tail, and its skin becomes covered in silvery-grey fur.

Werepossums can speak the common language of Souragne and, occasionally, other tongues as well, but lack a language of their own.

Combat

Werepossums prefer to avoid combat if at all possible, but will defend themselves if forced to. A werepossum in human or hybrid aspect may fight with a weapon, in which case they favor daggers or swords. Alternately, a werepossum can bite in its hybrid form for 1d4+1 points of damage. In hybrid aspect, a werepossum can also use a handful of thief abilities. The creature may pick pockets, move silently, and hide in shadows all at 70% chance, and climb walls at a 90% chance. The beast aspect of a werepossum is far too weak to be used effectively in most combat situations, but is often utilized for stealth and escape.

Werepossums rarely attack other beings outright, except when hunting for the sentient flesh they crave. When they do hunt, werepossums try to minimize the risk to themselves by selecting isolated, weak targets such as wanderers, petty criminals, or lost children. They tend to flee when faced with more formidable opponents. This does not mean that an encounter with a werepossum will end with the creature's flight. On the contrary, a werepossum which has been cowed into escape will inevitably follow its attackers. The creature will plague its opponents with mean-spirited pranks and distractions by using its thief abilities and any magical items in its possession.

Werepossums have a unique ability to *feign death* similar to the wizard spell of the same name. A werepossum may assume this state instantaneously at any time it wishes, but requires one full round to rouse itself back to "life." The werepossum is clever in its use of this ability, and will normally employ it in combat to realistic effect. For instance, the werepossum may crumble to the ground, pretending that a blow from an opponent's weapons dealt it a mortal wound. An experienced hunter may note that a "slain" lycanthrope does not revert to its human aspect, but most are not so observant. A werepossum will use the first available opportunity to rise and flee when its opponents become disinterested or distracted. Since there is a risk that the werepossum's attackers may destroy its unresponsive "corpse" quickly, the werepossum only uses its feign death ability if normal escape is impossible.

Werepossums can only be harmed by magical weapons of +1 or greater enchantment, or by a weapon constructed from dogwood. A werepossum's bite carries

a 2% chance per hp of damage inflicted of infecting the victim with lycanthropy.

Habitat/Society

Werepossums are enigmatic lycanthropes, to say the least. Solitary and aimless, they live on the outskirts of Souragne's human settlements. Their "lair" are actually just wilderness spots where they can sleep in peace, such as a hollow log or bed of moss. As a rule, werepossums are quite familiar with Maison d'Sablet, and can navigate the swamp quite well, whether they are poling a makeshift raft through the stagnant waters or climbing through the trees in their beast aspect. They steal almost everything they need to survive, and can be quite resourceful in their use of normal society's refuse and cast-offs. They are crafty beings, who enjoy tormenting people with carefully-engineered misfortunes and pranks. Most werepossums are regarded by local villagers as spooky loners with a lousy sense of humor.

Although they do not (or cannot) use wizardly magic themselves, werepossums are quite fond of magical items, and normally have a handful of favorite enchanted trinkets in their possession at any one time. They favor practical, single-use items such as potions and scrolls. The amount of trouble a werepossum can stir up with a simple potion of invisibility or ventriloquism is astonishing. They can use any unrestricted magical item, as well as those intended specifically for thieves.

Werepossum matings are impersonal and little-understood, but the female is left with the burden of caring for the young. Female werepossums rear their large litters in their beast aspect, and the young appear to be normal opossums until mature (Thankfully; embryonic marsupial-men are a tad too gruesome to contemplate). Despite the large number of young born in a litter (6-10), mortality is apparently quite high during the first few years.

Werepossums actually enjoy their outcast status and make it a point to not get along with anyone. Other wercreatures are treated with as much hateful glee as humanity, if not a tad more. Thus, werepossums have almost no allies, and count practically everyone as at least half-hearted enemies. Wererats, in particular, absolutely despise werepossums, and kill them on sight. Anton Misroi's undead servants often find themselves the victim of relentless, yet illogical, mishaps at the hands of werepossums.

Ecology

Werepossums can survive on just about any sustenance known to man—and some man is better off not knowing about—but they do enjoy sentient flesh. They would be

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mere scavengers off of human civilization if not for their incredibly malicious tendencies. Their pranks tend to cross the line from annoying to downright deadly.

NIGHTCRAWLER

Climate/Terrain	Subtropical to tropical swamps
Frequency	Rare
Organization	Pack
Activity Cycle	Night
Diet	Omnivore
Intelligence	Low (5-7)
Treasure	Q
Alignment	Chaotic Evil
No. Appearing	6-24 (6d4)
Armor Class	8
Movement	6
Hit Dice	4
THACO	17
No. of Attacks	1
Damage/Attack	1d4
Special Attacks	None
Special Defenses	Undead immunities, Regeneration
Magic Resistance	Nil
Size	S (3' tall)
Morale	Fearless (19-20)
XP Value	270

Of all Anton Misroi's undead minions, none are more horrifying than the nightcrawlers. Created from the corpses of children, and infested with all manner of swamp vermin, these hideous creatures that seek out adults with which to "play."

Superficially, nightcrawlers resemble children, but they are clearly inhuman. Their flesh is mottled with loathsome shades of green and brown. Tattered clothing hangs decaying from their little bodies. Their hair is plastered to their heads in damp, stringy clumps, and their gray, watery eyes lack pupils. Bits of algae and weeds cling to their bodies. Everywhere they go, they carry the ripe, unmistakable odor of the swamp. Those who get a good look at a nightcrawler will notice that its bloated skin seems to wriggle and pulse. This is because beneath its skin, a nightcrawler is nothing but bones and foul swamp creatures: leeches, earthworms, crayfish, crabs, water bugs, small snakes and frogs. These vermin constantly crawl in and out of the nightcrawler's orifices and through tears in its skin.

Nightcrawlers can speak the language they spoke in life, but their voices are inhuman are slurred, and punctuated with hissing and clicks. It is not living vocal cords that create their speech, but the bodies of vermin.

Combat

A nightcrawler can attack only with its tiny teeth, but its bite is nonetheless vicious, doing 1-4 points of damage. Nightcrawlers are intimately familiar with their swampy home in Maison d'Sablet; they can Move Silently, Hide in Shadows, and Climb Walls at a 80% chance of success while in the swamp. Like all undead, nightcrawlers are immune to *sleep*, *charm*, or *hold* spells. However, since they are composed of living vermin, they are not immune to poison, paralyzation, disease, suffocation, or life-affecting spells. They are not harmed by holy symbols or holy water, but can be turned as shadows.

Although undead, nightcrawlers do not have preternaturally tough flesh. Their skin rots slower than might be expected, but is not otherwise protected. Nightcrawlers are, however, extraordinarily difficult to harm permanently, because the living horde within them can constantly be replenished as long as they are in Souragne's swamp. A nightcrawler regenerates 2 hp per round as long as is in Maison d'Sablet, as countless creatures swarm to repair its wounds. If reduced to zero hit points or below, a nightcrawler collapses, but continues to regenerate. It will not rise again, however, until it has regained at least half its original hit points.

The true destruction of a nightcrawler depends on doing enough physical damage to the creature's skin that it can no longer realistically hold itself together. The DM should keep track of how many cumulative points of damage have been done to each nightcrawler. Once it has taken double its original hit points in damage, a nightcrawler will no longer be able to regenerate, and may be slain normally.

Habitat/Society

Nightcrawlers lurk exclusively in Maison d'Sablet, never leaving its swampy environs. They do not linger often on Misroi's decaying plantation, preferring the true wild areas of the swamp. There they romp and play endlessly, always on the lookout for adults with whom they might entertain their deranged fancy. Although thoroughly evil, nightcrawlers still have the minds of children. There is a hideous gleefulness about them, and their desires alternate between the charming and the unspeakable. ("Are you my Mama? It's time to play, Mama...")

When he so desires, Anton can mentally summon his nightcrawlers from the far reaches of Souragne to give them orders personally. They act as shock troops of sorts, on missions and errands where some degree of intelligence and a maximum degree of terror are required. All nightcrawlers are utterly in Anton's thrall, and will destroy themselves for him if so ordered. Their view him as an all-knowing and beneficent father. Anton, for his part, behaves very erratically towards his

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avored creations, alternately spoiling them with attention and carrion, or tearing them to pieces when he is enraged. The nightcrawlers dislike the mindless zombies which make up a majority of Misroi's minions, but will cooperate with them if Anton orders it.

Ecology

Anton Misroi recently devised nightcrawlers as a particularly horrid way of combining his powers over both life and death. Nightcrawlers can only be created from the corpses of children who have died in Maison d' Sablet. Anton calls forth a swarm of vile swamp creatures, which enter the body through its orifices. They then proceed to devour all the soft tissues of the child, leaving only the skin and bones. The creatures remain within the body, filling out its shape and animating it through Anton's power. For reasons even Anton is not quite sure of, he cannot yet create nightcrawlers from adult bodies.

Since nightcrawlers are undead, one would assume that they would therefore interact little with their surroundings. Their very existence, however, draws upon the life of the swamp, and they require food and water to sustain that life. They are capable, however, of subsisting on the most basic and polluted of fare: mud, peat, and swampwater. Naturally, they prefer a treat of human flesh when they can get it.

UNCLE SKELETON

Climate/Terrain	Any subtropical to tropical
Frequency	Very rare
Organization	Solitary
Activity Cycle	Night
Diet	Nil
Intelligence	Genius (17-18)
Treasure	A
Alignment	Chaotic Neutral (Evil)
No. Appearing	1
Armor Class	3
Movement	15
Hit Dice	9+5
THAC0	11
No. of Attacks	2
Damage/Attack	1d6/1d6
Special Attacks	Spells
Special Defenses	See Below
Magic Resistance	20%
Size	L (7')
Morale	Elite (13)
XP Value	7,000

An uncle skeleton is a powerful necromantic spirit which delights in frightening mortals. These bizarre entities somehow manage to be simultaneously sadistic

and good-natured. Their erratic behavior coupled with their potent powers makes them dangerous beings indeed.

Despite strong appearances to the contrary, an uncle skeleton is not undead. It is actually a spirit creature in a physical form, much like a rakshasa. An uncle resembles a human skeleton with clean, powder-white bones. Not a speck of flesh remains on the creature's frame. The eye sockets of the skull, however, contain intact eyes with glowing yellow irises. Uncle skeletons will often wear fashionable clothing, but they are equally likely to go about in nothing but a top hat and cane. Sometimes, they paint their bones with mysterious line drawings, thought to be necromantic symbols.

Uncle skeletons can usually speak a host of modern and ancient languages, and may *speak with dead* at will.

Combat

Ironically, for all their fiendish abilities, uncle skeletons rarely attack other beings directly. They prefer to use their powers to frighten and torment, rather than actually harm. Still, if pressed to do so, an uncle skeleton can unleash devastating attacks.

In physical combat, an uncle skeleton can strike with its bony fingers, inflicting 1-6 points of damage with each blow. Occasionally, an uncle may choose to wield a melee weapon—usually a machete, sword cane or whip. Once per week, an uncle skeleton may *animate dead* and control undead as if it were a 14th-level wizard. Uncle skeletons, like normal animated skeletons, are mostly composed of empty space, and thus edged or piercing weapons inflict only half damage on them.

In addition to these powers, an uncle skeleton has all the abilities of a 9th-level mage, with a particular focus on the schools of enchantment/charm, illusion, and necromancy. Favorite spells of uncles include: *audible glamor, change self, friends, grease, phantasmal force, spook, taunt, ventriloquism; blur, fog cloud, forget, improved phantasmal force, invisibility, mirror image, misdirection, scare, spectral hand, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter; feign death, hold undead, spectral force, wraithform; confusion, fear, fumble, hallucinatory terrain, improved invisibility, shadow monsters; advanced illusion, demi-shadow monsters, distance distortion, dream, shadow magic, summon shadow, teleport.*

Despite the fact that they are not undead, uncle skeletons have some powers and weaknesses that resemble those of the living dead. They cannot be affected by sleep or life-affecting spells, and they are immune to poison, suffocation, and paralysis. They are, however, vulnerable to *charm* and *hold* spells. They cannot be turned, but may be held at bay by a lawful

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good holy symbol presented with conviction. A vial of holy water inflicts 2d4 points of damage if splashed on an uncle skeleton. Furthermore, for reasons that are not quite clear, uncles may not approach within 30' of a large constricting snake, such as a python, boa, or anaconda.

Habitat/Society

Unsurprisingly, uncle skeletons dwell almost exclusively in Souragne's morbidly beautiful cemeteries. On account of the high water table, Souragne's dead are not buried, but interred in elaborate mausoleums and crypts. An uncle skeleton typically constructs an underground lair leading to a secret entrance inside a tomb. Their lairs are bizarre abodes indeed, appointed to fit their curious taste for the ghoulish as well as worldly pleasures. Though they are quite obviously nothing but bones, uncle skeletons are capable of enjoying the finer things in life, especially fine cigars and good rum. They also like expensive fashion and fine art. Yet they have a fiendish appreciation for the macabre; their lairs are often decorated with human parts in various states of decay, and infested with all manner of vermin. They keep vast numbers of skeletons and zombies as servants, and often congregate with ghouls, wights, and other graveyard undead.

One part deranged carnival showman, one part skulking undead lord, and one part winking, good-natured father, the uncle skeleton is an enigma. Although they are often characterized as evil, because of their association with evil undead and their perchance for terror, most uncles prefer to think of themselves as fulfilling some vital role. They reason that Souragne's folk must be reminded of the dangers of the night, lest they become careless and lazy and fall victim to the undead's predations.

The uncles see themselves as harbingers of a benign fear that gives humans a healthy respect for the dead. To this end, they keep trespassers, necromancers, graverobbers, and curious children away from graveyards with demented funhouse tricks. Uncle skeletons should not be regarded as good-willed creatures, however; often, their gleeful tricks can literally scare a man to death. Children are taught to respect the spirits of the dead, lest an uncle skeleton come to turn their hair white. On holidays associated with death or the dead, uncles roam the countryside on sedan chairs of bone, seeking to spread their wicked delights to unfortunate travelers.

Ecology

Being spirit creatures, uncle skeletons are immortal for all practical purposes. They do not reproduce as a regular course of action, but are capable of creating more uncle skeletons when their numbers dwindle significantly. At such times, uncle skeletons from across Souragne make their way to a tiny island deep in Maison d'Sablet. This insignificant isle is said to possess a gateway to the Eastern Bush, a netherworld where the spirits that become uncle skeletons reside. The gathered uncle skeletons perform an elaborate ritual that summons forth these spirits and give them material form. The young and old uncles then disperse, until their numbers again become sparse. Many decades or even centuries may pass in between these cycles.

Uncle skeletons have no natural enemies per se, unless, of course, one counts the unfortunate mortals who find themselves battered by the uncles' games. They rarely get along well with the more serious-minded, powerful undead, particularly vampires. They have also developed a distaste for the growing power of Anton Misroi, and occasionally take the opportunity to make unlife difficult for him and his minions. Uncles also have an intense dislike for willful, good-aligned personalities, such as priests and paladins, whom they consider "sticks-in-the-mud." The Voodan are quite knowledgeable about the nature of the uncles and are on good terms with them. They may, however, assist those who are plagued by such creatures... for a price.

The bones of an uncle skeleton are heartily sought by witches and the like for use in a variety of magical items related to fear and the undead. Uncle bones might be used in the construction of a *Rod of Terror*, *Wand of Fear*, *Amulet Versus Undead* or *Deck of Illusions*.

WEeping Willow

Climate/Terrain	Subtropical to tropical swamps
Frequency	Very rare
Organization	Solitary
Activity Cycle	Night

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Diet	Nil
Intelligence	8-10 (Average)
Treasure	O + Special
Alignment	Chaotic Evil
No. Appearing	1
Armor Class	-2
Movement	9
Hit Dice	9+3
THACO	11
No. of Attacks	1
Damage/Attack	1d8 or See Below
Special Attacks	See Below
Special Defenses	+2 to Hit, Undead Immunities
Magic Resistance	Nil
Size	M
Morale	Special
XP Value	5,000

The weeping willow is a particularly tragic and insidious form of incorporeal undead creature found only in the swamps of Souragne. Rare in the extreme, such an apparition is created only when a pregnant woman dies in Maison d'Sablet and her body comes to rest near a willow tree. The spirit of the unfortunate woman is anchored to this "host tree," which restricts its movement in unlife. However, the soul's unholy link with the living fabric of the swamp gives it formidable and frightening powers.

Those handful of adventurers who encounter a weeping willow will likely mistake it for a traditional ghost, nature spirit, or perhaps even a dryad. When materialized, the weeping willow appears as a beautiful apparition floating just off the ground. Her skin is pale and luminescent, marked by faint shadows that resemble the outlines of willow leaves. Her hair is Spanish moss, and her body is draped in gauzy green cloth that floats dreamlike on invisible breezes. Tiny yellow flowers cover her hair and clothes. Death accentuates the beauty of the spirit, so that even the plainest woman in life is striking in death. The creature's face, however, is marred by its look of anguish, and by its never-ending tears, which run like sticky sap down the woman's ghostly cheeks. The weeping willow cries ceaselessly, her sobs echoing through the bayou.

In its "natural" state, the weeping willow is anchored to its host tree. Its form appears in the bark of the tree as the vague shape of a beautiful, sinuous woman. The willow is incapable of any movement or special abilities in this form, though tears of sap run from what could be considered its eyes.

Combat

The weeping willow can materialize in its ghostly form at will, but the process takes a full round. Dissolving this

form also takes one round. While the willow is undergoing materialization of dissolution, she is vulnerable to attack and may take no other actions. While she is materialized, the willow's form is not visible in the bark of the host tree. The weeping willow may never move more than thirty feet from the center of its host tree.

The weeping willow can lure victims to its tree with its pitiful sobs. Her anguished cries can be heard from as far away as one hundred yards, and all those who hear it must make a saving throw vs. spell. Failure indicates that the victim is struck by the intense sorrow of the creature, and begins moving towards the host tree at his normal walking rate. Those who attempt to restrain the victim will be violently attacked by him. Those who make their saving throw are immune to the willow's lure until they next encounter it.

Those who approach the willow, whether lured or not, are addressed by the apparition in between choking sobs. The willow asks in desperation if they have seen her child, or know anything about it at all. Her inquiries, however, are largely rhetorical, as she is interested in examining their memories for herself. If her victims honestly claim to be ignorant of the whereabouts of the child, the willow will look even more forlorn. Those who fabricate knowledge of the child will be received ecstatically. All the while, the willow slowly moves towards the individuals she is addressing. When an individual gets close enough for the willow to touch them, she will attempt to embrace them, pretending to be either overjoyed or looking for consolation. It is then that she will employ her ability to drain memories.

The willow need not make an attack roll to drain her victim's memories if she can cloak her attack in an relatively innocent gesture, such as an embrace. Victims lose 1d10 x 10 weeks of memories beginning with the attack and going back in time. A successful save vs. spell indicates that the loss is only temporary. In such a case, the memories return completely in 3d10 days. Permanent memory loss can only be regained through powerful magical spells or psychic surgery.

The willow's memory drain is subtle. DM's should make the saving throw secretly for the victim in question, and then take the player aside and explain the situation. Victims of the memory drain act dazed for a round or two and are not entirely aware of what just occurred to them. This may give the willow time to drain the memories of other victims before the group catches on and becomes hostile. The willow is not interested in extended physical confrontation. If attacked, she will dissolve her ghostly form and return to her host tree, to wait until her assailants leave.

The most obvious solution to the destruction of a weeping willow is to cut down or otherwise destroy the

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host tree. This is an efficient course of action, but a dangerous one. Although the weeping willow does not suffer damage done to the host tree, she is murderously protective of it. Harming the host tree in any way will send the weeping willow into a frenzy. She will immediately materialize if she has not already, and begin viciously attacking those who are trying to harm the tree. It is only at this time that the willow will employ her ability to *cause wounds*. The willow's touch now causes 1d8 points of damage, inflicting horrible pain on her victims. While in this frenzy, she attacks with a +4 bonus to hit, but suffers a -4 penalty to her Armor Class. Those killed by a weeping willow's attack rise as ordinary ghosts, but are never anchored to the site of the willow's host tree.

Weeping willows may only be harmed in their materialized form, and may only be struck by weapons of +2 or greater enchantment. If attacked in the Ethereal Plane, the willow's Armor Class is 4. Like all undead, the weeping willow is immune to charm, hold, sleep, and death spells, or any mind- or life-affecting spells. Likewise, they are immune to disease, poison, suffocation, and paralysis. A vial of holy water does 1d6 damage to a weeping willow. Willows can be turned as ghosts, but a successful turning only results in their instant dissolution and return to their host tree. They may not, however, materialize again for 1d4 turns.

under his control, but Anton finds they make effective and entertaining sentries against the living, as they ignore the undead.

☒

Habitat/Society

A weeping willow has but one motivation: to find its child. The spirit believes not only that she is still alive, but that she carried her baby to term and then somehow lost it. Willows often construct elaborate fantasies about their nonexistent infant, giving it a name, physical characteristics, and even a personality. Victims are lured to the willow solely to determine if they have any knowledge of the child.

Ecology

Being undead, weeping willows interact little with their environment, save for their host tree. Occasional bits of treasure can be found near their host tree, but the most typical discovery are the personal possessions of their victims, including armor, weapons, and other equipment. Most, however, are soon rendered unusable by the swamp.

Anton Misroi recently had the fortune to discover these pitiable creatures. In typical fashion, he determined that they could be used for his own ends. Anton found that by carefully "disposing" of a pregnant woman beneath a willow tree on his plantation, he could actively create a weeping willow. Such willows are not

MEN, LUNATIC

Another Poor Soul Lost to the Mists

by Andrew Hauptman

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MEN, LUNATIC

Climate/Terrain	Any
Frequency	Very Rare
Organization	Solitary
Activity Cycle	Any
Diet	Omnivore
Intelligence	Average (8-10)
Treasure	Varies
Alignment	Chaotic Neutral
No Appearing	1
Armor Class	10
Movement	12
Hit Dice	1+1
THAC0	20
No. of Attacks	1
Damage/Attack	1d3 or By weapon
Special Attacks	Surprise
Special Defenses	Mental immunity
Magic Resistance	Nil
Size	M (5-6' tall)
Morale	Unsteady (5-7)
XP Value	35

The horrors of Ravenloft take their toll upon the poor mortals who live there in many ways. Some find their minds shattered and become "lost ones." Others have their minds twisted and warped until they become madmen, murderous fiends who stalk innocent prey in the darkened streets. Still others find their sense of reality hopelessly shattered, and become as erratic and unpredictable as the dark land itself. These strange folk are known as lunatics.

Combat

Lunatics usually wear the tattered rags of their former clothes and little more. They have few worldly possessions, and fewer weapons. However, lunatics are highly unpredictable combatants, even from one round to the next. For example, a lunatic armed with a knife may stab with it one round, then turn it around and strike with the pommel. He might also drop the knife to draw out a

longbow, which he may either string with an arrow or swing as a melee weapon, or even pluck on it as if he were playing a mandolin. DMs running lunatics are encouraged to roll a morale check every round; a failed check means that the lunatic takes an action which makes no sense at all (and probably does little or no damage in the process). Take the Chaotic Neutral alignment seriously, but remember that not all lunatics are violent by nature; they're just plain crazy!

Each round that a lunatic acts in an insane fashion, any intelligent character or creature fighting him must roll a surprise check or else stand still in wide-eyed amazement for the remainder of the round (repeated exposure to the lunatic's behavior may reduce or eliminate the surprise rolls over time at the DM's discretion).

The lunatic's unbalanced mind is well-protected from further mental tampering. All mind-controlling and mind-altering spells or psionics used upon a lunatic automatically fail, and mental attacks (such as psionics) only cause half damage. If anyone actually tries to contact a lunatic's mind (via telepathy or mindlink), that character must make an immediate madness check. The attempt fails regardless of the result of this check.

Habitat/Society

Unlike madmen, lunatics cannot even begin to pass themselves off as ordinary people (and they rarely try). They lead a bizarre, erratic life of solitary hermitage, usually because they are driven out of settled areas by saner folk (the DM may opt to roll random reactions on Table 59: Encounter Reactions on page 103 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to determine the lunatic's mental state and reactions each round). They pay little attention to personal hygiene or health and so tend to look like skinny, rag-clad wild men and women.

It should be noted that while lunatics are erratic and unpredictable, they are not stupid. Among their rants and ramblings may be found the occasional pearl of wisdom, or a vital clue for the current adventure. They are known to occasionally attach themselves to

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passersby, especially those who show them kindness (until they change their minds, which can happen at any time).

Ecology

Lunatics rarely have the presence of mind to produce anything of real value. Some may dabble with an art or craft, but their efforts will invariably be for naught. Their writings and paintings are incomprehensible to others, and their creations and inventions are ill-conceived and pointless. One notable lunatic, Marlo DaVucci, became almost legendary, putting even gnome tinkers to shame. His greatest achievement before his untimely death was a large, steam-driven device that exploded every time it was turned on.



DEAD OR ALIVE?

Creatures to Spook You

by "Liederick"

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Ravenloft is a land rife with the undead. Indeed, many who wander the domains might expect zombies to wonder every dark forest, and every abandoned ruin to be haunted by ghosts.

Not all creatures are undead, but, to the casual observer, some may seem to be. Described herein are four such creatures. They are not haunts, but they will spook the natives, regardless.

ROTTING MAN

Climate/Terrain	Ravenloft
Frequency	Very Rare
Organization	Pack
Activity Cycle	Day
Diet	Omnivore
Intelligence	Low (5-7)
Treasure	Nil
Alignment	Any
No. Appearing	1-6
Armor Class	8
Movement	6
Hit Dice	2
THACO	19
No. Attacks	1
Damage/Attack	1d4
Special Attacks	Cause Disease
Special Defenses	Immunity to diseases
Magic Resistance	Nil
Size	M (5'8" tall)
Morale	Unsteady (6)
XP Value	120

Rotting men are the victims of the undead virus. Though they resemble zombies in appearance, they are in fact humans suffering from a strange magical rotting disease.

Their flesh is rotting, turning into a putrid slime that drips from their bones. Their hair has fallen out, and their internal organs are shriveled, giving them a withered appearance; some have lost an eye, arm, or leg to the rot.

They shamble along with difficulty, in constant agony. Death does not claim these creatures as it would normally, and most go insane, raving and attacking anyone that comes near in a hope that this will make them meet their death.

The nature of the virus causing the disease makes the rotting men stand out when using a *detect undead* spell. However, they are neither undead nor mindless, and speak the common tongue as well as any other language they knew in their former lives, though haltingly and with great difficulty.

Combat

Rotting men have little to attack with. They do not generally use weapons, instead going into an all out attack with their bare hands. They are very slow, however, and always attack last in a round. They try to rend their victim's flesh with their nails. A successful attack, in addition to dealing damage, may bring out the undead virus that corrupts their bodies. If a natural 20 is rolled, the character attacked is infected with the undead virus. He then has to roll a saving throw vs. spell at a -2 penalty to avoid contracting the disease.

Otherwise, rotting men do not prove much of an opponent in combat, and almost seem to welcome death. They do not have the immunities of the undead, though they take half damage from cold attacks. They cannot be turned, and holy water has no affect on them, only serving to driving them more mad.

When slain, a rotting men collapses in a putrid heap of slime. The slime itself teems with the virus that brought about their condition, and is highly dangerous.

Habitat/Society

Rotting men are outcasts, and doomed to die a slow and agonizing death. They have no place in society, but often gather together in small packs that roam the countryside. Some actively seek a cure, but most simply wander and attack anything in sight, hoping to be killed in the ensuing battle.

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In a few cases, a Rotting Man may survive within a community, where he is being taken care of by trusted friends. While these men often die in peace and surrounded by friends, this ultimately spells doom for the people that took care of them, as the virus within them is unleashed upon their deaths, ready to contaminate those nearby and create more Rotting Men.

Ecology

Rotting Men are infused with the Undead Virus, and thus serve as interesting research subjects for unscrupulous mages. They are still human, however, and are aware of their own wretched condition.

They are omnivores, often reduced to eating trash or hunting the wild, but their magical nature allows them to go for weeks without drink or water. The skin of a Rotting Man may significantly enhance any type of necromantic spell, but its use can be perilous to the caster.

VIRUS, UNDEAD

Climate/Terrain	Ravenloft
Frequency	Very Rare
Organization	N/A
Activity Cycle	Any
Diet	Nil
Intelligence	Non (0)
Treasure	Nil
Alignment	Neutral
No. Appearing	N/A
Armor Class	N/A
Movement	0
Hit Dice	Special
THAC0	Nil
No. Attacks	0
Damage/Attack	Nil
Special Attacks	Rot
Special Defenses	See below
Magic Resistance	Nil
Size	T (microscopic)
Morale	N/A
XP Value	650

The magical undead virus is a microscopically small organism, invisible to the eye. Even *eyes of minute seeing* or *detect invisibility* will not reveal the virus' presence, though a *detect magic* will. *Detect undead* also works, but only when the virus is active (see below).

This dreadful virus slowly transforms the flesh of its host into a putrid slime, rotting their organs from their bodies, and gradually turning them into the zombie-like creatures known as the Rotting Men.

Sages speculate the virus is a variant of the shadow virus, a magical virus created by the mage Phagius. Another theory is that the virus was created by a Kartakan undertaker, who meddled into forbidden lore to resurrect his wife, killing his home village in the process.

Transmission

An undead virus spends most of the time being dormant, waiting for a victim. When it comes into contact with bare flesh, however, it becomes active, invading the tissues of the body.

The character whose body is invaded needs to roll a saving throw vs. spell with a -2 penalty. Failure indicates the character contracts the virus, at which point it turns active and starts killing off the character's tissues. During this time, normal physical contact with the body of an infected individual will not transmit the virus, as an active virus cannot survive in the open air.

Success means the character should make an immediate saving throw vs. death magic. Failure indicates the character has become a carrier, carrying the now-dormant virus in his body. Anyone he comes into contact with can now be infected by a mere touch.

Diagnosis

Initially, no effects can be noted. Within six hours, the first symptoms appear, as the victim catches a light fever, and starts feeling hot and itchy. As time progresses, the fever grows worse.

Within 24 hours, the victim's fever has him bedridden. His temperature rises to over 40 degrees Celsius, and his skin starts to peel. This keeps on for two days, after which the body temperature drops.

While this may seem the end of the disease at first, this is far from the truth. The victim's body temperature lowers steadily. Dark, numb splotches start to mark his skin, and his concentration starts to ebb. From this day on, every other day the character's Dexterity drops by one point. The victim's Dexterity does not drop below 3, allowing him to still move about, though it is not certain why the victim is not totally incapacitated. It seems this is a kind of survival trait of the virus.

On the fifth day, the victim's flesh starts to visibly rot, falling from his body and emitting a putrid odor. Charisma immediately decreases with one point each day, down to a minimum of three points.

Once Charisma has lowered to this point, most victims turn insane, as now their minds start to rot away, and they start losing their memories and thoughts. In game terms, the rotting men now start to lose one point of Intelligence each day, as the mental decay slowly takes

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their sanity. They do retain a certain cunning (Wisdom), though.

These victims have turned into Rotting Men. The initial reaction of most people is one of fear, and militia or townsfolk will often attempt to destroy the infected individual, which will unfortunately release the virus on the remaining populace. Those who still have a fraction of their mind may flee, wandering the countryside.

When the character's Intelligence has dwindled to nothingness, the last stage sets in.

The disease proceeds steadily from here. The victim rots away, obviously in agony, but unable to die normally. The virus can take weeks and, in some cases, months to consume the body, which can do nothing but shuffle about in agony. Anyone that is cured of the disease at this stage is a wreck—his mind gone, barely able to move, and horrible to behold. Even if the disease is cured, the victim is likely to die within a few (1d4) days.

At the end of the final stage of infection, when the victim's mind is totally gone, the victim collapses in a heap of putrid slime, with only the bones proving that this was once a living being. The slime itself is heavy with dormant viruses, and a single touch can start the whole process again.

Treatment

Viruses can be killed by using magical healing. A *heal* spell will destroy the disease, as will *resurrection* and *raise dead*. *Cure disease* will kill any dormant virus, but an infected individual can not be cured effectively unless the spell is cast within 24 hours of infection. Every 12 hours after that, the chance of curing drops with 10%. So, after 36 hours, the chance of healing is 90%. After six days, the virus has invaded the body tissues so thoroughly that *cure disease* is no longer effective.

SPOOK

Climate/Terrain	Any
Frequency	Uncommon
Organization	Solitary
Activity Cycle	Night
Diet	Emotions
Intelligence	Non-ratable
Treasure	Nil
Alignment	Chaotic Neutral
No. Appearing	1
Armor Class	2 or 10 (see below)
Movement	12
Hit Dice	5
THAC0	15
No. Attacks	1
Damage/Attack	Drain Emotion
Special Attacks	See below
Special Defenses	+2 magical weapon to hit
Magic Resistance	35%
Size	M (5'8" tall)
Morale	Elite (13)
XP Value	2,000

A spook is an apparition that is spontaneously created when strong emotions manifest during the death of a human being. Spooks are ethereal creatures. They are unintelligent beings, which shape themselves after the creatures whose emotions they picked up.

Thus, most spooks look like dead or dying people, though they are slightly transparent, and they are often confused with ghosts. When they attack, their body contorts gruesomely, their eyes bulge, their teeth elongate to fangs, and their hands become wicked claws.

Nobody has been able to communicate with a spook, and those who try telepathic contact should make a madness check as they contact the unintelligible, alien mind.

Combat

A spook attacks first by twisting their adopted shape into a horrible visage. Together with their unnatural aura, this causes *fear* into everyone who looks upon the spook. Those who fail a *save vs. spell* will be paralyzed of horror, unable to move for 1d4 rounds.

In the round after evoking its *fear* aura, the spook turns on the unmoving victim, trying to attack it against the victim's natural Armor Class. If it hits, it wraps its arms around its victim and starts draining the person of his emotions. While this does not initially cause damage, the draining leaves the victim lethargic for 1d4 days, as if affected by a *slow* spell. The victim's fear vanishes, though the horror of the experience is still grafted into their minds. In addition, the draining is a very strenuous

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experience, and the victim needs to save vs. death magic or temporarily lose one point of Constitution. Lost Constitution is regained at the rate of one point every week.

Regardless whether the save is made, the spook then breaks of its attack, ready to feed on the next victim. It will ignore its earlier “meal” until the next time they meet. If no other persons are available, it will simply leave.

A spook partly exists in the border ethereal, and therefor can only be hit by weapons of +2 enchantment or higher.

If the attacker is on the ethereal plane, however, any weapon will do, and the Armor Class of the Spook is lowered to 10.

Spooks cannot be turned, and *charm* and *mind-affecting* spells do not have effect on them. They are not undead, and thus cannot be affected by holy water or spells specifically designed for undead. On the other hand, cold-based spells do have normal effect, and as spooks are ethereal, a *protection from evil* will hold them at bay.

Habitat/Society

Spooks are creatures who attack those emitting the strongest emotions. They are attracted by fear, hate, lust, or love.

Spooks ignore anyone who does not possess these emotions, so mindless undead and the phlegmatic may wander undisturbed. Indeed, not a few castles seem to have a “house spook,” to which the inhabitants are accustomed to such a degree that the spook does not prove much of a threat.

Otherwise, spooks often live in abandoned homes and sites, as their attacks will drive off any eager inhabitants. This gives rise to a lot of tales of “haunted sites” throughout the land.

Ecology

Spooks seem to live off of emotions. They like strong feelings the best, but spooks are able to live for centuries without nourishment, though some sages speculate that, in this case, they simply feed “off the land.”

Spooks seem to be a natural phenomenon from the ethereal plane. They exist primarily in Ravenloft, but are occasionally encountered on the Prime Material.

WIGHTLORD

	Mage	Warrior
Climate/Terrain	Any	Ravenloft
Frequency	Very rare	Very rare
Organization	Solitary	Solitary
Activity Cycle	Day	Day
Diet	Omnivore	Omnivore
Intelligence	13-18	8-13
Treasure	A	A
Alignment	Any (Evil)	Chaotic Evil
No. Appearing	1	1
Armor Class	4	3
Movement	9	9
Hit Dice	10+	11+
THAC0	10	9
No. Attacks	1	2
Damage/Attack	1d8 or by weapon	1d8 or by weapon
Special Attacks	Drain level, Spells	Drain level
Special Defenses	Spell immunity	Spell immunity
Magic Resistance	Nil	Nil
Size	M (6' tall)	M (6' tall)
Morale	Elite (13-14)	Champion (16)
XP Value	9000	8000

The draining of the undead can have terrible repercussions indeed. Those that die may rise themselves as the living dead, while those that survive may be crippled for life, and not all handle it that well.

The wightlord is a sad example of the corruption which can be caused by an undead’s attack.

Although still alive, wightlords look like mere pale reflections of their original self, their skin almost translucent and drawn tight over their bones, an eerie light shining in their eyes. It is easy to take a wightlord for one of the more common undead, but for most people this is their last mistake, as is proven when the wightlord releases his powers upon the unsuspecting souls.

Wightlords speak all the languages they knew before their transformation.

Combat

The powers of wightlords vary depending on their former lives. Those who were warriors may have proficiency with the sword, while the arcane may wield the magic spells they knew in life. A mage wightlord’s level varies depending on the wightlord’s past. However, no wightlords lower than 9th level have as yet been encountered, and regardless of their profession, all wightlords use the standard monster Hit Dice (d8) to determine hit points.

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All wightlords have a chilling touch that causes 1d8 hit points of damage. This touch drains a victim's life force, adding the lost hit points to that of the wightlord (though never over his maximum). No save is allowed, and in addition to the hit point loss, the touch drains one level, though the victim does not lose additional hit points for the latter. When the last level is drained, the victim dies, rising within three hours as a wight or wraith under the wightlord's control. No levels are drained if the wightlord employs a weapon, but those who know the arcane arts can extend the ability through spells like *vampiric touch*.

The wightlord is not undead, and can not be turned or harmed with holy water, nor can *detect undead* detect a wightlord. They do have a few undead-like immunities, though. They are immune to the draining attacks of other undead or wightlords, and to *death magic* and cold based spells, though *charm* spells and poisons still work.

The attack form of a wightlord varies depending on its past. Warriors will prefer to use their draining attack, while magic users or priests will try to use their spells to gain the upper hand.

Some wightlords can be coerced into reason and negotiation, but most are insane beyond reason, as the negative energies slowly consume the lord's mind.

Habitat/Society

Unless a wightlord has a way to hide his nature, he will generally out to live outside of society, spending his days as a hermit, until those times when his insanity drives him to seek out victims to ease his frustrations. Most warrior wightlords quickly go insane, taking their vengeance on the society that is now unable to accept them.

Mage wightlords are more capable of dealing with their condition, and sometimes can grow to become powerful spellcasters, often well versed in the field of necromancy.

Most lords eventually seek out the company of the undead, feeling particularly drawn to the creatures that caused their condition in the first place, such as wights or wraiths.

Ecology

A wightlord is sometimes created when a high-level (9th or higher) warrior or mage barely survives an undead draining attack, most often when under a powerful protecting charm. Nobody really knows why certain people become wightlords, while others are crippled for life. Most mage wightlords were necromancers, but not all of them—at least one diviner is known to have been turned into a wightlord. Some speak of wightlords as

“Greater Cold Ones,” but the powers of a wightlord are far beyond those poor souls.

It is speculated that the dark powers have a hand in this, tempting heroes with undead powers they cannot control. Indeed, it seems only Ravenloft can spawn a wightlord, and their number is so small that it is seen as an indication that the personal intervention of the dark powers is involved. Still, some wightlords seem to hang on to their own alignments for quite a while, and it is speculated that for those few a *wish* or *restoration* can bring the wightlord back from the darkness.



THE SCROLL OF THE HUNTER

Primal Magic for the Lands of Mist

by Eric C. Daniel
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Appearance

The *Scroll of the Hunter* is actually something of a misnomer for this artifact. It is, in fact, a piece of hide approximately three feet long by one foot wide, with ragged edges. On one side of the scroll crude symbols have been drawn with reddish brown ink, looking like the sorts of artwork one finds in cave paintings. The symbols represent humanoid and animal figures hunting, the moon, circles, rays, and various beasts.

History

Before humans or even elves learned the grammar of magic as we know it today, the world was a much more dangerous and chaotic place. People looked at the world in fear. Hunters and warriors placated ancient spirits of they-knew-not-what for protection, and wore the skins of beasts in the hope of gaining power. When magic was discovered, it was far more primitive and ritualistic than today, but no less powerful. The *Scroll* dates from these most ancient of times, before history was recorded by any sentient race. Who made it is unknown. Sages, what few that know of it, state that the *Scroll of the Hunter* was probably a record made so one witch doctor or shaman could teach another. Whatever the *Scroll* is, wherever it has gone, the only thing known is that its power is real.

Powers & Curse

In the hands of a thief, a mage, or any of the thousands of non-adventurers in the Land of Mists, the scroll is nothing more than a curiosity, an ancient example of how people tried making records. The *Scroll's* sole unusual feature is that the hide appears indestructible. It cannot be cut or damaged in any way. Acid and fire have no effect on it, and the ink cannot be scraped off by any

means or with any tool. However, if a warrior or a cleric of any sort looks at the scroll, its true power is revealed. Once the unfortunate gazes on the scroll, the symbols seem to glow, and the victim cannot put it down or look away for a full round. An observer looking over the shoulder of the fighter or cleric holding the scroll would see that the symbols seem to have taken on the color and consistency of fresh blood, and actually appear to flow in the orbits and patterns laid down.

Once the round is up, the victim can release the scroll, but must make an immediate save vs. paralysis. (Rangers, druids, and other priests of nature make this saving throw with a -2 penalty because of their closeness to the natural world) If the save is made, the victim is affected as though he failed a madness check, with images of dark rites and unspeakable savagery echoing throughout his mind. (This can be cured normally.) If the save is failed, the victim has imbedded in his mind a ritual, capable of being performed once a month under a full moon, that will give the person performing this ritual the senses and skill of a wolf. (For game purposes, this ritual is a magical rite turning the performer into a loup du noir.) The victim will become entranced with the ritual, and will attempt to perform it at the first opportunity.

The rite is the same as the one described in *Darklords* as the one that turned Gregor Zolnik into the loup du noir he is today. For those without this accessory, the rite is as follows: The supplicant must first kill a wolf under a full moon, then draw a small circle within a large circle using the wolf's blood. The supplicant must then sit inside the smaller circle and eat the wolf's brain, for its cunning, and the wolf's heart, for its courage. Then the supplicant must ask a boon from whatever powers rule the night for the strength, senses, and skill of a wolf. A failed save vs. spell with a -2

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penalty indicates they grant this wish, and the supplicant becomes a loup du noir.

If there is some time to wait before the full moon, the victim is surly and impatient until that night, snapping at everyone and being generally unpleasant. He or she will refuse to speak of what he/she learned from the scroll. If the first attempt at using the ritual fails, the victim becomes obsessed with it, and will attempt to perform the ritual every full moon thereafter. The only way to break this obsession is by casting a *remove curse* spell on the victim while he is sitting inside the double circle the ritual requires.

Suggested Means of Destruction

This scroll has survived literally countless centuries, passing through hundreds of cultures and individual hands. There is some speculation that the scroll cannot be destroyed, that it is the last embodiment of the most ancient and powerful of magics. Others believe the only way it can be destroyed is if it is eaten by a loup du noir created by its magic, during one of the full moon rituals it describes.



CODA AL FINE

Music to Grip the Soul

by Marco A. Torres
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"Nevertheless the passions, whether violent or not, should never be so expressed as to reach the point of causing disgust; and music, even in situations of the greatest horror, should never be painful to the ear but should flatter and charm it, and thereby always remain music."

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Appearance

The *Coda al Fine* carries the appearance of any other sheet music. There is nothing magical or diabolical in its appearance. It is a collection of musical notes and symbols written on paper. There are exactly twelve copies of the *Coda*, each copy being for a separate instrument.

Background

Christophe Marquet was a young struggling musician in the land of Dementlieu. He had a great talent with the flute, but he was incapable of producing any original work. Thus, he took the published work of other musicians and played it at local inns and taverns, hoping to be noticed by anyone with influence.

It was during one of his many performances that he met Clarisse Delvaux, the daughter of a wealthy noble from Richemulot. At first he was mesmerized only by her physical beauty, but as he began to befriend her, he learned there was much more to this woman. She had been a student of music herself, having learned how to play the piano under a private tutor, and had even written a few of her own pieces. The two would often play music together privately, enjoying the beautiful sound they created, as well as each other's company. It seemed

like the perfect romance. But, like so many things in the Land of Mists, their happiness was not meant to last.

Almost two months after they had met, Christophe learned that Clarisse was engaged to another man through an arrangement made by her father with another noble. He was crushed. Not only did this other man have Clarisse, but he was better at him in just about everything. He was stronger, wealthier, and far more physically attractive. In fact, the only thing Christophe was better at was music. This other man had absolutely no talent for music, though he did enjoy Clarisse's work. Upon realizing he did have an advantage, Christophe set out to create the perfect gift for Clarisse: a song to make her instantly fall for him. Unfortunately, he still lacked the creativity to create his own music.

Christophe spent days trying to create anything that might even resemble music, but to no avail. He just wasn't capable of producing any original music. Feeling hopeless, Christophe went to the local tavern to drink his sorrows away. Instead, he found the answer to his problems. At the bar was a disheveled patron bothering most of the customers. Curious, Christophe moved closer to hear what he was saying.

"It is a magical figurine, capable of granting its owner whatever he wishes. But each wish bears a terrible price. The power will be yours alone, and no one shall be able to take it from you, unless you give it up willingly. But to do so, you must also tell of its price..."

Christophe rushed to the man, hoping this strange tale was true. "I'll take it," Christophe yelled. He ignored the man's statements of a "terrible price," seeking only to guarantee Clarisse's love for him. He took the figurine from the man, thanking him, and then bade him farewell. He then rushed back home. Looking at this strange figurine, Christophe made his wish. "I wish for a song that will make any who listens to it want to die for me!" Christophe had only meant his wish figuratively, but the figurine took it quite literally. That night, Christophe wrote down his greatest, and only, song. He printed enough copies for a small orchestra, for he had planned to get his song widespread. He fell asleep, exhausted from so much writing.

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The next morning, Christophe went to visit Clarisse, and play for her his new song. She was alone, for which Christophe was thankful, and she agreed to listen to it. Thus, Christophe began to play the beautiful song on his flute, as Clarisse watched. It was beautiful. Clarisse swayed to its music, enchanted by its beautiful tune, completely unaware of its dark secret. As Christophe played, he looked up to stare at his love. What he saw frightened him horribly.

There sat Clarisse, her body swaying to his tune. Her bruised, bloody body. Christophe tried to stop playing, but he found he could not. He continued to play, and Clarisse's body continued to injure itself. With each new note, a new wound opened, yet still she smiled. Finally, Christophe finished his performance. "It's lovely," Clarisse whispered. Then she died.

"What have I done?" Christophe moaned. Unable to live with his foul deed, Christophe took his own life, hoping to join his love in the next world. His only legacy was his lovely, yet deadly, coda.

Clarisse lost her life, and upon hitting the last note, the priest must cast *dispel evil*. At that point, all the abilities of the *Coda* are removed, leaving only the lovely song Christophe had intended.

✕

Powers

The *Coda al Fine* is a unique item. In order to be used, someone with the Musical Instrument proficiency must play it on one of the instruments it was written for. Multiple musicians multiply its power, although only up to twelve musicians may play it at a time. Upon beginning to play, any who listen to the song must make a saving throw vs. spell or be charmed by the tune. Every round thereafter, any under its spell lose one point of health for every musician playing. Thus, if there are three musicians playing, anyone listening loses 3 hp per round. This damage can only be healed by magical means. However, the musicians also suffer for its use. Every musician playing loses 1 hit point per round, the price for the power of the song. In addition, if they seek to stop playing, they must make a saving throw vs. spell at a -1 penalty per musician. Failure forces the musician to continue to play until the end. The *Coda* lasts for five rounds, making it quite dangerous if used with a large group of musicians. Use of this item requires a powers check of 1% per musician.

Suggested Means of Destruction

Because the evil of the *Coda* lies in the song itself and not the sheet music, destruction of it is quite difficult. There is only one way to destroy the evil of the song. A priest must *bless* twelve musical instruments, one for each instrument the *Coda* was written for. Then the song must be played completely, in the same room where

THE BA'AL VERZI KNIFE

A Blade to Open Old Wounds

by Charles Phipps
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**An entry from the personal journal of
Strahd von Zarovich:**

Sixth Moon, 690

I, Strahd, the law of the land, have been bereft of that which is most dear to me yet again.

Tatyana, this time born in the guise of a local farmer's daughter named Anna, is dead. Worse she died cast again from my castle. Thrown into the dark flowing canyons below it by cruel accident and terrible chance. Knocked into empty air while I attempted a duel of honor with a flaxen-haired adventurer who in ignorance and selfish lust had dared to challenge me for her hand.

I would like to say that the cretin paid a fitting penalty for murdering my beloved, but it is not so. He who did this dealt a stinging wound into my chest that even now refuses to heal, and escaped across my borders. He is temporarily out of Barovia's law, my law.

I am disturbed by these events more than any mere mortal man could possibly comprehend. Not only for the sheer, vile injustice that has been dealt Anna, depriving her of her status as my bride, but also for the knife the boy wielded. The knife of the Ba'al Verzi, the knife that I used to kill my brother Sergei, the knife nearly used to kill me, the knife which has returned again to haunt me; this was the knife the boy wielded against me.

There was a stinging familiarity in the blow the boy dealt me, a presence I have not felt for centuries. Was it Sergei? Does my brother yet haunt me in ignorance and boyish jealousy over the love between Tatyana and myself? I cannot believe that. The Sergei I knew would never have had the stomach for such fratricidal vengeance. I would dare to think even that he would approve of my decision. The gods will deliver Tatyana back into my hands again, allowing him to know the purity of our love.

An Inn in Gundarak, Same Night

Charles Mueller held the mystic knife close to his chest, the numerous bandages on his wounds covering almost the entirety of his torso.

He could barely move, but despite his exhaustion, this was due more to his failure to save Tatyana... Anna. Odd, he nearly said her name wrong. It must have been the pain, for although he had only known Anna for three days, he had fallen madly in love with her.

He cursed Strahd under his breath, for although he was out of that monster's reach he suspected the beast had ears everywhere.

Charles's mind wandered to thoughts of how this strange tragedy had come to pass; how he had been a simple student in Il Aluk until he had bought a strange, antique knife from a local merchant; how he had often dreamt of Barovia and had decided to travel there. How he had met his sweet beautiful Tat... Anna. How he had used the knife to destroy the vile things that came after her the night he was going to make his proposal, and how the knife had pierced the monster's side when their combat on the castle's drawbridge had knocked his beloved to her death.

Charles clutched his wounds; they were especially painful as he thought of that. At that moment, he vowed he would return again and destroy Strahd. The knife glimmered a bit as he made his mental vow.

The Ba'al Verzi Knife

The Ba'al Verzi Knife appears to be a small, red, black, and gold knife covered in mystic runes and precious stones on the hilt. Those who know the ancient history of Barovia will recognize it as the knife of a Ba'al Verzi assassin. A sheath used to hold the knife, no matter what the original material was made of, will gradually transform into odd-looking leather. Magical tests will reveal it to be human skin, specifically that of Sergei von Zarovich.

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Background

The Ba'al Verzi assassins were an order of murderers, assassins, and killers feared throughout Prime Material Barovia during the third century of that country's calendar. The assassins of the order were said to be perfect masters of subterfuge, and that anyone a target knew could be one of their agents, not even excluding the target's best friend, cousin, or even mother.

The Ba'al Verzi could be recognized in one way, however: All of their order committed their assassinations with small, special knives. The knives' hilts were decorated in red, black, and gold. The red stood for the blood they took, black for the death they brought, and gold for the payment they received for their grisly work. Finally, to mark the depths of these monsters' depravity, it should be noted that the sheath of the blade was made from the skin of the assassin's first kill, the person closest to them upon their joining of the order.

This Ba'al Verzi knife is older than the Demiplane as we know it. Originally wielded by the Ba'al Verzi assassin Illya Buchvold, it was taken from that personage when he was killed trying to assassinate the then-mortal Strahd in the year 347 of Prime Material Barovia's calendar. Later, on the infamous night that Barovia entered the Demiplane, this knife was the weapon Strahd von Zarovich used to kill his brother Sergei. Unbeknown to Strahd, however, when the blade struck down his brother a part of Sergei's spirit—specifically the part that was horrified at Strahd's unholy lust and angered at his vile murder—was lodged into the blade itself. Sergei's spirit merged with the vile magic and assassin's spirit that the knife represented.

After Strahd spent the night rampaging against his wedding guests, he attempted to recover the weapon but discovered it was like fire in his hands. Storing it inside his study, it lay forgotten for more than a century.

The blade was next found by the thief of a powerful group of adventurers sometime in the decade before or after 528 of the Barovian calendar—adventurers who were looting the castle as they searched for the vampire's crypt.

When the sun set the entire group was slain mercilessly, their bodies cast off the castle's rooftops, down the cliffs, to the rushing river below. Strahd had neglected to check their bodies though, and the Knife fell into the hands of a Barovian scavenger who had the foresight to guess that treasures might be found among the riverbanks.

Since then the blade has repeatedly found its way back to Barovia and has caused no end of men and women to meet their deaths battling Strahd. However,

each time it causes incredible misery to the vampire lord and many a time it has nearly destroyed him.

Powers

- ◆ *The Ba'al Verzi Knife* functions as a *knife* +2 most of the time; however, the bonus increases to +4 when fighting the creations of Strahd (be they zombies, skeletons, vampires, etc.) or the darklord himself.
- ◆ *The Ba'al Verzi Knife* will flash momentary and often confusing images to its wielder about the past of the vampire lord. These images grow stronger and clearer as the wielder carries the *Knife* closer to Castle Ravenloft. Once inside Castle Ravenloft, the visions are remarkably clear and precise, if somewhat disturbing depending on the room (one room might show the wedding guests gathering, but another may reveal Strahd's brutal murder of Sergei).
- ◆ *The Ba'al Verzi Knife* can be used to immobilize any vampire (even Strahd himself) like a wooden stake if driven through their heart
- ◆ Finally, *The Ba'al Verzi Knife* can be used to divine the location of Tatyana's current incarnation through an instinctive "feel" of where to go.

Curse

- ◆ The blade cannot be sheathed until it "drinks" at least 1 hit point of blood, be it undead or living. This is leftover from its original days as an assassin's tool; Ba'al Verzi considered it extremely bad luck to sheath it without drawing blood. If the wielder does not fulfill this requirement, the *Knife* will cause the character to increasingly take on the mindset of a Ba'al Verzi assassin, in hopes of satiating the blood thirst he feels. Characters who do not feed the *Knife* for long enough will find their alignment shifting to Chaotic Evil; they become stone-cold killers, ready to attack at the slightest provocation. Thankfully, once the blade is fed the urges vanish.
- ◆ If male, the wielder will inevitably fall intensely in love with Tatyana. Female wielders will develop strong feelings of protection and friendship (very rare as the *Knife* prefers the former). Inevitably this leads to tragedy as Strahd's curse takes effect.
- ◆ The wielder will be drawn to Barovia like a moth to a flame. This feeling of longing grows more intense with time, and the curses themselves will grow stronger as the wielder grows closer to Barovia.

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Suggested

Means of Destruction

- ◆ The *Knife* must be used to forever destroy Strahd von Zarovich (something that is unlikely to happen).
- ◆ The *Knife* must be exorcised of Sergei's spirit in the poisonous mists around Strahd's castle. It should be noted that the sliver of Sergei's spirit trapped in the blade has been totally corrupted by the assassin's spirit of the *Knife*; the resulting creation will be an entity as vile as Strahd himself, but possessing his late brother's likeness and memories, and burning for vengeance.

Adventure Hooks

- ◆ One of the heroes (preferably male) purchases the Ba'al Verzi knife from a wandering peddler, who acquired the weapon from a slain adventurer. The hero receives increasingly powerful dreams about Barovia and the tale of Strahd and Tatyana (the novel *I, Strahd* would be useful in this respect) and is then lured by dreams of the most beautiful maiden he has ever seen being dragged off by a vile monster. This generation's Tatyana is already being courted by Strahd, but her father is defying the lord. Thus, Strahd has sent his minions to drag her to Castle Ravenloft, confident he can make it up to her later. The *Knife* will not allow this though.
- ◆ The players are contacted by a powerful mage from Necropolis. The wizard has acquired the *Knife* and has developed precise instructions for destroying it which he will pay the players handsomely to do. The *Knife* will not enjoy this and exercises its full abilities to continue its quest for Tatyana and Strahd while the players are in Barovia. If the *Knife* is destroyed (as described in second method above) Sergei's spirit will emerge as a 4th magnitude ghost to haunt the people of Barovia. This creature is possibly worse than Strahd in his ruthless desire to destroy Strahd and regain Tatyana. The mage knows this, however, and is a member of the Kargatane who hopes to destroy Strahd as an homage to his fallen master Azalin and as a service to his mistress.



THE BOCCORU

A Voodan Kit for the Swamps of Souragne

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The *Domains of Dread* hardback has ideas for player characters that originate in the Lands of Mist, such as avengers, gypsies, etc. Along with this, it talks about some of the religions found in Ravenloft and only in Ravenloft.

One of these is the priest of the Loa, or nature spirits of the swamp. (Please bear in mind that these ideas has nothing to do with voodoo. This is an extrapolation of powers and responsibilities given the Souragnian shamans in books like *Dance of the Dead* and various adventures set in that domain. There are similarities in names, but nothing more.)

Boccoru are a type of specialty priest found only in the swamps of Souragne. They are similar to druids in that they revere nature, but unlike druids, they do not revere nature as a whole, but rather specific spirits of nature called the *Loas*. A Loa is a sort of hero-spirit of a particular species of animal or plant, something that embodies all of the essential characteristics and ideals of that one species. The boccoru learn from these spirits and honor them, and try and protect their lesser brethren and the balance of the world as a whole. Given the zombie-infested nature of the land they dwell in, this is not an easy task.

The greatest of these spirits are the Maiden of the Swamp and the Lord of the Dead. All Loas, especially these two, are actually living, solid creatures that can be talked to, if one can find them. The Maiden of the Swamp is essentially a hamadryad, but possesses a greater spellcasting capability than others of her kind. (Treat as a 9th-level boccoru and a 9th-level mage for purposes of what spells she can cast, save that all spells have only somatic components.) She is the Loa of Life. The Lord of Dead is Anton Misroi, the darklord of Souragne and the Loa of Death. (See *Domains of Dread* for Misroi's biography.) Both act as mentors to boccoru on occasion, teaching of magic and the swamp. Misroi, naturally, teaches evil boccoru who wish power for their own ends. He never lets them get too high in level. Not all Loa are found in Souragne. Like nature, they are spread throughout the domains. (The Loa of foxes, Bushytail, is found in Richemulot.) Adventuring

boccoru, therefore, can gain spells throughout the Lands of Mist.

Ethos and Purpose:

The boccoru seek to serve the spirits of the swamp and the people of Souragne. They wish to preserve the balance of the world, working with Nature, rather than against it. They also wish to protect the Souragnians from the forces of Death working and (pardon the expression) living there. They serve as healers, protectors, and guides.

Alignment

Boccoru must be partially Neutral in alignment. Those that are Neutral Evil are disciples of Anton Misroi and are not available as player characters.

Races

Boccoru are all human, since all of the natives of Souragne are human.

Requirements

Wisdom 9

Constitution 11

One must be wise to understand the ways of the loa, and healthy to survive in the swamps.

Spheres of Influence

Major: All, Necromantic, Plant

Minor: Animal, Healing, Weather

Granted Powers

- ◆ At 1st level, boccoru may walk through shrub grass, overgrown areas, and mud at full movement rate without leaving a trail. (Like a swamp druid, from *The Complete Druid's Handbook*)

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- ◆ At 3rd level, they may turn undead. They always turn undead as a priest of two levels lower. (Thus, a 3rd-level boccooru turns undead as 1st-level cleric) This reflects the fact that they are priests of the natural order in an unnatural world.
 - ◆ Also at 3rd level, boccooru learn enough of herbal lore to create *fetishes*, small packets of swamp plants and herbs with magical properties. These have either the properties of *protection from evil* (as per the 1st-level priest spell) or grant immunity to charm or enchantment magics. These can only be made once per week and last 1d4+1 days before losing all magical properties.
- drawn on it with charcoal made from cypress wood or (preferably) swamp tar. These symbols represent the teachers and Loa that the boccooru has learned from.



Arms and Armor

Boccooru may wear any armor, but as a rule prefer leather or hide armor. Anything with more metal would rust in the humid Souragnian atmosphere.

They are limited to the staff, club, knife, machete, net, and lasso for weapons. These are things that can be made in the swamp or are useful there.

Nonweapon Proficiencies

Bonus: none

Required: Herbalism, Survival(swamp) (available for 1 slot only)

Duties

Guidance, Marriage, Protection of their swamp area from unnecessary or unnatural depredation, Protection of living from the undead (good boccooru only), Healing and spiritual guidance to a particular village.

Limitations

Boccooru have no organized church, gaining their knowledge and skills from a single mentor and the Loa themselves. Therefore, when in trouble, they cannot turn to a larger association for help. They must rely on themselves and any creatures they can talk to and charm only. They do not gain followers at 9th level as per the *Player's Guide*, but at 11th level, they may gain 1d2 followers wanting to learn of the ways of the Loa, but no others afterward. Boccooru never build strongholds, just a small hut near whatever village they serve.

Symbol

The symbol of the boccooru priesthood is a small cross-section of a cypress tree branch with mystic symbols

THE ACOLYTES OF ZEBULON

A Cult In Defiance of Time Itself

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History

In year 700 of the Barovian Calendar, a man known only as Zebulon entered the city of Pont-a-Museau in the newly-formed domain of Richemulot. Like many others, he was struck with wonder at the crumbling dwellings and avenues of the apparently abandoned city. Unlike many others, he was also filled with a bitterness at the loss of whoever built the great city, and burned for the knowledge of what happened to the civilization before his own people. He began searching for answers, but found none, only fueling his desire. He began to lament that his own life was growing shorter while the answers he sought still lay out of his reach. It was then that he realized that Time is the greatest enemy of man. The passage of time had erased the records and history of the former denizens of Pont-a-Museau. Their existence had almost been for naught, future generations would only know of them through the remains of their crumbling buildings. Furthermore, a man who avoided war and disease would still fall prey to time, the most silent and insidious of killers. Zebulon set aside his archeological work, and delved into a new field of study—that of attaining immortality.

Zebulon consulted arcane tomes and experimented with chemicals and herbs both mundane and otherwise. His life passing each day, and feeling more and more the ebb of the hour, Zebulon turned his attention towards mastering undeath. During the course of his studies, he had amassed a large following. His fanatical apprentices scoured the Demiplane of Dread for answers. The acolytes of Zebulon were exceedingly harsh in acquiring the information they sought in the name of their master and the human race, and stories of their raids in the name of knowledge persist to this day in some communities. One apprentice brought back a magical work from castle Avernus itself, braving horrors innumerable in the

process. Using this and other tools, Zebulon performed a ritual that ended in with a dramatic explosion, destroying most of his tower and lab.

With the apparent destruction of their lord, the cult returned to their normal day to day activities. Months later, they began to receive prophetic dreams of their former master. Returning to the site of the explosion, they encountered a being of neither light nor darkness claiming to be Zebulon. Zebulon revealed to them secrets of the universe that he had experienced since his transformation. While it drove many insane, it convinced all that Zebulon had attained true immortality, and became a creature unto the gods. They fell in worship to their lord, who vanished one year to the date of his manifestation. Thereafter the faithful received unusual powers, and were instructed through visions to attempt to follow their lord into eternity. Thus the cult of Zebulon was formed.

Dogma

Time is the ultimate enemy; above all else value what time you have and mark its passage. Waste not, yet do not hurry through your lives, as this would indicate time's final victory. Seek to overcome time through any means: Zebulon was a man once, and his path is open to you as well. Barring your immortality, record you work both on paper and upon beaten metal; this way your work may be continued after your own death. Lastly, aid the poor, as their lives are consumed by factory owners and landlords; all men are equal and deserve to live their lives.

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Day to Day Activities

Above all else, priests of Zebulon seek immortality through research. They attempt to recreate their lord's work (though with less explosive results). They also act to preserve ancient knowledge and ways, maintaining libraries and museums, as well as restoring historical buildings. They fight oppression, taking up the case of the proletariat in those domains featuring factories and mills.

Dress

Priests of Zebulon dress in somber black robes with gold buttons. They wear wide-brimmed hats, and their weapon of choice is a morning star with the head fashioned as a broken clock. When armor is worn, it is always metal, as it lasts the ravages of time better than hide. Their holy symbol is that of a broken time keeping device of some sort, be it a cracked sundial or a stopped pocket watch.

Specialty Priest of Zebulon (Zebulyte)

Requirements

To be a specialty priest of Zebulon requires not only a strong sense of purpose but also an exceedingly keen mind. Thus only those individuals with a 14 in both Wisdom and Intelligence are eligible to be priests of Zebulon. The path they follow is one often riddled with dark secrets man was not meant to know, ones that may be repugnant to good individuals. Conversely, Priests of Zebulon work for the betterment of the human race, so evil individuals are not suited. Only those of True Neutral or Lawful Neutral alignment may receive spells.

Spheres

Major Spheres: All, Divination, Healing, Necromantic, Numbers, Time

Minor Spheres: Charm, Protection, Thought

Granted Powers

- ◆ At first level, Priests of Zebulon may *know age* as the 1st-level priest spell from *Tome of Magic* three times per day. This spell conforms to the restrictions presented on page 169 of *Domains of*

Dread. Zebulytes call this ability “knowing thy enemy.”

- ◆ At third level, priests of Zebulon may cast *death's door* once per week as the third level priest spell from the *Complete Necromancer's Handbook*.
- ◆ At fifth level, the Zebulyte has gained some mastery over time's effects on his body. He may add fifty years to his life, and is immune to *haste* and *slow* spells.
- ◆ Upon attaining 12th level, the priest is assumed to have duplicated enough of Zebulon's work to strip himself of his own mortality. The exact process is left up to the DM, but it should be difficult, to say the least. When the ritual is completed, the Zebulyte must make a saving throw vs. death magic. If successful, he has cheated time, and ceases to age. Additional benefits have been reported, such as increased resistance to disease or requiring less sleep, but any other effects bestowed are entirely up to the DM. If the priest fails his save, he inadvertently absorbed too much energy of undeath. He becomes a lich, with all the benefits and hindrances associated with such a being. The lich runs the risk of Corruption, as presented in the *Requiem* rulebook. Even if the priest makes his initial save, he still must make an additional save vs. death magic every five years or become a lich. It is important to note that even if a lich becomes totally Chaotic Evil in alignment, he will still receive spells, creating some sinister implications as to the true goals of Zebulon.

Additional Abilities

Priests of Zebulon may command undead as a granted power. They may use any metal armor, as well as any weapon. However, Zebulytes are basically pacifists, and any additional weapon proficiency slots gained during the course of their career should be treated as non-weapon proficiencies instead. While they may create undead, they never order them into combat, as this leads to unnecessary destruction. Instead they are used as servants to allow more free time.

Adventure Ideas

- ◆ The church of Zebulon maintains several libraries throughout Ravenloft. Some of that knowledge is dangerous to man, and is unavailable to the public. Either the PCs or their opponents desire that knowledge and attempt to acquire it through various means.
- ◆ Alternatively a priest has gone rogue. In his experiments he has made something which has

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resulted in a loss of sanity and life. The PCs are asked to hunt down this individual and creation, preferably returning both of them alive for treatment and study. The PCs might encounter the mad priest before becoming fully knowledgeable about the priesthood, and might assume that all followers of Zebulon are dangerous madmen.

- ◆ When an unfortunate Zebulyte becomes a corrupted (evil) lich, they are usually kept locked up by their more sane brethren, attended by powerful keepers. However, should one of these beings escape, they would certainly cause great destruction. The Acolytes would certainly wish to bring their former colleague back to captivity without destroying him, a task a certain group of adventurers might just be perfect for. Ethical issues of not making a creature such as this pay for its crimes, as well as the threat of a future outbreak would certainly trouble the PCs.
- ◆ Priests of Zebulon might also be found in the thrall of sentient undead. While they do not condone some activities taken by these creatures, they will possibly fight to maintain their source of research.
- ◆ Lastly, a lich hunt may turn up an immortal priest of Zebulon instead. Hardened adventurers may be shocked by such a being, researching for eternity without the malevolence normally associated with such undead. They might become pupils or agents of the Zebulyte, either through direct contact or through its associates, though they might never fully trust their patron.

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CLASSES OF THE DAMNED

The Paladin, Druid, and Bard Reexamined

by John W. Mangrum
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By the damned, I mean the excluded.

Charles Fort
The Book of the Damned (1919)

Appendix Three of *Domains of Dread* provided a new look at the AD&D character classes, reshaping them to fit the Ravenloft setting. Sadly for fans of the following three classes, it was decided that there simply were no paladins, druids, or bards native to the Lands of Mist. The argument against each of these classes has undeniable merit, yet at the same time it could still be argued that there is room for each.

This article attempts to reinterpret these three classes, presenting them in the style of Appendix Three and tweaking them just enough to bring them into Ravenloft's fold.

Although each class has been given a new name (Paragon, Caretaker, and Artiste) to differentiate these variants from their *Player's Handbook* counterparts, it is not necessary to use the new labels. The intention is simply to look at each class through new eyes, and alter their concept only as necessary to suit a gothic setting.

The professors sat at a long, worm-eaten table in the university's massive library, poring over crumbling tomes. As one of the sages delicately turned the page of his book, the dry parchment cracked, crumbling to dust between his bony fingers.

The professor let his hand flop to the table with a sharp knock, and sighed in frustration.

"This is pathetic," he groaned. The other two professors at the table looked up from their own studies, mildly interested. "How are we supposed to accomplish anything," Professor Hatterdam continued, "when all our texts are falling apart? Time is devouring this entire library as I watch."

Across the table, Professor Marchare smirked with sour amusement. "I suppose you'd like the University to go out and buy you replacements, eh?"

"At least we don't have problems with bookworms," offered Professor Dormuse, sitting at the end of the table.

Hatterdam gritted his teeth. "Decrepit books are the least of our problems." Pointing through one of the library's tall, dusty windows, he gestured to the city street and overcast sky outside. "When I look out there, do you know what I don't see?"

"A lively festival atmosphere?" mused Marchare.

"Academic progress?" guessed Dormuse blindly.

"Hope." Hatterdam paused for effect. Marchare and Dormuse shot each other glances through narrowed eyes.

"I look out there," continued Hatterdam, "and I see a city full of people without hope. These people are living in darkness; they need someone to show them the daylight still exists. They need..." He paused again, searching for the right word.

"A hero?" offered Dormuse.

"To be put out of their misery, more like it," sneered Marchare.

"...they need a paladin," Hatterdam concluded.

Marchare barked with laughter, which immediately drew hissing shushes from the library's few other patrons. He leaned forward and spoke in a more conspiratorial tone. "Don't you dare tell me you're serious, Hatterdam. You're wishing for some 'knight in shining armor' to ride in here on his noble steed and save us from our despair?"

"You're mistaking the trappings for the substance," replied Hatterdam indignantly. "But, yes. We need a paladin. Everyone does."

"You're mistaking hope for fairy tales, Hatterdam. Your precious paladin doesn't exist."

Dormuse kept quiet, his mousy eyes darting back and forth between his colleagues.

Hatterdam idly tapped his temple a few times in thought before replying. "And why do you say that, Marchare? Exactly why don't paladins exist?"

"I'll give you two reasons," Marchare spat back. "First, they go against the will of Creation."

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Dormuse raised an eyebrow. "What ever do you mean?"

Marchare looked to Dormuse and smirked. "Surely you two learned gentlemen cannot deny that the world is ruled by Misery, Evil, and Death."

"I certainly could deny that," interjected Hatterdam.

"But you wouldn't believe it," responded Marchare, grimly. "And I ask you this: What dark gods would torture their people so, only to offer the respite a paladin would bring? I assure you, whatever gods or monsters made the world, they are dark and fearsome beings, and your shining knight would be nothing less than a thorn in their paw—a living wound in their flesh."

"Or a candle against the darkness." Hatterdam's reply was calm and composed. "I have experienced joy in my life, and love, and beauty. If your 'Gods and Monsters' are capable of creating such delights, perhaps they are not so evil as you think, Marchare. That they create great evil, I cannot argue. But perhaps they are capable of creating great good, as well."

Marchare sneered. "Look around you. There is no joy here, no love, no beauty. Whatever created this, or allowed this to be created, is darkness incarnate."

"Then perhaps my description of the candle against the darkness was even more apt than I knew. Perhaps your dark gods create the paladin as a shining beacon, so better to deepen the shadows."

"Bah." Marchare frowned. "I still hold that our dark creators would spawn no paladin. Paladins are holy warriors, the sword arm of their god, correct?"

Hatterdam flexed his jaw a bit before answering. "...In theory."

Marchare pressed his point. "Have you heard the Vistani legend of the 'War for All Time?' As they tell it, our dark creators opposed the gods, and were banished for it; they would never allow their divine foes to have such direct influence in their realm."

Hatterdam offered his usual toothy grin. "I notice you've changed your theory of Creation, but no matter. Dormuse, correct me if I'm wrong, but do the Sithican elves not tell a tale of the gods?"

Dormuse crinkled his brow. "Which one?"

"The one concerning their lord, Soth, and the creation of their homeland. Do they not tell that the fallen knight Soth came from another world? Indeed, that he was cursed by the gods of that world, but then Marchare's 'dark creators' stole Soth away from them? And that those same, jealous gods were so enraged that the Sithicans had failed to prevent the theft, they damned those elves to share Soth's prison?"

Dormuse hemmed and hawed a bit, but finally nodded. "That is the gist of the legend, yes."

Marchare snorted in derision. "That entire legend is obvious rubbish."

"No more so than your tale of a war in the heavens. What the legend is," corrected Hatterdam, "is a theory. And since our debate is entirely academic, one theory is as good as another. Now then. Let us assume your new theory is true, Marchare—that your dark creators and the gods have agreed not to interfere in each other's affairs. Yet the legend of Soth shows that your dark creators can and have broken that pact! They have overstepped their bounds. Might the gods not retaliate tit for tat? 'Take one of our damned, receive one of our chosen?'"

"Still rubbish," grunted Marchare, crossing his arms in defiance.

"I have heard," muttered Dormuse, "that once, long ago, a spirit of great purity entered our world. The spirit was without form, so to further its ends, it entered the vessel of a mortal, and gave her the power to ease the suffering of the people around her. The demons in the mists despise this spirit, and seek its destruction. But it is beyond death, and without flaw, so they can neither harm nor corrupt it. But, paladins are merely those who have served as the spirit's vessel through the ages, and those vessels suffer the demons' wrath."

Hatterdam and Marchare both took a moment to soak this in. "So paladins are not just rare," thought Hatterdam aloud. "...they are in fact unique; there can only be one living paladin at a time."

Dormuse grinned. "Like a phoenix."

Marchare snorted again. "The phoenix is a fable, and your shining knights are no more real. If you ask me, Dormuse, you've just heard some badly distorted version of that Ezra myth."

"There are similarities," Dormuse conceded.

Marchare continued. "I'll even give you another paladin legend. According to the priests of the Divine Form, the faith of the common people can be so strong that it empowers a chosen few to turn mankind's brightest hopes into reality. According to them, a paladin is but the focus of mankind's own faith and hope. But—even if any of those legends were gospel truth, and a paladin could be born into the world, there still would be none of your do-gooder knights roaming the land. You forget; I promised two reasons why a paladin cannot exist."

Hatterdam simply waggled his fingers, prompting Marchare to continue.

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“A paladin—regardless of who or what chose him—remains a chosen one, marked from birth, correct?”

Hatterdam tapped his fingers against the table. “As far as I know.”

“Then let me ask you this. Just look at the collection of petty tyrants and true monsters who rule over our lands. Who of them would suffer a paladin to live? Best to kill the chosen one while still a child, than risk him reaching his full might. No paladin would live to the age of sixteen. So you see? The paladin has both heaven and earth against him.”

Hatterdam bowed his head and slowly rubbed his chin, pondering this new mental dilemma. It was Dormuse who spoke next.

“I have heard a tale...”

“Here we go again,” grumbled Marchare.

Dormuse frowned a bit before continuing. “A legend of Azalin and the Two Paladins. It’s quite long, actually.” Hatterdam leaned forward expectantly; Marchare glowered in silence. “Um...I’ll make it short. Long ago, when Azalin was new on the throne, he became aware of a young squire destined to become a great hero to the people—but also a dire threat to the king himself. So, Azalin had the squire slain out of hand.”

Marchare grinned. “My point is proved.”

“But,” continued Dormuse, ignoring the interruption, “Decades later a second knight was born to Darkon, one who also carried this destiny. They say that Azalin, now confident that he could destroy this chosen one as easily as the last, allowed him to live, and merely, secretly studied him for the rest of his days.”

Marchare puckered his lips. “And just what, pray tell, became of this second paladin?”

“I’m afraid I don’t know. The legend doesn’t say.”

“But,” Hatterdam boasted, “the moral is clear.

Must it be a given that every ruler will smite the young paladin? It is possible they could let him live. Perhaps he might escape their notice altogether! The debate is over! It is possible, however slim the chance, that a paladin could be born, and could live to adulthood! For all we know, a paladin could be traveling through the lands as we speak! The people have their hero! Perhaps we do have reason to hope for a—auwck!”

Professor Hatterdam’s oration came to an abrupt halt as his fleshless jawbone came unhinged and loudly clattered across the table, landing in Dormuse’s incorporeal lap, and sending banging echoes reverberating through the library of the University of Il Aluk. As the ghost handed back the skeleton’s jaw, Marchare’s putrid lips split into a wide grin, revealing a maw full of jagged fangs.

“Something finally silences the mighty Professor Hatterdam? Perhaps there is hope after all...”

Paragon (Paladin)

Ability Requirements: Strength 12
Constitution 9
Wisdom 13
Charisma 17

Prime Requisites: Strength, Charisma

Races Allowed: Human

As the debate above demonstrates, there are many reasons to believe that a paladin could never be born within the Demiplane of Dread, and even if they could, that they would never survive to see adulthood.

The former problem is the provenance of the dark powers, and as their motivations are ultimately unknowable, perhaps it would be best to simply give them the benefit of the doubt and assume that, if one accepts any of the professors’ arguments, the dark powers might allow a potential paladin to be born within their realm. However, even if we grant the dark powers this generous nature, a native paladin should still be as rare as a lich’s tear. It is advised that a DM not allow more than one native paladin into any given *campaign*.

Once born, the paladin falls to the mercy of the domain lords. It is a certainty that most of the few paladins born in the Demiplane of Dread over the centuries have been quickly exterminated by the lords of their native land. Put simply, as the potential paladin enters adolescence, his powers slowly begin to manifest; and as that happens, the domain lord becomes aware of the youth’s presence and power. This begs the question: Are there any domains where the lord might possibly suffer a burgeoning paladin to live?

The answer is very few indeed. Most of the darklords of the Core are known for being particularly ruthless, so perhaps it should be a pleasant surprise that there are actually two domains where a paladin could possibly survive: Darkon (now Necropolis) and Mordent. Azalin, mentioned in the professors’ debate, had a saying: “Never destroy a useful opponent.” A paladin born and raised in Darkon might have actually found special favor under the close scrutiny of Azalin, who may well have groomed the young warrior as a defender of king and country. And in present-day Necropolis, the throne of the darklord sits empty.

As for Mordent, Wilfred Godefroy pays little attention to the lives of the Mordentish; it is what becomes of them after death that he finds of particular interest. It should be noted that neither lord would think

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twice about destroying a young paladin should they ever pose an actual threat.

We find a few more options in the Islands of Terror. The lords of Staunton Bluffs and Rokushima Táiyoō are both physically unable to harm their denizens, and Ankhtepot, lord of Har' Akir, spends decades at a time in his fitful half-sleep. With a bit of luck, a paladin born in these lands could enjoy an uneventful childhood.

Lastly, Elena Faith-Hold is not the sort to eliminate a potential follower in her footsteps. However, she would certainly insist on taking any young paladin under her wing, so the youthful warrior would be doubly endangered; threatened by destruction if he turns against her, or by corruption if he sides with her.

All native paladin PCs must come from one of these six domains.

So what is a paladin? In some settings, the paladin is a holy warrior, the direct servant of his or her god. Ravenloft does not lend itself to characters who serve the gods in such a direct fashion, so we must find a new interpretation.

The Ravenloft paladin is a mortal who has been chosen by forces unknown to set a shining example of virtue; to be the lone candle against the darkness. The true nature of these forces is as mysterious as the dark powers they seem to oppose, but one thing is clear: They are the very incarnation of Lawful Good.

No more than once in a generation, and most likely far less often than that, these unknown forces of Law and Goodness will choose a pure-hearted child to receive their silent message. This message imbues the child with a powerful spiritual imprint, an ideal vision of Lawful Good that the paladin may well then spend the rest of his life desperately trying to uphold, despite his own mortal shortcomings.

Most of these potential paladins receive the spiritual message in the form of cryptic visions, which compel the child to transform himself into a living Paragon of Virtue. The source behind these visions never reveals itself, and in this way Paragons may be devout without necessarily adhering to any given religion. They follow their own powerful models of Right and Wrong, buoyed only by inner faith, but they may not be able to name a source for this moral center.

Some Paragons may feel that they have been inspired by Virtue itself, but most shape their self-image on the beliefs of their culture. A Paragon growing up in Mordent may believe he is the chosen of Ezra, just as a Necropolitan Paragon may be a devout worshipper of the Overseer; but both Paragons know they have no way to prove that these divine entities are the true source of their spiritual strength. In fact, "paragon" and "paladin" are merely labels others place on these uniquely gifted and

burdened individuals; their otherworldly sponsor is never kind enough to grant them such a title.

Paragons are granted many gifts in comparison to their fellows, and they have a clear vision of their goal: to become the living example of Virtue, an example which will live on long after they are gone. But they are their only judge when it comes to keeping to the righteous path, and many are wracked with self-doubt that they are failing to live up to their own ideal. As for the nature of those paladins who are unshakably sure of their own virtue, one need look no farther than the path of Elena Faith-Hold.

Ability Requirements

Paragons must be able to fully grasp the spiritual ideals which have been handed down to them, and they must be able to sagely judge their own actions. To this end, Paragons must have a Wisdom score of at least 13. They are given the seemingly divine mission of presenting the downtrodden with an example of virtue; of being a champion of hope; of being a Hero. To accomplish this task, it is crucial that they always present themselves in the best possible light, requiring them to have a Charisma score of no less than 17. Lastly, Paragons are expected to offer their message of hope in good deeds, not words. In the Lands of Mist, this can be a demanding task, and to hope to live up to this requirement, they must have a Strength score of at least 12 and a Constitution of at least 9. Any Paragon with scores of 16 or better in both Strength and Wisdom receives a +10% bonus to any experience he earns.

Paragons rise in level using the Ranger/Avenger chart in Table 76 on pg. 247 of *Domains of Dread*.

As a final note, only humans may be Paragons. No one knows exactly why the unnamed powers of Virtue never choose a member of the other races to represent them, but this is far from the only mystery surrounding them.

Alignment

Paragons have been chosen to be the living embodiment of Law and Goodness; thus, it is no surprise that they may only be Lawful Good. As a note, Paragons walk a narrow path, and they do so in the dark. Their spiritual powers depend on their upholding the ideals of their alignment, but the forces which empower them give them no overt guidance to let them know when they are in danger of straying. In addition, the dark powers find Paragons abhorrent, and would like nothing better than to see a Paragon lose his virtue.

Paragons are still but mere mortals, and as such have mortal frailties. While the forces of Virtue may

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well overlook a simple, foolish misstep, any overtly evil act will bring their disfavor. If the Paragon commits such an act through error, or through coercion, he may lose some or all of his powers until such time as he has atoned.

If a Paragon ever willingly and knowingly commits an evil or particularly chaotic act, the forces of Virtue will strip him of his spiritual powers immediately. If the player wishes, his Paragon may become a Fighter or Avenger of equal level, but the hero will be forever haunted by the knowledge that he failed in his divine mission.

However, the dark powers are more than willing to blur the guidelines and keep the Paragon unsure of his status. In case a Paragon PC ever fails one or more powers checks, the DM is encouraged to use “dark gifts” which closely mimic the powers the Paragon has lost.

Arms and Armor

As with other warriors, Paragons may wear any available armor and may make use of any kind of weapon. They may not specialize, however.

Spells and Magic Items

Paragons may make use of any magic armor, weapon, or item available to Warriors or Priests. Unlike paladins of other worlds, Paragons never gain the ability to cast spells.

Pure at Heart

If the player wishes, the Paragon may begin play “Pure,” utterly untouched by the lure of evil. While *Domains of Dread* makes this seem like a liability, presented here is a fuller account of the effects of Pure status, culling rules from the MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH setting.

Pure Status: To qualify for Pure status, a character must be of Good alignment and must have never committed any actions worthy of a powers check (regardless of the success or failure of that check). Any character of Pure status receives a +2 bonus to all saving throws to resist the supernatural powers of any evil creature. However, Pure individuals can also be turned by evil priests, and can be kept at bay by *protection from good* or similar spells. It is quite difficult to remain Pure at heart, even for a Paragon.

Detect Chaos

Starting in adolescence, a developing Paragon will notice that, when he looks deep into the soul of another, he can sometimes sense... *something*. By the time they begin their adventuring careers, most Paragons have learned that this *something* is a Chaotic spirit.

A Paragon can Detect Chaos within a range of sixty feet by concentrating in a given direction for a full round. If successful, a Paragon learns only that a given target is “Chaotic” or senses nothing. However, all targets can save vs. spell to completely avoid detection.

Sound Mind and Body

The great power of the Virtue imbued in the Paragon’s heart strengthens him in both body and soul. Thus, Paragons receive a +2 bonus to all saving throws, with one particular exception.

Since Paragons are prone to vivid dreams and haunting visions of their own destiny, they live their lives with one foot in a reality not quite shared by everyone around them. Add to this that many Paragons continually doubt their own virtue, actions, and sanity, and the result is that Paragons never apply their +2 bonus to madness checks.

Immunity to Disease

The Paragon’s spiritual strength extends to protecting the virtuous warrior from all natural disease. Note that this does not include diseases of magical origin (such as *cause disease*), magical diseases (such as Mummy Rot or Viruses), or disease-like curses (such as lycanthropy).

Where applicable, a Paragon may still use his +2 bonus to all saving throws to resist the diseases above.

Healing Touch

The Paragon may heal with a touch. Once per day, the Paragon can lay on hands, healing 2 hit points of damage per experience level. He can use this ability either on himself or on anyone else.

Furthermore, a Paragon can *cure disease* once per week for each five levels of experience (rounding down). Note that Paragons can only cure natural disease; not coincidentally, if a Paragon is not immune to the disease himself, he cannot cure it in others.

Aura of Protection

A Paragon is surrounded at all times by an aura of protection with a ten foot radius. All evil creatures within the radius of this aura suffer a -1 penalty to their attack rolls.

However, this spiritual aura can be sensed by any creature of evil alignment, even those not within its area. While most evil characters will sense this aura only as an unnerving, distasteful impression, evil creatures with either Intelligence or Wisdom scores of 14 or greater can recognize this aura for the purifying flame it truly is, and will take measures accordingly.

Turn Undead

Starting at 3rd level, a Paragon gains the ability to turn undead and lower-planar creatures as a cleric two levels lower. See Table 91 on pg. 264 of *Domains of Dread* for full details. Note that Paragons can also be turned by priests of Evil alignment.

Offer Solace

Although the Paragon himself is often deeply troubled by the fear that he is not living up to the spiritual ideal imposed on him, he does possess a crystal-clear understanding of that ideal and can communicate it to any who will listen. Merely by passing on the message of Virtue imbued within him, he can ease the inner suffering of others.

This ability works in a similar fashion to the fighter's ability to Inspire Bravery. A Paragon may take one turn to calmly assuage others by assuring them of the existence of spiritual justice and the bliss he himself dreams to someday achieve. **Table 1: Solace Bonus** provides the bonus the Paragon can bestow. This bonus may be used to boost the success of horror or madness checks. The Paragon may provide the entire bonus to a single character or divide it among several allies, but he may not use it on himself.

Paragon Level	Offer Solace
1-5	+1
6-10	+2
11-15	+4
16-20	+6

In addition, a Paragon may use this bonus to aid the recovery of an ally who has already failed a madness check. If the Paragon remains nearby the stricken character and acts as a source of guidance and support, the Paragon can offer this bonus to the character's monthly attempts to recover from their mental ailment. Consider the bonus an addition to Table 15 on pg. 156 of *Domains of Dread*.

Expiation

Of the many abilities granted to the Paragon, this above all may be the one which makes them so repulsive in the eyes of the dark powers. A Paragon has a deep desire to remove the suffering of others, even if that means he must suffer in their place. The Paragon's single most powerful ability to this end is that of Expiation: the ability to remove the burden of sin from another by placing it on himself; by making himself a scapegoat to carry their curse.

A Paragon can only use this ability of his own free will; no manner of coercion or unnatural control can force the ability to function. If the cursed target is for any reason unwilling to transfer their curse to the Paragon, they can make a saving throw vs. spell to avoid the effects of this power, with a bonus equal to the level of the curse (for instance, +1 for an Embarrassing curse, or +3 for a Troublesome curse).

A Paragon can also use his power of Expiation to take on magical, disease-like curses such as Mummy Rot or lycanthropy; essentially, any disease to which the Paragon is not immune. For the purposes of this power, the DM should judge these unnatural ailments and assign them a level of severity like those used for curses.

To draw the curse of another into himself, the Paragon need only touch the target and will the transference to take place. Theoretically, outside the Demiplane of Dread, the Paragon might then carry the curse himself until such time as he could be purified. However, in the Lands of Mist, the dark powers do not allow those they have marked to escape their shackles so easily.

Thus, within Ravenloft, this transference is only temporary. How long a Paragon can carry the curse of another depends both on the Paragon's experience level and the level of the curse. For each XP level, a Paragon can carry a transferred "Embarrassing" curse for a full 24 hours; he can carry a "Frustrating" curse for either one day or one night (until the next dawn or sunset). A "Troublesome" curse can be carried for only one hour per level, and a "Dangerous" curse can be carried for only one turn per level. Lethal curses, including those which bind darklords to their domains, simply cannot be transferred; the dark powers outright forbid it.

For example: A 6th-level Paragon could bear an Embarrassing curse for six full days, a Frustrating curse for three days, a Troublesome curse for six hours, or a Dangerous curse for a mere hour.

As an additional note, some curses (such as lycanthropy) are so venomous to the soul that a Paragon would normally lose his powers (perhaps temporarily) simply for carrying it. In cases of Expiation, the Paragon bears the curse explicitly to remove suffering, and so

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only suffers the loss of paladin status if he causes harm to others while in this cursed state.

The first time a Paragon takes on a curse, he automatically loses his Pure status. However, repeated uses of the Expiation ability do not incur additional powers checks.

A Paragon would never use this ability to help a justly-accursed villain escape punishment. Rather, the most common purpose is to ease the torment of those who have been unjustly damned, and perhaps aid them in ridding themselves of the evil burden forever. The most commonly told tale of Expiation concerns a Paragon and a young boy who had been stricken with a terrible form of lycanthropy. Knowing the boy could never withstand the ritual of purification, the Paragon took the curse into herself on the appointed night, and underwent the ritual in the child's place. Of course, in many versions of the story, the Paragon also failed to withstand the rite, and had to be destroyed before the curse could pass back to the boy. Such is the nature of most tales in the Lands of Mist.

Reputation

Paragons have been chosen to be the champions of Virtue and Honor. Quite simply, it is the fate of the Paragon's life to serve as an example for the generations to come, for good or ill.

Whenever a Paragon performs a noteworthy deed of bravery and justice (be it defeating some foul villain, removing a curse from an innocent, defending a village from threat, etc.), word of their noble act invariably spreads like wildfire. From that point on the Paragon receives a +1 Reaction modifier whenever dealing with Good or Neutral NPCs from that domain. This bonus is cumulative with additional heroic feats to a maximum of +4. However, if the Paragon suffers an ignoble defeat, his reputation is tarnished just as quickly, as people begin to realize that their role model may just be another flawed human after all. In such cases, his Reaction modifier drops 2 points. This is also cumulative with additional defeats, to a maximum penalty of -2.

Of Steeds and Holy Swords

In other worlds, a paladin can call for their war horse upon reaching 4th level. Such is not the case in Ravenloft, and most Paragons are quite unaware of this supposedly essential part of their legend. Some idle tongues posit that, were a Paragon to call for his steed, the dark powers might very well respond with something akin to the pseudo-familiars whispered about in wizardly circles.

Also, while a Paragon could wield a *Holy Sword* as well as any other paladin, to date no Paragons have ever found such a blessed weapon within the Demiplane.

Tithing

A Paragon must tithing 10% of all his earnings to the charitable institution of his choice. If a Paragon is a follower of a given religion, then this institution will likely be his church. If the Paragon follows no particular faith, he may tithe to whatever just and noble causes he wish to support. However, none of the tithed funds may go to or otherwise directly benefit the Paragon himself or any other player characters.

Should a Paragon find himself in a land totally devoid of worthy institutions to support, then he may tithe through charitable deeds, dedicating two weeks per XP level, per year, to the work. This could include any number of activities, from helping to build a chapel, to tending to the stricken in an asylum. The Paragon must refuse all payments or other compensations for this labor.

Self-Sacrifice

Even beyond tithing, Paragons have a charitable and tempered nature which dictates that they see to the needs of the common good. Paladins in other lands have strict rules regarding the keeping of wealth, and rigid guidelines as to how many and what types of magical items they may possess.

In Ravenloft, these strict rules have less meaning, not least because it is the rare Paragon indeed who can expect to accumulate ten enchanted items in his career.

Instead, Paragons should always think to a simple rule: "Others Before Myself." This philosophy finds spiritual expression in the power of Expiation, but is intrinsic to all facets of the Paragon's behavior.

If the Paragon possesses a magic item which is more desperately needed by another, the Paragon must give it away. If the Paragon is rich and others are wanting, the Paragon must give generous alms to the poor. If the battle is faring badly and one must hold off the foes while their allies retreat, it must be the Paragon who risks himself to protect his friends.

If this flexible code seems much more lax than the strict ethos of the typical paladin, in truth it is not. It is simply that the source of the Paragon's spiritual might offers only the most basic of guidelines, and the Paragon himself must then decide how to steer the correct course. (With the DM serving as ultimate judge.)

Paladins and Darklords

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It has often been speculated that the dark powers seek the destruction and/or corruption of paladins. The most obvious way that the dark powers shape short and painful lives for paladins in Ravenloft is through the domain lords.

Any lord can sense the general location (“in the town,” “on the eastern road”) of any Paragon within his domain from the first moment the Paragon enters to the last moment before the Paragon crosses the border back out. Short of death or the Paragon losing his paladin status, there is no known way to block this ability.

Should a Paragon ever actually come into the possession of a *Holy Sword*, domain lords will be able to sense his location to within 100 feet whenever the Paragon draws his enchanted blade.

Followers and Holdings

As it is in other words, Paragons are solitary creatures. Although they may be admired by the people around them, they do not gather followers in the typical sense. Likewise, Paragons do not build strongholds. Although a few have certainly retired to stately ancestral manors, they typically see building a fortified haven as vain and an expense better spent on more worthy causes.



At the end of the day, the old caretaker returned home from his chores in Viktal’s small graveyard, and smiled to find his wife still working on her beloved garden. She kneeled at the edge of her flower bed, grumbling to herself.

“Blasted weeds,” repeated the old caretaker’s wife more loudly, noting her husband’s approach. “No matter how many times I pluck them, they keep on sprouting up.”

“You just need patience, Lleucu. You’ll get them all in time,” assured the old caretaker as he turned to step into his home.

“I’m sure you’re right, Rhisiart, but—”

Lleucu’s words ended with a sudden gasp of fear, and Rhisiart spun back towards her in alarm, his hand instinctively plucking the sickle from his belt.

Lleucu still kneeled at the edge of her flower bed, but now a second figure stood behind her, its gangly little arm wrapped tight around her. In the instant Rhisiart met the foul little creature’s gaze, the goblin tenderly pressed a butcher’s knife against the flesh of Lleucu’s neck. Lleucu’s eyes were wide with fear; the goblin’s bulging black eyes narrowed in suspicion. Rhisiart froze where he was, knowing he could never reach the goblin before it could cut his wife’s throat.

“What do you want?” hissed the caretaker through clenched teeth.

The goblin’s reply was halting, guttural, and unexpected.

“Where are druids?”

The old caretaker hesitated a moment, pondering this question, before he replied. “I’ve no idea what you’re talking about, you foul little freak.”

The goblin snarled. “You know! You tell where are druids!”

As the terror in Lleucu’s eyes rose, so did Rhisiart’s ire. “I tell you,” spat the old caretaker, “I don’t know where there are any druids!”

The goblin frowned. “But you know of them...”

Frustration crept into Rhisiart’s voice. “Only what I was taught on my mother’s knee—only what everyone else knows.”

“You tell!” barked the goblin. “You tell what you know or your woman bleed!”

Lleucu began to weep from terror. “Please, Rhisiart,” she pleaded. “Please, just tell the beastie whatever it wants to hear.”

The old caretaker waved his empty hand helplessly. “I... I know that the druids are gone, wiped out to the last. Their pagan ways are lost forever. I don’t know where any druids are because they’re all dead! They don’t exist anymore!” Rhisiart’s eyes narrowed, and his voice grew cold. “Now let my wife go.”

The goblin sneered, and pressed its blade tighter against Lleucu’s throat. “You lie! You are druid! We know!”

When Rhisiart had no immediate reply, his wife’s face betrayed her sudden confusion. “Rhisiart? Is what the beastie saying true?”

The goblin continued to bark at the old caretaker. “We know you druid! Your lie not fool us! Mistresses want to find others!”

“There are no others!” Rhisiart shouted back, angrily.

The goblin twisted the blade. “You tell where others are, and your woman live! You lie, she die!”

Lleucu tried to find compassion in her husband’s eyes. “Please, just tell the beastie! Tell it what it wants to know! Save me!”

Rhisiart clenched the sickle in his hand, and mulled the dilemma over for much longer than either his wife or the goblin thought healthy. Finally, a terrible sadness crept over his face.

“Then kill her. I can’t stop you. But you’ll learn nothing from me. You kill her, then I kill you. No matter what, you will not leave here alive.”

Fear crept into the goblin’s black eyes. It allowed the blade to droop, then twisted its neck to look at

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Lleucu. "What do now?" asked the goblin, its voice unsteady. "He still not talk!"

Lleucu sighed, rolling her eyes in frustration. With one smooth motion, she grabbed the goblin's head and casually twisted it off, thoughtlessly tossing it into the underbrush.

The goblin's twitching corpse collapsed as Rhisiart stood motionless, stunned, and his wife stood, wiping the black blood off on her skirts.

Lleucu sneered. "You really would have let that goblin kill me, wouldn't you?"

As Rhisiart watched in frozen horror, his wife's flesh ran like water. In an instant, she was gone, and in her place stood a towering, twisted hag. Faster than his eyes could follow, the hag lunged forward, wrapping her steely talons around the old caretaker's throat and lifting him bodily up off the ground.

"You wicked, wicked little boy," cackled the monstrosity, with a voice like a snapping spine.

His voice choked off, the caretaker made a desperate slash at the hag's face with his sickle. Before he could so much as raise the weapon, the hag's free hand snaked out and effortlessly twisted the sickle from his grasp, breaking several bones in his wrist to do so.

"Druids," snarled the hag. "You blasted little weeds! No matter how many times we pluck you, you keep on sprouting up, you do!"

The hag grinned evilly, baring a maw full of jagged teeth. "But we'll get you all in time—we just need patience, we do!"

Keeping her iron grip on his throat, the hag tucked Rhisiart under her arm and started to carry him off into the woods, ignoring his increasingly feeble struggles.

"Come along, my pretty," she cackled. "I'm taking you home for dinner with my sisters, I am! They'll be very disappointed that you held your tongue, but they'll still savor you, my sweet little morsel!"

The hag could feel Rhisiart's stifled scream reverberating against her hand.

"Yes, my sisters must be starving by now—I know I am! Your wife didn't make much of a meal, my pretty," mocked the hag, making sure to meet the caretaker's gaze. "But if you're polite, maybe my sisters will let you sample some of her last scraps before your turn in the stewpot!"

With that, the hag loped off into the dark forests, leaving nothing behind but the ruined corpse of a goblin, and a sickle lying in the weeds.

Caretaker (Druid)

Ability Requirements: Wisdom 12

Charisma 15

Prime Requisites: Wisdom, Charisma

Races Allowed: Human, Half-elf, Half-Vistani

Druids are a source of much mystery and contention in the Lands of Mist. All sages will certainly agree that druids did once exist; they have left too many marks of their passing to be ignored. But beyond that, sages agree on little.

No one is really sure where the first druids came from. Some say the druidic order began with refugees fleeing Forlorn, who brought their ancient beliefs with them as they spread across the land.

No one is really sure where the druids went. A handful of sages believe that the druids went underground, hiding themselves behind protective veils of secrecy. Most insist the druidic order was wiped out entirely by forces of evil they could scarcely comprehend, or that the order rotted from within. In a sense, all are correct.

If the standard *Player's Handbook* druids can still be found in Ravenloft, then they lurk in isolated areas such as Forlorn, shunning outside contact, or they are outsiders drawn in through the Mists.

Yet the ancient teachings of the druids do live on in the Demiplane of Dread, in the form of the Society of Caretakers.

Part character class, part secret society, the Caretakers have adopted the druidic ways, hiding their rites and powers to avoid the persecution of the darklords. Even among their number, they cannot agree on the Society's origins; some say that the original druids established the society to adapt to their new surroundings; others say the druids were wiped out, and the founders of the Society only later discovered the druids' lore, adapting the legacy to their own ends.

Regardless, the few sages who know of their existence can affirm that the Society of Caretakers is not a perfect duplicate of the original druidic order, in terms of either powers or philosophy.

Caretakers are members of a mysterious cult that has learned to harness mystical power from Nature itself. In this way, the Caretakers forge a bond with the Land of Mists which grants them great power.

Unfortunately, by drawing power directly from the land itself, the Caretakers place themselves in direct

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opposition to the domain lords. More than one cell of Caretakers has been exterminated by a domain lord who saw the druids as a threat to their own power.

Ability Requirements

Caretakers must have a Wisdom score of at least 12 to grasp the ancient rites that grant them their special powers. They must also have a personality versatile enough to hide their true, mystical calling from those who would destroy them. To maintain this masquerade, the Caretaker must have a Charisma of at least 15. If a Caretaker has scores of 16 or better in both Wisdom and Charisma, he receives a +10% bonus to any experience points he earns.

Caretakers rise in level using the anchorite advancement chart in Table 89 on pg. 262 of *Domains of Dread*.

Alignment

A Caretaker's behavior must adhere to the unwritten laws of Nature. However, within the Caretaker cult there is some difference of opinion in how this is best achieved. Most Caretakers hold that, just as the beast of the field neither accepts nor rejects the laws or morality of mankind, neither then should they. Other Caretakers believe this behavior would be acceptable in an untainted world, but insist the Lands of Mist are steeped in evil. To maintain the true neutrality of Nature, this foulness must be countered through acts of compassion and vigilance against evil. Thus, player character Caretakers may be of True Neutral or Neutral Good alignment.

It is also rumored that some Caretakers see the evil taint in the Lands of Mist as the natural way of things, and thus believe that the Neutral Evil alignment best reflects the true nature of the untamed wilderness. If these evil druids do exist, they keep their true feelings hidden from their confederates.

Unlike anchorites, Caretakers of all three alignments gain the same spells and granted powers, and do not differentiate among themselves.

Arms and Armor

In deference to the ancient power of Nature, Caretakers may only wear armor or carry shields crafted of natural materials: leather or wood. They may never wear metal armor of any kind. However, it is acceptable for these natural forms of armor to carry enchantments.

Caretakers must also restrict themselves to a few weapons used in their pagan rituals, and those of the ancient savage, the "untamed" man: the club, sickle, dart, spear, dagger, scimitar, sling, and staff.

Spells and Magic Items

Caretakers draw their magical powers directly from the land itself, and recognize the existence of no gods. Their timeless rites provide them with spellcasting ability equal to clerics. However, the Caretaker is more restricted in their access to the spheres of magic. Caretakers have major access to the spheres of all, animal, elemental, healing, plant, time, wards, and weather. They also have minor access to the spheres of divination and travelers.

Caretaker spellcasting is also greatly affected by the ritual they call Attunement, which also grants them several additional powers as they rise in level. This is detailed fully below.

Caretakers can use any magical item normally allowed priests, but cannot use any magical written materials (such as books or scrolls), and may not use any magical armor or weapons which would violate the restrictions listed above.

Caretaker Hierarchy

The druids of most worlds organize themselves into a single, world-spanning organization. Every druid has their own position within that hierarchy, allowing the world-wide druid structure to respond efficiently to any menace that might threaten the natural order, wherever it may appear.

The Caretakers of Ravenloft seek to be as organized as the druids of other worlds, but the domain lords' relentless persecution has all but scattered the Caretakers to the winds. Entire cells have been wiped out in Tepest, Nova Vaasa, Nosos, and likely many other domains as well. To survive, the Caretakers have retreated into the realm of mystery, constructing multiple walls of secrecy around their existence. After all, any Caretaker who survives for long can attest that the minions of those who would destroy them can appear anywhere, in any guise.

In their secret rites, and behind closed doors, the Caretakers struggle to maintain their hierarchy, but they find this an uphill battle. Ultimately, the Caretakers want to establish an organization that stretches across the entirety of the Demiplane of Dread, but there are even some Caretakers who believe this will never come to pass.

Caretaker cells are thus organized one domain at a time, recruiting new members into their ranks when possible, but always remembering that they may have to flee their homes forever at any given moment.

When a new (1st-level) member is initiated into the Caretaker cell within a given domain, they are granted

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the title of “Initiate of the Eleventh Circle.” As the initiate rises in level, more and more of the hierarchy’s secrets are revealed to them, and they are taught more of the ancient rituals that grant them their mystic powers. Thus, every time a Caretaker rises in level, he is admitted to the next circle. A 2nd-level Caretaker would be an Initiate of the Tenth Circle, and so on, until a Caretaker reaches 11th level and is admitted to the First Circle.

Only when a Caretaker reaches 12th level do they earn the title of “Druid.” In addition, to qualify for this title (and the powers which come with it), the Caretaker must be attuned to twelve domains. (See “Attunement,” below.) Although the Caretaker hierarchy allows for any number of Initiates, there can be no more than nine Druids in all the demiplane.

When a Caretaker rises to 13th level, and when they have attuned themselves to thirteen domains, they qualify for the rank of “Archdruid.” Only three Archdruids can exist in the demiplane, and each Archdruid must have three Druids who swear fealty to him. If there are not enough qualified Caretakers to fill the three Druid positions directly below the Archdruid (including the one just vacated by the Archdruid himself), the prospective Archdruid cannot rise in level. Thus, for the three Archdruids to maintain their power, they must make sure the hierarchy is strong enough to produce nine Druids.

Currently, it is thought unlikely that there are more than six Druid-level Caretakers, and thus only two Archdruids can exist, if that many. Many believe it doubtful that there is more than one.

If a Caretaker manages to rise to 14th level, has attuned himself to fourteen domains, *and* there is at least one Archdruid who will swear fealty to him, then the character qualifies for the title of the Great Druid. To date, the Caretaker hierarchy has never been strong enough to produce such a high-ranking member.

In the unlikely event that one of these “named” ranks, be it Druid, Archdruid, or Great Druid, is completely filled, then an aspiring Caretaker cannot rise in level until a position has opened in the rank they seek to attain. In other words, if nine 12th-level Druids already exist, then an 11th-level Initiate cannot become 12th-level, no matter how many XP he gains, until one of the nine existing Druids vacates his post.

Caretakers of different alignments tend to follow different methods of opening the ranks. Those of Neutral Good alignment will generally try to help one of their superiors rise further up the chain; in this example, opening a Druid position by helping one of the existing Druids reach the rank of Archdruid.

True Neutral Caretakers (along with NG ones if the above plan does not seem feasible) arrange to duel for the position in one-on-one combat. The details of this duel are arranged ahead of time, and are not necessarily

fought to the death. If the duel is not fought to the death, the loser drops in level so that they have exactly 200,000 XP.

Neutral Evil Caretakers prefer more expedient means of opening the ranks, such as assassination.

Higher Ranks: There are higher ranks above the Great Druid, but even the Caretakers place them in the realm of myth; not only has no Caretaker ever survived to gain such power, most don’t believe the requirements can possibly be met.

If a Caretaker rises to 15th level, and has attuned himself to every domain in the Demiplane, they qualify for the title and the powers of the Grand Druid. As with the Great Druid, only one Caretaker can theoretically hold this title at a time. Unlike the lower ranks, contenders cannot duel the Grand Druid for his title; the Grand Druid holds it until his death, or until he chooses to step down.

If a Grand Druid ever rises to 16th level and finds someone else qualified to fill his position, he may step down, relinquishing his title and becoming what is known as “the Hierophant.”

Attunement

Caretakers derive their powers from the inherent magic of Nature, of the land itself. In Ravenloft, this means they use ancient rites to forge a special bond between themselves and one or more domains, using that connection to siphon off some of the power of the Lands of Mist themselves. This bond is known as Attunement.

A 1st-level Caretaker begins play attuned to the domain of his choice; typically, the domain the native player character calls home. There are Caretaker cells in many domains, but not all; many have been wiped out by the domain lords. However, Caretaker PCs are not restricted in which domains they can call home.

A Caretaker is at his full strength while within this attuned domain, and gains special benefits as he rises in level. However, they also establish a special, wary relationship with the lord of that domain. (See Lordly Opposition, below.)

If a Caretaker travels into domains they have not attuned, their power begins to wane as they separate themselves from its source. While in a domain sharing a border with one of their attuned domains, a Caretaker casts spells as if they were one level lower.

In a domain which does not border any of their attuned domains, but is within the same Mist-surrounded area, they cast spells as if they were two levels lower.

If a Caretaker travels to a domain separated from their attuned domains by the Mists, they cast spells as if they were three levels lower.

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For example: A 5th-level Caretaker is attuned to Lamordia. In that domain, he is at full strength, and enjoys certain benefits and penalties discussed below. In Dementlieu, Falkovnia, Necropolis, and the Sea of Sorrows, he casts spells as if he was 4th level. Anywhere else in the Core, he casts spells as if he was 3rd level, and in any of the Clusters or Islands of Terror, he only casts spells as a 2nd-level character.

Attuning Additional Domains: Each time a Caretaker is admitted to the next inner Circle (rises in level), the secrets he learns grant him the power needed to attune an additional domain. The ritual to attune a domain is not complex, but must be repeated on both equinoxes and both solstices (thus, a series of four ceremonies taking a full year to complete). Obviously, these rituals must be performed within the domain to be attuned, but the Caretaker does not need to remain in the domain between those four dates.

Although solstices and equinoxes may fall at different times in different Mist-surrounded regions of the demiplane, this does generally mean a Caretaker cannot attune more than one domain in a year. However, until 12th level (to earn the title of Druid), a Caretaker need not have attuned any additional domains to rise in level.

The Caretaker is free to decide which domains he wants to attune, although the inhospitable nature of some domains may make return trips difficult if not deadly.

Occult Language

One of the first secrets a new Initiate is taught is the secret language used in the Caretakers' secret rites. Thus, all 1st-level Caretakers receive this language without having to allocate a proficiency slot. The Caretaker's occult language is limited to topics of nature and natural events (which includes domain lords and border closings, in the Caretaker philosophy). This language is the Caretakers' sole method of reliably identifying other members of their disparate hierarchy, and as such guard it zealously: The punishment for teaching the secret language to a non-Caretaker is death.

Elemental Resistance

By attuning themselves to a domain, a new (1st-level) Initiate gains a special protection against nature's fury. Specifically, they gain a +2 bonus to all saving throws vs. fire- or lightning-based attacks. They retain this bonus even when they travel into non-attuned domains, but it falters in the face of the true masters of the land: Caretakers thus lose this bonus when facing attacks from the domain lords themselves.

Identify Plants and Animals

At 3rd level (the Ninth Circle), a Caretaker gains the ability to identify any native plants, animals, or pure water within an attuned domain with a 95% chance of success. When in a domain only similar to one they have attuned, this reliability drops to 80%. If the Caretaker is in a domain with an ecology dissimilar to any he has attuned, the chance of success drops to 50%.

For example: A Caretaker is attuned to Borca. Within that domain, her identifying ability functions at 95%. In any non-attuned domain in the Core, or in any other domain with an ecology roughly like that of Europe (such as Staunton Bluffs), the ability functions at 80%. In a desert realm like the Amber Wastes, or a twisted realm such as Bluetspur or Timor, this ability drops to 50%.

Pass Without Trace

Also at 3rd level, a Caretaker gains the ability to pass through any sort of wilderness terrain found in his attuned domains, such as underbrush, jungles, desert sands, etc., at his normal movement rate, and without leaving any trail. However, this ability can not be used to bypass closed borders (but see Slip the Bonds, below).

Charm Immunity

At 7th level (the Fifth Circle), a Caretaker becomes immune to *charm* spells or spell-like abilities of any creatures native to the ecologies of his attuned domains. This does not include the undead; a Caretaker attuned to Barovia would still be subject to a vampire's *charm* gaze.

Shapechange

Also at 7th level, the Caretaker gains the ability to *shapechange* into a reptile, bird, or mammal form three times a day. The druid may only take each form (reptile, bird, or mammal) once per day. Within these three categories, the Caretaker's choice of animal shapes is limited by only three factors: The animal must be between Tiny and Large size, it must be native to an attuned domain, and it must be non-supernatural in nature. Once in the animal's shape, the Caretaker takes on all of its characteristics: movement rate and forms, Armor Class, number of attacks, and damage per attack.

Each time a Caretaker changes into an animal form, he heals 10%-60% (1d6 x 10%) of all damage taken. Transformation from human to animal form or back

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again takes one round, during which time the Caretaker may take no other action.

The Caretaker's clothing and one item in each hand are absorbed into the new shape, and reappear when the Caretaker takes human form once more. Magical items cannot be used while thus absorbed.

Turn Undead

Even those Caretakers who follow the Neutral Evil philosophy recognize that undeath has no place in the realm of Nature. Thus, unlike clerics, Caretakers have no power to turn or control the undead.

Lordly Opposition

By attuning himself to a domain, a Caretaker draws from the same nameless source from which the domain lord's own land-granted powers are derived. Thus, through the ritual of Attunement, a Caretaker both connects himself, and sets himself in direct opposition, to the lord of that domain.

A Caretaker has a 5% chance per level of instinctually recognizing the lord of any domain to which he is attuned, no matter what shape the lord may be in. For example: A 6th-level Caretaker is attuned to Verbrek. One night, he sees a huge wolf in a clearing. The Caretaker has a 30% chance to instinctually know that this wolf is the domain's true master. Alternatively, if the Caretaker saw Alfred Timothy strolling through a village, the Caretaker would have the same 30% chance to instantly recognize this individual's true power, even if he had never seen him before.

The Caretaker also has a 1% chance per level of recognizing the mark of a domain lord. With a successful die roll, a Caretaker attuned to Lamordia could look at a battered corpse and *know* that Adam killed him; one attuned to Souragne could see a zombie and *know* that Anton Misroi animated it; our Verbreker Caretaker could meet an infected lycanthrope and *know* he carried the Timothy bloodline. This power can only detect those who have been directly and lastingly affected or altered by the darklord, be it through force or magic; it does not automatically detect any and all of the darklord's servants.

In all cases, the Caretaker simply recognizes the presence of the lord or his direct influence; no other information is gained.

This detection ability travels in both directions; whenever a Caretaker casts a spell within an attuned domain, there is a 2% chance per level of the spell cast that the domain lord becomes instantly aware of the Caretaker's general location (as with a darklord's ability to detect paladins) for the length of the spell's duration.

In addition, if the die roll indicates detection, the domain lord is also instantly aware that what he senses is a direct challenge to his power.

Slip the Bonds

Upon qualifying for the title of Archdruid (13th level and attuned to 13 domains; see above), a Caretaker gains the unparalleled power to cross closed domain borders. However, this ability is not without limit; the Caretaker has only a 5% chance of success per level, and must abide by several other restrictions. The Caretaker must be attuned to the domains on both sides of the closed border he seeks to cross, both the domain he is attempting to leave and the domain he is attempting to enter. Caretakers can never take others with them across closed borders, not even other Caretakers.

The Caretaker must also physically cross the border; they have no power over the Mists. If a Caretaker is unable to walk out of the domain (as with the island domains in the Sea of Sorrows, or an Island of Terror, for example), the Caretaker may himself be trapped regardless.

Lastly, succeed or fail, the domain lord is made instantly aware that someone has pierced his border (or tried to), and knows the precise location where it happened.

The Grand Druid

In the miraculous instance that a character actually qualifies to earn the title of the Grand Druid (see above), they gain a remarkable boost in power. Instead of using Table 90: Priest Spell Progression on pg. 262 of *Domains of Dread* to determine their spell limits, the Grand Druid can cast a flat six spells of each level. In addition, he gains six additional spell levels, which can be utilized as the character sees fit (six 1st-level spells, one 6th-level spell, or any combination in between). The Grand Druid also has the entirety of the Society of Caretakers at his command.

The Hierophant

Some say that the legend of the Hierophant is the true spiritual center of the Caretaker faith now. The cynics claim that, while the true druids worshipped nature for its own sake, the Caretakers follow the druidic ideals only in the hopes that, one day, this will earn them the right to become the figure of legendary power known as the Hierophant. Should a character ever qualify to become the Hierophant, they gain a number of incredible powers:

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- ◆ The Hierophant no longer uses Table 90 in *Domains of Dread* to determine his spell levels, instead using the system detailed under the Grand Druid, above.
- ◆ The Hierophant is immune to all natural poisons. This includes any ingested or insinuated poison derived from animal or vegetable sources. However, this immunity does not extend to poisons directly associated with the domain lords. The Hierophant is still susceptible to the poisonous border closings of Borca, for instance. The Hierophant may rival the darklords in power, but he will never be their master.
- ◆ The Hierophant has drawn so much of the land's power into himself that he becomes incredibly vigorous for his age (although he does continue to age). The character is no longer subject to ability score penalties inflicted by aging.
- ◆ The Caretakers' secretive nature and the Hierophant's own power combine to give the character the ability to alter his appearance at will. The character can change his height and weight by up to 50%, and can change his apparent age from childhood to extreme old age. The Hierophant can alter his features to that of any human or humanoid creature, including the ability to mimic specific individuals.

Any given alteration takes one full round to complete. In Ravenloft, there is no way to magically detect these alterations.

Due to this legendary power, some Caretakers say that, even if the Hierophant did exist, no one else would ever know.

Higher Level Hierophants: If a Hierophant does exist, he can rise to a maximum of 20th level, gaining additional powers as he does so.

At 17th level, the Hierophant gains the ability to hibernate. A hibernating character is completely unconscious and oblivious to his surroundings, but appears dead to the casual observer and ceases to age for the duration of hibernation. The character sets the length of his duration at the outset, choosing either a set period of time (ten days, twenty years), or an environmental change which will trigger his awakening (the first snow, a physical attack). Once hibernating, nothing other than the chosen trigger can wake the sleeping Hierophant.

A 17th-level Hierophant also gains the ability to "swim" through living earth (as opposed to cut stone) at his normal movement rate, and the ability to breathe while so entombed.

At 18th level, the Hierophant gains complete immunity to all heat and non-magical fire.

At 19th level, the Hierophant gains the ability to swim through water at his normal movement rate,

unaffected by pressures even the deepest depths, and gains the ability to breathe underwater normally.

Lastly, a 20th-level Hierophant gains the power to walk through the air at will, an ability identical to a permanent version of the 5th-level priest spell *air walk*.

Followers and Holdings

Caretakers do not build strongholds; they prefer natural surrounding as a rule and to call attention to themselves with such a structure would be to invite oblivion.

Due to the extreme secrecy of their cult, Caretakers do not automatically receive followers as they gain in level. However, high-level Caretakers may need to actively recruit to enable themselves to rise in rank, and as such all Caretakers are encouraged to steadily (but cautiously) recruit new initiates into their society.



I hope you know you're going to clean that up," growled the irate barkeep.

The striking, dark-haired couple leaning against the bar tossed the burly man a moment's glance, then went back to their conversation.

"So as I was saying, before I was so rudely interrupted," continued the man, raising his voice a touch on the last three words, "there aren't any bards. Not real bards, anyway."

His equally attractive companion rolled her eyes. "Now I know you're drunk. What about that fellow we were just talking to?"

"That little Borcan fop? Never!"

"I don't see how you can say that; his verse nearly moved me to tears."

"My point exactly. He was reciting poetry. Lyrics without melody do not music make, my dear, and I very much doubt he could have strummed out a tune on a lyre to save his life."

"You amuse yourself a great deal, don't you?"

The man grinned wryly. "Well someone needs to, and no one else seems up to the task."

The barkeep stomped over to the well-dressed couple and glared at them across the bar, impatiently tapping his foot. The pair blankly met his gaze for a moment, then nonchalantly turned back to each other.

"Anyway," continued the rake, "even if you do want to count every piddling poet and minstrel singing for his supper as a bard, where were his enchantments? That's the mark of the true bard: The art of weaving magic as easily as one performs a ballad."

"I don't know," murmured his lovely companion, as she thumbed through a small, leather-bound volume.

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“There’s some very intriguing stanza structure to be found within that fellow’s verses. I suspect he may have known more magic than he let on.”

“Really?” The rake raised an eyebrow and made a grab for the damsel’s book. “Let me see that.”

“Acquired a sudden taste for sonnets?” The ebon-haired damsel yanked the book away, tucking it into her vest. “I think I’ll keep this for myself, thank you.”

His face flushed with irritation, the barkeep leaned across the border, planting his elbow on the same ungainly, cloth-covered heap the rake was leaning against.

“I am talking to you two, you know.” The barkeep pressed a thick finger into the wet bundle. “Or have you two not noticed that this git’s bleeding all over my bar? You want me to fetch you some dishrags to mop it up or just kick you out now?”

The rake turned to the barkeep and snarled, revealing long, sharp incisors. His companion wrapped a hand around his collar and tugged him away.

“Come on, we know when aren’t wanted. If we get kicked out of the Crystal Club, we’ll never live it down.”

The rake took a moment to regain his composure. “Very well,” he said contemptuously, grabbing the mauled corpse and hauling it off the bar. “Let’s go somewhere where they appreciate their clientele.”

The damsel tossed a few coins onto the crimson-soaked bar, and the pair proudly strode outside, dragging the ruined body between them.

“Well, even if this pretender could weave magic, he’s still not a real bard,” continued the rake.

“Are you still rattling on about that?” asked his companion.

“Everyone knows all the real bards study at Harmonic Hall, and this fool wasn’t even from Kartakass.”

“So he’s not a real bard?” relented his companion, her eyes glittering yellow in the moonlight.

“No, not a real bard,” the rake grinned, his smile full of fangs.

“Not like us.”

Races Allowed: Half-elf, Human

In most worlds, the typical bard is a traveling minstrel and jack-of-all-trades. With the exception of the musical culture of Kartakass, that sort of merry, magical minstrel is almost unheard of within the Demiplane of Dread. In their place are the storytelling Gypsies, and their *giorgio* counterpart, the Artiste. The Artiste is the tortured performer: an artist whose talent is often indistinguishable from his madness, if not its direct inspiration. The brooding Artiste often travels the Lands of Mist in a romanticized quest to taste all of life, death, and all the facets of existence in between.

Ability Requirements

The Artiste’s art is his life, and vice versa. To that end, an Artiste character must have a Wisdom score of at least 12, so they can grasp the poetic truths of existence; an Intelligence score of at least 13, to transform these nebulous truths into startlingly clear imagery; and of course a Charisma score of at least 15 to woo the masses with their artistry. If an Artiste has Intelligence and Charisma scores of 16 or better, he receives a +10% bonus to any experience points he earns.

Alignment

Artistes are typically far too caught up in their own fevered imaginations to care one whit for the mores and morals of the society around them. In fact, many Artistes dismiss society’s strictures out of hand as an impediment to their own personal and creative liberation. Thus, Artistes may be of any non-Lawful alignment. Note that no player character Artistes may be of Evil alignment.

Arms and Armor

Artistes are not adverse to combat, but they certainly do not spend their days training themselves for battle. As such, they may not wear any armor heavier than chain mail, nor may they use shields. Note that wearing armor of any kind may affect the Artiste’s “thieving” skills.

Although they may use any weapon, most Artistes are trained primarily in the weapons of the duel. Thus, all Artiste characters must allocate at least one weapon proficiency slot to either the rapier, dagger, or (if the Artiste is a native of a Renaissance-level domain) any sort of *smokepowder* pistol.

Spells and Magic Items

Artistes enjoy a healthy selection of magical items, being able to use any magical item normally available to

Artiste (Bard)

Ability Requirements: Wisdom 12

Intelligence 13

Charisma 15

Prime Requisites: Intelligence, Charisma

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rogues. Unlike a simple thief, however, the Artiste also has an impressive spellcasting talent.

The Artiste has not so much been touched by his personal Muse as snatched up bodily in its iron claws. When creating their art, the worlds of the Artiste's imagination are often just as real to their mind's eye as the mundane world around them. This touch of fevered obsession, combined with the closely-guarded arcane secrets hidden in their compositions, allows Artiste characters the ability to weave magic with their madness. However, the Artiste's magic is limited in several ways when compared to that wielded by the true wizard.

Artistes cast their spells through their art; performance and spellcraft are one and the same. Thus, all Artiste characters receive one free non-weapon proficiency slot which they may place in either Artistic Ability, Dancing, Musical Instrument, or Singing. The proficiency chosen determines the type of artistry the Artiste uses to cast his spells. To cast a spell, the Artiste must use this proficiency successfully. If the die roll indicates a success, then the Artiste has recited the ode precisely, sung the aria flawlessly, danced the correct steps, or otherwise performed their art in such a way as to unleash the sorcery within. A failed roll indicates some slip which disrupts the spell. Casting times, spell components, and other details of the spell remain unchanged. Artistes must still memorize their spells just as wizards must do.

The Artiste first gains the ability to cast spells at second level. **Table 2: Artiste Spell Progression** indicates the number of spells an Artiste can cast per day. At 2nd level, the Artiste must choose the single school of magic from which they can learn spells. As the Artiste gains experience, his strange flights of fancy send his imagination into ever more esoteric realms; thus, at each even-numbered level after 2nd, the Artiste may add a magical school to those he can understand.

Artiste Spellbooks

Artistes must keep spellbooks just like wizards. However, to the untrained eye, the spellbook of an Artiste appears as anything but. Depending on the character's art form of choice, the contents may appear to be nothing more than a collection of short stories or poetry, sheet music to a ballet, impressionist sketches, or whatever would be appropriate to the Artiste's craft.

XP Level	Spell Level						Schools
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
3	2	—	—	—	—	—	1
4	2	1	—	—	—	—	2
5	3	1	—	—	—	—	2

6	3	2	—	—	—	—	3
7	3	2	1	—	—	—	3
8	3	3	1	—	—	—	4
9	3	3	2	—	—	—	4
10	3	3	2	1	—	—	5
11	3	3	3	1	—	—	5
12	3	3	3	2	—	—	6
13	3	3	3	2	1	—	6
14	3	3	3	3	1	—	7
15	3	3	3	3	2	—	7
16	4	3	3	3	2	1	8
17	4	4	3	3	3	1	8
18	4	4	4	3	3	2	9
19	4	4	4	4	3	2	9
20	4	4	4	4	4	3	10

While another Artiste can immediately spot the occult symbolism and arcane patterns hidden within the works, anyone else must make successful use of the Spellcraft non-weapon proficiency or cast *read magic* to reveal the true nature of the spellbook's contents. In some circles in Ravenloft, rumors abound of widely-published novels which actually hold hidden power for those who can see it. An Artiste has a -10% penalty to learn any spell written by a wizard, and vice-versa.

Enchantments

If an Artiste learns the 6th-level spell *enchant an item*, he can use his touch of madness to twist the spell to create permanent magical items even though the 8th-level *permanency* spell is far beyond any Artiste's grasp. The Artiste must seclude himself from all other activities so he can turn his full attention, and unleash his full passion, toward the creation of his masterpiece. In return for the permanent loss of a point of Constitution, an Artiste can literally pour some of his own life-force into the magnum opus, thus imbuing it with the power of any one spell found in the Artiste's spellbook. The enchanted masterpiece will cast its spell effect on anyone who closely studies the work (be it by reading the novel, examining the painting, reciting the musical work), once per day.

The process of crafting an enchanted masterpiece takes six weeks, plus one week per level of the spell to be placed in the work. The only spells which cannot be used in these enchantments are those of "instantaneous" duration.

Upon completing his occult masterpiece, the Artiste must also make a madness check, with a -1 penalty for each level of the spell being placed in the work. If the Artiste fails this check, then along with the standard results, the taint of madness has been sewn into the enchantment. The resulting magical work is typically more powerful than was expected, but is invariably also cursed. Details of the curse are left to the Dungeon

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Master, and should be revealed to the Artiste only through use.

Artiste Skills

In the course of their roguish lives, Artistes often pick up several skills commonly associated with thieves—although no self-respecting Artiste would allow himself to be linked with such rabble. **Table 3: Artiste Skill Base** indicates the base percentage chance of success an Artiste can expect at 1st level. The Artiste's race, Dexterity, and armor worn may affect these scores; see Tables 98 through 100 on pp. 268-9 of *Domains of Dread* for the exact adjustments.

After the base scores have been determined, a 1st-level Artiste character receives a pool of 20 points which he may allocate to his four skills as he sees fit. At each level thereafter, the Artiste receives another 15 points to distribute.

As a note, an Artiste cannot use his Read Languages ability to translate languages totally unknown in his home domain.

Table 3: Artiste Skill Base

Climb Walls: 5%	Detect Noise: 10%
Pick Pockets: 20%	Read Languages: 50%

Stir the Soul

An Artiste may use his type of performance art to modify the reactions of others, so long as his audience is not currently involved in combat and is both willing and able to pay attention to him for at least a moment. Each member of the audience must make a saving throw vs. paralyzation to avoid the effects of the Artiste's manipulation. Ravenloft natives may apply a +2 bonus to their saves simply due to their distrustful natures, but all audience members must also apply a -1 penalty to their saves for every 3 levels of the Artiste (rounding fractions down).

If the Artiste's attempt to stir the souls of his audience is successful, he may shift the crowd's Reaction by one level in any direction he likes; he may lift their spirits to the heavens, or dash them to the rocks, as he sees fit. See the Reactions section in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more details.

Inspire Courage

Just as the Artiste can tug at his audience's heartstrings, he can steel the spirits of his companions. So long as the Artiste knows the exact nature of the threat the party faces, he can inspire his companions through his performance, granting them either a +1 attack bonus, a +1 bonus to saving throws, a +2 bonus to morale, or a +2

bonus to fear checks. The Artiste must perform for at least 3 full rounds before the party faces the threat to have any effect. If the Artiste is successful, the inspiration can affect all of his allies within a (10' x XP level) radius. The effects last one round per level of the Artiste.

Uncommon Knowledge

Artistes have the bard's ability to "know a little bit about everything," with one important restriction: The person, place, or object being studied must have some tie to the character's home domain, or any domain where the Artiste has lived for at least a full year.

Counter Magic

The Artiste can counter the effects of enchanted songs or music, or the magic of bards or other Artistes, within thirty feet by performing a counter work (in whatever type of performance is applicable to the Artiste's chosen art form). If the Artiste makes a save vs. spell, he has successfully blocked the attack. While countering magic in such a fashion, the Artiste must take no other action more strenuous than a slow walk. An Artiste can counter magical attacks once per encounter.

Darkling Soul

Artistes often wander in the dreary and morbid worlds of daydreams and obsession. Although they live their lives with one foot in the realm of madness, they are not easily shaken by the macabre. Thus, all Artistes receive a +1 bonus to all horror checks, but suffer a -1 penalty to all madness checks.

Followers and Holdings

Although Artistes may well have their admirers, they do not attract followers as do the bards of other settings. As for building a stronghold, suffice to say that historically speaking, most Artistes have been far too busy catering to their patrons or drinking away their inheritance to concern themselves with such a massive project.



CHILDREN OF THE LIGHT

Native Ravenloft Characters Using the Player's Option™ Rules

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Introduction

The RAVENLOFT® Campaign Setting, the hardback book *Domains of Dread*, was released by TSR in mid-1997, somewhat later than the release of the three Player's Option™ rulebooks, *Skills & Powers*, *Spells & Magic* and *Combat & Tactics*. The three Appendices of *Domains of Dread* provided for character generation, and in particular, the generation of characters native to the Demiplane of Dread. However, the character generation guidelines (noting that I hesitate to call them "rules") did not deal with the creation of native Ravenloft characters using the Player's Option system. This article serves to fulfill that role.

This article builds upon the character generation guidelines presented in the Appendices of *Domains of Dread*. To make use of the guidelines presented here, readers will need to possess *Domains* and, at minimum, *Skills & Powers*. It is not necessary to possess either *Spells & Magic* or *Combat & Tactics*, although the guidelines presented here do accommodate those books.

General Concepts

The character generation system detailed in the Player's Option series of books is extremely flexible, in that it gives players, and DMs, great freedom in the customization of characters. This is obviously of considerable value in the Ravenloft campaign, where personality, characterization, and role-playing are important elements of the gaming experience.

However, as the saying goes, with freedom comes responsibility. With the introduction of the notion of subabilities and Character Points (CPs), it became possible to generate characters whose "unique" characteristics had a measure of "official sanction" but little role-playing basis. In the past, it was necessary for a player and DM to work closely to determine a character's background and personality, and on the basis of that work out whether those role-playing necessities had any measurable game effects. And it was for the DM to determine those game effects. Under the Player's

Option system, a player can choose the game effects he or she wants, work out the CPs necessary, and budget accordingly. The process of character creation is reduced to little more than an account-keeping exercise. In gamer's speak, under the Player's Option guidelines it is possible to "min-max" nearly every aspect of a character's creation. It is therefore incumbent upon every player and every DM to use the guidelines presented in the Player's Option books sensibly and responsibly; this is even more true of character generation in Ravenloft.

The guidelines presented in this article reflect the dichotomy of role-playing depth vs. "min-maxing." It is possible to abuse the system and create an indomitable character. But used wisely, these guidelines enable players and DMs to individualize native Ravenloft characters easily and consistently.

And remember, the DM is *always* the final arbiter of what is acceptable in his or her campaign.

Ability Scores

The subability guidelines from *Skills & Powers*, Chapter 2, are useful for the native Ravenloft character, as they enable strengths and weaknesses to be clearly defined. This is particularly so in relation to subabilities for ability scores that are below average; the ability to differentiate between subabilities by up to four points enables a weakness to be highlighted and rationalized. For example, a character with a Wisdom of 7 may be no less perceptive than an ordinary man (Intuition 9) but completely lacking in backbone (Willpower 5).

However, more caution should be used in relation to the subability guidelines than for any other of the Player's Option guidelines, as they have the potential, more than any other guidelines, to unbalance a character.

Finally, remember that irrespective of subability scores, races, classes, and some kits have certain base ability prerequisites; and in Ravenloft, the non-human races in particular require above-average abilities.

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Character Races

Naturally, humans are the most common race in the Demiplane of Dread. This is not to say that, officially, other races do not exist, and with the DM's permission a player may take a non-human character.

Note that the standard racial abilities of all non-human races native to Ravenloft completely use up the CPs available to those races. Only if a non-human character is created by purchasing abilities from the racial ability lists will any CPs be remaining for use for other things.

Dwarves

The only native populations of dwarves in Ravenloft may be found in and around the Mountains of Misery in Necropolis. There are no populations of deep dwarves native to Ravenloft. Grey dwarves may exist under the Mountains, but a player must have a very good reason for running such a character; grey dwarves are by nature evil and malicious, and this nature is only emphasized in Ravenloft. Hill dwarves are almost certain to come from settlements in the foothills of the Mountains of Misery, and mountain dwarves from deeper in the Mountains, where they are forced to continually defend themselves from the minions of Beryl Silvertress and the other evil inhabitants of the range.

The guidelines relating to the creation of dwarf characters on pages 23 to 26 of *Skills & Powers* apply to dwarves from the Mountains of Misery, with the following modifications:

All Dwarves

Character point cost: 45

In addition to the standard hill and mountain dwarf special abilities listed on pg. 25 of *Skills & Powers*, all dwarves from Ravenloft gain the special ability Fearlessness.

Dwarven Abilities

In addition to the dwarven abilities listed on pages 25 and 26 of *Skills & Powers*, dwarves from Ravenloft may select the following ability:

- ◆ **Fearlessness (5):** The dwarf is less vulnerable to fear—whenever the dwarf must make a fear check not caused by a magical attack, he gains a +2 bonus to his roll (in addition to any bonus from a high Wisdom/Willpower score).

Elves

Elves are perhaps the most common demihuman race in Ravenloft, although they are largely unseen by the human population, and are by no means as common in the Demiplane as they are in other TSR campaign settings. There are no populations of aquatic or grey elves native to Ravenloft. Players may not choose shadow elf (Arak) characters. Dark elves are present in small numbers under the Mountains of Misery in Necropolis, but like grey dwarves, players need considerable justification to choose a dark elf character. While high elves can be found throughout the core, elf populations are concentrated in Necropolis and Sithicus. Some cling to an existence in the rugged forests of Valachan. Sylvan (wood) elves can be found amongst the population of Vechor.

The guidelines relating to the creation of elf characters on pages 26 to 30 of *Skills & Powers* apply to elves from Ravenloft, with the following modifications.

High Elves

Character point cost: 45

In addition to the standard high elf special abilities listed on pg. 25 of *Skills & Powers*, high elves gain the special ability Iron Will.

Racial penalties

High elves from Sithicus suffer the grey elf racial penalty, rather than the standard high elf racial penalty.

Sylvan elves from Vechor suffer the high elf racial penalty, rather than the standard sylvan elf racial penalty.

Elven Abilities

In addition to the elven abilities listed on pages 29 and 30 of *Skills & Powers*, elves from Ravenloft may select the following ability:

- ◆ **Iron Will (5):** The elf is resistant to mental traumas—whenever the elf must make a madness check she gains a +2 bonus to her roll (in addition to any bonus from a high Wisdom/Willpower score).

Gnomes

As described on pg. 234 of *Domains of Dread*, there are a number of native populations of gnomes in Ravenloft, notably Mayvin in Necropolis. Gnomes are an inquisitive race and may be found just about anywhere in the core, particularly the larger cities of domains with

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Chivalric or Renaissance cultural levels. All gnomes native to Ravenloft are rock gnomes.

The guidelines relating to the creation of gnome characters on pages 30 to 32 of *Skills & Powers* apply to rock gnomes from Ravenloft, with the following modifications:

Rock Gnomes

Character point cost: 45

In addition to the standard rock gnome special abilities listed on pg. 31 of *Skills & Powers*, rock gnomes gain the special ability Fearlessness.

Gnomish Abilities

In addition to the gnome abilities listed on pages 31 and 32 of *Skills & Powers*, rock gnomes from Ravenloft may select the following ability:

- ◆ **Fearlessness (5):** The gnome is less vulnerable to horror—whenever the gnome must make a horror check, he gains a +2 bonus to his roll (in addition to any bonus from a high Wisdom/Willpower score). Note that this differs from the dwarven ability Fearlessness, which modifies fear checks.

Halflings

As noted on pg. 238 of *Domains of Dread*, there are quite a number of halfling populations in the Core, notably the towns of Delagia and Rivalis in Necropolis. However, halflings can be found just about anywhere humans can, as they are a peaceful and hardworking folk who are subject to few of the prejudices that are directed towards the other demihuman races. It may only be due to the industriousness of the halfling farmer that many of the larger cities of the Core are not starving.

All breeds of halfling may be found in Ravenloft. Note that although kender are present in Sithicus, many have been cursed by Soth to be vampires, and the rest are too violent and xenophobic to ever be suitable as characters (see pg. 50 *Domains of Dread*). The guidelines relating to the creation of halfling characters on pages 32 to 34 of *Skills & Powers* apply to halflings from Ravenloft, with the following modifications:

All Halflings

Character point cost: 35

In addition to the standard halfling special abilities listed for hairfoot, stout and tallfellow halflings on pages 31 and 32 of *Skills & Powers*, all halflings native to Ravenloft have the special ability Determination.

Halfling Abilities

In addition to the halfling abilities listed on pages 33 and 34 of *Skills & Powers*, halflings from Ravenloft may select the following ability:

- ◆ **Determination (5):** The halfling is less vulnerable to fear, horror or madness—the halfling has a +2 bonus to *one* of the checks for fear, horror or madness (i.e. +2 to all fear checks, *or* +2 to all horror checks, *or* +2 to all madness checks—player choice); or has a +1 bonus to *two* of the checks for fear, horror or madness (player choice). This bonus is in addition to any bonus from high Wisdom/-Willpower score.

Half-Elves

Half-elves may be found in many places in Ravenloft, although their numbers are greater in domains with large elven populations. Player character half-elves that are native to Ravenloft must be of high elf stock; while half-Arak and half-drow may be possible, such aberrations are stolen by the Arak or hunted down and killed.

The guidelines relating to the creation of half-elf characters on page 34 of *Skills & Powers* apply to half-elves from Ravenloft, with the following modifications:

All Half-Elves

Character point cost: 25

In addition to the standard half-elf special abilities listed on pages 34 of *Skills & Powers*, all half-elves native to Ravenloft have the special ability Iron Will.

Half-Elf Abilities

In addition to the half-elf abilities listed on pg. 34 of *Skills & Powers*, half-elves from Ravenloft may select the following ability:

- ◆ **Iron Will (5):** The half-elf gains a +1 bonus to checks for fear and horror. This bonus is in addition to any bonus from high Wisdom/Willpower score. Note that this differs from the elven ability Iron Will, which modifies madness checks.

Half-Vistani

Half-Vistani, or *giomorgo*, are entirely human, but because of the distance their culture places between them and the rest of Ravenloft's citizens, they are treated as a separate race by *Domains of Dread*. The half-Vistani Description, Personality and Ability Scores guidelines presented on pages 240 and 241 of *Domains of Dread*

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are unchanged. However, for the purposes of character generation using the *Skills & Powers* guidelines, half-Vistani Special Abilities have been revised.

Depending upon the tribe from which his Vistani parent belonged, a *giomorgo* will tend to have certain special abilities. Many (about 40%) of PC half-Vistani are of Kamii origin, with large numbers of the rest having a parent from the Equaar (20%) or Vatraska (20%) tribes. However, players may choose from the seven tribes listed in Table 68: Vistani Ancestry, or roll on that table.

Players who choose half-Vistani for their characters have 10 character points to spend on racial abilities. These points can be used to customize a half-Vistana from the general skill list below, or they can be used to purchase a tribe's skill package. Only five points can be retained for use later in the character creation process.

Canjar Half-Vistani

Character point cost: 5

Canjar *giomorgo* are aloof and prideful. Player character half-Vistani of Canjar origin must always be wizards, although they may be generalists or specialists of any description open to half-Vistani. They are covetous and possessive of magical items and spells. Because of their nature they tend towards neutral alignments and the following kits: Mystic and Scholar.

Canjar half-Vistani Special Abilities

Affinity for nature Free magick
Ancient languages (tralaks) Fire building

Canjar Racial Penalties

Aloofness Moon madness
Greed

Corvara Half-Vistani

Character point cost: 5

Corvara *giomorgo* distrust strangers, and have a mercenary attitude to life. Their most frequently asked question is, "What's in it for me?" Because of this outlook, Corvara half-Vistani often opt for thievery as a profession, tend towards neutral alignments, and prefer the following kits: Assassin, Beggar, Merchant, Outlaw, Pirate, Scout, Soldier, Spy, and Thug. Corvara half-Vistani can purchase the Keen Touch trait for one less CP than normal, that is, 3 CPs.

Corvara half-Vistani Special Abilities

Affinity for nature Set snares
Ancient languages (tralaks) Fire building

Corvara Racial Penalties

Moon madness

Equaar Half-Vistani

Character point cost: 10

Equaar *giomorgo* are nature-loving friendly folk, and hence a disproportionate number become rangers. They prefer the following kits: Amazon, Animal Master, Barbarian, Cavalier, Rider, Savage, and Scout.

Equaar half-Vistani Special Abilities

Affinity for nature Fire building
Ancient languages (tralaks) Riding, land-based
Animal lore

Equaar Racial Penalties

Moon madness

Kamii Half-Vistani

Character point cost: 10

Kamii *giomorgo* form the bulk of half-Vistani. They tend to be quiet and reserved in company, and many opt for the thief class. However, they may also be fighters. No kits are typical of Kamii half-Vistani. No Kamii may cast spells, although whether this is a restriction of their own choosing is not clear.

Kamii half-Vistani Special Abilities

Affinity for nature Fire building
Ancient languages (tralaks) Identify metals
Blacksmithing

Kamii Racial Penalties

Moon madness

Naiat Half-Vistani

Character point cost: 10

Naiat *giomorgo* are flamboyant and outgoing; they tend to be of the bard class. In addition to gaining the proficiencies of Dancing and Singing automatically, Naiat half-Vistani can purchase the traits of Music/-Singing and Music/Instrument for one less CP than normal, that is, 4 CPs and 3 CPs respectively. They prefer the kits Acrobat, Diplomat, Jester, Outlaw, Spy, and Swashbuckler.

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Naiat half-Vistani Special Abilities

Affinity for nature Fire building
Ancient languages (tralaks) Singing
Dancing

Naiat Racial Penalties

Moon madness

Vatraska Half-Vistani

Character point cost: 5

Vatraska *giomorgo* are known for their skill as healers and herbalists, but their bedside manner is cold and patronizing. They are only rarely good-aligned, and even more rarely do they become priests, despite their skills.

Vatraska half-Vistani Special Abilities

Affinity for nature Herbalism
Ancient languages (tralaks) Identify poison
Fire building

Vatraska Racial Penalties

Aloofness Moon madness

Zarovan Half-Vistani

Character point cost: 5

Zarovan *giomorgo* are quiet, introspective, and suspicious of strangers. They do things for their own reasons, and never share their motives, plans, or desires with anyone else. No more than one Zarovan half-Vistani will travel with any given group of adventurers.

All Zarovan *giomorgo* are wizards, although they may be generalist mages or specialists of any description open to half-Vistani. Because of their special relationship to time and space, Zarovan make excellent Dimensionalists.

Zarovan half-Vistani Special Abilities

Affinity for nature Fire building
Ancient languages (tralaks) Time warp

Zarovan Racial Penalties

Moon madness Time warp

Half-Vistani Abilities

A character with leftover character points may select additional racial abilities after taking one of the standard subrace packages. Or, if the player wishes to create his own customized half-Vistani character, he can pick and choose from the list of *giomorgo* abilities listed below. Abilities cost -10 to 15 character points; refer to the

descriptions below. Note that abilities with negative costs are racial penalties or disadvantages.

- ◆ **Affinity for nature (5):** From 1st level the half-Vistani character can accurately identify plants, animals, and safe water, as per the druid ability Identify (see page 59 *Skills & Powers*).
- ◆ **Aloofness (-5):** The *giomorgo* suffers a penalty to reaction adjustments from NPCs, because he is aloof, reclusive, patronizing, furtive, or simply *different*. While he relates to his own tribe, the character suffers a -1 reaction penalty when dealing with Vistani and half-Vistani whose origin differs from his, and a -2 reaction penalty when dealing with non-Vistani.
- ◆ **Bonus proficiency (5):** The character starts play with an additional non-weapon proficiency, and gains a +2 bonus to proficiency checks for that proficiency. The player may choose from the following non-weapon proficiencies: Ancient languages (tralaks), Animal lore, Blacksmithing, Dancing, Fire building, Herbalism, Riding, land-based, Singing, Set snares.
- ◆ **Determination (5):** The half-Vistani is less vulnerable to fear, horror or madness—the character has a +2 bonus to *one* of the checks for fear, horror or madness (i.e. +2 to all fear checks, *or* +2 to all horror checks, *or* +2 to all madness checks—player choice); or has a +1 bonus to *two* of the checks for fear, horror or madness (player choice). This bonus is in addition to any bonus from high Wisdom/-Willpower score.
- ◆ **Free magick (15):** This ability is useful for wizards only. If the Spell Point system from Chapter 6 of *Spells & Magic* is being used, the half-Vistani wizard gains an extra 4 spell points at 1st and 2nd level, and 10 spell points at 3rd level and above. These additional spell points can only be spent on free magick. Thus, a 3rd level specialist with this ability would have 35 spell points (15 + 10 + 10) to spend on spells, of which at least 10 must be spent on free magick.
If the Spell Point system is not being used, the half-Vistani wizard can leave one 1st level spell slot and one 2nd level spell slot free, to use during the course of the day to cast any spell of appropriate level which is in his spellbook.
- ◆ **Greed (-7):** This is simply the disadvantage Greed, as described on page 110 of *Skills & Powers*. Canjar half-Vistani tend to exhibit greed for magic items, spells, and power; Corvara half-Vistani tend to exhibit greed for money. However, the half-Vistani that takes this disadvantage as a racial

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penalty can gain another 15 CPs from choosing additional personal disadvantages.

- ◆ **Identify metals (5):** The *giomorgo* can determine the type of metal in an object with unerring accuracy. He can also identify the domain in Ravenloft from where the metal object was constructed with 100% accuracy; if the object was constructed outside Ravenloft, the character has a 5% chance per level of successfully identifying its world of origin. If the object was constructed by a Vistana, the character has a flat 25% chance of detecting any curse upon it before it affects him.
- ◆ **Identify poison (5):** The character can identify poisons as easily as a druid can identify plants, and can determine whether a person has been poisoned or not. The character has a 5% chance per level of being able to detect poison secreted in food or drink by close observation.
- ◆ **Moon madness (-10):** The *giomorgo* is subject to moon madness, or *lunatio*. On the three nights of the month when the moon is full, the character is restless and unable to sleep. He cannot heal wounds naturally and cannot memorize spells. He suffers a -2 penalty to all saving throws; this penalty lasts until he is able to rest undisturbed for 8 hours. On each of the three nights of the full moon the character must make a successful madness check or be overcome with the *lunatio*. A single failed check means the half-Vistana slips away from his companions to run wild under the stars. A second failed check indicates the character also becomes aggressive and even violent during these wild times. Should he fail all three of his madness checks, he has the mind of a wild, violent savage until the moon changes its phase. Moon madness is not related to the light of the moon, but perhaps to some unusual tidal effect on the minds of the Vistani. Moon madness affects half-Vistani even when they cannot see the moon, for example, they are underground or in Sithicus.
- ◆ **Time warp (0):** This ability is both a boon and a burden. The half-Vistana considers himself to be adrift on the river of time, occasionally moving faster or slower than the prevailing current. He may therefore answer a question just before it is asked, or momentarily freeze in place as the world catches up to him. The effect is usually no more than an inconvenience, but is relevant in combat.

When initiative is rolled, the character rolls two more dice, a d6 and a d10. On a d6 roll of 1 or 2, the d10 roll is subtracted from the initiative roll to determine the character's real initiative. On a d6 roll of 3 or 4, nothing untoward happens, and the character's initiative is unaffected. On a d6 roll of 5

or 6, the d10 roll is added to the initiative roll to determine the character's real initiative. If the phased combat system presented in *Combat & Tactics* is being used, an adjusted initiative roll of 1 or less results in the character's action occurring one phase earlier than usual, while an adjusted initiative roll of 10 or more results in the character's action occurring one phase later than usual.

Humans

The human racial abilities presented on page 36 of *Skills & Powers* apply to humans native to Ravenloft. In addition, humans from Ravenloft may select the following ability:

- ◆ **Determination (5):** The human is less vulnerable to fear, horror or madness—the character has a +2 bonus to *one* of the checks for fear, horror or madness (i.e. +2 to all fear checks, *or* +2 to all horror checks, *or* +2 to all madness checks—player choice); or has a +1 bonus to *two* of the checks for fear, horror or madness (player choice). This bonus is in addition to any bonus from high Wisdom/-Willpower score.

Character Classes

The following guidelines detail how each of the character classes presented in the Player's Option books can be incorporated into the wholly Ravenloft campaign. For the most part, the class guidelines presented in *Skills & Powers* and, for spellcasters, *Spells & Magic*, can be used directly in the creation of characters native to Ravenloft. At this point, however, a few characteristics of classes native to the Demiplane should be pointed out:

- ◆ Due to the harsh life and ever-present dangers typical of Ravenloft, all characters start at 1st level with the maximum number of hit points permitted by their hit dice.
- ◆ Due to the presence of powerful Darklords who brook no challenge to their authority, no character will automatically attract a body of human or demihuman followers, and all characters have great difficulty setting up strongholds of any form.

Warriors

The rules on warriors presented on page 47 of *Skills & Powers* and pages 246 and 247 of *Domains of Dread* are consistent. New guidelines relating to the creation of fighters, rangers and avengers native to Ravenloft are presented below.

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Fighters

Most fighter class abilities presented on pages 47 and 48 of *Skills & Powers* are available to fighters native to Ravenloft. However, fighters in Ravenloft are unable to purchase the followers ability (both 5 and 10 CP versions). Rather, the standard fighter in Ravenloft spends his character points to acquire the abilities of weapon specialization 5 and bravery 5.

- ◆ **Bravery (5/10):** The fighter from Ravenloft becomes hardened against the dangers of the demiplane. This increases his resistance to fear and horror, reflected in bonuses to his fear and horror rolls. Further, his stoicism in the face of fearsome situations puts backbone into others, and he can improve the fear rolls of those around him. The rules relating to bravery appear at page 248 of *Domains of Dread*. If bravery is purchased as a 10-point ability, the fighter is treated as 5 levels above his current level for the purposes of Table 77 on page 248 of *Domains of Dread*.

Rangers

The character creation guidelines relating to rangers presented on pages 49 to 51 of *Skills & Powers* apply to rangers native to Ravenloft, with the following modifications.

As stated on page 249 of *Domains of Dread*, in addition to humans, half-elves and elves, half-Vistani can become rangers. Those of Equaar origin are frequently rangers.

Most class abilities presented on pages 50 and 51 of *Skills & Powers* are available for purchase by rangers native to the Demiplane of Dread. However, Ravenloft rangers cannot purchase the special enemy ability, and typically purchase the bow bonus and the cure lycanthropy abilities in its stead.

The adjustments to the ranger's hide in shadows and move silently chances are those presented on Table 80 on page 250 of *Domains of Dread*.

If the ranger takes the followers ability, roll on Table 81 on page 251 of *Domains of Dread* rather than Table 19 on page 29 of *Player's Handbook*.

- ◆ **Cure lycanthropy (5):** By 10th level the ranger from Ravenloft is sufficiently familiar with the herbs and plants of the Demiplane that he can concoct a brew which may cure lycanthropy. The rules relating to the use of this ability are presented on page 251 of *Domains of Dread*.

Avengers

The avenger class guidelines on Ability Requirements and Alignment presented on page 252 of *Domains of Dread* are appropriate for avengers designed using the Player's Option system.

Avengers are treated as rangers for the purposes of the weapon proficiency and mastery rules (Chapter 7 of *Skills & Powers*).

Avengers have 30 character points to spend on abilities. Any unspent points can be used to acquire proficiencies or saved for use during the game. A standard avenger spends his points to acquire the abilities of extra hit points, intuition, and weapon specialization.

- ◆ **Defense bonus (15):** As fighter ability (page 47 *Skills & Powers*).
- ◆ **Detect noise (10):** As ranger ability (page 50 *Skills & Powers*).
- ◆ **Extra hit points (10):** An avenger's focused need for revenge is such that whenever he confronts an enemy that reminds him of his nemesis in melee combat, he gains 1 hit point per level of experience to help him through the encounter. This bonus increases to 2 hit points/level when he faces the subject of his vengeance. These hit points work exactly like the *aid* spell in that they are the first hit points the avenger loses when he takes damage. Once the combat is over, the extra hit points (if any remain) go away.
- ◆ **Increased movement (10):** As fighter ability (page 47 *Skills & Powers*).
- ◆ **Intuition (5):** If an Avenger makes a successful Wisdom/Intuition check while pursuing his foe, he intuitively "knows" which direction he should head. This ability helps an avenger by providing him with a general direction to go; it does not guide him directly to a specific location.
- ◆ **Magic resistance (10):** As fighter ability (page 47 *Skills & Powers*).
- ◆ **Move silently (10):** As ranger ability (page 50 *Skills & Powers*).
- ◆ **Priest spells (10):** This ability enables the avenger to cast spells as a paladin, starting at 9th level. This ability is generally restricted to Knights of the Circle.
- ◆ **Poison resistance (5):** As fighter ability (page 48 *Skills & Powers*).
- ◆ **Sneak attack (10):** As ranger ability (page 51 *Skills & Powers*).

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- ◆ **Special attack resistance (5):** Through the study of his foe and rigorous training, the avenger has developed an immunity to one of the special attack forms of his foe. This resistance takes the form of a +2 bonus to a relevant saving throw. The form of attack to which the avenger is resistant must be agreed with the DM. Examples include a +2 bonus to saving throws vs. vampire *charm*, the paralyzing touch of ghouls and ghosts, spells from the *necromancy* school of magic, or the breath weapon of a particular subspecies of dragon.
- ◆ **Special enemy (5):** Like rangers, avengers can focus their efforts against a particular type of creature. The creature chosen must be the same as the avenger's nemesis, and is subject to the DM's approval. If the type of creature is quite common in the campaign (e.g. human) then the DM can restrict the avenger's special enemy to a particular class or profession which is the same as the avenger's nemesis. For example, if the avenger's foe is a human necromancer, the avenger would not have humans as his special enemy, but could have either human wizards or necromancers of any race, at the DM's option.
The special enemy must be chosen by the avenger at 1st level. The avenger gains a +4 bonus to attack rolls against that type of enemy, and suffers a -4 penalty to reaction rolls vs. that type of enemy. The avenger will seek out such creatures over other foes in combat, unless there is some greater danger.
- ◆ **Spell resistance (5):** As fighter ability (page 48 *Skills & Powers*).
- ◆ **Weapon specialization (10):** The avenger can specialize in a particular melee weapon. The avenger may not specialize in a ranged weapon, although he is able to specialize in a weapon which may be both used in melee or thrown (dagger, spear, warhammer etc.)—in which case the avenger gains none of the benefits of specialization if the weapon is thrown. The avenger is treated as a ranger for the purposes of determining what level he can specialize at, and how many CPs specialization costs.

Optional Restrictions

An avenger can gain bonus character points to spend on the above abilities by accepting voluntary restrictions on his warrior abilities. The restrictions are the same as those for fighters.

Wizards

The great flexibility in design of wizard characters presented in both *Skills & Powers* and *Spells & Magic* renders much of information presented in *Domains of Dread* on mages, specialists, and elementalists irrelevant. After all, wizards can vary their weapon and armor use, knowledge of schools of magic, magic item use, and even things as fundamental as hit dice and attack rolls simply by spending character points. However, all wizards use the fear, horror and madness checks in Table 83 on page 253 of *Domains of Dread*. No wizard can purchase the Followers ability.

Mages

The guidelines on the creation of mage characters presented on pages 60 and 61 of *Skills & Powers* and page 15 of *Spells & Magic* are suitable for the creation of generic mages native to Ravenloft.

Specialist Wizards

The guidelines on the creation of specialist wizard characters presented on pages 61 to 63 of *Skills & Powers* and pages 15 to 23 of *Spells & Magic* are suitable for the creation of standard specialist wizards native to Ravenloft.

Half-Vistani may specialize in schools of magic, including schools of effect (like elementalism) and schools of thaumaturgy, that are open to half-elves, with the exception of divination and alteration. Female half-Vistani may become specialist diviners, irrespective of their Wisdom scores, but no half-Vistani may become a transmuter.

Arcanists

The school of arcane magic is a school of philosophy akin to divination and necromancy; arcanists are simply another breed of specialist wizard. The character generation guidelines for arcanists on pages 259 and 260 of *Domains of Dread* present the standard arcanist, in much the same way as the guidelines on pages 15 to 23 of *Spells & Magic* present other standard specialist wizards.

However, custom-designed wizards can also possess some or all of the abilities of arcanists, when the abilities of determination and turn undead are added to the ability lists on pages 60 to 63 of *Skills & Powers* and pages 24 to 27 of *Spells & Magic*.

A custom-designed wizard with the abilities of an arcanist would purchase:

- ◆ access to the abjuration, conjuration, divination and necromancy schools (20 CPs);

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- ◆ determination (purchased twice: +2 to both fear and horror checks. 10 CPs).
 - ◆ learning bonuses of +25% in divination and necromancy (14 CPs);
 - ◆ school knowledge in divination and necromancy (+2/-2 saving throw adjustments, 16 CPs);
 - ◆ turn undead (25 CPs);
 - ◆ limited magical item use (unable to use alteration, enchantment, illusion and invocation magic items, -20 CPs);
 - ◆ learning penalty of -25% in abjuration and conjuration (-16 CPs); and
 - ◆ supernatural constraint (5% cumulative chance per level of failing a power check, -9 CPs);
- for a net cost of 40 character points.

Under the Player's Option system, an arcanist's knowledge of forbidden lore is not a class ability, but the non-weapon proficiency Sage Knowledge (Forbidden Lore).

Customized Wizard Characters

Players can choose to customize their native Ravenloft wizards using the guidelines on pages 60 to 63 of *Skills & Powers* or 24 to 27 of *Spells & Magic*. For native Ravenloft wizards, the following abilities are added to the lists of abilities available for purchase by specialist or customized wizards:

- ◆ **Determination (5):** The wizard is less vulnerable to fear, horror or madness—the character has a +2 bonus to *one* of the checks for fear, horror or madness (i.e. +2 to all fear checks, *or* +2 to all horror checks, *or* +2 to all madness checks—player choice); or has a +1 bonus to *two* of the checks for fear, horror or madness (player choice). This bonus is in addition to any bonus from racial abilities and high Wisdom/Willpower score.
- ◆ **Turn undead (25):** As priest ability (page 57 *Skills & Powers* or page 40 *Spells & Magic*), using Table 91 on page 264 of *Domains of Dread*. This ability is generally restricted to arcanists and specialist necromancers.

Priests

Like wizards, the character generation guidelines for priests presented in *Skills & Powers* and expanded upon in *Spells & Magic* render much of the material in *Domains of Dread* irrelevant. Nevertheless, all priests use the fear, horror and madness checks in Table 88 on page 262 of *Domains*, and priests that are able to turn

undead use Table 91 on page 264 of *Domains*. No priest may purchase the followers ability.

Clerics

The guidelines on the creation of clerics on page 57 of *Skills & Powers* or pages 31 and 32 of *Spells & Magic* are appropriate for clerics native to Ravenloft. Note that the clerics presented in these books differ slightly in their access to spheres of influence; whichever one is preferred is up to the DM.

On page 264 of *Domains of Dread* it states:

“Clerics created in Ravenloft have major access to most spheres [of influence], although they have only minor access to the spells from the elemental spheres and no access to the animal, chaos, law, plant and weather spheres. In addition, a cleric has access to the spheres of numbers and thought only if he has an Intelligence score of 13 or better.”

This gives clerics native to Ravenloft major access to 16 spheres (18 if their Intelligence is 13+) and minor access to the elemental sphere, a truly incredible number and diversity of spells! The author considers that, in order to keep game balance, clerics native to Ravenloft should either be restricted to the spheres permitted under the *Spells & Magic* guidelines (see page 32 of *Spells & Magic* for the sphere list), or purchase spheres according to the guidelines on page 57 of *Skills & Powers*.

Specialty Priests

Owing to the virtual non-existence of activity by Higher Powers in Ravenloft, there are very few specialty priests native to the Demiplane. Nevertheless, they do exist.

In addition to anchorites (see below), DMs may permit natives of the Demiplane to become specialty priests of deities which have some “presence” in Ravenloft in the form of worshippers. Examples include Osiris in Har' Akir (priests of whom are members of the Green Hand secret society), the Morninglord in Barovia, Bane in Hazlan and Nova Vaasa, and Zhakata in G'Henna. Shamans are present in Souragne and the Nightmare Lands. More detail on the religious beliefs of the folk of Ravenloft can be found in chapters two, three and four of *Domains of Dread*. Players and DMs are encouraged to give each priesthood unique abilities and restrictions, and the lists on pages 38 to 41 of *Spells & Magic* serve as good references.

Anchorites

Anchorites are specialty priests native to Ravenloft who believe in the deity Ezra, usually depicted as a slender, dark-haired woman in flowing white robes. The

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character class guidelines on pages 264 and 265 of *Domains of Dread* detail the generic anchorite, in much the same way as generic crusaders, monks and shamans are detailed on pages 32 to 38 of *Spells & Magic*.

However, custom-designed priests can possess some or all of the powers of anchorites. For example:

A custom-designed priest with the abilities of a **Lawful Good** aligned anchorite would purchase:

- ◆ major access to all, charm, divination, healing and law, and minor access to guardian, protection, sun and wards (59 CPs);
- ◆ Mist Walking from 9th level (spell-like granted power akin to *teleport without error* once per month, 20 CPs);
- ◆ *Shield of Ezra* from 6th level (spell-like granted power akin to *protection from normal missiles* three times per day, 18 CPs); and
- ◆ turn undead (15 CPs);

for a net cost of 112 character points.

A custom-designed priest with the abilities of a **Lawful Neutral** aligned anchorite would purchase:

- ◆ major access to all, charm, divination, healing and law, and minor access to guardian, protection, wards and weather (61 CPs);
- ◆ Mist Walking from 9th level (spell-like granted power akin to *teleport without error* once per month, 20 CPs);
- ◆ *Shield of Ezra* from 6th level (spell-like granted power akin to *protection from normal missiles* three times per day, 18 CPs); and
- ◆ turn undead (15 CPs);

for a net cost of 114 character points.

A custom-designed priest with the abilities of a **True Neutral** aligned anchorite would purchase:

- ◆ major access to all, charm, divination, guardian and healing, and minor access to chaos, law, protection and wards (60 CPs);
- ◆ Mist Walking from 9th level (spell-like granted power akin to *teleport without error* once per month, 20 CPs);
- ◆ *Shield of Ezra* from 6th level (spell-like granted power akin to *protection from normal missiles* three times per day, 18 CPs);
- ◆ turn undead (15 CPs);
- ◆ weapon selection (any single-handed edged weapon, 7 CPs)

for a net cost of 120 character points.

The powers, duties and responsibilities of the anchorite are properly detailed on pages 265 and 266 of *Domains of Dread*.

Rogues

The rogue is a very common class in Ravenloft. The professions of the warrior, the wizard and the priest are difficult to aspire to, and even more difficult to survive in, given that powerful characters are immediately perceived as threats by domain lords. Staying out of sight is a good way to survive to old age in Ravenloft!

Thieves

The guidelines for the creation of thief characters on pages 51 to 53 of *Skills & Powers* are appropriate for thieves native to Ravenloft, with the exception that native thieves cannot purchase the followers ability.

Bards and Gypsies

The original concept of the AD&D bard is a person who is a “teller of tales, singer of songs, and entertainer extraordinaire.” As a result, *Domains of Dread* states at page 280 that “such happy, bright, and entertaining characters do not generally appear on the Demiplane of Dread.” The only bards native to Ravenloft are the wolfweres of Kartakass. Officially then, players may not play native bards.

However, this view overlooks the fact that bards, as presented in *Skills & Powers*, are jacks-of-all-trades. Part detective, part spy, part handyman, bards are commonplace amongst the adventurous in Ravenloft. Few are entertainers. Scoundrel and swashbuckling bards can be found amongst the well-to-do of Richemulot, bards with an interest in technology or medicine can be found in the institutions of Lamordia, well-dressed bards dabble in magic in the cellars of Dementlieu, and van Richten protégés sally forth from Mordent to investigate the evil and supernatural everywhere. That is, individual bards may consider themselves to be doctors, lay-priests, hedge-magicians, gypsies, or whatever, according to their chosen abilities and personal preference.

The gypsy class presented on pages 271 to 273 of *Domains of Dread* is a very weak class. It has few special abilities and quite severe hindrances. The author submits that the bard and the gypsy classes should be subsumed into a single class, retaining the class name “bard”, and “gypsies” are merely bards who have chosen particular gypsy-like abilities.

Native bards do not automatically gain the non-weapon proficiencies of Singing and Musical Instrument.

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Further, they are restricted to the weapons and armor available to thieves unless they purchase abilities that permit otherwise. They use the rogue experience table and have rogue attack rolls, saving throws, and fear, horror and madness checks.

The abilities a native bard may purchase are the same as those set out on pages 54 to 56 of *Skills & Powers*, although note that history and scroll use are slightly modified (see below). In addition, the abilities and limitations relating to magic use by bards set out on pages 43 and 44 of *Spells & Magic* are available to native bards. Additional abilities available to native bards are set out below. **Like bards from other realms, native Ravenloft bards have 70 character points to spend on abilities.**

- ◆ **Armor use (5/10):** For 5 CPs the bard can wear armor of base AC:5 (chainmail) or worse. For 10 CPs the bard can wear whatever armor he chooses. Note that this ability does not give the bard the ability to cast wizard spells while armored.
- ◆ **Class ability (5+):** This “ability” can only be purchased with the approval of the DM. As the bard is a jack-of-all-trades, he has somewhere and somehow picked up the skill of another class. Any of the abilities presented in the ability lists of classes other than bard could be available, but the DM is the final arbiter of whether the bard can have a particular ability. Thief abilities not already included in the bard list are appropriate, but there is no reason why a particularly religious and devout bard could not take a priest ability, for example. While the exact cost of the ability is up to the DM, because the bard is a generalist rather than a specialist as a rule it should be no cheaper than, and ideally 50-100% more expensive than, the cost of the ability to characters of the proper class.
- ◆ **Determination (5):** The bard is less vulnerable to fear, horror or madness—the character has a +2 bonus to *one* of the checks for fear, horror or madness (i.e. +2 to all fear checks, *or* +2 to all horror checks, *or* +2 to all madness checks—player choice); or has a +1 bonus to *two* of the checks for fear, horror or madness (player choice). This bonus is in addition to any bonus from racial abilities and high Wisdom/Willpower score.
- ◆ **Entertainer (5+):** For every 5 CPs spent on this ability, the character starts play with two additional non-weapon proficiencies, and gains a +1 bonus to proficiency checks for those proficiencies. The player may choose from the following non-weapon proficiencies: Cooking, Dancing, Etiquette, Gaming, Musical Instrument, and Singing. Further, every 5

CPs spent on this ability reduces the character point cost of the traits Music/Singing and Music/-Instrument by one point.

- ◆ **History (10):** This ability supersedes the standard bard ability (page 55 *Skills & Magic*). The bard can read and write his native language and knows his area’s local history. In addition, he has a 5% chance per level to know something about a person, place, magical item or other thing which is peculiar to Ravenloft (such as the Mists or meekulbern bushes).
- ◆ **Priest spells (10):** The bard has great faith in some Higher Power, and is able to cast priest spells from the all, divination, healing and protection spheres of influence as if he were a priest (including while wearing armor). The bard must have a Wisdom score of 9 or greater, and like a paladin does not gain additional spells for high Wisdom/-Intuition. Spell progression is as for wizard spells, using Table 32 on page 54 of *Skills & Powers*. With the DM’s permission, the bard can access different spheres, or can add further spheres for +5 CPs per sphere. This ability is generally mutually exclusive with the wizard spells ability.
- ◆ **Proficiency group crossover (5):** The bard with this ability can purchase non-weapon proficiencies from any proficiency group at base character point cost.
- ◆ **Scroll use (5/10):** As bard ability (page 55 *Skills & Powers*), but at the DM’s option, the bard may be able to read priest scrolls instead.
- ◆ **Special attack resistance (5+):** The bard has an innate resistance to a particular special form of attack. For 5 CPs the bard gains a +1 to saving throws against a fairly specific attack form, for example, spider and insect poisons or *enchantment* magic. For 10 CPs the bard gains a +2 to saving throws against a fairly specific attack form, or +1 to saving throws against a broad category of special attacks, for example all poisons, or all spells. More CPs can be spent to increase the saving throw adjustment or broaden the scope of the resistance. The exact terms and character point cost of this ability should be determined by, or in conjunction with, the DM.
- ◆ **Weapon use (5/7):** For 5 CPs, the bard can use any single-handed melee weapon and any missile weapon. For 7 CPs the bard can use any weapon he wishes.

Optional Restrictions

As bards can have the abilities of just about any class (with the DM’s approval and oversight), it stands to reason that they can also have the same class restrictions

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as other classes. Again, any restriction is subject to the approval of the DM, as is the number of CPs it grants. The player and DM can also design restrictions appropriate to the character. For example, a lay-priest bard may only be permitted to use priestly (bludgeoning) weapons, rather than thief weapons. While there is little change in terms of the number of weapons available, the bard-priest has precious few options for missile weapons, and such a restriction could be worth 3 CPs.

Under the Player's Option system, a gypsy-like bard would purchase the abilities of Entertainer 10 (dancing, gaming, musical instrument, singing), History 10, Weapon Use 5, Weapon Specialization 10, Wizard Magic Items 10 (page 44 *Spells & Magic*), Wizard Spells 10, and the restrictions (from page 44 *Spells & Magic*) Awkward Casting Method (3 turns to cast) -5 and Reduced Spell Progression -15, for a net CP cost of 35 CPs—a rather weak bard, but still with a greater breadth of abilities than the “standard” gypsy presented in *Domains of Dread*!

Psionicists

Psionicists as a class are detailed in Chapter 9 of *Skills & Powers*. Guidelines for the generation of psionicists using the Player's Option character point system are presented on the TSR website at <http://www.tsr.com/ADND/Downloads.html>; for reasons of copyright, those guidelines are not reproduced here. Those guidelines are broadly appropriate for the creation of psionicists in Ravenloft.

Metapsionics is not available as a psionic discipline. The methods for calculating PSP scores at 1st level and for additional PSPs for gaining levels set out on page 153 of *Skills & Powers* should be preferred over the methods set out on page 277 of *Domains of Dread*. However, recovery of PSPs in Ravenloft is as set out in Table 109 on page 277 of *Domains*.

Like other classes native to Ravenloft, psionicists do not automatically attract a body of followers, and may not purchase the followers ability. However, psionicists native to the Demiplane of Dread are incredibly resistant to insanity; this is not only reflected in their better-than-average madness checks, but a psionicist will generally purchase the walled mind ability.

- ◆ **Walled mind (5):** The psionicist is very resistant to insanity. So resistant, in fact, that even a failed madness check will not push him over the brink into madness. The rules for the walled mind ability are presented under the heading “Madness” on pages 274 and 275 of *Domains of Dread*.

Character Kits

Chapter 5 of *Skills & Powers* presents character kits which are generally universal in application, that is, they can be applied to any race or class. In this, it departs from the traditional AD&D concept of a kit as presented in the *Player's Handbook Supplement: Complete Books* series, that is, a specific group of skills, abilities and disadvantages which apply to characters of specific races and classes.

The Ravenloft accessory *Champions of the Mists* presents a number of kits available to characters native to Ravenloft. Like those presented in *Skills & Powers*, kits from *Champions* tend to be of universal application (although a few are class specific, like the Knights of the Circle and the Green Hand). That does not mean, however, that they can simply be used with the Player's Option character generation system without modification.

The simple rule is: if you are creating a character using the Player's Option system, you should only use the kits presented in Chapter 5 of *Skills & Powers*, unless the DM rules otherwise.

The kits typical of the *Complete Books* series provide characters with additional proficiencies and benefits which tend to increase their power considerably. Using the Player's Option system, these benefits can be easily mimicked by the purchase of race and class abilities, proficiencies, traits and disadvantages. Similarly, kits presented in *Champions of the Mists* can be suitably copied using the Player's Option system. For example, a cold one will have the natural immunity to cold trait; a pistoleer is simply another type of sharpshooter, specializing in powder weapons; a member of the Green Hand is a priest of Osiris, basic abilities for which can be found in *Legends & Lore 2nd Edition*, but which can be customized using the guidelines presented in *Spells & Magic*. Et cetera. All that is necessary is a bit of creativity from the player and DM.

Kits by Domain

Whether a kit is open to a character from a particular domain in the Demiplane is really a matter of common sense. For example, mariners and pirates are unlikely to be native to landlocked domains. Swashbucklers will only come from domains with Renaissance level technology, while barbarians and savages will only appear in domains between stone age and dark age technology. Soldiers may be very common in Falkovnia, but cannot be PCs, while one is unlikely to find a mystic in Tepest. Cavaliers are almost non-existent everywhere. When there is doubt about whether a character can take a particular kit, the DM should decide.

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Proficiencies

The selection of proficiencies, traits and disadvantages for a native Ravenloft character is one of the most important ways in which the character is developed, how he should be role-played. More than any other facet of character generation, a character's proficiencies, traits and disadvantages define his personality.

Potentially, any of the proficiencies, traits and disadvantages set out in the various Player's Option rulebooks are open to characters native to Ravenloft. But common sense must be the guide as to which are available to which characters, and in what circumstances. Players and DMs alike should refer again to the sentiments set out under the heading "Campaign Considerations/Training" on page 87 of *Skills & Powers*.

New Proficiencies

The following two proficiencies are available to characters native to Ravenloft. Rather than being entirely new proficiencies, however, they are merely examples of how current proficiencies can be "customized" or varied to accommodate the particular aspects of the Ravenloft campaign. The DM is encouraged to customize other proficiencies to give them a peculiarly Ravenloft "feel."

Ancient Languages (Tralaks)

Characters with this proficiency are familiar with *tralaks*, glyphs used by the Vistani for a variety of purposes. A failed check means that the character cannot identify the particular *tralak* before him; a roll of 20 means that the character incorrectly identifies the *tralak* (ascribing to it a meaning which is contrary to its actual meaning, if that is possible).

This proficiency is common among the half-Vistani.

Sage Knowledge (Forbidden Lore)

Characters with this proficiency are familiar with the nature and history of the Demiplane of Dread. The knowledge gained is not as detailed as that in a specific area of study. For example, while a character with Sage Knowledge (Forbidden Lore) might know that meekulbern berries can be used to create meekulbrau, a character with Sage Knowledge (botany) would know relatives of meekulbern, the medicinal properties of the stem, leaves and berries, when the berries are ripe, etc. By the same token, the character with Forbidden Lore would know something of the superstitious nature of the natives of Tepest, while the botanist would be completely unaware (but then, the folklore specialist is a different

matter entirely...). The exact usefulness or otherwise of this proficiency is entirely up to the DM.

This proficiency is common among arcanists.

New Traits and Disadvantages

Like proficiencies, traits and disadvantages presented in *Skills & Powers* can be adapted to have a peculiarly Ravenloft feel. There is often no reason to create an entirely "new" trait or disadvantage. DMs are encouraged to be creative. In the next section of this article, characters from certain domains will typically have traits or disadvantages which are not specifically described in *Skills & Powers*; for example "Inherent immunity/fear" or "Obscure knowledge (monsters)." Sometimes their game effects are noted, other times the game effects are best left to the DM's judgment. An example:

Obscure Knowledge (Monsters) (3 CPs)

This is the obscure knowledge trait, but restricted to obscure knowledge of the nature, habits, abilities and weaknesses of monsters. Since it is not broad-based, it only costs 3 CPs (2 CPs for Barovians and Tepestani). The character with obscure knowledge of monsters will know such things as common weaknesses (for example, that lycanthropes can be hit by enchanted weapons), and if a successful Intelligence/Knowledge check is made, specific weaknesses (for example, that mountain loup-garou are immune to silver weapons, but can be struck by gold).

Character

Generation by Domain

The following is a potted summary of the sorts of characters which are open to players, by domain, in the post-Grand Conjunction era. Each domain has the following entries:

Cultural level: This entry simply refers back to the same entry in *Domains of Dread* for the domain. The entry is important because it guides many elements of character creation—background, kits, weapon and nonweapon proficiencies etc. It is provided here for ease of reference.

Races: This entry details which races are available, or conversely, are not available, in the domain.

Classes: This entry details which classes are available, or conversely, are not available, in the domain.

Kits: This entry details the most common kits, from Chapter 6 of *Skills & Powers*, that are found in the domain. This does not mean that characters may not

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choose other kits; kit availability is subject to DM approval.

Characteristics: This entry details the proficiencies, traits and disadvantages which are possessed by a large proportion of the population of the domain. Proficiencies and traits from this list may be purchased for 1 CP less than normal. This reduction in cost is cumulative with other reductions in character point cost derived from a character's race or kit, but no proficiency or trait can ever be reduced below 1 CP. There is no change to the character point gain by a character choosing a common disadvantage, but the DM is justified in requiring the character to take the disadvantage unless circumstances dictate otherwise.

This entry also details class abilities which may be purchased by any class for the listed number of character points, as well as general information about characters from the domain.

If a domain does not appear below, either no description of it is given in *Domains of Dread*, or *Domains* advises that there are no native player characters from that domain.

Barovia

Cultural level: Medieval.

Races: Half-Vistani, human (Barovian or Gundarakite).

Classes: Any, although wizards are extremely rare. Priests must be specialist priests belonging to the Cult of the Morninglord.

Kits: No kit is particularly common amongst natives of Barovia.

Characteristics: Common proficiencies: Etiquette (Gundarakites only). Common traits: Obscure knowledge (monsters) (Barovians only). Common disadvantages: Phobia: darkness (Barovians only; game effect is to require a fear check to go outside between sundown and sunup); Cowardice, moderate (Gundarakites only; game effect is to blindly follow order from any authority figure unless a successful Wisdom/-Willpower check is made).

Borca

Cultural level: Chivalric.

Races: Half-Vistani, human.

Classes: Any.

Kits: Beggar, outlaw, pugilist, spy, thug.

Characteristics: Common proficiencies: Herbalism, Modern Languages (Balok and Dementlieu only). Common traits: Inherent immunity/poison, keen taste. All natives of Borca receive half the normal starting money.

Cavitius

Cultural level: Medieval.

Races: Human

Classes: Only fighters and avengers.

Kits: Barbarian, gladiator, pugilist, soldier, thug.

Characteristics: Common abilities: 1d12 hit points (costs only 5 CPs, and is available to both fighters and avengers). Common disadvantages: Bad tempered, irritating personality. All natives of Cavitius suffer a -4 penalty to their Charisma scores.

Dementlieu

Cultural level: Renaissance.

Races: Gnome, halfling, half-Vistani, human.

Classes: Any. Rogues are most common, wizards are "few and far between", and are mostly enchanters and illusionists.

Kits: Beggar, mariner, merchant, scholar, swashbuckler.

Characteristics: Common proficiencies: Modern languages, Reading/Writing. Common traits: Artistic ability.

Falkovnia

Cultural level: Medieval

Races: Half-Vistani, human.

Classes: No warriors.

Kits: Beggar, merchant, outlaw, spy, thug.

Characteristics: Common traits: Inherent immunity/fear (3 CPs for Falkovnians, gives +1 to fear and horror checks involving scenes of gruesome brutality and gore). Only rogues may start play with weapon proficiencies other than dagger, club, and bow.

G'Henna

Cultural level: Classical.

Races: Half-Vistani, human. With the DM's permission, players could have mongrelmen characters (mongrelmen are described on pages 37 to 43 of *Skills & Powers*).

Classes: Any. Priests must be devoted to Zhakata the Provider, and must live in hiding as sufferance for their heresy.

Kits: Beggar, outlaw, peasant hero.

Characteristics: Common proficiencies: Survival (desert).

Har'Akir

Cultural level: Bronze Age.

Races: Half-Vistani, human.

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Classes: Any. Priests must be specialist priests of Osiris, and be members of the Green Hand secret society.
Kits: No kit is particularly common.
Characteristics: Common proficiencies: Survival (desert). Common traits: Inherent immunity/fear (2 CPs only, +1 to fear checks involving mummies, desert zombies, and similar embalmed or desiccated monsters).

Hazlan

Cultural level: Medieval.
Races: Half-Vistani, human (Mulan or Rashemi).
Classes: Any, although wizards are rare. Wizards must be Mulan. The only priests who can openly worship are priests of the Church of Bane; these must be Mulan. With the DM's permission, a Rashemi character could belong to another church which has been pushed underground.
Kits: Mulan: Diplomat, mystic, noble, scholar. Rashemi: Beggar, outlaw, peasant hero, pugilist, smuggler, thug.
Characteristics: Common proficiencies (Mulan only): Etiquette, Reading/Writing. Common disadvantages (Rashemi): Phobia: magic. Rashemi have a +1 bonus to Strength, but receive only half normal starting money.

Invidia

Cultural level: Chivalric.
Races: Human.
Classes: Any.
Kits: Explorer, merchant, outlaw, pugilist, smuggler, thug.
Characteristics: Common abilities: Any class can purchase the special enemy ability (similar to that possessed by rangers and avengers) for 5 CPs. This special enemy must be an ethnic group or nationality of the Core. Common disadvantages: Bad tempered.

Kalidnay

Cultural level: Classical.
Races: As permitted by the DARK SUN® setting, other than thri-kreen.
Classes: As permitted by the DARK SUN setting.
Kits: As set out in the DARK SUN setting.
Characteristics: Unknown.
Note: The author is not familiar with character generation in the DARK SUN campaign setting, and does not propose to produce guidelines on the interaction between the Player's Option and the DARK SUN character generation scheme for the purposes of this article.

Kartakass

Cultural level: Medieval.

Races: Half-Vistani, human.
Classes: Any.
Kits: No kit is particularly common.
Characteristics: Common proficiencies: Musical instrument, Singing. Common traits: Music/instrument, music/singing.

Lamordia

Cultural level: Renaissance.
Races: Gnome, halfling, half-Vistani, human.
Classes: No priests.
Kits: Mariner, merchant, scholar.
Characteristics: Characters from Lamordia can choose one of the following proficiencies at the start of play to purchase for 1 CP less: Animal handling, Blacksmithing, Brewing, Carpentry, Cobbling, Leather working, Mining, Painting, Pottery, Sculpting, Stonemasonry, Tailoring, Weaving. Common traits: Inherent immunity/cold.

Mordent

Cultural level: Renaissance.
Races: Human, half-Vistani.
Classes: Any.
Kits: Mariner, peasant hero.
Characteristics: Common traits: Glibness, inherent immunity/fear (3 CPs for natives of Mordent, +2 to fear and horror checks involving ghosts and similar non-corporeal manifestations).

Necropolis

Cultural level: Varies. Chivalric in the west to dark-age in the east.
Races: Any.
Classes: Any.
Kits: No kit is particularly common.
Characteristics: No proficiency or trait is common amongst the varied population of Necropolis. However, moderate or severe phobia of undead is a common disadvantage.

The Nightmare Lands

Cultural level: Stone Age.
Races: Half-elf, human (Abber nomad).
Classes: Only fighters, rangers and priests. Priests must be shamans (pages 34 to 38 *Spells & Magic*).
Kits: Mystic, savage.

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Characteristics: Common traits: Inherent immunity/-mind-affecting magic (3 CPs, game effect it to imbue the character with 5% +1% per level magic resistance vs. mind-affecting magic), light sleeper.

Nosos

Cultural level: Renaissance.

Races: Any.

Classes: Any.

Kits: Beggar, noble, scholar, swashbuckler, thug.

Characteristics: Common proficiencies (middle and upper class only): Engineering. Common traits (lower class only): Inherent immunity/disease. Disadvantages (middle and upper class only): Phobia: disease. Characters from the lower class suffer a -1 penalty to Charisma.

Nova Vaasa

Cultural level: Medieval, although the western shore tends towards chivalric due to outside influences.

Races: Half-Vistani, human (90% lower class, 5% middle class, 5% upper class). Although refugees from Necropolis may be of any race, such folk are to be treated as natives of Necropolis, not Nova Vaasa.

Classes: Any. The official religion of Nova Vaasa is the Church of Bane, and priests from the middle and upper classes are very likely to worship Bane.

Kits: Beggar, mariner, merchant, noble, outlaw, peasant hero, rider (horse), soldier.

Characteristics: Common proficiencies (upper class only): Riding, land-based (horses). Common traits: Animal empathy. Characters from the lower class receive half normal starting money; characters from middle class receive normal starting money; characters from upper class receive normal starting money; characters from upper class belong to one of the five ruling families, and receive five times the normal starting money.

Odiare

Cultural level: Medieval.

Races: Human (Italian). Note that no character can have been born prior to the year 725 (13 years before the domain formed).

Classes: No rangers, priests or wizards.

Kits: No kits are particular common in this domain. In fact, few characters from this domain will have a kit at all.

Characteristics: At 1st level characters from Odiare can only speak Italian, and may not possess any non-weapon proficiency that requires formal study (e.g. Ancient

history, Engineering). Reading/writing always costs an extra 1 CP.

Paridon

Cultural level: Renaissance.

Races: Human.

Classes: No rangers or mages. Priests may only be specialist priests of the philosophy Divinity of Mankind (pages 54 and 55 *Complete Priest's Handbook*)

Kits: No kit is particularly common.

Characteristics: Common proficiencies: Etiquette.

Pharazia

Cultural level: Early medieval.

Races: Human (Pharazian or desert nomad).

Classes: No priests. Wizard must be specialist earth elementalists.

Kits: Pharazians: Beggar, merchant, scholar. Desert nomad: Rider (horse or camel).

Characteristics: Common proficiencies (Pharazians): Reading/writing. Common proficiencies (Desert nomads): Riding, land-based (horse or camel).

Richemulot

Cultural level: Chivalric.

Races: Halfling, half-Vistani, human.

Classes: Any.

Kits: Diplomat, merchant, noble, spy.

Characteristics: Common proficiencies: Local history. Common traits: Glibness, impersonation. Common disadvantages (for nobles particularly): Greed, irritating personality, lazy, powerful enemy, phobia: crowds.

Sebua

Cultural level: Stone Age.

Races: Human (children). The only inhabitants of Sebua are the so-called "wild children."

Classes: Only fighters and rangers are permitted.

Kits: The *only* kits which are permitted to wild children are: acrobat, animal master (monkey), jester, mystic, peasant hero, pugilist, savage, and thug.

Characteristics: At 1st level characters from Sebua can only speak their native tongue, and may not possess any non-weapon proficiency that requires formal study (e.g. ancient history, engineering). For weapons, they may only possess proficiency in club, spear and sling.

Sithicus

Cultural level: Medieval.

Races: Elf, half-elf, half-Vistani, human.

Classes: Any.

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Kits: Merchant, noble, outlaw, scout.

Characteristics: Common disadvantages (for full-blood elves particularly): Bad tempered, irritating personality.

Souragne

Cultural level: Chivalric.

Races: Human.

Classes: Any. Priests must be shamans (pages 34 to 38 *Spells & Magic*), wizards must be specialist necromancers.

Kits: Animal master, beggar, mariner, merchant, mystic, pirate, smuggler, thug.

Characteristics: All but upper class characters (10%) receive half normal starting money.

Tovag

Cultural level: Medieval.

Races: Any other than half-Vistani.

Classes: Any.

Kits: Gladiator, outlaw, pugilist, soldier, thug.

Characteristics: Common abilities: All classes are able to purchase the ranger Hide in Shadows ability for 5 CPs. All characters from Tovag age twice as fast as normal, and suffer a -1 penalty to Wisdom.

Tepest

Cultural level: Early medieval.

Races: Human.

Classes: No mages. Priests may only be clerics.

Kits: Peasant hero.

Characteristics: Due to low literacy rates in Tepest, the reading/writing proficiency costs an extra 1 CP for natives of the domain. Common traits: Obscure knowledge (monsters).

Valachan

Cultural level: Medieval.

Races: Elf, half-elf, half-Vistani, human.

Classes: Any. Rangers are common.

Kits: Animal master, outlaw.

Characteristics: No proficiencies, traits or disadvantages are particularly common amongst Valachan folk.

Vechor

Cultural level: Classical.

Races: Any.

Classes: Any. Wizards tend to be specialist wild mages; although other wizards can appear in Vechor, they must practice extreme caution.

Kits: Mariner, merchant. Sylvan elves from Vechor may take the savage kit.

Characteristics: No proficiencies, traits or disadvantages are particularly common amongst the folk of Vechor.

Vorostokov

Cultural level: Dark Age.

Races: Human.

Classes: Any other than priests. Rangers are common.

Kits: Animal master (wolf), barbarian, savage, thug.

Characteristics: Common traits: Inherent immunity/-cold. All characters from Vorostokov have a +1 bonus to Constitution.



October 31st, 752. MORDENTSHIRE.



The hour grew late, but the storm outside refused to cease its lamentations. George Weathermay sat on the floor of the library, leaning against a bookcase, utterly engrossed in his reading. An empty teacup sat on the table nearby, next to bowl of long-since-cold soup George vaguely recalled one of the twins bringing to him.

Gennifer and Laurie had checked in on him a few times over the course of the evening; even now, George was dimly aware of the sound of harpsichord music filtering up to him from the floor below. But for the most part, his nieces had kept their distance, respecting their uncle's request to study alone.

All evening long, George had skimmed through one journal after another, rushing through decades of Rudolph van Richten's notes and recollections. He read the names of a dozen long-dead friends. He found the doctor's description of George himself as a wide-eyed young man on his first excursion outside Mordent. He flipped through depictions of a hundred wonders, and a thousand horrors.

And he didn't care. Hours he had pored over the hand-written texts, driven to find the one piece of information he so desperately sought. Journal after journal had offered him nothing. As he finished with each book, he'd carefully slipped it back into its place on the shelf, not wanting to leave a trail for his nieces to follow, because it was desperately important that they not know what he was searching for.

And now, as the harpsichord music downstairs dwindled away, George had found what he sought, and the memories all rushed back at him again.

It was the year 741, and George was happier than he'd ever thought possible. He'd fallen in love with the woman of his dreams, Natalia, and had brought her home to Mordentshire. His heart had nearly burst with pride as he introduced Natalia to his parents, to his brother-in-law, and to his two little nieces. It only seemed right that she should meet Van Richten as well; he was so close to the family Gennifer and Laurie even called him an uncle.

Natalia said she'd be delighted to meet the esteemed doctor of whom she'd heard so much, and thus George was sold on the idea.

It should have been a day to remember forever, and sadly, it was. George would never be able to forget that day. *Could* never forget. *Must* never forget.

As George sat frozen on the floor in Van Richten's library, the scene burned itself into his mind's eye, as it had a thousand times before. George remembered escorting Natalia to Van Richten's shop. He remembered greeting the good doctor in the very room in which his nieces had greeted him tonight. His nieces were in the room then, too. They were just little girls then, visiting their "Uncle Rudolph," and perhaps hoping for a few sticks of cinnamon.

George remembered introducing Van Richten to his paramour, and the doctor politely bowing to kiss her hand. George vividly remembered the sudden shock that leapt into Van Richten's face when George offered Natalia's name. And George would never forget the malice dripping from Natalia's voice as she greeted him.

"Hello, Rudolph. I'm surprised you didn't recognize me."

Then George remembered the screams. The screams of his nieces as his beautiful fiancée pulsed and stretched and snapped into the shape of a monstrous beast, lunging at the doctor and knocking him backwards across the counter. George stood rooted to the spot, dumbly watching his life shatter. He was horrified, paralyzed, unable to lift a finger to save his friend.

George stared helplessly as the werewolf opened its jaws wide, preparing to tear out the doctor's throat. And he watched in mute fascination as Van Richten rammed his hand into a shelf behind the counter, miraculously producing a handful of crushed wolfsbane.

It was not that Van Richten had foreseen the ambush, nor was the handy cache of wolfsbane a stroke of luck. The doctor had simply kept himself alert as always, had kept himself prepared for threats no matter where, on in what form, they might arise. As George should have done, had he not been blinded by Natalia's passion.

In the last instant before the werewolf struck, Van Richten mashed the herbs into the monster's vicious maw. Now it was the werewolf's turn to scream, as the

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toxic herbs burned at its mouth and threatened to close off its throat. The monstrous wolf-creature in the tattered dress threw itself back from the downed doctor, clawing at its face in agony.

Van Richten pulled himself to his feet, and produced a silver dagger from a coat pocket. Rudolph called out to George for assistance, but the latter simply remained still, fighting the urge to join the chorus of screams.

Van Richten closed in on the wounded beast, and the monster's watering eyes narrowed with sudden delight. George saw what those glittering yellow eyes had seen: the two shrieking girls huddling in the corner, and this was at last enough to snap him to his senses.

"No!" George screamed, as he lunged at the werewolf. But the pained beast was still faster than George and Rudolph put together, and pounced at its target before either man could stop it. In an instant, the grotesque monstrosity had barreled down on his nieces, and snatched up Gennifer in its wicked claws.

The little girl shrieked in terror, as did her sister. The werewolf gripped Gennifer's throat, and could have choked off her cries, but did not. It *wanted* her to scream. The beast glared at George and Rudolph and somehow, through its fangs and inhuman snout, it grinned. Clutching the wailing, dangling girl tight against its distorted body, the werewolf started slowly backing toward the door.

"You have a lovely shop," the shaggy horror growled, its voice distorted and gravely. "I must be sure to visit again." It glared at George, its eyes laughing. "Good bye, lover. I'd blow you a kiss, if I could."

George sprang to action, his horror now entirely burned away by his outrage. Snatching yet another silver weapon tossed to him by the ever-resourceful doctor, George advanced on the creature he had known, and had loved, as Natalia. But the werewolf mercilessly slashed at Gennifer's side with its talons, and pressed its fangs into the little girl's collar. Bright crimson welled up from both wounds; the werewolf did not continue its ravages, and both George and Rudolph knew that this had been meant as a warning.

Thus it was that the werewolf retreated from the shop and into the empty street, with its two foes matching it pace for pace. Each time one of the men stepped too close, the merciless monster would slash again at its tiny hostage, and with each new wound George's horror and hatred grew tenfold.

As both men cleared the doorway, the beast paused, pondering. The men stopped as well, desperate not to provoke another vicious slashing. Finally, almost thankfully, the beast flung the girl at its pursuers with all its might, spinning and loping towards the nearby woods. George threw himself into the air, and managed to catch

his ravaged niece before she was smashed against the wall of the shop.

Forevermore, George would awake every morning with that memory of looking down at his little niece, still, pale, and drenched in her own blood.

Van Richten had pushed George aside, pressing the girl's wounds shut, and shouted at George to fetch the anchorites at once. George was already on his feet again, looking down at the blood smeared across his shirt, and he knew he had to make a choice. He could pursue the beast into the wilds and ensure it never escaped, or he could run for the priests and save his precious niece's life. Gennifer's wounds were deep, and she only had minutes left; if not for the good doctor's attentions, she wouldn't even have lived long enough to reach the priests.

George realized he had no choice. Of course he had none. No one pursued Natalia, and she escaped into the wilds. George and Rudolph rushed the gravely-wounded girl to the little temple of Ezra, and the anchorites there saved her life, and healed her scars.

Van Richten raised another concern, and the anchorites did all they could to search for any sign of lycanthropy in the poor child. Thankfully, they found nothing. George left Mordentshire, hunting Natalia Vhorishkova, and never returned. In the interests of his daughter's reputation, Gennifer's father did all he could to cover up the attack and, George supposed, all had been forgotten with the passing of the years. Time had healed all wounds.

All except for those in George's heart. Eleven years he'd spent hunting Natalia, with no success. He'd wiped out the entire Vhorishkova clan in his pursuit, and he'd dedicated his life to learning all he could about Natalia's kind, so better to destroy her. And as he learned more about lycanthropy, he learned he had cause for dread.

Gennifer had only been ten years old when she was attacked, and if she had been infected with the dread disease, it would not have manifested until she entered adolescence. The well-meaning anchorites had declared her clean of infection, but George found a creeping fear gripping his heart: the fear they could have been wrong.

George pulled the bundled handkerchief from his pocket, and unwrapped it to look at the wilted flower within one more time. It was called the Nightbane bloom. It would only grow in one small region of Kartakass, and although neither George nor Laurie could smell it, if it had been fresh, its stench would have driven Gennifer from the room entirely.

For only those who carried the Dread Disease could detect the scent of the Nightbane.

George crushed the wretched flower in his fist, as his eyes welled with tears. He threw the flower into the dwindling fire with a trembling hand, and watched it

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burn with eyes wide with terror. The phantom fear which had haunted him for years was now confirmed. Gennifer Foxgrove-Weathermay, so proud to be continuing Van Richten's crusade against the evils of the night, carried part of that evil within her blood.

But she had never changed; this much George knew. By the time he'd started to realize that Gennifer might still be cursed, the lycanthropy would have had several years to manifest. Even though he couldn't bear to return to Mordentshire to face his fears, to face the loving niece he'd damned, he'd kept tabs on her, and there was nothing to indicate that her lycanthropy had ever manifested.

With the years that had passed, George knew that the cycles of the moon could not make Gennifer change, nor the travels of the sun, nor the turning of the seasons. None of the cycles of nature could trigger the sleeping beast lurking within her.

But what *would* trigger her lycanthropy? Somewhere out there, there would be something that could change his beloved niece Gennifer into a monster as vicious as that which had attacked her. Something rare, something esoteric, something she had unwittingly avoided for half a decade at least.

But what? That was the mystery George had at last forced himself to return to Mordentshire to discover. George had slain the Vhorishkova clan long before he started to fear for Gennifer; he could learn nothing from them now.

Eventually George had thought of Van Richten. Natalia had used George's foolish affections to get close to the doctor. Why?

"Hello, Rudolph. I'm surprised you didn't recognize me."

Revenge. Natalia and Van Richten had crossed paths before; she had been the subject of one of his hunts, and had managed to escape, just as she had escaped that afternoon at the shop. If anyone other than Natalia knew the trigger of the lycanthropic curse she carried, it would be Rudolph van Richten.

And after hours of searching, George had found his answer. He'd had to go back through nearly twenty years of notes, but he'd found it. Van Richten had hunted Natalia in 734; she'd let her hatred for him fester seven years before she used George's blind love to strike back. In that initial hunt, she'd infected several victims to throw obstacles in Van Richten's path.

Van Richten had been present when these poor souls transformed; if anyone, he would know what could trigger their change.

George read the page of the diary one more time, as his eyes choked with hot tears.

Van Richten didn't know. Natalia never allowed her progeny to live long. She created them, she used them,

she destroyed them. Van Richten had never uncovered the trigger of Natalia's bloodline, but he did know of one thing which *could* force her progeny to transform: Natalia herself. She had the power to force her infected victims to change at her whim, without consideration for moons, or suns, or cycles.

A new vision battered against George's senses. This was not a memory, but a premonition: He saw Gennifer and Laurie becoming more experienced in their campaign against evil. He saw them spreading out from Mordentshire, taking their deeds of courage and valor to other lands. And he imagined them one day crossing paths with Natalia. And he imagined Natalia turning Gennifer into a monster. And he imagined Gennifer being used to slay Laurie. And above all, he saw himself in 741, frozen in shock, stupidly staring as Natalia transformed, not acting until it was far, far too late.

George found himself standing before the fire, the diary held in his outstretched, trembling hand. He had been about to hurl the accursed book into the flames. Thinking better of it, he carefully placed the journal back in its spot on the shelves, then took several minutes to collect himself, forcing down his tears, and steeling himself to face what would be waiting for him on the other side of the door.

George stepped out of the library, his face ashen, and walked down the stairs, feeling numbed. He found his nieces waiting for him in the sitting room.

How can I tell them?

"Hello George," Laurie smiled. "Did you find what you were looking for?"

How can I tell them that, because I was a fool, one of them harbors the hidden soul of a monster?

"George," asked Gennifer with a sudden, renewed concern, "are you feeling all right?"

How can I tell Gennifer the fate I've damned her to? How can I tell her there's nothing I can do?

Laurie frowned, and rose from her spot on the couch. "Say, you really don't look at all well."

How can I tell my nieces that something will someday transform Gennifer into a murderous beast? How can I tell them that, because I've never been able to catch Natalia, she can't be cured?

Gennifer's hand was on George's arm. "You look awful," she said, with deep concern. "And it's very late. Why don't we put fresh sheets on Uncle Rudolph's bed for you?"

How can I tell Gennifer I don't even know what might make her change? How can I damn her twice? First with the dread disease, and then with fear?

"Yes," agreed Laurie hopefully. "I'm positive he wouldn't mind if you stayed in his room."

How can I damn Gennifer to live with the same fear that's damned me?

BOOK OF SORROWS: INTERLUDE

“George, can you hear us?”

George suddenly realized his nieces were standing close before him, their faces mirror reflections of dread and concern. He tried to speak, but the words died in his throat. He started to reach out, but his hand trembled so badly he let it drop again. Suddenly his brow furrowed, and he clenched his jaw.

But there is something I can do. I can find Natalia.

Without a word of explanation, George snatched up his cloak from its spot near the fire, and rushed out of the shop back into the darkness and the rain.

I can hunt Natalia down, and make her pay for all the pain she’s caused. I can make her pay with her own worthless life.

Laurie and Gennifer ran after him, chasing him into the storm as he whistled for his horse.

“Wait, please!” cried Laurie.

“Just tell us what’s wrong,” continued Gennifer.

“Whatever it is, we can help!”

“Just don’t go,” they both shouted as one.

And when Natalia is dead, then Gennifer can be cured. And when Gennifer can be cured, then I can burden her with the knowledge of her curse.

George leapt into the saddle of his sodden black steed. He looked down as his two nieces, both getting quickly soaked by the relentless rain. His eyes softened.

“I—I’m sorry. B-but this—”

So long as Natalia lives, she can turn Gennifer into a monster, and there’s nothing I can do to stop it.

“This won’t wait.”

It’s my fault this happened. All my fault. So until Natalia is dead, the burden must be mine to bear.

George reined his horse around, calling for his hounds to heel. With that, he galloped back out into the storm, never looking back.

The hunt must go on. Until I or Natalia are dead, the hunt must never end. For Gennifer’s sake, for everyone’s sake, the hunt must go on.

Gennifer and Laurie stood in the road, oblivious to the storm, staring at each other with eyes wet with tears.

“Do you think he’ll come back?” asked Laurie, stifling a sob.

Gennifer merely looked out into the darkness, saying nothing.

“I didn’t think so either,” said Laurie, her voice heavy. A thought later, she straightened, and spoke with new resolve. “But I know what we need to do.”

Gennifer looked at her twin. The look they shared was devoid of joy, but full of understanding. They spoke as one.

“We need to learn more about that damnable flower.”



OCTOBER 31ST, 1912. NEW YORK CITY.



The first thing Charles noticed about the stranger was the wilted, reddish flower in his lapel. It was a strange sort of bloom, a bit like a lily, but not unlike an orchid. Perhaps it had forgotten which it was supposed to be, and had decided to halve the difference. Perhaps its haggard-looking owner wore his oddity with pride, allowing it to remain in his lapel until it withered away. Perhaps he was punishing the lily-orchid for its indistinguishable nature, refusing to release it from the prison of his lapel until it chose an identity for itself. However you looked at it, it was a most intriguing flower, and its owner would prove just as fascinating.

On this brisk Thursday, Charles had managed to maneuver a free afternoon, and had decided to spend it where he spent nearly every free minute he could muster; thus, when the stranger with the wilted flower approached Charles, he was engrossed in his research in the halls of the New York City Public Library.

To keep to the facts, the stranger did not actually approach Charles; at least, Charles never witnessed any such event taking place. Charles had been jotting down shorthand notes on a fascinating account found in his current reading material, and had run out of space on his current slip of paper. He reached for the little pile of

BOOK OF SORROWS: INTERLUDE

small squares of paper he used to keep his notes, and in turning, had found himself facing the fascinating flower.

“Happy Halloween,” said the stranger, in a voice which promised to break into a mad giggle at any moment. In such a way did the stranger introduce himself. Startled, Charles looked up to take in the man who now stood over him. The fellow didn’t strike much of a figure; thin and brittle, with hollow eyes, and dressed in threadbare clothes. Of course, Charles had to admit, he was no more impressive; his clothes were in no better condition, and on one occasion he had been told he resembled the Walrus from *Alice in Wonderland*.

The stranger delicately plucked up from Charles’ table a wide volume containing collected editions of the 1872 London *Times*, from which several of Charles’ paper squares were dangling, serving as bookmarks. The stranger opened to one of these marked pages, and after briefly eyeing the contents, read a select passage.

“From 4 o’clock, Thursday afternoon, until half past eleven, Thursday night, the houses, 56 and 58 Reverdy Road, Bermondsey, were assailed with stones and other missiles coming from an unseen quarter...”

The stranger snipped out a narrow-lipped grin, and shut the tome, placing it back on the table.

“I think I’ve come to the right place,” said the stranger, and he looked down at Charles.

“Charles Fort? Charles *Hoy* Fort?” queried the stranger. Now the stranger had become as intriguing as his flower.

Charles was not reluctant to let the surprise show on his face. “I dare say you’ve spotted me, sir! But I’m afraid you’re not as familiar to me. Have we met?”

“Do you mind if I sit,” asked the stranger, which in the grand scheme was as good a reply as any other. Charles gestured to an empty chair, and the stranger promptly settled himself in, taking a few distressed glances over his shoulder as he did so.

“Pardon,” tried Charles again, “but I’m afraid I don’t know your name.”

The stranger stared at Charles coldly, the sense of uneasy gaiety suddenly stricken from his features. “To be honest, sir,” replied the stranger after a moment, “I prefer not to give it. In the end, it’s better for us both that you don’t know it. In fact, it would be best for you if I didn’t know your name either. But I do, so there’s no getting around it. Ignorance is bliss, as they say. The problem being, it’s not your ignorance that offers you bliss, it’s the ignorance of... of a *something else*, of you. And I suspect,” whispered the stranger, suspiciously eyeing a patron who wandered by, “that this *something else* will not be ignorant of your existence for much longer.”

Now the stranger had Charles’ rapt attention. “Am I to take that as a threat?”

“No, I assure you,” whispered the stranger. “It is merely a warning from a man who wishes to save you the misery others have brought onto themselves.”

“So you say. You sit there and tell me that my research will put me in danger, yet you offer no explanation as to how you even knew of it. You’re a poor approximation of my wife, and I don’t recall anyone else even knowing about my hobby.”

“Hobby,” remarked the stranger. “Is that all this is to you?”

Charles grinned wryly. “Indeed not. At least, had I the resources, it would not be. But you’ve strayed from my point: You claim that some threat will soon learn of me, yet you offer no explanation as to how *you* learned of me. Perhaps I should simply posit that you yourself are some permutation of the doom which is to befall me.”

The stranger grimaced. “Doom *is* coming for us all, Mr. Fort, and perhaps my approaching you will hasten its arrival at your door. But I assure you, your research would have led it to you without my interference, and perhaps if I can convince you to turn back, you still might save yourself... for a time.”

“Turn back?” asked Charles, astounded.

“As to how I found you,” continued the stranger, “suffice to say that through my associates I have learned that you espouse a certain interest in the supernatural.”

Charles smiled a bit more openly. “To say these data are supernatural would imply the existence of the natural, and an artificial division between the two. These facts are simply the Damned, the Excluded; that which orthodoxy cannot explain, so that which they condemn.”

The stranger looked grim. “Mr. Fort, there are some things which must be condemned. Must be ‘excluded,’ as you say. Forbidden lore which must never see the light of day.”

“Balderdash—but very well. You say that my research will bring a terrible doom down on my head. I’m listening; tell me, what is this doom I risk? I can and do not promise to believe anything you tell me, but I assure you I shall accept whatever you have to offer in the spirit in which it is intended.”

“So you will hear me out?”

“Indeed, and with an open mind.”

The stranger paused, and Charles realized that, for all his foreboding, the fellow had no idea how to begin.

“Once measures a circle,” advised Charles, “beginning anywhere.” The stranger gave Charles a puzzled look. Charles scratched his mustache, and tried again. “All things exist in Continuity. You wish to find the best place to start defining this ‘looming doom’ of yours; I assure you that there is nothing to define. Nothing exists separate from anything else.” Charles leaned forward. “Just pick something to say, and work your way from there.”

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The stranger nodded, and took a deep breath.

“Have you ever read *Dracula*?” he asked.

After some contemplation, Charles had to reply in the negative. The stranger seemed disappointed, but not surprised.

“You will, one day, I’m sure. Perhaps you’ve heard of its author? Bram Stoker?”

Charles rested his chin on his hand. “Again, I’m afraid I must say no.”

Again the stranger shrugged, seeming to expect the answer.

“He wasn’t very widely read,” began the stranger. “But he was very important, in his own circles. He died just this year.”

“My condolences,” offered Charles.

The stranger nodded, and continued. “In fact, he died in April.” The stranger paused again, to fetch a oft-folded square of newspaper from an inner pocket. “In fact, he died the same week these people died.”

The stranger unfolded the sheet of newspaper, laying it flat on the table before him. Charles read the headline, although he’d seen it before, and was revisited by the same chill he’d felt when he had first seen that headline of *The New York Times* on the sixteenth day of April.

**TITANIC SINKS FOUR HOURS AFTER HITTING ICEBERG,
866 RESCUED BY CARPATHIA, PROBABLY 1250 PERISH,
ISMAY SAFE, MRS. ASTOR MAYBE,
NOTED NAMES MISSING**

“As you know,” the stranger commented, “the death toll was actually closer to fifteen hundred.” He unfolded yet another large sheet of paper, this one covered in handwritten scribbles.

“And these are the names of the dead.”

Both men paused to soak in the rows upon rows of names. The stranger produced a thick pen from his pocket, and placed it on the table.

“I assume I don’t need to tell you the events of April 15th. The sinking of the ‘unsinkable’ *Titanic*; the loss of two-thirds of those onboard—and surely I don’t need to tell you that the *Titanic* was nothing less than a symbol, a symbol crafted in iron and steel.”

“Do go on.”

“A symbol of mankind’s total conquering of nature. Declared ‘unsinkable’ as a virtual dare for the seas to do their worst. A bold declaration that, on the back of innovation, Man had at last assumed its rightful crown as the true masters of the Earth. How fitting that it should be struck down by the forces of nature. How fitting that it should be destroyed before it completed its maiden voyage.”

“The Greeks called it *hubris*,” Charles commented. “As a theorist, it’s to my own wonderment that I haven’t jumped to the conclusion that Zeus himself struck down

the mighty ship.” He smiled despite himself. “After all, did the gods of the Greeks not strike down the Titans which lent the liner its name?”

The stranger suddenly looked as wilted as his flower. “I assure you, Mr. Fort, this tragedy is no laughing matter. And it merely marks the beginning of our doom.”

Charles shrugged. “I don’t know whether I’m of a cruel and bloodthirsty disposition, or not. Most likely I am, but not more so than yourself. Surely sir, you admit that it was you who first made the point of the great and terrible irony which marked the sorrowful demise for these people.”

The stranger sat mute, considering this. At length he admitted, “True. It indeed was a grandiose joke. But perhaps the humor you see in it will vanish as you realize that this ‘joke’ it at our expense—all of us, everywhere. Or when you see that this tragedy was not the punchline.”

“No?”

“Indeed, no. As I said, this was merely the beginning.”

“The beginning of what, man? You have yet to explain a single word of this terrible Doom you’ve hung over our heads.”

The stranger grimaced. “Fair enough.”

Nonchalantly removing the cap from his pen, the stranger suddenly thrust the instrument at the sheet of names, with all the ferocity of a swordsman lunging with his blade. With a violent slash, the stranger left a wound of blue under a name near the top of the list.

“Colonel John Jacob Astor IV. I assume you are familiar with him?”

“Of course, the millionaire with the infamous bride.”

“Yes, the pregnant wife younger than his son. To avoid publicity here in the States they traveled to Egypt and Paris. They were returning home on the *Titanic*. Mrs. Astor survived, of course. When Mr. Astor was found floating in the Atlantic, his body had been badly crushed. He was more than just a real estate tycoon, you know. In his day, he’d been a novelist, an army man, an inventor—and an influential member of the Brotherhood of Alchemæ.”

“I’m sorry, I don’t think I quite caught that last one. The Brotherhood of—”

“If you claim you will give whatever I say temporary acceptance,” interrupted the stranger, “then accept this. This world is controlled by forces unseen. Forces so inhuman, we can barely comprehend their existence, and forces almost comfortingly human by comparison. The Brotherhood of Alchemæ is one of the latter. A qabal—a secret society—one of many hidden puppeteers pulling the strings of our lives.”

The stranger looked Charles dead in the eye. “I believe, Mr. Fort, that if I must stop to explain every

BOOK OF SORROWS: INTERLUDE

detail of what I am about to illustrate, that I may never finish. I'll ask your favor, and request that you let me say all that I have to say before you comment. Once I am done, then you may ask the questions."

Charles shrugged, gesturing for the stranger to continue. The stranger's pen lashed out again; in a flash, it had circled three names and drawn a line between them.

"Misters Thomson Beattie, Thomas Francis McCaffry, and John Hugo Ross. Canadian businessmen, also returning from a trip to Egypt"—the pen struck again, connecting the three names to that of Astor. "There to visit a hospitalized friend. Beattie and Ross were members of The Manitoba Club, which operates in part as a cover for the activity in which all three men were occupied."

"That being?"

The stranger glared, but continued. "That being the hunting and destruction of the evils of the night. Do you believe in werewolves, Mr. Fort?"

Fort crinkled the edge of his lip in a grin. "I think the idea of werewolves is most silly, degraded, and superstitious; therefore I incline toward it respectfully. They are so laughable I'm serious about them."

The stranger nodded. "It was in killing a werewolf in Winnipeg that they cemented their friendship, and their covert skills were quite accomplished. Ross and McCaffry died in the sinking. Beattie was lucky, and was pulled from the waters by a lifeboat. But then he died in the night."

Again the pen struck. "Major Archibald Willingham Butt, military aide to both Taft and Roosevelt, standing as mediator in their feud. He boarded in Southampton with his friend,"—and again a line was drawn to a newly circled name, "Francis Davis Millet, the artist. Butt was an influential member of Die Wächtern. Millet held an equivalent position in La Lumière. Both qabals seek the betterment of mankind. Both men were lost."

Another flash of the pen. "Mister Harry Elkins Widener, no known connection to any qabals, but a collector of rare and aged books. He was returning from a book-buying trip to England, accompanied by his parents and two servants. I have it from respectable sources that at least one of the books in his possession was very ancient indeed; in fact, that it was a medieval translation of an even more ancient scroll which had been rescued from the inferno which destroyed the great library at Alexandria. I shall explain the significance of that event later; for now, suffice to say that neither Mr. Widener, his father, nor his ancient tomes were saved."

A series of slashes from the pen. "Mr. Widener was last seen in serious conversation with a Mr. John Borland Thayer. Thayer was Second Vice-President of the

Pennsylvania Railroad. More importantly, he was a member of The Unseen Hand, as was his friend, Charles Dwayne Williams, of Switzerland. These men never made any attempt to board a lifeboat, well aware of the fate set for them. I do not know what became of Mr. Thayer. Mr. Williams was crushed by the collapse of the first funnel. But the body of neither man was ever recovered."

Another thrust, another name circled. "Mr. William Thomas Stead, famed author, political activist, and spiritualist, on his way to a peace conference here in the States. He foresaw the disaster, in a sense, but tempted fate, and defied superstition. He carried on his person a crucifix, decorated with a skull and crossbones, said both to have once been owned by Catherine the Great, and to have carried bad luck. While on board, he also told a tale concerning an inscription on a mysterious sarcophagus; anyone who spoke this inscription aloud would suffer a violent death. It is known that he then spoke the inscription aloud; I have not yet been able to verify the rumor that he actually possessed the sarcophagus, and that it was in the hold of the ship as it sank beneath the sea."

"So it was this Egyptian curse that sank the *Titanic*? Is that it?"

The stranger scowled. "You simply don't understand. I've only given you a handful of names, all from First Class. A handful of names you might have a chance of recognizing. But influential members of over a dozen qabals were on the *Titanic* on the night of the fifteenth, qabals united by one factor: They all sought the betterment of mankind, or in some way to expose the menace which hangs over us. Was their presence a coincidence? Men, women, First Class, Second Class, or even in steerage—such as Mr. Ali Ahmed, of the Lost Kingdom—all, in the end, with one thing in common. Not a one of them would live to see the dawn. Were their deaths a coincidence?"

The stranger began circling names left and right, connecting circles with a spider-web of lines.

"Major Butt and Mr. Thayer ate dinner together on the night of the sinking. Misters Widener, Thayer, and Williams were last seen together, later that night. At the end, when the boats were gone, when hope had died, did these people start to become aware of each other's presence? Did they too see the pattern? As the ship sank, did they compare notes, tracing the chains of circumstance and coincidence which had led each of them to this voyage?"

"Did they realize it was a trap, too late?"

"A trap!" exclaimed Charles. "A trap set by what?"

The stranger fell quiet, considering his answer. "There is a force of evil in this world," he began. "A force of purest evil, without form, without mercy, without

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the slightest trace of humanity. Indeed, it is not just a force of evil. It is *the* force of evil—the *source* of all evils, and it has been festering in our world for a very, very long time. The qabals of which I spoke—it is this source of evil which they oppose. Millennia ago, mankind had a chance to stop this evil before it could claim the Earth; we call that chance the Defiance. The fire at Alexandria marked the death of that hope. It took the forces of good thousands of years to rebuild that knowledge, to finally reach the point where their understanding of that Evil was great enough to once again give mankind the chance to be freed of its corruption. In the past decade, many of us had even come to think that the tide was turning in our direction.

“But too late, we’ve learned that the Evil had also spent the millennia working towards the reconstruction of the Defiance. But where we hoped to reconstruct the hope of the Defiance, the Evil sought to reconstruct its result: the shattering of mankind’s defenders, and the plunging of the world into misery. Now that we understand the goals of the Evil, it’s too late. The Evil has spent years... decades... *centuries*, putting its dominoes in a row, and now they’re all crashing down. The trap has been sprung, and the *Titanic* was only the Evil’s most public gesture.”

“There’s more?” Charles asked, fascinated.

“Indeed,” confirmed the stranger. “You saw black humor in the *Titanic*’s fate; perhaps it was all a joke, to this source of Evil. But we were intended to know it as a message. Years of the most subtle of manipulations, and then with one fell swoop, it crushed the confidence of mankind, and unmistakably announced to the defenders of our world that their Golden Era was over.

“And as I have said, the *Titanic* was just the beginning.”

“Just the tip of the iceberg?” mused Charles darkly.

The stranger winced. “Indeed. I first mentioned Bram Stoker—the author who dragged the existence of the diabolic vampire *Dracula* into the public eye. I have mentioned that he died in the same week as the *Titanic*’s sinking. He was far from alone.

“Clara Barton, a name I am sure you recognize. One of the founders of the American Red Cross; a venerable member of Die Wächtern. She died from ‘complications from a cold,’ so the record states, on April twelfth. If I were to present to you a list of names of those champions of good who have met suspicious or untimely ends—or perhaps merely ‘wasted away’—in this year, starting with the week of April fifteenth, it would be nearly as long as the list of names before you now.”

“But surely,” Charles insisted, “if you have now discovered the existence of this trap, there must be some action you can take to defeat it.”

The stranger pinched the bridge of his nose, squeezing his eyes shut. “You still don’t understand. The battle was fought, not in April, or in March, or in the year Nineteen-Twelve, or in the year before. The final battle—the turning point—was fought, and lost, at the end of the last century.”

The stranger pondered his own words for a moment, his thoughtless gazing slowly bleeding into suspicious glances around the library.

“Perhaps I *should* stop and give you all the details. Perhaps learning more about the final battle would help convince you.” The stranger rubbed his chin, then met Charles’ gaze again. “You aren’t familiar with Stoker, and you’ve never read *Dracula*. By any chance are you familiar with a Dr. Abraham van Helsing?”

Charles thought on this for a moment. “As you mention it,” he pondered, “I believe I have read some of his papers. The name is familiar to me.”

The stranger pursed his lips and nodded. “He died in April too, on the same day as Stoker. But he didn’t die in London, or on the *Titanic*. He died in the Carpathian Mountains, hunting a foe he’d long thought vanquished.”

“An interesting coincidence,” mused Charles. Noting the stranger’s look of confusion, he continued. “What was the first ship to rescue survivors from the *Titanic*?”

The stranger seemed to shrivel, and wouldn’t even answer the question. Gripping his pen tightly, he moved on, gritting his teeth. “Van Helsing was an important and valued man, undeniably, but it was more than twenty years ago that he’d last faced his immortal foe. That was when Van Helsing was most active; in the last decade of the past century, in the era of the turning point. You say one measures a circle beginning anywhere? Then this is where I’ll begin...



THE WAKING NIGHTMARE

From the Desk of Abraham van Helsing

by Jarrod Lowe

dotheevolution@yahoo.com

Though I have, upon more occasion than I ever truly desired, witnessed countless examples of the so-called “paranormal” and supernatural, and have given over my belief to these encounters wholeheartedly, I simply cannot fathom what I’ve most recently witnessed. Words simply do not describe the horrors I have seen in my time. I have observed as vampires drain the lifeblood from children, ghosts turn healthy young women into jaded crones in a split second, and young men change their shape into horrid human/rat hybrids right before my eyes. But what I have seen tonight, what I have learned, may make those once weary of the night, weary of the daylight as well.

**From the journal of
Doctor Abraham van Helsing,
14 Sept. 1893**

Your Holiness, Pope Leo XIII,

Though I may be gifted as a learned man, fear still indeed holds sway over me. A perfect example is the passage from my journal which you have just read, a passage that goes on to be filled with even more ramblings of an apparently insane man. But as you

know, insane is not what I am, my friend. I have simply taken off my blinders to our world and now have seen it for what it truly is. We have always known that our world is filled with many horrors. Some of us have had the misfortune to see study or experience wars, famine, and disease firsthand, but these things would never prepare a man for the terrors that truly exist.

Several years ago I was in Germany, there a thing that I had merely read about since my youth, an existence that I had merely theorized was proven to me beyond the shadow of doubt. A soulless fiend, an abomination in the eyes of God, a vampire, a nosferatu, an undead beast that stalks the night for the very thing that grants him his unholy power, the blood of the living. This unholy power I speak of makes the abilities of mere mortals pale by comparison. Then, several years later, my pupil and associate Dr. John Seward brought another of these creatures to my attention. This foul beast was the worst of them all, perhaps the most powerful and cunning of these creatures in existence. A Transylvanian nobleman, infamous in the history books as Vlad the Impaler, had somehow escaped the confines of death in order to stalk the night as undead. Luckily this beast we sought was finally tracked down, following a series of murderous exploits in London, to the Carpathian Mountains. There, my associates and I destroyed it, finally sending that monster to hell.

Thus, the proverbially happy ending? Yes and no. Those affected most by the creature, Jonathan Harker and his wife Mina, have lived happily ever after, although their exposure to the supernatural existence of such creatures has inspired them to accompany me in my life’s work. But what of the rest of the world? What other foul creatures exist in the night? Since our encounter with the dreaded vampire (currently being detailed under the guise of fiction by my close friend, Bram Stoker) we have borne witness to dozens of other examples of those pitiful enough to have garnered the attention of the vile entity we call the Red Death. A Demon from the bleakest pits of hell walking the streets of Dublin, the reanimated corpses of once living beings in the marshes of Louisiana, and while in Paris, the wretched carnage

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associated with the victims of a diabolical and murderous seer. All these things have made me want to put my pen to paper and detail everything that could well be a threat to our very survival as a species. But, time and again I am robbed not only of evidence, but also credible witnesses. So, as not to ruin my already horrid reputation, nor expose the secret affairs of my noble allies in Die Wächtern, I have simply taken down notes, made my studies, and continued my investigations. All the while hoping that one day I may be able to expose these creatures of the night.

But now things have changed. There is something out there that may very well be more of a threat than every vampire and lycanthrope in our world combined. A society of creature so evil and cunning, that they have apparently completely assimilated into our culture & society. Their goals are hideous. No less than the complete & entire domination of, not only the human race, but also all other creatures (natural or otherwise) inhabiting the Earth. You may believe that my statements are overly pessimistic, but please continue to read with an open mind. These things are true. Deadly creatures are among us.

THE BEGINNINGS

The plague of creatures first came to my attention while I was in the Americas, where I believe they may have first come into our plane of existence. I had traveled to Boston late in the summer of 1893 for a speaking engagement at the prestigious Harvard University. There, various philosophers and theologians from around the world had gathered. These, the most intelligent of men alive today, had all come to listen to this Dutch lad spout off my various views on the world and our place in it.

Upon arrival in the states I was put up for the week in the Hotel McCready, a very fine establishment, rivaling the lavish lodging houses of Paris itself. Doctor Myron DeLeo, a famous surgeon and the chairman of Harvard's elite School of Medicine, took me out for an extravagant dinner setting. As we indulged like underfed children, DeLeo began to question me on my thoughts pertaining to life and philosophy. I had assumed that Dr. DeLeo was unaware of my background as a medical doctor & thought of me purely as a theologian, so I decided not to make him aware of this and to answer his rather remarkable questions in minute detail. Though I thought it was queer, in my experiences, men who have dedicated their life to hard science rarely care much in the way of philosophies, but I continued to encourage him to ask me more.

After prodding my brain for my opinions, not only on philosophy, but also on religion, science and art, his

interests turned (surprisingly) to that of the macabre. Though, at first, I denied having any knowledge pertaining to his inquiries, he eventually coerced me into revealing details of some of my exploits. I talked at some length of my research into the paranormal, but never did I speak of exact events or people. DeLeo continued to pester me for knowledge, but I did not like the way he asked his questions. Being a gentleman, I thanked him for a fine meal and good company, then made my way to a waiting carriage.

DeLeo followed me into the street, asking me what he had said that had upset me so. I simply told him that I was weary, and that I wished to spend my first night on dry land resting. DeLeo thanked me for "my knowledge" as he put it, shook my hand and then disappeared into the night fog. Had I partaken of too much alcohol, I may have mistaken my surroundings for London.

I made it back to my hotel just before ten o'clock. I drew a bath and lit myself a pipe. I slipped into the tub and began to relax, letting the thoughts of Myron DeLeo and his incessant questioning flee from my mind. The tobacco that I puffed on, grown in the fields of Kentucky, was some of the best I'd ever tasted. As I nodded off, I thought that I must purchase a quantity of it before I set sail back to Amsterdam.

I suppose that I fell asleep, for how long I cannot say, but I managed to wake up at a very opportune time. What appeared to be a worm, or a small leech was crawling its way up my naked chest, and though I detest admitting it, such opaline creatures have always made me cringe. As I swatted at it, the creature let out a cry, like that of an injured child, just before splattering against the far wall. Quickly I leaped out of my bath and over to the thing, though only a scant few inches in length, I could clearly make out a set of eyes and four distinct tentacles surrounding its mouth. Startled at such a discovery, I fetched my spectacles and a magnifying glass from the desk, then returned to my find.

I peered down at the dead creature, now examining it more closely. As I prodded it with the tip of a pencil, it instinctively struck out with its powerful tentacles, snapping my writing utensil. I leaped back out of fright, and as I did so, I noticed that several more of these small creatures were falling into my bath, crawling into the hotel suite from a crack in the ceiling. Knowing full well the threat that I pose to certain creatures of the night I immediately assumed that this was some sort of assassination attempt from some unknown force. How wrong I was. It was far worse.

Hurriedly, I gathered a pair of trousers and a clean shirt, exited the room and found myself standing face to face with Dr. DeLeo. With unnatural strength, DeLeo thrust me up against the doorway. This is the point where I felt his presence entering my mind.

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“We must add your knowledge to our elder,” he ranted, “if we cannot control your body, we shall, at least, have your mind!”

THE DUEL BEGINS

I cried out, but the cries went unanswered. DeLeo’s face grew pale. His eyes rolled back into his head, and the sickening sounds of popping bone and the stretching of skin filled the air. I could see a movement inside his neck, as if large snakes were crawling beneath the surface of his flesh. I could feel my sight growing dim as the voice once again filled my skull.

“Give yourself to us. It will all be over shortly.”

As I began to black out, I felt the slither of DeLeo’s tentacles escape from his own mouth and begin to penetrate mine. I knew that they were searching for a passage to my brain as I felt them slip up the back of my throat. I tried to resist, but the beast was too strong. I knew in a matter of seconds I would be dead, and this creature would have all the knowledge I have spent a lifetime accumulating. I would not let this happen.

In my years as a scholar, I have gathered and studied many texts of magic. Though I feel that this knowledge is inexorably tainted by the evil of our world, I believe that the use of magic is necessary in situations such as these. So, using the last of my strength, I managed to squirm away from my attacker and quickly hustled down the hallway, leaving DeLeo to nurse a bloody nose that my right fist was somehow able to cause. Turning a corner, I was able to catch my breath and begin concocting the materials and recalling the precise words needed for what I was about to uncouple.

DeLeo, barely taken aback by my momentary escape, slowly made his way towards me. As my enemy came close, wiping the fresh blood from his lips, I felt as if my heart was going to beat through my chest. I had practiced and eventually mastered this particular incantation many years ago, though in my haste I doubted its current potency, as well as the present stability of the caster. Then, as if it had been destined since the time of Genesis, I unleashed my powerful spell. A flood of magically created acid erupted from the palms of my hands, spewing fourth and striking my unsuspecting enemy square in the face. DeLeo immediately came to a stop and began to tear at his own flesh, then he suddenly shrieked with an unearthly agony. I stepped to the side, viewing as the remnants of his once handsome visage began to bubble, then oozed down, dripping to the awaiting floorboards. It wasn’t long before the body stopped screaming, then after a few brief moments of twitching all was still. My victory had left me relieved, though I would not stay around awaiting the arrival of

any of his leech friends, or of any other creature resembling DeLeo.

I could have passed off this occurrence as something far less than it was, perhaps an odd creation by one of mankind’s more advanced enemies, but I knew that this creature was one of many. Its comment about “the elder” and its reference to itself as “we,” indicated a hive-like mentality.

As I made my way through the fog-filled streets of Boston, I grew increasingly paranoid. If DeLeo had, in fact, been one of these creatures from the time I met him, anyone could be one. I was sure that the scale of this menace had not encompassed all of Boston, but how could I be sure? Those that were out at that time of night could, in fact, be creatures on par with DeLeo, viewing my every move and returning the images back to “the elder.”

I tried not to think of these things as I pressed on. If DeLeo was such a creature, then he may have come to our world and immersed himself into our society from day one. If that was the case, then those he surrounded himself with were quite possibly be the same type of creature. Finding clues to what these things are would be difficult, seeing as how they blend so seamlessly into our society. I would have to be on my guard at all times.

I made my way to DeLeo’s office at the university. The night watchman was fast asleep at his post and, if I had my way, wouldn’t be alerted to my presence. As he slept, I quietly took his set of keys and his sidearm. If I were to come across any more of the beings such as DeLeo I couldn’t simply use magic against them. Holding the pistol tight, I crept (cautiously) through DeLeo’s office, lighting an oil lamp atop his cluttered desk. I sat down and began to rummage my way through his papers.

Nothing seemed out of the ordinary; there were no clues to the being’s whereabouts or any list of his compatriots. Suddenly I came to a realization. In my paranoid state, I had not properly thought this through. There would be no plans here. There would be no “member roster,” for they are all of a hive mind. Their leader, their “elder” gave them all orders, all information. They were indeed like a perfect, well-oiled machine. How ignorant I had been! In all the ruckus, I had forgotten what I was truly up against.

It was then I heard them coming, like a thousand pairs of feet, converging on the office. Quickly, I turned to the window. I saw before me dozens of men, women and children, watching me as if they were predators and I was the prey. Suddenly, the door to DeLeo’s office burst open, and no matter how many bullets I fired from the pistol, more creatures fell upon me. I know I killed at least five of them, a woman, a teenage boy, and three men, all from varying walks of life. I pulled back on the

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trigger until I heard the clicking of empty chambers. These creatures did not flinch, did not stop. As they pulled me off my feet and hauled me out of the building, I believe that I passed out from fright. I knew that I was done for.

THE ESCAPE

How long I festered in the domain of those damnable creatures, I do not know. I have vague recollections of one of them hovering above me... one of pure evil. When I finally woke, I had been stripped of all my clothes and belongings and was lying in a pitch-black cell. Though neither bars nor windows were present, I knew this was my prison. The walls were close together, and felt of a slimy, leather material. I tried to tear at the substance but it was no good. I felt as if I were doomed.

Outside my prison, I could hear them passing by. Their walking seemed stiff, mechanical, as if they had no mind of their own. Across from me, I heard them sealing up another in a cage such as mine. How the poor fool came across them was unknown to me. As the drones left, I once again began to feel around the edges of the material, looking for the slightest flaw in the structure. Luckily for me, these creatures were not such skilled craftsmen, so after a great struggle, I tore my way out of the prison.

The hallway was just as dark as my cell. I have known of creatures being able to operate in the darkness just as easily as in the light of day, unfortunately, I was not allowed such a luxury. Again, I used magic to benefit myself. A rather complex gesture followed by the lengthy reciting of some strange foreign words and I could see resonate heat trails in the darkness. Strong reds where the other prisoner was, pale oranges and yellow hues where the creatures had been only moments ago. Using this power, I scanned the corridor, noting dozens of people who were walled up much as I had been. There was no way I could have saved them all. That I can be sure of. But I knew that one, if he were still conscious, would be able to follow my lead.

Using a metal tool the creatures had used to fasten him into place (and graciously left behind for me in a special wall mount), I cut my neighbor out of his cage with one continuous slice. He fell at my feet with a long grunt. I hushed him and made a quick look over, trying to note anything out of the ordinary.

"Who are you," he asked. "What happened to me?"

I hoisted the gentleman up onto his feet, and we began our journey out of this prison. I told him who I was and he nodded, recognizing the name. He informed me that he was Pierce Decker, a philosopher who was to attend my speaking engagement this week. I did not express my conformation to him, but as I had assumed,

these creatures planned on assimilating all those learned men and women that they could, in order to add to the core of their intelligence. It had to be! They were not interested in brute strength, at least not yet. Otherwise, they would be rounding up athletes and others of sound body, not doctors and scientists. But what of the lad who attacked me in DeLeo's office? What of him? Most likely a college student, a promising one at that. How far could this conspiracy go? How many had it touched?

Then a noise, a scream, broke the monotony of silence, and pulled me away from my wandering thoughts. Decker looked very frightened, he could not see what I was seeing. Most likely, for this reason alone, he did not lose his mind. Coming down the corridor, like avenging spirits, were two of them. Their mouths open wide around the slime-coated tentacles groping at the darkness. Quickly, I flung Decker over my back and began heading in the opposite direction of our captors. Not being physically profound, Decker impaired my movement. The two creatures were able to quickly gain on us. In desperation, I made my way to a door, and slammed it behind me. This hall was grand, though also in pitch-blackness. I set Decker to the ground and began to search for a way to bar the door. Throwing a lever, there was the sound of metal on metal, and then a loud crash indicated that the door behind us was indeed locked. The only question that remained to be answered was that of our location.

Upon searching the large room, I deduced that we were in some sort of library or hall of records. Though the tomes were constructed of a strange substance (not paper), I concluded that these were some form of book. Gathering one to later use as evidence, I again lifted Decker and we began looking for a way out. Eventually, coming to a tunnel of sorts, possibly an air vent, we began our crawl for freedom. We crawled for what seemed forever, eventually finding an exit into the sewers. Upon reaching the street level, we discovered that we had apparently been absent from society for at least an entire day, for it was night once again.

Under the cover of night, we made our way back to my hotel. Decker and I cleaned ourselves up and dressed. It was only then that I was able to look at the tome in which I had taken from our enemies. The cover was silver, and of a material I did not know. The leather-like pages were covered with runes, ones with which I was also unfamiliar. I had come across this problem before, finding a tome that was written in a dead language and having to decipher it. Though magic is known to work in these situations, I had hoped to not have to use any more than I already had over the last several days. I'm aware that magic is a corrupted art on our world, an art that has resulted in the degradation of many good men. I did not wish to follow in their paths,

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but there was no other way. Only magic could help translate this work, only magic could unlock the secrets those beasts held.

THE JOURNEY

After conferring with Decker, we decided it would be best if we were to take the first boat out of the country, in order to get as far away from these monsters as possible. So, after gathering my things, the two of us made our way to the docks. Decker was a determined man, young and sure of himself. Though still weak from our capture, he was now open to the horror of our world. The shock of it did not affect him as it does some. This was a good thing, I thought at the time, it proved that he was strong.

There were several vessels in Boston Harbor that would accommodate us, both merchant vessels as well as commercial cruise ships. We opted for the prior, hoping our pursuers would expect us to take the more comfortable method of travel. Using the cash money I had left in my hotel room, we were able to book passage on a shipping vessel on a course for London. We were issued an empty cabin, merely a ten-foot square with a cot, but it would do. If I was going to be able to procure information on our monstrous enemies, I would not need sleep or comfort for several days.

As Decker rested on the cot, I began the difficult incantations. Using components bartered from the crew of the ship, incense and strips of ivory, I began casting. The trance I went into could last for days, but luckily we were far out to sea and Decker was there to protect me. But perhaps nothing could protect me from what I discovered by using the spell.

THE HORROR REVEALED

The trance began. I was no longer on the sea, no longer in the small cabin with Professor Decker. I was traveling down the foggy corridors of time, into the past of my current nemesis. The fog subsided, and before me, moving about in the darkness, was the horror of my worst nightmares. The mauve skin, the moist leathery tentacles hanging down from their faces and their dominating presence. The word "Illithid" entered my mind like a cool breeze. Was that the name of their race? They huddled beneath the ground, capturing humans and other creatures upon which to feed. Oh my God... they were feeding on the brains! Far beneath the ground, under their hidden complex was their leader. A giant mass floating in a pool. A giant brain? Yes, it was a giant brain. Surrounding it in the liquid were small leeches (much like the ones I encountered in my hotel room) and smaller brains. This Elder Brain thought its orders, transmitting the evil plots to its minions. Once

the resources (humans) of a world were nearly consumed, they set forth across the cosmos. Using technologies far beyond my realm of thought and using their mental gifts to operate the ship, they set sail, searching for new worlds on which to feed.

For years they searched. I could "hear" their displeasure in being away from their elder. It was all they knew. There were several worlds that gave them a temporary satisfaction, but those worlds were fleeting. Soon one of their crafts came into our solar system, the blue light from our planet alerted them that food was near.

For an unknown reason, their craft malfunctioned as they came into our world, and flew out of control. The Illithids could not save themselves from crashing. Nearly all aboard were killed. Those who did survive were severely injured. The most horrifying event to them soon followed. When they lost contact with their elder brain, the Illithid spirit was shattered.

To overcome their injuries, and to hopefully reconnect with their elder at a later date, the Illithids used their mental abilities to place themselves in a form of hibernation. Much like the vampire, they needed no form of nourishment as they did this, presumably suppressing their hunger for several hundred years.

In a strange turn of events, one among the Illithid woke long before the others. Alone, cut off not only from his brethren but the Elder Brain as well, the lone Illithid went mad. He traveled into the world under the cover of darkness hunting for brains, finding tribes of Native Americans, and early American settlers.

Many years must have passed for the lone Illithid, for I could feel as its rage grew. Marooned on a strange world, cut off from the most important aspect in its life, the Elder Brain, the Illithid's thoughts turned to rebellion. In its mind, it had succeeded greatly on its own, needing not the help of the elder or its compatriots. The Illithid had even uncovered many texts of what the humans called "magic," a powerful tool (that in its opinion) should be used in spite of their mental powers. Using this magic, the Illithid destroyed its shipmates as they slept, forever marking the betrayal of its own kind.

Throwing itself into the study of magic, the Illithid neglected its given mental abilities, and its own nature. Using spells to reduce its need of feeding, the Illithid rarely ventured into the world, leaving only to collect components for spells or the capture subjects on which to experiment. As it progressed in the study of the arcane arts, the years for the Illithid passed.

The creature knew that, even though spells had hindered its aging process, it was evident that its time was near. Feverishly, the Illithid searched for a way to achieve immortality, even leaving the sacred confines of its crashed vessel to look. Eventually, the being

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uncovered a secret in one of its texts. How it had missed it earlier was unknown. Perhaps one of its own blasphemous gods was looking out for the stranded Illithid. How the creature came upon the information is truly unknown, though knowing the true hideous nature of our world I would venture to guess the Red Death itself had wrapped its malignant claws around the situation. Using the information the Illithid underwent a transformation of mammoth proportions. I had heard of such creatures in the human variety, but this must have been the very first Illithid-lich to ever exist. Calling itself an Alhoon, the Illithid felt reinvigorated. Its ability to study and experiment day and night without the need of rest or nourishment was a godsend. The Alhoon soon put these gifts to work, beginning construction on a plot that would take nearly a century to culminate.

But culminate it did. After nearly a hundred years of work the Alhoon's plan finally came to a head. Through magic, the Alhoon created a new race of Illithid life. A breed of magically created Illithid-leeches, these creatures could be implanted into the human body and slowly take control. Eating away at the brain from the inside, the leech would grow to eventually inhabit the human head as well as take control of the body. While ingesting the brain the leech would absorb the memories and knowledge of the creature, eventually learning enough to completely replace the human in society. The power of the creature did not stop there. Housing tentacles within the human body, the leech could produce them through the mouth and take the knowledge of other humans by eating their brain. This information is always shared with the Alhoon, adding to its already super-genius intelligence. These leeches numbered in the dozens upon their creations near the first of the century; today their legions could rank in the thousands. The only saving grace for the human race seems to be the fact that the leeches are not always accurate in melding with the species they were designed for. The exact percentage of their effectiveness wasn't revealed to me.

These leeches seemed to be in constant contact with the Alhoon by either magic, or by mentalism. The Alhoon could view what they were seeing or hearing, or simply give them orders at any time...

THE UNWITTING BETRAYAL

Just then, as the vision was becoming the most clear, as I was about to learn even more about the Illithids and the Alhoon's current plans, I awoke from my trance. Two crushing hands were grasping my arms and holding me up in the air. As my vision cleared I could see just who had attacked me: Decker, with a crazed look in his eyes, was indeed the culprit. Obviously he had been implanted

with one of the Alhoon's leeches, and it had just taken control. Drained as I was, I would not be able to destroy this one with the use of a spell, but I knew that my time was short. Decker grunted as the creature's tentacles writhed beneath his skin, clearing a path to their exit. My dry mouth managed a cry for help as I witnessed his eyes roll back into his head. Using my feet for their only purpose besides running or walking, I kicked the creature in the stomach and chest as hard as I could. After physically injuring DeLeo, I knew that these creatures felt pain, and as I expected, Decker's grip loosened somewhat. With a cry to God I forced my way from his grip and landed solidly on the wooden planked floor. Somehow I managed to make it to my feet before Decker could collect himself, so I made my way for the door.

Finding myself alone on the deck of the ship did nothing for my courage, so I made my way toward the crew quarters for some much-needed assistance. Flinging the door open without any announcement I came across one of the more shocking visions of my life. Each member of the crew had been viciously slaughtered as they slept, their noses and mouths bloodied from Decker's apparent attack. As I turned away in horror I heard Decker approaching. Quickly I barred the door and began searching the corpses for a weapon of some sort, unfortunately nothing short of a gaff or a rusty knife was found. Decker pounded on the door with all his might as I scurried about the chamber of death, finding nothing but a locked trunk. Using the gaff I'd recovered I stabbed repeatedly at the lock, finally snapping it just as Decker burst through the door. Inside the case I discovered a rather large hunting knife, reminiscent of the blade carried by Quincey Morris in our battle against Dracula. Quickly I took hold of the blade, wheeled around and faced my opponent head on. Decker's tentacles were now fully exposed and snapping at me like angry cobras. I stepped back, looked over the situation, and then (like the madman I may be) flung myself into action. With a great leap I flew past him, hacking at the monster with my newfound weapon. I knew that I'd been successful in my advance because when I landed my blade was nearly covered in Decker's crimson blood. Again I turned, shocked to discover that my blow had nearly severed the beast's right arm.

Decker cried out in obvious agony. He took to his heels and chased me onto the deck, where I stopped only inches from the railing. Like a mad beast Decker advanced, leaping though the air at my general direction. With a simple step backward, my former ally shot past me and over the starboard side of the vessel. The fall was a mighty one, the force of which resulted in the tearing off of the rest of his arm. I ran to the side of the ship, hoping to see if he were dead or alive.

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Unfortunately my question would never be answered, for the foul creature would never resurface.

THE VOYAGE HOME

After resting for a bit, I searched the ship for any survivors. Unfortunately I found none. All had been savagely murdered by Pierce Decker, or at least the beast that dwelled within him. Not possessing the knowledge of a seafaring man, the vessel charted its own course, eventually drifting into Spanish waters. There we were discovered by a navy ship and piloted back to the mainland. I managed to elude my saviors, fearing they might well charge me for the murders of the crew.

In the weeks that followed I made my way to London (along the way continually looking over my shoulder for Decker or creatures like him), and to the home of my good friends Jonathan and Mina Harker. Here is where I've finally put my pen to paper and detailed an exploit for the world to read. Unfortunately, I have now returned to my senses. I know that the world would never believe such claims I have made herein, though I have not simply wasted my time in jotting it down. I will put this text to good use, copying it for all those investigators who will wish to study it.

I may never fully understand or even comprehend the vastness of the Illithid's merger into our world, but at least I am aware of it. I have told dozens of colleagues, who have told dozens more. The proverbial "hunt" is on, and hopefully the end to these creatures will soon be eminent.

Please my friend, pray to God that my hopes come true, and not my fears.

Dr. Abraham Van Helsing
23rd December 1893



to priestly turning; mental contact with all of its leeches and drones; SW sunlight, subject to spells that affect undead; MR 90%; SZ M (6' tall); ML fearless (20); Int godlike (21); AL LE; XP 12,000.

Notes: The Alhoon of Gothic Earth is immune to all natural and unnatural poisons, disease, sleep, hold, and charm-related magic; it is also unharmed by holy water, cold wrought iron, and silver based weapons. The Alhoon casts all spells as an 18th-level mage.

Psionic Summary: Same as all standard Illithids.

Illithid Drones and Leeches

Illithid Drones are all magically created creatures developed by the Alhoon of Gothic Earth. They begin life in the leech stage, and upon entering a human body, will take control within 48 hours. Upon one of the leeches entering a body the chances are 1 in 4 that an Illithid Drone will form within the human cranium. Those leeches that do not form drones simply die within the body, and do not affect the host in any way.

Illithid Drones: AC 8; MV 12; HD varies; hp varies; THAC0 varies; #AT varies; DMG 2, or by weapon/psionic attack; SA tentacles, psionic powers; SD infravision, psionics; SZ M (6' tall); ML champion (15); INT varies (usually genius 17-18); AL LE; XP 9,000.

Illithid Leeches: AC 10; MV 1; HD ½; hp 2; THAC0 20; #AT 1; DMG 1; SA domination, brain ingestion, thought absorbing; SD psionic communication; SZ T (3" long); ML champion (15); INT animal (1); AL N; XP 35.



DM'S APPENDIX

The Alhoon (Illithilich) of Gothic Earth

AC 2; MV 12; HD 8+4; hp 57; THAC0 11; #AT 4; Dmg 1d4; SA psionic powers, spells, leeches and drones; SD infravision, undead immunities, immune

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A GOTHIC EARTH GUIDE

TO VOUDOU

The Magic of Gothic Haiti

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FOREWORD

In adapting Voodoo for use in Gothic Earth, I have made substantial changes to its practices and beliefs. I did this primarily to make the material more immediately useful to DMs who might want to use it in their campaigns and also to make the material easily understood by those unfamiliar with the religion, particularly those familiar with it only through motion pictures.

Like authors of similar publications, I have no desire in any way to insult or mock the followers of Voodoo (or *Vodun*) as it is practiced today or as it has been practiced in the past. The material presented here is intended specifically for use in the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Masque of the Red Death* campaign setting, and in no way do I assert that what follows accurately describes the beliefs of Voodooists. Voodoo is a religion that is both complex and diverse in its practices; it is also firmly based on the localized beliefs of its followers, and much of this complexity and inner diversity has been lost in my translation of the religion into a gaming accessory. I encourage DMs who wish to use a more realistic version of Voodoo in their campaigns to expand on the ideas I've presented here by doing additional research on the subject and the land of its origin.

I made extensive use of the local university library in preparing the materials below, and I discovered an unusual situation. The majority of books specifically related to Voodoo in the library's on-line catalog were, in fact, missing from the shelves. For most of them, the catalog reported not that they had been checked out and never returned nor that they had been destroyed in some fashion; they were simply listed as missing. Fortunately, there remained sufficient resource materials for me to work with, but the mystery behind these missing texts created an ominous atmosphere for my research.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS TEXT

The following text is lengthy, so here is a listing of the major sections of it and what is included in each section:

- ◆ **Introduction** (a brief description of Voudou and its relationship to Catholicism)
- ◆ **The Voudou Priesthood**
- ◆ **The Voudou Temple** (*oumphort*)
- ◆ **Voudou Music**
- ◆ **Summoning a Loa**
- ◆ **Magic Lamps**
- ◆ **Using Voudou in your Masque Campaign**
- ◆ **Loa** (new creature entry including descriptions of specific loa)
- ◆ **Loa and *le Mor' Rouge*** (The Red Death)
- ◆ **Glossary of Terms**

INTRODUCTION

Voudou is a hybrid religion born of the combination of traditional belief systems brought to Haiti by enslaved Africans and Catholicism, which was forced onto these enslaved people. Like many other religions, Voudou provides its followers with guides for living their lives, and it includes rituals to commemorate birth, coming of age, beginning new ventures, retiring from old ones, and, finally, dying and mourning.

Voudou worshipers generally profess a belief in a single, omnipotent deity, just as other Catholics do. However, they also believe that that deity, being omniscient, is too concerned with the larger matters of the universe to be able to attend to the needs of individuals. Thus, *le Bon Dieu* has sent loa, supernatural

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beings that have become the focus of Voudou rituals and practices.

Voudou is not uniformly popular in Haiti, but everyone there acknowledges its presence and power. Many of the secret societies that exist throughout the small nation have no relation to Voudou other than usually nominal acknowledgment of a patron loa. On the other hand, some of these societies are led by powerful Voudou priests, usually *bokors*, Voudou shamans who use their powers for selfish and evil ends.

THE VOUDOU PRIESTHOOD

There are two types of Voudou priests (or shamans): the *houngann* (male) or *mambo* (female), the leader of a local Voudou community, and the *bokor*, the male or female leader of a subversive Voudou community devoted to evil. *Hounganns* and *mambos* undergo rigorous training before they are allowed to “take the *azon*,” the calabash rattle that is the symbol of his or her office. *Bokors* possess a similar symbol, a rattle made from a tree-grown calabash instead of a liana-grown calabash.

Hounganns and *mambos* are at least 3rd-level shamans (mystics); unlike PC shamans, *hounganns* and *mambos* have Arcane as a regularly available proficiency category. They earn their early experiences as assistants to established *hounganns* or *mambos*. *Hounganns* can take female pupils, and *mambos* can take male pupils, although such situations are uncommon. Often a shaman’s successor is chosen from among his or her children, provided the child is properly trained. The *houngann* or *mambo* is responsible for healing, performing magic, counseling, and receiving confessions. Additionally, he or she is responsible for officiating at ceremonies in which loa are summoned. All *hounganns* and *mambos* are native-born Haitians, and the vast majority of them are *noirs* (Blacks), although a large number of *mulâtres* (Mulattoes) also serve as *hounganns* or *mambos*. Although *hounganns* and *mambos* are, generally, indifferent if not friendly toward *blancs* (Whites), no White *houngann* or *mambo* has ever been known in Haiti. *Hounganns* worship the Rahda loa only; they never consciously summon other loa to their ceremonies. *Mambos* worship the Rahda loa as well, but they have been known to deal with the Gu’aydé loa when they’ve felt it useful, and on extremely rare occasions they will attempt to deal with Pitro loa, but only in the direst of circumstances.

Bokors are also at least 3rd-level shamans (mystics); they have Arcane and Rogue as regularly available

proficiency categories but they do not have Wilderness. *Bokors* typically reside near large settlements, and there are often several *bokors* within each major city in Haiti. They are very involved in Haiti’s vacillating governments, seeking to gain as much power for themselves as possible whenever the diplomatic winds change. Some *bokors* work for more powerful humans or beings, although their pride would keep them from admitting publicly that they do. Some *bokors* have undergone training to become *hounganns* or *mambos*, only to abandon their training before their final initiation, often because they were refused initiation by their tutor’s loa. *Bokors* worship the Pitro loa, but they often call upon the Gu’aydé loa, depending upon the service they require. Most *bokors* receive their training directly from one of the Pitro loa, and thus are devoted to that particular loa for the rest of their lives (and often thereafter).

Players who wish to play *hounganns* or *mambos* should be aware that their powers are closely tied to their proximity to the land, and it is highly unusual for any *houngann* or *mambo* to be away from Haiti for more than a two-week period, as they have duties to their local communities which cannot be passed on to others. For every 2,000 miles that they travel away from Haiti, they lose one level of experience; moreover, all experience earned anywhere but the Greater Antilles is divided in half because the supernatural powers that grant them their powers and abilities are so far away from them. While a *houngann* or *mambo* may retire after years of service and after training a successor, one who abandons his or her position will become outcast from Haitian society, will lose all mystic abilities, and will become a likely candidate for zombification. Players should not be allowed to play *bokors*.

Other leaders in a Rahda Voudou community include the *confiance*, the apprentice *houngann* or *mambo*; the *houngann’con peristyle*, leader of the ritual chorus; *la place*, the master or mistress of ceremonies for the Voudou rites, the *ongantier*, *triangler*, and *hountorg’iers*, who play the *ongan*, triangle, and drums, respectively; the *ventailleur*, who acquires any animals which are to be sacrificed; the *reine silence*, who ensures there is silence when appropriate and removes disruptive individuals from ceremonies; and the *hounsis*, members of the ritual chorus. Members of the community who have not yet undergone the initiation process are called *hounsis bassiles*. A female *houngann’con peristyle* serves under a *houngann*, and a male *houngann’con peristyle* serves under a *mambo*. *Bokors* make use of fewer assistants (because they are less trusting of others), and their aides often perform overlapping duties in ceremonies.

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THE VOUDOU TEMPLE

The primary site of Voudou rituals is the *oumphort*. It consists of a large area called the *peristyle* and an adjoining square building called the *santé-santé*. The *peristyle* is usually partially open to the sky, the remainder of it covered by a canvas or wooden roof. In the *peristyle* is where the Voudou ceremonies and rituals are performed, where the ill are treated, and where community meetings are conducted. The floor of the *peristyle* is never paved or tiled; rather, it is the bare ground that has been hardened by frequent use. The *peristyle* is surrounded by a low wall, generally four feet tall, and spectators are occasionally allowed to remain behind this wall to observe the activities in the *peristyle* without disrupting the proceedings.

In the center of the *peristyle* is the *poteau-mitan*, the centerpost. All ceremonies in the *peristyle* center around the *poteau-mitan*, the top of which is called the “center of the sky” and the bottom of which is called the “center of hell.” The post itself is square and is set in a circular base of concentric steps made of layered cement that is often used as an altar for loa. During a summoning ceremony, this base is covered with lit candles in addition to any sacrificial materials. The post itself is a devoted to Papa Legba.

The *santé-santé* is windowless and lit only by candles. Inside, it is divided into several sections, each containing an altar and each section devoted to a particular function. The largest section is where individuals are initiated into the rites of Voudou. This initiation consists of dying symbolically and then being reborn as a follower of the *houngann* or *mambo* performing the initiation. The potential initiate is anointed with special oils and perfumes and then sealed in a coffin while the *houngann* or *mambo* summons a loa to possess the initiate. Strengthened by the loa, the mounted initiate bursts forth from the coffin and, once released by the loa, proclaimed a true member of the community. A longer but similar process is used when a member of the community is to become a *houngann* or *mambo*, but this process has never been witnessed by those outside the community.

In the yard of the *oumphort*, beyond the *peristyle* wall, is the *oumphort's reposoir* tree, which represents the permanent home of the primary loa of the *oumphort*. Generally a pedestal or basin sits at the foot of the tree, and consecrated foods are put there for the loa. On special holidays, the tree is surrounded by a series of candles (the number and color depending upon the holiday and the loa). Some *oumphort*, particularly those in rural areas, will include more than one *reposoir* tree.

These trees are recognizable by the strips of brightly colored cloth that are tied to their branches.

In the limbs of the tree lives a tree-snake, which often descends the trunk of the tree to be fed during Voudou ceremonies. The snake is a symbol of Damballah and A'ida-Ouédo and thus is most frequently present at Rahda ceremonies. Tree-snakes also live in *reposoir* trees devoted to Pitro loa, but often these are poisonous, and live animals are often penned to the foot of the tree for the snake to feed upon. Gu'aydé *reposoir* trees more often contain aggressive, large-billed birds than they do snakes.

VOUDOU MUSIC

The primary mode of communication in a Voudou ritual is dance; thus, music and motion are essential and consistent elements in all loa-summoning ceremonies. The three main instruments used in Voudou rituals are the *ongan*, the triangle, and the drums. The *ongan* is a short, slightly curved piece of metal that resembles a small, rounded spade. The *ongan* is struck with a metal rod, producing a high-pitched, piercing tone. The triangle is a thick, metal instrument that is also struck with a metal rod. Typically, it hangs from the roof of the *peristyle*, although sometimes it is built into the wall itself. Voudou drums are tall and thin, and they are usually decorated with symbols associated with the loa relevant to a particular ceremony. In Rahda ceremonies, three drums are used; Pitro ceremonies use only two drums, while the Gu'aydé loa don't appear to care how many drums are used at ceremonies where they appear.

The instruments provide more than just the atmosphere to inspire the Voudou dancers. They are crucial to tying the ritual to the five elemental powers of existence. Thus, the *ongan* represents the earth, the triangle (with its open interior) represents the air, and the drums represent the water (as the ocean waves beating against the shore). Fire from the candles around the *poteau-mitan* is used in the ritual to represent the element of fire, and the loa itself represents the element of spirit.

SUMMONING A LOA

Loa-summoning ceremonies can take place at any time of the day, although normally spectators are allowed only at those which begin at sun-down. Generally, these dusk ceremonies are somewhat more elaborate and orchestrated than private ceremonies, as the Voudouisants are aware that they are not only summoning their loa but they are also performing for

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their audience. Allowing non-Haitian spectators to a Voodoo ceremony is extremely rare, but it has occurred.

The ceremony begins with a small circle of *hounsis* dances around the *poteau-mitan* while singing songs related to the air and the *astrale*, the home of the loa. In Rahda ceremonies, these dancers wear white linen, but in Pitro ceremonies they are dressed in red robes, and in Gu'aydé ceremonies they are dressed in purple, often a purple sash worn over their regular clothes. The dancers increase their speed as they move around the *poteau-mitan* until finally the *houngann'con peristyle* joins them by singing out a call to Papa Legba. The chorus then repeats their leader's call and one of them steps forward as he or she feels that Legba is mounting him or her. As Papa Legba mounts his *choval*, the chorus member begins to shake and sweat and is unable to stand unassisted. The possession process generally takes only a few minutes, as the *hounsi* has been mounted before. Once the possession appears complete, the *houngann'con peristyle* leads the singers in additional songs to placate Papa Legba and entreat his aid in their contacting the loa they wish to summon. Of course, the first thing Legba wants is his dinner, so he will immediately find his steak and rum and then quickly consume them.

After he has eaten, Legba will listen to the *houngann's* or *mambo's* request to summon a particular loa. He will then verify that the appropriate materials are present to satisfy the requested loa and that they are of sufficient quality. If a Gu'aydé loa is to be summoned, Legba often expects a symbolic bribe of a few coins. If all is in order, Legba will agree to summon the loa and he dismounts his *choval*.

La place directs the dancing to resume. Legba's *choval* is led to the *santé-santé*, where he or she will remain until he or she recovers from the experience, usually 2d4 minutes. The remaining dancers will continue to encircle the *poteau-mitan*, moving with the pounding rhythms of the drums as they sing songs of praise and entreaty to the loa they are summoning. This process continues for up to an hour as the dancers wait for the loa to arrive. If Papa Legba has promised a loa will come, then a loa will come. However, there is only a 5% chance per level of experience of the *houngann* or *mambo* that the loa that comes is the loa sought. If a different loa is indicated, then there is a 10% chance per level of experience of the *houngann* or *mambo* that the loa will be of the same type (Rahda, Gu'aydé, or Pitro) as the loa originally sought. If a different type is indicated, then there is a 75% chance it will be Gu'aydé if the originally sought loa was either Rahda or Pitro. If a loa other than the original is indicated, the DM can choose the one that will be the most appropriate or most interesting for the circumstances. Once the DM has

determined which loa will appear, there is a 10% chance that Trois Jours Malheureux will show up instead; if she doesn't, then there is a 20% chance that she will show up in addition to the loa that does show up.

When the loa does appear, a process similar to that described above for Papa Legba occurs. However, there is a distinct possibility the loa will not select one of the *hounsis* as its *choval*. In fact, there is only a 50% chance that it will do so; otherwise, it will choose the *houngann'con peristyle* (5% chance), the *confiance* (15% chance), the *houngann* or *mambo* (15% chance), one of the *hounsis bassiles* (5% chance), or one of the spectators (10% chance).

Once the *choval* has been mounted, the loa will perform some actions to verify its identity. Damballah, for instance, will immediately move to the bonfire created for him and slide around in it like a snake. The unmounted *hounsis* continue their dance during this process as they sing thanks to the loa for answering the summons. On unusual occasions a second (randomly determined) loa will appear; it will be outraged if its specific material requirements are not present, but it will wait for them to be prepared. Generally, loa do not interfere with each other even when one appears at the other's ceremony, although there is some animosity between Agouné and Rattalon, and they often end up fighting violently if they encounter each other.

After its initial demonstration, the loa presents itself to the *houngann* or *mambo* to receive his or her request or command. How the loa responds is entirely up to the loa, although the Rahda loa tend to feel more of an obligation to serve the *houngann* or *mambo* than the other loa do. A typical mounting lasts several hours, although possessions of up to a week long have been reported. The loa abandons its *choval* at will, although it can be forced out by magical means, typically with some damage also being done to the mount in the process.

The summoning process described above is typical, but the process may vary depending upon the loa summoned. The unwilling *choval* for Ça-balla, for instance, is tied to the base of the *poteau-mitan*, and the loa will not select a different mount. A ceremony conducted by a *bokor* is smaller, and spectators are never allowed. Typically, the *bokor* intends to be the *choval* himself or herself, although on occasions someone else will be designated as the potential mount. In addition to their red robes, *hounsis* at Pitro rituals tend to cover themselves in blood from freshly killed animals.

MAGIC LAMPS

Another way of summoning a loa is by creating a magic lamp. Doing so is a private ritual, and a loa doesn't

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actually appear, but some of its power is acquired through the process. A magic lamp is used to produce special effects on behalf of its maker. While *hounganns*, *mambos*, and *bokors* typically instruct the maker on how to build an appropriate lamp, the maker must perform the construction, or the lamp's power will be ineffectual. There are several types of magic lamps, and a list of a few of them along with powers they can accomplish is provided below.

A magic lamp is created by pouring small amounts of castor oil, olive oil, and other specified ingredients depending on the nature of the lamp into a shallow bowl and hanging the bowl in the center of an *oumphort* or a private shrine. Alternatively, the bowl may be placed on the altar of the particular loa being beseeched. Occasionally, the loa will require additional oils or perfumes be added to the lamp. Maitress Erzoulie, for instance, always insists that magic lamps include attar of roses before she will empower their abilities.

The Travail Lamp

The *travail lamp* is used to increase the maker's ability at his craft or profession. In addition to castor oil and olive oil, the lamp must also contain a piece of a beef heart and seven needles. Typically, the maker also adds another material which symbolically relates to his or her desired effect. For instance, a *houngann* who wishes to improve his ability to heal people might add medicinal oils to the lamp. A farmer who wants to increase the number of healthy crops he reaps might add seeds to the lamp. The effects of the lamp should be mildly beneficial to their maker. For instance, the *houngann's* curing spells might automatically cure an extra point of damage each time they are used. The effects of the lamp (as determined by the DM) last for 3+1d4 days after its creation and positioning in the *oumphort*. Gu'aydé loa never empower *travail lamps*, but Pitro loa have occasionally deigned to do so, particularly for *bokors*.

The Lamp Noir

The *lamp noir* is used to ward off an individual's enemies, impelling them to leave the area or even the town where the maker resides. The material components for this lamp include ground pepper, powdered lizard bones, and soot. The lamp can also be used to instigate family disruptions as well as political discord; these uses require the addition of a piece of sheep dung to the lamp's oils. As a ward, the *lamp noir* is generally empowered by a Rahda loa, but if it's being used to cause evil, it will be empowered by a Pitro or Gu'aydé loa.

The Charman' Lamp

The *charman' lamp* is used by those who wish to attract a romantic partner. It is typically made in a bowl that is half of a coconut shell, and, in addition to the basic oils, it contains items related to sweetness and attraction: syrup, honey, perfume, and/or a magnet. Once the ingredients are gathered, the oils are lighted. Typically, this lamp is empowered by Maitress Erzoulie, who will also require rose oil in the lamp. On rare occasions, some other loa is summoned to power the lamp, depending on the circumstances of the desire. For instance, a sailor might ask Agouné to empower the *charman' lamp*, while someone who has been spurned and is more interested in vengeance than love might call on Omdantrou to empower the lamp. The effect of the lamp generally is to raise the maker's Charisma score by 2+1d3 points with regard to that targeted individual only for the duration of the burning of the lamp. Maitress Erzoulie believes that while love can be encouraged, it must never be forced. Of course, not all the loa share this perspective and may grant greater powers to the maker of the lamp. Interfering with *charman' lamp* ceremonies is one of Trois Jours Malheureux's favorite activities.

The Disastr' Lamp

The "disaster" lamp is only empowered by the Gu'aydé loa and is used to bring about dire catastrophes, typically including multiple deaths. Among its ingredients are lime juice, the gall bladder of an ox, and soot. No *houngann* or *mambo* will ever instruct on the creation of this type of lamp, and only the bravest of *bokors* will. The effect of the lamp is to bring devastation upon the target, typically in the form of disease (yellow fever), a great fire, mosquito swarms, or madness. Typically, the maker of the lamp shares in this misery, although often to a lesser extent than the intended victim. Usually the maker of the lamp is unaware of this danger, and seldom does anyone, having made one of these lamps and lived, attempt to make another.

USING VOUDOU IN YOUR MASQUE CAMPAIGN

Voudou is a restrictive game component because it is found in a very small area of the world, one not often the focus of 1890s adventuring. Moreover, as common characters in the Masque campaign are white Europeans or Americans, they would not be overly welcome on Haitian shores. The Haitians of the 1890s hated the

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English almost as much as they hated the French, but they hadn't yet developed their animosity for the United States. In 1889, Frederic Douglass was named U.S. minister to Haiti, although he resigned and returned to the United States in 1893 after a U.S. admiral attempted to capture part of the northern peninsula to use as a U.S. coaling station.

Once in Haiti, Gothic Earth adventurers will encounter a language problem, as all the inhabitants speak Creole (although many of the *mulâtres* also speak French and a few of the *noirs* speak Spanish). They could become involved with investigating Voodoo by picking up information about it elsewhere (such as New Orleans) and following those clues to Haiti. They could come across it accidentally, having ended up in Haiti for some other reasons. If the adventurers are involved in the Spanish-American War in the Caribbean, they could find themselves washed up on Haitian shores and taken in by a friendly *houngann* or a scheming *bokor*.

While they do occasionally allow spectators at their ceremonies, the Voudouisants are very possessive about the privacy of their rituals. Any member of a Voodoo community who reveals its secrets will be in dire peril. A *bokor* will not think twice about killing anyone he or she feels has betrayed him or her; a *houngann* or *mambo* will summon a loa to adjudicate such matters, but typically the traitor does not survive the judgment. Thus, if PCs observe a ceremony they were not meant to see, they could easily earn the wrath of the local Voodoo community. Depending on the nature of the transgression, the community may send an assassin to track and punish the party should they leave Haiti. Turning the transgressor into a zombi is another option available to the *houngann*, *mambo*, or *bokor*. (See "Voodan Zombie" for more information on the zombification process.)

Adventures with Voodoo should maintain a sense of mystery regarding the abilities of the Voudouisants and their followers. Non-Haitians should never be able to learn whether loa really exist or if they're just imaginary gods. They may witness impossible things, but they should never really find an explanation for these things. PCs who have earned the respect of a *mambo* (by performing some task for her) might be allowed to ask one question of a loa, although the question would have to be asked by someone in the ceremony while the PCs watched from beyond the *peristyle* wall. The DM could use this ceremony to give the PCs information about the nature of the Red Death, as most of the loa are aware of it and know that it killed A'ida-Ouédo. Of course, they don't know a great deal more about the Red Death other than that it's a threat and that it monitors the use of magic. The DM could involve the PCs in Damballah's efforts to defeat the Red Death, but doing so would very

much change the nature of the Gothic Earth campaign, and I don't recommend it.

LOA

	Gu'aydé	Pitro	Rahda
Climate/Terrain	Haiti	Haiti	Haiti
Frequency	Rare	Rare	Very Rare
Organization	Solitary	Solitary	Solitary
Activity Cycle	Night	Any	Any
Diet	Nil	Varies	Varies
Intelligence	Very (11)	High (13)	Exc. (15)
Treasure	Nil	Nil	Nil
Alignment	NE	C(N)E	LN(G)
No. Appearing	1-3	1	1
Armor Class	0	-2	-3
Movement	Varies	Varies	Varies
Hit Dice	6	8	10
THAC0	15	13	11
No. of Attacks	1	1	2
Damage/Attack	2d6	3d8	Special
Special Attacks	See below	Varies	Varies
Special Defenses	See below	See below	See below
Magic Resistance	Nil	40%	30%
Size	Varies	Varies	Varies
Morale	13-14	15-16	19-20
XP Value	650+	2,000+	4,000+

Loa are supernatural beings given form by the emotional intensity of their worshipers. As such, they can take on a variety of forms and abilities, and they do not fit well into categorization. There are certainly more types of loa than the three discussed here, but these three are the most prevalent, the ones which are most frequently summoned or which most frequently appear during Voodoo rituals.

All loa have a physical form which they may use to appear if they so desire, and usually this form is human. Damballah, a Rahda loa, appears in the form of a giant constrictor snake, while Baron Samedi, a Gu'aydé loa, appears as a lean gravedigger wearing a top hat. Loa are reluctant to take on corporeal forms because doing so makes them vulnerable to *le Mor' Rouge*, a force all but a select few of the loa fear.

Loa are almost always encountered when they take possession of a "mount," a human taking part in a Voodoo ritual designed to summon a loa. A mounted human takes on all the characteristics of the loa, often gaining special abilities and immunities for the duration of the possession. The human will generally not remember any of the things he or she says or does while possessed by a loa; on very rare occasions, however, a loa may will that its mount remain aware of what has happened during the possession. Should this unusual event occur when a player character is the mount, then he

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or she must make a madness check as soon as he or she is dismounted.

When loa wish to communicate with their followers, they often do so by using their followers' dreams. Generally, the loa will only communicate with someone it has mounted in the past, although in unusual circumstances a loa might try to communicate with someone who has never been mounted. This method of communication is inexact, and sometimes a loa's message is misinterpreted by the dreamer.

COMBAT

If it is encountered in physical form and it fears attack, a loa will simply become noncorporeal and elude its attacker. In its physical form, it has all the abilities inherent to that form, but it retains the armor class listed above. Additionally, it can speak any language it knows and it can become incorporeal at will. It is vulnerable to normal weapons when corporeal. A Rahda loa in its physical form is immune to non-magical fire; a Pitro loa in its physical form is immune to both magical and nonmagical fire. Often, a loa in physical form can fly, even if that physical form does not inherently possess the ability to fly.

If a loa is encountered while mounted on an individual, then the loa may use all abilities of that individual in combat, but the mounted individual gains all advantageous abilities of the loa as well, including special attacks and defenses. A mounted individual will use a weapon only if its loa is typically associated with a weapon (such as the Rahda loa, Ogoun B'koulé, who brandishes a cutlass). A character cannot be enabled to fly by being mounted.

When the loa "dismounts" or leaves the character's body, any damage that the character took while mounted is reduced to 1/4 of that amount (round down) if the loa was a Rahda loa. If the loa was a Pitro loa, then there is a 50% chance that the damage will be reduced to 1/2 of the amount; otherwise, full damage is taken. If the loa was Gu'aydé, then the character takes all damage.

HABITAT/SOCIETY

Loa developed from the beliefs of various African peoples who had been brought to Haiti as slaves. When the Red Death came to Gothic Earth, the African gods were separated from their worshipers here, but the religions that celebrated those gods continued, and these beliefs, so strongly held for such a long time, became noumenal, sentient manifestations. Enslaved Africans brought these manifestations with them to the Western Hemisphere. In Haiti, the manifestations became aware that they gained power from the land and, when aided by

certain rituals performed by their followers, they could interact more directly with their physical environments. These manifestations became known as the Rahda loa, and their primary duty is the protection and service of their followers.

Manifestations accompanying later groups of enslaved Africans were of a different bent, less inclined to service toward their followers and more inclined to creating mischief. These became known as the Gu'aydé loa, and they were somewhat weaker than Rahda loa. The Gu'aydé loa typically have bizarre names, such as "Rattalon" ("level with the heel") and "Ti Puce sur d'Cheval" ("little flea on the horse").

The Pitro loa, while nominally based in African traditions and beliefs, were the manifestations of the hatred the Haitian slaves had for their enslavers, who were primarily white Europeans. These loa tend to be exceptionally violent, and their rituals invariably require some type of sacrifice.

One loa, Papa Legba, traditionally considered a Rahda loa, is invoked in all Voodoo ceremonies, for he is the "Keeper of the Crossroads," the loa who facilitates the effectiveness of the ceremony and monitors the contact between humans and loa. Papa Legba is invoked even in Gu'aydé and Pitro ceremonies. In New Orleans, he is known as "Papa Lebat."

ECOLOGY

Although loa are supernatural manifestations, they do have material needs that have developed out of their particular rituals. These needs are met during Voodoo rituals in which the particular loa are invoked. For many loa, particularly the Gu'aydé and Pitro loa, this material substance is rum and possibly also a sacrificed animal or other creature.

Loa are tied to Haiti, the land which gave them life. Only Papa Legba appears immune to this restriction, and he has in fact traveled throughout the hemisphere, although the majority of his travels have been along the Gulf coast of the southern United States, particularly New Orleans. His mode of travel is unknown, for he has been known to appear in ceremonies separated by vast differences on the same night; it is possible he exists as more than one manifestation, but he has never bothered to explain his abilities. For other loa, the farther away they are from Haiti, the weaker they become. For every 300 miles away from Haiti a loa travels, its hit dice are reduced by 1 and its Armor Class is increased by 1. Moreover, the length of time they are away from Haiti has an effect on their abilities, as their worshipers on Haiti become aware of their absence and cease their rituals. Each week that a loa is away from Haiti (more than 100 miles from Haitian shores), it must make an

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Intelligence check or be unable to manifest physically for one full month. Additionally, any intended mount must make a saving throw vs. spell, and if that saving throw is successful the loa is unable to mount that individual or any other for a period of 6+2d10 hours. The loa are aware that their powers are closely related to their proximity to Haiti, and most of them do not venture often away from there. A notable exception is Maitress Erzoulie, who often spends up to a month in New Orleans several times a year, particularly in February.

Listed below are several noted loa and their associated characteristics. This list is by no means exhaustive. Each loa is listed by most common name, other common names in parentheses, type of physical manifestation, personality, special attacks and defenses, and material needs. As described above, loa generally shun their physical manifestations so that they will not become vulnerable to the Red Death. However, they do use these manifestations frequently when they communicate with humans in dreams.

RAHDA LOA

Damballah

(Dang'bé, The Serpent-God)

Manifests as a giant constrictor snake. Damballah is the beneficent patriarch of the Rahda loa and the patron of the Haitian people. He wants only peace for the land. His wife, A'ida-Ouédo, was destroyed by *Le Mor' Rouge*, and he has sworn himself to avenging her death, although he well recognizes that none of the loa are powerful enough to threaten the Red Death. Damballah is often summoned by those who desire advice on administrative matters, such as government officials and business owners. In southern Haiti, he is also often called upon to bless newborn sons; there is a 15% chance that he will do so once he has been summoned, and a boy with his blessing gains a permanent +1 on saving throws vs. poison. Damballah requires only that a great fire be burning when he is summoned.

Maitress Erzoulie

Manifests as a beautiful young woman holding a silver hand-mirror in one hand. The maitress is the embodiment of love, beauty, and jealousy, and she often comes to the aid of men and women who are seeking aid in their romantic pursuits. Anyone successfully attacked by Maitress Erzoulie suffers no loss of hit points but does lose 1d2 points of Wisdom for 1d4 hours; the maitress must will this attack and be able to touch the skin of her opponent. Maitress Erzoulie requires that perfumes and

cosmetics be available to her when she is summoned. She also requires that an eligible partner, usually male, be available to be married to her, although her actually wedding the partner is uncommon.

Papa Legba

(Keeper of the Crossroads, Papa Lebat)

Manifests as an old man with a crippled leg and a heavy wooden cane. Papa Legba is the diligent guardian between humans and the loa. As such, humans must beseech him whenever they wish to communicate with one of the other loa. He is also responsible for keeping the loa from interfering too often and too directly in the lives of humans, for such interference is what draws the attention of *Le Mor' Rouge*. He is generally cranky when summoned by or encountering humans. Papa Legba mounts an individual long enough to eat and to find out the nature of the summoning, and then usually he facilitates or refuses the summoning; he has never been known to spend more than twenty minutes mounting an individual. Papa Legba can detect lie at will. He is immune to all illusions, phantasms, enchantments, and charms. He can only be hit by magical weapons of +2 or higher. While Papa Legba does protect other loa from *Le Mor' Rouge*, he does not appear to fear it much himself, as his physical manifestation has frequently been encountered on dark nights, usually on otherwise deserted roads. In his physical form, he strikes twice per round with his wooden cane, doing 3d6 damage on each successful strike. When summoned at a Vodou ceremony, Papa Legba asks only that a well-cooked steak dinner and a glass of rum be provided to compensate him for his services.

Ogoun B'koulé

Manifests as a male soldier who brandishes a shiny cutlass. Ogoun B'koulé oversees war on Haiti. He is not always happy with chaotic and undisciplined forces that have caused so much destruction in the country, but he valiantly comes to their aid when he is successfully summoned. He takes no damage from weapons of less than +1 enchantment. Once per day he can cast *lightning bolt* as a 7th-level adept. Ogoun B'koulé requires that a large array of weapons be present when he is summoned. An individual mounted by this loa will consume two or three bottles of rum and six or seven bullets before being dismounted; none of this ingestion will do the individual any lasting harm, although he or she will probably have a hangover the following morning.

Agouné

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(The Sea-Master)

Manifests as a middle-aged man in an admiral's uniform. Agouné controls the surface of the sea, while his consort, La Sirène, governs that which dwells beneath the surface. Agouné is a haughty, vain loa who is generally summoned to entreat safe passage by water or to aid in a sea battle. Unlike his consort, Agouné can appear on land as well as on the sea; he can walk on water at will. Once per week, Agouné can summon a hurricane, which will attack a designated coastline or area of water within four hours of forming and do 6d6 damage to anyone caught in it (save vs. spell for half damage) and which will last for 1d4 hours; Agouné is immune to the effects of the hurricane. When summoned, Agouné requires a bucket of live crabs be present for him to eat and a bucket of sea water be present for him to drink. He additionally requires the presence of at least four mirrors so that he may admire himself.

La Sirène

(The Mermaid)

Manifests as a mermaid (cannot manifest away from a body of water) holding a conch shell in one hand. La Sirène governs all that dwells beneath the surface of the sea. Taciturn and slow to anger, La Sirène is frequently summoned by fishers who wish to know when they will be able to catch the most fish. She also provides comfort to those whose loves have drowned and protects those who are swimming off the shores of Haiti, so long as they have invoked her name respectfully. A character mounted by La Sirène does not gain the fish-like lower torso of a mermaid, but he or she does gain the ability to breathe underwater and can swim at a movement rate of 12. Anyone successfully attacked by La Sirène must save vs. spell at -2 or be *charmed* by her and unable to resist her. Such a person will believe he or she can breath underwater and will follow La Sirène beneath the waves if she feels that death is an appropriate punishment. La Sirène can summon 1d4 sharks twice per day; these beasts obey her mental commands when summoned and remain until she dismisses them. When summoned, La Sirène requires a four-inch long piece of string and the bleached bones of a freshwater fish.

GU AYDÉ LOA

Baron Samedi

(Baron le Cimetière)

Manifests as a middle-aged gravedigger dressed in black and wearing a black top hat. Although there is no official hierarchy among the Gu'aydé or "trickster" loa, Baron Samedi is generally considered their leader, at least by everyone except the Gu'aydé loa. The baron is obsessed with the dead and often mounts individuals at a funeral so that he can participate in the burial rites. He is summoned by those who wish to speak to the dead, and he obtains answers to their questions, although these answers are not always reliable. Baron Samedi is immune to enchantment and charm spells. He can *teleport without error* twice per day, and once per day he can use a *power word, kill*. Baron Samedi requires that a lamb drenched with human blood be present when he is summoned; the person he mounts will kill the lamb after the baron has arrived. He also requires the presence of a bottle of rum and a dried orchid blossom. Baron Samedi is apparently able to appear in his physical manifestation without threat from *Le Mor' Rouge*, as he does so frequently. Like Maitress Erzoulie, Baron Samedi also likes to frequent New Orleans, although never for more than a couple of weeks before he returns to Haiti.

Ti Puce sur d'Cheval

Manifests as a mosquito with red wings. "Little Flea on the Horse" is an unpredictable loa who harasses farmers and tradespeople by interfering with their animals. Most commonly, Ti Puce frees herds or flocks from their pens or makes them ill by contaminating their food. She can cast *putrefy food and drink* twice per day, and there is a 75% chance that this ability will change the target food and water into Type H poisons. When summoned, there is a 15% chance that instead of attacking a specified target, she will attempt to harass the summoner instead. Ti Puce is immune to poisons, but she is highly susceptible to enchantments, getting a -2 penalty to her saves against such spells or spell effects. When summoned, she requires a bucket filled with a horse's blood; once she has mounted an individual, she drinks the blood, typically spilling much of it over her mount's clothes in the process. These stains can never be removed, and some wear their blood-stained clothes as a badge to tell others they have been mounted by Ti Puce sur d'Cheval.

Trois Jours Malheureux

(Translates as "three unlucky days")

Manifests as a middle-aged woman with no eyes. Trois-jours enjoys mounting individuals who are expecting

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some other loa to mount them. She then pretends to be that other loa, often causing real damage to the individual she's mounted because she does not possess the immunities that the loa she's impersonating does possess. Trois jours is the most hated of the Gu'aydé loa. She possess a gaze attack that does 2d4 damage to a single individual, and that individual must make a horror check. She can use this gaze attack only three times per day. On rare occasions, Trois Jours is specifically summoned and requires a bottle of rum and a large bowl full of red rose petals. She generally performs whatever task her summoner asks of her, but she makes sure that the summoner suffers as well.

Rattalon

Manifests as a man's shadow (can only manifest during the day or on a night with a full moon). Whether physically manifesting or mounting a human, Rattalon doesn't speak. He uses elaborate pantomime to communicate, and those accustomed to dealing with him can generally understand what he has to say. As mischievous as the other Gu'aydé loa, Rattalon enjoys disabling devices—jamming guns and cannons, stopping clocks, breaking wheel spokes, etc. Rattalon must have some familiarity with the item to know how to disable it effectively; when he encounters some new device, he often spends a great deal of time studying it to determine how to disable it. Rattalon takes no damage from metal weapons and only half damage from electricity-based attacks. Rattalon appears more frequently as his physical manifestation than he does by mounting a human. When he does mount a human, he requires that twelve clocks be present at the summoning, each set exactly to a different hour of the day. He consumes the hands of each of these clocks.

Ça-Balla

(Translates as “that which dangles”)

Manifests as a sixteen-year-old boy with a forked tongue. Ça-Balla is the loa of suicides. He is invoked primarily as an instrument of death in attempt to persuade others to commit suicide. Thus, typically his mount is not voluntary. At other times, however, he is invoked by an individual who is contemplating suicide, and he helps the person find the resolve to go through with his or her death wish. Ça-Balla can speak any language he has heard spoken, and he is immune to gaseous poisons. Anyone mounted by Ça-Balla who manages to survive the experience will have, for the rest of his or her life, scars on his or her neck like those left by a rough rope noose. Such persons are considered bad luck by most Haitians, and they are often chosen to become zombies

without other provocation. When summoned, Ça-Balla requires that his mount be wearing a noose around his or her neck and be drunk with rum or whiskey. Ça-Balla always allows his mount to remain aware while he or she is mounted; in the end, it is the mounted individual and not the loa who must commit the suicide.

PITRO LOA

Mackandal

Manifests as a giant mosquito. Mackandal represents the spirit of revolution on Haiti. He abhors any type of slavery and will punish slavers (or those who behave as slavers) by killing them, usually using fire. He abhors the creation and use of zombies. Mackandal takes no damage from weapons made of metal; he can be struck but such wounds, but the wounds they make immediately heal. Any opponent successfully attacked by Mackandal must save vs. poison or be stricken with yellow fever. Mackandal is immune to enchantment and charm spells. When summoned, Mackandal requires several bottles of rum and the recently culled heart of a *blanc*.

Ange-sou

(River of Blood)

Manifests as a wererat. Ange-sou is summoned by those who are planning to commit murder and feel they need aid in committing the crime. An individual mounted by Ange-sou will not be dismounted until he or she has committed a murder, although it need not be the murder originally intended by the summoner. The mounted individual may take on the half-human, half-bat hybrid form of the wererat; however, he or she cannot fly as he or she must maintain relatively consistent contact with the land or revert to human form. In her hybrid form, Ange-sou can infect victims with lycanthropy, although her preference is generally to kill them. When summoned, Ange-sou requires that the summoner and the intended mount be covered with human blood. She also requires a bottle of rum and a variety of fruits to satisfy her hunger.

Général Clairepel

Manifests as a light-skinned Haitian armed with a silver handgun (treat as a navy pistol) that never needs reloading. Perhaps the least aggressive of the Pitro loa, Général Clairepel is the protector of light-skinned

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Haitian children who are born to dark-skinned parents. Moreover, he is the protector of women who are unjustly accused of infidelity by their husbands, and he believes firmly that the best way to protect such a woman is to kill the husband painfully. The *général* is able to detect lie at will, and he is immune to all illusion, phantasm, and polymorph spells. When summoned, he requires that a loaded gun be present for his mount to wield. He also requires a bottle of rum; once he has mounted, he pours the rum into his pockets, which remain dry.

Omdantrou

(Man-in-the-Hole)

Manifests as half-wolf, half-human (treat as the half-wolf, half-human form of a werewolf with all accompanying abilities except shape-changing ability). Omdantrou aids those who are seeking vengeance, just or unjust. He is savage and brutal, and his summoning ceremony always involves the slow, methodical sacrifice of a large dog. He has been known to mount a human without being specifically summoned, as the carnage of war can also attract his attention. An individual mounted by Omdantrou can use the werewolf's singing ability, but Omdantrou usually prefers using more aggressive and sanguinary means to defeat his enemies.

LOA AND LE MOR ROUGE

Throughout its brief history, Haiti has been a cauldron of violence and hatred, first between the *noirs* and the European *blancs*, and more recently between the *noirs* and the *mulâtres*. Those scholars in a position to speculate believe such a situation delights the mysterious entity known as "the Red Death" (or "le Mor' Rouge" in Creole). The loa do not believe themselves susceptible to the monstrous and spontaneous mutations that affect humans who delve too much in the arcane and evil, but clearly the Red Death does have some influence over the loa. For instance, as was apparently the case in the destruction of A'ida-Ouédo, the Red Death is able to prevent a loa in physical form from returning to noncorporeal form. How or why this occurs has not been determined, as the Red Death has never been in the practice of revealing its motives; however, the other loa have taken notice of this threat and have reacted to it in different ways. The Rahda loa, particularly Damballah, A'ida-Ouédo's former mate, have sworn to avenge themselves by destroying the Red Death, but they are keenly aware they need to learn more about the nature of their enemy before they take action against it. The Pitro

loa are not overly concerned about vengeance, but they generally believe the Red Death is European in origin, that it came to Haiti with the hated *blancs*, and that its goal must be the enslavement of Haitians, so it should be destroyed. None of the Pitro loa have actually taken any action against the Red Death, but they all agree that they hate it. The Gu'aydé loa, who shed no tears when A'ida-Ouédo was destroyed, look upon *le Mor' Rouge* as a kindred spirit, although they realize it is quite powerful and not something they want to anger.

The truth of the matter is not well understood even by the loa themselves. The Red Death has been present in Haiti since the very beginnings of the Voodoo faith, carried there on the ships of the *blanc* slave traders. The loa exist as manifestations of the emotions of the Haitian people, and as such can be corrupted as the beliefs of their faithful are corrupted. With each *houngann* or *mambo* seduced into following the ways of the *bokor*, the peril the unwitting loas find themselves in grows in power. In fact, the more pessimistic mystic scholars believe it inevitable that, eventually, all of the loas will fall before the Red Death, just as the sidhe fell centuries ago.

Even further, these scholars claim the corruption is already well underway. Some believe that *le Mor' Rouge* is currently winding its way through the Pitro loa, but all agree that the Gu'aydé have been thoroughly corrupted by the evil of the Red Death, and may have always been so.

GLOSSARY

Astrale: The home of the loa. No human has ever visited the *astrale* and returned. For those DMs who own the AD&D *Shaman* accessory, the *astrale* is the Voodoo equivalent of the spirit world.

Azon: A calabash rattle that is the symbol of office for *bokors*, *hounganns*, and *mambos*. *Hounganns* and *mambos* typically possess a rattle made from a liana-grown calabash, so the hollowed gourd possess a natural handle. *Bokors* use tree-grown calabash gourds, and an artificial handle must be attached to them. The type of rattle being used is generally but not always an effective means of identifying the moral orientation of a Voodoo shaman.

Blancs: "Whites;" although the *noir* population of Haiti vastly outnumbered the *blanc* population in the 1700s, the *blancs* controlled the economic power in the land. Thus, they had access to better education and owned the land. The various wars that ravaged Haiti during the 1700s and 1800s were often waged under the battle cry, "*Tuez les blancs!*" ("Kill the Whites!"). By the 1890s, most of the *blancs* in Haiti

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had been killed or had escaped. Those that remained lived, generally, in the relative safety of cities such as Port-au-Prince or Gonaives.

Bokor: A Voodoo shaman who uses his or her powers for evil or selfish means; thus, one who has been corrupted by the Red Death.

le Bon Dieu: “The Good God;” the Christian god.

Choval: “Mount;” an individual who is to be or has been mounted by a loa.

Confiance: An apprentice to a *Houngann* or *Mambo*.

Drums: Drums used in Voodoo ceremonies are tall and thin. Three drums are used in Rahda ceremonies, two drums are used in Pitro ceremonies, and any number of drums may be used in Gu’aydé ceremonies. (The Gu’aydé loa enjoy cacophony.) The drums represent the element of water in the Voodoo ceremony.

Haiti: “Mountain land;” Haiti’s name is one of the few relics of the people who lived on the island before the Spaniards came to it. By the end of the 1700s, these people were essentially extinct, most of them having been killed by the Spaniards or the diseases the Europeans brought with them to Haiti.

Houngann: A male Voodoo shaman, typically devoted to one of the Rahda loa.

Houngann peristyle: Leader of the ritual chorus during a Voodoo ceremony. A female *houngann peristyle* serves a *houngann*, and a male *houngann peristyle* serves a *mambo*. Often these are married couples.

Houns: A member of the ritual chorus that participates in the Voodoo ceremony.

Hounsi bassile: Member of the Voodoo community who has not yet undergone the initiation process.

Hountorg’iers: Player of the drums during a Voodoo ceremony.

Lamp: A magical device that allows an individual to summon the power of a loa without the loa’s taking the individual as a mount. Typical lamps are the *traval lamp*, which increases its maker’s skills at his or her craft; the *lamp noir*, which is used to provide protection to the maker; the *charman’ lamp*, which acts as a love potion, and the *disastr’ lamp*, which is used to bring ruin upon the maker’s enemies.

Loa: A supernatural being given form by the emotional intensity of the *noirs* along with residual spirits of the original inhabitants of the land, who have come to be known as Tainos. The loa represents the element of spirit in the Voodoo ceremony.

Mambo: A female Voodoo shaman, typically devoted to one of the Rahda loa.

le Mor’ Rouge: “The Red Death;” a mysterious entity that many believe cultivates evil in Gothic Earth.

Mulâtres: “Mulattos;” Haitians of mixed White and Black genetic backgrounds. Some of these have light enough skin to pass as *blancs*. The educational opportunities available to the *blancs* were also, generally, available to the *mulâtres*, and when the *blancs* were removed from power, the *mulâtres* moved in to take economic and administrative control of the tiny nation. By the 1890s, “mulâtre” was becoming less of a racial distinction and more of a class distinction, as some *noirs* who had been able to get an education were becoming more powerful (particularly in the north), so that well-educated and wealthy *noirs* were coming to be referred to as *mulâtre* as well.

Noirs: “Blacks;” Making up the vast majority of the Haitian population, *noirs* were descended from the Africans who’d been brought to Haiti as slaves, generally by the Spanish or French. The bulk of the Haitian army in 1890 was comprised of *noirs*, and most of the secret societies throughout the country were comprised of *noirs*. Many members of the Haitian army had fought in the U.S. during the War of 1812 and the Civil War, so they were well-trained.

Ongan: A short, slightly curved piece of metal that resembles a small, rounded spade. It is struck with a metal rod to produce a high-pitched, piercing tone. The *ongan* represents the element of earth in the Voodoo ceremony.

Ongantier: Player of the *ongan* during a Voodoo ceremony.

Oumphort: The primary site of the Voodoo ritual, consisting of the *peristyle* and the *santé-santé*.

Peristyle: A large area, part of the *oumphort* where ceremonies and rituals are performed, where the ill are treated, and where community meetings are conducted. The *peristyle* is usually open to the sky, with the remainder covered by a canvas or wooden roof. The *peristyle* is surrounded by a low wall, generally four feet tall.

la Place: The master or mistress of ceremonies for the Voodoo rites.

Poteau-mitan: The centerpost of the *peristyle*. The top of the *poteau-mitan* is called the “center of the sky,” and the bottom is called the “center of hell.” The post is square and set in a circular base of concentric steps made of layered cement. The post is devoted to Papa Legba. Lit candles that surround the *poteau-mitan* represent the element of fire in the Voodoo ceremony.

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Reine silence: Woman who ensures that there is silence when appropriate during a Voudou ceremony and who removes anyone who is disruptive.

Reposoir: A tree in the yard of the *oumphort* that represents the permanent home of the primary loa of the *oumphort*. A tree-snake usually lives in the limbs of the tree, a nonpoisonous snake in the case of Rahda loa, but poisonous snakes in the case of Pitro loa. The *reposoir* of a Gu'aydé loa typically contains an aggressive, long-billed bird.

Santé-santé: A square, windowless building adjoining the *peristyle*. It is divided into several rooms, each of which is devoted to a particular function, such as the initiation process.

Secret societies: Organizations formed throughout Haiti usually by slaves who had escaped to freedom. Typically, these organizations control a declared area of the rural country, generally including at least one centrally located town. These societies act as police within their areas, patrolling particularly at night to maintain peace and safety for the inhabitants. Members of rival societies encountered during the night are marked for death. Generally lawful in orientation, the personality of these organizations strongly varies with the personality of their leaders.

Tainos: When Columbus landed in northern Haiti in 1492, most of the inhabitants of the land were Tainos, a subgroup of the Arawak people that inhabited various of the Caribbean islands. Initially seen as “charming Indians,” the Tainos soon earned the enmity of the Spanish, particularly after the Tainos took revenge on the Spaniards after some of them had raped and killed several Tainos women. Slaughter by the Spanish as well as diseases from which they had no defenses drove the Tainos essentially to extinction by the mid 1600s. Their influence on subsequent Haitian development was minimal, although they did provide the land its name and also introduced the Europeans to barbecue and hammocks.

Triangle: A thick, metal instrument struck with a metal rod. Typically, it hangs from the roof of the *peristyle*, although it may instead be built into the wall itself. The triangle represents the element of air in the Voudou ceremony.

Triangler: Player of the triangle during a Voudou ceremony.

Ventailleur: Individual responsible for acquiring any animals which are to be sacrificed or otherwise used in a Voudou ceremony.



MARS ATTACKS GOTHIC EARTH

Inspired by the Works of H. G. Wells

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... across the gulf of space, minds that are to our minds as ours are to those of the beasts that perish, intellects vast and cool and unsympathetic, regarded this earth with envious eyes, and slowly drew their plans against us.

—H. G. Wells
The War of the Worlds (1898)

For centuries they watched us from their strange, crystalline towers on the Red Planet, our benevolent superiors. Then they discovered the presence of an evil force, a corrupting agent, on our world. They are the foes of the Great Enemy, the leaders of our struggle, and they have decreed that the struggle must end now. They are our saviors in the depths of space. They will destroy our enemy and our pathetic kind! We must rejoice!

—Jacques Cheval
French Mystic and member
of the Six-Fingered Hand.

Just as the 1890s began, Herbert George Wells came into possession of the plans for an operational time machine. The circumstances leading to this event were later well documented by Wells himself, although most readers had no idea that his novel, *The Time Machine*, was based on factual events.

As a boundless optimist in human nature, Wells soon constructed the time machine and visited future eras of the Gothic Earth, hoping to marvel in the spectacles of future mankind. What he found was horror. The human race destroyed by war, or existing as brains floating in great vats, existing alone on a barren planet, or the species split into mindless nymphs and subhuman ghouls. Every time Wells visited one of these futures, he would return to the present in a state of shock, and do all he could to warn mankind of the fate it was marching toward.

And to his wonderment, he had an effect. Every time he couched his terrifying futures in just enough fiction to find wide acceptance among his readers, the futures Herbert visited would *change*. Somehow, in some way he didn't quite understand, making the present aware of the fates which awaited them would change the flow of time just enough to prevent the future he had visited from ever taking place. But, like the many-headed hydra, for every terrible fate mankind avoided, another would take its place.

The extermination of thousands and the destruction of London at the turn of the century by a mere fifty alien machines was but one of the futures Herbert visited, and the nearest. *The War of the Worlds* was published just a few years before the invasion was due to commence; Wells himself saw little hope of preventing it.

Yet, somehow, in some way he did not understand, Wells stopped it. Somehow, the publication of one little "scientific romance" stopped the onslaught of alien

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horror before it began. But what new future had risen to replace it?

That is for the Dungeon Master to decide.

MARTIAN HISTORY

The Martian civilization was old when the civilization of mankind was young. Like the Gothic Earth, Gothic Mars was a vigorous and vibrant world, awash in wondrous magic. Martian physiology was not identical to that of humans even then, but the similarity was there. While the primitive inhabitants of Earth were building ziggurats, the Martians were starting to explore their neighboring planets. This was done with their magical *Scrying Stones*, fired through space towards their distant neighbors. Some of these *Scrying Stones* were sent to Earth, where the primitive native species that found them considered them gifts from the gods.

For centuries, the Martians watched the human civilization develop, and they watched the humans learn the arts of sorcery. And then, one day, thousands of years ago, the Martians peered through their *Stones*, and they saw something new on the Gothic Earth. A force of pure, formless evil, which corrupted all that it touched. A terrible evil which insinuated itself into the magical fabric of the Earth even as the Martians watched. One day, the humans would call this force the Red Death. Martians have always known it as the Great Enemy.

The Martians were horrified, and declared that all connections with the Earth must be severed, all *Scrying Stones* destroyed. But just as the Martians had looked down at the Earth, the Great Enemy had looked back at them. Even then, there was an element of paranoia in the Martian psyche. Slowly, they were shaping their world to best serve their species, exterminating dangerous creatures, and eliminating disease. The Great Enemy sensed this underlying paranoia, and flowed to their world through the mystical link provided by a single *Scrying Stone*, and the dark sentiments in the heart of a single Martian philosopher. Thus, even before the Red Death had reached Asia, it had stretched across the void of space.

In their panic, the Martians abandoned magic entirely, turning solely to their technology. Thus the vast majority of their race never noticed as the Great Enemy corrupted their world even more quickly than its progression on Earth. Those who knew of the Great Enemy's presence were those already corrupted.

GOthic MARS TODAY

Thousands of years have passed since the Great Enemy spread across Mars, and the Angry Red Planet has been completely altered. Magic still exists there, but has been

corrupted just as on Earth. Most Martians have completely forgotten the magical history of their ancestors, having tied themselves ever and ever tighter into technological advancement. The paranoia of the Martian race has been heightened, and over the centuries they have gradually eliminated every possible threat from the face of their world. And when all the threats were gone, the Martians eliminated all that which was not of immediate use.

Mars is now home to a mere two species of animal life, and a handful of plants. The animals are the Martians themselves and the source of their sustenance. The plants, of which the Red Weed is most prevalent, are allowed to exist only because they regulate Mars' thinning atmosphere, just as plants do on Earth. All other forms of life are gone. Microorganisms were eliminated entirely so long ago that, until recently, the Martians didn't even remember their existence.

Mars is dying. Killed, one species at a time, by the Martians themselves, in the name of self-preservation. They have abandoned the secrets of magic, and they have forgotten the existence of disease—but they still remember the Great Enemy. And now the time has come to confront it.

REASONS FOR THE INVASION

H. G. Wells speculated that the Martians invaded the Earth because their world was cooling, and thus losing the ability to support life. This theory has some basis in truth, as seen above, but is not entirely correct, having been founded more in the theories of Martian life posited by astronomers like the esteemed Percival Lowell than in any personal knowledge of Martian society. The true reason for the Martian invasion may never be known to the people of Gothic Earth, but the DM can take his pick from either theory below:

- ◆ Gothic Mars is dying, as humans have speculated, and the Martians need to find a new home. Unfortunately, the only other world they know of which can support life is Earth, home to the vilest force of corruption they have ever known. Thus the Martians do attack the Earth—but not to destroy it. In fact, they come to save it—and all of existence—from the Great Enemy, by destroying all that which it has corrupted. Unfortunately, in their eyes, all of mankind has been corrupted by the Great Enemy; all are servants of the Evil.
- ◆ The Martians have recently rediscovered the presence of the Great Enemy on their own world. Despite the wave of panic which has shaken their paranoid society, the Martians have also discovered how the Great Enemy has been seeping into their

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world: the *Scrying Stones*. (See “Devices and Weaponry,” below.) Apparently, not all of the *Stones* were destroyed; some were hidden away by the Great Enemy’s early Martian minions. To their horror, the Martians have discovered that even those *Stones* which were destroyed so long ago have maintained the magical link with their partners on Earth. Thus, the Martians have been sent to Earth to find and destroy the *Scrying Stones* scattered across that world, and sever those connections forever.

Either way, the Martians have come to save their world from the Great Enemy, and possibly even to save the Gothic Earth from itself. Sadly for the people of Earth, the Martians view humans as a primitive species of dubious intelligence, a lesser species by every meaning of the word. To make matters worse, the Martians believe the Great Enemy exists *within* humanity—that it can only be destroyed by destroying every being it has corrupted. Thus, in the battle to destroy the Red Death, the human population of the Earth is considered entirely expendable.

MARTIAN BIOLOGY

What follows is a brief treatise on every species of Martian life known to exist.

MARTIANS, GOTHIC

	Explorer	Philosopher
Climate/Terrain	Any	Any
Frequency	Very Rare	*
Organization	Unit	Solitary
Activity Cycle	Any	Any
Diet	Blood	Blood
Intelligence	Genius (17-18)	Supra-genius (19-20)
Treasure	Special	Special
Alignment	N	N(E)
No. Appearing	1-10	1
Armor Class	9	10
Movement	6	3, Fl 18 (D) **
Hit Dice	2+2	1+1
THAC0	18	19
No. of Attacks	2 or 1	1
Damage/Attack	1d3+1(x2) or By Weapon	By Weapon
Special Attacks	Technology	Possible Spell Use
Special Defenses	See below	See below
Magic Resistance	Nil	Nil
Size	L (6' long)	L
Morale	Elite (13)	Steady (12)
XP Value	120	65 175 if spell caster

* Martian Philosophers have never been known to journey to Earth. If one does appear, the DM must devise the reasons for its arrival.

** Cannot glide in Earth’s gravity.

When Imhotep released the Red Death into the Gothic Earth, the Martians were already an ancient race, and through the centuries, the Martians have used their technology to hasten their own evolution. Just as they have done with their world, the Martians have reshaped themselves to perfectly suit their purposes. Those parts of their physiology which are required have been made more powerful; those which are not needed no longer exist.

During the course of their scientifically guided evolution, the Martians have split into two distinct “races,” although the Martians themselves think of these divisions as something more akin to social classes. The far more common of these we designate as “Explorers.” These Explorers form the spearhead of the Martian invasion force; a single Explorer inside one of their massive Death Machines can decimate an entire city in mere hours.

The far rarer Philosophers are the leaders of the Martian race. To date, they have not personally participated in the invasion of Earth, but they are the ones who arranged for the attack. They are the most intelligent of the Martian races, but due to their widespread corruption by the Great Enemy, also the most warlike. Fortunately, they are the most fragile as well, and this was the main reason they did not leave their world to attack Earth.

Of all the species native to Earth, a Martian Explorer most closely resembles an octopus. It is, quite literally, a head with tentacles. Its body is covered in a glistening, pulsing gray hide resembling wet leather. This bulk has a three foot diameter, and can range from five to seven feet in length. Perhaps 90% of this body is taken up by the creature’s brain. A single, large tympanic membrane at the rear of the body serves as an ear. The Martian has an approximation of a face at the front of its body; this “face” consists of two large, dark, lidless eyes, and a quivering wedge-shaped mouth which is used solely for the purposes of breathing. Martian eyesight is excellent, although they cannot see the blue portion of the visible spectrum of light.

Sixteen slender, whip-like tentacles are bunched around the Martian’s mouth in two bunches of eight each. These tentacles can reach ten feet in length, and are prehensile and quite dexterous. Although Martians are capable of walking on these tentacles on their home planet, in Earth’s greater gravity the Martians are reduced to dragging themselves along the ground in slow, pained movements. If the Martians were not hyper-oxygenated by Earth’s richer atmosphere, it is likely they would be unable to move their bear-sized bulks at all.

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Other than those features already mentioned, the bodies of those Martians known as Explorers also include a heart, lungs, and nothing else. Philosophers can be distinguished by their slightly shorter tentacles, and by the two large, wing-like membranes which they can extend to ride on the Martian winds. On Earth, it is likely Philosophers would be unable to glide without some form of magical assistance.

Martians have been known to make strange, “hooting” noises from time to time. Although some humans have thought this represented the Martian language, these noises are nothing more than a side-effect of the Martian breathing process. Martians in fact communicate via an innate, nonmagical form of telepathy. Martian telepathy is limited to line-of-sight, and it is not known if they can mentally communicate with any species other than their own without magical aid—or indeed if they would bother to try.

Combat

Monstrous as they appear, a single unarmed Martian is not much of a match for a single human. It’s in their armaments that the Martians become deadly. For this reason, Martians are rarely encountered outside the mechanical bodies they create for themselves—bodies such as the dreaded Death Machines. Specifics on the bizarre Martian weaponry can be found below.

Should a Martian Explorer be forced to defend itself unarmed, it can lash out with its whip-like tentacles. Both bunches of eight tentacles can attack once per round, using a single attack roll for each bunch. With a successful attack, the tentacles grapple the Martian’s foe, strangling the victim for 1d3+1 points of damage each. However, if a Martian is forced to engage in this sort of physical struggle for a full turn, it will collapse from exhaustion, unable to move for a full turn while it recovers.

The Philosophers are weaker than their Explorer kin, and thus cannot even muster the feeble attack listed above. However, roughly one Philosopher in five is capable of spell use; these are usually Mystics of level 2-8. To date, no Philosopher Adepts are known to exist. Due to the endemic corruption of the Red Death in their world, most (about 80%) of all Philosopher Mystics are of an Evil (either Lawful or Neutral Evil) alignment.

All Martians share one great weakness: As all microorganisms were wiped out on Mars millennia ago, Martians have no natural resistance whatsoever to disease or bacteria. The first wave of Martians sent to Earth was completely unprepared for this invisible menace, and literally rotted to death within a few weeks of their arrival.

Since that terrible failure, the Martians have been experimenting with vaccines to Earth’s diseases and toxins, to mixed results. Whenever a Martian is exposed to a source of disease or poison, roll 1d6. On an Odd roll, the Martian is totally immune to the disease or poison. On an Even roll, the Martian has no resistance to the attack at all, automatically failing all saving throws and suffering the worst possible effect. This result will then be constant for all Martians of any one invasion force, but may change from invasion force to invasion force, at the DM’s discretion.

Habitat/Society

The current state of Mars has already been discussed, and will not be repeated here.

Martians are sent to Earth in units of five Explorers; not coincidentally, this is the standard crew capacity of the massive cylinders the Martians use to travel from world to world. However, more than one cylinder will typically be sent at a time (up to ten cylinders in a wave), and once on Earth, different units will cooperate freely with one another to coordinate construction, attacks, and defense.

Once on Earth, Martians work around the clock to build and maintain their technology, or to conquer and defend their territory. It would seem that Martians have no need for sleep.

All Explorers must answer to the dictates of the Philosophers, and those on Earth at least are unswervingly loyal to their cause. However, the vast majority of Martians are unaware that a minority of the Philosopher class have continued to practice the arts of mysticism, banned in ages long past. If they could only be convinced that these Philosophers, who are now the very leaders calling for the invasion of Earth, are responsible for the continuing corruption of their world, their society would likely collapse into civil war, and Earth might hear of them no more.

Ecology

Martians shape the ecology to suit them, just as they have shaped themselves over time into a state of what they consider physical perfection. All that does not demonstrably support Martian life is seen as a potential threat, and thus is to be eliminated.

Martians have no concept of sex or gender, and are still studying the differences between males and females of the human species. Martians themselves reproduce through budding. Each new Martian is a perfect copy of its parent in miniature, and is “born” with a level of intelligence perhaps equal to an eight-year-old child. However, it then takes years to develop into adulthood

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and must be educated by its elders, just as it is with humans. Martians spawned on Earth may roll 1d6 to test for their resistance to disease, as above. On a roll of 1-5, they inherit their parent's immunity or vulnerability to disease, whichever the case may be. On a roll of 6, the young Martian has developed a limited resistance to Earth's microorganisms; it can make saving throws to resist these toxins, just as human characters do, but must still apply a -3 penalty to any applicable saving throws.

The Martian digestive system has atrophied into nonexistence. To sustain themselves, Martians use small siphoning devices to draw the blood from other creatures and then inject those nutrients directly into their own circulatory systems. Many have pointed to this vampiric characteristic as a sure sign of the Martians' evil nature, but in truth it is simply an evolutionary trait, no more evil in itself than a man who eats steak.

On their home planet, the Martians breed a humanoid species (known only as "Food") to supply them with the blood they require. On Earth, Martians seem to be able to survive on the blood of any warm-blooded creature, but have shown a definite preference for humans. A sign of their malevolence? Do humans supply them with more nutrients than they can acquire elsewhere? Or do the Martians simply equate humans with the manlike animals they herded on Mars? The truth is known only to the Martians.

Perhaps the saddest part of the Martian's entire situation is that, although they may be literally bloodthirsty as a race, their attitudes are not. They are entirely inhuman, but they are not typically warmongers taking delight in the destruction of those weaker than themselves. They see their attacks as no more evil than a human would think himself evil for removing a wasp's nest from his home. The Martians have simply allowed their Philosophers, and through them the Red Death, to turn them against humanity, and in ravaging the ecology of Gothic Mars, against themselves.

THE FOOD

The sole other species of animal life on Mars, these creatures are raised by the Martians like cattle to serve as their source of blood. These creatures, unnervingly enough, are humanoid in shape, standing about six feet in height. Perhaps then it should not be taken as coincidence that the Martians so often think of humans as nothing more than food. Unlike humans, the "Food" have rounded heads with large, flinty eyes, and are only of animal intelligence. They are weakly muscled, and their siliceous skeletons cannot withstand Earth's gravity; thus Gothic Earth heroes will never encounter one alive, even though the Martian invaders invariably bring along a few specimens as a food supply during

their interplanetary voyage. Should one of these manlike creatures be animated into the ranks of the undead, it would have abilities equal to that of a Boneless (*Ravenloft MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix III*).

THE RED WEED

The Red Weed is supplied for the sake of completeness; although not exactly inoffensive, it is far from dangerous. This plant was carried from Mars to Earth in the same cylinders which brought the invaders; it spreads like kudzu vines, but its wide fronds are more reminiscent of ferns. It is a deep red color, as are all other known forms of Martian plant life.

Whether this plant was introduced as a form of terraforming, or if its seeds were brought to our world merely by accident, the Red Weed spreads quickly in Earth's lush environment. The speed of its growth is equivalent to the amount of water available; in relatively dry environments, the Weed might grow only a foot a day, while a wide river could be completely choked overnight.

Fortunately for the Earth's ecology, the Red Weed is every bit as vulnerable to microorganisms as the Martians themselves. When a Martian cylinder reaches the Earth, roll 2d20; this is the number of days the Red Weed will survive before it succumbs to blight and rots away completely. During that time, however, it spreads like wildfire, and can even make roads and rivers impassable.

MARTIAN TECHNOLOGY

Technology is the true heart of Martian society, and of the terror they cause. They have a tool for every need, and their technological advancement is unimaginably advanced in comparison to that of the Gothic Earth. The Martians wear most of their mechanisms, most notoriously their Death Machines, like battle armor. Some have commented that these automatons move in a much more fluid, lifelike manner than the Martians themselves. It has even been speculated that these machines now truly represent the Martians' bodies—that the Martians are merely brains who switch mechanical bodies to suit their needs as casually as a man changes his shirt.

TRANSPORTATION

Most Martian "vehicles," such as their Death Machines and Handling Devices, are really better thought of as mechanical bodies constructed to serve specific needs. A few Martian transportation methods do lend themselves

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more readily to the common conception of a vehicle, however.

Cylinder

Martian space travel is achieved via the use of a gigantic cannon, a machine thought to be larger than Earth's largest volcano. This cannon launches the Martian spacecraft known simply as Cylinders, and can fire a maximum of one such Cylinder per day. A Cylinder is essentially a massive, hollow, padded bullet. Each "bullet" has a crew of five Martian Explorers, two or three Food creatures, and carries enough materials to construct five Death Machines and one Handling Device upon landing. Most Cylinders contain assorted additional tools and weaponry as well.

All Cylinders fired as a single invasion wave will land on Earth within 100 miles of each other, although their specific landing points within that diameter appear fairly random. The Martians have never been known to fire more than ten Cylinders in a single wave (this taking ten days). This may represent a limitation of their technology.

A Cylinder resembles a huge, green comet upon entering Earth's atmosphere, and typically buries most of its length on impact. For this reason, exact measurements of the size of a Martian Cylinder have never been taken. The flat rear surface of a Cylinder, however, has been measured to have a ninety foot diameter.

Building a space cannon on Earth is beyond the ability of the Martian invaders. Once here, they have no way to return to their homes. This is entirely deliberate; their leaders do not want to risk any chance of Martians carrying the taint of the Red Death back home with them. For the Martian invaders, the destruction of the Great Enemy is a suicide mission.

Flying Machine

It takes a Martian invasion force several weeks to construct a Flying Machine and render it operational. In fact, it only takes a few days to construct, but the Martians then need extensive testing to adjust the Flying Machine to Earth's heavier gravity.

A Flying Machine resembles nothing so much as a massive "flying wing." It soars in near-total silence, and is large enough to transport a single Death Machine, or even up to fifty Martians—an entire invasion wave. Flying Machines carry no weaponry, but their armor is equivalent to that of a Death Machine (see below).

DEVICES & WEAPONRY

The Martians have developed an endless variety of tools and machines to serve them, some of which can even operate in an autonomous fashion—such as the digging mechanism the Martians put to use once they crawl from their cylinders. Left alone, these mechanisms will scoop up soil and any other matter they come across, refining these raw materials into rods of the special alloy the Martians use to build their more complex devices—or simply to build their strange shelters. A selection of the most notorious Martian devices follows.

Martian technology is built for use by Martian physiology, and is the product of an inherently alien mind—for instance, none of their technological wonders offer any evidence that the Martians ever developed the wheel. Using any Martian technology requires a specific proficiency to do so (for instance, a Heat Ray weapon proficiency)—and no human has ever been taught such a skill. Anyone attempting to use Martian devices without the appropriate proficiency has a 50% chance of accidentally targeting themselves with the device (a potentially lethal mistake); if they do not target themselves, then they fail to trigger the device at all.

Death Machine

Surely the most feared of all the Martian devices, this aptly-named creation is a towering, ninety-foot high tripod. The central, dome-like body serves as the Martian's cockpit, and is mounted on three long legs which drive themselves into the earth like tent poles, supporting the Machine as it runs along like a spinning barstool. Death Machines are startlingly agile, often able to dodge incoming artillery fire, and, when running over clear terrain, capable of matching speeds with a steam locomotive. The alloy used to construct a Death Machine has a shining appearance not unlike aluminum, but puffs of green smoke shoot from the joints of the Machine's legs whenever it moves.

Three long, dangling tentacles also emerge from the bottom of the central body, and each has an equivalent Strength score of 19. The Machine can use these tentacles to wield their Black Smoke cannons (see below), or to snatch up victims, either dashing them against nearby objects for 2d10 points of damage, or placing them in the Machine's large, rear-mounted "basket." The Martians will use the later tactic when gathering humans for later use as food or fodder for their experiments.

Mounted on a jointed "arm" atop the central dome is the lens which fires the Death Machine's feared Heat Ray. The firing range of this Heat Ray is limited only by line of sight, and has been known to strike targets up to

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two miles away. However, due to the limits of the Martian pilot at the controls, potential targets receive a +1 to their saving throws for every 500 feet between them and the firing Death Machine. (Specifics on the Heat Ray follow below.)

Death Machine armor is particularly resilient—nothing short of explosive force can so much as scratch it. Specifically, Death Machine armor absorbs the first 10 points of damage taken from any single attack, and can do so indefinitely (thus, an attack causing 11 points of damage causes only 1; any less damage ends up causing none at all). The central body (including the Heat Ray) and the three legs must be targeted separately (or roll 1d4 to determine hit location if the attacker does not specify). Each section of the Death Machine can withstand 60 points of damage before it is destroyed.

Martian Death Machine: AC 3; MV 100; HD 10; hp 60 (per location); THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg see below; SA Heat Ray; SD armor absorption; SZ G (90'); XP 3,000.

Despite the many options a Death Machine has when it comes to extermination, in each round a Machine can “only” attack once, be it with a tentacle, Heat Ray, or Black Smoke. Although a Machine’s legs can topple trees and crush houses, the Martians have never been known to purposefully attack with these appendages.

The Martian at the controls can be individually targeted, although this requires substantial penalties: -4 for a called shot, and additional penalties for range (recall that the Martian is nearly 90 feet above the ground). Also keep in mind that, if a potential attacker can see the Martian pilot, then the Death Machine’s Heat Ray is likely aimed directly at him.

If a Machine is disabled (one or more legs destroyed), other Death Machines in the area will cease their attacks to carry their fallen comrade back into secured territory (requiring at least two Machines to carry one) to commence repairs. If the Martian pilot is killed before the Machine is disabled, the Death Machine will flail about like a headless chicken, crushing all before it in a random path of destruction for 1d6 rounds before it topples over. Just hope the Heat Ray isn’t in use when that happens...

Death Machines also possess a few other devices used in non-lethal capacities. The Machine is limited by the pilot’s vision—the Martians do not use devices such as infrared or radar. Thus it is much easier to avoid a Machine’s attention at night. For this reason, the Heat Ray lens is also capable of emitting a beam of normal light, not unlike a normal spotlight. However, should the Martian spot a potential target within that beam, the mere

flip of a switch can turn that light into the withering destruction of the Heat Ray.

Death Machines also carry foghorn-like sirens, which the Martians use to communicate when they cannot directly see each other, and steam jets, which are used to disperse clouds of Black Smoke.

Handling Device

Much smaller and less dangerous than the Death Machine, the crab-like Handling Device measures only 20 feet wide by 10 feet long. Mounted on the front of the Handling Device are dozens of retractable tentacles, levers, bars, and other tools the Martian inserted into the controls can use to manipulate objects or build machines. Although the Handling Machine does not bear any weaponry, it can extend its tentacles up to thirty feet, and can grasp objects (including struggling humans) with a 19 Strength. Use the Martian’s THAC0 to determine if the Device grabs its target.

Heat Ray

The terrifyingly lethal Martian Heat Ray comes in two varieties. The first is the large weapon mounted on top of a Death Machine; this can fire a ray of intense heat in up to a 240° arc, and requires no roll to hit. Anything caught within this sweeping path of destruction must make an immediate save vs. breath weapon (or Magical Fire for inanimate objects). If the target’s saving throw is successful, it “only” takes 3d8 points of damage, indicating that it was somehow able to hurl itself just out of the path of the beam, or that it was able to hide behind heavy cover. Anything failing the saving throw is instantly immolated. Wood bursts into flame, brick shatters, metal melts, gunpowder explodes, water instantly boils into scalding steam—and people are incinerated where they stand.

Fortunately, the Heat Ray cannot fire directly below the central body of the Death Machine, nor can it fire directly behind the Machine’s current facing. Ultimately, all that gives a target a chance against this terrible weapon is the likelihood that he will fall beneath the Martian’s notice. Death Machines typically only fire their Heat Rays on three types of target: 1. Large targets like buildings or vehicles. 2. Large crowds of people. 3. Anything that attacks them first. Martians have dietary reasons for not cooking every human in sight; this may be a target’s saving grace.

Some time after arriving on Earth, the Martians demonstrated that they had also developed a personal version of their Heat Ray, a thin tube a Martian can carry in its tentacles. Thankfully, increased portability also means lessened power. Personal Heat Rays strike just

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like firearms, and inflict 3d6 points of damage with a successful hit. Targets can dive for cover by making successful saves vs. breath weapon, as above; in this case, a successful save results in half damage. Personal Heat Rays seem to be able to fire about ten charges before the Martian has to replace the special lens on the tube (this takes one round).

Black Smoke

Decades before humans will develop similar weaponry themselves, the Martians have demonstrated the use of a lethal form of poison gas known as Black Smoke. The original version of Black Smoke consists of large tubes which the Death Machines would carry with their tentacles, not unlike a human wielding a firearm. These tubes can fire up to six grenade-like projectiles which rupture on impact, spewing forth a deadly black cloud of up to 300 feet in diameter. This vapor does not behave like normal smoke; after the initial round of disbursement, it settles into low-lying areas, never rising more than fifty feet above the ground. In addition, any contact with water (including steam) instantly reduces the vapor to a harmless, gray, sediment-like residue. Lastly, unless dispersed by winds, this lethal cloud will hang in the air for 2d20 hours.

A character within the area of effect when a Black Smoke canister ruptures, but at least fifty feet off the ground (perhaps atop a hill, or on the upper floors of a tall building) must only make a single save vs. poison at +4 to avoid the effects before the Black Smoke settles down. Martians remain safe in their Death Machines, towering ninety feet in the air, and will not hesitate to fire Black Smoke directly at their own feet.

Anyone actually caught within the cloud of Black Smoke (or who enters it before it is dispersed) has their visibility reduced to zero for as long as they remain within the cloud. In addition, they must make a save vs. poison *each round* they remain within the cloud; any failed saving throws mean the Black Smoke has been inhaled. Any inhaled Black Smoke instantly destroys the ability of a victim's lungs to absorb oxygen—the victim immediately begins to suffocate (as per the rules for Holding Your Breath in the *Player's Handbook*). There is no known scientific cure for this lethal effect, but the Mystic spell *neutralize poison* can save the target if cast in time. Of course, both victim and caster must first be out of the cloud for this to help.

The only saving grace of Black Smoke is that it is every bit as lethal to the Martians as to humans; thus, they tend to only let clouds hang for a few minutes before wading in with their Death Machines and rendering the Smoke harmless with their steam jets. However...

Black Smoke, Improved

Leave it to Martian ingenuity to increase their already lethal killing possibilities. Some time after the initial invasion attempt, this deadly vapor came into use; it is thought the Martians developed it through human experimentation. Thankfully, Improved Black Smoke appears to be much more difficult to manufacture than its more common predecessor, making it useful only as a personal weapon. This is a simple, grenade like device that is very effective against humans and terrestrial life forms, but merely a nuisance to the Martians themselves.

These weapons are small canisters that, when hurled, rupture on impact spewing forth a deadly black cloud. A single canister can create a cloud of roughly 20' x 20' x 10', which can hang in the air for 2d6 rounds before dissipating. Those in this cloud are blinded for the duration; each round they must also save vs. poison, or suffer 1d6 damage from the deadly toxin. If the save is made, they lose but one hit point per round.

Bolt Gun

These personal devices are rarely seen off Mars. They fire bolts of super-heated metal at tremendous velocities. They inflict 2d8 damage (and 8's are re-rolled just as 6's are with normal guns), and they hold 4 shots. They are otherwise identical to Navy Pistols in stats. These are the favored weapons of the Philosophers.

Scrying Stones

These odd, ancient items appear to be large, rounded gemstones, and are a remnant of an era of Mars' history long since passed. Closer examination reveals them to be glass-like ellipses with strange scrollwork engraved inside. They are constructed in mystically-linked pairs. Holding a *Scrying Stone* and gazing at it in an unfocused manner (generally requiring a meditation skill or similar proficiency) allows the holder to see through the companion stone, with a 360° viewing radius. The holder can also cast line-of-sight spells through the link between the stones, no matter what the distance between them.

The Martians produced these stones millennia ago, launching one of each pair off into space on random trajectories while imbedding the others into the buildings on their world. When the Great Enemy was detected on Earth, the Martians ordered all the *Stones* be destroyed, but a few were secreted away by the first of the Red Death's Martian minions, and have been kept in use ever since.

Optionally, destroying a single *Scrying Stone* does not sever the mystical link between the location of that

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stone and its partner; to completely sever this link, both stones must be destroyed, and it is to this end that the Martians have come to Earth. The peoples of Gothic Earth's ancient history who found these "thunderstones" soon discovered they granted visions of higher beings (in fact, telepathic messages sent by the Martian philosophers), and considered the stones holy relics. Today, the few remaining stones have been scattered across the globe; many are languishing in the storage cellars of the world's leading museums.

USING THE MARTIAN MENACE IN A GOTHIC EARTH CAMPAIGN

So, which future will rise to take the place of that depicted in H. G. Wells' *War of the Worlds*? That depends entirely on how the DM wishes to use Mars in his campaign.

WAR OF THE WORLDS

This would follow the story of the novel fairly faithfully. When *War of the Worlds* was serialized, most publications changed the events to place them in their hometowns; Orson Welles will repeat this tactic in his 1938 radio drama by moving the invasion to New Jersey. Thus it's perfectly acceptable to transfer the invasion to anywhere you choose.

The invasion would begin with a series of ten flashes being observed on the surface of Mars over the course of ten days. The scientific community would debate this for a time, considering the possibility of massive volcanic activity on the Red Planet. Then, just as the news is dying down, the cylinders start dropping from space, again at the rate of about one a day. About a day after a cylinder crashes, the Martians emerge. About a day after that, they finish constructing the first of their Death Machines. Black Smoke follows as the invasion progresses, and the heroes must battle for their own survival; not just against the merciless, exterminating Death Machines, but against the collapse of society that spreads in its wake. Whether or not the Martians are ultimately defeated by the common cold is for the DM to decide...

MARTIANS AMONG US

The Martians are on Earth—but they would prefer to keep their activities a secret. It's possible the original Invasion did take place, but in a far less visible location than the London of Wells' novel, and various forces—be

it the government or the qabals—covered up the event to avoid widespread panic. Learning from the failure of their initial invasion, the Martians have learned from their mistakes—and are trying new, subtler tactics.

This plot line perhaps fits best into the canon MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH setting, since it does not involve the majority of the world's population being aware of the existence of alien invaders. Instead, this would become a covert struggle, a campaign in the "alien conspiracy" genre like the *War of the Worlds* TV show or *The X-Files*.

The Martians would operate in secret, experimenting on humans in an ongoing attempt to protect themselves from the twin threats of the Great Enemy and microorganisms. Meanwhile, other clandestine groups would be involved with the encroaching Martian invasion as foes or allies. For example, members of the Brotherhood of Alchemæ might be thirsting to get their hands on the wondrous Martian technology—and might not care what sort of Faustian bargains they would have to make for access to those secrets.

But the Brotherhood's selfish desires pale before those of the Martians' true servants: the qabalists of the Six-Fingered Hand. After the shattering of the Defiance, a group of its most conservative members fled to Rome—and there came into the possession of a *Scrying Stone*. The highly advanced beings which communicated with them through this stone taught them a great deal about the Red Death, and that it *must* be destroyed, no matter what the cost—even if the cost was the Earth itself. Rallying to this new cause, the qabal included the (at the time) near-human hand of their Martian masters in their symbol—and has continued to serve the Martian cause ever since.

FROM THE ASHES

The Invasion happened in the past, and most of the Martians were wiped out by illness. Most but not all. The PCs must help to rebuild from the destruction the Martian Invasion wrought, facing not only the Red Death and its minions, but the disease-resistant Martian survivors—and their reinforcements—as well.

RETRIBUTION

This can be married with one of the above plot lines. Someone finds a method of sending humans to Mars, perhaps using the *Scrying Stones*. The PCs are then thrown to Mars, where they must deal not only with the Martians in the seat of their power, but a world entirely corrupted by the Red Death as well. This is probably the only adventure in which PCs would interact directly with the Philosophers. ☠

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TOME OF MAGIC RULES

FOR THE RED DEATH

A Masque of the Red Death Rules Expansion

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A successful campaign set on Gothic Earth relies heavily on the mood created by the Dungeon Master and the players. The idea is to create an imaginary world that reflects life in the Victorian 1890s by incorporating the elements found in the horror literature of that era, or from later works set in that time period. (Other genres, including science fiction and mystery, can also add flavor to a Masque campaign—authors such as H. G. Wells and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle come to mind.) A player running an adept character may want to mimic the actions of the protagonists of these stories, but cannot find a suitable spell in the *Player's Handbook*. Perhaps the DM would like to have a villainous NPC mystic use a spell in an adventure based on a story he or she has read, but finds his choices limited by what is allowed in *A Guide to Gothic Earth*. While the *Player's Handbook* presents many spells that can be used quite effectively to set the proper atmosphere of a Masque of the Red Death campaign, many of the wizard and priest spells found in *Tome of Magic* are equally appropriate for adepts and mystics.

This article presents rules for using Wizard and Priest spells from *Tome of Magic* in the MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH campaign setting. These new rules are presented in a similar manner as *Player's Handbook* spells are presented in “Chapter V: Magic” of *A Guide to Gothic Earth* (MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH Campaign Setting Boxed Set). Additionally, rules for using *Tome of Magic* spells found in “Chapter VI: Spells” of *Realm of Terror* (2nd Edition RAVENLOFT Campaign Setting—the Red Boxed Set) are referenced. DMs not having access to *Realm of Terror*, the Ravenloft Campaign Setting rules in effect when MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH was first published, may use similar or identical rules presented in the newer *Domains of Dread* (“Chapter 8: The Path of the Priest” and “Chapter 9: The Way of the Wizard”) or the older boxed set, *Forbidden Lore*. If a

given spell is not listed in the adept and mystic spell lists below, you may assume it functions as described in *Tome of Magic*. In addition, the material presented in the “New Rules for Wizards” and “New Rules for Priests” sections of *Tome of Magic* are considered with regards to their appropriateness or applicability to the MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH campaign setting.

A word of caution: MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH is intended to be a low magic world, where spells and magical items are extremely rare. Only a small percentage of Gothic Earth's inhabitants know of the existence of magic, and an even smaller number of individuals, members of the adept and mystic classes, are actually capable of casting spells. A DM who decides to allow *Tome of Magic* spells into play must be very careful not to upset the balance of his campaign. Remember that this article is intended to provide rules and guidelines for using *Tome of Magic* spells in a campaign to enhance the story the DM and players are telling. If an adept or mystic gains access to a spell from *Tome of Magic*, then it should be even harder to find another spell, be it from this source or the *Player's Handbook*. In addition, please remember that on Gothic Earth, reversible spells each count as individual spells that must be researched, discovered and learned separately. Any reversible spell found in *Tome of Magic* should therefore be considered two separate spells in a MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH campaign.

NEW RULES FOR ADEPTS

Wild Magic and Wild Mages

This article assumes that wild magic does not exist on Gothic Earth—the low frequency of magical spells and the small percentage of the population able to cast them,

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combined with the corruption of magic by the Red Death that weakens spells in general, prevent its use.

Therefore, all of the spells in *Tome of Magic* listed under the heading “Wild Magic” are unavailable. Since there is no wild magic on Gothic Earth, there is no equivalent of the wild mage for the adept class.

Note: Another intriguing possibility to consider is that wild magic does in fact exist on Gothic Earth, at least in theory. Perhaps a very erudite (or foolish) adept could discover (or accidentally stumble upon) wild magic while researching the possibility of circumventing the Red Death’s influence over spell casting. A DM should carefully consider the effect on game balance, however, before allowing wild magic spells into a MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH campaign.

Elemental Adepts

“Chapter II: Character Creation” in *A Guide to Gothic Earth* leaves the decision for allowing specialist adepts in a MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH campaign to the individual DM. While it is pointed out that specialists in certain schools (especially necromancy) will not be able to resist the temptations of the Red Death for long, other schools (e.g. abjuration) lend themselves to inclusion in the game. Similarly, elemental adepts (elementalists) should be considered for inclusion, as the “school” of elementalism is really a reordering of other spells from the other, more traditional schools of magic.

Elementalism on Gothic Earth finds its roots in alchemy, a practice that originated in the Hellenistic period in Egyptian Alexandria. The art of alchemy was devoted to the discovery of a substance that would transmute common metals into gold. In the fifth century BC, the Greek philosopher Empedocles had a profound impact on the study of alchemy when he theorized that all matter was composed of the four basic elements: air, earth, fire, and water. Aristotle’s assertion that all things in nature strive towards obtaining a perfect state lead the alchemists to believe that common metals would follow along the same logic, and gold was considered the perfect state for metals to achieve. Although alchemy was practiced in ancient Greece and Rome, it became less prevalent in Europe during the Dark Ages. During that time, the Arabs continued the practice, and it eventually found its way back to Europe from the Arab world through Spain and during the Crusades. The study of alchemy then achieved its height in Europe during the Middle Ages. From the roots of alchemy, the modern science of chemistry was also born.

For the most part, an adept specializing in elementalism follows the rules presented in *Tome of Magic* (and the rules for specialist wizards found in the *Player’s Handbook*), but is still subject to the same rules

adepts must follow for spellcasting as presented in *A Guide to Gothic Earth*. The elemental adept must pick one of the four elements in which to specialize, and may cast spells from the elements not directly opposing it. With regards to the Spellcraft nonweapon proficiency (which every adept is required to purchase), the elemental adept gains a +3 bonus when making checks involving spells from his chosen element but hasn’t spent an additional slot for that element. Spending an additional slot for his chosen element gives the elemental adept a +4 bonus to the Spellcraft roll when that particular element is involved. Elemental adepts gain a +5 bonus when attempting to learn new spells of their chosen element (+3 for attempts to learn elemental spells not directly opposing their chosen element). They suffer a -5 penalty when attempting to learn spells that are not from the “school” of elementalism. See Adept Spells below for specifics on any particular elemental spell from *Tome of Magic*, and especially note the descriptions for *hatch the egg from the stone* (seventh-level adept spell) and *glorious transformation* (ninth-level adept spell).

Note: Elemental wizards as described in *Tome of Magic* would make interesting additions to a MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH campaign that uses time periods found in the Historical Reference series and *Seeds of Evil* by James Wyatt in *DRAGON Magazine* #249 (see especially *The Crusades Campaign Sourcebook*)

Metamagic

Metamagic consists of a collection of spells, mainly from the alteration school, that allow the caster to alter the effects of spells subsequently cast with regard to such properties as duration, range, and damage. Because magic is so rare on Gothic Earth, and access to spells extremely limited, metamagic is all but unknown in the MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH campaign setting. Most adepts must spend a lifetime attempting to master the most basic of spells, and will only come across a handful in that time. This precludes any advanced study in metamagic, since adepts must dedicate the majority of their time to hunting down and mastering the natural forms of spells.

Note: MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH DMs may wish to allow certain NPCs access to metamagic. After all, NPCs such as vampires effectively have an eternity to master the intricacies of spellcasting!

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NEW RULES FOR MYSTICS

Quest Spells

Since mystics are not granted spells from deities but rather use their knowledge of the occult to control unseen spirits of the world into creating the desired effect, quest spells do not exist on Gothic Earth.

Note: Perhaps ages ago in the time of myth and legend, long before the Red Death ever entered the world, deities no longer in direct contact with the modern world granted quest spells to their most faithful priests. Mystics might thus come across in their arcane studies references to these accounts, but would still be unable to access them directly - unless of course the ever-scheming Red Death decides to masquerade as one of these ancient gods and grant the unwitting mystic's request. The Sidhe, too, might still be able to access certain quest spells through the Red Death, who will most certainly exercise his malignant influence for his own nefarious ends. The quest spell *wolf spirits*, with its Celtic roots, naturally comes to mind, and the PCs might find themselves the hunted in a twisted variation of the Wild Hunt of Celtic mythology (see *Seeds of Evil* by James Wyatt in DRAGON Magazine #249 for more information on the Sidhe). Specifics are left up to individual DMs, who should carefully consider the effect on game balance before allowing quest spells into a MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH campaign.

Faith Magic and Devotional Power

Faith magic allows priests to amplify the characteristics of certain spells they cast in terms of range, area of effect, duration and damage by tapping into the devotional energies of their followers. Since mystics do not receive their spells by petitioning a particular deity or obtain followers at a certain level like priests do on other campaign worlds, and because the Red Death's corrupting influence tends to weaken all magic in general, faith magic (specifically the fourth-level priest spell *Focus* from *Tome of Magic*) does not exist on Gothic Earth.

Note: Faith can be a very powerful thing, for without faith, there is no hope. MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH DMs may wish to allow PCs access to faith magic through the spell *Focus* to reflect the power of the human spirit in the face of great adversity. At the very least, the normal rules, penalties and powers checks for casting spells on Gothic Earth should apply. But if the mystic manages to successfully cast an amplified spell through

the combined devotional energies of his friends and followers, then adversity may be defeated, hope restored, and the corrupting influence of the Red Death circumvented. If you decide to allow faith magic in your campaign, it should only be used rarely and to enhance the story your gaming group is telling. Specifics, especially additional penalties and restrictions, are left to the individual DM who is also cautioned to carefully consider the effects of allowing faith magic in a Masque campaign on game balance. Mystics with the Enthusiast kit from *Mystics, Miracles & Meditations* by James Wyatt (in DRAGON Magazine #236) would be ideal candidates for access to faith magic.

Cooperative Magic

Like priests, mystics may work in tandem to enhance and amplify the effects and properties their spells will have through cooperative magic. The normal rules, penalties and powers checks for casting spells on Gothic Earth still apply. See Mystic Spells below for specifics and special considerations regarding a particular spell listed in *Tome of Magic* as cooperative magic. Be aware that some cooperative magic spells are not available on Gothic Earth. If a particular cooperative magic spell is not listed in the Mystic Spells section below, you may assume it operates as described in *Tome of Magic*. Note that the first-level priest spell *combine* from the *Player's Handbook* is also categorized by *Tome of Magic* as cooperative magic.

NEW SPHERES

The new spheres of priest spells presented in *Tome of Magic* are for the most part available for study to the mystics of Gothic Earth with the notable exception of the War sphere. See Mystic Spells below for specifics and special considerations regarding any particular spell belonging to a new sphere. Be aware that some of the spells from these new spheres are not available on Gothic Earth. If a particular spell from one of the new spheres is not listed in the Mystic Spells section below, you may assume it operates as described in *Tome of Magic*.

Sphere of Chaos

DMs should pay special attention to the intent of any PC mystic casting certain spells from this sphere. If the spell is cast for an evil or sinister purpose, the mystic must make the mandatory powers check for spellcasting with a percentage chance of failure equal to double the level of the spell.

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Sphere of Law

DMs should pay special attention to the intent of any PC mystic casting certain spells from this sphere. If the spell is cast for an evil or sinister purpose, the mystic must make the mandatory powers check for spellcasting with a percentage chance of failure equal to double the level of the spell.

Sphere of Numbers

Mystics wishing to cast spells from the sphere of Numbers must have a minimum Intelligence score of 13. This new sphere provides some great examples of how the spells in *Tome of Magic* can be used to enhance and enrich a MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH campaign. Mystics with the Medium kit, for example, will benefit with the inclusion of the *personal reading* spell. The spells of this sphere perhaps best exemplify how inclusion of *Tome of Magic* spells can help the DM and players tell a better story in their gaming sessions.

Sphere of Thought

Mystics wishing to cast spells from the sphere of Thought must have a minimum Intelligence score of 13. DMs should pay special attention to the intent of any PC mystic casting certain spells from this sphere. If the spell is cast for an evil or sinister purpose, the mystic must make the mandatory powers check for spellcasting with a percentage chance of failure equal to double the level of the spell.

Sphere of Time

The spells of this sphere could be potentially damaging to game balance in a MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH campaign. Although rules are provided for their inclusion in play, DMs should carefully weigh the effects on game balance before allowing them into a Masque campaign, and feel free to disallow them entirely.

Sphere of Travelers

A few of the spells from this sphere fail to function when they are cast within a lair of evil (see page 108 of *A Guide to Gothic Earth* for what defines a lair of evil). See the Mystic Spells section below for details on any particular Travelers spell that may be affected by this.

Sphere of War

This article assumes that spells from the sphere of War do not exist on Gothic Earth. Since these spells are intended to work with the *Battlesystem* and *Battlesystem*

Skirmishes rules for fantasy and medieval combat, they would be inappropriate in a Victorian setting. In addition, they would allow the caster to influence larger area of effects at lower levels (e.g. an entire combat unit may benefit from a spell rather than one or a handful of individuals), going against the tenet that magic is intrinsically weaker on Gothic Earth.

Note: DMs running a MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH campaign set in the time periods presented in the Historical Reference series (and detailed in *Seeds of Evil* by James Wyatt in DRAGON Magazine #249) may wish to allow spells from this sphere in their campaigns. Specifics are left up to individual DMs.

Sphere of Wards

Ward spells may not function in a lair of evil if they contradict with the desires, powers, and magics of the resident creature (see page 108 of *A Guide to Gothic Earth* for what defines a lair of evil). For example, while the first level Mystic spell *anti-vermin barrier* normally functions as described *Tome of Magic*, it would have no effect on a pack of rats that are controlled by a vampire within her lair of evil.

ADEPT SPELLS

First-Level Spells

Fist of Stone: This spell functions as described in *Tome of Magic*, except that the caster's fist does not visibly appear to be made of stone.

The following spells do not exist on Gothic Earth.

Hornung's Guess

Murdock's Feathery Flyer

Nahal's Reckless Dweomer

Patternweave

The following spells function as described in the Ravenloft Campaign Setting.

Metamorphose Liquids

Second-Level Spells

Maximilian's Earthen Grasp: This spell functions as described in *Tome of Magic*, except that only those directly attacked by the earthen arm and hand see its true form. Onlookers only get a vague sense of the compacted soil's true form, perhaps as an afterthought or when glimpsed from the corner of their eye.

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Protection from Paralysis: This spell does not provide protection against the paralysis attacks of undead creatures (such as ghouls). Otherwise, it functions as described in *Tome of Magic*.

The following spells do not exist on Gothic Earth.

Chaos Shield
Hornung's Baneful Deflector
Nahal's Nonsensical Nullifier
Sense Shifting

Third-Level Spells

Maximilian's Stony Grasp: This spell functions in a similar manner as described above for the second level adept's spell *Maximilian's earthen grasp*.

Spirit Armor: This spell functions as described in *Tome of Magic*, except that no shimmering aura is visible around the caster. To reflect the increased danger of casting necromantic spells on Gothic Earth, the caster is not allowed a saving throw vs. spell to avoid taking 2d3 points of damage when the spell ends. The normal penalties for casting a spell from the school of necromancy on Gothic Earth still apply. In addition, the bonuses awarded to armor class are effective against gunfire.

Wizard Sight: This spell functions as described in *Tome of Magic*, except that the caster's eyes do not glow blue. Instead, the adept's eyes turn milky white, and the irises and pupils disappear.

The following spells do not exist on Gothic Earth.

Alacrity
Alternate Reality
Augmentation I
Far Reaching I
Fireflow
Fool's Speech
Minor Malison
Squaring the Circle

The following spells function as described in the Ravenloft Campaign Setting.

Lorloveim's Creeping Shadow

Fourth-Level Spells

Locate Creature: On Gothic Earth, this spell does not allow detection of a creature while within the confines of its lair of evil (see page 108 of *A Guide to Gothic Earth* for what defines a lair of evil). The spell will come to an abrupt end if a creature that is

initially outside of the confines of its lair of evil suddenly enters it.

Mask of Death: This spell functions as described in *Tome of Magic*, not as described in the Ravenloft campaign setting.

The following spells do not exist on Gothic Earth.

Dilation I
Divination Enhancement
Far Reaching II
Greater Malison
Minor Spell Turning
Mordenkainen's Celerity
Summon Lycanthrope
There/Not There
Unluck

Fifth-Level Spells

Khazid's Procurement: This spell will not enable a gate to be opened within an area designated as a lair of evil (see page 108 of *A Guide to Gothic Earth* for what defines a lair of evil).

Safeguarding: This spell functions as described in *Tome of Magic*, except that the area of effect is a 10-foot-radius sphere.

Von Gasik's Refusal: This spell functions as described in *Tome of Magic*, except that the area of effect is a 10-foot-square per level of the caster.

The following spells do not exist on Gothic Earth.

Far Reaching III
Lower Resistance
Magic Staff
Vortex
Waveform

Sixth-Level Spells

The following spells do not exist on Gothic Earth.

Augmentation II
Bloodstone's Spectral Steed
Claws of the Umber Hulk
Dilation II
Wildshield
Wildstrike

The following spells function as described in the Ravenloft Campaign Setting.

Lorloveim's Shadowy Transformation

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Seventh-Level Spells

Hatch the Stone from the Egg: Only earth elementalists adepts can learn or cast this spell on Gothic Earth, and it must be discovered—it can never be researched, or chosen as the bonus spell for advancing in level. It is one of the rarest spells on Gothic Earth, the magic formulae all but lost over the ages. Along with the magical *Philosopher's Egg* (see Miscellaneous Magic under “Magic Items” in *Tome of Magic*), acquisition of this spell should represent a major quest for an earth elementalist adept, for it allows for the creation of *The Philosopher's Stone* (see “Appendix 3: Magical Item Descriptions” in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). In a MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH campaign based on the Historical Reference series and James Wyatt's DRAGON Magazine #249 article *Seeds of Evil*, this spell may be easier to obtain at the discretion of the DM. See also the ninth-level adept spell *glorious transformation* below.

The following spells do not exist on Gothic Earth.

Bloodstone's Frightful Joining
Hornung's Surge Selector
Intensify Summoning
Spell Shape
Steal Enchantment

The following spells function as described in the Ravenloft Campaign Setting.

Shadowcat

Eighth-Level Spells

The following spells do not exist on Gothic Earth.

Gunther's Kaleidoscopic Strike
Homunculus Shield
Hornung's Random Dispatcher
Wildzone

The following spells function as described in the Ravenloft Campaign Setting.

Abi-Dalzim's Horrid Wilting

Ninth-Level Spells

Glorious Transformation: Only earth elementalists adepts can learn or cast this spell on Gothic Earth, and it must be discovered—it can never be researched, or chosen as the bonus spell for advancing in level. It is the rarest spell on Gothic Earth, and requires possession of the *Philosopher's*

Stone (see the seventh-level adept spell *hatch the stone from the egg* above).

Wail of the Banshee: This spell functions as described in *Tome of Magic*, not as described in the Ravenloft campaign setting. In addition, the material component of this spell is a lock of hair from a female member of the Sidhe (see *Seeds of Evil* by James Wyatt in DRAGON Magazine #249).

The following spells do not exist on Gothic Earth.

Elemental Aura
Estate Transference
Stabilize
Wildfire
Windwalk

MYSTIC SPELLS

First-Level Spells

Ring of Hands: Each mystic of the group casting this cooperative spell must successfully make their required Spiritlore Check or the spell fails for all. Each mystic must also make a separate powers check as required by the spellcasting rules of the MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH campaign setting, but success or failure is determined on an individual basis.

Sacred Guardian: This spell functions as described in *Tome of Magic*, except that the recipient must be somewhere on Gothic Earth, as planar travel is all but impossible in the MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH campaign setting.

Thought Capture: This spell operates in a manner similar to the description in the RAVENLOFT campaign setting. When cast in an area defined as a lair of evil, there is a 50% chance that any *thought capture* spell gathers a thought from the evil creature residing in that region (see page 108 of *A Guide to Gothic Earth* for what defines a lair of evil). Since some thoughts captured with this spell may contain terrifying images and maddening ideas, mystics may have to roll a horror or madness check at the DMs option. Thoughts of a terrifying or maddening nature will always be picked up first by this spell.

The following spells do not exist on Gothic Earth.

Courage
Morale
Speak With Astral Traveler

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The following spells function as described in the Ravenloft Campaign Setting.

Analyze Balance
Emotion Read
Know Age

Second-Level Spells

Aura of Comfort: This spell functions as described in *Tome of Magic*, except that there is no visible aura around the recipient.

Create Holy Symbol: As mystics do not use holy symbols on Gothic Earth, this spell does not exist.

Frisky Chest: While this spell functions on Gothic Earth, any object enchanted with it will not sprout appendages of any kind, including legs, wings or fins. Instead, the enchanted item will slide across the floor, apparently of its own volition, away from anyone other than the caster approaching it. Items enchanted with this spell cannot fly or swim, only slide across the ground. Otherwise, it functions as described in *Tome of Magic*.

Sanctify: When this spell is cast within the confines of a lair of evil, the two effects cancel each other out (see page 108 of *A Guide to Gothic Earth* for what defines a lair of evil). Positive and negative modifiers do not apply for the duration of the spell. If the area of the lair of evil is greater than the area of effect of the Sanctify spell, the normal penalties of a lair of evil still apply in the area outside the spell's area of effect. Casting *defile*, the reverse of this spell, within a lair of evil will cumulatively add its penalties to those of the lair of evil.

The following spells do not exist on Gothic Earth.

Draw Upon Holy Might
Emotion Perception
Rally

The following spells function as described in the Ravenloft Campaign Setting.

Mind Read
Nap

Third-Level Spells

Choose Future: This spell does not allow an individual to reroll a horror check or a powers check.

Extradimensional Detection: This spell functions as described in *Tome of Magic*, except that it cannot

detect interplanar gates as these do not exist on Gothic Earth.

Helping Hand: This spell functions as described in *Tome of Magic*, except that there is no visible manifestation of the hand.

Line of Protection: This spell functions as described in *Tome of Magic*, except that there is no visible manifestation of the field of force.

Memory Read: A mystic viewing a subject's memory of an event that caused that subject to fail a fear or horror check must also make a fear or horror check after he reviews these memories.

Strength of One: Recipients of this spell receiving damage bonuses due to their magically increased strength do not gain the bonus when using firearms.

Thief's Lament: This spell functions as described in *Tome of Magic*, except that a -4 penalty is applied to all thieving skill proficiency checks within the area of effect when the individual attempting to use the ability fails his or her saving throw (thieving skills are redefined as nonweapon proficiencies in the MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH campaign setting—see "Chapter III: Proficiencies" in *A Guide to Gothic Earth*). Since any character class in MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH setting can purchase thieving skill proficiencies, this ward is effective against more than tradesman, the Gothic Earth equivalent of the rogue class.

The following spells do not exist on Gothic Earth.

Adaptation
Astral Window
Caltrops
Unearthly Choir

The following spells function as described in the Ravenloft Campaign Setting.

Emotion Control

Fourth-Level Spells

Addition: This spell only functions at the tenth level priest or lower level on Gothic Earth (i.e., only a single, inanimate object of up to ten pounds may be created which remains in existence for 1 turn per level of the mystic). It otherwise functions as described in *Tome of Magic*.

Dimensional Folding: If this spell is cast within an area designated as a lair of evil, or if the target location is within a lair of evil, the percentage chance of aging is doubled for anyone entering the gate (see page 108 of *A Guide to Gothic Earth* for what defines a lair of evil).

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Mental Domination: A mystic of eleventh level or higher casting this spell may force a subject to perform delicate actions such as picking a lock at a -3 penalty to the nonweapon proficiency roll. Otherwise, it functions as described in *Tome of Magic*.

The following spells do not exist on Gothic Earth.

Chaotic Combat

Focus

Join with Astral Traveler

Leadership

Tanglefoot

Tree Steed

Uplift

The following spells function as described in the Ravenloft Campaign Setting.

Modify Memory

Probability Control

Rapport

Thought Broadcast

Fifth-Level Spells

Barrier of Retention: A creature cannot be trapped with a barrier of retention while within the confines of its lair of evil (see page 108 of *A Guide to Gothic Earth* for what defines a lair of evil). Otherwise, the spell functions as described in *Tome of Magic*. See also "Sphere of Wards" in the New Rules for Mystics section above.

Clear Path: This spell fails to function if cast within or while passing through a lair of evil (see page 108 of *A Guide to Gothic Earth* for what defines a lair of evil) if the creature inhabiting that lair so desires.

Cloud of Purification: This spell fails to function if cast within a lair of evil (see page 108 of *A Guide to Gothic Earth* for what defines a lair of evil) if the creature inhabiting that lair so desires.

Easy March: This spell fails to function if cast within or while marching through a lair of evil (see page 108 of *A Guide to Gothic Earth* for what defines a lair of evil) if the creature inhabiting that lair so desires.

Meld: This spell may only be cast by a mystic of appropriate level on another willing mystic. Otherwise, it functions as described in *Tome of Magic*.

Mindshatter: Casting this spell on Gothic Earth under any circumstance is considered an evil act. Any mystic casting this spell must always make the

mandatory powers check at double the level of the spell (i.e. 10%).

Time Pool: The caster's base chance of viewing a desired scene is only 25%, and the maximum percent chance of viewing this event is 75%. Otherwise, this spell functions as described in *Tome of Magic*.

Unceasing Vigilance of the Holy Sentinel: This spell fails if cast within the confines of a lair of evil (see page 108 of *A Guide to Gothic Earth* for what defines a lair of evil). Otherwise, this spell functions as described in *Tome of Magic*.

Undead Ward: This spell fails to function if cast within the confines of a lair of evil (see page 108 of *A Guide to Gothic Earth* for what defines a lair of evil). Otherwise, this spell functions as described in *Tome of Magic*.

The following spells do not exist on Gothic Earth.

Disguise

Extradimensional Manipulation

Extradimensional Pocket

Illusory Artillery

Thoughtwave

Sixth-Level Spells

Age Creature: Casting this spell on Gothic Earth under any circumstance is considered an evil act. Any mystic casting this spell must always make the mandatory powers check at double the level of the spell (i.e. 12%).

Land of Stability: This spell fails to function if cast within the confines of a lair of evil (see page 108 of *A Guide to Gothic Earth* for what defines a lair of evil). Otherwise, this spell functions as described in *Tome of Magic*.

The following spells do not exist on Gothic Earth.

Dragonbane

Gravity Variation

The Great Circle

Monster Mount

Seclusion

The following spells function as described in the Ravenloft Campaign Setting.

Group Mind

Sol's Searing Orb

Seventh-Level Spells

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Breath of Life: Only the reverse form of this spell, *breath of death*, is available on Gothic Earth, and the caster is subject to the penalty for casting necromantic spells as part of the required spellcasting powers check. Casting this spell is always considered an evil act, so the mandatory powers check for spellcasting is effectively always 28%.

Mindkiller: Casting this spell on Gothic Earth under any circumstance is considered an evil act. Any mystic casting this spell must always make the mandatory powers check at double the level of the spell (i.e. 14%).

Note: This spell is only found in earlier additions of *Tome of Magic*.

Mind Tracker: This spell functions as described in *Tome of Magic*.

Note: This spell appears in later additions of *Tome of Magic*, including the online version found on the AD&D Core Rules 2.0 CD-ROM.

Uncontrolled Weather: This spell fails to function if cast within the confines of a lair of evil (see page 108 of *A Guide to Gothic Earth* for what defines a lair of evil). Otherwise, this spell functions as described in *Tome of Magic*.

The following spells do not exist on Gothic Earth.

Age Dragon

Hovering Road

Shadow Engines

Spirit of Power

The following spells function as described in the Ravenloft Campaign Setting.

Illusory Fortification



HIGH STRANGENESS IN THE GOTHIC EARTH

Using Fortean Phenomena in Masque of the Red Death

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Author's Note: All historical data in this article was compiled from *The Complete Books of Charles Fort*, ©1974 by Dover Publications, New York, introduction written by Damon Knight.

That compilation consists of the following works, all written by Charles Fort: *The Book of the Damned* (1919), *New Lands* (1923), *Lo!* (1931), and *Wild Talents* (1932).

CHARLES FORT

IN THE GOTHIC SETTING

Charles Hoy Fort was born on August 6th, 1874, in Albany, New York, the son of Dutch immigrants. Throughout his childhood, he was subject to brutal beatings from his father, leaving him forever opposed to authority figures and smug superiority.

In 1892, at the age of eighteen, Fort has had all he can stand of his tyrannical father. He slams his father's stained-glass front door, breaking it, and soon thereafter leaves home for good. After a year spent working for newspapers, Fort travels around the world on eighty cents a day, seeking to "put some capital in the bank of experience."

Age the age of twenty four, he marries (a cook in his grandfather's house, by one account; the nurse who treated him for malaria, by another), and settles down in the Bronx, New York. There he spends the rest of the decade (and the decade after that) working as a journalist and living in abject poverty.

So what relevance does this quiet little man have to MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH? Turn to 1916, when Fort receives a modest inheritance, enabling him to do what he has dreamed of for years: to spend nearly every day of the next twenty-seven years studying newspapers, scientific journals, and anything else he can get his hands

on in the realm of scientific journalism. And there he will uncover the Damned, languishing in the "potter's field of Science." The strange phenomena which would not fit into the established patterns of orthodoxy; the unexplained events which hinted at a world far stranger, far less rational, far less understood than what the high priests of "Dogmatic Science" would have us believe. Thus, these phenomena were excluded; simply ignored, or explained away through lazy rationalizing.

Fort aimed most of his attacks at the realm of astronomy, taking morbid delight in watching these scientists destroy the careers of those who dared these conflicting theories of the universe, or proudly predicting the movements of the heavens—and then having to repeatedly cover up their errors when the heavens did not comply.

Fort said, "I conceive of nothing, in religion, science, or philosophy, that is more than the proper thing to wear for a while." He observed that the only difference between that which was sane and sound, and that which was outlandish and bizarre, was the opinion of the observer. At the beginning of the 19th century, those who reported witnessing meteors fall from the sky were ridiculed, the scientists of the time smugly relying on the self-apparent logic that, "In the first place, there are no stones in the sky: Therefore no stones can fall from the sky." Most reports were dismissed as flashes of lightning, with the witnesses often accused of dishonestly or blatant stupidity.

By Fort's time, only a few tattered remnants of that old orthodoxy remained. The evidence had piled too high, and the astronomers were forced to truly study the data. Thus, meteorites moved from the realm of the Excluded to the Excluding. Now, when witnesses reported seeing strange lights in the sky, their reports were dismissed as being "just meteors," with the

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witnesses often accused of dishonesty or blatant stupidity.

In his research, and with the outlandish, satirical theories he presented to “explain” his phenomena, Fort was arguably the first to offer that the strange lights seen in the sky might be the spacecraft of otherworldly visitors. He wrote of poltergeist activity, spontaneous human combustion, unidentified creatures, psychic phenomena, of fish raining from the sky, and more.

Perhaps his most pervasive addition to the modern lexicon was his coining of the term “teleportation,” a familiar enough concept now, but one so neglected before Fort came along it hadn’t even earned a name.

As for his own, true theories to explain the Excluded, Fort offered little, other than the advice to believe nothing, offering instead temporary acceptance; and his vague “doctrine of the hyphen,” a belief in a Continuity between all things. The difference between a man and a mountain, between the Earth and the skies, perhaps even between sanity and madness: all a matter of degrees, all adding up to a single universe-as-organism.

Or as Fort put it, “that all things are like a mouse and a bug in the heart of a cheese. Mouse and a bug: no two things could seem more unlike. They’re there a week, or they stay there a month: both are then only transmutations of cheese. I think we’re all bugs and mice, and are only different expressions of an all-inclusive cheese.”

USING THE DATA

What follows is an extensive list of the phenomena Charles Fort reported as occurring during the time frame of the MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH setting, 1890-1899. These Fortean phenomena have been organized into loose categories for ease of reading, but the reader will quickly find that the categories are not well defined. Should black rain be Weird Weather or Sky Falls? This is fine; Fort himself, who wrote in a stream-of-consciousness style, would certainly argue that these phenomena cannot be neatly pigeonholed.

But how do they relate to the Red Death? What relevance do rains of slime or misplaced alligators have in a setting based on themes of Victorian horror? The first and most direct answer is that these phenomena, by their very nature, are bizarre and unpredictable. An experienced player in the Gothic Earth setting might well come to think he’s learned all the Red Death’s tricks. Ah, a vampire is on the loose. Fetch the stakes and holy water! But... what is the significance of the rain of eels? Or the luminous object seen searching the skies? Are they related to the vampire’s appearance? Or is the world just going mad, and threatening to take everyone with it?

Thus, whether heroes directly encounter these phenomena or just hear about them through the grape vine, they can be used to challenge the hero’s (and the player’s) grasp on reality.

Silver always kills werewolves. Excellent. But how comforting is that when one realizes that, just maybe, the laws of gravity might rewrite themselves, if only for an instant?

Interested MASQUE DMs should also be able to find a number of occurrences which seem like ready-made adventure hooks; the “poltergeist girls,” or the “escaped panther” which terrorizes a small region of Russia.

Go through the lists, and look for the hidden patterns. Find phenomena which seem simply enough explained take on new significance when compared to the larger picture. Watch as a regrettable case of mass hysteria in New York turns into the middle chapter of a vanishing slasher’s travels around the globe, his crimes becoming more vicious as he goes.

You’ll also find a few entries which include a sentence or two labeled “Orthodoxy;” this is the simple, unchallenging theory put out at the time to explain that specific odd occurrence away. Typically offered by newspaper editors or academics who couldn’t be bothered to investigate first-hand, these theories usually sound good, but are only valid so far as they ignore the elements of the event which defy their pat explanations.

WEIRD WEATHER

Strange conjunctions of earth movements and meteors, freak storms, you name it: On the Gothic Earth, not even the weather is to be trusted.

January 20, ‘91: A meteor is seen in the sky over Italy, in conjunction with falling stones and an earthquake.

March 16, ‘91: A sudden whirlwind snatches up two men at Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, and carries them “a considerable distance.” Nothing else was affected by the freak wind. (And see “Eerie Explosions,” below.)

October 19, ‘92: In Martinsville, Ohio, mist is reported falling on an area not more than a dozen feet square.

October 30, ‘92: Day after day, water is reported to be falling on a large cottonwood tree near Stillwater, Oklahoma, in the midst of a drought. *Orthodoxy:* The “water” is produced by insects infesting the tree.

October, ‘92: Day after day, water is reported falling in a small area near a brickyard in Akron, Ohio, despite clear skies. *Orthodoxy:* Theory presented

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that vapors from brickyard are rising, condensing, and falling back.

November 19, '92: Water reported falling on a peach tree in Brownsville, Pennsylvania. The water is reported to be falling from some height above the tree itself.

July 11, '93: A sudden deluge in a clear day near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, causes a flash flood; two miles away, no rain falls.

August 6, '93: A woman and the horses drawing her carriage in Rawlins County, Kansas, are drowned by a flash flood while crossing a dried-up stream.

September 16, '93: The village of Villacanas, Toledo, Spain, is invaded by trees as a sudden deluge drives branches through walls and causes roots to grab people from their beds.

December 17, '96: A “strange meteoric light” is seen in the sky over Worcester, about twenty minutes before the fiercest earthquake the British Isles will suffer in the decade. *Orthodoxy:* A remarkable coincidence.

June 6 & 11, '97: During a time of famine and drought in Assam, India, a green moon is seen twice before an earthquake; once six days before and once one day before the quake hits.

November 19, '99: A meteor falls in conjunction with a thunderstorm off the coast of Greece.

SKY FALLS

Perhaps no other phenomenon is as closely identified with Fortean themes as the “sky fall.” While weird weather may deluge you with rain, sky falls can produce objects—or even living creatures—that had no business being in the skies in the first place. The most common explanation is that a theoretical whirlwind scooped the objects up, keeping them aloft before allowing them to drop back to earth again. Sadly, this ignores problems such as “Why have frogs never fallen with fishes?” or, “How can winds keep objects of distinctly different sizes together?” See more on this topic under Teleportation.

January 31, '90: “Incalculable” numbers of larvae, some black and some yellow, fall on Switzerland. The yellow larvae are three times the size of the black.

Early '90: Red rain falls on Newfoundland. *Orthodoxy:* Similar rains in Europe are typically ascribed on Sahara sands blown into the upper atmosphere by wind storms. That explanation seems out of place on this distant shore; thus it is explained as “merely wind-borne dust from the roads and lanes of Wessex.”

February 6, '90: Fish fall in Montgomery County, California. The fish are of a type unknown to the witnesses.

May 15, '90: Something the color of blood rains from the sky over Messignadi, Calabria. The substance is tested by public-health laboratories in Rome; it is in fact found to be blood. *Orthodoxy:* A flock of migratory birds were caught and torn apart by a violent wind. No dead birds, whole or partial, were reported to have fallen, nor were there any reports of a violent wind. Later, blood will rain again at the same location.

May 31, '90: An “edible substance” falls from the sky at Meridin and at Diarbekis, Turkey, during a heavy rain. The substance is found in convoluted lumps, yellow outside and white inside. They are ground into flour from which “excellent bread” is made. *Orthodoxy:* Lichens carried on a whirlwind.

June 6, '90: Limestone pebbles fall with hail in Pel-et-Der (L'Aube), France. *Orthodoxy:* Pebbles blown from Château-Landon in a whirlwind, ignoring how the stones got mixed in with an ice storm in June.

January 24, '91: Snowflakes the size of saucers fall on Nashville, Tennessee.

February 21, '91: *Scientific American* reports repeated occurrences this winter of the snow crust in Randolph County, Virginia, being covered with otherwise ordinary worms. Unexplained, unless they fell with the snow.

March 7, '91: *Scientific American* reports additional appearances of “snow worms” near Utica, New York. The worms consist of two separate species.

August 8, '91: A shower of fishes—of an unfamiliar species—at Seymour, Indiana.

February 4, '92: Enormous numbers of brown worms fall from the sky near Clifton, Indiana.

February 14, '92: Many scarlet worms—of a species unknown locally—are found scattered across several acres of snow in Massachusetts.

May 29, '92: A shower of an enormous number of eels falls on Coalburg, Alabama. The species is unknown in the state; one witness claims they can be found in the Pacific.

June 30, '92: A fall of small, almost-white frogs near Birmingham, England. *Orthodoxy:* Typically, the frog fall is blamed on a whirlwind, but no mention is made of any ponds which might have supplied the frogs, nor is their color explained.

August 9, '92: A yellow cloud appears over Paderborn, Germany. It releases a torrential rain, in which falls hundreds of mussels.

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June, '93: Objects resembling crystallized niter fall in a storm in Peshawur, India. They are reported to taste like sugar.

April 7, '94: A “prodigious” fall of dead leaves at Clairvaux and Outre-Aube, France, over the course of half an hour. *Orthodoxy:* The leaves had been caught up in a cyclone.

April 11, '94: The leaf fall phenomenon repeats itself at Pontcarré, France.

May 11, '94: During a hailstorm, a small piece of alabaster falls at Vicksburg, Mississippi; a gopher turtle falls in the same storm, at Bovina, eight miles away. *Orthodoxy:* Widely reported, only one attempt at explanation: whirlwinds.

June 3, '94: Ice fragments fall from the sky in Portland, Oregon, in conjunction with a tornado. The ice fragments are 3 to 4 inches square by an inch thick, with smooth surfaces.

November 1, '94: *Nature* magazine reports a fall of hailstones weighing almost two pounds each.

June, '95: A fall of enormous ants—the size of wasps—of an unknown species in Manitoba, Canada.

Summer, '96: Hundreds of dead birds—wild ducks, cat birds, woodpeckers, and “many birds of strange plumage,” some resembling canaries—fall from a clear sky at Baton Rouge, Louisiana. *Orthodoxy:* There had been a storm on the coast of Florida.

Summer, '97: An immense number of small, blood-red clouds appear in the sky above Macerata, Italy. An hour later a storm breaks, dropping a myriad collection of seeds. The seeds are identified as coming from a tree found only in Central Africa and the Antilles. Many of the seeds are in the first stages of germination.

August 10, '97: Rough-edged but smooth-surfaced chunks of ice, about two inches across by one inch thick, fall at Manassas, Virginia. They appear to be broken fragments of a larger sheet of ice.

March, '98: Black rain falls on Ireland. *Orthodoxy:* Ascribed to clouds of soot drifting from manufacturing towns of North England and South Scotland.

September, '98: Lightning strikes a tree in Jamaica; “water-worn” pebbles are found scattered around the strike site.

November 21, '98: Numerous batches of phosphorescent, asbestos-like material, several inches long and several inches wide, fall on Montgomery, Alabama. *Orthodoxy:* Cobwebs.

@ May 1, '99: A “snow white” meteorite falls at Vincennes, Indiana. *Orthodoxy:* Local editor declares it a fragment of quartz boulder, and chides

anyone with at least a public school education for believing quartz could fall from the sky.

STRANGE STARS

Since Fort aimed most of his attacks at astronomers, it's no surprise that he delighted in deflating the puffed shirts of that scientific community. Be it misshapen planets or heavenly bodies refusing to move along their scheduled routes, Fort was quick to point out that, for all their “discoveries,” (one star was “discovered” by an astronomer taking a look at a photo taken by someone else a dozen years earlier), the astronomers seem to have much less of a grasp on the heavens than they claim, or perhaps that the universe is not so much a clockwork as an organism.

Intriguingly, Fort occasionally speculates that the universe might be contained within a vast, dark shell. As the Gothic Earth is located within a crystal sphere in the Prime Material plane, he's absolutely correct. Of course, in the real world, we know better... don't we?

November 20, '94: Swift's Comet predicted to appear. It never does.

July through August, '95: Prof. Mascari, of the Catania Observatory, reports observing dark spots on Saturn's ring, which do not move despite the ring's turning.

January 16, '98: Astronomer Dr. Espin observes a “cloud” between the Earth and the star Perseus. He sees it again on the 24th. Other astronomers observe the cloud, too small to be a nebula, on February 17th. The cloud eventually passes away from Perseus.

November, '98: The Leonid comets, last seen in '66, are predicted to reappear. They fail to do so. *Orthodoxy:* The comets had been “perturbed.” They would appear in Nov. '99. The Leonids again fail to appear in '99, or the next year.

LIGHTS IN THE SKY

Decades before the world ever heard the terms “flying saucer” or “UFO,” Fort was reporting glowing objects in the sky and speculating that they might be alien craft. Of course, his phenomena also included rogue comets, floating organic creatures, bizarre mirages, and strange, sourceless lights. If a DM does want to introduce aliens into their MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH campaign, it is recommended that they ignore modern UFOlogy, relying on more theme-appropriate sources to populate their skies, such as H. G. Wells' *War of the Worlds*.

Intrigued readers are directed to the article *Mars Attacks Gothic Earth*, elsewhere in this netbook. Between these two articles, an enterprising DM might

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find enough material to base an entire campaign off alien visitors and unexplained phenomena; *The X-Files* as written by Wells, as it were.

March 12, '90: At 4 PM, a mirage of a large, unknown city appears in the sky over Ashland, Ohio. The city is identified alternately as Mansfield, 30 miles away, Sandusky, 60 miles away, or “a vision of the New Jerusalem.”

October 27, '90: A comet-like object is observed in the sky over Grahamstown, South Africa. It moves one hundred degrees over the course of fifteen minutes.

September 10, '91: The comet-like object is observed by a Prof. Copeland.

September 11, '91: The comet-like object is seen in the sky over Nova Scotia by Dr. Alexander Graham Bell.

October, '91: A witness reports seeing shafts of light, looking and moving like the beams of a searchlight, in the China Sea.

December 9, '91—April 23, '92: An aurora of light is seen in the sky over Lyons, New York, once every twenty-seven nights. *Orthodoxy:* Each aurora was preceded that day by a disturbance in the sun, caused by the sun’s synodic period. However, the sun’s synodic period does not quite match the aurora’s cycle.

January 17, '92: A long and detailed mirage of a battle between Indians and hunters appears in the sky over Lewiston, Montana. The Indians have superior numbers and eventually win, burning the hunters at the stake.

February '92: A luminous object is seen traveling back and forth, “searching” the skies above Sweden for ten hours.

April 4, '92: Dutch astronomer Muller observes a dark object cross the moon.

June 10, '92: A light, like a “little searchlight,” is seen on Mars. It is witnessed again on July 11 and 13.

August 12, '92: “Rapid flashes” of light, likened to the signal of a lighthouse by one witness, are seen in the sky over England.

February 24, '93: The officer of the watch aboard the H.M.S. *Caroline* reports seeing unusual, globular lights over the seas between Shanghai and Japan. Over the course of two hours, the lights sometimes mass together, but generally move northward in an irregular line.

February 25, '93: The H.M.S. *Caroline* observes the lights again, this time for seven and a half hours. The objects cast a luminous reflection in the water, and seem to move in pace with the ship. A

telescope reveals only that the lights are reddish in color and emit a faint smoke. Another ship also sees strange lights at roughly the same time, in roughly the same locale.

April 1, '93: An observer in the Azores sees a shaft of light on the moon. A similar phenomenon is witnessed by an observer in Paris on September 25.

March 7, '93: A luminous object, compared to an elongated pear, is seen in the sky over Val-de-la-Haye. *Orthodoxy:* A signal suspended from a balloon.

October, '93: Photographs are taken of a comet apparently colliding with a “dark object,” shattering it.

December 20, '93: A luminous object seen by many witnesses passes through the skies over Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Described as a “brilliant white,” shaped like a wheel, and about the size of a table.

August 26, '94: An Admiral Ommanney witnesses a disk from which projects an orange-colored body resembling “an elongated flatfish” in the sky over North Wales.

August 23, '95: A luminous object, considerably larger and brighter than Venus, is witnessed sailing across the sky over Oxford, England. Another witness later claims to have seen the same object over London that same night. *Orthodoxy:* A fire-balloon released at an allotments show.

Summer, '96: A railroad postal clerk observes a strange, rosy light while riding onboard a train headed north from Trenton, Montana. The light appears to be about one foot in diameter, floating 100 feet above the ground (and sometimes higher). The speed of the object varies; sometimes it falls behind the train, sometimes it outruns it considerably. *Orthodoxy:* Ball lightning, or the lights of the train reflected by fog, or rain, or telegraph wires.

June 27, '96: While observing the moon, a writer for *Science Gossip* observes a long black object cross from west to west. *Orthodoxy:* Writer believes it to have been a bird, but saw no fluttering motion.

July 31 '96: W. R. Brooks, director of the Smith Observatory, watches a dark, round object pass slowly across the moon in a horizontal direction.

April, '97: Numerous reports of a cigar-shaped “airship” in the skies over Chicago and Illinois. *Orthodoxy:* Venus, newspaper hoaxes, or toy balloons.

June, '97: A correspondent to the *Weekly Times* and *Echo* reports having seen in this month a mirage of an unknown city, resembling an “ancient European

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City,” in the sky over the Yukon. Apparently the phenomenon repeats each midsummer, and has been known to the native population for quite some time. By the end of the decade, it is decided the city is Bristol, England. *Orthodoxy:* A supposed photograph of the mirage is a hoax, thus the mirage must be as well.

June 3, '98: *La Nature* reports the sighting of two luminous bodies, seemingly united, visible in the sky for five or six minutes.

July 1, '98: A red arc, like part of a rainbow, seen in the sky over Sedburg, at night, during a heavy rain.

July 8, '98: A witness at Kiel, Germany, sees an object in the sky, as broad as a rainbow, and colored red by the just-set sun. It remains stationary, its brightness fading before it disappears entirely after about eight minutes.

August 11, '98: The meteorologist F. F. Payne sees a large, pear-shaped object sailing rapidly across the Canadian sky. He at first takes it to be a balloon, but cannot spot a cage, so assumes it to be a mass of cloud. After about six minutes, it becomes “less dense” before disappearing.

October 27, '98: A witness in County Wicklow, Ireland, sees a golden yellow object in the sky, resembling a three-quarters moon, at about 6 PM. He watches it for about five minutes as it slowly moves behind a mountain. *Orthodoxy:* An escaped balloon. Fort can find no actual reports of escaped balloons in the summer or fall of 1898.

March 2, '99: A luminous object is observed for six hours in the sky over El Paso, Texas. *Orthodoxy:* Venus.

EERIE EXPLOSIONS

Fort hints that some of these phantom blasts may have been caused by meteors, some more obviously than others. Still, they carry a common theme: Violent explosions which lack either a cause and/or an effect. A temper tantrum of the Red Death? The side effects of a failed magical experiment, covered up before witnesses could collect evidence? Or something even stranger?

Pre-1890 through May 23, '96: The famed “Barsival Guns” heard emanating from the sky over Barsival, Belgium, although they can be heard well out into the English Channel. The sounds, resembling the retort of distant cannons, are always heard in threes. Each of the three “shots” is fired in quick succession, but intervals between these “triplets” can vary from seconds, to days, to years.

Orthodoxy: Never explained; extensive study rules out the usual “earthquake” explanation.

March 16, '91: Two men walking along Vanderbilt Avenue in Brooklyn, New York, are momentarily blinded by an explosion which injures one man and stuns the other. A sliver of brass or copper shrapnel is removed from the injured man, but none can be found at the scene. At witness reports seeing a flash just before the unexplained explosion, but can offer no more details.

January, '92: A family in Peterborough, England is repeatedly shaken as if their house was being bombed. Yet no damage is done to the house, and there are no injuries.

November 2, '93: At 5:45 PM, a loud explosion-like sound is heard, and a shock felt, in Worcester, some portions of West England, and Wales.

July 12, '94: A shock felt and rumbling sound heard at Comrie, Scotland, but no signs of an explosion can be found. The phenomenon repeats exactly one year later.

August 24, '95: A boy in Donegal, Ireland witnesses a luminous object falling from the sky, exploding near him. He shields his face with his hands; a *second* explosion shatters his fingers. No trace of the exploded object can be found.

November 15, '95: At noon, an “alarming explosion” is heard somewhere near Fenchurch Street, London. An hour later, a still more violent explosion is heard not far away. In neither incident can any trace be found of any explosion having occurred.

Orthodoxy: Hooligans unknown placed fog signals in the streets, which were then detonated by passing vehicles.

February 10, '96: A tremendous explosion in the sky over Madrid smashes windows, knocks down a wall, and sends people panicking into the streets. A luminous cloud of debris hangs over the city for five and a half hours, and stones fall from the sky.

February 24, '97: An explosion is heard in the sky over Tombstone, Arizona.

WILD TALENTS

Poltergeist activity; psychic phenomena; spontaneous human combustion; lethal somnambulism; strange photos. The roots of parapsychology; a rogues’ gallery of uniquely gifted or burdened individuals, just waiting for the heroes to cross their paths.

As a note, Spontaneous Human Combustion was a semi-respectable theory in the Victorian age, considered a punishment for over-indulgence of alcohol and sloth.

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May 12, '90: A Dr. B. H. Hartwell is driving through a forest when he sees a woman crouching in a clearing. Fire, not coming from her clothing, is consuming her shoulders, abdomen, and legs.

July, '90: While the daughter of a Mr. Piddock, in London, England, lies in her deathbed, volleys of stones—of inexplicable origin—are hurled at his house, breaking windows.

November, '90: Stephen Haven, a wealthy farmer near Fowlerville, Michigan, is found one night calling for help from the bottom of a well, having walked there in his sleep. Two months later, he disappears again, and is found standing in neck-deep water in a nearby lake, again having sleepwalked. Later, Haven is found trying to set the house on fire, while still fast asleep. In another occurrence, the somnambulist Haven attempts to hang himself, and on November 18, '92, his nocturnal death wish is finally fulfilled—he falls from the upper story of his barn.

December 19, '91: Near Toronto, Canada, Jenny Bramwell—the fourteen-year old, adopted daughter of a Mr. Robert Dawson—is ill. She goes into a trace, and exclaims “Look at that!” pointing to the ceiling—which is aflame. Over the next few days, Jenny continues to point at a series of new fires of inexplicable source. It almost seems as though anything *within the house* that Jenny stares at bursts into flame. Jenny is blamed for the fires, and returned to the orphanage. *Orthodoxy:* Jenny, who the reporter who “solves” the case calls “half-witted,” stole “some chemical” from the drug store and wandered about her house, setting fires.

October 14, '92: While visiting her uncle’s farm, Ann Avery of Middletown, Ohio, is pelted by stones, and reports objects in the house moving toward her. Her uncle, just returned from dropping his wife off at the railroad station, gives her tale little credence, but when the stone-tossing phenomenon repeats itself, he and some of his neighbors grab their guns and station themselves around the house. All to no avail; the stone tossing will not end until Ann flees back to her own home.

March, '93: A fakir, Soliman Ben Aissa, exhibits his talents in Germany; he can stab daggers into his cheeks, tongue, and abdomen without injury, the wounds healing instantly.

August, '93: A photographic plate left exposed to a starry, moonlit night for one hour shows irregular, “lightning”-like markings when developed.

April, '94: The *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* reports a case of “spontaneous combustion of human bodies.”

January 6, '95: Over the course of twenty hours, the home of the Colwell family, of Brooklyn, New York, burns down. Policemen are called to the scene, and watch as furniture bursts into flame before their eyes. Mr. Colwell claims it started with a stove that collapsed, followed by pictures falling from the walls. Later he found a bed on fire; this was put out. Then he watched as wallpaper began to ignite. Finally a lamp falls from the wall, and the entire house goes up. The Colwells lose everything in the blaze. *Orthodoxy:* The police at the scene are convinced of a supernatural cause. According to the *New York Herald*, Colwells’ sixteen-year old daughter Rhoda set the fires and “artfully tricked” the police and firemen. When it is revealed that four mysterious fires had also started in a home where Rhoda worked as a housemaid, she is coerced into confessing her guilt in the crime. Or was she simply pyrokinetic?

July 29, '97: A photographic plate exposed to a solar eclipse over Ohio shows “knotted lightning” when developed.

CRYPTOZOLOGY

The world has yet to hear of Bigfoot, and knowledge of Nessie won’t be spread beyond Loch Ness for another decade. But the world is still full of monsters. Fort reported events indicating the existence of witches, and werewolves, and vampires, and all manner of beasts far stranger than that. Be it a kangaroo inexplicably spotted roaming the American Midwest, or a foreign predator apparently so cunning an army of hunters cannot catch it, these mysterious, “hidden” creatures seem to exist at the frayed edges of what we consider reality.

February 28 through March 1, '90: A “wandering monster” is reported by the Melbourne *Argus*, said to be about thirty feet long and terrorizing the people of Euroa. A group of forty men with nets is sent out to hunt the beast; they come up empty.

September 5, '91: Two icemen in Crawfordsville, Indiana, witness a headless monster (or is it a construction?), about twenty feet long and eight feet wide, paddling through the sky via fin-like attachments. When the icemen retreat from its approach, the “thing” paddles away, screeching loud enough to wake a pastor in a nearby house from his sleep.

February 27, '92: A five and a half foot-long alligator is found frozen to death on bank of the Rock River, near Janesville, Wisconsin.

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July 6, '93: A mysterious animal is reported preying upon human beings in Russia, south of Moscow. Fort reports a woman was “grabbed” while crossing a field, and notes the similarity to historical werewolf accounts. Three days later, another woman is attacked but beats the creature back until help arrives. Later that same day, the beast devours a young boy. On the 11th, it claims a woman’s life. Three days later, it severely wounds one woman, and an hour later attacks a peasant girl, who is rescued by a companion. *Orthodoxy:* A panther escaped from a theoretical menagerie.

July 24, '93: Having evaded numerous hunts organized by the government, the mysterious Russian “panther” attacks four women, killing one. A Prince Sherincki is sent from St. Petersburg with a veritable army to hunt the beast, which promptly disappears forever. *Orthodoxy:* Eventually declared a large dog, as most mystery animals are.

September 21, '95: A parakeet is caught in a farm yard at Gledhill, Ardgay, Scotland. Two years later, a second parakeet appears in the same yard and is caught. Both are males. No one reports a missing bird on either occasion.

December 1, '96: The dead bulk of an unidentified creature, 21 feet long and weighing an estimated seven tons, washes up on the shores of Florida, twelve miles south of St. Augustine. It is thought to only be a partial body. The few researchers who can be persuaded to investigate the corpse before it is destroyed by the elements battle over its true nature: a giant octopus, or merely the head of a massive whale-like creature?

1899: The “blonde beast of Patagonia,” the giant ground sloth, is discovered by Dr. F. P. Moreno, who brings samples of the beast’s hide to England. He states that the hide specimens are long-preserved, but the natives who gave him the samples claimed they had killed the creature themselves.

February 23, '99: The trading vessel *Emu* arrives in Sydney, Australia, bearing parts of an unknown monster. The captain claims to have found the corpse of a sixty foot long, hairy, two-headed creature on the shores of Suarro Island. *Orthodoxy:* Fossils, and the captain is lying. The fossil explanation is later refuted; now the skulls are those of beaked whales.

TELEPORTATION

There’s only three examples in this category, but in fact Fort related his theory of *teleportation*—the instantaneous movement of an object from one location to another without passing through the space between—

to many different phenomena. Quasi-random teleportation may have led the dead crocodilian above to a demise far from home; a man spotted miles from his actual location may have been unwittingly “misplaced” by the universe for a moment. Of course, those who are merely temporarily mislocated, or simply popped from Point A to *terra firma* of Point B are the lucky ones: Sky falls may be caused by a vast school of fish, happily swimming in the Atlantic one moment, finding themselves plunging through the upper atmosphere the next. And rains of blood? Perhaps, sometimes, the process of teleportation is not quite as gentle as one might hope. Of course, in all those cases, the victims of teleportation are returned, in one way or another. But think of the people who step out their door one day—and forever vanish from the face of the Gothic Earth.

July through August, '92: So many young men vanish in Montreal, Canada, that the headline “Another Missing Man” becomes common.

May 7, '93: A woman walking along a road near St. Boswells, England, sees ahead of her a tall gentleman dressed in black, making her think of a clergyman. She watches the man turn around a low hedgerow—and vanish before her eyes.

March 31, '95: A man walking the road between Oxford and Wolverton encounters a man having difficulty controlling his horse. The witness scurried out of the way; when he looked back at the horse and rider, they had vanished into thin air. *Orthodoxy:* A classic ghost story!

OCCULT CRIMINOLOGY

For this last category, I’ve saved the phenomena which seem to have a hint of the truly malevolent or macabre. Of all the categories, this one holds the most malice, and thus may be the most immediately relevant to a MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH campaign. With most Fortean phenomena, we get the sense only that Reality may be insane, and that we are subjected to its daydreams; taking these latter events into account, it may be that nightmares walk the Earth as well.

May 17, '90: Many in Japan believe that an invisible *thing* is wandering their streets and homes. When it attacks, it opens a little slash, about an inch long, which causes little pain at the time of the attack.

December 6, '90: A woman named Matilda Crawford falls from a train. She claims a young man had insulted her, then pushed her out a window. A detective in the next compartment testifies that, to the best of his knowledge, there was no one else in the compartment with Ms. Crawford.

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July 8, '91: Carl Gros found dead near Maspeth, Long Island. There are no marks in his clothes to correspond to the wounds in his body.

Winter 1891-'92: Local newspapers report a series of men being wounded in the streets of New York City. The assailant is a “vanishing man” who “disappeared marvelously.” Five men have been stabbed by January 14, '92, and more attacks follow. As mass hysteria spreads, the police are blamed. On January 17, the police arrest a little man named Dowd, who is scapegoated for the attacks. He pleads not guilty; his lawyer pleads him not guilty, but insane. Dowd is sent to the asylum for insane criminals in Auburn, New York. The NYC attacks cease.

February 2, '92: A Mr. & Mrs. Kring are found murdered near Johnstown, Pennsylvania, their bodies butchered and burned. Then the body of a stranger is found, well-dressed, but with no means of identification. Then yet another corpse is found—it too is well dressed, but cannot be identified.

February 4, '92: After the burial of Frances Burke, of Dunkirk, New York, her relatives suspect she had merely been in a catatonic trance, and have her exhumed. The coffin is found full of water. It is the coroner's opinion that Frances had been buried alive, and had drowned in her coffin. A source for the water is not offered.

March 12, '92: Vienna, Austria is hit by a series of murders by an unseen assassin. The fifth victim is stabbed to death in one of the city's most public places.

March 31, '92: A family returns from a trip to Chicago to discover their Brooklyn, New York, home totally ransacked—even the curtains have been torn and strewn about the floor—but absolutely nothing has been stolen. Instead, valuables have been savagely smashed, and then left where they were found. This marks the beginning of a poltergeist-like crimewave—homes entered via unexplained means, curtains and valuables destroyed, nothing ever stolen.

August, '92: Henry G. Trickey, reporter for the *Boston Globe*, wrote a “scandalous article” about the accused murderess Lizzie Borden, currently awaiting trial in prison in Massachusetts. It was revealed the article was false; Trickey was indicted, and left for Canada, perhaps to avoid prosecution. While boarding a train at Hamilton, Ontario, he falls and is killed.

October, '92: A Portuguese sailor calling himself “James Brown” is transferred from Ohio Penitentiary to the National Asylum, in Washington,

D.C., and his story is retold in local newspapers. In 1867 “Brown” had been caught in the act of a “vampire killing,” literally caught sucking the blood from one of his crewmates, with a second exsanguinated corpse nearby. “Brown” was tried, convicted, and sentenced to be hanged, but the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment by President Johnson.

Early '93: An elderly man named Mack, his invalid wife, and their daughter Mary move to the town of Bellport, Long Island, and open a candy shop on the first floor of their home. They are subjected to a barrage of persecutions attributed to other shopkeepers who, presumably, dislike them for their “thrift.” Stones are thrown at the house by “street gamins;” several boys are arrested, despite a lack of evidence. A large dog appears once, knocking Mary down with such force it injures her back and leaves her crippled for the rest of her life. Stones are tossed onto the roof while Mary lies in bed, terrifying her—in fact, frightening her to death.

April 10, '93: Over the course of a few hours, twelve men in Brooklyn, New York are taken to a Brooklyn hospital for injuries suffered in high falls, or from being struck by falling objects.

July '94: In a large vineyard at Collis, near Fresno, California, someone drops dead of “heart failure.” Then a second victim drops dead. Then a third drops, and is dying. Others flee the premises, convinced that *something* foul is afoot. *Orthodoxy:* A case of “mass psychology,” a.k.a. mass hysteria.

August, '95: In Belfast, Ireland, a little girl vanishes. While police investigate, a little boy disappears, and then another child. On September 10, another little boy vanishes, and two days later, yet another.

AFTERWORD

In compiling this article, I have resisted the temptation to alter dates in the interests of including even more types of phenomena in the time frame of the MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH campaign. None of the occurrences listed in this article have had their facts altered from their presentation in Fort's books; no entries here are based in fiction, although that does not mean all of them must therefore be infallible sources of the truth.

The occurrences Fort reported on ranged from the 1700s to the early 1930s; obviously, only a fraction of them have been included here. Any reader who finds their interest piqued by the strange and unnerving phenomena covered here is strongly encouraged to read Fort's works for themselves; you won't be disappointed.☠

THE BRITISH SOCIETY OF PARANORMAL RESEARCH

Intrepid Investigators of the Gothic Earth

by Jarrod Lowe

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Founded in 1888 London by Sir Walter McCarthy, the British Society of Paranormal Research (or simply “the Society”) was created to investigate and record all strange or unexplained occurrences dealing with the occult. By 1890 the Society has grown to over fifty full time investigators operating not only in Great Britain, but also around the world. The Society is funded by private donations from individuals of various walks of life. Rumors within the Society indicate that one of the groups financial backers is a member of British royalty, but the truth of this is unknown.

SYMBOL

Members of the society carry a silver-handled magnifying glass on their person at all times. Though not used as an official symbol, members often identify each other with this detective tool.

MEMBERSHIP

The Society is composed mainly of those rare individuals who have given up their personal endeavors as well as their resources in order to dedicate themselves to the investigation and recording of information on the world of the paranormal. Also included in the ranks of the Society are those born with gifts some will never know, like prognosticators and those with a so-called “sixth sense.” These individuals are frequently included on Society assignments.

The Society operates mainly out of London, a townhouse in Greenwich, but members of the exclusive organization are truly international. With members hailing from as far away as the Orient, Africa, and the Americas, those of the Society are rarely far from one another. All members, upon investigation of paranormal or supernatural events, report directly to the London

office of Sir Walter McCarthy. Reports always include a detailed written description of all factors in the case, any photos and/or evidence of the phenomenon, as well as follow ups of those effected by the events.

In the few years since its founding, the Society has witnessed many strange events. They currently have files pertaining to such varied topics as the survivors of the Defiance massacre, the mystery of the Donner Party, the experiments of 18th century madman Victor Frankenstein, and such notable modern personalities as Professor James Moriarty and the mysterious killer known only as “X.”

HISTORY

The Society was formed by Sir Walter McCarthy in 1888 following his family’s untimely demise. Along with Scotland yard Detective Edmund McSwain, the British Society of Paranormal Research was formed. Soon they began recruiting “agents” who also shared their passion for occult investigation.

SIR WALTER MCCARTHY

9th-level Tradesman (Scholar), Lawful Good

AC	10	Str	10
Movement	12	Dex	9
Level/Hit Dice	9	Con	8
Hit Points	19	Int	17
THAC0	16	Wis	12
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	14
Damage/Attack	By weapon		
Special Attacks	Nil		
Special Defenses	Nil		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

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Weapon Proficiencies: Derringer, Knife, Sword Cane, Army Pistol, Rapier.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Academician, forbidden Lore (ghosts), Language, English (native), Language (Latin), Language (Spanish), Ancient Language (Gaelic), Philosophy, Religion (Catholicism), Savoir-faire, Etiquette, Ventriloquism.

Sir Walter McCarthy was born in Dublin in 1837 to Professor Windsor McCarthy and his wife Elizabeth. The eldest of three sons, Walter studied philosophy and religion at the University of Edinburgh (Scotland).

Walter became one of Europe's leading philosophers during the 19th century, and in 1874 he received England's highest honor, as he was knighted. Sir Walter McCarthy retired from teaching the following year to spend more time with his family. He had been married for twenty years and fathered four children, two of which were grown by the time he bought an historic manor in London. Unbeknownst to McCarthy, the manor was haunted by vile and evil spirits who resented and despised the living. The purchase of the manor resulted in the deaths of his wife and two of his daughters. This unfortunate event led to the eventual formation of the Society.

Forbidden Lore

Though McCarthy's family was killed by the spirits which resided within his house, one daughter survived. Lucretia, McCarthy's youngest, had survived the onslaught of the entities, but not without scars. Lucretia found herself aged nearly eighty years and driven past the point of insanity. Unable to care for his elderly, deranged daughter, McCarthy had her institutionalized. The Red Death saw this as a means to battle the elder McCarthy, and after freeing the girl, transformed her into an evil Night Hag. Lucretia now lives beneath Seward's Sanitarium in London. There she conducts vile experiments upon inmates as well as plots against her father and his precious Society.

EDMUND McSWAIN

(a.k.a.: Michael Murdock, Edmund M. Murdock, Samuel McSwain)

8th-level Tradesman (Detective), Lawful Good

Armor Class	10	Str	13
Movement	12	Dex	15
Level/Hit Dice	8	Con	12
Hit Points	30	Int	16
THAC0	12	Wis	15
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	14
Damage/Attack	By weapon		
Special Attacks	Nil		
Special Defenses	Nil		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

Weapon Proficiencies: Army Pistol, Navy Pistol, Derringer, Bowie Knife, Scattergun.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: English (native language), Language (French), Criminology, Backstabbing, Disguise, Open Locks, Tumbling, Artisan (painter), Forbidden Lore (lycanthropes), Academician.

Weapons: McSwain possesses a mystical dagger from Egypt which, legend says, was once used to pierce the flesh of an ancient pharaoh-sending him to his death. It acts as a *Dagger* +2, and grants the wielder *chill touch* 1/week. Each use of the dagger, even for mundane purposes, requires a powers check. McSwain keeps the dagger in a hidden location only he knows.

Edmund McSwain was orphaned at birth, but despite his poor upbringing in Aberdeen, he made it all the way to England where he worked his way through Oxford. Following school Edmund joined Scotland Yard, where he made detective in near record time. During the late 1880s he was one of the first to investigate the Whitechapel (later Jack the Ripper) murders. Though he was close to forming solid leads on the mysterious killer, he was pulled from the case. Soon he was approached by Sir Walter McCarthy to investigate the death of his family.

Forbidden Lore

McSwain was one of the chief investigators of the Ripper Murders in Whitechapel, and had nearly discovered the true ghostly nature of the beast he stalked when he was taken off the assignment. A mole of the Red Death had burrowed its way into the upper echelon of Scotland Yard, and allowed many cases pertaining to the supernatural to go unsolved. For this reason McSwain resigned, but continues a private investigation on the true puppet-master of the Yard.

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OSLANNA STROKOFF

6th-level Adept (Metaphysician), Neutral Good

Armor Class	10	Str	9
Movement	12	Dex	14
Level/Hit Dice	6	Con	10
Hit Points	20	Int	13
THACO	19	Wis	17
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	16
Damage/Attack	By weapon		
Special Attacks	Nil		
Special Defenses	Nil		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, Derringer, Army pistol.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Russian (native language), Language (English), Academician, Forbidden Lore (lycanthropes), Spellcraft, Alchemy, Prognostication, Psychometry, History, Artisan (poet), Musician (violin), Cooking.

Oslanna Strokoff is the eighteen year old daughter of Russian explorer Nikita Strokoff. In 1889 the elder Strokoff was killed while guiding Edmund McSwain after a murderous loup-garou. His dying wish was for McSwain to take care of his only daughter, and McSwain complied by adopting Oslanna and taking her back to London with him.

Forbidden Lore

Though it has been only a year since her adoption, and Oslanna has developed her natural “gifts” more-so with the Society than she ever could on her own, she still holds McSwain responsible for her father’s death. If this resentment turns into a full-blooded hatred remains to be seen, but the Red Death knows Oslanna could be the secret weapon for destroying the Society for good.

✂

ALFONSO TYVES

Physician Heal Thyself

by Charles Phipps
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ALFONSO TYVES

Very Old Feral Vampire, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	1	Str	19
Movement	12 Fl 8 (C)	Dex	18
Level/Hit Dice	11+1	Con	18
Hit Points	54	Int	19
THACO	10	Wis	10
Morale	17	Cha	2
No. of Attacks	1	XP	11,000
Damage/Attack	1-8+7 (clawed hands + Strength bonus)		
Special Attacks	See below		
Special Defenses	See below		
Magic Resistance	See below		

Alfonso Tyves is a horrific sight to look upon. He has completely pasty-white skin; long, pointed and slightly drooping ears; huge fangs which fold over his lips; a completely hairless body; and eyes with red irises that seem to look into the soul. Alfonso often wears the black clothing of a beggar and long woolen cloaks in dark hues despite the weather. He is never seen without two items of interest: an ornate ruby ring and a shoddy, patchwork black duffel bag.

BACKGROUND

Alfonso Tyves was born in Italy in the late 14th century to an exceptionally wealthy family. Like the Borgias and Medicis (though on a much smaller scale), his family was active in politics.

Alfonso was disgusted by this life beginning when he was eleven. He hated the way that the poor and meek were treated under the current laws and the deplorable conditions most of the poor lived under. Going against his family's wishes, he soon took up the medical arts, in hope of alleviating some of the terrible suffering he felt due to his family's wealth. Although he mastered nearly all commonly-known medical knowledge, and many esoteric texts when the former failed to meet his standards, he grew vastly disgusted with the level of

ignorance and superstition rampant among the doctoral trade.

He was ready to consign himself over to the Church, in hopes of at least gaining some spiritual fulfillment for the masses if he couldn't give them physical release, when he met a beautiful woman named Portia, a noted widow and philanthropist. She was also a member of the secret qabal known as the Phoenix. Recruited into the qabal that very night, Alfonso met great foes in the servants of the Red Death and was determined to meet them head-on with reason and compassion. For years he pored over his library to try and unravel the secrets of many of the qabal's foes. He also fell in love with his mentor as she aided him on numerous occasions.

Then disaster rocked Alfonso's world as Portia fell gravely ill with a virulent plague, spread through the bite of a being who walked the day as a man but the night as a rat. Alfonso could not allow this to occur, and spent long hours poring over the darkest libraries of the qabal in hopes of saving her.

He found his cure when he and several friends, at the cost of most of their lives, captured a creature which hailed from the darkest mountains of Romania and passed itself off as a human noble of that region—a thing that drank blood and was known as Nosferatu. The creature was obviously some kind of blood-diseased human; Alfonso hoped to purify the dark essence from the magical nature of the disease and thus give Portia a newer, stronger form.

After many experiments, and as Portia entered her final hour (while the nosferatu was kept in blessed chains in Tyves' manor basement), Alfonso completed the potion that he hoped would cleanse the weaknesses from the vampiric form. In order to make sure it was safe, he did the unthinkable and tested it upon himself. Alfonso's Phoenix allies did not survive his transformation.

The new vampire broke free at that very moment and attacked. Alfonso's allies were ripped to shreds and drunk dry. The Red Death had warped the enchantments Alfonso's colleagues had wrought, and the experiments the scientist had performed created a being far more evil than its original template. The noble doctor regained his

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senses only after he had gently drained his true love dry of her blood. At this he fled into the night, mad with grief and hunger.

CURRENT SKETCH

Alfonso Tyves has endured over three hundred years of constant rejection, horror, and overwhelming hunger which would make many other vampires shudder in shock. With each kill over which he has almost no control, he becomes increasingly dispassionate and no longer can bring himself to feel remorse over what he has done. His only regret now is his original destruction of Portia.

Since then, however, Alfonso has continued his studies with almost a rampant obsession. His interrogations of famous doctors, scientists, and scholars, along with the looting of libraries and the minds of qabalists, has unearthed much knowledge—as now he has no other real thing he can enjoy on the Earth. He is now totally resigned to defeat of the forces of darkness in the land; yet, while not one of his direct minions, he brings enough misery to satisfy the black power.

However, some shred of Alfonso's humanity remains (if one can call it that) in his love for those who show signs of compassion themselves. Philanthropists, healers, and others motivated by truly unselfish motives bring feeling to Alfonso's heart. He does whatever he can to protect and serve these noble individuals, until they do something equally selfish; then Alfonso's wrath knows no bounds. This has led to several unfortunate attempts at romance by Alfonso as he has fallen in love with lawful and just women.

COMBAT

Alfonso is a fierce foe in combat even though he has not utilized a weapon for nearly a century. His hands end in fierce claws that allow him to make wicked brawling attacks. Alfonso's attacks often open horrible wounds that leave lasting scars. (There is a 10% chance per attack that horrid scars are left, reducing the victim's Charisma by 1 point—this chance is cumulative as Alfonso matches himself to his foes). The feral vampire cannot be hit by weapons of less than +2 enchantment and he regenerates 4 hit points per round. He also has the standard vampiric spell immunities and is immune to illusions of the first level due to his extreme intellect.

Alfonso can *charm* a target with his gaze but gains no bonus to doing so (indeed when a PC first looks upon the Feral vampire he must immediately make a horror check with a -1 penalty). He therefore often attempts to initiate his gaze from the shadows, where only his eyes are visible.

His other powers include the ability to assume the form of a foul-smelling green mist, which mimics the effect of the *stinking cloud* spell if a PC passes through it; the ability to summon and control rats for a full mile around him; and the ability to transform into a horde of small rodents at will (catching and destroying the rodents will inflict 2 hp of damage on him per rat destroyed—they have no special immunities). Tyves possesses a superb mastery of the *spider climb* ability of vampires and has used it to scale even the most barren of structures in several escapes.

He suffers from the usual vampiric vulnerabilities (stake through the heart, holy items, running water, and garlic) but has two notable modifications to his weaknesses: He is not repulsed by mirrors (in his case he's come to see not being able to view his reflection as a blessing) and he cannot tolerate sunlight in *any* form. Indeed if he were ever totally exposed to it for a full round he would be totally annihilated—despite his age, he shows no signs of getting stronger in his ability to resist the sun's rays.

It should also be noted that Alfonso has acquired two mystical items in his murders of the various mystics of the world. The first is a large ruby ring which he keeps on his left finger. (The ring allows any man to *shadow walk* three times per day, but causes chilling damage of 3 hp per trip—Alfonso's body temperature is already below normal limits, so he does not suffer from this.) The other is a large, patch-covered black sack which he keeps over his shoulder at all times. (This is actually one of the few *Bags of Holding* left in the world and is filled with countless books and a fortune in gold, precious stones, and valuables of various types that Alfonso has stolen through the years; although he has no real use for money, he has found it occasionally still comes in handy. However, the bag inspires possessive feelings about its contents, leading to paranoia over time. Tyves has surely crossed that line by now.)

Finally, Alfonso is cursed with unending hunger that only slightly abates when he has gorged himself full. While, like most normal vampires, he feeds on blood, he has also found he can gain similar sustenance from any bodily substance (flesh, organs, bone marrow, etc.). In order to abate his hunger, he has taken to completely devouring his prey, leaving only empty bones. This horror-inspiring process takes a mere ten minutes and any who witness it must make a madness check. If Alfonso only drinks the blood of his victims (which is *extremely* rare as he drains 3 points of Constitution per round), those that die will rise in three days as a Feral vampire under Alfonso's control.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

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- ◆ Alfonso spots the PCs performing an act of extreme charity and decides the characters are some of the few remaining just men left in the world. He therefore begins to stalk the characters, and in occasional cases aid them (by ripping enemies apart when they aren't looking) and leaving them small gifts (taken from "less worthy" recipients). He even may develop specific "helping styles" and feelings for each character. Soon, though, the PCs may become suspicious when a trail of horrible murders follows their passage, and when Alfonso inevitably comes to take less interest in his charges or, worse, comes to believe he was mistaken about them—he reacts.
- ◆ Portia, the Phoenix qabalist, survived her encounter with Alfonso many centuries ago—though "survived" is a relative term, as she became the only other feral vampire in existence. Since then her heart has blossomed with hatred for her creator and she has become a powerful minion of the Red Death—corrupting, destroying, and creating as that entity sees fit. Still she has never given up her desire to destroy her maker and has decided to enlist "champions of good," through agents of hers, to hunt down and destroy Alfonso. PCs who take up her crusade against the terrible man may uncover his history and even develop a sort of tragic sympathy for the beast, or at least will learn that their employer is actually a far greater menace to humanity than the broken monster.
- ◆ A beautiful lady of the upper class in the PCs' home area (preferably someone close like a love interest, sister, best friend, etc.) has developed a great interest in aiding the needy and suffering of those around her and has had great success in this endeavor. Unfortunately Alfonso has noticed this and has developed a crush on the poor girl. Ultimately, after numerous attempts at wooing and protecting her, he has deluded himself into thinking that his curse would be perceived as a blessing by the girl (and with his charm ability it will be). To this end he begins a slow and subtle stalking, followed by a series of drainings that will leave her deathly ill and will ultimately turn her into one of the undead. The PCs must find out the true nature of their foe and bring an end to him as he tries to find companionship once again in his truly miserable life.



MADAME SEJOURNÉ

A Vengeful Spirit from Gothic Haiti

by Bil Boozer

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BIOGRAPHY

The Haitian slave revolts of the late 1700s were bloody, savage conflicts, and fighters on both sides committed atrocities that even a century later are nauseating to think about. One victim of these atrocities was Madame Sejourné, a French woman and wife to a plantation owner who lived on the southern peninsula.

APPEARANCE

Madame Sejourné appears much as she did when she died at age twenty-eight—young and attractive except that her mouth is frozen in a perpetual scream. Her translucent form is dressed in a ripped, bloody dress, and her form glows with an eerie white light that illuminates the area in a fifteen foot radius around her.

MADAME SEJOURNÉ

Banshee (3rd Magnitude Ghost), Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	-2/4*	Str	10
Movement	15	Dex	12
Level/Hit Dice	7	Con	10
Hit Points	52	Int	15
THAC0	13	Wis	7
Morale	18	Cha	6
No. of Attacks	1	XP	7,000
Damage/Attack	1-8 (cause wounds with touch)		
Special Attacks	Keening		
Special Defenses	Undead immunities, hit only by silver or magic weapons; aura of despair		
Magic Resistance	20%		

* Ethereal vs. nonethereal foes/ethereal vs. ethereal foes

Madame Sejourné radiates despair in a 100-foot radius. Characters within this radius must make a saving throw vs. spell at -2 or be overcome by her aura of despair. Affected characters will become lethargic and

depressed, and they will suffer a -2 penalty to all attack rolls, saving throws, and proficiency checks so long as they remain inside the area. Leaving the area will return characters to normal, but they must make another saving throw each time they enter the area.

Madame Sejourné can cause wounds with her chilling touch, doing 1d8 points of damage with a successful attack roll. Twice per night, she can loose a horrific keening. All creatures within thirty feet of her when she keens suffer 3d6+3d4 points of damage; a successful save vs. death magic results in only 10 + 2d4 points of damage.

Madame Sejourné is noncorporeal and is vulnerable only to weapons of +1 or greater enchantment or to weapons made of silver. As an undead creature, she is immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells; she is also immune to cold-based or electricity based attacks. Holy water can do 1d6 points of damage if it is splashed on her form, and she can be turned as a “special” undead creature. A *dispel evil* spell will destroy Madame Sejourné, but she will reform after the following dusk.

BACKGROUND

Madame Sejourné was one of the many victims of the savage fighting that broke out in Haiti in November 1791. On their plantation a few miles southwest of Jeremie on the southern peninsula, Monsieur and Madame Sejourné were captured by *mulâtres* protesting France’s revoking their rights as citizens. Madame Sejourné had been pregnant for eight months when she and her husband were captured. Their captors decapitated Monsieur Sejourné as his wife watched horrified. Then, they savagely cut her open to remove her unborn child, which was thrown to the hogs, and her husband’s head was sewn up inside her womb. She screamed in pain and terror until she died.

PERSONALITY

Madame Sejourné is completely irrational, wanting nothing more than the death of any person she

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encounters. She is anchored to her two-story home and can travel no more than thirty feet from it (although her keening can be heard quite a bit further than that). She is only active at night, and she will be unaware of any activity that has taken place in her home during the day. She generally appears in the ruins of her home 20-50 minutes after sunset and disappears as the sun appears over the eastern mountains.

Madame Sejourné's nightly presence has caused the withering of all vegetation within a one-mile radius of the house. Consequently, there are no animals that frequent the area, and it could be used as a relatively safe place for characters to spend the night provided they stay out of the house in the center of the area. Residents of the area outside the one-mile radius believe that an evil spirit inhabits the house, and they avoid it and the barren area around it.

If the house is destroyed, Madame Sejourné remains anchored to her body, which lies rotting away in the small cellar of the house. If her body is destroyed, then the banshee has lost her anchor and is free to roam the land causing terror wherever she goes. Of course, she'll want to kill those who destroyed her body before she finds new victims.

COMBAT

Although insane, Madame Sejourné is well aware of her powers and how to use them against intruders. Her aura of despair is such that anyone within the house when she appears will be aware that something has changed, particularly if he or she is affected. Screaming in anger, Madame Sejourné will travel through the house attacking anyone she encounters with her chilling touch. If confronted by a formidable force, she will resort to keening and then retreat if a substantial number of her opponents survive that attack. Thereafter, she will use the mansion itself to hide her as she defeats her foes by appearing out of walls and then disappearing back into them after attacking someone from behind. She has only a 1 in 10 chance of surprising opponents with this attack because her glow gives her away before she strikes. Madame Sejourné is unable to pursue intruders more than ten feet from the house itself. Because of her ties to the location, she is always aware of any living presence within the house.

Once an intruder is dead, Madame Sejourné loses interest in him or her, so a clever character might use *feign death* or a similar magical effect to elude the banshee. Madame Sejourné makes no attempt to attack undead creatures that she discovers in her home, although she won't be happy that they're there. She wants only to be left alone in her grief and terror.

If one of the intruders in her home is a pregnant woman, then that character will be the primary target of Madame Sejourné's attacks, as she cannot tolerate another's being able to bear a child when her own was stolen from her. If a woman does give birth to a child within the house and in Madame Sejourné's presence, the banshee will emit a final keening (even if she has done so twice already that night) and then disappear, never to return. This final keening does not cause any damage, but all characters within thirty feet of Madame Sejourné when she makes this last cry must save vs. death magic or become deaf permanently; those who make a successful saving throw also lose their hearing, but it returns in 1d6 hours.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- ◆ A villain who is aware of Madame Sejourné kidnaps an NPC important to one or more of the party members and confines the prisoner in an upstairs room in the Sejourné house, providing clues that lead the party to the house just before dusk. Alternatively, one of the PCs could be mounted by a Gu'aydé loa who leads its mount to the Sejourné house before dismounting.
- ◆ Having desecrated a *bokor's* Voudou ceremony, the party is on the run and comes to the Sejourné house. Their pursuers will only reluctantly follow into the one-mile radius around the house, and they will come to no more than 300 feet of the house itself, keeping a guard around it so that the party is trapped. If the heroes don't find a way to escape, then they'll be there until after dusk and meet the house's main resident.
- ◆ While in Europe, the party is hired by a member of the Sejourné family who recently discovered the family's property on Haiti. The relative asks the party to survey the land and find out if any family members are still residing there.

Inside the house, the party discovers that it has been ransacked, apparently robbed. There is a bedroom that was obviously set up to be a child's nursery, although everything in it is covered with dust. At the DM's discretion, one or more of the items in the nursery may act as warding allergens against Madame Sejourné. There may also be items of value in the house for PCs to pilfer as well as journals kept by Madame Sejourné and/or her husband that would provide additional clues about her demise. If the PCs have no access to divination magic, then perhaps a letter written by an associate of one of her killers may describe her gruesome death. The journals would be written in French, while the letter would be written in Creole.

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An encounter with Madame Sejourné should be designed to scare the PCs. They cannot negotiate with the banshee, as she is insane. Their best bet is to run, provided they have some place safe to run to. If the house is surrounded by armed pursuers, then the PCs are in something of a fix. Even if the PCs do figure out how to destroy the banshee, accomplishing that task—deliberately endangering the life of a pregnant woman—will certainly earn them a powers check.

It would be helpful if the PCs had some experience dealing with ghosts before their meeting with Madame Sejourné so they are at least familiar with some of the common properties of ghosts and are aware that ghosts have allergens. It would also be a good idea to make sure at least two of them have enchanted weapons. Note that any single individual who stays alone in the house overnight is extremely unlikely to survive the encounter with the banshee, so there may be a body or two in the house when the party arrives.



SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE RED DEATH

PART ONE:

Being an Account of the Life and Career of the Great Detective on Gothic Earth, up to and Partially Including the Great Hiatus

by Joe Bardales
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INTRODUCTION

“Come, Watson, come! The Game is afoot!”

Sherlock Holmes
“**The Adventure of the Abbey Grange,**”
The Return of Sherlock Holmes

In all of literature, perhaps no character is more renowned and beloved than the world’s first and foremost consulting detective, Sherlock Holmes. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle penned a total of fifty-six short stories and four novels that present the cases of Sherlock Holmes, collectively referred to as the Canon. The citizens of Gothic Earth are perhaps more fortunate than we are, for Holmes and his chronicler Dr. John Watson are not mere fictional characters in their world but actual persons who walk the streets of Victorian London. With the corrupting presence of the Great Evil known as the Red Death on Gothic Earth, it is only natural to assume that Sherlock Holmes has run afoul of this malignant entity, and crossed wits with its evil minions on more than one occasion.

This article attempts to address some of the differences and discrepancies between the Sherlock Holmes of literature and the Sherlock Holmes of Gothic Earth. While intended primarily for Dungeon Masters, Player Characters with the Forbidden Lore proficiency might be privy to the information contained within at the DM’s discretion. Forbidden Lore is provided for some

of the famous cases from the Canon which, for obvious reasons, have not been revealed to the public by Dr. Watson at Holmes’ request. Full NPC write-ups are also provided of Holmes and Watson, as well as other prominent characters of the Canon, for use in a Masque of the Red Death campaign set in Victorian London. Other interesting tidbits related to the Canon are included as well to add further detail and help round out the London of Gothic Earth, including information on the Diogenes Club and the Baker Street Irregulars. Finally, this article may be used to provide adventure ideas for PCs with the detective kit for tradesmen in the Masque of the Red Death horror roleplaying setting.

The information within this article only covers the career of the Great Detective through the start of the Great Hiatus. The Great Hiatus was a period of time when Sherlock Holmes was assumed to have died combating the evil Professor Moriarty, and he let the world, including his chronicler Watson, continue to believe so to better be able to fulfill his mission from a position of relative anonymity. Further information on Sherlock Holmes’ adventures during the Great Hiatus will be provided in the upcoming year through various Masque of the Red Death resources on the Internet, and the second part of this article detailing his career after the Great Hiatus will appear in next year’s Ravenloft NetBook available from the Secrets of the Kargatane web site.

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A BRIEF COMMENTARY ON THE LITERARY AGENT

"Where there is no imagination there is no horror."

Sherlock Holmes
A Study in Scarlet

When Dr. Watson first established a London medical practice, he became acquainted with a fellow physician and part-time author by the name of Arthur Conan Doyle. Their professional relationship soon blossomed into a friendship, and Doyle became fascinated with Watson's accounts of the adventures of Sherlock Holmes. At first considering himself an amateur unlikely to be published, Watson passed on his accounts of the cases of Sherlock Holmes to Doyle, whose name and reputation had earned him some connections in the London publishing circle. Soon after, the first Sherlock Holmes story, *A Study in Scarlet*, was published in the 1887 issue of *Beeton's Christmas Annual* under Doyle's name (on Gothic Earth, *A Study in Scarlet* was not narrated by Dr. Watson but instead written in the third person). The response from the public for more stories about Sherlock Holmes was so overwhelming that Doyle introduced Watson to his publishers and arranged for him to have his own accounts of the cases published. From that time on, Doyle has served as his literary agent. Through Watson, Doyle has met with Holmes on several occasions, and the two men got on just famously, each counting the other as a personal friend (See also the entry for Arthur Conan Doyle in the "Who's Who on Gothic Earth" section of *The Gothic Earth Gazetteer*).

FORBIDDEN LORE OF THE CANON

"When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth."

Sherlock Holmes
The Sign of Four

This section documents the heretofore-unknown supernatural and occult occurrences within the cases of the Great Detective, Sherlock Holmes, that comprise the Canon. For the sake of convenience, the cases are presented in the form of a timeline, and for the sake of completeness, cases that transpired as written by Dr.

John H. Watson without any associated Forbidden Lore are included as well. No attempt is made to summarize the events of the cases as published by Watson, and the reader is referred to the actual stories in the Canon, or to other secondary sources for a synopsis (see "References" below). At the request of Holmes, Watson has refrained from bringing to light this confidential and mysterious information in his published accounts of these cases for the sake of the public good. Because of this necessity, the astute reader may notice a few differences in detail between the cases as presented in the Canon and the Forbidden Lore accounts of how they actually transpired on Gothic Earth. Finally, this section only presents Forbidden Lore from cases that took place prior to the Great Hiatus.

Note: The exact dates of the cases of Sherlock Holmes have long been the subject of debate by Holmesian and Sherlockian scholars. The dates used in this list are taken from *Encyclopedia Sherlockia* by Matthew E. Bunson (see "References" below). While this author does not necessarily agree with the accuracy of all these dates, they are perhaps the best and most logical choice for a campaign set on Gothic Earth.

1874, August–September: "The 'Gloria Scott'," *Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*

1879, Oct. 2: "The Musgrave Ritual," *Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*

Forbidden Lore

Sir Ralph Musgrave, a cavalier and companion to King Charles II prior to the Restoration of the monarchy, was a member of the qabal known as the Phoenix. In addition to the crown of Charles I, the Musgrave family was entrusted to protect several magical tomes and secret documents belonging to the Phoenix from Cromwell's reign of terror during the years of the Commonwealth. Oliver Cromwell had instituted a witch-hunt as a cover to eliminate members of the Phoenix. Sherlock Holmes uncovered all these items on the grounds of Hurlstone Manor House in Sussex by interpreting the key within the cryptic words of the Musgrave Ritual. Holmes was living on Montague Street in London at the time, and turned over the texts and documents of the Phoenix to the adjacent British Museum.

1881, March: *A Study in Scarlet*

1883, April: "The Adventure of the Speckled Band," *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*

Forbidden Lore

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Holmes' adversary in this case, Dr. Grimesby Roylott, was a yaun-ti pureblood (see the *Monstrous Manual*). Roylott was also very wary of the Vistani, and allowed them to camp on the grounds of his Surrey estate, Stoke Moran, without incident.

1886, October: "The Resident Patient," *Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*

1886, October: "The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor," *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*

1886, October: "The Adventure of the Second Stain," *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*

1887, April: "The Reigate Puzzle," *Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*

1887, May: "A Scandal in Bohemia," *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*

Forbidden Lore

Irene Adler, who was able to outwit Sherlock Holmes in this case, was in fact a werefox. Like the King of Bohemia, Holmes was not immune to her charms, and nearly became enslaved by her. He was able to deduce her true nature, however, and reason quickly overcame charm. Despite this knowledge of her lycanthropy, he could not bring himself to kill her and let her escape. Although a creature of evil, Irene Adler has not forgotten this gesture, and she awaits the day she can return the favor.

1887, June: "The Man with the Twisted Lip," *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*

1887, September: "The Five Orange Pips," *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*

Forbidden Lore

The villain of this case, Captain James Calhoun, was not only a leading member of the Ku Klux Klan, but belonged to an evil qabal known as the White Legion as well. Colonel Elias Openshaw, who served in the Confederate Army under Hood during the American Civil War, was an orange planter who joined the Klan in Florida. Captain Calhoun approached Elias about joining the White Legion, but the occult activities of that organization offended the colonel, who had no desire to dabble in the black arts. Calhoun intended to kill him for refusing the offer because he now knew too much about the secretive qabal. Elias, however, managed to escape to England before the captain could carry out his plans. After many years had passed, Calhoun finally hunted Elias Openshaw and murdered him. Fearing the colonel had passed his knowledge about the White

Legion on to his brother Joseph, an industrialist also living in England, Calhoun assassinated him as well. It was John Openshaw, son of Joseph and nephew of Elias, who sought Sherlock Holmes' assistance when he too received death threats in the form of a letter accompanied by five orange seeds.

This case was perhaps the greatest failure of the Great Detective, who foolishly let John Openshaw return to his home in Sussex without protective accompaniment while he began his investigations. On route, Calhoun and his accomplices struck, and dumped the body of John Openshaw into the Thames River. Holmes cursed his stupidity and swore revenge on Calhoun, but was forced to confront a new problem. That night, the body of John Openshaw dragged itself from the Thames intent on seeking its own revenge on Sherlock Holmes. In the form of a revenant (see the *Monstrous Manual*), Openshaw attacked Sherlock Holmes as he was leaving 221B Baker Street late at night to intercept Calhoun at the Albert Dock. Holmes became paralyzed with fear as he recognized the water-bloated corpse whose eyes began to blaze with great intensity as it turned to face the detective. As Openshaw's claw-like hands reached for Holmes's throat, Dr. Watson fired his service revolver at the walking corpse, forcing it to stagger backwards. Holmes regained his senses at the sound of the shots, and thinking quickly, presented the five orange seeds from the death threat letter to the revenant. The undead monster withdrew, and headed back towards the Thames.

The delay caused Holmes to miss apprehending Calhoun before his ship left port, but he did take some comfort in the fact that the vessel never reached its destination of Savannah, Georgia, presumably lost at sea. Holmes related to Watson that it was no coincidence they never saw John Openshaw's revenant again.

1887, October: "A Case of Identity," *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*

1887, October: "The Red-headed League," *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*

1887, November: "The Adventure of the Dying Detective," *His Last Bow*

1887, Dec. 27: "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle," *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*

1888, January: *The Valley of Fear*

Forbidden Lore

The Scrowlers were an evil secret society posing as Lodge 341 of the benign Ancient Order of Freeman in the Vermissa Valley, a coal mining region of the United

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States located in the Glimerton Mountains. Their leaders were wolfweres that included Jessik, who later broke from his brethren to intimidate the small West Virginia town of Falls Run through the Sleeping Wolf (see "Falls Run" by James Wyatt in *DUNGEON Magazine* #67).

1888, April: "The Yellow Face," *Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*

1888, September: "The Greek Interpreter," *Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*

1888, September: *The Sign of Four*

1888, September: *The Hound of the Baskervilles*

Forbidden Lore

Holmes was unavailable at the onset of this case (sending Watson in his stead) as he was previously engaged with the undocumented case of the Vatican cameos on behalf of Pope Leo XIII. During this time, Leo XIII introduced Holmes to Professor Abraham van Helsing, leader of the qabal known as Die Wächtern. Previously, Holmes had spoken with the Holy Father about some of the more supernatural elements in cases he had investigated. The Pope came to realize that an alliance between these two great men would be most beneficial in the battle against the evil entity known as the Red Death. At the request of Leo XIII, Van Helsing took Holmes into his confidence and offered Holmes membership in Die Wächtern, but decided, however, to withhold his knowledge of the existence of the Red Death at this time. Holmes refused the offer, stating that such ties might later hinder him in his investigations. He did, however, pledge to aid Van Helsing and his qabal whenever and however he could.

At the completion of the Vatican cameo case, Holmes returned to England and traveled to Devonshire on Dartmoor to begin work on the Baskerville case. Instead of joining Watson directly at Baskerville Hall (near the hamlet of Grimpen), Holmes hid out at Black Tor overlooking Grimpen Mire to better investigate the case. While his presence on the moor was unknown to all at Baskerville Hall including Watson, Holmes did make contact with a band of gypsies calling themselves "Vistani." They were camped on the moor near the treacherous bog of Grimpen Mire that was said to be the home of the ghostly Hound of the Baskervilles. The Vistani explained to Holmes that the hound of legend was in fact a moor hound that appeared as a great mastiff with a spectral black form and flaming red eyes (see Moor Hound under Dog, Bog Hound in *Monstrous Compendium Annual Volume Two*).

The story of the moor hound's creation began during the time of the Great Rebellion (circa 1647) when Sir Hugo Baskerville refused to allow the Vistani's ancestors

to camp on his property and threatened them with violence if they did not withdraw. The tribe promised to leave in three days' time, but before they could break camp and depart, Sir Hugo attacked a young Vistani maiden in a drunken rage. The young woman fled from his unwanted advances into Grimpen Mire where she met her death by drowning in a patch of quicksand. In her anger, the raunie of the time evoked a powerful curse directed not only at Sir Hugo but also any of his descendants that would later become master of Baskerville Hall. The result was the summoning of the moor hound, which hunted down every Baskerville to inherit the estate until they died in fear like the wronged Vistana.

The Vistani were currently camped near Baskerville Hall in an effort to capture (and if necessary, to bury) a former member of their tribe, a darkling convict that had escaped from a British gaol and now believed to be hiding out on the moor. Meanwhile, Jack Stapleton, a naturalist and future brother-in-law to the current master of Baskerville Hall, Sir Henry Baskerville, spent some time exploring Grimpen Mire, where he met up with the escaped convict. Stapleton was in fact Jack Baskerville, a distant relative attempting to wrestle the Baskerville estate away from Sir Henry and all the while plotting his murder. The chance meeting with the fugitive darkling in Grimpen Mire presented him a unique opportunity. The renegade Vistana offered to help him carry out his plans by manipulating the original curse to protect Jack from the Hound when he ascended as master of Baskerville Hall in exchange for money and safe passage out of England. As related by Watson in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Holmes was able to deduce the true identity of Stapleton, but he also uncovered his connection with the escaped darkling convict. Holmes went on to save Sir Henry from a near-fatal attack by the moor hound by cleverly using a small mirror to catch the first ray of morning sunshine as it broke over the moor, then directing the beam at the spectral mastiff. This caused the damage he had inflicted earlier with his revolver to become permanent and fatal to the ghostly canine. With the death of the moor hound, the Baskerville's ancestral curse came to an end, and the Vistani were content to leave it at that, feeling justice had been more than served. Stapleton, now revealed to be a Baskerville, attempted to escape into Grimpen Mire, where he is presumed to have drowned. It is unknown what ever happened to his darkling accomplice.

The case of the Hound of the Baskervilles was first brought to Holmes attention by Sir Henry's personal physician, Mr. James Mortimer, M.R.C.S. Unbeknownst to Holmes, Mortimer was a member of Die Wächtern acting on the orders of Professor Abraham Van Helsing.

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1889, April: “The Adventure of the Copper Beeches,”
Adventures of Sherlock Holmes

1889, June: “The Boscombe Valley Mystery,”
Adventures of Sherlock Holmes

1889, June: “The Stock-broker’s Clerk,” *Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*

1889, July: “The Naval Treaty,” *Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*

1889, August–September: “The Adventure of the Cardboard Box,” *His Last Bow*

1889, September: “The Adventure of the Engineer’s Thumb,” *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*

1889, September: “The Crooked Man,” *Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*

1890, March: “The Adventure of Wisteria Lodge,” *His Last Bow*

Forbidden Lore

In this adventure, Sherlock Holmes was first exposed to the practice of Voodoo and its mysterious magical rituals. The villain of this case, Don Juan Murillo, had fled from the Caribbean after he was deposed as dictator of San Pedro, a small islet off the Haitian coast on Gothic Earth. He was living under an alias in England, knowing full well that the further he was away from Haiti, the less vulnerable he was to the magical practices of the voodoo priests who wished to extract vengeance for the horrible crimes he committed under his cruel regime. (For more about Voodoo on Gothic Earth, see “A Guide to Voodoo on Gothic Earth” by Bil Boozer elsewhere in *The Book of Sorrows*).

1890, September: “Silver Blaze,” *Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*

Forbidden Lore

When an abandoned gypsy camp was found near the scene of the crime, the Vistani became the prime suspects in this case involving the murder of John Straker and subsequent theft of Colonel Ross’ racehorse, Silver Blaze. Returning the favor the Vistani performed for him in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Sherlock Holmes again journeyed to Dartmoor to investigate the case and clear their name. Afterwards, the raunie of the tribe took Holmes into her vardo wagon and gave him a prophetic reading from a strange deck of cards she called the Tarokka. She foretold that a man from Holmes’s past would soon reenter his life and prove to be his greatest nemesis. She warned him that this powerful adversary would appear to be at the center of a

great web of evil, but was in fact a mere pawn of the true enemy. She cautioned Holmes to heed these words: “All will not be as it appears to be. Even your remarkable gifts may not reveal to you what you need to know before it is too late. Your great skill in the art of detection is about to be tested to its limits. Always remember that this man is living behind a veil of illusion, and he is but a symptom, not the cause, of a far greater evil.”

1890, December: “The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet,” *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*

1891, April 24–May 4: “The Final Problem”,
Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes

Forbidden Lore

See “What Really Happened at Reichenbach Falls” below.

1891, May 4–1894, April 5: The Great Hiatus

Forbidden Lore

See “The Truth behind the Great Hiatus” below.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED AT REICHENBACH FALLS

“It is with a heavy heart that I take up my pen to write these the last words in which I shall ever record the singular gifts by which my friend Mr. Sherlock Holmes was distinguished.”

Dr. Watson
“The Final Problem,”
Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes

From January to April in the year 1891, Sherlock Holmes engaged in an all out war against the criminal empire of his greatest nemesis, Professor James Moriarty (see *A Guide to Gothic Earth* in the MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH boxed set for game statistics). During this time, Holmes was able to deduce the true nature of the professor, discovering him to be a malevolent spirit originating from India known as a rakshasa. Holmes confided in his friend Professor Abraham van Helsing his discovery, and the leader of Die Wächtern was able to provide the Great Detective with information on how to combat this menace. Moriarty, who was aware that his

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secret had been discovered, concentrated all his efforts on removing the troublesome consulting detective once and for all.

Holmes and Moriarty chased one another from London and across Europe to the Reichenbach Falls at Switzerland where they faced each other in a final showdown. Alone, the rakshasa attacked first, lunging at the Great Detective in its true tiger form, having dropped its illusions. Holmes was prepared, and drew a medieval Indian crossbow inlaid with white tiger bone he procured from the British Museum from under his coat, and loosed a crossbow bolt with an ivory tip deep into Moriarty's chest. Stunned, the evil rakshasa staggered backwards and stumbled over the edge of the cliff to plummet into the watery chasm at the bottom of Reichenbach Falls. Holmes looked over the edge of the chasm, but could see no sign of Professor Moriarty's body in the turbulent foam below.

THE TRUTH BEHIND THE GREAT HIATUS

"Well, then, about that chasm. I had no serious difficulty in getting out of it, for the very simple reason that I never was in it."

Sherlock Holmes
"The Empty House,"
The Return of Sherlock Holmes

On May 4, 1891, newspapers across Gothic Earth announced that Sherlock Holmes was dead, apparently killed while ending the criminal career of Professor James Moriarty at Reichenbach Falls in Switzerland. Sherlock Holmes smiled when he saw his plan had worked, although he somewhat regretted not being able to let Watson know he was still alive and well. It was for the best, however, to continue to deceive his friend and chronicler, not only to ensure his friend's safety but to allow him to embark on the next phase of his mission against the very heart of darkness.

Until that time, Holmes felt it was his greatest duty to rid the world of Moriarty and his vast criminal empire, and he was willing to sacrifice his own life to do it. In the course of his investigations, however, he was able to deduce Moriarty's true nature, and the need to end his machinations became even greater. Holmes recalled the words the Vistani raunie had spoke to him in her vardo wagon that dark, moonless night on Dartmoor, and soon came to another realization. It was as if all his singular

experiences with the supernatural to date, combined with the powers of detection and deduction he had cultivated all his life, came together in a moment of clarity. Holmes could find no other solution, and therefore what he had reasoned must be true. In an instant, Holmes became aware of a great evil presence existing in the world, one that underlined all that was evil but was itself not of this world. And the thought chilled him to the core.

Holmes contacted Pope Leo XIII immediately and told him of his dark discovery. The pope replied that he was already aware of this great threat, and that it was known to a small few as the Red Death. At the pope's suggestion, Holmes contrived his plan to drop from sight by letting the world assume him dead. He hoped that by doing so, the minions of the Red Death that were aware of the threat he now posed would be satisfied and drop their guard. Traveling from Switzerland in the guise of a Norwegian explorer named Bjorn Sigerson, Holmes went to the Vatican to meet up with Pope Leo XIII and Abraham Van Helsing. Holmes also confided his plans to his brother Mycroft, who agreed to manage his affairs for as long as he was gone.

Unfortunately, Holmes was unaware that one other individual had witnessed him walk away from Reichenbach Falls alive and unscathed...

WHO S WHO ON GOTHIC EARTH: NPCs OF THE CANON

MAJOR NPCs OF THE CANON

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SHERLOCK HOLMES

"I play the game for the game's own sake."

Sherlock Holmes
"The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans,"
His Last Bow

13th-level Tradesman (Detective), Lawful Good

Armor Class	6	Str	18
Movement	12	Dex	18
Level/Hit Dice	13	Con	17
Hit Points	63	Int	18
THACO	14	Wis	16
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	12
Damage/Attacks	By weapon		
Special Attacks	Nil		
Special Defenses	Nil		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

Weapon Proficiencies: Derringer, pistol (army), pistol (navy), rapier/foil

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Criminology, law (British), chemistry, geology, toxicology, musician (violin), pugilism, marksmanship, athletics (fencing), tracking, disguise, modern language (French), hide in shadows, move silently, open locks, forbidden lore (note: this list was compiled in part from the account given by Dr. John Watson regarding his new friend and roommate Sherlock Holmes in the novel *A Study in Scarlet*)

APPEARANCE

The Great Detective Sherlock Holmes is a tall English gentleman with a wiry frame and a distinguished aquiline nose, and he is frequently encountered wearing his trademark Ulster coat, deerstalker cap, and a long cravat tightly wrapped around his neck. Due to his highly successful career as a consulting detective, chronicled faithfully by his friend and associate Dr. John Watson, he is a fairly recognizable figure on Gothic Earth (when not in disguise for a case he is working on of course). Holmes also enjoys smoking a good shag of tobacco from his meerschaum pipe, especially when he is occupied with a particularly challenging "three-pipe problem."

BACKGROUND

Sherlock Holmes was born the second son of an English country squire on January 6, 1854. His older brother, Mycroft Holmes, was seven years his senior. In October of 1872, he entered Christ Church College at Oxford, having spent the previous summer in a class taught by

Professor James Moriarty, who would later reenter Holmes life as his greatest nemesis. While attending university, Holmes investigated and solved the first case of his career (detailed in "The 'Gloria Scott'", *Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*), the success of which provided the impetus for him to seriously decide on detective work as his future livelihood. After leaving Oxford in 1877, Holmes took rooms in London on Montague Street nearby the British Museum, and embarked on his career as a consulting detective. His early cases included "The Musgrave Ritual" (*Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*) as well as several other undocumented cases that are mentioned in passing in the stories comprising the Canon.

In January of 1881, the historic first meeting of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John Watson took place in the chemistry lab at St. Bartholomew's Hospital where Holmes was conducting experiments. Their mutual friend Stamford introduced the two men when he realized both were in search of a roommate. The next day, Holmes and Watson moved into their now famous London lodgings at 221B Baker Street. For ten years, Holmes and Watson worked together on many cases, starting with *A Study in Scarlet*. On May 4, 1891, Sherlock Holmes was reported dead to the world by Dr. Watson following the events described in "The Final Problem" (*Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*). Apparently, a battle to the death ensued between the Great Detective and the infamous Professor Moriarty that resulted in both men tumbling over a cliff at Reichenbach Falls, Switzerland to a watery grave in the chasm below.

PERSONALITY

Sherlock Holmes is a man of two personalities. When there is no problem to solve that occupies his time and faculties, he becomes silent and moody, shunning the company of his fellow man, and pining away on his violin. When a problem worthy of his attention presents itself, Holmes immediately becomes active, energetic and engaged. Holmes has no illusions about his gift for the art of detection. At the same time, he is no stranger to humility, and will freely admit when he is off the track or erroneous in his conclusions. In fact, he has instructed Watson, whenever it appears he is becoming overconfident in his abilities, to whisper "Norbury" in his ear ("The Yellow Face", *Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*).

While on the surface he may appear to be arrogant and impatient with those who are not able to see the solution to a problem as readily as he can, he has never had a need for public acknowledgment. In fact, he is content with allowing the London Metropolitan Police or Scotland Yard to take credit for solving the crimes he has investigated on their behalf. His remarkable abilities

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might never have become public knowledge if it wasn't for the fact that his friend Watson has faithfully served as his chronicler, publishing the accounts of his many adventures and the methods of deduction and detection he employs. Holmes is greatly amused by this flattery.

In summary, the personality of Sherlock Holmes is quite complex, and the stories of the entire Canon are rife with Watson's musings on the subject. Self-described as not actively seeking the company of other men, he has allowed Watson into his world by embracing him in friendship. And if anyone on Gothic Earth can truly know Sherlock Holmes, it would be his loyal friend and chronicler, John Watson.

COMBAT

Although Holmes appears to be thin and wiry, Watson's accounts of his adventures describe him as possessing well above average strength, and being a boxer of no small skill. He is proficient with the rapier or foil, and counts fencing as one of his hobbies. A marksman with various types of hand-held firearms, Watson disapproved of the target practice Holmes would conduct from his armchair—usually a patriotic display of bullet holes in the form of Her Majesty's initials, V. R.—using the walls of their Baker Street flat). Holmes also possesses some knowledge of the martial art known as *baritsu*, a Japanese system of wrestling (use the Punching and Wrestling rules under the Attacking Without Killing section in “Chapter 9: Combat” of the Player's Handbook). Despite his outward appearance, Holmes is more than capable of defending himself in a physical confrontation.

Forbidden Lore

In the course of his professional career as a consulting detective, Sherlock Holmes has been exposed to the supernatural and the occult on many occasions, and he is now fully aware of the great evil presence underlying much of the evil in the world known to a rare few as the Red Death. While Holmes prefers to work independently, he does maintain close contacts with several qabals on Gothic Earth (most notably Die Wächtern and the Vistani - see *The Hound of the Baskervilles* under “Forbidden Lore of the Canon”), and he frequently consults with and performs services for these secretive groups. Holmes is also aware of the existence of magic on Gothic Earth, but he remains wary of the art and anyone capable of wielding it, knowing full well the potential for corruption its use presents. He has elected not to share all his knowledge of these dark subjects with Watson, hoping to protect his dear, loyal friend from any possible danger or retribution (see “What

Really Happened at Reichenbach Falls” and “The Truth behind the Great Hiatus” above).

DR. JOHN H. WATSON, MD

“I have all the facts in my journal, and the public shall know them.”

Dr. Watson

A Study in Scarlet

7th-level Tradesman (Physician), Lawful Good

Armor Class	10	Str	12
Movement	12	Dex	14
Level/Hit Dice	7	Con	18
Hit Points	24	Int	15
THAC0	17	Wis	11
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	10

Damage/Attack By weapon

Special Attacks Nil

Special Defenses Nil

Magic Resistance Nil

Weapon Proficiencies: Pistol (army—his “service revolver”)

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Medicine, chemistry, biology, journalism, athletics (rugby), animal husbandry (canines)

APPEARANCE

Dr. John Watson is a man of middle height, stout of build and of a remarkable constitution despite a bullet taken during his service in the Second Afghan War (prior to his association with Sherlock Holmes) that left him a convalescent for many months. His face sports a thick moustache that nicely compliments his square jaw. He favors the conservative clothing of the time, and frequently wears a bowler hat that also serves to hold his stethoscope, which is visible as a bulge in its side. At most times he carries his medical bag containing his diagnostic instruments, and when accompanying Holmes on a case he never travels from London without them.

BACKGROUND

John Hamish Watson was born August 7, 1852, the son of Henry Watson. His mother died while he was still quite young, and his remaining family moved to Australia for a time. He returned to England around 1865 and attended a prestigious school, his father having made his fortune while Down Under. In June of 1872, he entered the University of London Medical School, taking his

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degree of Doctor of Medicine in 1878. He immediately moved to Netley where he took the prescribed course for army surgeons, and by November of 1872 was dispatched to Bombay as part of the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers when the Second Afghan War broke out. Too late to join his original unit, he remained stationed in Bombay.

In the spring of 1880, Watson was reassigned to the 66th Foot Berkshires, and on July 27 he took part in the Battle of Maiwand. During this conflict, he was wounded in the shoulder by a Jezail bullet and nearly captured by the enemy, but his orderly Murray courageously saved him from that fate. He was then taken to Peshawar where he contracted enteric fever as a side effect of his war wound. Over the next few months he had a slow recovery, but by November he was discharged and allowed to return to England. He decided to settle in London, as he no longer had any living relatives to call upon.

In January of 1881, he was desperately seeking a roommate with whom he could share living expenses. By chance, he happened upon an old associate named Stamford at the Criterion Bar in Regent Circus, Piccadilly. Stamford was Watson's dresser at St. Bart's Hospital when he attended the University of London Medical School. Stamford knew of another gentleman also seeking a roommate and took Watson to St. Bart's to meet Sherlock Holmes, thus orchestrating their historical first meeting. The next day, Holmes and Watson visited 221B Baker Street, and finding the rooms to their liking, moved in. The two gentlemen took to each other almost immediately, and a strong, lasting friendship began. Watson recounted their first shared adventure in his novel *A Study in Scarlet*, feeling that the public should be made aware of the methods and contributions of Sherlock Holmes despite his friend's content with anonymity (this novel was rewritten in the third person and published by Arthur Conan Doyle at Watson's request—see "A Brief Commentary on the Literary Agent" above).

In June of 1882, Watson opened a medical practice at 1 Bush Villa, Elm Grove, Southsea. He was still able to pull himself away from his practice to accompany Holmes on his cases, and his remaining free time was spent serving as Holmes chronicler and biographer. The two continued to live on Baker Street and share many adventures for eight years, until Watson married Mary Morstan in May of 1889 and subsequently moved out. Watson first met Mary Morstan in September of 1888 during the adventure of *The Sign of Four*. After their marriage, Dr. Watson bought a practice in the Paddington district of London, but his understanding wife allowed him to continue to accompany the Great Detective on many of his cases, which he continued to

document for the public record. For the next few years, life was content for Watson, until the fatal year of 1891, when he lost not only his best friend at Reichenbach Falls in Switzerland during the events chronicled in "The Final Problem" (*Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*), but his loving wife Mary passed away from the world as well.

PERSONALITY

Although Dr. Watson describes himself as lazy and of little motivation, his actions in the Canon on behalf of his friend Sherlock Holmes seem to prove otherwise. While Watson will never be the great detective that his friend is, frequently bungling his attempts to duplicate the methods of the Great Detective, the one strong trait that he possesses is his great loyalty, not only to Holmes, but to his wife and country as well. While he does not always readily follow the clues and deductions so obvious to his friend, he nevertheless is able to accurately chronicle the methods of Sherlock Holmes upon their explanation at the conclusion of a case. As a physician, he is more than capable (Holmes had the utmost respect for Watson in this regard), and while his practices may not always have flourished, this was due to his desire to remain ever at Holmes disposal, and certainly not attributable to any lack of motivation.

COMBAT

A trained army man, Dr. Watson is completely capable of holding his own in a skirmish. As a young man, he was very active athletically, and played rugby for the Blackheath football team while in medical school. Combined with his remarkable constitution, this early love of sports served him well in later years, and allowed him to recover from the effects of the Jezail bullet and subsequent bout with enteric fever. He is also proficient with the army pistol, the "service revolver" Holmes frequently asks him to take along on their more dangerous adventures.

Forbidden Lore

As Sherlock Holmes adventuring companion and biographer, Dr. Watson has also become aware that there are supernatural and occult forces at work in the world. While he remains ignorant of the existence of the Red Death, he has nevertheless come to accept that there are many things that are unexplainable by science, and perhaps even by the Great Detective. At the request of Holmes, he has left the supernatural elements out of many of the cases he has chronicled for the protection and welfare of the general public. His journal notes

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containing the dark truth about these occurrences remain under lock and key in a strong box protected by the London Banking firm Cox and Company of Charing Cross, along with the details of cases he has yet to publish. In addition, Watson has not confided any of this information to his literary agent, Arthur Conan Doyle.

MYCROFT HOLMES

"If the art of the detective began and ended in reasoning from an armchair, my brother would be the greatest criminal agent that ever lived."

Sherlock Holmes
"The Greek Interpreter,"
Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes

14th-level Tradesman (Scholar), Lawful Neutral

Armor Class	10	Str	10
Movement	12	Dex	9
Levels/Hit Dice	14	Con	12
Hit Points	31	Int	18
THACO	14	Wis	16
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	14
Damage/Attack	By weapon		
Special Attacks	Nil		
Special Defenses	Nil		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

Weapon Proficiencies: Pistol (Navy), sword cane

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Academician, History (Elizabethan England), modern language (German), modern language (French), modern language (Spanish), law (British)

APPEARANCE

The rotund figure of Mycroft Holmes appears slightly unkempt, his clothes wrinkled and his hair frequently mussed. He is larger than his brother Sherlock, but his light, watery gray eyes with their far away, introspective look reveal the family resemblance.

BACKGROUND

The elder brother of Sherlock Holmes, Mycroft is seven years his senior. Officially, Mycroft is employed by the British government at Whitehall in the capacity of an auditor overseeing various governmental departments. Unofficially, he is consulted by all levels of government regarding national policy. His great intellectual abilities of memory and synthesis of data allow him to rapidly evaluate unrelated matters and draw appropriate

conclusions and predict probable outcomes. Sherlock Holmes has remarked that at such times, his brother *is* the British government. The Great Detective has sought advice from his elder brother on more than one occasion, and Mycroft has brought several cases to Sherlock's attention. Mycroft Holmes is also a founding member of the Diogenes Club, a gentlemen's organization on Pall Mall. Other than his office at Whitehall, Mycroft limits himself to his rooms on Pall Mall and the Diogenes Club across the way.

PERSONALITY

Outwardly, Mycroft Holmes seems to be lacking in ambition and energy, limiting himself to the narrow orbit of his Pall Mall lodgings, his office in Whitehall, and the Diogenes Club. His intellectual abilities and powers of observation are in fact greater than those possessed by his brother. The Great Detective has remarked, however, that his brother would rather be considered wrong than go out of his way to prove himself right.

COMBAT

While proficient with both the navy pistol and sword cane, Mycroft Holmes is not as capable of defending himself as his famous brother, and prefers to avoid physical confrontation whenever possible.

Forbidden Lore

Mycroft Holmes is the founding member of the qabal known as the Diogenes Club (see "Secret Societies of the Canon: The Diogenes Club" below). He presents himself as an unmotivated loner to protect his true identity and activities on behalf of this organization. Mycroft also keeps his brother Sherlock Holmes in the dark about much of his work with the Diogenes Club, although the famous detective is aware that his older sibling is more than a mere auditor for the British government. Sherlock Holmes, however, has confided everything he has learned about the supernatural to Mycroft, who always listens to everything he relays with great interest. Sherlock has also kept his brother informed of his activities during the Great Hiatus, and Mycroft has been entrusted to handle all his affairs during his absence.

MINOR NPCs OF THE CANON

INSPECTOR

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GEORGE LESTRADE

"You know me too well to think that I am boasting when I say that I shall either confirm or destroy his theory by means which he is quite incapable of employing, or even of understanding."

Sherlock Holmes
"The Boscombe Valley Mystery,"
Adventures of Sherlock Holmes

5th-level Tradesman (Detective), Lawful Good

Armor Class	10	Str	13
Movement	12	Dex	12
Levels/Hit Dice	5	Con	14
Hit Points	14	Int	14
THACO	18	Wis	10
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	16
Damage/Attack	By weapon		
Special Attacks	Nil		
Special Defenses	Nil		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

Weapon Proficiencies: Pistol (army), pistol (navy), rifle, baton

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Criminology, law (British), marksmanship, quick draw, biology (anatomy)

Notes: An inspector of Scotland Yard with the tenacity of a bulldog, Sherlock Holmes categorized him as lacking in imagination and often out of his depth. He shares a professional rivalry with Inspector Gregson. According to Watson, his physique is lean and ferret-like. Despite his condescending attitude towards Sherlock Holmes and his methods, he frequently consults the Great Detective when a particularly singular crime leaves him at a loss. He is not as reluctant to take full credit for solving the case, however. PCs adventuring in London will likely make his acquaintance in cases where Scotland Yard is brought in.

INSPECTOR

TOBIAS GREGSON

4th-level Tradesman (Detective), Lawful Good

Armor Class	10	Str	15
Movement	12	Dex	11
Levels/Hit Dice	4	Con	15
Hit Points	17	Int	15
THACO	19	Wis	9

No. of Attacks	1	Cha	14
Damage/Attack	By weapon		
Special Attacks	Nil		
Special Defenses	Nil		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

Weapon Proficiencies: Pistol (navy), rifle, repeating rifle, baton

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Criminology, law (British), pugilism, athletics (football)

Notes: According to Holmes, Inspector Gregson was the smartest of the Scotland Yarders, and with Lestrade, the best of a bad lot. Gregson is tall with fair skin and flaxen colored hair. He is professionally jealous of his superior Lestrade, but isn't as apprehensive about asking Sherlock Holmes for assistance in a case. Like Lestrade, PCs may encounter Gregson in their dealings with Scotland Yard. In particularly unusual cases, he will accompany his superior to the scene of the crime.

MRS. HUDSON

3rd-level Tradesman (Servant), Lawful Good

Armor Class	10	Str	7
Movement	12	Dex	9
Levels/Hit Dice	3	Con	12
Hit Points	7	Int	11
THACO	19	Wis	16
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	14
Damage/Attack	By weapon		
Special Attacks	Nil		
Special Defenses	Nil		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

Weapon Proficiencies: Pistol (derringer), kitchen knife (treat as pocket knife)

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Etiquette, savoir-faire, cooking

Notes: The long-suffering landlady of Holmes and Watson and 221B Baker Street, she is none the less always ready to serve a simple dinner, afternoon tea or a hearty Scotch breakfast. In addition to seeing to that her lodgers had every comfort, Mrs. Hudson has assisted Holmes on several of his cases. While the Holmes's frequent visitors and irregular hours (combined with his many noxious chemical experiments, indoor firearm practice and heavy tobacco use!) would try the patience of a saint, Mrs. Hudson has always been in great awe of her famous tenant, giving him his space and treating him like a son. If the PCs ever have reason to call upon the Great Detective at 221B Baker Street, they will undoubtedly be lead up the stairs to his rooms by Mrs. Hudson. (The servant kit for tradesman can be found in

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the article “Victorian Knights” by Andrew Hauptman published by the RPGA POLYHEDRON Magazine)

SECRET SOCIETIES OF THE CANON: THE DIOGENES CLUB

“T here are many men in London, you know, who, some for shyness, some from misanthropy, have no wish for the company of their fellows. Y et they are not adverse to comfortable chairs and the latest periodicals.”

Sherlock Holmes
“The Greek Interpreter,”
Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes

A LAWFUL NEUTRAL QABAL

One of the newest qabals on Gothic Earth, the Diogenes Club is also unofficially sanctioned by the British Government. Using the cover of a Pall Mall gentlemen’s club, this qabal engages in espionage and secret missions on behalf of the British Empire. Their activities frequently involve elements of the supernatural, and members are committed to protecting the British people from the knowledge that such things exist at any cost. Agents of the Diogenes Club have encountered minions of the Red Death on several occasions, but the outcomes of these dealings might surprise and upset the most dedicated foes of darkness.

SYMBOL

All members of the Diogenes Club wear a silver pendant etched with a lighted lamp in front of the sun representing the lamp Diogenes carried when he walked the streets of Athens by day in search of an honest man.

MEMBERS

The public face presented by each member of the Diogenes Club is that of a private individual with no desire for friendship or camaraderie. Members include scholars, lawyers (barristers and solicitors) and other tradesmen, but representatives of the soldier, adept and mystic classes are known to be in their ranks as well. Almost every member is employed in some capacity by

the British Government at Whitehall, but all are sworn to defend the Crown and the British Empire at any cost.

HISTORY

Founded in 1879 by Mycroft Holmes, the Diogenes Club grew out of a rising need to deal with certain bizarre and unexplained cases that threatened British national security. The highest-ranking members of the British government call upon the Diogenes Club to handle sensitive incidents, often with supernatural implications, that are deemed best left out of the public record. Since its inception, agents of the Diogenes Club have encountered everything from doppelgangers in Parliament to abominable snowmen (or Yeti) in the Himalayas.

The Diogenes Club operates out of a club located on Pall Mall in London, a short distance from the seat of British government at Whitehall. Outwardly, it appears no different than any other London gentlemen’s club save for the eccentricities of its members (referred to by Holmes as some of “the most unsociable and unclubable men in town”). During normal operating hours, talking is only allowed in the Stranger’s Room. After hours when visitors are no longer permitted, members gather in the Cynic’s Library to discuss their latest operations and to review concluded cases. New assignments are handed out at this time as well.

What makes the Diogenes Club different from other qabals engaged in similar work is the fact that they view compromise with the minions of evil as a viable alternative. Instead of destroying a vampire living in the heart of London’s West End, for example, they may attempt to negotiate with the undead creature to relocate to a remote part of Cornwall away from too much public attention, especially if he controls certain foreign interests that are vital to British national security. Knowing full well the reaction that would result if this information became public, even if only to members of other qabals like Die Wächtern, the Diogenes Club is extremely secretive in its dealings with outsiders. It is for this reason that Mycroft Holmes has withheld much about his involvement in the Diogenes Club from his brother Sherlock, who would be horrified and morally outraged by their methods of compromise with evil, and he has repeatedly discouraged the Great Detective from joining.

DETAILS, DETAILS

“Y ou know my method. I t is founded upon the observation of trifles.”

Sherlock Holmes

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“The Boscombe Valley Mystery,” *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*

BAKER STREET IRREGULARS

0-level Tradesmen: AC 10; MV 12; hp 1-4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (sap or pocketknife); AL NG;

Notes: An Irregular may possess any or all of the following Rogue nonweapon proficiencies: detect noise, hide in shadows, move silently, open locks, pick pockets.

Comprised of a group of homeless street urchins, Sherlock Holmes recruited and organized these boys to perform various missions for him in places he could not go without arousing suspicion. They were paid a shilling a day (plus expenses) for their troubles, and a guinea bonus went to the boy who successfully completed the mission. Holmes used the inconspicuous Baker Street Irregulars to get information from persons who would otherwise become tightlipped at the sight of an official looking person. Also known by Holmes as the Baker Street Division of the detective police force. If any harm were to befall one of these youngsters, be assured that Holmes would not rest until he apprehended the perpetrator, exercising the same zeal he would have for one of his more affluent or illustrious clients.

SCOTLAND YARD

Specifically, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the London Metropolitan Police. It is also the name of the headquarters of the London Metropolitan Police. In addition to Inspectors Lestrade and Gregson, Sherlock Holmes also worked with Yarders Bradstreet, Forbes, Hopkins, Gregory, Jones and MacDonald in the course of his career. Holmes never really had any faith in the abilities of Scotland Yard, and solved the crime on their behalf on more than one occasion. Scotland Yard also maintains a museum, and many of their exhibits contain items from cases investigated by Sherlock Holmes.

GREATER LONDON POLICE FORCE

The regular policemen of the London Metropolitan Police. The London Metropolitan Police force was divided into twenty-two divisions (differentiated by alphabetical letter) in Holmes's day, each manned by regular police and members of the CID. The everyday London policeman is known as a “Bobbie” after Robert Peel, who founded the London Metropolitan Police in 1829. Treat Bobbies as 1st-level tradesman, AL LG (usually); AC 10; MV 12; HP 1-6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (baton); with the following

nonweapon proficiencies: law (British), pugilism, running. In addition to a baton, Bobbies are equipped with a whistle and a pair of darbies (handcuffs). Remember, London policemen have traditionally never carried firearms while on duty.

REFERENCES

“Here is my lens. You know my methods.”

Sherlock Holmes
“The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle,”
Adventures of Sherlock Holmes

THE CANON

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- ◆ *A Sherlock Holmes Companion* edited by Peter Haining, Barnes & Noble Books, 1994 (ISBN 1-56619-268-4).

WEB SITES

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- ◆ Michael Sherman's *221B Baker Street*
<http://members.tripod.com/~msherman/holmes.html>



BOOK OF SORROWS: GOTHIC EARTH PEOPLE

"X"

The Shape of Things to Come

by Jarrod Lowe

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BIOGRAPHY

A mystery, an enigma, a question within a question best sums up the man dubbed X. His appearance varies as quickly and often as his personality. He is the one human being that no citizen of Gothic Earth should ever have the misfortune to cross paths with.

APPEARANCE

The true appearance of the man known as X is unknown. It is theorized that X is a master of disguise, able to easily blend into a crowd and disappear with ease. Though never confirmed, witnesses have identified different men. Short, tall, round, thin, all within sight of his believed crime scenes.

BACKGROUND

X is a man whose murderous impulses derive not from who or where, but when. He is believed to have been involved in over twenty-five confirmed murders during the period 1888-1890, each series of slayings more bizarre than the last. X has the uncanny ability of prognostication, a strange phenomenon in itself, but what he is able to prognosticate is far more unusual. X is able to see far into the future, and into the minds of those who will become the most feared and unstable killers of the forthcoming twentieth century.

His first series of murders occurred in New Orleans, January 1888, months before the Ripper homicides in London. The way in which X killed the prostitutes of New Orleans duplicated Jack's spree in Whitechapel to the measure. Though New Orleans was hit by "Jack" before he ever murdered a single woman in London, the story was never released to the press. After the true Jack the Ripper began his killings the murders in New Orleans ceased.

On January 1, 1890 the person identifying himself only as X wrote a letter to the London Times confessing to not only the murders in Louisiana, but also to over a dozen more unsolved murder cases around the world. X described each and every victim and each crime that he had committed in grizzly detail. Seeing how each case was unsolved and the particulars of each had yet to be made public, all investigating law enforcement officers had to corroborate his confession.

X went on to say his powers of vision was a gift from God, given to him in order to prepare the world for the coming of evil. He concluded his letter by saying that he, as X, will not make further contact unless it is part of his act. By "act" he apparently means that if the future killer makes contact with the authorities, then so shall he.

Following the letter to the London Times strings of mass murder began occurring in Paris, followed by Rome and later Madrid. Each collection of murders seemed to be committed by a different man, but those made aware of X at Scotland Yard and other private investigators like London's Sherlock Holmes, believe it to be the homicidal seer. It seems that catching this madman will prove extremely difficult due to his unusual nature and his knowledge of future killers and their methods of non-detection. Currently X is known only to various law enforcement agencies around the world and not to the public at large.

COMBAT

X uses various means to commit his horrid crimes. Over the years he has employed knives, guns, ropes and explosives to kill. But after beginning a series of murders with a specific weapon he will most likely continue using that weapon until the particular cycle of murders are complete.

It is believed that X possesses greater than average physical strength, as well as some type of formal training in pugilism or martial arts.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

As with any foe of this caliber the Dungeon Master must be very careful. Using this character as a simple hack & slash villain of the week would be an injustice. X should be a recurring villain whose methods and motives are always different. He uses his knowledge of future events and future crimes to his fullest advantage. X is always three steps ahead of any detective pursuing him, and a direct confrontation should come only after a long drawn out chase involving a monstrous amount of detective work and a large portion of pure luck.

The adventurers may be made aware of X when conventional detective work fails. Scotland Yard and/or the British Society for Paranormal Research may put them on the killer's, sometimes indistinguishable, trail.



ARTHUR MORDRED NESMITH

The Gatekeeper of Gothic Earth

by Charles Phipps
tcp@zoomnet.net

PROFESSOR ARTHUR MORDRED NESMITH

12th-level Human Mystic, Lawful Evil

Armor Class	10	Str	12
Movement	12	Dex	12
Level/Hit Dice	12	Con	12
Hit Points	39	Int	18
THACO	16	Wis	18
Morale	14	Cha	11
No. of Attacks	1	XP	4,000
Damage/Attack	By weapon		
Special Attacks	Curses, Spell use		
Special Defenses	Spell use		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

Weapon Proficiencies: Derringer pistol, Dagger

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Academician, Ancient Language (Egyptian), Ancient Languages (Latin), Ancient Languages (Persian), Astronomy, Etiquette, History (Arabian), Language, (Aramaic), Mathematics, Religion (Zoroastrianism) Spirit Craft (Divination), Forbidden Lore (Fiends), Forbidden Lore (Magical Items)

Arthur appears to be a extremely dignified looking man in his middle forties. He always dresses in immaculately clean clothing and becomes obsessed with the slightest blemish. He speaks with a heavy English accent and tends to drift off into lectures at the slightest provocation. He is extremely polite however and typically never loses his temper, only coming close to doing so when someone does something outlandish or his

disrupts his orderly lifestyle. On these occasions he hovers on the edge of extreme violence.

BACKGROUND

Arthur Mordred Nesmith was born Alan Tom Doolittle to a prostitute and an unknown father in a brothel in Whitechapel, East London circa 1854. Arthur was treated poorly as an unwanted annoyance by the brothel's owner, until it became apparent that he was a prodigy of incredible skill. From that point on he was allowed access to the man's extensive book collection.

Alan soon lost himself in that sea of knowledge, even as he saw his mother wither away and die due to an opium addiction that had killed her by the time he was nine. He was not overly affected by this however, as he had already applied his extensive genius in mathematics to the owner's books. By the time he was eleven Arthur had the intelligence of a man twice his age.

However, as Alan reached the age of sixteen he realized that he wanted a far more thorough education than that he could be given by bought books, or from whatever information could be gleaned by tutors who would lower themselves to such unseemly employment. Alan prepared to gain admittance into Oxford by acquiring fake credentials (easy enough to come by considering his origins), and on the strength of his fantastic test scores. His plan succeeded, and when he took on his new identity, he changed his first and middle names to that of those two figures in Arthurian history who rose to prominence despite the unholy and vile circumstances of their conception. His last name was changed almost as an afterthought, seeking something suitably "scholarly."

Upon his admittance to Oxford Arthur discovered a whole new type of world, a world far less wretched and far more orderly than the one in which he had grown up.

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The shock caused him to revile with all his heart the condition the world was in. He detested such a world as could produce the environment he had grown up in, and Arthur vowed to some day change the chaos he saw around him for the better.

One night, Arthur was whittling away the hours in Oxford's library (having no desire to join in the "celebrations" his fellow students regaled themselves in—he had seen far too much of that in his life already), when he happened across an old book on the occult called *The Book of Malevaous*.

The book was Persian, brought by to Oxford by a British soldier a few years before. Reading the book, Arthur discovered it contained a detailed description of various fiends that had come to the Earth and the various rituals in which a mortal could hope to control them. Arthur was enthralled, and he spent the remainder of his Oxford years studying and learning in the various mystical subcultures that permeated the British academia of the time, and he took every class that even held a sprinkling of occult lore. Arthur now knew the true source of chaos and disorder in the world and it had a name: *demons*.

A series of brilliant papers on the nature of religion and its effect on human history brought the young scholar critical acclaim, and Arthur soon arranged for an archaeological expedition to Persia. Once there, he discovered the hidden location of a cavern temple he had read of in *The Book of Malevaous*. According to that work, the temple contained the ancient works of a Zoroastrian mystic who died battling evil; the locals had forsworn against the place for untold ages since. Within the subterranean temple, Arthur discovered an ancient human skeleton at the foot of a huge stone statue of a demon, perfectly preserved by some unknown magic.

While Arthur stood staring at the statue, a terrible sandstorm raged outside the cavern; after Arthur's team reemerged, the members of his expedition began to die one by one, in horrible and in widely varied manners. Finally, after Arthur was forced to shoot the last of them with his pistol when the madman attacked him, Arthur ran back to the statue and screamed at the top of his lungs for the fiend to reveal itself. The statue spoke, as he suspected it would. It was a demon which had been imprisoned in its phylactery for over two thousand years by the mystic whom he had killed with his still potent magic. The mystic whose skeleton still lay at the foot of the statue.

Arthur spoke at length with the monster, and to his surprise discovered that it too wished to see a world free of disorder, mindless violence, and disgusting betrayals. Humanity had no respect for the world's laws and would not stop until it destroyed itself with war and crime.

After Arthur was rescued by British soldiers, he took back the statue to England and began making preparations for what would become his mission in life.

CURRENT SKETCH

Arthur Mordred is now the staff librarian of a prestigious university (one of the DM's choice), who is believed to spend his ample leisure time writing papers on the occult, aided by the light requirements of his work. This is true enough, but the deeper truth is far more sinister. Arthur now spends the majority of his time researching the darkest of prophecies, corresponding with mystics worldwide, those of both the black arts and the whitest of white, and plotting to both free his master and cast open the gates of Hell to bring forth demonic legions upon the Earth.

To this end he has also thoroughly researched most magical items and books on Gothic Earth and has gathered an extensive collection of both (using unscrupulous archaeologists, mercenary tomb raiders, and thugs he pays for with grants mysteriously given by the University). These artifacts he keeps in his private library below the school, with the Fiend-statue—whose true name he has discovered to be Alcanthana. Most of these artifacts are cursed and evil beyond imagination, but he collects them indiscriminately in hopes of discovering a use for them sometime in the near future. Occasionally, he has taken on an apprentice from the university and instructs him thoroughly in the dark (or white) arts in hopes of harnessing their knowledge for his plans. Several of his pupils now remain on campus as graduate students and serve him and Alcanthana. On several occasions, Arthur has even invited mystics to his home to try and discover new approaches to approaching his scholarly studies; so far none have been able to deduce his true intentions.

COMBAT

Arthur is extremely weak in physical melee, and although he has used a pistol on occasion he is likely to surrender or make a run for it if confronted with man-to-man combat. However, Arthur has far more power at his disposal than any normal man might hope to possess, due to the numerous pacts he has forged with Alcanthana, not to mention the numerous powers checks he has failed due to his out and out betrayal of the human race.

Aside from his appalling intellect and the ability to call upon mystically endowed minions with a mere telegram or letter (he has in the past aided numerous evil qabals, fiends, and undead monstrosities with his knowledge and can depend on them for aid), he also has a extremely potent arsenal of magic. While most of his

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spells are of the Divination or Summoning schools, he has several spells which are simply lethal. These he always uses to the maximum and planned effect, often having several cast on items in reserve since he never leaves his University.

He has also acquired an unusual ability, half from his studies and half from his evil deeds: He can throw a curse, up to and including a Dangerous level of severity, once per week upon the target of his choice, with unlimited range. Arthur can also use this ability under “justifiable circumstances” to make the curse more powerful. Arthur has used this ability on occasion to compel allegiance or obedience, and has destroyed at least three nosy students via lightning, train wreck, and fire. In service to another entity, he has no compunctions about using it as often as possible.

It is also feasible that Arthur could use the magical items in his possession, but he is well aware that the curses upon them have been the death of many. Thus he would only use artifacts from his collection in the direst of circumstances, when all his other abilities and plans have failed.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- ◆ Arthur has finally acquired the correct information to free Alcanthana from his imprisonment and bring him into the world. This rite requires the transfer of the fiend’s spirit into a mortal receptacle, which Arthur has chosen from the local student body: a rather annoying friend or relative of the PCs who has come dangerously close to deducing Arthur’s true nature and purpose. The ritual is of profound implications as Alcanthana is a fiend of incredible power who, given enough time, could actually succeed in opening his gateway to the lower planes and essentially bring about the Apocalypse. However, the PCs have forewarning of this event as they have received a pleading letter from their ally beforehand. This ally has taken up a intense interest in the occult and could serve as the key to stopping the madman’s plot.
- ◆ This adventure is best for beginning PCs. Arthur is the mystically-inclined mentor to a hero, and has begun to teach him the mystic arts and how they can be used to repulse and/or destroy the legions of evil. This situation can go on for as long as the DM wishes; as short as the opening adventure, or for most of the length of the campaign. with Arthur becoming a trusted and powerful ally in the war against evil. Eventually, however, Arthur will try and gain the PC’s aid in assembling the various relics and material components he requires to aid in opening a permanent gateway on Gothic Earth to the

lower planes, which he describes as akin to Dante’s Nine Hells. Whether the PCs know of the gateway’s true purpose is up to the DM, but most likely Arthur will veil his true purposes. Where the adventure goes from here is up to the DM and players; there are many possibilities including: preventing the gateway from being opened, Arthur sending several of his minions after the snooping hero, or figuring some way to close the semi-unstable gateway before it grows and consumes Gothic Earth. If the DM feels particularly destructive, a “doomsday” life-and-death Armageddon may commence with man versus the devils.

- ◆ A most unlikely event has occurred; Arthur has fallen in love. The subject of his affections is the beautiful daughter of a dead adept whom Arthur had corresponded with for several years, though the old man never knew that Arthur was such a vile abomination. However, Alcanthana has decreed that ties to a mortal woman of such goodness cannot be tolerated and has ordered his network of minions (assembled by Arthur himself) to destroy her.

Arthur is incensed by this betrayal and has vowed to destroy his master. What fate befell his love is up to the DM, but Arthur has since come to the heroes, begging for aid against the supernatural menace. If the PCs have matched wits with Arthur before it could be a truly interesting tale; even more so if they do not help him, and must slowly discover the web of lies that Arthur has wrapped around himself. One thing that should be kept in mind is that Arthur, despite—or perhaps because of—his dark spirit and legalistic soul, is possibly the single greatest repository of fiendish knowledge on Gothic Earth. If this information is turned over to the forces of good, the possibility of taking the fight directly some of the greatest evils in the multiverse may be within reach.



TON TON MACOUTE

An Infamous Foe in Gothic Haiti

by Bil Boozer

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BIOGRAPHY

Mothers throughout Haiti threaten their children with the legend of Ton Ton Macoute, the malevolent spirit who comes in the night and steals bad children from their beds. What these women and their children do not realize is that the danger is very, very real, and it's not just the bad children who are taken.

APPEARANCE

From a distance, Ton Ton Macoute resembles a typical *noir* resident of Haiti—barefoot and shirtless, he wears only the ragged remnants of a pair of pantaloons and a leather knapsack on his back. Up close, his appearance is quite frightening. The whites of his eyes are a sickly yellow, and his mouth is filled with jagged, elongated teeth. His fingers and toes end in sharp, dark claws.

Ton Ton Macoute stands 6'3" tall and weighs approximately 210 pounds. His skin is tough and leathery, although it remains intact.

TON TON MACOUTE

Ghoul, Neutral Evil

Armor Class	6	Str	13
Movement	9	Dex	15
Level/Hit Dice	3	Con	12
Hit Points	18	Int	11
THAC0	18	Wis	14
Morale	12	Cha	6
No. of Attacks	2	XP	270
Damage/Attack	1-4/1-4		
Special Attacks	See below		
Special Defenses	See below		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

At will, Ton Ton Macoute may employ a special form of *pass without trace*. This ability allows him to enter any freshly-filled grave without disturbing the dirt over the coffin. The grave must have been filled within the past forty-eight hours for Ton Ton Macoute to be

able to use this ability. He can emerge from the grave in the same fashion, so long as no more than five days (120 hours) have passed since it was filled. If more than five days have passed, Ton Ton Macoute must dig his way out of the grave, a process that takes one hour for each day that has passed since the grave was filled. Digging his way out of a grave reminds Ton Ton Macoute that he is dead, a memory he prefers to forget.

Ton Ton Macoute possesses proficiency in opening locks (12), moving silently (16), and hiding in shadows (18). As an undead creature, he is immune to sleep and charm-related spells. Ton Ton Macoute takes only half damage from gunfire, and none of the damage die are rerolled. He speaks Creole when he chooses to speak.

Ton Ton Macoute's knapsack is approximately three feet long and half as wide. It is made of dark leather and is always strapped over his left shoulder. The knapsack acts as a *bag of holding*; however, should anyone other than Ton Ton Macoute wear the knapsack, then for each day an object is kept in the knapsack there is a cumulative 10% chance that it will disappear permanently from Gothic Earth. Ton Ton Macoute will never willingly give up his knapsack. Anyone who takes it from him will find inside several straw dolls and materials for creating more, two clean machetes, and one child's shoe.

BACKGROUND

Marcus Revieneaux was born the son of two African-born slaves whose people had practiced cannibalism. Their French owner forbade the practice on his plantation, and, in his disgust over their origin, treated them much worse than he did his slaves from other parts of Africa.

When Marcus, the youngest of five siblings, turned seventeen, he and his brother and sisters watched as his parents were beaten and finally, suffering from the wounds that had ripped their flesh, they were nailed into coffins and buried alive.

Marcus was filled with anger and hatred, but his owner kept him well confined. Two months after the

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deaths of his parents, Marcus was able to escape his shackles and exact his revenge. He stole into his owner's house and took the man's eight-year-old daughter, leaving a straw doll in her bed. Marcus strangled the child and took her body into the forest to the side of a swift river, where he had planned to throw it. He remembered the stories his parents had told him of how their people had eaten the hearts of their enemies in order to gain strength over them, and, still excited from his kill, he sliced open the little girl's chest, took out her small heart, and ate it. Pleased with the taste, he took the girl's liver and other organs and ate them as well. So engrossed was he in his debauchery that he failed to notice as his fingernails became claws and his teeth became sharply pointed. He also didn't notice the approach of his pursuers, the plantation owner and his hired managers, until they were almost upon him. Hearing them so near, he jumped up and fled into the river, swimming down stream and leaving the body to be found by his hunters.

Six years later, Marcus returned to the plantation. The owner had been killed the previous year by revolutionists, and the plantation was being run by those who had formerly been slaves on it. Among these workers were Marcus' brother and sisters, all of whom were married and had families. His siblings were elated to see that Marcus was still alive, even if he appeared oddly different to them. In particular, his yellow eyes unnerved them, but he explained that they were left-over symptoms of an illness he'd fought off several years earlier.

Instead of explaining to their children that Marcus had returned from the dead, the siblings told their children that Marcus was a friend of the family and they called him "Ton Ton Macoute" ("Uncle Knapsack"), because he was always carrying his leather knapsack over his shoulder.

In the years since he'd left the plantation, Marcus had acquired quite a taste for human meat, finding the internal of organs of young children to be particularly satisfying. After spending three months on the plantation, he found his cannibalistic cravings more and more difficult to ignore because he was surrounded by so many young children. Finally, one night, he crept into the room of one of his nephews, slit the boy's throat, and then sliced open his torso. Marcus was startled by a sudden gasp from behind him. Turning, he saw his sister as she began to scream in horror. He reached across and grabbed her in one clawed hand while he tried to silence her scream with the other. Seconds later, his brother-in-law appeared, and, without hesitation, he aimed his rifle at Marcus and fired.

Two days later, Marcus awoke in a wooden coffin. After some struggling, he managed to break the lid off,

and he found he had no trouble slipping through the loose dirt between the coffin and the surface. It was night. He'd been buried in a field, not a graveyard, and it took him several hours to orient himself and find his way back to his sister's home. There, he destroyed the rest of the family. His nephew's remains had been removed, but the boy had had two sisters that were more than satisfactory to Marcus' macabre hunger.

Had he exacted this same vengeance on the rest of his family, then stories about Ton Ton Macoute might never have spread through Haiti. But the other family members did survive and, in fear, they moved to more populated areas where they told the story and it grew into the horrible legend now told throughout the country.

PERSONALITY

Ton Ton Macoute is proud to have become a legendary figure, although he has no one to whom he can boast. He remains obsessed with eating the organs of young humans, although generally he doesn't attack more than one in a week. Too frequent attacks might incite the living to try to hunt him down. He also believes that if he dines on humans too frequently, the delicacy will become less savory. He has retained his sense of taste even though he is undead.

Ton Ton Macoute typically spends his days in a freshly filled grave. Given the abundance of deaths due to violence and disease in Haiti, these resting places are generally not hard to find. If he needs to, he can dig his own resting place, although his *pass without trace* ability does not work in these circumstances, and he has to resort to digging himself out after dusk. On rare occasions, he has made himself a resting hole in a seldom visited cellar in Port-au-Prince or Gonaives when he has found himself in one of those cities at dawn.

Each night after he rises, Ton Ton Macoute usually spends several hours determining where he is going to rest the following morning, scouting out gravesites or other places where he might want to rest. If he has decided to feed, then he will locate an appropriate victim, usually by using his Move Silently and Hide in Shadows proficiencies to sneak through residential areas and peer through windows until he finds an appropriate victim, usually a child between 8 and 15 years old. He enters the child's room (frequently through the window) and attempts to paralyze the child. If the child is not paralyzed, he or she wakes, and Ton Ton Macoute kills him or her quickly and escapes without feeding. Otherwise, Ton Ton Macoute puts the child in his knapsack and leaves a straw doll in the child's bed. The ghoul then escapes and finds a secluded place to eat. After he has eaten what he wants, Ton Ton Macoute

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disposes of the remains of the body by burying them, burning them, or throwing them into a river or the ocean.

Ton Ton Macoute will often remain in the same area a few days after he has fed to find out if he is blamed for the disappearance, as he enjoys hearing his legend repeated. After a few nights, however, he will move on to another area and another victim.

On nights that he does not feed, Ton Ton Macoute travels the night listening to the news and gossip that he hears. Specifically, he will take the opportunity to eavesdrop on the parents of the child he killed or abducted to hear their grief and listen to them curse his name, if they blame him for the loss of their child. If he was forced to kill a child without eating him or her, then Ton Ton Macoute will try to abduct another child the following night unless there is great danger that he will be caught.

If the night is particularly dark, Ton Ton Macoute he might stop a traveler to ask questions about someone or something, but he is careful to keep himself as hidden as possible so that his nature will not be detected. Such occasions are very rare, and he will only speak to a *noir* or a *mulâtre*, although he will not necessarily be deterred if the traveler is accompanied by *blancs*.

He also spends time collecting straw and materials to create the dolls that he leaves in his victim's places. These dolls were part of the stories his parents had told him, and so he uses them as well. Some of these dolls have found their way as far away as New Orleans, where they are often claimed to have mystical powers related to Voudou, but they are nothing more than the calling cards of Ton Ton Macoute.

Ton Ton Macoute has no love for the *blancs*, who enslaved his parents and killed them, but he shows no preference when it comes to his cannibalism. In fact, because the *noir* population is so large compared to the other racial groups in Haiti, most of his victims have been *noir* children.

Though he is not a religious man, Ton Ton Macoute avoids contact with Voudou whenever possible. He will not knowingly take the child of a *houngann*, *mamba*, or *bokor*, and if he realizes he has done so he will depart the area immediately. On a few occasions, his day-time rest has been disturbed by a bokor's retrieving a zombi; he tries to avoid having this happen if possible.

COMBAT

Ton Ton Macoute will avoid any combat with more than one opponent or a single opponent who appears threateningly powerful. If forced into combat, he attacks with his clawed hands, doing 1d4 points of damage with each successful attack. Each time Ton Ton Macoute's opponent is wounded in this manner, he or she must

make a saving throw vs. paralyzation or become rigid for 3-8 (2+1d6 rounds). Once a victim has been paralyzed, Ton Ton Macoute will kill the victim using the victim's own weapon or a machete that he keeps in his knapsack. Ton Ton Macoute has no desire to create rivals of his own kind. If he does kill someone with his claws, he will disembowel the body and consume its inner organs unless he is prevented from doing so. If the victim does later rise as a ghoul (as described in the *Monstrous Manual*), Ton Ton Macoute will track it down and destroy it as soon as he can do so safely.

If Ton Ton Macoute has access to a freshly filled grave, he will use his *pass without trace* ability to hide from pursuers. Alternatively, once per week, Ton Ton Macoute can become invisible (per the spell); however, for each hour that he remains invisible, he must rest (in a grave) for one full day once he has returned to visibility.

Ton Ton Macoute may be turned as a shadow. During the daylight or under bright conditions (such as those of a *light* spell), he fights at a -2 penalty and opponents gain a +2 bonus on their saving throw vs. paralyzation from his attacks. Aware of his weaknesses, Ton Ton Macoute is active only during the night. In fact, the only time he might be encountered during the day is when someone unearths the coffin he happens to be sleeping in. In such circumstances, he will appear dead, and he will be dormant for 2-5 rounds before realizing what has happened and attempting to kill his discoverers or (more likely) escape them.

ADVENTURE IDEA

While Ton Ton Macoute is not a powerful creature and could probably be defeated by a low-level party, he might be better suited as an adversary for medium-level parties because he is so elusive. A first encounter with him could include meeting him on the road on the way to some common destination, where the party has other business as well. Later, after Ton Ton Macoute has killed a young girl (having been discovered by her older brother before he could eat her organs), the town or city is alarmed because of the presence of the ghoul. Only the less educated Haitians will believe that it is indeed Ton Ton Macoute that has come to steal their children; more educated Haitians will believe it is some deranged human with a penchant for killing. Anyone who has done specialized study in the undead and who is able to investigate the murder scene might discover evidence that a ghoul is behind the slaying. The following night, a young boy disappears, and a straw doll is found in his bed. By the time the party hears about it, the boy will have been killed, and Ton Ton Macoute is snuggled in his hiding place. Skilled trackers or individuals with the ability to detect the undead might be able to locate the ghoul's hiding place and try to put an end to him. If he escapes, though, the party will have a difficult time figuring out where he's gone unless they've got magical assistance.



PIASA BIRD

Winged Death in the Heartland

by Tim Brannan

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PIASA BIRD

Climate/Terrain	Any
Frequency	Unique
Organization	Solitary
Activity Cycle	Any
Diet	Carnivore
Intelligence	Low (5-7)
Treasure	Nil
Alignment	Chaotic Evil
No. Appearing	1
Armor Class	5
Movement	9, Fl 18 (C)
Hit Dice	7+2
THAC0	12
No. of Attacks	5 (claw/claw/horn/bite/tail)
Damage/Attack	1-4/1-4/1-6/1-10/1-6
Special Attacks	Swallow whole, Fear aura
Special Defenses	Nil
Magic Resistance	Nil
Size	H (20')
Morale	Elite (13-14)
XP Value	1,300
Psionics	Nil

APPEARANCE

The Bird of Piasa (Piasa Bird) resembles a manticore in many respects. It has the head of a black bear with a man's face, large disproportionate teeth, and the horns of an elk. Its head and neck are covered with a whiskery mane, like the beard of a man. The body resembles a lion's or a bear's save that it is scaly like that of a large fish, and it has a bear's legs ending with an eagle's claws. Its tail is at least fifty feet long, wound three times around the body, and tipped with a spearhead thrust backward through its hind legs. Large bat-like wings extend over its shoulders. Overall its body is black with red horns. It stands over seven feet tall and is twenty feet long.

COMBAT

The Piasa attacks its opponents by swooping down on top of them. Its first attack is usually a high-pitched scream that causes fear. Anyone with a fifteen foot radius of the Piasa under 5 HD must save vs. spell or be affected as a *fear* spell. The Piasa will then rip into its victims with a claw/claw/bite routine using its horns and tail as needed. The Piasa can attack multiple opponents per round. Due to its size, any naturally rolled "20's" on its bite attack are considered to have swallowed the victim whole. Anytime the Piasa does this it will break off its attack and fly to its lair to digest. The victim does not immediately die; the Piasa prefers fresh meat in its own lair. The victim can attack while inside the Piasa, but will fight at a -4 to hit. The victim also takes 1-4 hit points of damage per round.

HABITAT/SOCIETY

The Piasa is the only one of its kind, or rather it is the only one that has ever been seen. It is unknown that if this is the same monster that attacked Chief Ouatoga's tribe or an offspring. The Piasa seems to go through periods of activity and inactivity that can last for years. Again it is unknown if it is the same creature or some offspring of the original.

The Piasa lives on fresh meat. Its preferred food is man, in particular children and young adults. When humans can not be found the Piasa will eat any large game animal.

The Piasa makes its home in caves in the bluffs along the Mississippi river. Its favorite or most active spot comes from the areas North of St. Louis in what is now called Alton.

ECOLOGY

The Piasa Bird lives solely on freshly-killed meat. It produces nothing that is otherwise useful to human-kind. Due to its rarity a captured live Piasa could command a king's ransom from some of the less-respected zoos in

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the world. Most scientists consider the Piasa a myth, or at best, an extinct creature from eons past. Scholars of a more arcane bent agree that the Piasa bird was once merely a myth, but that when the Red Death arrived in the region, it turned this myth into a monstrous reality.

STORY OF THE PIASA BIRD

When Marquette and Joliet came down the Mississippi river in 1673 they encountered a bluff on the east side of the river with the painting of a giant monster. When they asked the Indians what this monster was, they retold for them the story that had been handed down to them for generations. Marquette named the monster “Piasa,” pronounced Pie-a-saw, which means “the Destroyer.”

The Legend of the Piasa bird that was related to Marquette and Joliet went something like this. Many years ago a great bird roamed the land. Every morning the people would wake in fear to the shrill screams of the great Bird. The bird awoke hungry and would carry off dozens of boys and girls to its cave to be eaten. Chief Ouatoga [OO-wa-toe-ga] was getting old. He wanted to destroy this terrible killer before he died. He called his braves to a meeting and told them he was going to ask the Great Spirit what to do.

He went up on the highest bluff. He spoke with the Great Spirit. The Great Spirit told the Chief, “Dip your arrows deep into the poison of a copperhead snake and shoot them into the body of the Bird. They will cause its death.” He returned to the camp and told his people what the Great Spirit had told him. He gathered up a small army of the strongest braves and set out to hunt the Bird. Chief Ouatoga told his braves that the plan was for someone to stand on the cliff to lure the Bird down. When the great monster swoops down they were to shoot it with their poison arrows.

The braves all begged their chief to be the one to sacrifice themselves. But the chief told them no, he would be the one, since he was older. While the braves practiced with their bows, Chief Ouatoga spoke with the Great Spirit. “Think not of my life,” he said, “but the lives of the children.”

The next morning the chief stood tall waiting for the great bird to come. Its screams could be heard as flew down the river looking for victims. The bird saw the old chief and swooped down on him with a terrible scream.

Just as the monster was ready to attack the braves shot their arrows and all 100 met their mark. The monster fell into the Mississippi river and died. The braves carried the broken and bruised body of their chief back to the tribe. The medicine man healed him and he awoke the next day surrounded by his grateful people. In remembrance of the act he returned to the site and painted a life-size picture of the monster. Every time an

Indian went down the river after that, he fired an arrow at the bluff. In alternate versions of the story the youngest brave stands on the cliff instead of the chief. When he is healed the next day he becomes the new chief.

PIASA BIRD TODAY

The Piasa Bird was recently (1893) spotted near Wrights, Illinois by an engineer on the Chicago/New Orleans Rail Road. James LaFayette Brannan, the youngest of John Weston Brannan, spotted what he thought was a large eagle outside of his southern Illinois home. Upon closer examination Brannan found that it was no eagle. He described it as a “dragon” and it was as long and high as a rail car. The monster turned to him and starred down at him with its yellow, almost human, eyes. Its mouth and beard were covered in gore. The Bird had been feasting on a white-tailed deer. Brannan saw the Piasa move towards him, but managed to fire a shot with his Winchester fowling piece. The Piasa took off and headed out into the darkness. The next day Brannan and members of the county sheriff’s office investigated the site. All that was found was a few bones of a deer. Brannan, the grand-son of recent Irish immigrants, was believed to have been indulging and spotted a turkey vulture; a large and not uncommon bird. Brannan contends that he had not been drunk. Many locals however remember seeing Brannan out celebrating the birth of his new son Virgil. This story appeared in the Alton *Telegraph*.

Since the Brannan sighting, no other confirmed sighting of the Piasa has been recorded. However several farmers as far north as Quincy (90 miles) have reported missing or mutilated cattle. More times than not, these incidents have reported as problems with rustlers. Investigators and adventurers in the Alton/East St. Louis area should be well advised.



CIRCUS PERFORMER

An Entertaining Kit for Masque of the Red Death

by Daniel J. Bandera
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CIRCUS PERFORMER

Class:	Tradesman
Ability Reqs:	Dex 14; Cha 10
Prime Req:	Dexterity
Hit Die:	d6
Attack as:	Tradesman
Saves as:	Tradesman
Advances as:	Tradesman
Exc Strength?	No (see below)
Spell ability?	No
Exc Constitution?	No (see below)
Starting Cash:	2d6

Proficiencies

Weapon Slots:	3
Additional Slots:	4
Nonproficiency Penalty:	-3
Nonweapon Slots:	6
Additional Slot:	3
Available Categories:	General, Rogue
Bonus Proficiency:	See below

Recommended Proficiency:

- Rope spinner:* rope use
- Tightrope walker/ trapeze artist:* tightrope walking, tumbling
- Clown/gymnast:* juggling, dancing, tumbling
- Trick-shot artist:* marksmanship, blind fighting, quick draw
- Knife-thrower:* knifemanship, blind fighting, quick draw
- Strong man:* endurance.

Description: A character with this kit is a performer in one of the many traveling circuses that tour the world. The character performs acts that require great dexterity, whether it is as an acrobat, a tightrope walker, a trapeze artist, a juggler, a rope spinner, a trick-shot artist, or a knife-thrower.

As an alternative, a character could be a circus strongman. In this case, replace Dexterity with Strength as the character's prime requisite.

Special Benefits: As a circus performer, the character chooses from one of the various types of performers mentioned above. If the player chooses acrobat, tightrope walker, juggler, or rope spinner that character must take the proficiency that corresponds to that activity. However, once the character selects his primary proficiency, he gains a bonus of +1 to all proficiency checks, as if he had spent a second proficiency slot on it. If the character chooses strong man, then that character may have exceptional Strength and Constitution, but gains no other benefits.

A character selecting trick-shot artist or knife-thrower must select the Marksmanship (or Knifemanship) proficiency with the navy pistol (or throwing knife). In addition to the regular bonuses gained from this proficiency, the character gains an additional +2 to hit on aimed shots, and +1 to hit on rapid fire. At the same time the character loses the +1 damage bonus on aimed shots that is normal gained with the marksmanship proficiency. This is due to the fact that the character's act typically involves not harming the lovely assistant that he is using as a target.

As the member of a traveling circus, the character is part of a close knit group of performers. Once per month per level of the character, he can call on his fellow performers for help. The type of performers that the character can call on is determined by the DM, but could include any of the above, and also includes animal handlers, hypnotists, fire breathers, and healer/trainers.

Special Hindrances: Because of his profession the character is limited in his freedom of travel. He must stay with his circus and must be present for all show times.

Another hindrance caused by his profession is the fact that many people look down on circus performers and will not take the character seriously. When the character tries to communicate with anyone not from the lower class, he receives a -4 reaction penalty.

At the same time, the character can do things in public that most ordinary people could not get away with, such as scaling the outside of a building. To escape legal

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action, the character needs only to claim he was performing a stunt to gain publicity for his circus. Of course the character cannot take advantage of this too often in the same location or the authorities may not be so forgiving.

New Proficiency

Knifemanship: This proficiency is similar to the marksmanship proficiency. It grants a +1 to hit and damage with a throwing knife. If two knives are thrown in the same round, the user receives only a bonus of +1 to hit. The user also has the choice of throwing up to three knives in the same round but receives no bonuses to the hit or damage rolls.

X

THE MAGIC OF NATURE

The Fetishist Adept Kit for the Masque of the Red Death Setting

by Andrew Hackard
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“Nature is a war of
living powers of will.”

Karl Heim

Sees-in-the-Night was searching for just the right eagle feather. His young daughter, Listening-to-Wind, was along to learn the ways of the ancient magic. The magic of the white man was foul; it polluted the land and saddened the spirits. Their magic, however, affirmed life and strengthened the web connecting all things.

“Ah, Daughter, see this feather?” asked the aged medicine man. “This feather, now, will allow us to see the white man before he can get close enough to kill our warriors.”

“Father, that’s wonderful!” squealed his daughter. “But—”

Suddenly both fell quiet. Something dark, something alien lurked near the trail.

“Quietly, little Wind,” said Sees-in-the-Night. “We must be away. Take my hand—yes, the one which holds the hummingbird wing. Do not fear that which the Great Mother has provided us.” His daughter, trembling, took hold of his hand with both of hers. “Now, we must warn the others; death walks among us again, ready to claim the foolish and the careless.”

With those words, the shaman rose into the air, his daughter clutching his hand even tighter, and flew back to the village.

While men of learning pore over dusty tomes in candlelit libraries, far from the prying eyes of the commoners, searching for the arcane phrases in forgotten tongues which will empower them with supernatural talents, there are those who draw great power from a simpler source: the very interaction between Nature and her children. These are the fetishists.

In MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH terms, the fetishist is a character kit for the adept class, albeit one with some unusual powers and restrictions. Fetishists hail from the

as-yet undeveloped corners of Gothic Earth, places where the traditions run generations and centuries into the past, places where the Red Death has yet to claim a solid foothold. No force for good can stand forever, though...

The fetishist starts play as an apprentice to an older fetishist, usually of the same tribe or clan. (If such a mentor is not available, the fetishist suffers a –25% XP penalty until such time as he can be properly trained in the ways of natural magic. This penalty only applies to characters starting away from their people, and once erased can never be reinstated.) As the fetishist grows in power, however, he becomes less reliant on his teacher, until finally he is ready to work alone.

Fetish magic is tied closely to nature, and its rituals hark back to the times when all men submitted to the whims of the wind and sea, huddling in caves for warmth and shelter. Fetish magic is old, perhaps even older than the Red Death itself, and has changed little in the course of centuries. The fetishist must acquaint himself with nature, and conversely must shun technology, as this is a perversion of man’s place in the natural order. Thus, fetishists tend to use only natural weapons (spears and arrows tipped with bone or flint, slings made of sinew, and the like) and are unfamiliar with more complicated manufactured items. As a result, the PC starts play with one-third the starting money of the typical adept, and that “money” may only be used to purchase items found in the fetishist’s homeland. Money that is unused at this step vanishes; “primitive” people have no need of money.

The key to fetish magic is *sympathetic magic*, the belief that animals and plants with certain prominent traits (good sense of smell, keen eyesight, and so forth) can impart those traits to humans, via items known as *fetishes*. The fetishes (also known as *talismans*) somehow imbue the fetishist with a specific ability related to the animal or plant from which the fetish was taken. These are typically powers affecting only one person, although some fetishes may become more powerful as the adept becomes more familiar with them.

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CORRUPTION

Fetishes, in using magic that is so intimately tied with Nature, innately reject the overtures of the Red Death. Still, because spellcasting carries some risk, the adept has the same chance of becoming corrupted as any other adept. However, all fetishists are assumed to start the game as Pure (in terms of powers checks).

ADEPT KIT: THE FETISHIST

Class:	Adept
Ability Req.:	Int 9, Wis 12
Prime Req.:	Intelligence
Hit Die:	d6
Attack As:	Adept
Save As:	Adept
Advance As:	Adept
Exc Strength?	No
Spell Ability:	Special (see below)
Exc Constitution:	Yes
Starting Cash:	1d6

Proficiencies

Weapon Slots:	2
Additional Slot:	6
Nonprof. Penalty:	-4
Nonweapon Slots:	6
Additional Slot:	3
Available Categories:	General, Wilderness
Bonus Prof.:	Animal Lore (as in the <i>PHB</i>), Spellcraft
Recommended Prof.:	Herbalism, Survival

Role-Playing: The fetish adept looks to Nature to take care of his needs. He rarely relies on anyone else (except an apprentice), and works apart from the clan most of the time. He is, of course, available to consult with the chief at any time, and a wise chief keeps his fetishist close at hand.

A fetishist who makes his way to more thickly settled lands is likely to be perplexed and disoriented, and may even become physically ill when he realizes how disconnected from the land the people are. In game terms, the fetishist has a -2 reaction penalty applied to any reaction checks he must make in these noisy, crowded, filthy regions, and he will usually try to cut his stay as short as possible.

PC fetishists may be of any non-evil alignment; NPC fetishists may be of any alignment whatsoever.

Special Benefits: The fetishist, when operating alone in his home territory, imposes a -3 penalty to the surprise checks of opponents in the area; the fetishist himself is surprised only on a roll of 1 on 1d10. Both modifiers are negated if anyone else is with him except an apprentice.

The fetishist is unique among adepts, in that he can also cast certain mystic spells (although all the usual rules for casting adept magic still apply). He pays for this with a greatly-reduced spell selection at the start of the game. Once the fetishist begins to contact the "outside world," however, it is possible that he may learn to cast other adept spells, according to the arcane formulae used by most adepts. This is extremely hazardous, however.

First of all, a fetishist can only use regular adept spells up to one spell level lower than the highest spell level he can cast. A fifth-level fetishist, for instance, can use up to third-level fetishes, but only second-level non-fetish magic. Fetishists are never able to learn non-fetish mystic spells.

Second, a fetish adept who fails a powers check while casting a non-fetish spell suffers a cumulative -1 penalty to *all* Spellcraft checks made to use fetishes (see Special Hindrances, below). This represents the gradual sundering of ties with Nature. (A fetishist who fails a powers check while using a fetish does not incur this penalty.) Further, after the first failed powers check from using a non-fetish adept spell, the spell level restriction is removed.

Third, a fetishist who learns non-fetish magic and then returns to his tribe suffers a -2 reaction penalty from any tribe member who sees him use this "new" magic. This penalty is cumulative, so the more he uses spells, rather than fetishes, the worse he appears to his tribe. Eventually, he may be divorced from the tribe, or even murdered, for rejecting the ways of his people.

Special Hindrances: In addition to those described above, the fetishist must first fashion a fetish for any spell he wishes to cast. In game terms, every spell has a specific material component (some of which are given later in the article), replacing any such component in the descriptions in the *Player's Handbook*. While these components are not valuable in the traditional sense, they may well be difficult to create; many of these fetishes are created specifically for the casting of a single spell and cannot be reused.

Also, using a fetish and casting a spell are more difficult for the fetishist than for the ordinary adept. Fetishists must roll a successful Spellcraft check for *any* fetish or spell they wish to use; a failed check means that the fetish was improperly crafted or the spell was improperly worded. The powers check, however, still applies.

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There are no fetishes above fourth level (unless the players and DM wish to create some). While the fetishist follows the typical adept spell progression, he may not cast fifth-level and higher spells unless he journeys to the cities and towns to seek them out. Fetishists do not obtain familiars.

Finally, fetishists suffer a –5 reaction penalty from “true” adepts and mystics, who perceive the fetishist’s magic as “primitive” and raw. This penalty may be lessened or even erased by careful roleplaying on the part of the fetish adept’s player, but it will take time and persistence.

FETISHES

The fetish itself is the small talisman, usually made of animal or plant material and often decorated with mystic symbols, used to empower a spell. Crafting the appropriate fetish properly can be a project of many days.

An apprentice fetishist has the advantage of working closely with a master of the craft. Apprentices still working under their masters may roll once a month to see if they have learned a new fetish. (This rule supersedes the rule in *A Guide to Gothic Earth* about learning spells. Fetishists who are on their own, however, revert to the rule presented in that book.)

The fetishist starts play with the fetishes *cantrip*, *cure light wounds*, and *alarm*. (There is no need for *read or detect magic*; fetishists can use a Spellcraft roll to attempt to recognize fetishes carried by other adepts. Of course, a fetishist who begins to learn normal adept magic will have need of these spells.) Other fetishes may be discovered or crafted by the fetishist over the course of the campaign. (The “learn spells” roll is also used in the creation of fetishes.)

Here is the “spell list” of the fetishist; DMs who have access to other spell sources are encouraged to add appropriate spells to this list. An (M) following a spell denotes a mystic spell.

FIRST LEVEL

alarm, *armor*, *cantrip*, *change self*, *comprehend languages*, *cure light wounds* (M), *endure heat/endure cold*, *enlarge (reduce)*, *feather fall*, *invisibility to animals* (M), *jump*, *locate animals or plants* (M), *pass without trace* (M), *sanctuary* (M), *spider climb*

SECOND LEVEL

alter self, *barkskin* (M), *find traps* (M), *goodberry (badberry)* (M), *invisibility*, *levitate*, *locate object*, *misdirection*, *resist fire/resist cold* (M), *slow poison* (M), *speak with animals* (M), *strength*

THIRD LEVEL

clairaudience, *clairvoyance*, *cure disease* (M), *feign death*, *fly*, *haste*, *infravision*, *magical vestment* (M), *non-detection*, *snare* (M), *tongues*, *tree* (M), *water breathing*

FOURTH LEVEL

cure serious wounds (M), *dig*, *free action* (M), *improved invisibility*, *neutralize poison* (M), *plant growth*, *polymorph self*, *shout*, *speak with plants* (M), *stoneskin*

DMs are encouraged to invent their own fetish talismans for these spells; some suggestions follow. Note that these are basic guidelines; the fetishist should be required to do some work to make these appropriate for spell components. A totem may be required to include some form of artistry created by the adept himself (painted runes, beadwork, and so forth) to be effective.

Also, a fetish which is designed to affect another person gives an unwilling target a +2 to his saving throw unless the fetishist takes the time to personalize the fetish for that target. Fetishes should almost never be something the character can find “just lying around” and be able to use instantly; they take preparation and care to create.

FIRST LEVEL

Alarm: The fetishist uses a small amount of urine, from a dog he has raised himself, and mixes it with fresh crushed tea leaves. He uses this mixture to “mark” the area he wants the alarm spell to cover by putting a small amount on the boundaries of the area as he circles three times, backwards. The spell does not take effect until the third circuit is completed.

Comprehend Languages: To cast this spell, the fetishist must capture a mockingbird and remove its tongue. He then impales the tongue on a small silver needle and passes that needle through his earlobe. (If the fetishist has pierced ears, he may not use that hole; he must make a new one for the spell to work.)

Feather Fall: This spell requires down taken from a bird that has just safely fallen from its nest to be removed and sewn into decorated leather wristbands. These wristbands will enable the

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fetishist to cast feather fall once; when the spell expires the down has disappeared. The fetishist may also craft wristbands for comrades, although unless he personalizes them for the recipients (a process taking three days per set of wristbands) they will have only half the usual duration. Also note that a newborn chick only has enough down for one casting of the spell.

Jump: The fetishist must remove the hind leg of a frog or rabbit, cut away the skin, and consume the flesh raw for this spell to take effect. He must also take the skin, paint it with symbols of the wind, and place a piece of the skin in each shoe.

SECOND LEVEL

Alter Self: To cast this spell, the fetishist must prepare a headband made from chameleon skin. On it, he must copy the runes representing his true name, but backwards. The runes fade at the end of the spell's duration and must be repainted before the headband can be used again.

Goodberry/Badberry: The berry used for this spell may be the only berry taken from that plant by the fetishist. To prepare it, the adept leaves the berry steeping in fresh rainwater (for *goodberry*) or sow's blood (for *badberry*) for 24 hours. The fetishist must have collected the water or blood himself.

Levitate: To cast this spell, the fetishist must find a tree that was struck by lightning but survived. He must pluck a green leaf from one of its branches, etch his name on it, and let it float to the ground. When it touches the ground, the spell takes effect.

Resist Fire/ Resist Cold: The fetishist must prepare a chest-sized patch of skin from a bear, with the fur still attached, by adding beadwork to the fur and around the edges; the bearskin is worn on the back as a cape. (The adept need not have slain the bear himself, however.)

THIRD LEVEL

All of the following fetishes must be personally collected by the character who intends to use them. The fetishist places them in a small bag, whose cord is knotted three times (once for Nature, once for Life, once for Magic) and worn on the belt. When the spell is ready, the fetishist opens the bag and removes the items. A fetishist may prepare a bag for another character, but spells cast for someone else have only half the duration.

Clairaudience: the ears of a bat

Clairvoyance: the eyes of a hawk

Feign Death: the tail of an opossum

Fly: a hummingbird wing

Infravision: the head of a rattlesnake

FOURTH LEVEL

Cure Serious Wounds: The adept must use a beaded cloth which has been taken from a burial shroud to pluck the leaf of an aloe vera plant. The sap from the leaf should be rubbed into the cloth, which is then immediately placed on the wound. The fetishist must then trade the name of the character who needs healing onto the cloth to effect the cure.

Dig: Requires a bag as above, containing the forepaw of a hedgehog.

Neutralize Poison: This spell also needs the bag described above, and the fang of a poisonous snake.

Stoneskin: This spell is difficult for the adept to cast. He must locate the complete, unbroken shell of a turtle which died a natural death, carve into it the runes for "harmlessness", and place it under his pillow the night before the spell is needed. At sunrise the next morning, the spell takes effect; it lasts until sundown that day.

I hope these examples inspire you to create other fetishes for your players to discover, and to explore new ways of casting magic on Gothic Earth.



THE SENSITIVE

A Supernatural Kit for the Gothic Earth

by Gerard Morrissette

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THE SENSITIVE

Class:	Tradesman
Ability Reqs:	Int 11; Wis 13
Prime Req:	Wisdom
Hit Die:	d6
Attack as:	Tradesman
Saves as:	Tradesman
Advances as:	Tradesman
Exc Strength?	No
Spell Ability?	No
Exc Constitution?	No
Starting Cash:	4d6

Proficiencies:

Weapon Slots:	3
Additional Slots:	4
Nonproficiency Penalty:	-3
Nonweapon Slots:	6
Additional Slots:	3
Available Categories:	General, Professional, Arcane*
Bonus Proficiency:	Sixth sense
Recommended Proficiencies:	Psychometry Prognostication

* The sensitive can only select Psychometry and Prognostication at first level. He can choose any of the arcane skills after first level with no penalty.

Description: Throughout history, every area of the world has had its legends of individuals and groups that possess a power beyond the reach of the everyday man. Whether it is the gypsies of Europe, the natives of America or the aborigines of Australia, most of these legends are similar in respect to the special attachment to nature and the world around them that these groups share. The sensitive is a descendant of one of these groups.

Although normal in most respects, the sensitive is especially in tune with the world around him, and can sense the presence of the supernatural. Most sensitives are in denial about their connection to the supernatural,

even refusing to believe in the supernatural world at all, but usually some event in their life will begin to change their outlook. Many sensitives make a living out of the supernatural, as investigators or as those who seek to put an end to the evil of some creatures of the night.

A sensitive must remain vigilant against the forces of evil however, for just as he can use his gifts for the good of man, the Red Death can use these powers as a gateway for corrupting the sensitive.

Role-Playing: Many sensitives are withdrawn for most of their lives, not sure how to deal with others since they can't even deal with their own unique abilities. The few friends that they do make throughout life are kept close, and loyally defended.

While trying to come to grips with the reality of their powers, a sensitive sometimes discovers the brutal horror of the Red Death. While reactions to the Red Death vary from person to person, a high percentage of sensitives choose to combat the fiend in some small way. Sadly, many of these valiant souls end up paying for their bravery with their lives, because they were not prepared for the arduous task of facing the minions of the Red Death.

Special Benefits: All sensitives are born with the sixth sense, the ability to detect the supernatural around them. Also, because of their supernatural nature, sensitives are able to attack creatures immune to normal weapons, just as long as he is not using a ranged weapon. Thus, a sensitive could harm a vampire with a rapier, but not with a revolver.

A sensitive is also able to weave a simple defensive field around himself. Once a week, a sensitive is able to create a field that is equivalent to the 1st-level priest spell *protection from evil*. This field lasts for one turn, and weakens the sensitive once it is gone, requiring him to rest for one turn before acting again.

Special Hindrances: Whenever a sensitive is within five miles of a source of supernatural evil, he is unable to rest peacefully. He will suffer a cumulative -1 penalty each day to his saving throws and proficiency checks until he either moves out of the area, or destroys the source of his unrest.

Unfortunately, because the sensitive is so connected to the supernatural, he is also more susceptible to its temptations. A sensitive doubles the difficulty of all powers checks that he has to make. ☠

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OCTOBER 31ST, 1912. NEW YORK CITY.



So now do you see?” asked the stranger, folding up his sheets of newspaper and stuffing them back in his coat.

“By the end of the century, the Red Death had spread to every corner of the Earth—every last foot ever touched by man. Countless hidden battles were fought against this terrible force of evil. Some battles were won, some lost, and somehow, a rumor grew into a legend, which grew into a belief. A belief that these battles would mark the end of the struggle—that the end of the century would mark the end of the conflict, whether the Red Death won or lost.

“The struggle waged on and on. And then, one day, it was the twentieth century, and the world was still here. The Red Death was not suddenly vanquished—and I do not claim that the past decade has been without its sorrows—but bit by bit, the tide turned. One by one, the unnatural minions of this terrible evil were vanquished. One foul creature at a time, the forces of good were prevailing, and the Red Death was losing its grip on our world.

“The vast majority of people were unaware of the existence of this struggle, but they could sense its effects; even if they never noticed the change, they could feel as the corruption slipped away from them, and as hope was allowed to flow back into their lives. Hope—that’s what mankind felt as this decade began. It was truly the Golden Era.”

“An era which sank with the *Titanic*,” Charles supplied.

“Indeed, Mr. Fort, indeed.” The stranger’s voice was grim. “The forces of good were on the cusp of vanquishing the Red Death forever—but we were too late. Just too slow, and now the Red Death has had the time it needed to strike back. The *Titanic* was just the beginning; a message from this terrible Evil to both the qabals who opposed it, and to all the world. Even as I speak, we who have worked so hard to oppose or expose the Red Death are being hunted like dogs. We are being driven into the sea, scattered to the winds. And I fear that the Red Death’s rampage will not end with our destruction.”

“No?” asked Charles. He had long since realized that the stranger was far more personable if left to speak endlessly.

“No. Evil is spreading unchecked throughout the world. Not all qabals have the betterment of mankind as their goal, Mr. Fort. For every qabal which sought to destroy the evil which has poisoned our world, there has been a group working towards selfish or unholy ends. Qabals which serve evil causes, each in their own way, and in doing so feed the Red Death the corruption it so craves.

“Those sinister forces are growing in power, Mr. Fort. Man is being turned against man; we are being set against ourselves, against our kin. There is a secret society today which calls itself the White Legion. It selfishly seeks the betterment of one portion of mankind at the expense of all its fellows, and it in particular is gaining in strength, on both sides of the Atlantic. The Democratic candidate in the upcoming presidential election is a member, this much I know as fact.”

“And with Major Butt dead,” mused Charles.

“—with the Major dead, thus unable to act as mediator,” completed the stranger, “there has been no chance for the Republican schism to end. The Democrats will take the election, I assure you, and the White Legion will control the Oval Office. And in the Old Country... the Red Death has been there since the beginnings of history. There, its evils have piled atop one another, layer upon layer, and I sense...”

“Yes?” prodded Charles, his eyebrow raised.

“There, the Red Death is... *curdling*. The evil is so ancient, so thick, that it is warping into something more foul than I could have ever dreamed possible. The White Legion is even more powerful in Europe than it is here, Mr. Fort, so powerful in fact it is collapsing under its own weight. It is so widespread that it is being infiltrated by other insidious groups, splitting into sects, and...”

The stranger’s voice trailed off again, his eyes dancing as they followed the visions he was conjuring with his mind. He glanced askew at Charles.

“There are groups being spawned in the heart of Europe, Mr. Fort, groups with goals you would think

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unimaginable in their depravity. Or *should* think unimaginable, if you have any shred of humanity within you.”

Charles started to comment, but found his mouth unexpectedly dry. The stranger noticed this, and continued.

“So I say to you again, Mr. Fort: Give up your research. If you continue in this endeavor, then someday, in one of these books, you will find the Red Death—and when you find it, it will find you. You said you have a wife; go home to her, and cherish her in the time you have left before the Evil claims us all. Abandon this research. Let your ‘damned facts’ stay damned.”

The stranger looked Charles straight in the eye. “And should you ever be approached by a qabal, do not accept the hand they extend to you. Run, for no matter how noble their intentions, to be connected to the opponents of the Red Death is simply to carry a death sentence.”

“I would not join one of your qabals,” Charles commented, “any more than I’d be an elk.”

The stranger blinked at Charles incredulously. “Do not make light of my warning, Mr. Fort. When I say—”

“—And what *do* you say to the evidence I presented?” Charles asked. The stranger’s stare appeared both bemused and irritated.

“What, your strange, irrational coincidences? I didn’t think much of them at all. The Red Death is of the purest evil—it *is* Evil. It exists solely to spread corruption and strife, misery and horror. What possible reason would it have to be tossing fish down on people’s heads? It’s ridiculous—an insult to all those who have given their lives to fight this menace. You’ve taken the most loathsome foe mankind has ever known and made it out to be some sort of... of...”

“Deranged fishmonger?” Charles asked, impishly.

The stranger’s response was utterly devoid of any trace of whimsy. “Indeed.”

Charles shook his head. “I am not now saying that this Great Evil—this *Red Death*, as you call it—is an idiot. Maybe he, or it, drools comets and gibbers earthquakes, but the scale would have to be considered at least super-idioty.”

The stranger scowled. “If you’re not mocking me, Mr. Fort, then just what is your point? Have you one?”

“The point I make to you, sir,” Charles replied, “is merely this: If there is a Red Death, must it be sane?”

The stranger opened his mouth to reply. And he allowed it to remain open as he sat in silence, thinking.

“You say to me,” continued Charles, “that it took you until the turn of this century to learn the true nature of the Red Death, and that you took this information to heart too late to stop this great and terrible source of evil from lashing out against you.

You have presented me with vampires; I have presented you with teleporting kangaroos. You claim these are entirely separate. Black magic and misplaced marsupials; what could be more different? You claim that the former springs from the font of all evils, yet even while believing in the supernatural you exclude the latter datum because it does not fit your theories.”

“Indeed.” The stranger lapsed back into silence, unsure of Charles’ intention.

“So, you claim that your Evil minion and my Excluded buffoon have nothing to do with one another. Very well. But then I say this: They are white coral islands in a dark blue sea.”

It took the stranger a moment to fully realize that the meaning of this phrase had totally escaped him. “What?” he asked, at length.

“Islands in a sea,” Charles repeated. “Two islands, which plainly appear entirely separate. But they only appear separate because you have failed to look beneath the surface. You have failed to dive into the dark blue sea, and there discover that these islands are a single mass of land, their continuity hidden by the depths.”

A look of confusion began to creep into the stranger’s face. “What are you saying, Mr. Fort?”

“What I claim is this: That it did not take your ‘forces of good’ millennia to understand the true nature of the Red Death. What I claim is this: That it merely took you millennia *to convince yourselves you already knew it.*”

“*What!?*” The stranger started, leaping from his chair.

“Just like all the rest of society, your qabals became consumed by their own hubris—just as humanity believed itself master of the Earth, your champions of good believed that they understood the nature of the Red Death, and thus could master this great Evil. They convinced themselves that they knew the Red Death’s tricks, and therefore that they could parry its blows.

“Thus, you stopped watching those other white coral islands. Thus, while you were merely gazing at the surf, you did not see the *things* crawling from one island to another along the sandy bottom of that dark blue sea, until those *things* had already crawled onto your shore.”

The stranger sneered, disgusted. “You’re mad.”

“Sir,” Charles frowned, “I am not the one claiming the *Devil* sank the *Titanic.*”

The stranger glowered in silence, his hands clenched in white-knuckled fists. “I mistook you, Mr. Fort,” he hissed, through clenched teeth. “I took you for a decent man, dabbling in matters which would lay you low. Now I see I have erred. You are interested only in opposition. You collect your Damned facts, not because you wish to know the truth, but because by aligning yourself with these freaks of nature you find yourself in opposition—to

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science, to society, to reality—and that opposition is what drives you.”

All trace of humor drained from Charles’ face. “My only important opposition here is, not you, but the belief that I am in conflict with you.

“I put to you that the Red Death is mad. Perhaps it has recently gone mad, or perhaps it has always been so. But I assure you, if your theories do not match your data, it is not the fault of your data. You will never understand this great and terrible Evil you claim exists, if you insist on artificially excluding those of its manifestations you cannot explain.”

“Fifteen hundred people died on the *Titanic*,” spat the stranger. “The Red Death killed fifteen hundred people to slay no more than thirty of its foes, and to send a message to the rest of us. Am I then to understand that this tragedy was *our* fault? That we brought this doom upon ourselves?”

Charles calmed as the stranger’s agitation grew. “All I say is that the warning was there to see, if only you had looked. I don’t blame you; I would have never seen it either.”

“Warning!” the stranger hissed. “What warning?”

Charles smoothed his mustache. “You started by asking me if I had read a novel. Now I shall return the favor. Have you ever read *Futility*?”

“I’ve never even heard of it.”

Charles nodded. “Neither had I until just recently. Written by a chap by the name of Morgan Robertson. It wasn’t widely read, but it’s very important, in its own way.”

“And what way is that?”

“The novel carries a subtitle: *The Wreck of the Titan*. The tale depicts the largest ship ever built—a liner christened the *Titan*, one with measurements startlingly similar to its namesake *Titanic*. In the novel, this ship sails forth on its maiden voyage; this voyage is in April. The ship strikes an iceberg. The *Titan* sinks.”

“You call that a warning? Some obscure novel?”

“All I say is that it was there to be seen, if only you—if only *we*—had thought to look. And, it was published in 1898; during the ‘final battle,’ as you put it. A warning delivered fourteen years early, before it was too late. A warning which was promptly ignored.”

“You’re insane,” declared the stranger.

“And your Great Evil, accepting for now that it does exist as you say, is winning the battle simply because you refuse to open your eyes.”

“You’re completely mad,” continued the stranger.

“And you’re afraid to question whether you really know anything more about the Red Death than your ancestors did millennia ago.”

“You’re mad, Mr. Fort,” interrupted the stranger, “but I say again: Continue your research into the

supernatural, and you will not die a natural death. You’ll be killed, or you’ll vanish, or you’ll simply waste away. Turn back, Mr. Fort, or...”

“—And if you insist on keeping your eyes shut...”

Charles continued, speaking over the stranger’s diatribe.

“...You’ll be sorry,” the two men spoke as one.

The stranger fell into a silent, glowering fury; Charles gazed up at him, a quiet sadness in his eyes. After a moment, the stranger turned on his heels and stormed from the hall, never to enter Charles’ life again.

Charles sat in silence, composing himself. After a time, he quietly gathered up his little squares of paper, and tucked them in his pockets to take home to the shoe box he used to store his notes. He quickly tidied up his table and walked outside, pausing between the library’s two proud, stone lions.

Charles glanced at each of the statues in turn, then continued down the steps and off into the streets. He knew he would see those twin guardians of knowledge again; sooner or later, he’d find another free afternoon. His research would continue, the dire portents of a stranger with a curious, wilted flower notwithstanding.

But at that particular moment, Charles just wanted to go home to his wife. The hour was later than he’d thought, and a storm was blowing in.

“There have been suggestions of an occult control upon the minds of the inhabitants of this earth. Let anybody who does not like the idea that his mind may be most subtly controlled, without his knowledge of it, think back to what propagandists did with his beliefs in the years 1914-18.”

Charles Hoy Fort
Lo! (1931)

Charles Fort was misquoted and *Titanic* historical data was distorted from these sources:

The Complete Books of Charles Fort, Charles Fort (Dover Publications, Inc.; New York) @1974.

The Complete Idiot’s Guide to the Titanic, Jay Stevenson & Sharon Rutman (Simon & Schuster Macmillan; New York) @1998.

The Titanic Conspiracy, Robin Gardiner & Dan van der Vat (Citadel Press; Secaucus) @1995.

Website: *Encyclopedia Titanica*

<http://www.rmplc.co.uk/eduweb/sites/phind/>



BOOK OF SORROWS: CREDITS

MATTHEW BALL

Voices of the People

At times it seems as if the Dark Powers themselves were conspiring against the inclusion of any of my writings into this netbook. As deadlines approached, I found myself pleading for more time, but saddled with responsibilities and pressing concerns only *Voices of the People* came into being. The Vistani in the piece, Latcho Drom, is also the name of one of my major sources for the article as it is also a title of a movie which explores the origins and traditions of the gypsy music. Any one with an interest in gypsy cultures and a patience for subtitles should seek out the movie—it's definitely an eye-opener and a great source for material on the gypsy way of life. All the verses in the article are actual gypsy songs, some with slight word changes to make them fit the Ravenloft world, and if anyone is interested, I can provide them with copies of the actual words. If I remember correctly, "latcho drom" is from the Rom language, and means safe journey. To my friend, Tracy A., this article is for you. Here's wishing for a safe journey for you whatever may come. To the rest of you, here's to hoping that the secrets of the Brotherhood of St. Phocas will be revealed from the mists at another time.

Until then...

mball@ns.sympatico.ca

DANIEL J. BANDERA

The Haunts of Lockwood Manor

Circus Performer

I am pleased to have been able to contribute to another NetBook for the Kargatane and would like to thank them.

If there is one thing that I have learned from them it is to listen to the voices in my head instead of the thing under my bed.

The circus performer entry comes from a moment of merriment in an old gaming session. The ghosts of the Lockwoods is my first in a series of adventures inspired by the *Van Richten Guides*. Eventually, I plan on writing an adventure that corresponds with each of the different Guides.

daniel.j.bandera@us.pwcglobal.com

JOE BARDALES

Kargatane

Tome of Magic Rules

Sherlock Holmes and the Red Death

Joe Bardales is thankful for having the privilege to work with his fellow Kargatane and all the talented contributing authors on another spectacular Ravenloft NetBook this year. Joe would like to dedicate his contributions this year to the loyal fans of the MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH setting, ignored and under served for far too long. He hopes you will enjoy these small offerings and find them of use in your campaign. In addition to being a member of the Kargatane, Joe is co-publisher and co-editor of the upcoming *Chilling Tales of Gothic Earth*, a new online e-zine for MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH, with fellow *Book of Sorrows* author Jarrod Lowe. They both encourage you to check out their web site at <http://members.tripod.com/chillingtales> and the first issue due to be released in January 1999, just in case you are wondering what Sherlock Holmes will

be up to while on hiatus...

joe@kargatane.com

BIL BOOZER

Vampire, Pisacha

The Gothic Earth Guide to Voudou

Madame Sejourné

Ton Ton Macoute

An interesting result. Apparently, subjects become less willing to offer dedications after zombification. We'll have to keep that in mind for further netbooks...

billboozergsu.edu

BOOK OF SORROWS: CREDITS

EHREN BRADBURY

The Tale of the Ragman

The Acolytes of Zebulon

The Ragman—This character is based on a piece of prose (author anonymous) I heard many, many years ago at a junior high speech tournament (oh so long ago). The piece impressed me then, and still does so now. I wanted to give Ravenloft another tragic “good guy,” and I hope he finds a home in others’ campaigns. Thanks to Nick and Josh for doing some of the best last minute proofreading ever.

The Acolytes of Zebulon—Thanks to Brian, for asking “why does Dave always get to be the death guy,” and making me create something entirely my own (I promise to cut back on the pre-fab adventures just for you). May Thull attain true immortality someday.

I’d also like to thank the Kargatane for putting these great netbooks together in the first place.

wbradbur@bayou.uh.edu

TIM BRANNAN

Piasa Bird

Tim Brannan has heard stories about the Piasa Bird his whole life, and is the great-grandson of James LaFayette. He teaches Educational Psychology courses at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He lives outside of Chicago, which is a safe 300 miles from Alton.

tbrannan@usa.net

CHARLES BROWN

Kargatane

Mars Attacks Gothic Earth

Charles Brown didn’t know what he was in for when he replied to an e-mail on the Ravenloft list about starting a netbook. . . Since then he’s been a semi-contributing member of the Kargatane from day one, and is pleased to finally have a submission worthy of acceptance. He dedicates it to the memory of Orson Welles, who used the source material to frighten an entire nation one dark Halloween night, many years ago. . .

charles@kargatane.com

ANDREW CERMAK

Simon LaFleur

The Gargoyle of the Great

Cathedral

Will o’the Woods

Blackblade

Theokos

Simon LaFleur was inspired by a very obscure character from 70’s horror “literature.” Anyone who can tell me the character’s name will get my healthy respect (well, maybe “respect” isn’t the right word, but anyway. . .). I changed the character’s background almost completely, threw in Souragne and Chicken-Bone (a criminally under-used character), and voilà; instant tool of Voodan vengeance. Actually, it was a somewhat more complicated process than that, enough so to make poor Simon perhaps my favorite character of my own creation.

The Gargoyle was quite simply inspired by the idle thought “Hey, Ravenloft doesn’t have enough gargoyles.” I can’t think of anything more Gothic than a gargoyle, after all. “He” started out as a common gargoyle, then was quickly transformed into a gargoyle golem because that was more appropriate to the background concept I had developed for him. I haven’t used him in my campaign yet, but I plan to use him as a Ravenloftian counterpart of the Hunchback of Notre Dame; Wort from *Tower of Doom* simply doesn’t cut the mustard (at least, not my mustard); besides which, he’s dead, somewhat limiting his usefulness.

Will o’the Woods was created as a reaction to *The Shadow Rift*. While I thought it was an excellent supplement with a fascinating take on the fey, it didn’t provide enough cruel prankster faeries for my taste, so I invented one of my own to plague the Tepestani people (as if they weren’t plagued enough already. . .).

Blackblade and Theokos started out as two parts of a six part submission for the Book of Sorrows creatively entitled “Six Fiends for Ravenloft.” The Kargatane thought six new fiends was a bit more than the demiplane could handle, and asked me to resubmit the two of my choice instead. I in turn asked them which two were their favorites, and thus Blackblade and Theokos made the final cut.

Blackblade was quite simply created to fill a role. I wanted an assassin character to plague my PCs, and from that desire came Blackblade. Up ‘til now he has been the agent of petty vengeance for a few slighted noblemen and merchants, but the soon the darklords may be

BOOK OF SORROWS: CREDITS

seeking his services, and that's when I expect the character to become a lot of fun.

Theokos, on the other hand, was an idea I got after rereading about Elena Faith-hold in *Islands of Terror*. Page 9: "As [the door] opened, a wizened old servant greeted her and ushered her into the reception hall. He welcomed her back to her castle." That got me to thinking: just what is this old servant's story? Since *IoT* doesn't tell us, I made one up for him. I dedicate these articles to my knuckles and wrists, for sacrificing so much of their own well-being to ensure that these characters made it out the door, and to my father, for bringing me home that black box when first hit the shelves. Ultimately, the blame lies with him...

a_cermak@hotmail.com

ERIC C. DANIEL

The Scroll of the Hunter

Boccoru

The man folded the paper and blew a puff of air through his lips. He turned his eyes to the shadowy figure before him. "The information presented meets with your approval?" it asked in a low, inflectionless voice. The man nodded and placed the paper in an inside pocket. "Our usual deal for it?" he inquired. The figure agreed in the same emotionless tone and turned to go. "Our organization thanks you. This will be useful in our mission," the man said quickly. The figure stopped, and half turned back. "Your thanks are unnecessary, Mr. Turagdon. My own interests are served by this," it stated coldly. With that, the figure vanished into the mist rising in the growing dusk.

Strahd4037@aol.com

LUIS FERNANDO DE PIPPO

Spirit Points

The idea for the spirit points arose because I was tired of hearing my players complain about the use of energy draining monsters and how it was unfair that their precious levels were "stolen." For a time we used saving throws, but that at high levels where not satisfactory so I came up with the points.

lfdepippo@ciudad.com.ar

MARK "MORTAVIUS" GRAYDON

The Brotherhood of Mortis

Well, I'm really pleased to have made a contribution to this netbook (for good or ill) and hopes to have a long continuing relationship with Ravenloft in general (for good or ill) for as long as its undeath lasts. Well, time to get back to my cell and start writing again... (for good or ill)

Allan_Graydon@bc.sympatico.ca

ANDREW HACKARD

Kargatane

More Fun and Games

Lost Tomes of the Arcane

The Kargatane Bookshelf

Mynilar Sannom

The Magic of Nature

As the newest member of the Kargatane, I must say that it has been a privilege to work with such a talented group of people, and a rare treat to read all the submissions for the *Book of Sorrows*. I look forward to beginning the next netbook (which only proves that the workload has driven me mad).

I dedicate these articles to Chuck, Mikey, Spud, Doogie, Gaby, Aaron, Michael, Tanya, Kevin, George, and Lance, who taught me all I know about being a Ravenloft DM. (Not all at the same time.)

andrew@kargatane.com

BOOK OF SORROWS: CREDITS

ANDREW HAUPTMAN

Men, Lunatic

Andrew Hauptman has been teaching for 6 years in the New York City public school system. In what he laughingly calls his spare time, he has written five RPGA tournament modules, one for Ravenloft and three for the MOTRD-based Living Death campaign. He has also written two short articles for the RPGA's Polyhedron magazine for the Living Death campaign.

Quistar@aol.com

NATHAN E. IRVING

Romagna

Nathan dedicates his article to the most heart-stopping babe in Ravenloft, Tiyet.

nellisir@aol.com

GEOFF KIMBER

Children of the Light

Geoff has been playing AD&D for more than 17 years, which is probably explains his unwholesome attitude to "ghosties, ghoulies and long-legged beasties/and things that go bump in the night." Aside from AD&D, his hobbies include making crop circles in his turbocharged Toyota Celica GT-Four, and teaching his goldfish to sing Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*. Various reviewers have had this to say about his article:

"Mr. Kimber has plumbed the depths of depravity to bring us this unnecessarily graphic portrayal of mindless violence. The man knows too much."—*Phinias Wirm, Interrogator-Marshal, Falkovnian Armed Forces.*

"A rip-roaring, bodice-tearing, codpiece-bulging tale of lust and unrequited love in sun-drenched climes. A 'bed-time story' if ever there was one."—*the Phantom Lover, ghost writer for Jackie Collins.*

"The author challenges the established theories of race, gender, and class mobility in modern society. He is therefore a dangerous subversive, and is to be arrested on sight."—*Josephine Chantreux, Defense Adviser to Marcel Guignol, Dementlieu.*

"If I could read, I'm sure I'd be offended by this piece of 'learning.' Burns well, tho'."—*anonymous native of Tepest.*

GKimber1@email.dot.gov.au

"LIEDERICK"

Dead or Alive?

Liederick is the 'owner' of the Mordentshire Print Shop, and member of the Mordent Cartographic Society. After the demise of most of the Society in the destruction of Il Aluk, he has become very interested to uncover all things undead and vile. He subsequently spends most of his spare time plotting domain maps and rediscovering ancient sagas.

liederick@timetech.demon.nl

RENÉ LITTEK

Lesser Breeds of the Arak

I'd like to dedicate my article to Nastasja, the dream of my sleepless nights, who always cheers me up when I need it most, and thanks to J. R. R. Tolkien and many other people for creating the elves we know today.

I just love elves!

Rene.Littek@gmx.de

JARROD LOWE

The Waking Nightmare

"X"

The British Society for Paranormal Research

Jarrold R. Lowe is co-webmaster and a regular contributor to *Ravenloft: Our Place In the Mists...*

Currently, he is attending college at Morehead State University in Kentucky, where he is majoring in both Art and Journalism with a minor in Creative Writing. Jarrold continues to live with that wacky bard "Frosty O'Grady" in the large pink apartment complex that has been their home for the majority of 1998.

Jarrold enjoys spending his time in the company of good friends, reading, listening to Pearl Jam, and concocting misadventures for his Gothic Earth campaign ("None come before Konga!").

BOOK OF SORROWS: CREDITS

Jarrold would like to dedicate his contributions to the *Book of Sorrows* to all of his varied friends & loved ones who have stood by him through thick & thin. (You know who you are.)

From the Desk of Abraham Van Helsing: The Waking Nightmare is dedicated to Kargatane member (& co-editor of the upcoming *Chilling Tales of Gothic Earth*) Joe Bardales, whose help, criticism, friendship and good humor have always helped to brighten the author's day. Around the corner in 1999 will come the aforementioned *Chilling Tales of Gothic Earth*, an electronic fanzine dedicated to that kooky entity "The Red Death" and his little world called Gothic Earth. Jarrod & Joe are really psyched about this monster endeavor. They hope that those dedicated fans of MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH and RAVENLOFT will continue to show their support for the wonderful world of gothic horror originally concocted by Bill Connors.

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dotheevolution@yahoo.com

JOHN W. MANGRUM

Kargatane

Framing Fiction

Classes of the Damned

Mars Attacks Gothic Earth

High Strangeness in the Gothic Earth

John would like to thank Steve Miller, Cindi Rice, and Dave Gross for assisting him in the pillaging of their creations for the Ravenloft framing fiction. Now let's see if he's ever heard from again...

Unsurprisingly, the concept for the Gothic Earth fiction fell into place as John was leaving the movie theater after seeing James Cameron's *Titanic*. He got the inspiration to do *Classes of the Damned*, oddly enough, while walking home in the rain from seeing *Dark City*.

High Strangeness is the result of a pent-up fascination with Fortean themes John developed while working on the infamous "Certain Unnamed Game."

Mars Attacks Gothic Earth is being published on the 60th anniversary of Orson Welles' infamous radio broadcast, and H. G. Wells' novel was published one century ago this year.

John also wants to repeat that nothing he's written in this netbook is canon, and promises to not even mention Charles Hoy Fort in next year's *Book of S...*

iggy@kargatane.com

GERARD MORRISSETTE

The Sensitive

Gerard Morrisette is 22 years old and works in the child welfare field. To relax he enjoys terrorizing his players with his MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH campaign, set in their hometown of Lowell, Massachusetts.

J24U@prodigy.net

CHRISTOPHER DALE NICHOLS

Kargatane

Sir Bartholomew Nylreave

Chris Nichols has been with the Kargatane since its beginning, and thanks whatever forces may be responsible for that fact. He is honored to have such skilled and pleasant friends. In dedication, he would like to thank the Old Man of Providence, H. P. Lovecraft, the fine folks at Pagan Publishing for their illuminating efforts in the genre of horror role-playing, and as always the Kargatane, for their efforts to teach, inspire, and not toss me into the oubliette. As time wears down into thin and mottled tatters, and society configures itself into a millennial culture at the brink of the abyss, I hope to continue my tenure with the Kargatane.

chris@kargatane.com

CHARLES PHIPPS

The Ba'al Verzi Knife

Alfonso Tyves

Arthur Mordred Nesmith

I have always loved the Ravenloft setting and ever since I wandered to the mists five years ago I have tried my utmost to do the unique flavor of the Demiplane

BOOK OF SORROWS: CREDITS

justice. Thanks to compatriots on the Ravenloft list (and the gaming group I now work with that I met on it) I think I have done reasonably well. I am just glad I had the especially opportune chance to once again participate in these wonderful netbooks which the Kargatane provides.

tcp@zoomnet.net

JON "KITSUNE" STACEY

The Return of Urdogen

Mr. Stacey would be delighted to offer a dedication—just as soon as we clear the seawater from his lungs...

kitsune@itctel.com

MARCO A. TORRES

Coda al Fine

Music has always been my greatest source of inspiration, so I guess it's only fitting that I finally got around to writing something with music as a main part of the plot.

I'd also like to acknowledge my brother, sister, and parents who have always encouraged me to write.

JawaLad@aol.com

STUART TURNER

Kargatane

The Kargatane Bookshelf

Faces of Deception

It's now one year since the Kargatane produced its first netbook, the *Book of Souls*. When we started preparing that first volume, I really don't think we knew what we were getting ourselves into! What began as a one-off netbook production has exploded into three more mini-netbooks, the large *Secrets of the Kargatane* website, competitions, and now the *Book of Sorrows*.

After all that, I'm happy to say that I'm still having a great time! Thanks for that must go to the other Kargatane members residing in this bookshop, and to the Kargat for their continued support of our endeavors (however misguided!).

stu@kargatane.com

"TYKUS THE GLADIATOR"

Whäl

Tykus is an adventurer from Athas who has seen more than he should have.

Kies9528@mailclerk.ecok.edu

ANDREW WYATT

Children of the Bayou

These monsters are original concepts, but I should probably credit William W. Connors and the rest of the Kargat for making Anton Misroi something more than expected in *Domains of Dread*. I've been a Ravenloft fan since the black box days, and the first AD&D adventure I ever DM'ed was—fittingly—*Night of the Walking Dead*. I run my own Ravenloft site, the

Lonesome Road (<http://come.to/lonesomeroad>). When I'm not gaming, I'm busy being an environmental science grad student. I'd like to thank the Kargatane for supporting a fabulous game setting and for providing a voice for quality fan-authored material. And a special thanks to my many players through the years, for lighting a candle in the darkness...

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