

Ravenloft

Van Richten's Encyclopedia

of Darklords & Domains

Volume II

*A Complete 5e Ravenloft Encyclopedia.
Meet all the Darklords and visit every
Dread Domain ever published!*



By Misffactor Press

Credits



WARNING!

Some of the content in this book can and will be disturbing to part of our audience. We have tried our best to treat these subjects with the respect and severity that they deserve, but parts of Ravenloft, and the real world history and fiction that inspired it, have always been horrific in the extreme. If you or your group feel uncomfortable with that kind of material, we strongly suggest that you leave it out of your campaign. We have chosen to leave it in as we believe that these subject still need to be addressed, and that roleplaying games — like literature — are one of the best mediums for doing so.

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A few words...

Who are we?

We are a group of people who share their enthusiasm for the Ravenloft setting and desire to spread the mists so that more victi... people know about our favorite setting of dread. We are all creating Ravenloft material that is true to the origins of Ravenloft under the umbrella of Mistfactor Press, for the DMsGuild.

What is this?

This is the **second** volume of Van Richten's Encyclopedia of Darklords & Domains. A huge project almost two years in production. In this encyclopedia we present all the Darklords and domains that have ever been published in novels or other Ravenloft books released prior to the fifth edition. In this book, you will find the lore of the domains of the Clusters and Isles of Terror. Each domain entry you will also find the lore and statblock of its current or even former darklord and their stats. New spells and magic items as well as new NPCs and monsters unique to their domains are also included. For the people that wish to dig deeper, some of our references and links for the original books and areas of research are given as well.

Regarding Ravenloft

Maybe there isn't only one Ravenloft. Maybe there are many.

The Mists may hold not only many different domains, but also many versions of each domain. Several Barovias, Darkons, Falkovnias and each of the dark domains, all slightly or greatly different from the others. Ravenloft is a dark mirror of other realities, but rather than an intact mirror, it may be more of a shattered one — each shard reflecting the original somewhat differently. Think of this like the reincarnation of Tatyana, or maybe the reflections of Amber in the works of Roger Zelazny. Books and records inside Ravenloft may contain different, contradictory descriptions of apparently the same realms. Travelers in the Mists might return to a familiar domain, only to find out that it is not quite the same as the one they are familiar with. This could be quite an eerie and unsettling experience. The Darklord and the folk could be different, the geography or the history, the technological level or even small and irritating details. Their own families might not recognize them, or may have never existed. Perhaps they'll encounter another version of themselves. Most importantly, this cosmology can put an end to the debates about different editions and fanfics. There's no need to choose one over the others.

They could all form part of the many Ravenlofts, in the one setting.

What's next?

If you wish to be informed of our future products and also receive a discount you can register for our newsletter list [here](#). You can also participate in Ravenloft conversations by looking for us on Facebook at the [Mists of Ravenloft Group](#)! There, you can give us your feedback or even request stuff that you would like to see included in future projects!

Till then,

GET MISTIFIED!

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The Amber Wastes

Overview

Ashes to ashes. Dust to dust. Eventually the sands of time reclaim even the most powerful empires. In the deserts of The Amber Wastes however, their demise is not always the end. The arid, unrelenting heat of the day, and near freezing temperatures at night, force a certain skill of perseverance in life; while long-forgotten religious rites, performed in honor of Pharaonic God-Kings, allow a perverse persistence in death. In the desolate sandscapes of **Har'Akir**, **Sebua**, and **Pharazia**, water is more valuable than gold. What remains of the nomadic populace clings to existence among the oases sparsely scattered about the shifting sands. Moving from one font of life to the next is a daunting task. Travel by day, and the heat takes its toll. Travel by night, and there are far worse fates than death. The Ancient Dead patiently wait amongst the dunes and cliffs, the Lords among them understanding a simple truth. Life is a mirage, while Death is eternal. Even the strongest will join them in time. While each of these Domains existed long before The Grand Conjunction, and one of Hyskosa's Signs was observed in Har'Akir, the event had no immediate impact on their status as Islands of Terror. It was a full six years later, by the Barovian Calendar, that The Dark Powers merged their borders to form The Amber Wastes Cluster.

Mistways

-*The Jackal's Ruse* is a one-way mistway from The Nocturnal Sea to the desert of Har'Akir.

-*The Road of a Thousand Secrets* is a two-way, somewhat reliable mistway between southern Hazlan and south-eastern Pharazia.

-*The Road of Burning Amber* passes through the Island of Terror, Al Kathos, connecting the Amber Wastes to the Verduous Lands.

-An unnamed mistway occurs between Mount Frost in Rokushima Táiyoo and Anhalla in Sebua. The route can only be found when the snows storm about Mount Frost while a sandstorm affects Anhalla.

Chronology

551 BC – **Har'Akir** forms

564 BC – **Sebua** forms

590 BC – **Pharazia** forms

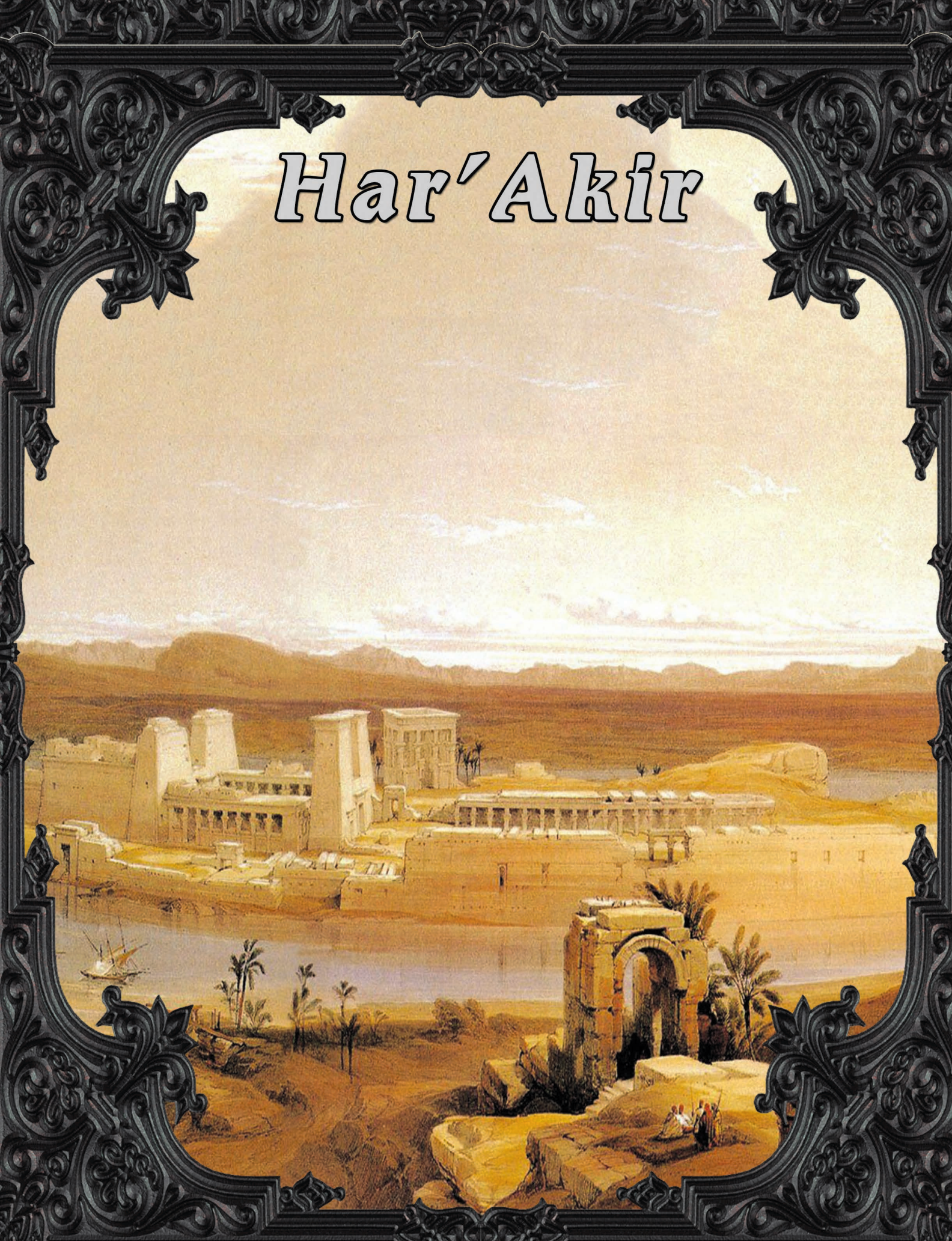
746 BC – The desert domains fuse – The Amber Wastes form.

"The desert is a place of bones, where the innards are turned out, to desiccate into dust"
~ Vera Nazarian, *The Perpetual Calendar of Inspiration*



The Amber Wastes

Har' Akir



Har' Akir



Har' Akir is a harsh domain, one of scouring sands with a long history. But it is a history that is yet to be written. Long ago, in the Black Land, Anhk-tepot rose to power, and in a search for immortality gained exactly what he wanted: power over life and death. But at a terrible cost. His touch became death to everyone, and though eventually, he surrounded himself with undead servants, it became too much for his subjects, and he was killed in an uprising. Even before this, Anhk-tepot was overextending his reach, increasing the size of the Black Land immensely through conquest, and starting a golden age for the kingdom that would eventually become an empire. With his death, all his hopes and ambitions were put beyond him, as he was confined to the stretch of land that is Har' Akir, and the tiny settlement of Muhar. Such great dreams were now confined to his own mind and he slept for decades, wallowing in his dreams and memories. When Sebuva appeared nearby, things got worse as the Son of Suns could see what became of his empire in the aftermath of his death. A great kingdom, but one poisoned by ambition and which eventually fell because of it. As such, he despises Sebuva for having fallen from the great pedestal that he had started lifting the Black Land to. Anhk-tepot, unlike Tiyet, also senses that there is some royal blood in Sebuva. And as the Pharaoh stirs in his dreams, he senses that perhaps there might be hope after all, if one of the royal bloodline would come to his tomb. Perhaps he might then rekindle his dreams of conquest.

Adventures in Har' Akir will almost inevitably center around Muhar, as the domain is small and it is the only readily available water source. Leaving therefore becomes difficult. But the themes of the domain play out well here: It is the story of ambition and of extending yourself too far. Anhk-tepot tried for immortality, Isu (the, now dead, priestess) wanted to become queen and convert the Muharans to Set, Senmet wanted to become Pharaoh and the story goes on. Even now, Snefru, the priestess in Muhar, seems destined to repeat the mistakes of her predecessor. Adventures should center around this: Ambition that becomes too much. Perhaps the adventurers get greedy when looting a tomb, and they're cursed. Perhaps they delve too far, and encounter something they can't handle. Perhaps they simply stay away from Muhar too long one day, and they run into the werejackals.

"I want to be Caliph in the place of the Caliph." ~ René Goscinny, Iznogoud,

Culture Level:	Bronze Age
Climate & Terrain:	Warm, desert, hills, and mountains
Year Formed:	551 BC
Population:	600
Races (%):	Humans 99%, Other 1%
Languages:	Akiri, Pharazian
Religions:	Akiri pantheon
Government:	Theocracy
Ruler(s):	Snefru
Darklord(s):	Anhk-tepot
Nationality:	Har' Akiri
Analog:	Ancient Egypt

Local Fauna:

Har' Akir is close to complete desolation, but even in this gods-forsaken land, some animals still manage to survive the harsh conditions. Snakes, scarabs, jackals, and camels are the dominant species here, though the lower slopes of the southeastern mountains of Har' Akir tend to have more spotted lions living in them than any other predator. Out in the desert though, the king of "normal" animal life is the giant scorpion, whose sting can fell even the hardest traveler. Even the most fearsome predator avoids the Valley of the Pharaoh's Rest, as it is filled with all kinds of monsters.

Local Flora:

Har' Akir is terribly desolate. The only real vegetation is the palm trees that surround the single spring at the center of Muhar. The nomads elsewhere subsist on what little moisture, meat, and vegetation they can find in the desert. A few cacti make up the main way of getting water in the desert, and some locals whisper of a secret spring hidden in the mountains, one that they use to keep themselves away from Muhar whenever possible. The location of the spring is secret and travelers will have to find it themselves, but unlike in Muhar, taking water from this spring is not taboo.



Har' Akir

Native Horrors

Werejackals make a particular home in Har' Akir, though they are careful not to overfeed or infect more of their kind, as there are limits to the number of people in Har' Akir. They hide among the jackals of Har' Akir as well as among the nomads of the desert. They strictly avoid getting too close to Muhar or the Valley of the Pharaoh's Rest, fearing the wrath of Set and Anhktepote respectively. The true danger in Har' Akir though is the undead, ranging from desiccated and dried-up zombies to the servants of Set, the mummies. Local legends speak of two-headed dogs as well: those who hear their howl are doomed to die within a fortnight. Whether that legend is true is unknown, but the death dogs are real, sticking to the deepest parts of the desert.

Terrain type

Har' Akir consists of desert and mountains. And that is about it. The only break in that monotony is the oasis around which Muhar rests, and the secret spring in the mountains. The weather here is unpredictable, with the desert often kicking up storms that last for days and which flays the flesh from the bones of those who have not sought shelter. After such storms, the desert changes with previous landmarks gone and new ones established, and sometimes old secrets are uncovered.



Important Landmarks

Anhktepote's Tomb

Anhktepote's Tomb is the resting place of not only Anhktepote himself but many officials of his time, as well as his children and grandchildren. It is guarded by six gigantic statues, three gods (Ra, Osiris, and Isis) on the left, and three mortals (Anhktepote, his wife Nephyr, and Anhkamon, his vizier). Five of these are still in good condition, sheltered by the mountains, but the statue of Nephyr has been horribly defaced so that the face is no longer recognizable. Some speculate that this is the work of Nephyr herself, unable to face and understand what she has become. More than 200 people are entombed here, sealed away when Anhktepote perished. A few of the tombs are empty, as Anhktepote was drawn into the Mists before they died and were entombed themselves. While Anhktepote himself sleeps most of the time, that is not the case for his family. His eldest son, Thutepote, is quite active though he poses the smallest threat as he is a normal mummy. Far more worrying are the more than a dozen high priests buried here, sealed away in a crypt at the center of the tomb. Here can be found the sarcophagi of the high priests, each of whom has become a greater mummy with the passage of time. Senmet was once one of these High Priests though he was slain by Anhktepote, following the Night of Thoth (the night when Anhktepote rose for the seventh time). Another is Hotep, a high priestess of Sebek, the crocodile god, who has been forced into slumber by Anhktepote due to worries that her lust for revenge could pose a threat in the future — doubly so, as Anhktepote killed her originally by surprise. Hotep is also potentially the second greatest threat and powerful spellcaster in Har' Akir, second only to Anhktepote. Anhktepote himself, the Great Pharaoh, the Son of the Sun, rests in a sarcophagus on a funeral barge, sealed inside a sarcophagus which can only be opened by mortal hands if a magical ankh is used. Anhktepote himself can rise from there himself, but doing so is painful as he sees what has befallen his once prosperous land.

Forgotten Shrine of Nephyr

Nephyr was the youngest wife of Anhktepote and there is even a room inside his tomb for her. However, she was not buried there. She died along with the rest of his victims due to his deadly touch after insulting the gods — though she was the first. She was also the first to come to him in his new form, terrifying to behold as she tried to embrace him. He screamed for her to leave, and so she did, escaping into the deep desert rather than return to the room that was supposed to be her tomb.

Har' Akir

Here she has established a small underground shrine, a place dedicated to Anhktepot, but out of his sight. She was intended to be buried alongside her husband, hence the empty room in the tomb, but this is where she lives now. Nephyr doesn't understand what she has become and hasn't seen Anhktepot in his new mummified form, believing him to have died as a normal mortal, and her to have been selected as an immortal guardian over his tomb. Even so, she still respects his wishes of never coming close.

Valley of the Pharaoh's Rest

Only a single road leads into the Valley of the Pharaoh's Rest, starting in Muhar. The road from the village rises gently as it approaches the entrance to the canyon. There is little loose sand here as the canyon walls protect the road and canyon from the sands. Only smooth, flat rocks litter the landscape here

The canyon walls are a mere 500 yards to either side of the road, from where they rise up 700 feet above the desert floor (or some 500 feet above the canyon walls). Vultures and packs of death dogs make their home here, protecting the ancient tomb of Anhktepot. Traces remain that indicate that other tombs could be built here in the future, as there is plenty of room, but no pharaoh has risen since the time of Anhktepot.

Towns and villages:

Muhar

Muhar is a hamlet of 300 inhabitants that has risen up around a sacred spring. This spring is what makes it difficult for people to leave, as anyone is allowed to drink freely from it, but to take the water and bring it from Muhar is a crime punishable by death. Traditionally Muhar is led by a high priest or priestess of Osiris, and the current leader is a young woman named Snefru. She took over when Isu Rehkotep was killed during the seventh rising of Anhktepot by a group of intrepid heroes (Isu was trying to overthrow Anhktepot with the help of one of his High Priests, the traitor Senmet. Senfru was then selected to follow her, but like her predecessor, she too has fallen from the grace of Osiris and into the worship of Set through the scrolls and diaries of Isu). Now she leads the inhabitants of Muhar in the secret worship of Set, while they believe they're still worshipping Osiris, the god of the dead.

Neighboring domain(s):

Sebua

Fun Fact:

The village of Muhar is sometimes erroneously called Mudar. In the Har' Akir language Muhar means "place of water", but due to a slight inflection in the name, when Muhar is translated into Balok or Common, it is pronounced Mudar (which roughly translates in the Har' Akir language as "place of mud").



Anhktepót

"I don't understand why so many seek immortality. It's always a curse. Never a blessing."

~ Rudolph van Richten

Anhktepót is tall and well built. When standing still, he appears regal and looks as if he should be obeyed without question. The golden crown of his people sits on his head, a massive headpiece that intimidates and awes. His eyes glow with an orange light tinged with gold. All this is an illusion however. Anhktepót staggers when he walks and his voice is a raspy whisper.

Anhktepót's torso and legs are covered in tightly wrapped strips of linen, yellowed with age. He has torn the strips around his head and arms free and now they trail behind him like a rotting cloak.

Background: Anhktepót was once the dedicated high priest of Re, the head of the Mulhorandi pantheon. Re was a god of light and wisdom who promised those that followed his teachings eternal life in the afterlife. When Anhktepót was a young man that was enough, but as he got older, the promises began to ring hollow. Anhktepót wanted immortality. Life eternal in the service of his god, to provide a steady hand to guide his church and his faithful.

Despite his prayers and years of faithful service, Re never granted Anhktepót this boon. Anhktepót began to grow bitter at his god's silence. After a few years it even seemed like Re wasn't listening at all. The rituals seemed hollow and the prayers were just performances for the flock. Anhktepót began to live a secret life away from the church and his silent god.

Anhktepót used contacts within the Red Wizards of Thay to purchase slaves. He bought dozens and had them secreted in tombs around his temple city. Every night unfortunate men, women, and children were brought to his chambers. Anhktepót tortured them to discover the secrets of life. He cut them apart, burned their flesh and even ate their corpses. Anything to learn the secrets of immortality.

One morning as the sun rose over his desert home, Re sent one of his falcon headed angels to Anhktepót. They commanded the wayward priest to release his slaves and prepare for a ritual cleansing that would absolve him of his sins. Once that was accomplished, the angel would guide Anhktepót on a quest that would vanquish a massive serpent of night and chaos that threatened a far away land. If Anhktepót could slay the beast, then he could return to Re's ser-

vice, although as a lesser priest. Then when the priest died, all would be forgiven.

Anhktepót sneered at the angel and spat on its fine robes. He would not release anyone. Re was dead to him, and Anhktepót would discover the secrets of immortality on his own.

For a second, the angel's eyes were saddened before it motioned and the great doors to Anhktepót's inner sanctum opened. Behind it were hundreds of lesser priests of Re. As they watched, the angel pronounced his judgement. Anhktepót would live forever as he wished, but it would be an eternity of torture.

Anhktepót fled from his temple city, taking his most loyal servants and priests with him. At first the curse was everything he had hoped for. Wounds healed instantly, poison had no effect. But soon he realized his damnation. His touch killed. Anyone that Anhktepót even brushed against contracted a wasting fever and died soon after. Rather than repent, Anhktepót studied dark magic that allowed him to raise and control the undead.

Anhktepót had forsaken Re. He cast down the god's statues and broke the holy ankh he wore around his neck. The priests that followed him finally saw what their master had become. They turned on him and at midnight under a new moon, mummified him. Yet still he lived.

As Anhktepót was being ritually sealed in his casket and buried beneath the sand, the angel of Re returned to him in a vision. Anhktepót would live forever, entombed below ground stuck inside the body of a corpse.

As the angel departed, the Mists closed in.

Current Sketch: Anhktepót sleeps for decades at a time. He lives in his dreams about the pleasures of the flesh and commanding armies of fanatically loyal priests. As he dreams his mind is connected to the minds of his people. Any great wave of despair or fear awakens the mummy lord and his minions. Unfortunately for the people of Har'Akir, their coming only brings more death.

Anhktepót hates his rotting prison. He longs to be human again and would gladly sacrifice his immortality to live as a mortal for a decade or two. To further add to his torment, the Dark Powers have granted him a ritual that lets him become human for one day.

Anhktepot

In a depraved ceremony, Anhktepot must sacrifice a human just before the sun rises. If the ritual is successful, Anhktepot will become human until the sun sets. The knowledge that he will return to his decrepit form with the setting of the sun robs him of any joy he gets by being a man again.

If Anhktepot is slain while a mortal, his mummy servants will take him to his pyramid and mummify his corpse. When the ritual is complete, Anhktepot will return to unlife with all his powers and hit points restored.

Darklord's Tactics: Anhktepot is a powerful cleric, although he doesn't know which god grants him spells. He never prays, but the spells are granted to him with the rising of the sun, just as if Re were granting them.

In addition to his spells, Anhktepot is tremendously strong, able to crush the skulls of seasoned warriors without much trouble. Even worse, his touch delivers a powerful wasting disease that fights against any attempt, magical or mundane, to cure it. Clerics of good aligned gods are particularly hated by the fallen priest. He will attempt to drag them back to his temple when he finds them. No one knows what heinous acts he performs, but they scream for days.

Borders: When the mummy lord closes the borders of his domain, Har'Akir is surrounded by a shimmering wall of heat. Creatures that come into contact with the wall burst into golden flames that inflict 2d10 points of fire damage upon them each round. This damage ignores immunity and resistance. The creature continues to burn for one minute after they have retreated from the wall. The wall cannot be flown over or dug under.



Anhktepot

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 221 (26d8 + 104)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	8 (-1)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	23 (+6)	3 (-4)

Saving Throws Con +11, Int +9, Wis +13, Cha +3

Skills Deception +3, History +9, Insight +13, Intimidation +3, Medicine +13, Perception +13, Religion +9

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 23

Languages Akiri, Abyssal, Auran, Celestial, Draconic, Ignan, Infernal, Terran

Challenge 22 (41,000 XP)

Rejuvenation. Anhktepot regenerates 2d6 points per round thanks to the ankh around his neck. If Anhktepot is reduced to 0 hit points, the ankh around his neck restores 2d6 points of damage per round after one minute of his death, if it is not removed. After Anhktepot's body is destroyed, he gains a new body in 24 hours if his heart is intact, regaining all his hit points and becoming active again. The new body appears within 5 feet of Anhktepot's heart. If Anhktepot is permanently destroyed, he can be rejuvenated completely with a ritual which uses the 'Scroll of Thoth'. The ritual takes 8 hours and requires two intelligent living humans as sacrifices.

Spellcasting. Anhktepot is a 14th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 21, +13 to hit with spell attacks). Anhktepot has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *sacred flame*, *thaumaturgy*, *toll the dead*, *word of radiance*

1st level (4 slots): *command*, *continual flame*, *guiding bolt*, *shield of faith*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person*, *silence*, *spiritual weapon*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead*, *dispel magic*, *meld into stone*, *spirit guardians*, *water walk*

4th level (3 slots): *control water*, *guardian of faith*, *stone shape*

5th level (2 slots): *contagion*, *dawn*, *flame strike*, *insect plague*

6th level (1 slot): *harm*

7th level (1 slot): *fire storm*

Anhktepót

Innate Spellcasting. Anhktepót's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 21, +13 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

1/Day each: *daylight, sunburst, sunbeam, wall of light, tsunami*

Magic Resistance. Anhktepót has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Touch of Rot. The touch of Anhktepót causes a rotting disease that kills in 1d3 days. A target that Anhktepót targets and touches with this ability must make a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or contract the Disease of Rot. One day after infection, the victim experiences convulsions so violent that spellcasting and weapon use are impossible. For each day that the victim lives after the first, it permanently loses 2 points of Charisma and 1 point each of Strength and Constitution. Only a Wish spell can heal this point loss. Recovery from the Disease of Rot requires one cast of the lesser restoration spell for every day the disease has progressed, and they must all be cast within a twenty-four hour period. Any creature that dies from this disease rises as a mummy 1d2 days later.

Turn Resistance. Anhktepót has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead. He is immune to damage from holy water but suffers 1d6 points of damage from non evil holy symbols that touch his skin.

Undead Defenses. Anhktepót is immune to spells and spell-like effects that affect his mind. He is immune to sleep, mind-reading spells and psionic powers.

Fear Aura. Any creature hostile to Anhktepót that starts its turn within 30 feet of Anhktepót must make a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw, unless Anhktepót is incapacitated. On a failed save, the creature is frightened until the start of its next turn. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to Anhktepót's Fear Aura for the next 24 hours.

War Caster. Anhktepót has advantage on Constitution saving throws that he makes to maintain his concentration on a spell when he takes damage. Anhktepót can perform the somatic components of spells even when he has weapons or a shield in one or both hands. When a hostile creature's movement provokes an opportunity attack from Anhktepót, he can use his reaction to cast a spell at the creature, rather than making an opportunity attack. The spell must have a casting time of 1 action and must target only that creature.

Despair Aura. Anhktepót emits a 60ft radius aura centered on himself. All living creatures must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1d4 round. A creature that succeeds on the saving throw or falls paralyzed once, is immune to this aura for 24 hours.

Become Human. Anhktepót can absorb the essence of four humanoids to take the guise of a human. His body slowly returns to "life" with each absorption and finally becomes as if he is alive. In this form he cannot be turned and he is not considered undead (though he still is). This 'living' form lasts for 1d3 days.

Necrokinesis. Anhktepót has absolute control over all undead and dead creatures. All undead creatures of CR 15 and lower follow his commands and act as allies to him. Dead bodies that Anhktepót can see, will momentarily animate to grapple, attack or otherwise assist Anhktepót and hinder his enemies. In addition, he can cast *speak with dead* at will.

Heart-Stop. Anhktepót can cause the hearts of others to instantly stop, effectively killing them. Once per day, a creature that Anhktepót can see must make a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or suffer a heart attack and fall to 0 hit points, unconscious.

Pestilence Inducement. Anhktepót has the power to manipulate both diseases and pests such as locusts and scarabs. Anhktepót roars and conjures 2d4 swarm of scarabs and locusts who act as allies to him. The swarms fight till death.

Eclipse Manipulation. Once per month, Anhktepót can cause an eclipse which blots out the light of the sun.

Sandstorm Form. Anhktepót has demonstrated in both his rotting form and even partially regenerated form that he has the power to turn his body into sand and fly, either as a sandy tornado in various sizes or a jet of sand. He can carry immense loads with him, up to 1000 lbs of items or up to 10 creatures. While he is in this form he can't speak, he has a flying speed of 40ft and his size can become so tiny as to be able to squeeze through the gaps between bricks or even gargantuan to cover the skies of a small city. He can change his size to one size larger or smaller, with a bonus action at will. Anything he is wearing transforms with him, but nothing he is carrying does. He reverts to his true form if he dies. While in sand form, Anhktepót can't take any actions, speak, or manipulate objects, he can't be grappled, petrified, knocked prone, restrained, or stunned. He is weightless, he can hover, and can enter a Hostile creature's space and stop there. In addition, if air can pass through a space, the sand can do so without squeezing. He has advantage on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution Saving Throws. While he is in a form which is huge or larger, *dust devils* and *walls of sand* (exactly like the spells) form in the area he occupies. These spell-like effects dissipate after 1 turn. All creatures chosen by Anhktepót in that area take 1d6 slashing damage per turn, are considered heavily obscured and have their speed halved. Ranged weapon attacks are made with disadvantage and their range is halved. Anhktepót can remain in this form for up to 5 hours and he cannot transform again until he takes a long rest.

Anhktepote

Water Divination. Anhktepote can read the future, the present and the past and/or provide help to a problem at hand via reading the omens of the water. Once per day, he can cast any one divination spell as a ritual.

Warding Flare. Anhktepote can interpose divine light between himself and an attacking enemy. When he or one of his allies is attacked by a creature within 30 feet of him that he can see, he can use his reaction to impose disadvantage on the attack roll, causing light to flare before the attacker before it hits or misses. An attacker that can't be blinded is immune to this feature. Anhktepote can use this feature 6 times, regaining all expended uses when he finishes a long rest.

Radiance of the Dawn. Once per day, Anhktepote can harness sunlight, banishing darkness and dealing radiant damage to his foes. As an action, he roars a holy prayer to Ra, and any magical darkness within 30 feet of him is dispelled. Additionally, each hostile creature within 30 feet of Anhktepote must make a DC 21 Constitution saving throw. A creature takes radiant damage equal to 2d10 + 14 on a failed saving throw, and half as much damage on a successful one. A creature that has total cover from him is not affected.

Actions

Multiattack. Anhktepote can use his Dreadful Glare and makes one attack with his rotting fist.

Rotting Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage plus 21 (6d6) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with mummy rot. The cursed target can't regain hit points, and its hit point maximum decreases by 10 (3d6) for every 24 hours that elapse. If the curse reduces the target's hit point maximum to 0, the target dies, and its body turns to dust. The curse lasts until removed by the remove curse spell or other magic.

Dreadful Glare. Anhktepote targets one creature he can see within 60 feet of him. If the target can see him, it must succeed on a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or become frightened until the end of Anhktepote's next turn. If the target fails the saving throw by 5 or more, it is also paralyzed for the same duration. A target that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to the Dreadful Glare of all mummies and mummy lords for the next 24 hours.

*"Darklord Ankh Tea pot or something.
Dunno, I have never been to Har'Akir."*

~ Puncheron, probably

Legendary Actions

Anhktepote can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Anhktepote regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Attack. Anhktepote makes one attack with his Rotting Fist or uses his Dreadful Glare.

Blinding Dust. Blinding dust and sand swirls magically around Anhktepote. Each creature within 5 feet of Anhktepote must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or be blinded until the end of the creature's next turn.

Blasphemous Word (Costs 2 Actions). Anhktepote utters a blasphemous word. Each non-undead creature within 10 feet of him that can hear the magical utterance must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of his next turn.

Channel Negative Energy (Costs 2 Actions). Anhktepote magically unleashes negative energy. Creatures within 60 feet of him, including ones behind barriers and around corners, can't regain hit points until the end of Anhktepote's next turn.

Whirlwind of Sand (Costs 2 Actions). Anhktepote magically transforms into a whirlwind of sand, moves up to 60 feet, and reverts to his normal form. While in whirlwind form, he is immune to all damage, and he can't be grappled, petrified, knocked prone, restrained, or stunned. Equipment worn or carried by Anhktepote remains in his possession.

Significant Possessions

Anhktepote has a large treasure of gold, gems, jewelry, and magical items. So far he has not needed any of these items and they lie untouched in their vaults. Should the need arise, he is quite capable of using any magical item found in his lair.



Pharazia



Pharazia



Pharazia is a domain of duality. The city and the desert. The faithful and the heretics. The city dwellers and the nomads. Even the lord of the domain is a man in two: by day a beautiful angelic figure, and by night a horrible monster.

The sun beats down mercilessly on the open stretches of sand here, burning those foolish enough to be caught away from shade or proper protection. Only the hardiest of plants and animals survive here, and then only near the oases in the southern region or in the shadow of the capital, Phiraz.

Adventures in Pharazia revolve around survival in the desert. It is unforgiving, and encounters with mummies are only too frequent. While these are dangerous, the Black Herald is far worse, and it is best to flee if he appears. Other dangers and encounters include the nomads who are always plotting to take down Diamabel. Should the heroes choose to work with the nomads, their task would be to infiltrate Phiraz and drag its ruler out into the open, where the nomads can dispatch him. If they should be so lucky as to meet Diamabel in his angelic form, they might be recruited to help root out the heathens or infidels that he believes are rampant, or even the desert nomads. It would carry great reward, but risking the wrath of Diamabel is not conducive to a long life.

"But in the desert, in the pure clean atmosphere, in the silence – there you can find yourself."

~ Father Dioscuros

Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Warm, desert and oases
Year Formed:	590 BC
Population:	10,000
Races (%):	Humans 99%, Other 1%
Languages:	Common, Pharazian
Religions:	Diamabel's Law
Government:	Religious despotism
Ruler(s):	Diamabel
Darklord(s):	Diamabel
Nationality:	Pharazian
Analog:	Arabian Nights

Local Fauna:

The deserts of Pharazia are home to a plethora of wildlife, which may surprise the casual observer. Snakes are everywhere, together with the jackals, vultures, and crocodiles that infest the rivers and oases of the domain. The animal that most people associate with Pharazia is the desert camel. The safest and fastest means of transportation across the deserts, the desert nomads use it to the exclusion of all other animals. Unfortunately for the Pharazians, a more dangerous threat than the snakes lurks amongst the dunes. The domain is infested with mummies, and unlike those found elsewhere, here they hunt in packs. Where they come from is unknown as Pharazia has none of the religious sites or elaborate tombs that are usually associated with mummies. Most suspect that they are a long-forgotten remnant of Pharazia's past, while nomads tell tales of unfortunates caught by Diamabel. These poor souls are tortured, and become these walking dead through the drying effects of the desert.

Local Flora:

Pharazia is a desert wasteland with little in the way of vegetation. Only around the three watering holes are there any plants to be found. Various types of palms are found there, providing a modicum of shade. Some of the palms provide dates, while other trees and bushes grow here, with figs and olives growing well. On the green banks near the springs at the center of each oasis, the locals grow just enough wheat to sustain themselves, though their existence is by necessity a frugal one. One plant stands out in Pharazia though, a small desert flower called golden liquid. Its roots search out the deep groundwater, giving it no need for surface water or rain. It opens under the full moon, and inside can be found a quart of the purest clean water. It has healing powers of sorts, giving advantage on saving throws against poison for twenty-four hours after being drunk. Only a few of the desert nomads know of this property.

Terrain type

Pharazia is all desert, though two rivers cut across the land, before terminating in two smaller oases. The source of all water in the domain starts at Phiraz, and flows outwards, ensuring that the inhabitants of the city have access to clean water. Elsewhere the domain is a featureless desert that only extremely rarely sees rain. When the rain falls, the area is temporarily cooled, before returning to deep humid heat for a day or two. After that, it simply returns to its normal state of unbearably hot. A desert is a complicated environment. Contrary to popular belief, it is not simply a "really hot, really dry place", but an area of contrasts. Hot

Pharazia

in the day, cold in the night, and constantly shifting, with most landmarks consisting of dunes that could shift the next day. Temperatures often reach extreme degrees in Pharazia, reaching 160 degrees Fahrenheit in the middle of the day, outside of shade.. In those temperatures, it is natural for creatures to succumb to the dangers of heat stroke and exhaustion. Wind in the desert can run the normal gamut of wind-strength, but higher winds start to move the top layers of dust and sand around, which can cause trouble for anyone travelling the desert. The deeper levels of sand are usually unaffected, as they are far firmer in composition and may not have moved for thousands of years. The sand that does move can reduce vision to near-zero in seconds, and completely change the landscape in minutes.

Important Landmarks

Diamabel's Temple

Diamabel's temple is an odd place. Situated in the middle of Phiraz, it is dedicated to the worship of Diamabel and his decreed laws. It is, outside of Diamabel's own quarters, an austere place, with scripture written on the walls of the huge prayer rooms. The floors are brown with dried blood from daily floggings, and there are booths where the priests take confessions at any time of day. Unspoken among the faithful is that the confessors often accuse neighbors and friends of indiscretion. The priests live in solitary cells, simple places with wooden or stone benches to sleep on, and a minimum of creature comforts. The priests treat themselves with near the same harshness they treat the general populace.

Diamabel's quarters are luxuriously furnished with the finest of silks. The most tender and choice foods are laid out in golden bowls for him and his several courtesans to enjoy. Here he lives in the utmost luxury during the day. Before sunset each day, he sends his attendants away, and painfully transforms from an angelic being into the monster known as the Black Herald. This is when he remembers his dedication once more, taking to the sky to root out heretics. Usually, he returns before dawn, but on occasion he transforms back to his angelic form and allows the people of Phiraz to witness his majesty as he returns, reaffirming their faith, and giving rise to the rumor that he chases away the Black Herald. Only the nomads of the desert know the truth.

Towns and villages:

Phiraz

Phiraz is an ancient walled stone city. Home to nearly 10,000 people, the vast majority of the Pharazians dwell here. Only the desert nomads live outside its walls. It is a city held in thrall by Diamabel, as the populace has, through religious indoctrination, become incapable of sustaining itself out in the desert. Only the presence of freshwater and easily accessible foodstuffs from the oasis on the southern end of Phiraz keeps the populace fed (if barely). Religious doctrine rules the city, doctrines dictated by Diamabel. For at least two hours a day, the people of Phiraz must pray to show their faith, and many of the people do far more. It is forbidden to drink more than four quarts of water per day, and food is highly regulated, both in amount and preparation. Any deviation from Diamabel's laws is punished with flogging by the zealous devotees of the temple. Many inhabitants believe that the devotees are TOO zealous, but they aren't speak those thoughts, for fear of being reported. Their biggest problem is that Diamabel believes his laws are too lax as he hasn't fully transcended into a higher being yet. And as such, he often issues new decrees for laws and punishments. This has created a great tangle of laws that no one can keep track of. The priests more or less do what they want. If called out on their actions, they will cite whichever law they believe will get them out of trouble with Diamabel.

Neighboring domain(s):

Sebua

Fun Fact:

The women of Pharazia use veils during the day and have done so since the creation of the domain to avoid the rays of the sun. This has led to them being fairer skinned than the men, and the beauty of Pharazian women is legendary. The women have taken the wearing of the veil to the level of an art form. The women have their own secret language based on how they wear and move their veils.



Diamabel

"Come, my children and listen! On this day the gods have decided that we must be strong but merciful.

Before us stands a heretic! He does not attend his prayers as he should! He defies the gods and mocks their sacrifices!

To show the gods' strength this man and his wife shall be sealed in barrels and placed inside their home. Then the home shall be burned.

To show the gods' mercy their children shall watch and have the coals placed in their eyes, so the last thing they see will be the fire of the gods. They will contemplate this the rest of their days."
~ Diamabel

During the day Diamabel is a vision of angelic beauty. His pale skin and feathered wings glow with divine radiance, his silver hair reflecting the light of sunrise or sunset. His face is so beautiful that it has made grown men weep, even when it is crossed by lines of fear or worry. His lithe body is heavily muscled belying the speed and grace with which he moves. His eyes, always blue, are sky blue when he is at peace and the deep blue of a storm tossed sea when he is angry. At night, Diamabel undergoes a horrific transformation. He loses his radiance and deep gashes criss-cross his skin, weeping thick drops of black blood, with the bone underneath showing through. His eyes explode, leaving him with empty eye sockets. The feathers in his wings fall out, and the skin on them rots, leaving only thin bones. Despite the loss of his feathers, Diamabel can still fly.

Background: Diamabel was born to rule. He was the son of a sheikh of a powerful tribe of nomads. The nomads controlled important trade routes through the desert and served as guides and protectors for the giant merchant caravans that crossed the desert from the sea to the wealthy cities. When Diamabel was a child, his nursemaid would tell him stories of her far away homeland. In her land, people chosen by the gods were turned into pillars of pure light and taken away to live with their deities for all eternity. At the young age of five, Diamabel knew the path he would tread in life. As Diamabel grew into manhood, he became an accomplished warrior and tactician. He became famous for his devastating night raids on enemy nomad tribes and the caravans they protected. Diamabel always looked beyond the desert, to the seats of the gods and swore one day he would be with them. His father had no time for this nonsense. Protecting his people and letting them prosper was his

only concern. Time and again, the young man tried to convince his father that he should follow a heavenly path, but the entreaties failed. Diamabel had more success with the rest of his tribe, most of whom began to worship him. As Diamabel grew older, his relationship with his father became more and more laboured. When Diamabel was sixteen, his father suddenly died. Those in the tribe that whispered of poison or murder soon joined their sheikh in death. The tribe of nomads changed with Diamabel's leadership. They no longer protected caravans or raided enemy tribes for supplies and honor, now they were conquerors. Diamabel began to subjugate the nearby tribes. Any that didn't convert to his faith were put to the sword. The few members of the tribe that didn't share his belief were slain as well.



As Diamabel's power grew, he began to attack the coastal trading towns and wealthy cities that surrounded the desert, putting thousands to the sword, but it wasn't enough. At night, Diamabel would dream of becoming an angel in the service of his god, strong, with a fiery sword in one hand, and carried aloft on feathered wings. In the mornings, he would wake, still just a man. His frustration and anger drove him to even greater heights of savagery. At the height of his power, Diamabel moved to raze a village on the edge of the desert, one of the few left that didn't worship his god. The village didn't have the numbers to openly resist, but archers hid in the houses, and took a terrible toll on men and horses. As Diamabel ordered his men to burn the village, an arrow was loosed, and tore its way into his torso. Diamabel fell from his horse and his most faithful servants surrounded him. Healers were summoned but he knew it was too late.

Diamabel

The arrow had entered too deeply and the wound couldn't be staunched. Diamabel's blood seeped into the hot desert sands and he died. When he opened his eyes again, he had changed. The arrow was gone and Diamabel had become a perfect being too beautiful and tall to be a man. Diamabel was convinced his god had given him part of heaven to rule, but that belief only lasted until his first transformation. Now he believes that his god tests him, and with each passing day he grows less patient and forgiving.

Current Sketch: Diamabel is deeply conflicted. During the day he is a vision of angelic perfection, but his transformation at night troubles him. He has convinced himself that the heretics living in his lands keep him from becoming one with his god. Diamabel believes he has been too lenient with heretics in the past, and now takes advantage of his terrifying night form to hunt them down.

In daylight, Diamabel lounges in his palace or walks amongst the faithful. Anyone he sees that violates his holy law, or looks like they may violate his holy law, are immediately seized by his La Givers. The lucky are scourged by the Law Givers, Diamabel's holy enforcers and either let go, or slain on the spot. The unlucky are marked by Diamabel himself.

As the sun sets, Diamabel is forced to transform into his monstrous form. His painful transformation complete, he takes to the skies and hunts down those who angered him. Diamabel slaughters them and their families, and burns their homes. He decapitates the dead bodies and scatters the heads in the street as a warning to their friends and neighbors.

Darklord Tactics: Diamabel is straightforward in his tactics. When he enters combat he glows with a fierce radiance, causing most enemies to flee from his god-like anger.

Diamabel cannot die as long as Pharazia exists, so with this knowledge, he charges into the midst of his foes, and sets about him with Spiritburner, his flaming sword, and smashing foes with his wings. Diamabel heals at an incredible rate, and if he is slain his body immolates, and the ashes are spread by the desert winds to the far ends of Pharazia. After a month he revives and starts to plot his revenge.

Borders: When Diamabel closes the borders of Pharazia, the land is surrounded by a blistering sandstorm. Any creature foolish enough to enter the storm is flayed to the bone almost instantly. The storm can-

not be subdued by magical or mundane means and any attempt to teleport past it delivers the caster and any willing allies into the middle of its biting winds.



Diamabel

Medium monstrosity (humanoid), chaotic evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 194 (16d10 + 64)

Speed 40 ft., fly 70 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +11, Con +9

Skills Athletics +11, Deception +10, Intimidation +10, Perception +7

Damage Immunities necrotic, radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from weapon attacks lower than +2 enchantment

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 19 (22,000 XP)

Magic Resistance. Diamabel has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Indomitable. Diamabel can reroll a failed saving throw. If he does so, he must use the new roll.

He can use this feature three times between long rests

Second Wind. Diamabel has a limited well of stamina that he can draw on to protect himself from harm. On his turn, he can use a bonus action to regain 1d10 + 16 hit points. Once he uses this feature, he must finish a short or long rest before he can use it again.

Diamabel

Regeneration. Diamabel regains 5 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point.

Aura of Despair. When Diamabel enters combat, all enemy creatures within 30ft must succeed on a DC 18 Charisma Saving throw with a -2 penalty on the roll or become frightened for 1 minute. The creature can roll again at the end of their turn, ending the effect on a success.

Healing Rush (1/Day). Diamabel focuses the energy of the land into his body. Diamabel magically regains all missing hit points and is freed from any curse, disease, poison, blindness, or deafness.

Action Surge. Diamabel can push himself beyond his normal limits for a moment. On his turn, he can take one additional action. Once he uses this feature, he must finish a short or long rest before he can use it again.

Improved Critical. Diamabel's weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 18–20.

Great Weapon Fighting. When Diamabel rolls a 1 or 2 on a damage die for an attack he makes with a melee weapon that he is wielding with two hands, he can reroll the die and must use the new roll, even if the new roll is a 1 or a 2. The weapon must have the two-handed or versatile property for him to gain this benefit.

Dueling. When Diamabel is wielding a melee weapon in one hand and no other weapons, he gains a +2 bonus to damage rolls with that weapon. (included in the attack)

Fearless and Reckless. After knowing what awaits you, nothing in this life can scare you. Diamabel's speed increases by 10 feet when he takes a Dash action as long as he is moving towards an enemy. When he does so, he can choose to make a single attack as a bonus action. Taking this bonus action attack reduces his armor class by 2 until the start of his next turn.

Charger. As part of the Dash action, Diamabel can make a melee attack with a +5 bonus if he moves at least 10 ft before.

Mobile. Diamabel can Dash on difficult terrain without difficulty, and doesn't provoke opportunity attacks in melee.

Rejuvenation. When Diamabel is defeated, his body and equipment are wreathed in flames, becoming ash instantly. One month later, Diamabel takes form again in a hidden cave, restored to full hit points, ready to take vengeance on those that opposed him.

Spiritburner's Flames. Diamabel can use a bonus action to speak his magic sword's command word, causing flames to erupt from the blade. These flames shed bright light in a 40-foot radius and dim light for an additional 40 feet. While the sword is ablaze, it deals an extra 2d6 fire damage to any target it hits (included in the attack). The flames last until Diamabel uses a bonus action to speak the command word again, or until he drops or sheathes the sword.

Actions

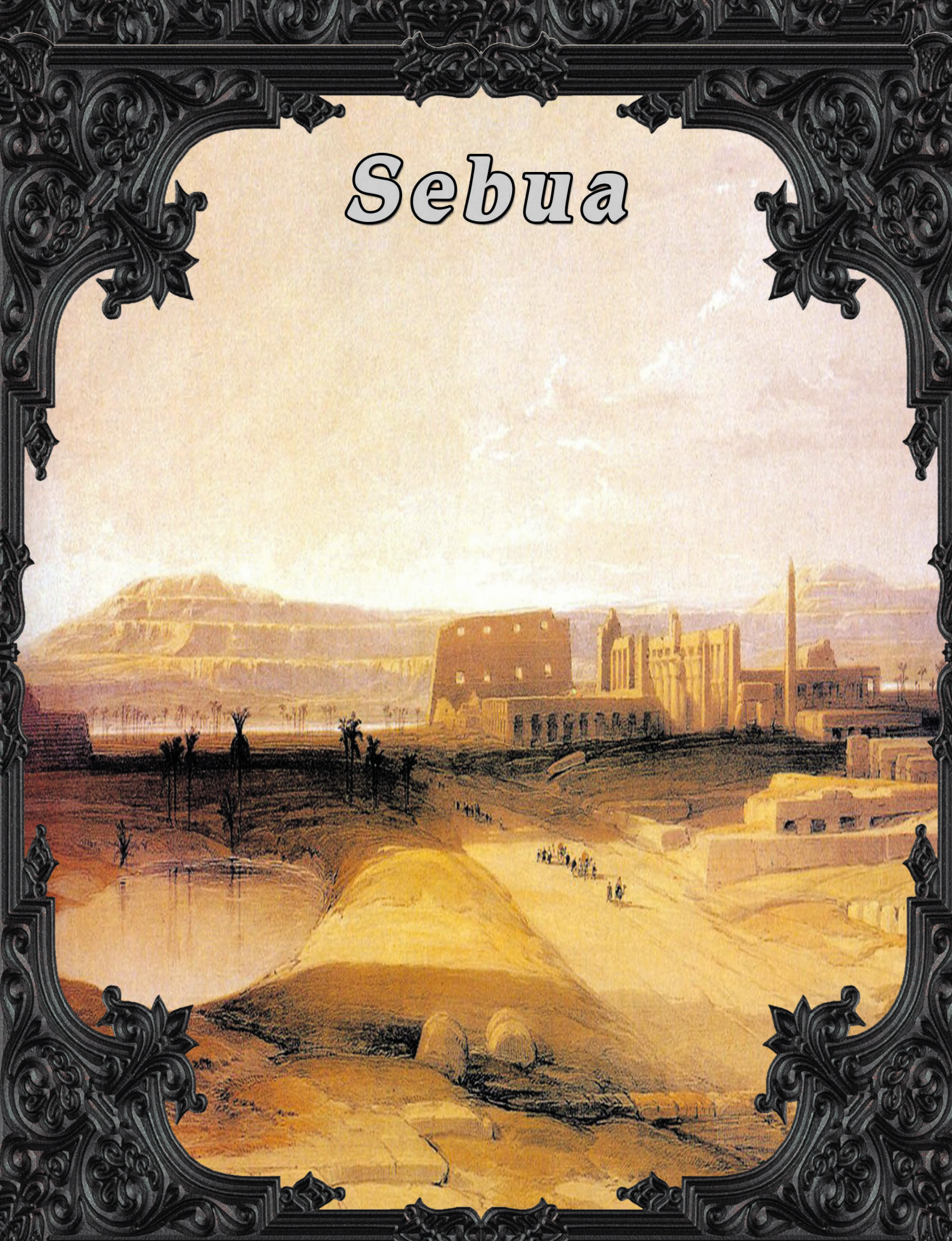
Multiattack. Diamabel makes three melee attacks.

Spiritburner +3. Melee Weapon Attack: +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing + 2d6 fire damage, or 10 (1d10 + 5) slashing + 2d6 fire damage if used with two hands.

Wing Buffet (Recharge 5–6). Diamabel furiously beats his wings, emitting negative energy pulses in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 36 (8d8) Necrotic damage and becoming Stunned until the end of their turn on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



Sebua



Sebua



Sebua, like its neighbors, is a desert wasteland. But even more so than the others, it has less of a population and only shows signs of a once-great kingdom that has long since disappeared, due to the actions of its darklord. The capital of Anhalla lies in ruins, though the oasis that it grew up around now serves as a home to the wild children, the presumed descendants of the original inhabitants of the Black Land (as Sebua was known before it was dragged into the mists of Ravenloft).

Sebua is the punishment for Tiyet's crimes of greed and murder. More importantly, it is the punishment she faces for daring to go against the will of the gods and their judgment. As she hungers for the hearts of others, she is trapped in a land where there are only a few visitors and even fewer inhabitants. Once the center of a grand kingdom, the 40 by 40-mile domain now keeps her imprisoned within its grasp. Not that she seems to care, as she has learned to (mostly) suppress her desire for human hearts.

Ironically, as her inability to live with other human or intelligent beings extends to her domain, it leaves the domain — in spite of its desert nature — brimming with animal life, especially around the oases. The only reason that settlers haven't gathered here is due to the constant threat of Tiyet, Moosha the Scabrous One, and the rumors of the tolls that they take on the visitors here. Even more ironically, without knowing it, Tiyet's salvation lies within her grasp: some of the wild children are the descendants (if illegitimate) of the pharaoh Khamose, the first man whose heart she ate. If one of them is restored to the throne, the gods will forgive her, and she'll be allowed to finally rest in the afterlife. In effect, she and her lover Zordenakht present a twisted version of Romeo and Juliet, where Juliet, instead of surviving and then killing herself again, becomes a unique form of undead.

Adventures in Sebua are unlikely to center around Tiyet herself, as she prefers to stay out of sight unless hungry, or unless someone enters her estate. Instead, it is likely to center around Moosha or the wild children, or perhaps exploring the ancient temples in the Valley of Death. The feel of someone having denied the gods should be strong, so adventures where the heroes find themselves chasing a heretic or someone escaping justice across the desert would be very appropriate here.

Should you, as the Dungeon Master, wish to include Tiyet, remember she remains a distant threat. She doesn't want to come close in case she gives in to her hunger, as the heartbeat of the living drives her past rational thought. In essence, only those who seek her out, whether to redeem her or to slay her, should go near her. Perhaps they discover that one of the wild children is of royal lineage (likely through the use of various spells) and it is the one that she has just kidnapped to consume their heart, or maybe they have slain the Black Snake at the Temple of Apophis and discovered the desiccated heart, leading them to her estate.

"In the desert, the line between life and death is sharp and quick."

~ Brian Herbert & Kevin J. Anderson, *The Butlerian Jihad*

Culture Level:	Bronze Age (Ruins), Stone Age (the wild children)
Climate & Terrain:	Warm, deserts, hills, and mountains
Year Formed:	564 BC
Population:	200 (estimated wild children)
Races (%):	Humans 100%
Languages:	Wildspeak
Religions:	Apophis (darklord), the desert (wild children)
Government:	None, though the wild children use a form of democracy
Ruler(s):	Tiyet
Darklord(s):	Tiyet
Nationality:	Sebuan
Analog:	Ancient Egypt



Sebua

Local Fauna:

Sebua is filled with animals. Baboons are common in Anhalla, scorpions and snakes can be found everywhere, vultures make their home around the Valley of the Dead, but soar high above the domain looking for carrion. Bats fly out of the Valley during the night as well, and coyotes and jackals fill the night with their howls. Around the waterways, you'll find huge swarms of mosquitoes and insects, as well as crocodiles.

The wild children are the descendants of the original inhabitants of the Black Land that preceded Sebua. Some are even from the royal bloodline, though they are illegitimate. For some reason, the children of Sebua do not age, and they're very protective of each other as a result, as their numbers do not seem to replenish the normal way, but somehow their numbers seem to be fairly constant. They are utterly innocent and unable to speak any human language, but they've become wise to the ways of the desert, which they worship as a harsh goddess. Mostly they know that they need to avoid Scabby and the "Mystery Shadow" (Tiyet), though Scabby is far more active and a more direct threat to their way of life. (See more on Scabby below)

Local Flora:

Plantlife in Sebua is hardy but located only around the luscious oases. There you can find any desert or river plant you can imagine, with dates, figs, and olives being particularly common, and a staple of the diet of the wild children. In some places, it's also possible to find bananas and coconuts, though these are far rarer, and treated as a delicacy by the children. They use the reeds of the rivers to create baskets and the roofs of their primitive mud huts while avoiding the crocodiles that lurk within the dark waters.

Native Horrors

Monsters are far more common here than they appear. It is in fact a domain filled with the undead, but the majority of them are still locked within their tombs in the Valley of the Dead. Tiyet is obviously a threat too, but Moosha, the Scabrous One (a form of desert vampire that drains moisture instead of drinking blood) is far more active, as he wanders Sebua looking for victims, so that he may lessen his constant pain. He normally lairs around the Southern Oasis (the third biggest oasis in Sebua, but one where the brackish waters, due to his actions, are no longer drinkable), but he preys mostly on the wild children, who have learned to avoid "Scabby".

Terrain type

Sebua is a desert wasteland, though one with plentiful oases to keep visitors alive, so it is not as barren as its neighbors. In the north are rock and cliff faces, and in the south, you'll find nothing but sand and shrubs. Sebua is subjected to a merciless sun during the day, and while it is much cooler during the night, the countryside is bathed in an orange glow. The glow stems from the odd-colored moon that is visible from Sebua, while hardly any stars appear in the sky. Sebua is at the mercy of harsh sandstorms that appear in seconds and disappear just as quickly, though they may last for hours. Often, the only warning that travelers get is that the light turns an odd orange color just before the storm hits — unfortunately, that light is indistinguishable from the light of the moon, meaning that these are far more lethal during the night, as there is no warning to rely upon.



Important Landmarks

Red Oasis

In the east of Sebua lies one of its oases, but one that wary travelers avoid. The waters here are highly alkaline and due to a combination of salt and mud, are the color of blood. More worryingly for the travelers are the size of the insects that fly around it. The insects are so large and aggressive that most measures fail to stop them from attacking living creatures, some having stingers that are long and strong enough to make it through leather armor. What attracts and creates these animals here is unknown, but as it is home to a large number of stirges, most observers suspect that there is an insectoid hive that breeds the creatures here.

Sebua

Temple of Apophis

The Temple of Apophis is where Tiyet met her end at her own hands, and where Zordenakht resurrected her and poisoned himself. Apophis is the Snake God of the World's End, the creature that Ra fights against each day to bring the sun around. Or at least that was what the inhabitants of the Black Land believed. It is the only temple in the Valley of the Dead that has survived the centuries completely intact. Tiyet's weakness lies here in an urn upon the altar of Tiyet. The ornate urn contains the desiccated heart of Tiyet, and is guarded by a unique black snake, as large as the purple worms seen elsewhere, that devours anyone who tries to obtain either the wealth of the temple (which is considerable) or the urn with the heart in it. Tiyet doesn't even know that her heart is still here, and due to the memories of Zordenakht dying here, has not been back to the temple since the day of her transformation.

Tiyet's Estate

Tiyet's Estate lies on the edge of Anhalla and is the only original building that's not falling into ruin. It's a large estate, a big building, made of white and yellow stone, and surrounded by a tall wall that encircles the building and a garden. From within can be heard the sound of partying and laughter, though no such thing actually takes place. She is entirely alone in there, haunted by the sounds of the people that she can no longer be near, and worst of all, for her, she hears the voice of Zordenakht, the lover who helped her cheat death after she stabbed herself in the heart. She hears his voice, but it never talks to her, and when she tries to seek it out, it vanishes.

Valley of Death

The Valley of Death lies on the northern end of Sebua amid a massive rock formation that is close to being mountains. This canyon cuts through the rock, with the sandstone cliffs rising between 500 and 1,000 feet from the canyon floor. The valley is the site of many tombs, filled with unknowable horrors, places that have never been explored after Sebua appeared within the mists, ripe for the picking by the adventurous. It was once the center of religious worship in the Black Land, and there were temples to many gods here, but only two remain now: the Temple of Apophis (covered above) and the Temple to the Dark God of Vengeance where Moosha was once punished for his crimes, though the Dark God's temple is mostly ruined — it is merely in slightly better condition than the others. Great wealth potentially lies in the valley still, but the dangers to overcome it are many.

Towns and villages:

Anhalla

Anhalla consists of two sections, depending on how close you are to the oasis at the center of it. Around the oasis are new, and primitive, buildings made from mud, where the wild children live. These are simple, if effective affairs, where the children seek refuge when they need to and where they live. These buildings provide some measure of security against the predations of both Moosha and the wild animals of the domain. The ruins around the mud village huts are far grander buildings, also ruined and overrun with baboons and other animals. They were clearly once important buildings, owned by rich families, but now they have been scavenged and nothing of worth can be found there. Even the simple tools that might once have been of use have been taken long ago by the children.

Neighboring domain(s):

Har' Akir
Pharazia

Fun Fact:

The wild children of Sebua are human, but their language no longer resembles that of any other human language. Instead, they've regressed to an animalistic level and can only be communicated with through *speak with animals* spells, or similar types of magic.



Tiyet

"All my life fools have thought I was nothing but a beauty to be tamed. A trophy.

Every single one has paid for their hubris with their life. Every single one.

I have eaten their hearts and made them pay for trying to break me."

~ Tiyet

Tiyet appears to be a woman in her early twenties. Stunningly beautiful, her hair is so black that it appears purple in certain lights, whilst her eyes are gold. She is small, barely taller than five feet, and has a slender build. She dresses in silk and gold and elaborate jewelry. Her favorite piece is a thick collar, made of gold and inlaid with rubies and emeralds.

Tiyet favors makeup that is expertly applied to enhance her beauty. She favours dark colors to match her skin, but rouges her lips to make them stand out. Her hair is left free, but perfectly frames her face and neck.

Background: Tiyet is ancient and the land where she was born has been long forgotten by all but the most ancient liches. She rarely refers to her homeland, and when she does she calls it the Black Land.

Tiyet's father was a scribe for Khamose, the fourth son of the pharaoh. One day she visited her father at Khamose's estate and the pharaoh's son was instantly taken by her beauty. He asked for her hand that day and Tiyet, seeing a chance to treat with royalty, immediately agreed. Her father was not able to stop the ceremony, and so agreed.

Tiyet thought she would soon gain the ear of the pharaoh, but her dreams soon came crashing down. Khamose had several wives and only one, Nuferi, his first wife ever got close to the pharaoh. Tiyet was little more than a concubine. The first wife, Nuferi, reveled in putting Tiyet in her place. Tiyet hadn't come this far to be denied.

Through careful manipulation, Tiyet had Khamose catch his Grand Wife in a compromising situation with one of his favorite slaves. Nuferi was innocent of any wrongdoing and pleaded with her husband to believe her. Khamose, his honor and reputation stained by even the implication that his wife had betrayed him, had her thrown down into a pit filled with jackals.

Nuferi's corpse had not even grown cold before Tiyet was scheming to become Khamose's next Grand Wife. Through subtle threats, politics, intimidation and seduction she pushed all of Khamose's wives aside and claimed the position.

Only one person suspected Tiyet's involvement in Nuferi's death, Zordenakht. Zordenakht lived a double life. By day he was a wealthy and well connected merchant, but by night he was a powerful cleric of Apophis, a massive serpent of chaos and darkness. Zordenakht learned of Tiyet's ambition and ruthlessness through his dark magic. He confronted her, intending to blackmail her into spying on her husband for him, but he was struck by her beauty. Tiyet for her part, was enamored by Zordenakht's power and intelligence. Tiyet had come to realise her husband would never be pharaoh. He wasn't smart enough or cruel enough, and Tiyet was ready to move on. Soon, the two were lovers.

Tiyet and Zordenakht would meet in the secret temple of Apophis. Tiyet didn't love her husband, but violating her wedding vows weighed heavily on her. She had recurring nightmares about the hell reserved for oathbreakers, torn to shreds for eternity by snarling wolves and hideous beasts. She confessed her worries to Zordenakht, who told her of a secret ritual that would tie her soul to her body after she died. Zordenakht refused to perform the ritual, as he didn't fully understand it.

Tiyet was confident her husband would never find out, but she underestimated him. Khamose had noticed his wife's wandering eye and ordered a servant to follow her. The servants discovered her dalliance with the cleric and quickly returned to his master.

Tiyet returned soon after the servant and heard him talking to Khamose. She turned and fled to the temple of Apophis. She found Zordenakht there and told him her husband's guards were surely on their way and he must perform the ritual at once. Tiyet pulled out her dagger and plunged it deep into her chest.

Zordenakht had no choice. He quickly set to work. He removed Tiyet's heart and cast spells that he only half understood. He wrapped Tiyet's body in burial linen and laid her in the tomb that had been constructed for him. Zordenakht drew his own dagger, covered in a virulent poison and took his own life.

Tiyet awoke at midnight, lying next to the corpse of Zordenakht. She had an uncontrollable urge to seek

Tiyet

out Khamose. As she traveled to the estate she could hear the heartbeats of the living all around her, but she was drawn to one heartbeat in particular. It was louder than the rest and it pulled her toward it.

She entered Khamose's estate and traveled to his bedchamber. She stood over her husband who woke suddenly. She paralyzed him with a glance and plunged her hand into his chest. She ripped his beating heart out of his chest and devoured it. Then she returned to the temple of Apophis and slept.

When Tiyet awoke sometime later, she was in an unfamiliar land. The dark powers had brought her into Ravenloft and given her Sebu.

Current Sketch: Tiyet has ruled in Sebu for two hundred years. Her domain is a solemn land of the dead with few living inhabitants. Tiyet, despite being a dark lord and having been granted a domain, has no control over the living. She rules the undead, and they treat her like a goddess, beloved and feared. Tiyet lives in a rambling noble estate that will never live up to the grand palace she once inhabited. She is constantly reminded that her current estate isn't as grand as her previous one, angering her in a thousand ways.

Living strangers that travel through Sebu will never meet Tiyet. She watches from afar as her mummy guards and their ghoul minions confront the strangers and drive them off or slay them to join her zombie hordes.

Tiyet occasionally throws elaborate balls in her massive estate to try and remember the grand galas she had in life. Her balls are extravagant, almost gaudy affairs that every member of the court is expected to attend. There is food, music and dazzling light shows. Despite their opulence, even the richest living subject of Sebu wouldn't dream of attending. Any living creature that intrudes on one of her masquerades is met with a cold stare by Tiyet. Tiyet retires after letting her displeasure be known, leaving the living interloper to the tender mercies of her undead lieutenants. Once the living stranger has been slain, Tiyet returns and the party continues.

Tiyet cannot stand the living. When she looks at a mortal all she can hear is their beating heart. The longer she looks, the louder the heart beats in her ears. More mortals make the heartbeats even louder. She finds the staccato rhythm maddening. What is worse, she needs mortal hearts.

Once a year, Tiyet must seek out a living creature with an Intelligence of 8 or higher and devour its heart. Tiyet must rip the still beating organ out of their body and devour it whole. If she does not then it will become a desire, then a compulsion, then an obsession.

Darklord's Tactics: Tiyet lacks physical strength and a warrior's training. She cannot command the elements or call upon the powers of the gods, but she is an absolute nightmare in combat. She can freeze someone in place with a glance and her touch skin, bone and armor. Her kiss drains the strength of her victim, leaving them too weak to stand, much less fight.

A creature paralyzed by Tiyet's gaze is in incredible danger, as Tiyet can rip out their heart in seconds. The process takes four rounds. In the first two rounds, Tiyet plunges her hand into her opponent's chest. She grasps the heart on the third, then slowly rips the organ out of her opponent in the fourth round. Letting the blood of a freshly removed heart drain into her mouth is one of Tiyet's few joys.

Borders: When Tiyet wishes to close the borders of Sebu, a howling storm appears. Creatures that enter the storm are blinded and deafened. The creatures take 2d6 slashing damage at the start of their turn while they are in the storm. After being lost in the storm for 1d10 minutes, the creature exits the storm at the point they entered.



Tiyet

Tiyet

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 143 (22d8 + 44)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +5, Wis +4

Skills Acrobatics +9, Animal Handling +4, Deception +7, Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth +9

Damage Immunities fire, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Akiri, Draconic, Abyssal, Pharazian, Common, Thieves' Cant

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Sneak Attack. Tiyet knows how to strike subtly and exploit a foe's distraction. Once per turn, Tiyet can deal an extra 5d6 damage to one creature that she hits with an attack if she has advantage on the attack roll. The attack must use a finesse or a ranged weapon. Tiyet doesn't need advantage on the attack roll if another enemy of the target is within 5 feet of it, that enemy isn't incapacitated, and Tiyet doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Cunning Action. On each of her turns, Tiyet can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Steady Aim. Tiyet, as a bonus action, can give herself advantage on her next attack roll on the current turn. She can use this bonus action only if she hasn't moved during this turn, and after she uses the bonus action, her speed is 0 until the end of the current turn.

Assassinate. During her first turn, Tiyet has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn. Any hit she scores against a surprised creature is a critical hit.

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker that Tiyet can see hits her with an attack, she can use her reaction to halve the attack's damage against her.

Evasion. If Tiyet is subjected to an effect that allows her to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, Tiyet instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Friend to All. Tiyet gains a +3 bonus to persuasion, insight and deception checks.

Elaborate Defence. If Tiyet chooses not to take the attack action on her previous turn or if she uses the dodge action in melee combat, she gains an additional +2 bonus to her AC until the start of her next turn.

Heart Attack. Tiyet's most frightening power directly affects the heart. By focusing her dreadful glare upon the victim's chest, as an action, Tiyet can wreak havoc with their physical well-being. Provided that Tiyet can see her target and that the target is within 180ft, she can slow a heart until the victim suffers the signs of a heart attack, labored breathing, profuse sweating, crushing weight upon the chest, pain in the neck and jaw, and intense pain in the arms, particularly the left. She needs no attack roll and there is no saving throw. Within 1d4 rounds of concentration, Tiyet can cause the muscle fibers of the heart to twitch in an uncoordinated fashion, preventing the heart from beating effectively (if at all). As a result, the heart quivers like a can of writhing worms. Tiyet cannot kill a victim by cardiac arrest unless she touches them through a successful Necrotic Touch attack. The first round of Tiyet's assault on a heart reduces a victim's maximum hit points by 25%. Each of the second and third rounds give a level of exhaustion. At the fourth round, the victim is unable to move on their own: the pain is too great. During the fifth round, the character's hit points drop to 10. These effects end after the target takes a long rest and only if they have their heart within them. Tiyet kills by cardiac arrest only when necessary. If a heart ceases to beat, she can't feed upon it. For this reason, she usually paralyzes a victim. With her Necrotic Touch reaching through their chest, she draws out the heart, which, miraculously, continues to beat outside the body. Only a beating heart can satisfy her needs. If she devours the beating heart, the victim immediately dies. A creature that has his heart torn but not devoured will survive for 1 week without their heart. If the heart is returned within that time, then the target is cured by any ailments caused by this ability, otherwise they perish and are raised as a mummy under Tiyet's control, within 24 hours.

Audible Heartbeats. Heartbeats of any intelligent, humanoid creature within a mile are audible to her until she feeds on a victim's beating heart. Then, only hours later, she can hear the beats again, first faintly, then ever stronger. If she has not fed for 11 months, the sound is painfully loud, echoing inside her skull.

Create Sandstorm. Once a day, Tiyet can create a sandstorm, using a unique form of the *control weather* spell. The storm covers up to a square mile, and lasts up to two hours, depending on Tiyet's wishes. She can move the sandstorm as she pleases. She requires three rounds of concentration to create the storm, but her powers are not restricted during that time. Tiyet can summon this power to seal her domain as many times as she wishes.

Tiyet

Mobile. When Tiyet uses the Dash action, difficult terrain doesn't cost extra movement on that turn. In addition, when she makes a melee attack against a creature, she doesn't provoke opportunity attacks from that creature for the rest of the turn, whether she hits or not.

Summon Beetles 1/Day. Tiyet can summon a swarm of beetles on a target within range. Some will attempt to crawl into the ears and noses of their victims, driving them mad with pain until the insects are removed. A target that Tiyet can see within 60ft must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be incapacitated for 1d4 rounds. If the target successfully saves, the beetles fall to the ground to form a swarm of beetles (MM, pg. 338). The swarm of beetles acts as an ally to Tiyet and fights till it is destroyed.

Transform to Owl. Three times each day, Tiyet can change shape to assume the form of a huge white owl with almond-shaped eyes or back to her true form with an action. Like an owl, she can see keenly at night but by day in this form, she sees as well as a human. She uses the giant owl (MM, pg. 327) statblock but she retains her ability scores. Tiyet assumes the Hit Points and Hit Dice of the new form. When she reverts to normal, she returns to the number of Hit Points she had before she transformed. If she reverts as a result of dropping to 0 Hit Points, any excess damage carries over to her normal form. As long as the excess damage doesn't reduce her normal form to 0 Hit Points, she isn't knocked unconscious.

Transform to Monkey. Tiyet can shape change into a monkey at will. She uses the baboon (MM, pg. 318) statblock but she retains her ability scores and can still use her Necrotic Touch, Dreadful Glare and Heart Attack abilities. Tiyet assumes the Hit Points and Hit Dice of the new form. When she reverts to normal, she returns to the number of Hit Points she had before she transformed. If she reverts as a result of dropping to 0 Hit Points, any excess damage carries over to her normal form. As long as the excess damage doesn't reduce her normal form to 0 Hit Points, she isn't knocked unconscious.

Rejuvenation. If Tiyet is reduced to 0 hit points, she has been defeated but not destroyed. Her body crumbles into a pile of glittering sand. Within a month, Tiyet's body reforms somewhere in her domain's Valley of Death. There is only one way to truly destroy Tiyet: trick her into eating her own heart. (The organ still lies where Zordenakht left it long ago in the temple of Apophis.) If the heart is brought to her lips, it begins to beat, and she cannot resist it, no matter how recently she has fed.

Illusionary Appearance. Even though Tiyet is a mummy, her appearance is that of a beautiful woman in her late twenties. Only true sight can reveal her real looks.

Convincing Lies. Once per day, Tiyet can twist her words and use her silver tongue to tell a convincing lie to a target of her choosing that can hear her. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom Saving throw or believe the lie, never question it, and refuse to discuss its credibility. This effect lasts 10 days and creatures who are immune to Charm effects are unaffected.

Demand Submission. Tiyet controls all CR 6 or lower undead within her domain.

Flee. Tiyet can move four times her speed when she takes the disengage action.

Actions

Multiattack. Tiyet can use her Dreadful Glare and makes one melee attack.

Tiyet's Kiss. *Melee Spell Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) necrotic damage and the targeted creature loses 1 Str point. This loss is permanent as long as the victim remains in Sebuu.

Necrotic Touch. *Melee Spell Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d12 + 3) necrotic damage. If the attack is successful, Tiyet can delay the damage of up to two hours and she can choose to inflict it with a bonus action.

Rotting Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with mummy rot. The cursed target can't regain hit points, and its hit point maximum decreases by 10 (3d6) for every 24 hours that elapse. If the curse reduces the target's hit point maximum to 0, the target dies, and its body turns to dust. The curse lasts until removed by the remove curse spell or other magic.

Dreadful Glare. Tiyet targets one creature she can see within 60 ft. of her. If the target can see her, it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or become frightened until the end of Tiyet's next turn. If the target fails the saving throw by 5 or more, it is also paralyzed for the same duration. If the target cannot see her but Tiyet can, then the target has a +2 bonus on its roll. A target that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to the Dreadful Glare of Tiyet and all mummies (but not mummy lords) for the next 24 hours.



The Frozen Reaches

"Below the 40th Latitude there is no law; below the 50th no god; below the 60th no common sense; and below the 70th, no intelligence whatsoever."

~ Kim Stanley Robinson on Antarctic expeditions.

Overview

As the chill of autumn gives way to the cold of winter, sometimes it is best to curl up in a cozy chair, near a warm fire, and open up an inviting book. When the cold of winter extends into an endless season of despairing numbness; when the fire, necessary for survival, begins to sputter; when any exit from the house becomes an expedition that risks life and limb; then it seems prudent to carefully stoke that book into the last embers of the hearth, and hope for a few more minutes of light and warmth.

In the icy forests of **Vorostokov** game is scarce, yet the hunting parties have mouths to feed. Luckily there is a small town not far away. It truly is best not to know how the sausage gets made. While Castle Giurgui offers shelter from the elements in **Sanguinia**, one might find that death in the numbing cold is preferable to the pain of pestilence that lies within. These two Domains make up the Frozen Reaches Cluster, where a campfire is a necessity, but also a beacon in the night.

Mistways

The Bleak Road is an unreliable two-way connection between Nova Vaasa and Vorostokov.

Chronology

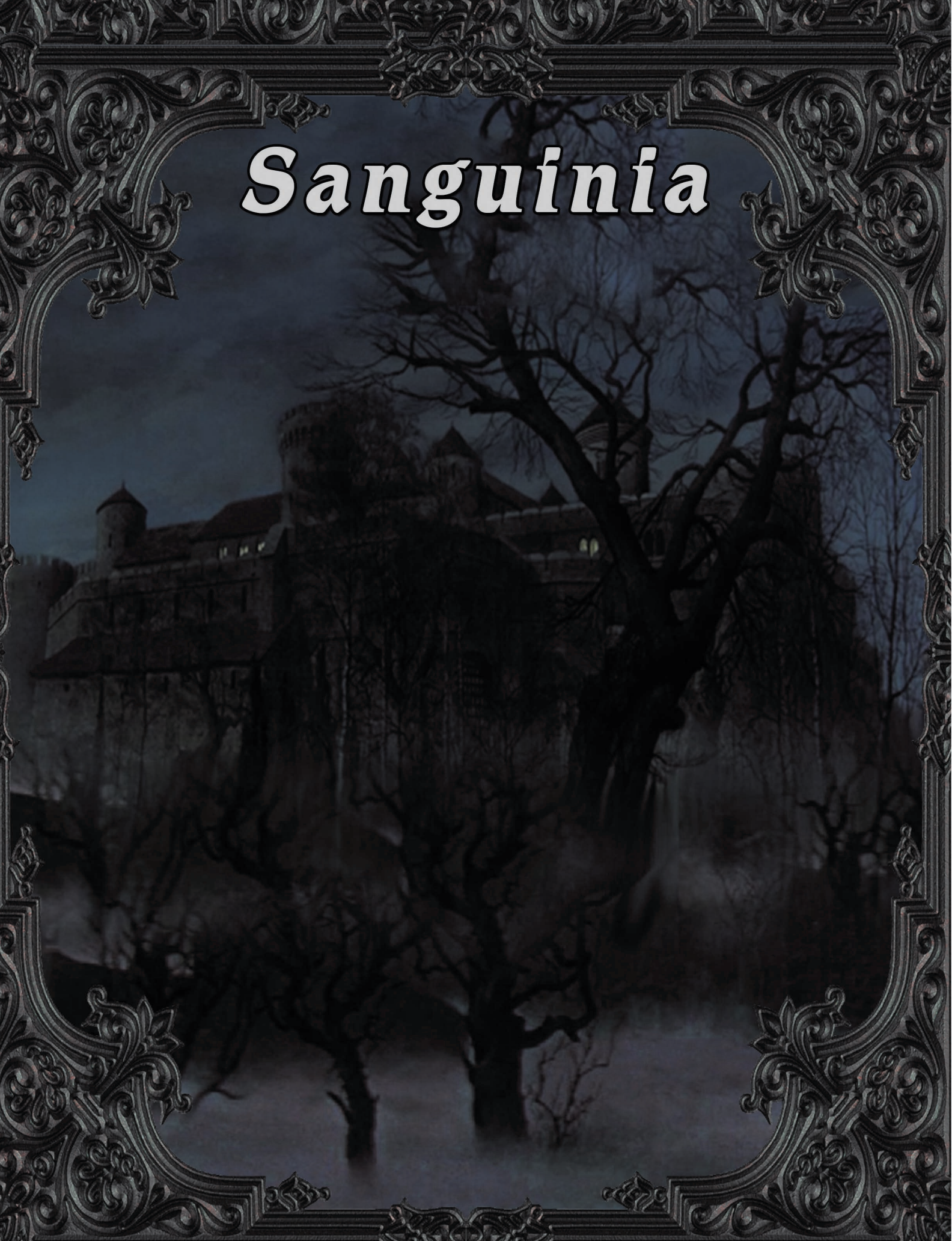
607 BC – **Sanguinia** forms.

731 BC – **Vorostokov** forms.

740 BC – The Grand Conjunction creates the Frozen Reaches Cluster.



Sanguinía



Sanguinia



Sanguinia was shaped by the ravages of the disease called the Red Death. The damage wrought by the disease has been long forgotten by the people living in the domain, but not so by their ruler. While its people are hearty and hale, and believe their ruler to be a distant and cruel master — they also believe him to be handsome beyond any other man in Sanguinia. Instead, the monster hides in his halls, taking interest in his subjects only when he thinks he has found a cure for his affliction. At that point, he sends his hunters out amongst the populace, where they quietly harvest new subjects for their master and take them back to Castle Giurgiu. Adventures in Sanguinia should focus on either the damage done by disease and fighting them off or on the predations of the prince. Combining the two would be obvious. Perhaps a friend of the heroes suffers from a terrible affliction, but the prince has created a cure during his many experiments. Unfortunately, such a cure won't come cheap and could cost the heroes their lives.

"And now he acknowledged the presence of the Red Death. He had come like a thief in the night. And one by one dropped the revelers in the blood-bedewed halls of their revel and died each in the despairing posture of his fall."

~ Edgar Allan Poe, *Masque of the Red Death*

Culture Level:	Early Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Cold, forest, hills, and mountains
Year Formed:	607 BC
Population:	6,300
Races (%):	Humans 99% Other 1%
Languages:	Common, Sanguine
Religions:	None
Government:	Hereditary monarchy
Ruler:	Prince Ladislav Mircea
Darklord:	Prince Ladislav Mircea
Nationality:	Sanguinian
Analog:	Edgar Allan Poe's <i>Masque of the Red Death</i> (Not to be confused with the Advanced Dungeons & Dragons module of the same name)

Local Fauna:

The local wildlife in Sanguinia is relatively benign, apart from the wolves, especially after the appearance of the larger domain Vostrovok to the southeast. Caribou, deer, and small game abound, as though the winters are long, dark, and cold, unlike Vostrovok, Sanguinia is not permanently locked into winter. The summer is brief, but blissful for the life-loving inhabitants, and in that time they hunt the plentiful game as best possible. Much of the local wildlife is infected with disease. This means that the locals take great care to only eat healthy animals, and kill and burn the remains of any diseased creatures that they run into. They bury them if they cannot burn them, but they know that certain diseases will survive the winter frosts and will return once more in the summer. These diseases run the entire gamut from mildly inconveniencing to deadly, but with medical knowledge in short supply in Sanguinia, the locals have to be careful. Sanguinia is not safe either. Goblins hide in the mountains and the Sanguinians often carry out culls. Werewolves have started penetrating in greater numbers from Vorostokov, and a few undead lurk in the domain, though no vampires. Mircea does not want to create more of his own kind, and he does not tolerate them coming from elsewhere and propagating. Any troublemakers are hunted down.

Local Flora:

Pine, moss, and lichen dominate the slopes of Sanguinia, though the heavy snow of the winter often leaves these buried. The domain is bright with many flowers in the summer (and lots of bees as a result), that the locals use to create colorful decorations for their houses. Near the rivers, the reeds are often used for thatching roofs of the houses, but elsewhere they use the needles from the evergreen trees. Some of the younger Sanguinians have started a trend where they have seasonal flowers on the roof, which erupt in a riot of colors when summer arrives. Quite the superstitious folk, they believe that by planting flowers and caring for them, they ward off diseases of the wind. Of course this is just a myth, still it helps keep their spirits high as they feel somewhat protected.



Sanguinia

Terrain type:

Sanguinia feels like it is located high in the mountains, with even the lowest rivers estimated to be at least 700 feet above sea level. This is difficult to judge, as there are no seas to evaluate this against, but the mountainous terrain stretches high into the sky from these low points. The terrain itself consists of tall mountains and hills, with very little level ground. Most of the hills and a fair area of the mountains are covered in forests.

Important Landmarks

Castle Giurgiu

Castle Giurgiu is a large and magnificent structure with a strong, tall wall and massive iron gates. The crenellations soar into the sky, as a testimony to the prince's wealth and extravagant tastes, as they are carved with reliefs of gargoyles leering and creatures of all kinds cavorting with each other. Inside the rooms are draped with thick hangings, and cobwebs and filth are everywhere, completely belying the clean exterior. Here, disease and death stalk the halls, and deep within the center of the castle, lie seven rooms of different colors: blue, purple, green, orange, white, violet, and black.

This is where Mircea holds court, and where he originally slaughtered all his guests. The black room also contains his laboratory, where he experiments upon new subjects, ever searching for a cure for his vampirism. He is unsuccessful, and the screams of his subjects echo throughout the chambers of the vast castle, only to be lost before ever reaching the sky.

Towns and villages:

Fagarus

With a population of 800, Fagarus is the southernmost village of Sanguinia, and the one nearest the border with Vorostokov. This has affected the amount of trade flowing through the village, and it is now very prosperous. The elders of the village are worried about the wolves that come through the pass. Furthermore, the boyarsky, the henchmen of Boyar Gregor Zolnik, from Vorostokov have been banned from entering the village after fights have broken out in town.

Kosova

Kosova lies to the north of Sanguinia, and is its second largest town and the furthest away from Castle Giurgiu. Mircea's henchmen rarely visit the town and its 1,000 inhabitants, only arriving to claim the harsh taxes levied by the prince. However, they still believe that the prince to be a just ruler, even if he is never seen. The locals here grow wheat, rye and turnips, which they sell to Tirgo and Fagarus; Kosova's fields are located by the warmest and lowest slopes of the mountains, which ensures a good crop.

Tirgo

Tirgo is both the largest and richest town in Sanguinia, with a population of 1,300. It is a mining town, with prosperous mines producing gold, copper, and iron. They're only rarely able to export the gold and copper, but they make a fortune from the rare times where visitors from outside come through the Mists. As a result, they have a strange relationship with the Vistani. They need them for trade and make a good profit from them, but they resent their reliance upon the travelers.

Being closest to Castle Giurgiu, they are also where most of Mircea's victims or subjects (as he calls them) come from, with people being abducted by his henchmen during the night. These losses are blamed on monsters and wolves, and like everyone else, the locals still believe that their prince is a handsome young man, though a harsh one. Nagging doubts have begun to set in though, as the years pass where they don't see him. The locals used to have no real way of telling the passage of time, but after the appearance of Vorostokov, more have started showing an interest in doing so, as it facilitates trade.

Neighboring domain(s):

Vorostokov

Fun Fact:

The Sanguinians are generally good looking and healthy people. Both men and women wear their hair long and wild, but the men's beards are meticulously groomed and braided. It is a sign of virility for a man to have a braided beard when it is tinged with frost which leads many young men to spend far too long outside in the cold, in order to show off.



Prince Ladislav Mircea

(Vincent Price) "Somewhere in the human mind, my dear Francesca, lies the key to our existence. My ancestors tried to find it. And to open the door that separates us from our Creator."

(Jane Asher) "But you need no doors to find God. If you believe —"

(Vincent Price) "Believe? If you believe you are gullible. Can you look around this world and believe in the goodness of a god who rules it? Famine, Pestilence, War, Disease and Death. They rule this world."

(Jane Asher) "There is also love and life and hope."

(Vincent Price) "Very little hope I assure you. No. If a god of love and life ever did exist — he is long since dead. Someone — something, rules in his place."

Ladislav Mircea looks more like a gargoyle than a man. He walks with a hunch, else he would be over six feet tall. Ladislav's eyes are bloodshot and constantly dart from side to side. Ladislav's mouth is too wide and full of small sharp teeth, looking less like a mouth than a drooling needle filled maw. His hands are strong and tipped with blunt nails. They are perfect for clubbing victims to the ground so he can feed.

Ladislav cares nothing for the people he rules. As long as he has the chance to feed, Ladislav would be indifferent if all of Sanguinia was an empty tomb.

Background: In life, Ladislav Mircea was an incredibly handsome man. His hair was raven black and his eyes were icy blue. He looked at people with a cold calculating gaze, as if he were evaluating one of his horses or statues. People were useful only as far as they served him, merely tools to be used, cast aside, and forgotten. Ladislav's only cares were his money and power. Prince Ladislav had no friends, rather surrounding himself with dozens of toadies. He didn't care. Ladislav didn't want friends, he was as cold and heartless as the land he ruled.

When plague ravaged his lands, Ladislav moved quickly. He brought his closest advisors and lackeys into his castle and sealed the gates. The prince watched as his people suffered. Those foolish enough to approach the gates, especially with obvious marks of disease, were shot with arrows or doused with boiling oil and left to rot where they fell.

Despite the castle's isolation, plague eventually entered. At first, Ladislav made a game from killing those unfortunate enough to get sick. The victim would be stripped, and Ladislav's cruel guards would

drive them with scourges to the top of the walls of Castle Giurgiu, chasing them with vicious hounds. At the top, the guards would seize the unfortunate and fling them into one of the great cauldrons of boiling oil kept above the gate. The victims were poured over the top of the walls.

Ladislav rather enjoyed the time of the plague. He had always had an interest in alchemy, and he began to sneak out of the castle at night to take samples of the boils and buboes that covered the plague victims. Ladislav still believes this is how he caught the plague.

As the signs of the plague became evident on him, Ladislav hid his boils under thick robes and disappeared into his alchemy. He tried everything he could think of to cure his disease, but to no avail. He became increasingly desperate. Spiriting healthy people into the castle to drain their blood, cerebral fluids, and bile, Ladislav began injecting himself with their fluids to try and slow the disease. Nothing worked.

After a time Ladislav was haunting his own castle. The few guards, servants, and lackeys who remained, barricaded themselves inside their chambers, desperate to avoid being dragged into the laboratory. As the castle lost itself in fear, the land beyond became shrouded in mist.

Ladislav had changed. The disease was gone, or had become such a part of him that it didn't hurt him any more. The only thing that caused him pain was his hunger. A hunger that grew within him. One night, the hunger grew so great he couldn't contain himself. He ran from his lab and leapt upon the first person he saw, an unfortunate servant that had been caught outside after dark. Ladislav devoured the woman, broke her bones for the marrow, drained her blood, and supped on her eyes. Finally his hunger abated, and he knew the only way to quench it.

What followed was an orgy of violence as Ladislav hunted down every living soul in his castle, transforming into a beast as he did. As Ladislav hunted and his victims' screams echoed off the stone walls of Castle Giurgiu, the mist closed in.

Current Sketch: Ladislav spends most of his time in Castle Giurgiu. His once handsome features have become twisted and bestial. He rarely appears in public, but when he does, he is heavily cloaked and hooded. He cares nothing for his people beyond feeding on them and torturing them for his own sadistic pleasure. Ladislav continues his study of alchemy, hoping to

Prince Ladislav Mircea

cure his vampirism and regain his good looks. He creates new vrykolakas and experiments on them, hoping to understand how to reverse the process. Inevitably, he fails, and the unfortunate experiment is either slain or thrown over the walls of Castle Giurgiu and forgotten.

Darklord's Tactics: Ladislav takes his time in combat. He knows that he's immortal and far stronger than most opponents. Ladislav stalks his prey from the shadows and summons rats to harass and weaken them. When his prey tries to rest, he will move in for the attack. Once Ladislav has infected all of his opponents with his infected tongue or fever gaze, he will retreat and let his deadly diseases run their course. As the prey suffers, he will stay close to feed on their pain and despair. Any creature that separates from the main group is hunted down and attacked as soon as Ladislav thinks he can slay them before their friends can aid them. When his opponents are too weak to defend themselves, he will move in to feed. He starts by breaking his victim's bones. This serves two purposes; it keeps the prey helpless, and he can devour their marrow with his long, rasping tongue. Then Ladislav moves on to his prey's bile, before finally drinking their blood and killing them. If the prey is alone, he will talk to them as he feeds, commenting on their taste and asking why their compatriots abandoned them. If his victims are in a small group, Ladislav will vivisect one of them and keep up a running monologue about the fantastic feast before him, all the while cracking bones.

Borders: When Ladislav seals the borders of Sanguinia, the domain is surrounded by a driving snowstorm. Any creature, even creatures that live in the demiplane of ice or the deepest reaches of Cania, must turn back or be slain and sealed in an icy tomb.

Prince Ladislav Mircea

Medium undead (shapechanger), Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 114 (12d8 + 60)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Wis +6

Skills Perception +6, Persuasion +2, Stealth +7, Survival +6
Damage Resistances necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned, unconscious

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Sanguine

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Regeneration. Mircea regains 15 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point and isn't in running water or sunlight. If Mircea takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of Mircea's next turn.

Spider Climb. Mircea can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Vrykolakas Weaknesses. Mircea has the following flaws:

Harmed by Running Water. Mircea takes 20 acid damage if he ends his turn in running water.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. Mircea takes 20 radiant damage when he starts his turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, he has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Burial Site Bound. Mircea is bound to the place of his death. He must return to this location once per week and bury himself in the earth for 24 hours, during which time he is paralyzed and can be beheaded. If he is unable to return to this site, he is reduced to 0 Hit Points and will attempt to use Feral Corruption; if this host animal can't return to the burial site before the possession effect ends, Mircea is destroyed and the animal host returns to normal.

Vulnerable to Decapitation. If the killing blow resulted in a decapitation, Mircea can't use his Feral Possession and is destroyed.

Iron Spike. Mircea is incapacitated (though not permanently destroyed) if an iron spike is driven to his skull.

Infectious. A creature that took damage from Mircea's tongue attack must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw after the fight or contract filth fever disease as described in the contagion spell. Until the disease is cured,



Prince Ladislav Mircea

in addition to the disease's effects, the target can't regain hit points except through magical healing, and the target's hit point maximum decreases by 10 (3d6) every 24 hours. If the target's hit point maximum drops to 0 as a result of this disease, the target dies and is raised as a vampire spawn after 24 hours. Decapitation prevents it from transforming and being raised.

Tough Negotiator. Mircea's voice of authority allows him to persuade any creature with ease. Mircea can cast the command and suggestion spells at will and rolls persuasion rolls with advantage.

Shapechanger: If Mircea isn't in sunlight or running water, he can use his action to polymorph into a dire rat or swarm of rats, or back into his true form.

While transformed, Mircea can't speak. His statistics, other than his size and speed, are unchanged. Anything he is wearing transforms with him, but nothing he is carrying does. He reverts to his true form if he dies.

Feral Possession. Unlike most other undead, Mircea isn't destroyed when he reaches 0 HP. Instead, he attempts to cast his spirit into an animal within 100 feet, which must attempt a DC 14 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, the animal is possessed. This has the effects of the possession ability, but it lasts 7 days. This possession can be ended with a remove curse spell cast on the animal. If the animal succeeds at its save, Mircea can attempt to possess a different animal within 100 feet. If Mircea fails to possess anything, he is destroyed. While Mircea is possessing an animal, he seeks out his burial site (see Burial Site Bound) immediately, burying himself there. When he is in this state of recovery, the animal host is paralyzed, and beheading it destroys Mircea and kills the host. Removing the curse destroys Mircea and returns the animal to normal. After 1d4 days, if Mircea hasn't been destroyed, the animal dies and he rises in a new body that's identical to his previous one, formed from the animal's remains.

Actions

Multiattack. Mircea uses his claws and tongue, or his claws and his Fever Gaze.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 22 (4d8 + 4) slashing damage. Instead of dealing damage, Mircea can grapple the target (escape DC 14).

Barbed Tongue. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (4d8 + 4) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Mircea regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Fever Gaze. Mircea targets one creature he can see within 30 feet of him. If the target can see Mircea, the target must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or fall asleep. The target is unconscious until the spell ends, the sleeper takes damage, or someone uses an action to shake or slap the sleeper awake.

Children of the Night (1/Day). Mircea magically calls 3d6 diseased giant rats, provided that the sun isn't up. The called creatures arrive in 1d4 rounds, acting as allies of Mircea and obeying his spoken commands. The beasts remain for 1 hour, until Mircea dies, or until he dismisses them as a bonus action.

Reactions

Fluid Getaway. Mircea adds 2 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him and moves 10ft away from the attacker if the attack misses. To do so, Mircea must see the attacker and be able to move.

Phlegm. If a creature misses a melee attack against Mircea then he can spit phlegm into their eyes. The creature must make a DC 14 dexterity saving throw. If they fail, they are blinded until they or an ally within 5 feet uses an action to wipe away the sticky wad of mucus and blood.





Vorostokov

Vorostokov



orostokov is a domain of hunger and of winter. The temperature never rises above -22° Fahrenheit and snow and ice are a constant of life here. And so is the lack of food. Only through the graces of proficient hunters is it possible to keep people alive. In fact over the past few years, since the descent of the eternal winter, all the villages have buried half or more of their previous inhabitants. The one exception being the village of Vorostokov, which has been sustained by Gregor Zolnik. He may well be responsible for more deaths than the winter. But there are signs that the winter is coming to an end, so how much longer will the good-natured and stoic Vos suffer his predations — and what extremes will he go to, along with his minions, the boyarsky, to remain in control?

Adventures in Vorostokov should focus on the eternal cold and the suffering of the locals. Zolnik has been doing everything in his power to keep the Vos in Vorostokov village alive, but now that he has turned his eyes to control of the domain as a boyar, he has ensured that they have increasingly come to rely upon him for food. He has done this by any means he can, including killing the hunters of each village, and he is certainly not above sending his pack against a group of adventurers from elsewhere. Any heroes should therefore feel pursued through the domain, hounded constantly by wolves, and only safe in the villages. And only then if they're not trying to upset the status quo.

"I don't care what they're going to say. Let the storm rage on. The cold never bothered me anyway."
~ Elsa, Frozen

Culture Level:	Dark Ages
Climate & Terrain:	Cold forest, hills, plains, and mountains
Year Formed:	731 BC
Population:	1,100
Races (%):	Humans 99%, Others 1%
Languages:	Common, Voros
Religions:	None
Government:	Independent settlements (turning to despotism)
Ruler(s):	None
Darklord(s):	Gregor Zolnik
Nationality:	Vos
Analog:	Siberia

Local Fauna:

Vorostokov is infested with wolves, due to the need of Gregor Zolnik to hide himself and his minions. While Gregor might be unable to catch game himself, others can survive on the wildlife found here. Reindeers are the biggest type of animal found, but snow hares and foxes are far more numerous as are any small animal that can survive in harsh cold conditions. All of the animals found within the domain are emaciated compared to those found elsewhere but do provide some nourishment. The best chance anyone has of getting food within the domain comes from the Bottomless Lake. Getting through the ice may be a challenge, but underneath the ice is a fair amount of pike, carps, and eels. Anyone venturing here may have to contend with Gregor's minions, the boyarsky.

Local Flora:

With a land locked in eternal winter, there are not many plants that are hardy enough to survive in a domain as hostile as this. Pines and lichens are the main ones, though frozen plants can sometimes be found underneath the snow and ice. The conifer forests of Vorostokov are mostly avoided by the locals as they are old, dark, and deep, but they provide a bitter type of evergreen nuts that sprout every three months. Bark and lichen otherwise provide the only type of food that doesn't involve meat of some kind in the domain.

Native Horrors

Few monsters dwell in Vorostokov, if not counting the intrusions from Sanguinia. But the wolves here are enormous, reaching truly dire proportions. White worgs are relatively common here as well, and there is at least one winter wolf who has made Vorostokov into its home. The Loup du44 Noir are the main issue here, a form of lycanthrope that is capable of putting on the skin of a wolf, like a coat, and taking its form in a similar manner to a werewolf. These men as beasts serve Gregor Zolkin in his attempts to bring the villages of Vorostokov under his control, and normally only attack those who have defied Gregor in some way. Special mention also goes to the Witch of the Forest — a supposedly supernatural being who controls the wolves of Vorostokov. Nothing could be further from the truth, and it is, in fact, Gregor's sister who escaped when he killed his family. She is hiding from the wolves and looking for help, though she will often slyly help the other villages. However, she will not do so at danger to herself or at risk of exposure, leading many to suspect her of greater crimes. Only those outsiders that come to the domain ever learn the truth, as she is more likely to trust those from outside of Vorostokov.

Vorostokov

Terrain type

Vorostokov is locked in eternal winter, a small valley stuck in-between mountains, where hills, plains, and forests are all possible. Near the center of the valley is a lake, known locally as the Bottomless Lake. It isn't actually bottomless, but no one living has seen how deep it is, and since the descent of the eternal winter, no one has taken a deep dive into the lake. At least no one that survived.

Important Landmarks

Bottomless Lake

Bottomless Lake is not bottomless as mentioned above. It is a frozen lake, and quite deep. Filled with fish it would be an abundant food source, if only it wasn't frozen over. At the bottom of the lake, a huge pike, roughly 10 feet long, has been in hibernation since the descent of the eternal winter. With the recent thaw, it has begun to stir once more, and it is hungry.

Gregor's Cave

A non-descript cave in the mountains surrounding Vorostokov, this is where Gregor wakes after death. Nothing here shows that the cave has any special meaning to him, though he slaughters anyone he finds here and has them eaten — whether by the villagers of the Vorostokov Village or the wolves depending on how the current hunting is.

Towns and villages:

Kargo, Kirinova, Nodvik, Novayalenk, Oneka, Torgov, Voronina

These villages all have around 100 inhabitants, though many of them are built for more. Each homestead is a low timber-built house, with a thatched roof, often smelling strongly of pine and resin. They're warm, but not particularly comfortable. What each of them is is a small fortress on its own, surrounded by a sharp wooden palisade, that may be low, but is quite effective.

The villages all live in fear of the want-to-be boyar Gregor Zolnik, and each has a strong feeling of being under siege by the wolf packs of Vorostokov. In spite of this, the inhabitants manage to be both open and welcoming to outsiders, keeping their suspicion for non-humans and those who serve the boyar.

Vorostokov Village

Vorostokov Village is the largest village in the valley, numbering 200 inhabitants. It is also permanently under the thumb of Gregor Zolnik and his boyarsky

— his retinue of strongmen and thugs. He has supplied the village with food for years, though many suspect that he has been feeding them with human meat, meat that was until recently disguised by his sister and mother. Both of them have disappeared, at roughly the same time as a witch appeared in the forest. Gregor loudly claims that the witch was the one to take his family, though some suspect he killed them himself after the death of his son and wife by a pack of wolves.

Neighboring domain(s):

Sanguinia

Fun Fact:

The inhabitants in Vorostokov often adorn themselves with wolf head pendants carved from bone, in the belief that they ward off the wolf packs.



Gregor Zolnik

"He is more beast now than man. Twisted and evil."

~ Rudolph van Richten

Gregor appears to be a tall, powerfully built human in his late twenties or early thirties. Barrel chested with heavily muscled arms, his blonde hair is cut short to accommodate a helmet, with a great long beard reaching to his chest. When Gregor gets angry, his eyes glow like coals and he growls like a feral beast.

Gregor is a terrifying form of lycanthrope called loup du noir. Loup du noir are rare even in Ravenloft, but far more dangerous than an ordinary werewolf. Gregor usually wears loose clothing that can be easily removed before he changes to another form, along with his longsword and an elaborate wolf pelt sash.

Background: Gregor grew up as a poor hunter in the village of Vorostokov, a village in the far north of his homeworld. The winters were long and brutal in Vorostokov, but the people were tough and resourceful. They carefully salted meats and harvested crops to survive the long winters, supplemented by Gregor and the other hunters bringing in-game during the cold months.

Gregor's life might have been uneventful if not for the cruel whims of fate. One year the snows came early while the crops were still in the ground, ruining them. The harvest from the year before had been sparse, and not much was left. Gregor and his fellow hunters took to the woods, but the game was gone. In a few weeks, the village was on the verge of starvation. Neighboring villages sent runners to ask for help. Their crops were gone and no one could find any meat. Already there were rumors of people performing desperate acts to survive.

One day on the return from another fruitless hunt, Gregor happened upon a wolf dying in the snow. The wolf was a great black beast that had chosen to take on a massive bull elk on its own. The wolf had torn the throat out of the elk, but in return, the elk had gored the wolf deeply. As the wolf lay dying, a story Gregor's grandfather told him came to mind unbidden. In ancient times, hunters would don wolf skins and turn into wolves. With that kind of power, Gregor could feed Vorostokov. He had never been a religious man. The gods were too far away and too silent for someone that had to battle for survival every day. But now he prayed, to anything that would listen, and his prayers were answered. Gregor knew the arcane sigils to draw, knew the words to speak, all he had to do was speak them. Gregor slit the wolf's throat and

used its blood to draw the symbols and wards in the snow. Once the ritual was performed, Gregor skinned the beast and placed the still steaming carcass on his shoulders. At first, nothing happened. Then with the painful sounds of bones breaking and joints popping, Gregor changed into a wolf. Gregor knew this was his destiny. To run across the frozen ground, to feel the hot blood of his prey gushing in between his jaws, this was who he was always supposed to be.

With his newfound power, Gregor tracked game across great distances and returned to his village a hero. Vorostokov was saved. When spring finally came, Vorostokov was the only village that hadn't lost half its number to starvation and desperate cannibalism.

Gregor's fame spread far and wide, and his lord, a duke of some fame, came to see this hunter that had impossibly found game. Gregor and the duke's daughter, Ireena, had an immediate attraction and were soon engaged.

Gregor and Ireena lived in Ireena's chambers in the duke's castle. But despite his comfortable life and loving marriage, Gregor could not give up the hunt. He hid his wolf pelt in a nearby cave and would sneak out every night to hunt.

Ireena soon discovered Gregor's absence and thought her husband had taken a liking to one of the peasant girls that worked in the castle. Ireena was not one to take something like this lying down and soon took a lover herself.

When Gregor eventually discovered his wife's infidelity, he was enraged. He donned his wolf pelt and ambushed his wife and her lover in their bed chambers. Gregor tore them to pieces, then stalked through the castle, killing everyone.

The dark powers took Gregor and Vorostokov into Ravenloft that night, but Gregor neither realized nor cared. The duke was dead and now Gregor, a simple hunter turned hero, ruled. He invited other hunters he could trust to become his boyarsky. He told them of his secret, and if they agreed to serve Gregor faithfully, he would perform the ritual for them. Those hunters that refused were torn to pieces by Gregor and his retainers. Soon he ruled a small kingdom of Vorostokov and several nearby villages. He built his great hall in Vorostokov and tried to rule. Inevitably winter came again and this time neither Gregor nor his boyarsky could find any meat. After months of desperate searching and all of the villages under his

Gregor Zolnik

protection on the verge of starvation, Gregor made a fatal choice. He and his boyarsky went into neighboring villages and killed the villagers there. Then they fed the meat to the people they ruled. As winter retreated Gregor and his men would cease their attacks, but when winter returned Gregor would find food by any means necessary. Eventually, he took a new bride, Sasha, and had two sons. When Gregor's oldest son Alexis, turned eighteen, Gregor insisted on taking him out into the forest to perform the ritual that would make him a hunter. Sasha thought little of some silly ritual until Gregor's mother, Antonia, warned her to follow her husband and son into the woods and see the ritual. Antonia was an arcanist of some skill, as were Gregor's sisters, Elena and Natalya. All three women had known Gregor's secret for years but kept the information to themselves. Antonia followed her husband and eldest son into the forest and arrived just in time to see her son transform into a wolf.

Suddenly the wolf attacks had plagued other villages, but none of Gregor's made sense. Suddenly she understood where the meat that she ate every winter came from. She screamed and ran, only to be chased by the assembled boyarsky. In her headlong flight, she fell into a ravine and was broken on the rocks below.

Gregor found his wife's body at the base of the ravine and flew into a rage. Without knowing why he knew, Gregor knew his mother was responsible. He donned his wolfskin and charged into his great hall. He found Antonia there and leaped upon her, tearing out her throat before he realized where he was and who was there. Gregor's two sisters used their combined magic to force him to take his human form in front of dozens of witnesses. Gregor couldn't slaughter them all. He stood in the center of his great hall as his servants fled.

Current Sketch: Gregor's conscience tears at him. He only ever wanted to be a hero, but now he is reviled. He still rules his small kingdom, but only because no one has the strength to replace him. He surrounds himself with boyarsky, but many of them are little better than animals. They party and feast into the early hours of the morning, but it is a hollow existence for Gregor. His sister fled into the woods that day and has sworn revenge for the death of their mother. They live in the woods now while the villagers whisper they are witches and greatly fear them. Gregor has recently started pushing into the outer villages, bullying them into submission. Perhaps here he can find some that think of him as a hero. Gregor's crimes are too well known, and all he finds is hate and fear.

Darklord's Tactics: In human form, Gregor is a talented warrior and arguably the best duelist in the domain of Dread. He enjoys matching his longsword, Ilyana, against the steel of others. If severely pressed or angered beyond the point of control, Gregor adopts his wolf form. The transformation is painful for him, but he heals all damage as he changes. If Gregor is slain, he and all of his equipment disappear in a flurry of snow. He awakens one hour later in the cave where he initially hid his wolf pelt. Gregor has a natural empathy with wolves, winter wolves, and wargs, who treat him as pack alpha. Several packs of wolves stay near the darklord and will come to his aid if he is attacked. Gregor is loath to sacrifice any wolves that come to his aid, and will only do so in dire circumstances.

Borders: When Gregor closes the borders of Vorostokov, the mountain passes are choked by avalanches and freezing storms. The storms are unnaturally fierce and cold and any creature that moves into them is buried under tons of snow and ice. If the creature manages to dig themselves out, they will be back inside Vorostokov.



Gregor Zolnik



Gregor Zolnik

Medium humanoid (shapechanger), chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 in humanoid form (hide armor), 15 (natural armor) in dire wolf or hybrid form

Hit Points 104 (16d8 + 32)

Speed 30 ft. (40 ft. in wolf form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +8, Dex +7

Skills Animal Handling +9, Athletics +8, Nature +6, Perception +9, Stealth +7, Survival +4

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered or blessed

Condition Immunities charmed, paralyzed

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 19

Languages Common (can speak in dire wolf form)

Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Shapechanger. Gregor can use his action to polymorph into a Large dire wolf, or back into his true form, which is humanoid. His statistics are the same (besides AC, speed, and attack options). Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. Gregor reverts to his true form if he dies. When killed in wolf form by a silver weapon, his body dissolves and reforms the next night in his cave.

Keen Hearing and Smell. Gregor has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Magic Resistance. Gregor has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects. However, dousing him with holy water strips him of this trait until the start of his next turn.

Magic Wolfskin. Nonmagical weapons that are not silvered or blessed break after striking Gregor while he wears his magic wolfskin.

Vicious. Gregor deals an extra 9 (2d8) damage against a creature that grants him advantage on an attack roll.

Ilyana's Heal. Gregor's longsword, Ilyana, grants him the ability to cast the *heal* spell once per day.

Animal Affinity. Gregor's animal affinity allows him to speak with his totem animals. Gregor can communicate via telepathy with wolves and snakes within 60ft.

Adept Hunter. Gregor's ability to hide from and track his prey grants him advantage on stealth checks during night time. He also rolls with advantage when he is trying to track his enemies.

Spellcasting. Gregor is a 8th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). Gregor has the following Ranger spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *detect poison and disease*, *hunter's mark*, *zephyr strike*

2nd level (3 slots): *find traps*, *summon beast**

*Tasha's Cauldron of Everything

Pass Without Trace 3/Day. Gregor can cast the *pass without trace* spell three times per day without the need for material components.

Decapitating Bite. If Gregor rolls 19 or 20 when using a Bite attack, he deals an additional 1d12 damage and the enemy must make a DC16 Constitution saving throw or drop to 0 hit points. The target cannot be stabilised and is considered incapacitated. It will die within 1d4 rounds unless it receives magical healing.

Fleet of Foot. Moving through nonmagical difficult terrain costs Gregor no extra movement. He can also pass through nonmagical plants without being slowed by them and without taking damage from them if they have thorns, spines, or a similar hazard. In addition, Gregor has advantage on saving throws against plants that are magically created or manipulated to impede movement, such those created by the Entangle spell.

Weak to Enhancements. Magical weapons inflict 1 extra point of damage per magical bonus. For example a +2 long sword will deal 1d8 + STR mod + 2 (Magical bonus) +2 extra damage due to this trait.

Gregor Zolnik

Gregor's Bane. If killed in human form, Gregor's body instantly vanishes, taking his pelt and sword along. Exactly 1d6 hours later, he reappears fully healed in the cave where he once hid his pelt with his sword and wolfskin. Should his wolf form be destroyed, he reappears in the cave twenty-four hours later, fully healed. He has survived death both ways before and now has almost no fear of being killed. The only way to truly destroy Gregor is to sprinkle his wolf pelt with salt and wolfsbane while he is in human form. The next time he transforms, he will be vulnerable to all weapons and spells, and if killed in this state he will be truly dead.

Alpha Wolf. Gregor has total control over the transformation and actions of other werewolves. As an action he can force a shapechanger like a werewolf, a wolfwere, werefox, loup du noir or any other canine werecreature to transform into any of its forms. He can also use a bonus action to command a shapechanger to take an action.

Barking Restoration. The first time Gregor changes back into his wolf form, he heals all wounds he has suffered, but changing back does not cure him of any injuries suffered in wolf form. This ability can be used once per day.

Teleport Upon Death. The first time Gregor reaches 0 hit points, he immediately teleports to his cave then 1d4 turns later he transforms to his wolf form restoring all of his HP and leaves to chase his enemies. He cannot change back to human form for the next 1d12 hours.

Resistances and Immunities. Gregor is immune to mind-affecting spells, sleep and disease. In addition, weapons made out of silver can harm him but he is resistant unless that weapon is also blessed by a priest. Gregor is immune to all damage coming from spell attacks but non-damaging spells can still affect him.

Actions

Multiattack. Gregor makes two attacks of which, only one can be a bite attack.

Bite (Dire Wolf or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage and the target must succeed a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. On a natural 20, and when it reduces a target to 0 hit points, Zolnik tears the victim's throat out, dealing 9 (2d8) bleeding damage to the target at the start of each of its turns until a creature takes an action to bind the wound or the target receives magical healing.

Claw (Dire Wolf or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5ft ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d12 + 3) slashing damage.

Ilyana +3 (humanoid form). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d10 + 6) slashing damage.

Longbow +1 (humanoid form). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.



The Shadowlands

"A shadow leaned over me, whispering, in the darkness. Thoughts without sound; sorrowful thoughts that filled me with helpless wonder and held me bound." ~ Alfred Noyes

Overview

Finding yourself in a dark forest, the only light dimly cast by a pair of twin moons, where shadows creep, and evil lurks, and daylight never comes might cause one to question whatever faith you hold dear. In the Shadowlands, even the most devout clerics and paladins of their time have suffered through this absence of light. Once darkness seeps into your soul, even the most justified ends tend to find unholy means. Learning into theocracy and finding the gods either cannot, or will not, answer leaves the small populations here to suffer the fallen decrees of failed zealots. Lies to obtain power beget more lies to maintain it. The knights of The Shadowlands (Avonleigh, Nidala, and Shadowborn Manor) have all lost their way, and if you find yourself in this dark Cluster, so will you.

Mistways

Via Corona connects Nidala to Darkon.

A fracture in Lake Amenta connects to Loch Lenore in The Shadowrift. This connection exists for the 13 years during which the Unseelie Court rules, and then disappears for the next 13 years.

Chronology

611BC — The sentient sword, Ebonbane, slays a devout paladin. **Shadowborn Manor** forms.

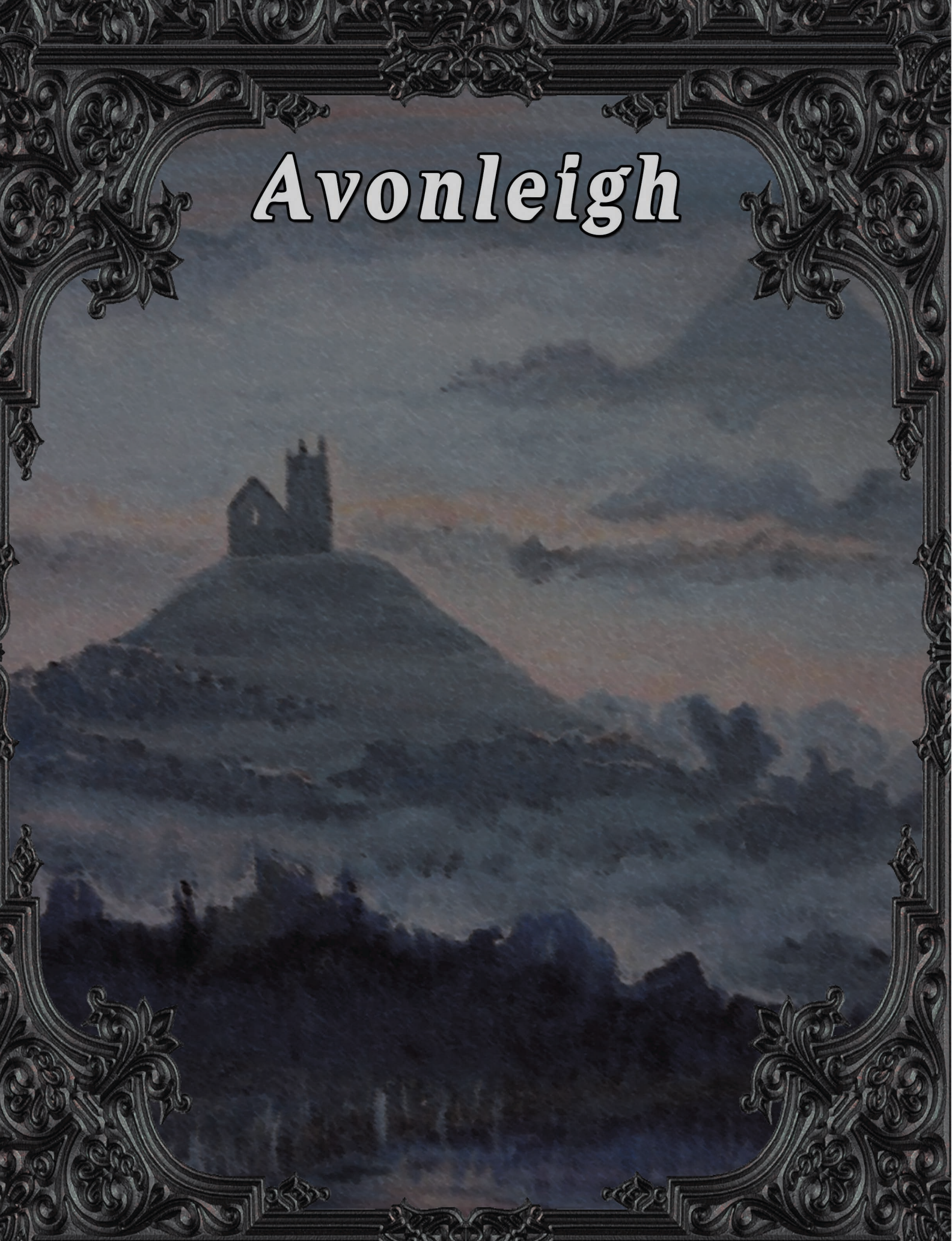
615BC — **Nidala** forms.

646BC — **Avonleigh** forms.

747BC — The Shadowlands Cluster forms in the Phantasmal Forest



Avonleigh



Avonleigh



Avonleigh was once a thriving land, one with a fair (if somewhat foolish) king, a proud people who were willing to help others, a church that was fair and just, and a happy and productive populace. That was true until the arrival of Morgoroth, a man whose soul had been stained by the foul murders he had committed. Seeking atonement and redemption, he arrived in good faith, and swore to Lord Ferran Shadowborn, of that cursed line, that he was working towards the betterment of himself and others. When he built Tergeron Manor in a single night, his powerful magic regrettably bound the spirits of his past victims to the estate, never allowing him rest. He fully intended to keep his promise, but he had not expected to meet Lord Ferran's daughter, Aurora. Their love for each other, denied by none but themselves, eventually led to the downfall of Morgoroth when a knight from his homeland, a man known only as Lambert, came to the land and confronted him — it was enough to push Morgoroth over the edge and into his old ways. He slaughtered any who came against him, Lord Ferran, Lambert, the knights of the Order of the Circle (an order that had all the great knights in it, as well as Lord Ferran. It also once held as members, both Kateri Shadowborn (see Shadowborn Manor) and Elena Faith-hold (see Nidala)). All fell to his might, and he kidnapped Aurora, rendering her unconscious with one of his spells.

She was trapped in a glass coffin, forced into suspended animation, as they were taken into the Mists, and when Morgoroth tried to escape, he lost his physical body, trapping himself forever in Tergeron Manor. Now, Avonleigh is shrouded in eternal gloom, never day and never quite night, just like the two are trapped between life and death, each in their own way.

Adventures in Avonleigh should focus on subjects such as denied (or unrequited love), the curse that has trapped Aurora Shadowborn in the glass coffin inside Tergeron Manor, or perhaps even simply driving the undead presence from the Phantasmal Forest. Likely adventures include being sent here from Nidala to deal with undead creatures or to deal with any supposed heretics that might seek refuge in the forests or swamps of Avonleigh. Perhaps the adventurers are actually looking for the Shadowborn Manor and confuse it for Tergeron Manor — an area similar to, but much more accessible than Shadowborn Manor.

"The course of true love never did run smooth"

~ William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Culture Level:	Savage (remnants of Medieval buildings)
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate forest and swamps
Year Formed:	646 BC
Population:	None
Races (%):	None
Languages:	Common, Nidalan
Religions:	None
Government:	None
Ruler(s):	Morgoroth
Darklord(s):	Morgoroth
Nationality:	Nidalan
Analog:	<i>Sleeping Beauty</i> mixed with Avalon from the legends of King Arthur

Local Fauna:

Avonleigh is devoid of humanoid or intelligent life. But dangerous lifeforms of all kinds thrive here, from bears and wolves to gigantic centipedes and snails, all the way to common venomous snakes and scorpions. There is also a plethora of less dangerous animals such as badgers, stoats, hares, and deer.

Local Flora:

Avonleigh is overrun with plant life, growing so thick that it's almost impossible to penetrate the domain unless following animal trails. Oak trees that are seemingly thousands of years old mingle with birch, ash, and pine trees. All grow tall and strong, though twisted, blocking out the feeble light from the gloomy sky. Mushrooms and vines entwine all the trees and the rotting logs between them. Many of the fungi are edible. In fact, Avonleigh could fairly easily sustain most of the population of Nidala, if only it was possible to harvest its bounty.

Avonleigh

Two plants stand out in Avonleigh, the Bloodrose, and the Fearweed. Bloodroses are a type of deep-red and extremely beautiful and rare rose that drinks blood instead of water to survive. While it can be found elsewhere, it is most common in Avonleigh. Some are said to have grown large enough that they have become sentient, and have started actively hunting humanoids in Nidala. Such rumors have yet to be confirmed.

Fearweed lives in a gruesome symbiosis with the Bloodrose. Where the Bloodrose survives by drinking the blood of a creature, Fearweed survives by feeding on carrion, though it is unable to harm creatures directly. However, when disturbed, the plant releases a hallucinogenic gas that induces harmful hallucinations in nearby creatures, leading them to attack each other or leading them into danger.

Native Horrors

Most of the animal life here is extremely wary of humanoids and avoids them at all costs, even the more voracious predators shy away. The reason for this is quite simple: humanoids attract the attention of the undead spirits of the domain. Banshees, ghosts, shadows, spectres, and many others make their home here, drawn to the domain by the power of Morgoroth, as well as the tragic feel to the domain. Here they grow strong, feeding on the unwary travelers and explorers that pass through from Nidala and beyond.

Terrain type

The eastern parts of Avonleigh, where it meets up with Nidala, is a combination of swamp and forest. The swamp dominates, making travel difficult. After a few miles, however, the forest quickly takes over, as if it were squeezing the life out of the swamp. The trees become ever-present. As one travels further west, the forest gets thicker and thicker until it becomes almost entirely unpassable.

Important Landmarks

Circle of Stone

The Circle of Stone is an ancient henge that stands within the borders of Avonleigh. Once dedicated to the knights that called themselves the Order of the Circle, it has since been repurposed by the Church of Belenus to, with the blessing of the Shadowbane family, serve as a forward base for the Church to attempt to reconquer Avonleigh from Nidala. So far all attempts have failed, though the faithful have at least managed to create a safe staging point. On occasion, Elena Faithhold will send some of her more difficult followers here, ones that she can't be seen to get rid of publicly. Coming here, though the staging point is safe, is usually a death sentence in disguise.

Devonshire Pond

Devonshire Pond is a fetid bog, filled with algae, rotting logs, and general pond scum. It bubbles with strange gases at all times, and camping near it is incredibly dangerous as the gas is sometimes poisonous. The frogs that live in the pond have somehow developed an immunity to it, but with that, have become poisonous themselves.

King's Highway

The King's Highway bisects Avonleigh's forest, cutting east to west in a somewhat passable manner, though it stops far short of the border with Nidala. Only after wading through miles of swamp and forest is it possible to reach the highway from Nidala. It is still passable, even after a century of neglect, though the cobbles have shifted a lot during the years, and weeds have broken through them, making passage somewhat perilous. It leads through the Phantasmal Forest and straight past Tergeron Manor and is the easiest route to get from one side of the domain to the other. It is said to be haunted at times by the Headless Horseman and is best avoided, as there is nothing to see on the western side of Avonleigh currently anyway.



Avonleigh

Phantasmal Forest

The Phantasmal Forest isn't named for illusions. Instead, it is named after the many disembodied spirits that haunt it, phantasms, spectres, ghosts, spirits and more all make their home here, as if drawn to it. This makes the Phantasmal Forest incredibly dangerous, but it is home to something worse as well. Deep within the trees of the Phantasmal Forest, the unlucky traveler can find Addar's Glade. Addar is a unique unicorn, a vain and prideful creature who thought himself strong and smart enough that he could do no wrong, even once serving as a steed for one of the paladins in the Order of the Circle before their death at the hands of Morgoroth.

However, Addar was corrupted by a tryst with a nightmare, and their offspring became the shadow unicorns that can now be found throughout the Mists. Addar's mate was slain by adventurers, but Addar himself slew the culprits in return and feasted upon their hearts. Now the unicorn hungers for blood and intelligent meat (that of elves is of particular delight), and the Mists are only too happy to provide — in fact, Addar is so far along the path of evil that he is on the cusp of earning his own domain.

Worse yet, the Phantasmal Forest is also home to Shadowborn Manor (more details can be found under that domain).

Tergeron Manor

Tergeron Manor is a large estate within the Phantasmal Forest. It is a large, magically created, estate, complete with a temple, bell tower, and a large residential area. It is surrounded by a tall, iron fence that, though rusted, is still strong. Within the Manor can be found Morgoroth, watching eternally in a disembodied state over the slumbering Aurora. She lies within a glass coffin in a room just underneath the belfry. Unknown to Morgoroth, ringing the bells would free Aurora, but in his jealous and insane state, he'd be driven to kill anyone trying to rescue the maiden and drive her mad, as he would be unable to keep himself away from her afterward. Within the estate can also be found the shards of the magical mirror that Morgoroth tried to create to escape from Avonleigh — only by combining the thirteen shards once more can he truly be defeated.

Wyndham Lake

Wyndham Lake is the sister lake to Devonshire Pond, filled with much of the same scum. Wyndham Lake, though disgusting and filthy, isn't subject to the same gas as Devonshire, and has much richer wildlife surrounding it. It is home to a lake pike that has grown to an incredible size, which has been known to devour full-sized bears.

Neighboring domain(s):

Nidala
Shadowborn Manor

Fun Fact:

Wood cut from Avonleigh's oak trees makes for terrible masts, due to their twisted nature. They have a strange quality, which makes them excellent for furniture, as they are very resistant to fire and incredibly durable.

Morgoroth

"I tried.

I tried to live a virtuous life. To undo the many wrongs I had committed.

And I was punished for it.

Those who called me their friend turned against me, and when I defended myself I was trapped here. One day I will escape, and then those that control this hell will know how evil I can be."

~ Morgoroth the Black

Morgoroth is a human male that stands nearly seven feet tall. His skin is pale and thin. His bones appear as if they are about to burst through his skin. His eyes are gray and stand out against his pale skin and black hair.

Morgoroth wears the black robes that he wore in life. They are made of pure silk with silver lining. Morgoroth prefers to cover his face with his hood.

Background: Morgoroth came to the world of Avonleigh to escape justice for crimes committed in a distant world. He does not talk about his homeland, and anyone who has attempted to find out more about it soon disappeared.

Soon after appearing in Avonleigh, Morgoroth approached the head of the circle, a devout knightly order dedicated to wiping out evil and protecting those who could not protect themselves. He swore fealty to the head of the order, a knight named Ferran Shadowborn, and agreed to serve as his advisor in exchange for land and serfs to work his fields. Shadowborn agreed. Morgoroth used powerful magic to build his manor house in one night, deep within the woods outside of the Circle's fortress. On the first night, spirits appeared on the outskirts of the forests surrounding the manor. Morgoroth grew pale as he saw their faces, but would not talk of the spectres. Locals began to call the forest the Phantasmal Woods.

The Circle soon came to rely on Morgoroth's advice, especially in matters of magic and the undead. Morgoroth's advice was so good that many of the knights of the Circle began to forget their initial objections. As for the necromancer, two things turned him from the path of evil. He was constantly watched by the spirits in the Phantasmal Woods, who seemed appeased as long as the wizard did what was right.

Morgoroth had also fallen in love for the first time in his long life. Ferran's sister, Aurora was as virtuous and honest as she was beautiful. Morgoroth had never seen anyone like her, and soon fell deeply in love. Aurora was destined to become the high priestess of the local temple, however, and had sworn a vow of celibacy. Aurora in her turn had also fallen in love with the wizard. She thought he was a tortured soul that was trying to atone for his past.

After several years, it all came crashing down. Morgoroth finally confessed his love to Aurora, who dearly loved him, but could not betray her vows. Overwhelmed, she fled from Morgoroth. The wizard was shattered by what he saw as a rejection in the cruellest way.

To make matters worse, Lambert, a paladin from Morgoroth's homeland who had been tasked with finding and slaying the wizard, arrived on the doorstep of the Circle demanding to know the wizard's location. Lambert laid bare Morgoroth's crimes, which were vile and extensive. The circle debated what to do. Morgoroth may have done horrible things, but he had aided them for years. Even the watchful spirits of the Phantasmal Wood had been largely dismissed by the knights as ghosts drawn to powerful magic.

While the Circle talked, Lambert found out the location of Morgoroth's manor and rode to confront his old enemy. When Morgoroth saw Lambert something in him snapped and he battered the paladin with every hateful spell at his dark disposal. Lambert was overwhelmed and slain. Morgoroth raised Lambert as an undead paladin.

Ferran had noticed Lambert's disappearance and gone to the aid of the wizard. When he saw what Morgoroth had done to Lambert, his blood boiled in righteous anger. Ferran struck down the undead monstrosity and ventured forth into Morgoroth's manor. He was never seen again.



Morgoroth

Morgoroth, having tasted the evil power that he had refused for so long, abandoned his road to redemption. He teleported to Aurora and kidnapped her in front of her priests. He took her to his manor to force her to be his bride. The Circle, having been informed of Ferran and Lambert's fate by Ferran's squire, and Aurora's fate by her priests, rode to Morgoroth's manor to confront the wizard.

Morgoroth met them with a horde of undead and magic drawn from the Abyss itself. As the battle raged, Morgoroth and his manor were drawn into Ravenloft.

After slaughtering his foes and raising them as undead, Morgoroth found Aurora in a glass coffin. No matter how he tried, he could not open the coffin, nor communicate with the prisoner inside. Morgoroth abandoned his attempts to free Aurora once he realized he was a prisoner as well. Morgoroth constructed a magic mirror to try and escape his domain, but the ritual backfired. The mirror shattered as did Morgoroth's physical form. His spirit was trapped inside the walls of his domain, where it remains to this day.

Current Sketch: Morgoroth has been trapped in the walls of his domain for centuries now. His frustration has caused him to slaughter several parties of adventurers that could have freed him from his torment. He still seeks the shards of his mirror, but grows jealous if anyone else finds a piece and attempts to slay them.

Darklord's Tactics: While stuck inside the walls of his domain, Morgoroth has several abilities. No necromantic spell can function in Avonleigh unless Morgoroth allows it too. Morgoroth also controls all undead within the walls of Avonleigh, no matter who raised them. He can also control the environment in Avonleigh and can use freezing winds to separate and damage foes. Morgoroth can summon spirits from the Phantasmal Forests that surround his manor house and can communicate with anyone inside the home by using his mirrors. While Morgoroth is trapped within the walls of Avonleigh, he cannot engage in direct combat. Once he is freed from the walls of his domain Morgoroth is a powerful necromancer.

Borders: When Morgoroth closes the borders of Avonleigh, the domain is surrounded by supernatural cold. The farther creatures move away from Avonleigh the colder it becomes. By the time they have moved 300 hundred yards away from the border, it is too cold for the creature to move. If the creature is not rescued, they will soon die.



Morgoroth the Black

Medium undead (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 97 (13d8 + 39)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
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12 (+1)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)
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Saving Throws Con +8, Int +9

Skills Arcana +9, Deception +8, History +9, Nature +9, Perception +8, Stealth +7

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapon

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Tergeron, Nidalan, Draconic, Abyssal, Infernal, Celestial, Darkonese, Mordentish

Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Ethereal Sight. Morgoroth can see 60 ft. into the Ethereal Plane when he is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement. Morgoroth can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. He takes 5 (1d10) force damage if he ends his turn inside an object.

Summon the Spirits. Once per day, Morgoroth can call 4d4 poltergeists (MM, pg.279) and 1d4 shadows (MM, pg.269) from the Phantasmal Forest to haunt and torment the intruders. These should be used to frighten the characters by lunging out of walls, screaming in agony, and otherwise harassing them. At the most opportune moment, they should ambush the intruders and try to slay them.

Morgoroth

Illusory Reflection. As a darklord, Morgoroth wields the ability to manipulate reflections. For example, someone looking into a pool of water might see the flesh on their face run off their skull like melting wax. If a creature tries to bash down a wall, Morgoroth can create an illusion that the walls bleed and so on. While this cannot physically harm or hinder anyone, it can be most unnerving, perhaps prompting Fear checks. Note that Morgoroth cannot affect the images reflected in the thirteen shards of the magical mirror in the parlor of Tergeron Manor which the characters will collect during the course of their adventure.

Quickened Necromancy. Morgoroth can cast any necromancy spell with a casting time of 1 action as a bonus action. In addition, when he casts a necromancy spell using an action, he can also cast a necromancy cantrip by using a bonus action.

Arcane Recovery. Once per day when Morgoroth finishes a Short Rest, he can choose expended spell slots to recover. The spell slots can have a combined level that is equal to or less than 5, and none of the slots can be 6th level or higher.

Grim Harvest. Morgoroth reaps life energy from creatures he kills with his spells. Once per turn when he kills one or more creatures with a spell of 1st level or higher, he regains hit points equal to twice the spell's level, or three times its level if the spell belongs to the School of Necromancy. Morgoroth does not gain this benefit for killing constructs or undead.

Undead Thralls. When Morgoroth casts *animate dead*, he can target one additional corpse or pile of bones, creating another zombie or skeleton, as appropriate. Whenever he creates an undead creature using a necromancy spell, it has additional benefits:

The creature's hit point maximum is increased by 20.
The creature adds 5 to its weapon damage rolls.

Inured to Undeath. Morgoroth's hit point maximum can't be reduced.

Regeneration. Morgoroth regains 10 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point.

Limitations of the Manor. While trapped within the walls of Tergeron Manor, Morgoroth is unable to engage in direct combat with the adventurers, including spellcasting. In addition, all magical ways to pass through the walls or teleport within the manor, automatically fail. The only way for Morgoroth to be released is for an adventuring party to find all the pieces of the shattered mirror and correctly place them in the frame. Once he is released, however, he becomes a dangerous enemy, possessing the full complement of spells he memorized before he became trapped in the wall of the manor.

Potent Necromancer. Morgoroth's targets suffer a -1 penalty to their saving throws against spells of the necromancy school.

Spell Resistances. Morgoroth has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects. In addition, he is immune to mind affecting spells and illusions. He also benefits from a +1 bonus to saving throws against necromancy spells.

Control Necromancy. No spell from the school or sphere of Necromancy functions within Avonleigh unless Morgoroth wishes it to. In order to prevent a spell from taking effect, however, he must know that it is being cast.

War Caster. Morgoroth has advantage on Constitution saving throws that he makes to maintain his concentration on a spell when he takes damage. He can perform the somatic components of spells even when he has weapons or a shield in one or both hands. When a hostile creature's movement provokes an opportunity attack from Morgoroth, he can use his reaction to cast a spell at the creature, rather than making an opportunity attack. The spell must have a casting time of 1 action and must target only that creature.

Control Doors and Windows. Morgoroth has the ability to make the doors and windows of Tergeron Manor open and close at will. He often uses this to injure an unwary adventurer or amplify a frightening situation. A creature that is within 5ft of a closing window or door takes 1d6 force damage. Should anyone attempt to force open a door that Morgoroth wants closed, a DC 15 athletics check is required. Magic such as a knock spell can be used as well.

Snuff the Lights. Thrice per day, Morgoroth can instantly snuff all nonmagical light sources within Tergeron Manor. Morgoroth must succeed on a DC 8+ Spell level Arcana check to snuff magical light sources. When Morgoroth invokes this power, no new lights of either magical or mundane nature can be created for 10 minutes.

Cold Message. Thrice per day, Morgoroth can cause a cold wind to blow past the adventurers. While most will only shiver at this frigid breeze, one of the characters can be singled out to hear a brief message of up to 13 words.

Freezing Corridors. Once per day, Morgoroth may send a gust of frosty air through the manor's corridors, requiring each enemy to make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw. A successful save indicates that a target has suffered 1d8 points of cold damage, while failure inflicts 2d8 points of cold damage and freezes all liquids carried. This includes holy water, poisons, magical potions, and even lamp oil. Any frozen fluid can be thawed out in half an hour with a torch or similar source of heat but will have been changed by the process so that it is unsuited to its original purpose. For

Morgoroth

example, drinking water becomes brackish and bitter, magical potions have a 40% chance to lose their enchantments, and lamp oil is no longer combustible.

Spellcasting. Morgoroth is a 12th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). Morgoroth has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch**, *frostbite*, *infestation*, *mage hand*, *message*, *toll the dead**

1st level (4 slots): *cause fear**, *expeditious retreat*, *false life**, *grease*, *mage armor*, *shield*, *unseen servant*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness**, *darkness*, *gust of wind*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *spider climb*, *web*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead**, *bestow curse**, *dispel magic*, *summon undead**, *vampiric touch** 4th level (3 slots): *blight**, *confusion*, *fire shield*, *wall of fire*

5th level (2 slots): *animate objects*, *danse macabre**, *enervation**, *immolation*

6th level (1 slot): *circle of death**, *create undead**, *eyebite**, *guards and wards*, *magic jar**

*Necromancy spells

Play Dead or Burst. When Morgoroth reaches 10 hit points or lower but not 0, he immediately casts *feign death* as part of a contingency spell he has permanently cast upon himself via a magic ring. If Morgoroth's enemies do not inflict further damage upon him, he wakes in just over three hours. If Morgoroth reaches 0 hit points and is slain, he explodes in a burst of necrotic energy and as his mirror is shattered again, he is sealed inside the manor. Each creature within 20 ft. of him must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Necromancer's Doom. The only way for Morgoroth to be truly defeated is for a creature to attack the mirror after Morgoroth has been freed. By shattering the shards of the complete mirror and burning the frame, Morgoroth is permanently slain, though his spirit lingers as a poltergeist trapped inside the Manor. Morgoroth now uses the poltergeist (MM, pg.279) statblock and loses all of his other powers except the Summon the Spirits daily ability. He can never become his former self and only remains to haunt the manor as a lesser plaything for the dark powers.

Actions

Staff of Wither. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage, or 5 (1d8 + 1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands and Morgoroth can expend 1 charge to deal an extra 2d10 necrotic damage to the target. In addition, the target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have disadvantage for 1 hour on any ability check or saving throw that uses Strength or Constitution.

Withering Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (4d6 + 2) necrotic damage.

Etherealness. Morgoroth enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. He is visible on the Material Plane while he is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet he can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Horrifying Visage. Each non-undead creature within 60 ft. of Morgoroth that can see him must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If the save fails by 5 or more, the target also ages 1d4 x 10 years. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to Morgoroth's Horrifying Visage for the next 24 hours. The aging effect can be reversed with a greater restoration spell, but only within 24 hours of it occurring.

Possession (Recharge 6). One humanoid that Morgoroth can see within 5 ft. of him must succeed on a DC 17 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by him; Morgoroth then disappears, and the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. Morgoroth now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. Morgoroth can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn undead, and he retains his alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to being charmed and frightened. He otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies. The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, Morgoroth ends it as a bonus action, or he is turned or forced out by an effect like the dispel evil and good spell. When the possession ends, he reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 ft. of the body. The target is immune to Morgoroth's Possession for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.

Significant Possessions:

Staff of Wither (same as *Staff of Withering* but can be attuned by a wizard), *Ring of Contingency*

Nidala



Nidala



The story of Nidala is the story of religious belief run amok on a populace, not unlike the Inquisition seen in Tepest, but with a far smaller focus. Where the Inquisition in Tepest believes that the wickedness of the world is due to fey influence, in Nidala, the Knight Protector and her templars believe that it is failings of personal faith that cause these issues, and that only through the harshest of measures can such heresy be eradicated. There is only one legal religion in Nidala, that of the Church of Belenus, the sun god. Those who worship a different god are deemed heretics and hunted down by Elena Faith-hold or one of her minions. And the infractions that one can accidentally cause are many, as Elena issues new decrees each week on what is and isn't allowed. Anyone caught breaking these decrees is punished harshly, with public floggings and hangings an almost daily occurrence. The residents of Nidala live in mortal fear of Banemaw, a legendary evil dragon that swoops down from its lair in the mountains and lays waste to the innocent settlements of Nidala. What none of them know is that the smoldering ruins that appear regularly are not the result of a dragon's attacks, but are in truth the work of Elena who, despite her claims of protecting the Nidalans, is actually the one who puts villages to the torch, for doubting her leadership and showing "a lack of faith". The villagers do know that they're tired of Elena's tyranny and edicts, and under their breath dub her Elena Strangle-hold. Rebellion is not far away unless she finds a way to stamp it out.

"From the beginning men used God to justify the unjustifiable." ~ Salman Rushdie, The Satanic Verses

Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forests, hills, mountains, and plains
Year Formed:	615 BC
Population:	30,000
Races (%):	Humans 99%, Others 1%
Languages:	Common, Nidalan
Religions:	Belenus
Government:	Theocratic monarchy
Ruler(s):	Knight Protector Elena Faith-hold
Darklord(s):	Elena Faith-hold
Nationality:	Nidalan
Analog:	Avalon, Arthurian Legend, Welsh Mythology

Local Fauna:The normal animals and beasts of this terrain are found in Nidala. Wolves, bears, boars, deer, rabbits, and such are common here. But monsters are few, most having been hunted down in Elena's mad crusade. What few are left hide among the populace as only shapeshifters can. Half of the time, there is a distinct lack of fey creatures, but the other half is filled with them. This is because there is an odd cycle in the south of Nidala, near Lake Amenta, where fey sprout from nowhere for 13 years at a time, and then disappear again for another 13 years. This has been going on for as long as anyone can remember but is usually ignored to avoid calling attention to one's village. Domesticated animals in Nidala include cows, goats, and sheep. Sheep are the most common animals in Nidala, for the wool proves useful in the cold winters. Horses are especially prized in Nidala however, with Nidalan breeds growing tall and strong. Some believe that a bit of unicorn blood must have crept into the bloodlines sometime in the past to give them their size and strength. Thankfully, the horses are as docile as the smaller horses one finds elsewhere. The real monsters in Nidala are Elena and her henchmen. These men are all religious zealots and will do ANYTHING that Elena says. And her decrees are law, no matter how unreasonable they are. And she expects obedience in everything. She believes that her decrees are truly good and that anyone not obeying her is evil. So when things do not go her way, she lays waste to the offending settlement, often unable to prevent herself and her henchmen from going overboard. Banemaw is the bogeyman of Nidala. A supposedly horrible dragon that the populace truly believes exists, that lairs somewhere in the mountains. They believe that Elena spends most of her time hunting the dragon, and that the destruction of hamlets and villages that litter Nidala's countryside is due to the rampages of the dragon. Only because she's been unlucky has she not destroyed him yet. Or so they believe. Any of her henchmen that defect are killed and dismembered, so the secret remains safe for now.

Local Flora:The plains are what stick out to most visitors of Nidala. While many of them are covered in grain, usually wheat, there are large fields of flowers such as bluebells covering much of the land.. Orchids are found here too, in the southern part of the domain, near Lake Amenta, while deep in the forests, people come across "faerie rings", rings of mushrooms that grow in a circular pattern, and which the locals believe mark where the fey hold court. In the spring many locals spend their time in the flower fields, dreaming themselves away.

Nidala

Terrain type: Nidala is a beautiful, if cold, domain. The mountains are tall and rugged, the hills are low and rolling, and the forests are green, deep, and old. Nidala is a mix of all kinds of terrain, and the locals have managed to tame almost all of it. Only in the highest of mountains, and near Lake Amenta, or the border to Avonleigh, can one go to find solitude.

Important Landmarks

Faith Hold: Faith Hold is the stronghold of Elena Faithhold. It is more of a fortress than a castle, and was built a few hundred years ago to secure Nidala against the onslaught of both monsters and heretics. The walls remain strong and tall, and within her soldiers find refuge. Prominent within Faith Hold is the church to Belenus, a henge that was in place before the castle was erected, and still stands in the courtyard. The walls around it have been built cleverly, so that as long as the sun is in the sky, it is bathed in daylight. Here the Knight Protector holds daily sermons for her followers, while she uses the throne room to issue her decrees. From Faith Hold, riders are sent every day to carry Elena's messages across Nidala.

Lake Amenta: Lake Amenta is the center of fey activity in Nidala. Unbeknownst to the Nidalans, this is because Lake Amenta links to Loch Lenore in the Shadow Rift. This allows the passage of mortals and fey creatures in both directions while the Unseelie Court holds power in the Shadow Rift. (In Nidala this period lasts 13 years, in the Shadow Rift, it is 100 years). The area around Lake Amenta is abandoned, after bloody incidents the last time the rift opened, where bloodthirsty fey swarmed from the portal in Lake Amenta and overran several nearby villages, before retreating. Once again Elena Faithhold blamed this on Banemaw, claiming that the dragon was in league with the fey.

Mount Malcredo: Mount Malcredo is the tallest mountain in Nidala, and the seat of Faith Hold. It is also the supposed lair of Banemaw, though where the dragon might be hiding since the mountain has been scoured by Elena's followers is something that the Nidalans wonder about. The mountain is barren and holds no riches, but it holds a commanding position over the nearby countryside and proved a formidable obstacle in the past against heretics and monsters.

Shadowborn Manor: Shadowborn Manor is found in Nidala. More detail can be found in the description of that domain.

Towns and villages:

Touraine: Touraine is a large city with 21,000 inhabitants, and the capital of Nidala. It has avoided the ravages of Elena, mostly due to its size. The clergy of Belenus, Elena's henchmen, patrol Touraine daily, and punishments are frequent. The inhabitants are so inured to this treatment, like elsewhere in Nidala, that visitors note them as subdued and jaded.. Almost as if they no longer dare live, out of fear that it'll break one of Elena's commandments. The punishments meted out by the faithful often become an attraction, as at times attendance is mandatory so that the populace can see the fate of the heretics and lawbreakers among them. Touraine also stands out for its lack of a palisade or city wall. There is no evidence that it has ever had one, leaving it at the potential mercy of attackers, a deliberate move on the part of Elena, should she ever need to level Touraine to the ground.

Neighboring domain(s):

Avonleigh

Fun Fact: The inhabitants of Nidala all have blue eyes. Most of them have red hair as well, though a few have raven-black hair. All of them gain freckles when they've been out in the sun for a few hours.



Elena Faith-hold

Elena Faith-hold is a tall human woman with platinum blonde hair and emerald green eyes. She is a born general and warrior, looking far more at home on a battlefield, her ornate plate covered in blood and mud, than at court in a ball gown. Elena's face is beautiful, but stern, and when she speaks she expects to be obeyed. Her magical longsword, Caitlin, is always at her side and carves a bloody swath through her enemies in battle. To Elena every cut, spurt of blood and cry of pain is a hymn of glory to her god, Belenus.

Background: Elena was the protector of Nidala, a small but prosperous province wracked by the Heretical Wars, a series of conflicts between the Great Kingdom of Avonleigh and the Southern Empire. The cursed sword Ebonbane, mortal enemy of the Shadowborn clan of paladins, possessed Grand Caliph Muhdar ab Sang, ruler of the Empire, and drove him mad. The sword mustered the armies of the Southern Empire and drove them into the heart of the Great Kingdom, seeking to bring the Shadowborn clan to an end once and for all. Elena, a friend of Kateri Shadowborn, marched to war to protect her province and her kingdom from the sudden invasion of the normally peaceful Southern Empire. Elena fought in dozens of desperate battles, loudly singing battle hymns to her god Belenus. So great was Elena's faith and so powerful was her sword arm, that the armies of Avonleigh rallied around her shouting her praises as they marched to war. After long years of bloody conflict the Caliph was slain and his armies were driven back to the Southern Empire. By now, Elena was famous throughout the kingdom of Avonleigh, and the worship of Belenus spread wherever she traveled. Elena knew she was just a vessel for Belenus's power and wisdom, but deep in her soul she loved the adoration. When she finally returned home to Nidala, this adoration reached fever pitch. Worship of Belenus had eclipsed all the other gods in the pantheon. At first, Elena was most pleased that Belenus was so loved and that his brother and sister gods had a home in Nidala as well, but a darkness had already settled in her soul. It started small at first, with one temple in a remote part of Nidala that had strayed from the light of the gods. Elena cleansed the temple and dedicated it to Belenus. Her faith and power grew. Next, a series of raids by cultists of Baphomet were crushed by Elena and her paladins. Elena basked in the love of Belenus. But it couldn't last. The worship of Belenus had overtaken the worship of every other god in Nidala. During Belenus' holy days Elena would throw open the gates of Faith Hold and welcome all to feasts. These celebrations became famous throughout Nidala and beyond. During one of these celebrations a cleric of a brother god in the pantheon told a joke

about an inconsistency in the teachings of Belenus. It was an old joke, a flaw in the dogma that had been corrected centuries before. But Elena heard, and she was overcome with rage. Elena doesn't even remember drawing her sword but she did. She doesn't remember the fatal blow, but the cleric's head parted ways with his sacrilegious neck. Elena ordered the doors of her castle shut, and she stormed through the castle with her most devout followers, slaughtering those who couldn't prove their devotion to Belenus. Once the castle was cleansed, she and her followers rode out into Nidala. Elena and her army of fanatics charged into every town and castle, putting anyone they deemed heretical to the sword, leaving behind only dazed survivors and corpses. Nidala burned in holy war. Elena wiped out the followers of the other gods and brought their temples low. As the last cleric of the last god was slain the mists moved in and claimed Nidala.

Current Sketch: Elena keeps watch over Nidala from her castle, Faith Hold. She employs an army of informants in her domain to keep a constant vigil against heresy. Any report draws her and her knights out from the castle in a storm of fire and blade. Occasionally she will just decide that a town has committed egregious sins and slaughter its inhabitants anyway. Elena and her soldiers surround the town and burn it to the ground, and her informants spread the word that the dragon, Banemaw, had destroyed the town. Although Banemaw is fake, Elena will spend the next few days bemoaning her inability to stop the dragon. The people of Nidala fear Elena and her soldiers, but fear Banemaw more. Kill the saint and the sinner and let Belenus decide. Belenus has stopped answering her prayers. Elena believes this is a test of faith. She knows that once she has purged every sinner from Nidala, and eradicated every impure thought, Belenus will return to her, and she will be raised up to rule beside him. Elena has periods of crushing self doubt but has come so far down this road she sees no other way. Once a week, Elena is compelled to mount her warhorse at midnight and ride across the countryside. During her ride, she hears the condemnation of every person she has killed either by deed or command.

Darklord Tactics: Elena is at home in melee. When confronted with archers or spellcasters, she closes the distance on her warhorse, and hacks at her foe with wild abandon. Lesser melee combatants are given similar treatment. When her opponents are fellow knights or paladins, Elena will dismount and challenge them to single combat. Elena will abide by a strict code of honor, giving her opponents a chance to ready their weapon, allowing fallen opponents to stand un-

Elena Faith-hold

til she loses more than half her hit points. Then she will use every cheap and dirty trick she knows. If Elena is hard pressed by a superior foe, she will call in her fanatical followers, who attack in a berserk frenzy.

Borders: Elena cannot close the borders of Nidala.



Elena Faith-hold

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 22 (+2 adamantine full plate, shield)

Hit Points 184 15d10 + 90

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	22 (+6)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +12, Dex +2, Con +13, Int +2, Wis +9, Cha +11

Skills Arcana +8, Insight +7, Intimidation +9, Perception +7, Persuasion +9, Religion +8

Senses passive Perception 17

Languages Common, Infernal, Nidalan

Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Aura of Despair. Elena radiates a malign aura that causes enemies within 10 ft. of her to suffer a -4 penalty to their saving throws.

Detect Life. As an action, Elena can detect the thoughts of any humanoid within 60 ft. Elena cannot read the creature's thoughts, but she can hone in on them to root out creatures that may be hiding. Targets within range can make a DC 17 Intelligence saving throw to escape detection. Magic effects that shield thoughts also prevent discovery. Intriguingly, this power cannot detect infants, the insane, nor the undead.

Divine Smite. Elena's spell slots are reserved for Divine Smite. The extra damage is 2d8 for a 1st-level spell slot, plus 1d8 for each spell level higher than 1st, to a maximum of 5d8, Elena has four 1st-level spell slots (2d8), three 2nd-level spell slots (3d8), three 3rd-level spell slots (4d8), and two 4th-level spell slots (5d8).

Action Surge. Elena can push herself beyond her normal limits for a moment. On her turn, she can take one additional action. Once she uses this feature, she must finish a short or long rest before she can use it again.

Indomitable. Elena can reroll a saving throw that she fails. If she does so, she must use the new roll, and she can't use this feature again until she finishes a long rest.

Second Wind. Elena has a limited well of stamina that she can draw on to protect herself from harm. On her turn, she can use a bonus action to regain hit points equal to 1d10 + 12. Once she uses this feature, she must finish a short or long rest before she can use it again.

Dueling. When Elena is wielding a melee weapon in one hand and no other weapons, she gains a +2 bonus to damage rolls with that weapon (included).

Superior Critical. Elena's weapon attacks score a critical on a roll of 18–20.

Command Undead. Elena can use an action to command or destroy CR 1 or lower undead creatures. The undead remain loyal to her for as long as Elena is within 60ft of them.

Magic Resistance. Elena has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Candle of Truth(2/Day). Elena can cast the *zone of truth* spell twice per day.

Unholy Sense. Elena believes that she can still use her divine sense ability, as per the spell. Furthermore, she believes that the inability of other spellcasters in Ravenloft to detect evil is a sure sign of their spiritual impurity. In truth, this ability performs just as the Divine Sense ability — except that instead of detecting the creatures described in the ability, she actually detects all strong emotions that the target creatures may feel toward her. Sadly, this ability does not distinguish between emotions. Elena interprets both the burning hatred of her foes and the boundless love of a suitor as purest evil and lashes out at each.

Slash of Faith. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when Elena hits with it (included in the attack).

Heavy Armor Master. Elena can use her armor to deflect strikes that would kill others. While she is wearing heavy armor, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage that she takes from nonmagical weapons is reduced by 3. Thanks to her adamantine armor, critical hits don't affect her either.

Elena Faith-hold

Mounted Combatant. Elena is a dangerous foe to face while mounted. While she is mounted and isn't incapacitated, she gains the following benefits:

- She has advantage on melee attack rolls against any unmounted creature that is smaller than her mount.
- She can force an attack targeted at her mount to target her instead.

If her mount is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Actions

Multiattack. Elena can use Convert The Faithless. She then makes 3 attacks, preferring her bastard sword.

Caitlyn, Bastard Sword +2. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (2d10 + 9) slashing +2d6 necrotic damage.

Convert The Faithless. Elena Faith-hold can attempt to convert a foe to her side. The target must succeed at a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or "see the light." This effect acts as a Dominate spell, except that she can only convert humanoids, and those who are converted will gladly die for her. If a target succeeds, Elena Faith-Hold cannot attempt to convert that creature again for 24 hours.

Banemaw (Recharge 5-6). Elena Faith-hold conjures a vortex of fire in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 56 (15d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Corrupted Lay On Hands. As an action, Elena can cure herself or her fiendish mount of up to a maximum of 75 points of damage. Elena can use this ability on other creatures to wound them. A creature must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take a number of necrotic damage chosen by Elena. The points are not removed from the pool if the creature succeeds on the roll. This ability can not be used again, after the pool is emptied, without a long rest.

Reactions

Interception. When a creature Elena can see hits a target, other than her, within 5 feet of her with an attack, she can use her reaction to reduce the damage the target takes by 1d10 + 5 (to a minimum of 0 damage). She must be wielding a shield or a simple or martial weapon to use this reaction.

Legendary Actions

Elena can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn.

Elena regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Move. Elena moves up to her speed without suffering Opportunity Attacks.

Attack. Elena makes a melee attack.

Consecration (Costs 2 Actions). Elena consecrates the ground around her. Each creature within 10 feet of her must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take 2d6 + 7 points of radiant damage and be knocked prone. The area is then considered difficult terrain to all but Elena Faith-hold.



***Shadowborn
Manor***



Shadowborn Manor



Shadowborn Manor is one of the smaller domains within the Mists, consisting of a single estate that was drawn into Ravenloft at the moment when the evil sword Ebonbane completed its mission and killed the paladin Lady Kateri Shadowborn. As it savored its victory both it, and its victim (albeit in spirit form) were drawn into this domain.

Now they are both trapped — Kateri because she is the nemesis of the sword, and Ebonbane because it wants freedom beyond anything else. Freedom that it will never have, and each morning as it looks out from the windows of the Manor, all it sees is the outer curtain wall and nothing beyond it. It, and anything else within the Manor, can never pass through the wall, and only entry is allowed. It believes that when the faith of Lady Shadowborn dies, so too will the restraints that have been placed upon it. It seethes with the power that it has been granted, far beyond what it had before coming into the mists, but it is a power that it cannot exercise, and it would gladly trade all the power it has for freedom.

Adventures within Shadowborn Manor should focus upon the loss of freedom — anyone who gets in cannot get out, and the unrestrained anger of Ebonbane is certain to try to destroy them utterly. However, there is one hope — the blood of Lady Kateri Shadowborn is strong, and so is her name. Anyone of good heart could be a descendant of hers, and many are those who carried her name before getting a new name and siring children. These children and the grandchildren have grown strong, and a player character of good heart could easily be a direct descendant of Lady Shadowborn or one of those who took her name as their own. The prophecy is that one of the Shadowborn family will one day defeat Ebonbane and free her. Whether the prophecy is true or not, both her family and the Lady herself believe it. Ebonbane doesn't know of it, and as such it uses what limited means it can to draw in the family in an attempt to destroy her faith in herself and Belenus — the only way it can escape.

"Captivity is the greatest of all evils that can befall one."

~ Miguel Cervantes (author of Don Quixote)

Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate (subject to Ebonbane's whim), estate
Year Formed:	611 BC
Population:	0
Races (%):	None
Languages:	Common, Nidalan
Religions:	Church of Belenus
Government:	None
Ruler(s):	Ebonbane
Darklord(s):	Ebonbane
Nationality:	Nidalan
Analog:	Transylvania

Local Fauna:

Shadowbane Manor once held life, but now, within the Mists, it holds nothing but death. There are no animals alive in here nor is anything else. There are only two things that can be remotely considered "alive" within the estate, and that is Ebonbane and its eternal nemesis, the Lady Kateri Shadowborn who is now trapped within the Manor as a spirit, a weak type of ghost. But just as she is unable to hurt or dislodge Ebonbane, so is the sword unable to get rid of her. The only way to do so is for it to undermine her faith in herself and her deity. While it has had some success in this, having destroyed some of her descendants, it's been nowhere near as successful as it had hoped.



Shadowborn Manor

Local Flora:

Unlike the animals within the confines of Shadowborn Manor, plant life is abundant, though only on the estate grounds. The local plant life has proven remarkably resilient to the whims of Ebonbane, even when the sword changes the weather in a dramatic fashion. Somehow, perhaps with the blessings of Belenus, the plants survive. When alive, Lady Shadowborn had a liking for roses and the rose garden that she cultivated in her off-duty hours became famous in the surrounding countryside. Even now, some of the strains that she perfected grace the gardens of kings and queens around her original world. When she was drawn into the mists, however, they all turned black overnight.

Native Horrors

There are no living or unliving beings within Shadowborn Manor. There is only the monster, Ebonbane.

Terrain type

Shadowborn Manor once rested upon a low hill, but the hill and the surrounding lands are no longer visible. Only the outer wall of the domain can be seen, and no one can pass through it from the inside. Only entering the domain works, and not even Ebonbane can reopen that border for other creatures.

Important Landmarks

Shrine of Belenus

The Shrine of Belenus is the only place within Shadowborn Manor that Ebonbane cannot enter, and the hiding-place of Lady Kateri Shadowborn. Within the shrine burns a brazier of coal, one that is never extinguished so long as Lady Shadowborn keeps her faith. Recently, the fires have been burning lower than ever, and the Lady despairs at ever defeating Ebonbane and the curse it has become upon her family. She is looking for a sign, any sign, from Belenus that she is doing the right thing.

Towns and villages:

None

Neighboring domain(s):

Avonleigh

Fun Fact:

Lady Kateri Shadowborn has a much larger family than she is aware of. When she left her original world, her grandchildren spread her name, and in her honor, the paladins of her home country take her name as their surname. Prophecy has it that one who comes from her name will once more restore her to the world, and defeat the fiend that took her away.



Ebonbane

“For centuries my family fought evil in all its forms. I had accepted that I was the last of my line, and had resolved to make sure the riches my family accumulated would be put to good use. I never thought I would end my days here, a shadow hiding in my own home. I cannot overcome this evil, and my family’s home is a monument to its victory.” ~ Kateri Shadowborn

Ebonbane is a slender longsword. Its blade is covered in glowing runes that are painful to look at and its hilt is forged from one piece of silver. The hilt is intricately carved to resemble screaming skulls. Even when still, the blade radiates menace.

Background: Kateri Shadowborn was the last in a long line of paladins that served a deity of law and light for centuries. By the time Kateri Shadowborn retired to her family’s manor, she was ready to spend her autumn years distributing her family fortune to charities. But it was not to be. Kateri had destroyed many of her churches’ enemies, but a cabal of wizards still remained. These wizards had been thwarted by Kateri time and again and were desperate for revenge. They combined their powers to create a powerful weapon of evil. When the final rune was set, Ebonbane came to life and devoured the souls of the wizards who created it.

Ebonbane was free but had an overwhelming desire to slay the last of the Shadowborns. Ebonbane used a succession of witless fools to travel to Shadowborn Manor and attack Kateri. The duel between the paladin and the artifact was a titanic contest, but the sword was just too powerful. As Ebonbane struck the final blow, Shadowborn Manor was pulled into Ravenloft.

Current Sketch: Ebonbane is the absolute lord of its domain, but it means nothing. It has no servants, and only one of the spirits that haunts its mansion is intelligent, and Kateri Shadowborn has no interest in talking. On the rare occasions that the living wander into its domain, Ebonbane has a brief respite from its eternal boredom.

Darklord’s Tactics: One of Ebonbane’s favorite tactics is to dominate one of the mindless undead that haunt its domain. Ebonbane will force the creature to act smarter than it is, while making sure it is still defeated. Then Ebonbane allows itself to be taken as treasure. Ebonbane will dominate its new wielder and wait for its friends to fall asleep before starting the slaughter.

Borders: When Ebonbane closes the borders, the wall at the edge of Shadowborn Manor becomes impassable. The walls cannot be damaged by weapons or spells. Climbing over the walls is impossible, as the walls flow like water and there are no handholds. Spells that pass try to bypass or go over the walls fail. Creatures that try to fly over the walls are pulled down onto the sharp spikes that line the top by an invisible force. If the creature survives they are dumped on the inside of the wall.

Ebonbane’s Lair: Shadowborn Manor

Ebonbane’s domain is an ancient and massive manor house. The night sky can always be seen through the windows, but any attempt to open or smash the windows or doors fails. Encounters within Shadowborn manor are with the spectral and physical remains of Ebonbane’s past victims and objects animated by poltergeists. The only friendly encounter is the ghost of Kateri Shadowborn. She seeks a way to destroy Ebonbane and will help anyone she thinks has a chance to finally slay the sword. After centuries of waiting, she is starting to despair. Ebonbane is always encountered in Shadowborn Manor.



Ebonbane

Ebonbane

Small construct, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 195 (30d6 + 90)

Speed 0 ft., 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Cha +11

Skills Stealth +7, Perception +7, Persuasion +11

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non magical attacks, cold, poison

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, frightened, grappled, incapacitated, stunned

Senses blindsight 120 ft. blind beyond this radius, passive Perception 17

Languages Common, Telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Unnatural Sharpness. Ebonbane counts as magical damage and ignores resistance to slashing damage. Ebonbane treats immunity to slashing damage as resistance. Wounds inflicted by Ebonbane must be healed magically.

Constructed nature. Ebonbane doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep

Dominate Wielder. Ebonbane likes to place itself somewhere within the recesses of Shadowborn Manor. Here, it will wait for a hero to pick it up. Once the hero has picked it up, Ebonbane will immediately attempt to take control of its wielder (see page 216 of the *DMG* under Conflict). If Ebonbane fails, it will immediately attack its wielder. If Ebonbane wins, it devours the soul of its wielder. Ebonbane animates the body, which is aware of what happened. The body cannot be healed in any way. If the body is separated from Ebonbane for one minute, the body will collapse and reanimate as a zombie one hour later.

Actions

Multiattack. Ebonbane makes three vorpal blade attacks.

Vorpal Blade. Melee Weapon Attack: +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d8 + 7) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage. When Ebonbane attacks a creature with at least one head and rolls a 20 on the attack roll, you cut off one of the creature's heads. The creature dies if it can't survive without its lost head. A creature is immune to this effect if it is immune to slashing damage, or doesn't have or need a head. Such a creature takes an extra 6d8 slashing damage from the hit.

Animate Blades (Recharge-Short or Long Rest). Ebonbane animates every sword within 30 feet. Treat these as Flying Swords (see page 20 of the *Monster Manual*). Swords with magical properties (such as *wounding* or *flame tongue*) still possess and use them. Swords that are being wielded are not affected by this ability. The swords stay animated for 1 minute or until they are reduced to 0 hit points and are destroyed.

Legendary Actions

Ebonbane can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The monster name regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Vorpal Blade. Ebonbane makes one vorpal blade attack.

Shadow Double. Ebonbane makes dozens of illusionary doubles. The next attack roll against Ebonbane is made with disadvantage.

Quick Slash. Ebonbane chooses a wielded weapon within 30 feet that does slashing damage. The weapon turns on its wielder. The wielder must make a DC 18 Strength saving throw or they take damage as if the weapon had just struck them, including extra damage from any magical properties the weapon may have (flame blade for example). If the wielder fails the saving throw by 10 or more, the hit is treated like a critical hit.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Ebonbane can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

- Ebonbane chooses a point within 50 feet and spectral blades erupt from that spot. Creatures within 10 feet of that spot must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. Creatures take 6d8 slashing damage on a failed saving throw and half as much on a successful one.
 - The floor splits open under a creature that Ebonbane chooses within 30 feet. That creature must make a DC 18 Strength saving throw. Creatures that fail are sucked into the floor and restrained for 1 minute. Restrained creatures may repeat the saving throw at the end of their turn to end the condition.
 - Every light source within 30 feet of Ebonbane, magical or mundane, is suppressed for one round. Shadows grow longer and deeper, devouring all the light nearby. Treat this as the 2nd-level spell *darkness* except it cannot be dispelled.
- Ebonbane can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and it can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

How to defeat the Darklord

Only by harnessing the four keys can Ebonbane be permanently destroyed. Each key is tied to one of the four elements and symbolic of the forging of Ebonbane. The Key of Fire, for instance, is symbolic of the flames that forged the evil blade. By combining all four items Ebonbane can be destroyed. The four Keys are all inside Shadowborn Manor. Ebonbane is unaware of their existence, but Lady Shadowborn knows of the Keys, but does not know what they are.

The Verduous Lands

"The forest did not tolerate frailty of body or mind. Show your weakness, and it would consume you without hesitation."

~ Tahir Shah, *House of the Tiger King*

Overview

Whether the jungle you enter is full of trees or seaweed, the important thing to remember is that in these primitive places with sweltering, oppressive heat and unrelenting humidity, the food chain reigns supreme... and you are not likely found at the top. The only respite to be found from this is in the small towns of Sri Raji, where ritual sacrifice to Kali occurs daily. Here, death is the way of life, and only the strong survive to tell the tale. In the Verduous Lands, it is always better to be predator than prey. The Cluster was formed by the Grand Conjunction, connecting the tropical jungles of Sri Raji and the Wildlands with the coastal Domain of Saragoss (each previously an Island of Terror). In these lands every inch of progress must be won as the flora and fauna each seek to defend their territory. Stealthy predators hunt both day and night, the lack of a moon allowing them to stalk under cover of darkness.

Mistways

The sea off the coast of Saragoss connects via Fracture into Loch Lenore of the Shadow Rift. The duration of this connection lasts for 13 years, when the Seelie Court rules; and then is closed for the next 13 when the Unseelie Court returns.

The Emerald Stream is a Charted Mistway between the Sea of Sorrows and Sri Raji.

The Road of Burning Amber passes through the Island of Terror, Al Kathos, connecting the Amber Wastes to the Verduous Lands.

Chronology

- 658 BC – The **Wildlands** form.
- 670 BC – **Sri Raji** forms.
- 728 BC – **Saragoss** appears.
- 740 BC – The Grand Conjunction creates the Verduous Lands Cluster.



Saragoss



Saragoss



Saragoss is a domain born of conflict. Draga watched his parents' murder at the hands of pirates, and after becoming a pirate himself after being tortured, and nearly eaten by sharks — during which he was bitten by the wereshark that would change his life — he murdered the entire crew of the pirate ship that captured him. He became a scourge upon the Sea of Fallen Stars on Faerûn, inflicting the same punishment on others, whether pirate or not.

He was rewarded for his deeds when he was dragged into the mists and the domain manifested around him. But when he slaughtered the crews of nearby ships, something changed and the entire domain became one of conflict. There is no peace here. Even previously loyal shipmates slowly grow to distrust each other, and that distrust turns to hate. And more so for the crew of other ships, leading them to beguile and betray those around them, in an attempt to flee Saragoss. Adventures in Saragoss will likely be short as they'll be a matter of life or death. You either obtain the resources you need by any means possible, or you die. There is no middle ground, and if you're not the most ruthless predator here, it means that you're someone else's prey.

Heroes who land here will likely have arrived by accident, pulled here either from a different domain or world entirely. Their ship will be stuck and in need of repairs. The inhabitants of nearby ships will appear friendly, but once they've assessed the strength of the heroes and the crew, they'll decide if they can take them or not. Regardless, a shiftiness will be detectable in all interactions. If they're too strong, the heroes will likely see another ship get attacked during the dead of night, either by the crews of nearby ships or the creatures below. Then it becomes a race against time. It should be noted that Draga rarely bothers to close his borders, so getting out, once the ship is fixed, should be easily done, unless the heroes manage to annoy the darklord.



"The man who has experienced shipwreck shudders even at a calm sea." ~ Ovid

Culture Level:	Stone Age (among the natives, the ships range from Bronze Age to Renaissance, Draga is Chivalric)
Climate & Terrain:	Warm aquatic
Year Formed:	728 BC
Population:	1,000
Races (%):	Humans 98%, Other 2% (not including the undead or sahuagin)
Languages:	Any
Religions:	None
Government:	None
Ruler(s):	None
Darklord(s):	Draga Salt-Biter
Nationality:	Saragossan
Analog:	Sargasso Sea, Forgotten Realms

Local Fauna:

Sharks are by far the most common animals within the domain of Saragoss, despite the hatred that Draga feels for them. The "sewer fish", as he refers to them, are drawn by the smell of blood and the incessant conflict happening above and below the waves.

Other than sharks, the only common animals here are fish (especially eels, though their flesh tastes so bad that intelligent creatures avoid it) and seagulls. The animals here, like the other inhabitants of Saragoss, constantly fight amongst themselves, whether for resources or simply due to the influence of Draga.

Local Flora:

Kelp, algae, and seaweed strangle this domain in the only spots that the saltwater isn't showing through. Especially the red sargassum seaweed strangles all other forms of plant life and traps all kinds of ships, and other debris from across the worlds of the multiverse. Occasionally strange plants make their way here too, along with the ships from elsewhere, and there is at least one strange type of aquatic treat active here, though it dares not challenge Draga, and hides whenever he comes near.

Saragoss

Native Horrors

There are few monsters within Saragoss, though at least two tribes of sahuagin call it home, as well as aquatic zombies. These creatures war incessantly with each other, but their favorite tactic is to prey upon the ship dwellers above them. If they cannot enter the ships during the night to murder the inhabitants, they'll destroy part of the ship's hull and sink it. They'll then feast on the dying and drowned creatures.

Terrain type

Saragoss is an unbroken ocean, apart from the gigantic patch of sargassum that sits at the center of the domain, though the waters are only about 100 feet deep in the deepest sections. The bottom of the ocean floor is littered with old, broken, and in some cases, rotting ships. Victims of the people above, and Draga below.

Important Landmarks

There are no permanent landmarks within Saragoss. Ships appear regularly, but most don't last more than a year at most. Authority extends only within the areas of the individual ships, and upon those ships, the captain is god, except where Draga is concerned. Conflict is constant, and as a result, many ships are broken, rotting, or simply deserted — markers of crews that have passed away, even if their undead bodies might remain.

Towns and villages:

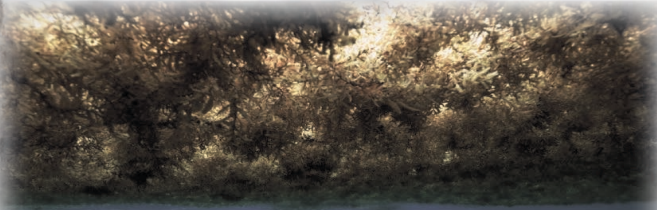
None

Neighboring domain(s):

Sri Raji

Fun Fact:

Ironically, one of the main issues with living in Saragoss is the lack of food, but sargassum seaweed is edible. For it to be edible though, it needs to be dried and cooked, and Saragoss is drastically short of lumber — except for that coming from other ships. In effect, what keeps many here, can also keep them alive, if only they had the resources to use it.



Draga Salt-Biter

"I am not the sea. I am not a grand concept or a romantic notion. I am the predator. You are all prey."

~ Draga Salt-Biter

Draga is handsome, in a primal way. He is heavily scarred with a powerful build and a weathered face. His deep set eyes are gray, while his black hair is kept extremely short. His torn and sun bleached clothes are still recognizable as the vestments of Umberlee, goddess of the sea.

Background: The young Draga was born to sail the seas, loving the salt air and the bite of the waves. His parents took him on voyages with them, but it was on one such voyage that pirates struck. A few days out from port, pirates attacked the ship. The crew tried to resist, but were overwhelmed by the vicious pirates. The crew that fought were slaughtered, Draga seeing his parents butchered before his very eyes. The crew that surrendered were cut to pieces and thrown to the sharks as chum. The cruelest fate was saved for Draga, who was found hiding amongst the cargo. The pirates drove a hook through Draga's calf and hung him over the side of the ship. As Draga hung, he saw his parents' butchered remains feed the sharks circling the ship. The pirates dangled the child over the circling sharks, pulling him out of the way whenever a shark tried to bite. If the sharks lost interest, they would lower the boy further down. The sharks bit at Draga — and unbeknownst to all at that time, one was a wereshark. Draga was infected with lycanthropy.

Eventually the pirates tired of their game and dragged the boy back on deck. After healing he joined the crew. Over the next few years, Draga learnt the pirate's ways. He never forgave them for their treatment of him and his parents.

Draga worked hard and learned to control his lycanthropy, aided by the ship's chaplain. The chaplain taught Draga the ways of Umberlee, goddess of the sea and sailor's bane. Draga liked this cruel goddess who cared nothing for her worshippers. When the time was right, he slit the chaplain's throat and took his position. Eventually Draga was ready. One night while on watch he moved amongst the pirates, slaughtering them all. The pirates who were kind to him died quickly, the pirates who were cruel died slowly in great pain. Draga reserved a special fate for the pirates that had dangled him over the side of the boat for the sharks.

Draga weakened the timbers in the bottom of the boat, and dove overboard. He turned into his hybrid

form and ripped the timbers apart, sinking the ship. As his former crewmates floundered in the water, Draga swam amongst them, biting them and letting them bleed. Soon other sharks were attracted to the blood and the pirates began to panic. Soon the sharks began to frenzy. An hour after he leapt overboard, not one pirate survived.

Draga found work on the pirate ship Vengeance. Soon he became its captain and was rightly feared all along the Sword Coast. Draga would capture a ship and demand a sacrifice for Umberlee. If the crew acquiesced, Draga would leave. He would return a few hours later and put the crew to the sword. If the crew refused, Draga would attack immediately. Draga would let two live. One, he would let escape to spread his legend, the other he would use as shark bait, the same cruel fate that the pirates had dealt him so long ago. Draga never pulled his victims out of the water until the sharks had their fill.

On his twenty-fifth birthday, Draga celebrated by taking three ships in one day. That night as the crew celebrated a strange fog rolled in. When Draga and his men awoke they found themselves beached on a massive kelp bed on a strange island in an unknown sea.

Draga was unsure of what had transpired, but sent men to scout the island. When they didn't return, he waited until nightfall and plunged into the water. Draga assumed his shark form before he even realized what he was doing. While scouting around the shallows near the island Draga found his men. Several had been torn apart by sharks and a few were being dragged down into the deep by a handful of sahuagin. Draga rampaged, killing the sahuagin and his crew, then returned to the boat. As he breached the water, Draga discovered he could not breathe.

Draga's wrath was unlike any that he had felt before. Completely losing control, Draga lunged into the ship to grab sailors and pull them into the waters below. When Draga finally regained his senses, all of his crew were slain.

Current Sketch: Draga hates his domain and all of its inhabitants. The sharks and several varieties of aquatic undead all follow his commands, and Draga has used them to become a tyrant beneath the waves. Above the surface, Draga relies upon intimidation and a vampire whose ship became beached on the kelp to enforce his will.

Draga Salt-Biter

Draga found a magic ring that lets him breathe air for two hours every day. He uses this ring to ensure his power above the surface remains intact.

Darklord's Tactics: The wereshark is a dedicated cleric of Umberlee, and believes he still gets spells from his goddess (in actuality the dark powers grant him magic). He is also a skilled warrior more at home in the sea than on land.

Draga rarely shifts into his hybrid form. He cannot stand to be reminded what he has become and will gladly kill anyone who discovers he is a lycanthrope.

Draga hates the sharks that guard his island and has no desire to keep their company, but they are fanatically loyal and fearless guards. If Draga is attacked, dozens if not hundreds of sharks will come to his defense.

Borders: When Draga closes the borders, a ring of jagged rocks rise out of the sea. These rocks are impossible to climb and any creature that tries to fly over them is hurled back by savage gales. Trying to sail through the rocks is impossible, and dozens of sharks patrol the edges waiting for any ship foolish enough to try.



Draga Saltbiter

Draga Salt-Biter

Medium humanoid (shapechanger), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 in human form, 16 in shark or hybrid form (natural armor)

Hit Points 112 (15d8 + 45)

Speed 30 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	19 (+4)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +7

Skills Athletics +9, Deception +11, Intimidation +11, Nature +5, Religion +5, Stealth +6, Survival +8

Damage Resistances cold

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Condition Immunities frightened

Senses blindsight 30 (60 ft. while in water), passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Mordentish, Vaasi, Darkonese, Roku-ma, Souragnien

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Command and Create Undead. Draga Salt-Biter has complete command over all non-intelligent undead that are within his domain. Once per day, Draga can cast animate dead without expending a spell slot whether he has memorized that spell or not. When he uses this ability, all those slain in Saragoss in the last 24 hours rise to do his bidding. If there are no obvious enemies, the undead so created begin to fight one another. The number of risen undead creatures is up to the DM's discretion but 2d4 undead reef sharks (MM pg.336) and 1d4 hunter sharks (MM pg.330) will always come to his aid. The statblocks of the summoned creatures are as seen in the monster manual with the only alteration that they are undead rather than beast type and have the Undead Fortitude trait, found in the zombie (MM. pg.316).

Shapechanger. Draga can use a bonus action to polymorph into a shark-humanoid hybrid form or into a giant shark, or back into his true form, which is humanoid.. His statistics, other than his size, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to his true form if he dies. Draga hates his wereshark form and only polymorphs in dire need.

Spellcasting. Draga is a 10th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). Draga has the following Cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *mending, resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *bane, command, guiding bolt, sanctuary*

2nd level (3 slots): *enhance ability, hold person, silence*

3rd level (3 slots): *mass healing word, meld into stone, spirit guardians, water walk*

4th level (3 slots): *control water, locate creature*

5th level (2 slot): *dawn, flame strike*

Draga Salt-Biter

Control Sharks. All living and undead sharks within Saragoss are under Draga's absolute control. Once per day, Draga can call 1d8 reef sharks or 1 giant shark (MM pg.328). There is a 10% chance that, instead of these sharks, a Megalodon appears. The sharks come after 1d3 turns.

Detect Intruder. Draga is immediately aware of any ships that enter his domain. He knows the exact location of the ship for up to two hours after it has entered the domain.

Control Weather. Draga can cast *control weather* once per day.

Perpetual Shark. If Draga is killed, his essence divides and projects itself into all the living sharks of his domain. The sharks then enter a frenzy, attacking and killing all other sharks they encounter. Every time one shark kills another, the victor gains possession of the loser's part of Salt-Biter's life force. This continues until all of Draga's substance exists only in one shark, whereupon he returns to full awareness. This process usually takes a week to accomplish. When finished, Draga may then change his form as he was able to do before. The only way to permanently destroy Draga is to destroy all the living sharks within his domain before he manages to return, an almost impossible feat or by immediately killing Draga after he has regained his personality and when there are no more sharks in the domain. Draga can sense how many sharks are within Saragoss and he usually keeps to his shark form until more sharks enter his domain which does not take too long for blood is constantly being spilled into the waters of Saragoss.

Frenzy. Once Draga takes 50 or more damage he flies into a frothing frenzy. The damage from his bite attack gains plus 2d8 slashing, and he can use the feeding frenzy reaction.

Shark Telepathy. Draga can telepathically communicate with all sharks in his domain. He rarely does so, since he hates all of the sharks and communicating with them disgusts him.

Sensory Organs. Draga can smell the blood of a creature or hear its heartbeat from up to 330ft away. This ability only functions if the creature is submerged in the same body of water as Draga. Draga has advantage on any Wisdom (Perception) or Wisdom (Survival) check he makes to track the creature.

Actions

Multiattack. Draga makes two attacks.

Bite (Shark or Hybrid Form Only). Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 18 (3d8 + 5) slashing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with wereshark lycanthropy.

Tooth Studded Greatclub (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 7(2d6) slashing damage. If Draga rolls a critical hit on the attack roll the tooth studded greatclub inflicts triple damage.

Reactions

Feign Pain. Draga's favorite tactic is to pretend that he received fatal damage and is in great pain. When he receives damage, he can take a reaction to portray himself as heavily damaged. All enemy creatures within 30ft that can see him must make an Insight check versus Draga's deception roll. If the result is lower than Draga's, the creatures believe that Draga is heavily wounded. Draga gains advantage on attack rolls against these creatures until the end of his next turn. A creature that observed this tactic rolls insight with advantage the next time Draga uses this reaction again.

Feeding Frenzy. Draga makes a bite attack. Draga may only use this reaction when his frenzy special trait is active.



Sri Raji



Sri Raji



The domain of Sri Raji is a realm of sweltering jungle during the day, unrelenting rain in the afternoon, and utter darkness in the night. No moon hovers over this domain, and the pockets of civilization that dot Sri Raji are at the mercy of those around them if they do not light fires themselves.

Sri Raji is ancient according to the mythology of the inhabitants, and the customs of the inhabitants have been ingrained over hundreds if not thousands of years. The caste system is set in stone: the brahmin (clergy) are at the top, who look to the spiritual matters of the people, dedicating themselves to understanding the whims of the gods, and led of course by Arijani himself, as the highest priest of Kali in the land. Next come the kshatriyas (the nobles) who handle the day-to-day administration of the domain, tending to tasks deemed unworthy by the brahmin. Vaishyas (the merchants) are next, handling trade and the purchasing and selling of goods, and finally, come the shudras (the peasants) who tend to the rice fields. Anyone is expected to obey those of a higher caste, and even within the castes, there are rankings that are so complicated that outsiders stand no chance of understanding them. To those born in Sri Raji, they're as natural as breathing. Atop it all sits the dread Maharaja, Arijani. Technically not a Maharaja, but the highest-ranking and most powerful priest of Kali in Sri Raji. None dare or even want to challenge his leadership. In spite of the dread price he exacts, of a living sacrifice from each day (chosen in various ways in each settlement as explained below), they consider this Kali's divine price for keeping them safe. As a result of this god-fearing traditionalist view, Rajian society is extremely stable, though many would consider it stale.

It is not possible to move from one caste to another, regardless of position and accomplishment though some heroic figures in Rajian mythology have managed to do this anyway. Marriage between castes is forbidden, and those children that result from unsolicited trysts are abandoned in the wilds. They're never seen again. Adventures in Sri Raji should focus on the issues of faith and the caste system. Anything that upends these brings great distress to the Rajians. Their worldview is such that these disturbances cause an unbalance in the great cosmic balance, and should be avoided. Only through the betterment of oneself and reincarnation may they find improvement and a better caste in the future. Any upsets to this could bring down the priests of Kali or the other Rajian gods. Or an invitation to come visit the Maharaja himself.

"Those who fear the darkness have no idea what the light can do."

~ Katasai Rakshasa

Culture Level:	Classical
Climate & Terrain:	Warm, jungle, hills, and mountains (all covered in jungle)
Year Formed:	670 BC
Population:	27,000
Races (%):	Humans 99%, Other 1%
Languages:	Common, Rajian
Religions:	Rajian pantheon
Government:	Theocratic and aristocratic monarchy
Ruler(s):	Maharaja Arijani
Darklord(s):	Maharaja Arijani
Nationality:	Rajian
Analog:	Mythological India

Local Fauna:

The jungles of Sri Raji are filled with all kinds of animals. Monkeys, snakes, and exotic birds are extremely common here, but the deadliest predators of the jungle are the feline type. Tigers are the largest, with dire tigers being common, but other smaller cats like panthers are encountered often as well. When on the river, most visitors find themselves looking out for crocodiles. Only when it is too late do many of them discover that the large and cumbersome-looking hippopotami are at least as deadly as the crocodiles and far bigger and more aggressive.



Sri Raji

Local Flora:

The jungle in Sri Raji covers everything that isn't either river or some form of farmland. The jungle is ancient, and the trees are enormous and clustered tightly together. In many places, the underbrush makes it nearly impassable, as it takes on all the worst aspects imagined of a jungle. In other places, it behaves more like a normal jungle with the underbrush dying off to some degree as the trees above block out most of the sunlight and prevent the undergrowth from spreading. Near the cities of Sri Raji, the land is dominated by rice paddies and cotton fields, with a few other types of crops being tended to by the peasants. After the Grand Conjunction and the appearance of first Sargasso to the north and the Wildlands to the north, the locals have started trying to clear roads through the jungle, though they've not had much luck with it.

Native Horrors

Sri Raji is home to a number of nagas, but they keep their distance from the cities, as they know these to be the hunting grounds of Arijani, and none of the, admittedly few, native horrors dare cross the dreaded Maharaja.

Terrain type

Underneath the jungle canopy, it is possible to find hills while near Bahru, the mountains take over, representing the only break in the otherwise oppressive green that is Sri Raji. Apart from the mountains, the only break in the jungle is the rivers and the areas surrounding each of the settlements. Here the inhabitants fight a daily battle to keep the jungle away from their rice paddies and other fields, one that is usually successful, but which requires a lot of work. This work is back-breaking and many shudras have found themselves giving up their lives to keep the crops growing and the dangerous beasts away from the higher castes.

Important Landmarks

Mahakala

Mahakala, the grand temple to Kali, sits as the center of Bahru. It is the home of Arijani, and it is a stone monument of frightening proportions, topped with an open-air pavilion, where Arijani eats his victims at the end of each day when the rains stop. Only on the days where the rains continue into the night are his victims allowed to return to their homes. Those few that do remember nothing, and their fellows believe them to be blessed by Kali herself.

Mahakala is a long, slender spire, the only intact building in Bahru, but visitors find it impossible to describe what they see. The place is so cloaked in Arijani's illusions that accounts of the appearance of the place vary greatly. This also affects scrying and other attempts at gaining information about the place. Anyone coming here only sees what Arijani allows them to see.



Towns and villages:

Bahru, the Accursed City

Bahru was once a magnificent city, but it was turned into ruins by the predations of Arijani when he destroyed his own kind. Now the only building that is still intact is the temple to Kali, Mahakala. The ruins are far from uninhabited however, and nagas and the priestesses of Kali, known as the Dark Sisters, live here, providing a formidable obstacle to intruders. Other dangerous creatures might dwell here for a time if Arijani finds them useful.

Muladi

Muladi really shouldn't have 8,000 people living in it. It is by far the largest city in Sri Raji, and crime and violence are rampant in it, as the city is too small to hold its population making it extremely crowded during the night when people huddle together for safety. The rice paddies surrounding the city are tainted as well from this, and plagues of parasites and waves of disease are frequent guests. As a result, unlike elsewhere in Sri Raji, the main diet is fish and kelp from the lake. Muladi is the home to the temple of Rudri, the god of wind and storm. Many of the problems that affect Muladi are due



Sri Raji

to the presence of the temple, and the attention that follows from Rudri, but the inhabitants feel that they should be grateful for the mercy of Rudri. As the priests keep reminding them: Without Rudri who would keep away the beasts and monsters of the jungle?

Pakat

Pakat, with its population of 3,500 is the second largest in Sri Raji. But while the town is large, it only has a small amount of farmland around it, resulting in an almost constant shortage of food — one that leads to disease and suffering. This is because the lands around Pakat seem far more savage than those elsewhere in Sri Raji. The animals are more aggressive, and there are even carnivorous plants. All of these make it extremely difficult for the shudras to keep the farmland arable and safe. Pakat is the home to the temple of the goddess Ratri, a once splendid temple, but one that has now fallen into disrepair. The locals are not aware of this, but under the guise of Ratri is actually a cult to Siva, the goddess of destruction. They slaughtered Ratri's followers years ago and moved in, and the locals that worship here have no idea that they're actually supporting something so destructive and anarchic. They're, in effect, helping fund their own destruction, and the more desperate their situation becomes, the more they donate. And the more they donate, the more the priests can use these funds to destroy the city and the landscape around it.

Tvashsti

This small town is home to just under 2,000 people, and it is the smallest of the settlements in Sri Raji. It is well off, as the rice paddies around the city stretch out for miles, and the fishermen take great catches from the river. Not only that, but the city is safe due to the strong and sturdy stone walls that surround Tvashti. Without knowing it, the inhabitants of the town are better off than their fellow Rajians elsewhere in the domain.

The center of Tvashti is the temple to Tvashti, the Sri Raji god of technology and science, and the one that the city takes its name from. The buildings around it constitute a great university and the best educational facility in Sri Raji (and for quite a ways beyond that), as the priests and the inhabitants of Tvashti value nothing higher than knowledge and intelligence.

Neighboring domain(s):

Saragoss
The Wildlands

Fun Fact:

Sri Raji has no moon, and as a result, the nights are black as ink. This also means that there is no easy access to the domain of Bluetspur.



Arijani

"Greetings friends!

Come, the wine is chilled...no, master dwarf, for you I have black ale brought from the Ironroot Mountains! But as I said, the feast is prepared and the wine is ready, let us eat.

I just know this is going to be the beginning of a wonderful friendship." ~ Arijani

Arijani is a rakshasa, a tiger headed humanoid with the body of a muscular man. His body is covered in orange fur with black stripes and he moves with unnatural grace. His fingers are tipped with long retractable claws, while his fangs are the size of daggers. Arijani is just over seven feet tall and weighs over 300 pounds. He prefers to wear fine silks dyed with vibrant colors, often red, green, and black, with the color and cut carefully chosen to match his fur and emerald green eyes. The rakshasa is also rather fond of the hookah, fine wines, and beautiful women. One of these will always be within reach, and quite often all three. Arijani is a delight in conversation. He always has an insightful comment to make or tasteful, but still an extremely funny joke to make. These jokes are never at the expense of his guest or himself. Guests are often surprised to find Arijani has had their favorite food prepared before he meets with them. Arijani dismisses this as a happy accident, a coincidence that proves chance favors this meeting.

Despite his refinement and friendly nature, Arijani is a predator. Arijani is a shrewd judge of character, and like all rakshasas has powerful ESP. He is expert at figuring out what his allies and enemies want and uses this to make them his slaves. If his victims avoid being ensnared by his plots or corrupted by their own vices, Arijani has no problem with gutting them with his claws and devouring them alive.

Background: Mahiji was the high priestess of Kali in the city of Bahru, before the city became a collection of ruins. Mahiji was renowned for her loyalty to Kali and her deep cruelty. One day, an assassin came to her temple to find Mahiji and end her reign of terror in Bahru. Instead the assassin was taken by her beauty and dedication to her god, and seduced her instead. Their affair was torrid and Mahiji was soon with child. When the assassin discovered the pregnancy, he went berserk. Mahiji was badly wounded and would have been killed if several priestesses of Kali hadn't

come to her aid. While the assassin slaughtered the priestesses of Kali, his illusion slipped and Mahiji saw who he really was. The assassin's tiger head marked him as a rakshasa, but his ten heads and blood red fur marked him as Ravana, the god of rakshasas. Mahiji fled deep into the temple of Kali, collapsing onto an altar of her dark goddess. Mahiji was terrified Kali would be angry, but she couldn't have been more wrong.

Ravana had now thrown aside his illusion and stormed through the temple, looking for Mahiji. He found her lying on an altar to Kali, but she was not alone. Crouching over the altar was a beautiful woman with dark skin, and four arms. Kali had sent an avatar to protect Mahiji. Ravana's rage was spent. He could never fight Kali in her own temple. To do so would court the ire of a far more powerful deity.

Kali named the child Arijani and found him a home amongst the rakshasas of Bahru. The community hated Arijani from the start. They dared not risk the wrath of Kali or Ravana by slaughtering the boy, but they endlessly mocked him for having a human mother. When the rakshasa thought they could get away with it, they mercilessly beat Arijani for slight infractions. As neither parent intervened to aid the young rakshasa, the beatings became more savage and frequent.

After years of abuse from his community and neglect from his parents, Arijani had had enough. The rakshasas of Bahru hunted the humans that lived in the city for food and sport. Arijani waited until several rakshasas were feasting on a human that they had cornered before ensuring a large group of adventurers came across them. The rakshasas were slaughtered by the righteous adventurers, who were hailed as heroes and invited to stay in Bahru to root out the rakshasa threat. Over and over again Arijani made sure the humans found the rakshasas, but was careful that the humans were in a large enough group or powerful enough to slaughter the rakshasas. Soon the number of rakshasas in Bahru rapidly dwindled.



Arijani

It all came to a head one night when the rakshasas decided to attack the humans en masse. The humans fought back and the city of Bahru bled for three days. Arijani watched the carnage from the top of a tower and howled his victory to the sky.

Which is how Ravana discovered what had happened. Ravana was incandescent with rage. He sent his avatar to slay Arijani and bring the boy's soul back to him. Arijani fled to the massive temple of Kali. There he worked with the avatar of the great goddess to trap Ravana's avatar within the temple.

Arijani reveled in his victory while Ravana's avatar bartered for its freedom. Arijani agreed on one condition, no rakshasa must ever harm Arijani again. The avatar agreed and sealed the pact with a *wish* spell. Arijani thanked the helpless avatar, then produced a crossbow and bolt that had been blessed by a good cleric. With a sneer, he fired the bolt into the avatar's heart. Arijani named his crossbow *Ravana's Bane* and laughed in triumph as the mists closed in around the ruined city and the lands beyond.



Current Sketch: Arijani rules Sri Raji from a massive temple complex dedicated to Kali in the cursed city of Bahru. The city around the temple is in ruins, but the temple is immaculately maintained by an veritable army of slaves and servants. The Rakshasa's most valuable servants are the Dark Sisters, a cult of women who worship Kali. The cult brings Arijani victims to sacrifice on the great altar to Kali in the middle of the temple complex. Arijani believes that Kali will only protect him from the wrath of Ravana so long as he provides her with daily sacrifices. Rakshasa are master manipulators and have a natural ability to cloak themselves in illusions. Each creature seeing their illusion will see a humanoid that resembles an old friend or a long lost loved one. The Dark Powers have stripped Arijani of this ability and now he can only cover himself in illusions that inspire fear and loathing in anyone who sees them. Arijani has learned to use this ability in combat to frighten his enemies, allowing him to separate his foes and hunt them either individually or in small groups.

Arijani has no proof, but he knows *Ravana's Bane* is somewhere in Sri Raji. He doesn't know how he knows, but he is sure of it. Arijani has dispatched dozens of agents across the domain looking for the crossbow. So far they have found nothing, but the thought that someone else may have found it fills him with dread, and so he sends out more agents to aid in the search. Arijani would do almost anything, even keep his word, to possess the crossbow.

Darklord's Tactics: Arijani calls his fighting style the Masquerade. It's a blend of illusions to frighten and disorient his foes and powerful melee attacks to slay isolated enemies. As a rakshasa, Arijani has little to fear from spellcasters but concentrates on anyone wielding a ranged weapon first. If one of his enemies wields a crossbow Arijani will attack them first and with incredible ferocity.

Borders: When Arijani wills it, an army of illusory killers attack any creature that gets too close to the border of Sri Raji. These killers cannot be disbelieved or dispelled and keep attacking until the creature retreats or falls unconscious after taking too much illusory damage. Packs of tigers have learned to patrol the borders of Sri Raji and will wait until an exhausted creature turns away from the wall or falls unconscious before closing in to feed.



Arijani



Maharaja Arijani

Medium fiend, lawful evil

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

Hit Points 300 (21d8 + 13d6 + 140)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	21 (+5)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +12, Int +12, Wis +12

Skills Acrobatics +12, Arcana +12, Deception +8, History +12, Insight +12, Intimidation +8, Nature +12, Sleight of Hand +12, Stealth +19

Damage Vulnerabilities piercing from magic weapons wielded by good creatures

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from magical weapons of less than +3 enchantment

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Rajian, Infernal, Abyssal, Darkonese, Vaasi, Draconic, Aklo

Challenge 21 (33,000 XP)

Limited Magic Immunity. Arijani can't be affected or detected by spells of 6th level or lower unless he wishes to be. He has advantage on saving throws against all other spells and magical effects.

Innate Spellcasting. Arijani's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks). Arijani can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *color spray*, *detect thoughts*, *disguise self*, *light*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *unseen servant*

3/Day each: *blindness/deafness*, *charm person*, *clairvoyance*, *create food and water*, *darkness*, *detect magic*, *fear*, *feign death*, *fireball*, *flame strike*, *fog cloud*, *haste*, *inflict wounds*, *invisibility*, *major image*, *Melf's acid arrow*, *suggestion*, *Tasha's hideous laughter*

2/Day each: *dominate person*, *dream*, *fabricate*, *fly*, *harm*, *plane shift*, *programmed illusion*, *project image*, *true seeing*

Divine Eminence. As a Bonus Action, Arijani can expend a spell slot to cause his melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If Arijani expends a spell slot of 2nd Level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

Kali's Stealth. Arijani can hide in plain sight and move stealthily like a cat. He rolls stealth checks with advantage.

Vulnerable to Crossbows. Arijani takes double damage from magical crossbows and crossbow-like weapons. Damage coming from a magical crossbow wielded by a good aligned creature deals maximum damage.

Unharmd From Locals. Arijani is invulnerable to all attacks from creatures local to his domain. Only outsiders are a real threat.

Mental Fortitude. Arijani is immune to all spells of the enchantment and illusion schools of level 3 or lower. He rolls with a +1 bonus to saving throws when a spell from these schools of a higher level targets him.

Masquerade. Arijani is able to magically disguise himself with an almost-perfect illusion. Unlike other rakshasa, Arijani's illusory forms are always fearful to those around him (observers always feel as they would if they could see right through his magical disguise), so he rarely bothers with it. Arijani can cast *disguise self* at will but when he does so he has disadvantage on all social interaction rolls as people avoid him due to the discomfort they feel when they look at him. Arijani can cause his disguise to appear as a creature's worst nightmare. That creature must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. The creature rolls at the end of each of its subsequent turns ending the effect on a success. If the initial saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is also paralyzed. A creature that succeeds on this saving throw is immune to this effect for 24 hours.

Instant Death? Many believe that a hit from a bolt coming from Ravana's Bane, the crossbow used to slay Ravana the Rakshasa-god, would instantly annihilate Arijani but this theory remains untested. This theory is correct as Ravana's Bane will slay any Rakshasa hit by it. Arijani is constantly looking for this relic to make sure that the only thing that he fears is not used against him.

Arijani

Potent Illusionist. Any creature that must make a saving throw against Arijani's illusion or enchantment spell do so with a -1 penalty.

War Caster. Arijani has advantage on Constitution saving throws that he makes to maintain his concentration on a spell when he takes damage. He can perform the somatic components of spells even when he has weapons or a shield in one or both hands. When a hostile creature's movement provokes an opportunity attack from him, Arijani can use his reaction to cast a spell at the creature, rather than making an opportunity attack. The spell must have a casting time of 1 action and must target only that creature.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Arijani fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Maharaja of the Rakshasa. Arijani is immune to all attacks, spells or spell-like abilities coming from a Rakshasa.

Cloak of Displacement. While Arijani wears this cloak, it projects an illusion that makes him appear to be standing in a place near his actual location, causing any creature to have disadvantage on Attack rolls against him. If he takes damage, the property ceases to function until the start of his next turn. This property is suppressed while he is Incapacitated, Restrained, or otherwise unable to move.

Boots of Levitation. Arijani can use an action to cast *levitation* on himself at will.

Actions

Multiattack. Arijani makes two claw attacks or one claw and one bite attack

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 9 (2d6 + 2) slashing damage, and the target is cursed if it is a creature. The magical curse takes effect whenever the target takes a short or long rest, filling the target's thoughts with horrible images and dreams. The cursed target gains no benefit from finishing a short or long rest. The curse lasts until it is lifted by a remove curse spell or similar magic.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. **Hit:** 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage.

Legendary Actions

Arijani can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Arijani regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Consume Magic. Arijani expends a use of a spell to gain 1d4 x that spell slot's level in hit points.

Move. Arijani moves up to his speed without provoking attacks of opportunity

Cast a Spell (Costs 2 Actions). Arijani casts a spell of the illusion or enchantment school.

Significant Possessions

Cloak of Displacement, Boots of Levitation



Wildlands



Wildlands



The Wildlands is the domain of the intelligent animal, and humans and other humanoids have no place in this domain. The “Law of the Jungle” is what rules the Wildlands: The strong devour the weak, and the weak kill the strong. All of it is in an unending cycle of life and death, showing that the circle of life holds strong, even here, under the shadow of King Crocodile. The Wildlands has no humanoid population, only an animal one. But the animals here can speak any language that humanoids can, though they mostly choose not to. There is but one exception to this rule: The flies, as they were seen to be too lowly for King Crocodile. But in spite of the lack of humanoids, they’re essential to the domain, as it is, in part at least, their fault that the domain even exists. King Crocodile ruled the animal kingdom through fear and terror, striking in the dead of night, and killing and eating anything he pleased. None of the other animals could stand against him, but in their fear they turned to Man and asked him to come to their realm and fight against King Crocodile, and rid them of him. And come they did, with saws, tools, and fire. But they did not rid the animal kingdom of King Crocodile, and soon the animals agreed that Man was worse than King Crocodile — their weapons and their fire were destroying their homes. And so, they turned to King Crocodile, asking him to protect them. And the King agreed, but on the condition of getting all their powers as his own. They agreed, and in a rampage of blood and terror King Crocodile removed Man from the animal kingdom, but when the other animals asked for the return of their powers, he laughed and told them that now he was too powerful and they could not take them back. Only two animals had not given him their power: the jungle serpent and the fly. The wise serpent had refused to turn over its power, and the fly had been dismissed by King Crocodile as too feeble and meager. The serpent departed the land but bestowed upon the King its power, a prophecy: That he would either die at the hands of Man or at the one that he dismissed in his pride. Like its neighboring domain, Sri Raji, The Wildlands has no moon. The animals have stories about the moon and say that when the moon disappeared, that was when the world descended into darkness. Some even believe that King Crocodile ate the moon in his voracious hunt for mankind, though others dismiss this as tall tales. Adventures in The Wildlands are about sheer survival. The land and all the animals in it are normally hostile to humanoids, even the animals that would normally be seen as benign. Furthermore, each of the animal types embodies the

characteristics that are often assigned to them: Elephants are wise, protective, and loyal, where monkeys are mischievous and clever. Coming here is likely to have been incited by greed (such as those seeking out the fabled Elephant Graveyard) or by need. This could be the need for some rare ingredient, whether animal or plant, that can only be found in The Wildlands, or because one of the heroes’ friends has been transported here — perhaps by reincarnation into an animal, or perhaps to serve as bait for the Hunter...

“One of the beauties of Jungle Law is that punishment settles all scores. There is no nagging afterward.”

~ Rudyard Kipling, The Jungle Book

Culture Level:	Savage
Climate & Terrain:	Warm jungle, hills, and swamp
Year Formed:	658 BC (conjecture, the animals of The Wildlands don’t care, joined with Sri Raji in 740 BC)
Population:	1 (There are hundreds or thousands of animals within the Wildlands, but only one human)
Races (%):	Humans 100%
Languages:	Any (The animals of the Wildlands can speak any language, but they rarely speak any language other than their own)
Religions:	None
Government:	None
Ruler(s):	None
Darklord(s):	King Crocodile
Nationality:	None
Analog:	The Jungle Book



Wildlands

Local Fauna:

The wildlife of The Wildlands is omnipresent. There are animals everywhere, from the swamps of the north to the savannahs of the south. All the animals found in warm climates are present here, such as tigers and lions (fighting for rulership of the savannah) to gorillas, and chimpanzees (fighting for control of the plateau, all while dodging panthers). Birds like toucans and parrots dominate the sky, along with vultures that have grown fat on the flesh of the defeated animals. Only a single lake in the northern swamps is left untouched, for that is the domicile of King Crocodile, and while the swamps around it are filled with crocodiles of enormous sizes, none dare cross the King. There is an exception to this rule. The humble fly can be found anywhere, and while it is the weakest animal by far, it is also the one that has killed the most other animals. These flies are filled with malaria, plague, and other diseases, all of which claim more victims in a day than any other animals claim in a year. There is an animal that cannot be found here though. The Wildlands is completely devoid of snakes, as they followed the lead of the jungle serpent when it left the animal kingdom. As this happened before it was dragged into the Mists, there are none of them here, nor have any gone here since, even from Sri Raji.

Local Flora:

The Wildlands have as full an ecology as is possible. Any kind of jungle plant or bush can be found here. Most prominent are banana trees on the plateau at the center of the domain, while bushes and grasses dominate the savannah of the south. On the border between these two can be found tall and strong trees that support animals such as giraffes. Meanwhile, rivers separate the swamps from the plateau guarded by territorial hippopotami.

Native Horrors

There are no monsters within The Wildlands, except for the animal ghosts that can be found around the lake of King Crocodile, evidence of his endless appetite. The Elephants' Graveyard is guarded by the skeletons of ancient elephants as well. These leave dying elephants alone, but chase away any others.

Terrain type

While there are hills and the rather large and tall plateau of the domain, along with the savannah, most visitors here will come away with an impression of trees. The jungle and the trees here are so thick and the foliage so dense, that it seems to go on forever. Even in the areas that aren't dominated by jungle, you can still see them.

Important Landmarks

The Elephants' Graveyard

The Elephants' Graveyard is where the old elephants go to die. They make their way here during their final days, lie down and make themselves comfortable, and then they pass on. The strongest and oldest of them subsequently rise again as guardians of the place. Legends have it that the bones of the dead elephants turn to silver while their tusks turn to gold. But even if that legend is not true, the graveyard holds a fortune in ivory. Woe unto those foolish enough to come here for wealth though, as the guardians are many and strong. They also have a horrific habit. Every night, at midnight, they all raise their non-existent trunks and salute the non-existent moon. The sight and sound of this is enough to drive any sane person mad.

The Hunter's Hut

The Hunter's Hut is the home of a single man. A hunter of unprecedented skill who, using his black powder rifle, sets out each day at dawn, with the aim of making a single kill of a particular kind. The wooden hut is decorated with his trophies, the heads of animals that he has killed. Each is mounted on a wooden plaque, and the plaques cover the walls, both inside the hut and out. In the innermost sanctum of the hut hang the heads of several humanoids, preserved in a similar manner. And a single empty wooden plaque hangs in the center of the sanctum — one large enough that it can only be reserved for the head of King Crocodile, the only animal to ever best the Hunter.

Towns and villages:

None

Neighboring domain(s):

Sri Raji

Fun Fact:

Rumor holds that two human boys have lived, survived, and thrived at different times among the animals of The Wildlands — with the animals hoping that the boys would save them from King Crocodile. Both returned to the World of Man when they grew up, however, with neither having fulfilled the prophecy of killing King Crocodile.



King Crocodile

"A little closer..."

Just a little closer..."

~ King Crocodile

King Crocodile is a massive crocodile, some forty feet long from snout to the tip of his tail. His scales are brown and yellow. His teeth are longer than daggers and yellowed with age. His eyes glow red with slits for pupils, shining with an unnatural intelligence.

His underside is a sickly yellow color and covered in sores from the massive, biting flies that live in the Wildlands.

Background: King Crocodile was an ancient crocodile. Far larger than any of his kin. The King Crocodile also ate more than every other crocodile put together. Because of his size and endless appetite, the other animals of the jungle came together to decide what to do.

After hours of screaming and screeching, roaring and howling, it was decided that the animals of the jungle would ask the humans to kill King Crocodile. Only Python said this was a bad idea, but she was overruled. Parrot was sent to get the humans.

The humans came, but they didn't kill King Crocodile. They brought fire and they cut down the jungle. They hunted the animals for their meat and hides. Things were worse than ever.

So the animals came to King Crocodile and asked him to kill the humans. The king agreed, but demanded a gift from each animal so he could use their powers against the humans.

Each animal gave King Crocodile a gift. From the Cheetah he received speed. From the Fox he received cunning. Piranha gave him sharp fangs. One by one the animals lined up to give their gifts.

Only the Python, who refused to give a gift, and Fly, who King Crocodile thought was far too small to give a useful gift, gave nothing.

Python took her brood and left the jungle. She looked sad and told her friends farewell. They laughed and told Python to stay. The jungle would be safe once King Crocodile ate all the humans.

As King Crocodile got to work eating every man, woman, and child in the jungle, Python looked back.

Soon a mist had enveloped the jungle, and all you could hear was the screams. Soon she couldn't even hear those.

Current Sketch: King Crocodile is the absolute ruler of his domain. He's defeated all his challengers and no one dares stand against him. He lives alone in a massive marsh on the northern side of his domain. None of the other animals go there, so he is always hungry. The other animals leave small tributes to the king. Mostly food. King Crocodile takes these tributes, but it's never enough. He is always hungry. The king's greatest secret is that he is dying. The flies of the swamp have infected him with the terrible wasting disease called the Sleeping Sickness. King Crocodile is terrified of dying, but the few people that have been willing to help him have fallen victim to his endless hunger.

Darklord's Tactics: King Crocodile hunts like his lesser kin. He ambushes prey from the water and attempts to pull them in and drown them. If the prey is too strong or has powerful allies nearby King Crocodile will wait and watch. He will attack then retreat. He will make his foe bleed and use up resources to heal. The marsh is full of biting flies, massive spiders, and poisonous snakes. King Crocodile lets the swamp and his constant attacks wear down his foe before closing in for the feast.

Borders: When King Crocodile closes the borders, steam obscures the edges of the Wildlands. Any creature that enters the steam exits it at the same point 1d6 hours later.



King Crocodile



King Crocodile

Huge beast, chaotic evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 210 (9d12 + 12d10 + 75)

Speed 30 ft., burrow 20 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +10, Con +9

Skills Animal Handling +7, Athletics +10, Intimidation +6, Stealth +13

Damage Immunities acid; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non magical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, prone

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Animal communication, Common, Draconic

Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Hold Breath. King Crocodile can hold his breath for 48 hours.

Second Wind. King Crocodile has a limited well of stamina that he can draw on to protect himself from harm. On his Turn, he can use a Bonus Action to regain Hit Points equal to 1d10 + 12.

Once he uses this feature, he must finish a Short or Long Rest before he can use it again.

Aggressive. As a bonus action, King Crocodile can move up to his speed toward a hostile creature that he can see.

Ambusher. King Crocodile has advantage on attack rolls against any creature he has surprised.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of King Crocodile's choice that is within 20 feet of him and is aware of him must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to King Crocodile's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Aura of Pain. King Crocodile can emit a powerful aura that causes sheer pain to everyone that dares to come near him. All creatures that are hostile to King Crocodile within 20 ft of him take 1d6+5 necrotic damage per turn. This effect lasts for 1d8+5 turns. Once he uses this feature, he must finish a short or Long Rest before he can use it again.

Action Surge. King Crocodile can push himself beyond his normal limits for a moment. On his turn, he can take one additional action on top of his regular action and a possible Bonus Action. Once he uses this feature, he must finish a Short or Long Rest before he can use it again.

Improved Critical. King Crocodile scores a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.

Swords for Teeth. When King Crocodile attacks an object with his teeth and hits, maximize his damage dice against the target. When he attacks a creature with the bite and rolls a 19–20 on the Attack roll, that target takes an extra 4d6 slashing damage. Then roll another d20. If the result is 20, he lops off one of the target's limbs, with the Effect of such loss determined by the DM. If the creature has no limb to sever, he lops off a portion of its body instead. When he rolls a 1 or 2 on a damage die for a bite attack he can reroll the die and must use the new roll, even if the new roll is a 1 or a 2.

Impenetrable Natural Armor. King Crocodile's scales are as hard as adamantite. Critical hits against him count as normal hits instead. He is also resistant to all damage. These effects apply as long as he is not hit at his under belly which is only exposed when he is underwater.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). King Crocodile fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

King's Resilience. King Crocodile regains 10 hit points at the start of his turn. If King Crocodile sees any kind of snake, this trait doesn't function at the start of his next turn. King Crocodile dies only if he starts his turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Actions

Multiattack. King Crocodile makes three attacks: two with its bite and one with his tail.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (3d10 + 5) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 20). Until this grapple ends, the

King Crocodile

target is restrained. King Crocodile cannot bite another target as long as he is grappling one.

Tail. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target not grappled by king crocodile. **Hit:** 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 20 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Legendary Actions

King Crocodile can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The giant crocodile regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Move. King Crocodile moves up to his speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Bite. King Crocodile makes one Bite attack.

Fierce Growl. King Crocodile roars with rage, pushing all creatures in a 30 ft cone that fail a STR saving throw, by 20 ft or by half if they succeed.

Swallow. King Crocodile swallows one Medium or smaller creature that he is grappling dealing 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing damage and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside King Crocodile, and takes 10 (3d6) acid damage at the start of each of King Crocodile's turns. King Crocodile can have up to four Medium targets swallowed at a time. If King Crocodile dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by him and can escape from the corpse using 10 ft of movement, exiting prone.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the King Crocodile can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

Swamp Drain. Up to three creatures within 50 ft of King Crocodile that are inside a swampy area must succeed on a STR saving throw (DC 20) or be drawn underwater and be restrained by swamp weeds and vines.

Faithful Servants. Animals of the swamp gather to protect their master. Baboons throw stones, wild cats slash away and insects bury under the victims skin. All enemy creatures within a 40 ft radius must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw (DC20) or take 2d10+5 force damage.

Unlimited Hunger. King Crocodile ferociously devours one of the animals found in the jungle, regaining 2d10+5 hit points.



Zherisia

Overview

Death is part of the natural world, but natural predators learn to take only what they must. As civilization expands, it is often this natural world that suffers. Once the splendors of nature are laid to waste in the name of progress, society attempts to fill the void. Where trees once stood tall and majestic, now monolithic buildings and smokestacks take their place. When there is no more to steal from the world around us, then we begin to steal from each other. Once the resources become so limited that there simply isn't enough to go around...that's when murder starts to make sense. In the lands of the Zherisia Cluster (Paridon, Timor, and Nosos) dark forests have been replaced by dark alleys. Fetid swamps have been drained and stagnant sewers take their place. Where white clouds once filled an endless blue sky, only black, acrid smoke contrasts against the brown smog that hides the sun. As the land has transformed, so too has the inhabitants of these urban wastelands. As common folk resort to crime and murder most foul, the leaders of these domains have transformed into the things that they once feared most. The dark alleys of Zherisia are filled with predators, but they are anything but natural. They take not what they need, but what they desire, and they take all of it they can find. Stick to the areas lit by lamps above the foggy streets, and definitely don't take a shortcut through the sewer! If there is any solace to be had in this city of the damned, it is that you can always make a choice. What will you be today? Predator or prey?

Chronology

551BC – Sodo slays the other members of his clan and **Paridon** forms as an Island of Terror

620BC – The Hive Queen frightens her mother to death, but her visage becomes permanent.

Timor forms.

732BC – Malus Sceleris murders his druidic father, **Nosos** forms.

740BC – The Grand Conjunction places Timor as the sewers beneath the city of Paridon.

744BC – Paridon and Nosos enact a Trade Agreement. The Zherisia Cluster is completed.

Mistways

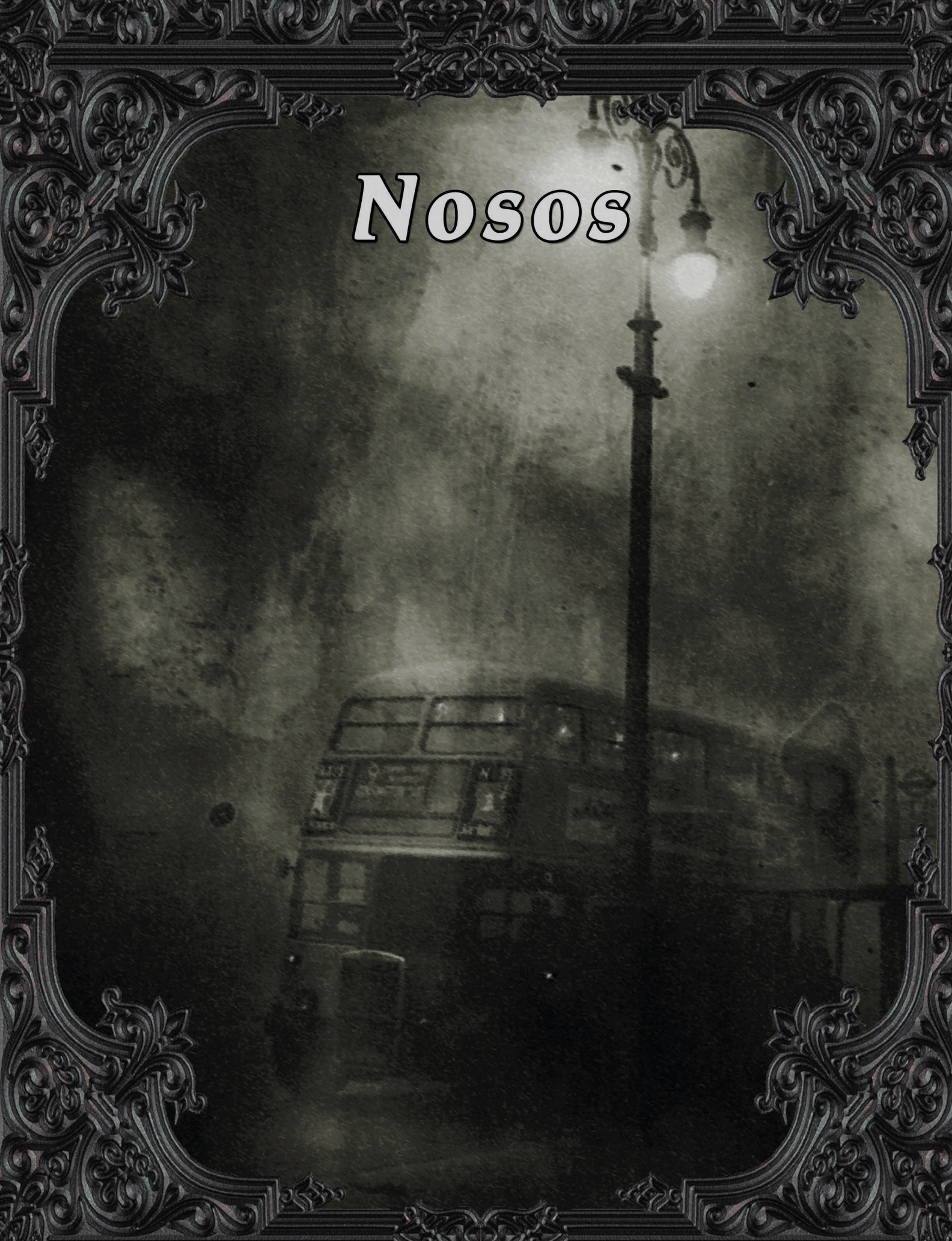
The Shrouded Way connects northwestern Darkon's Mistlands with southeastern Paridon and is a two-way, fairly reliable mistway.

The Serpent's Coils is a somewhat reliable two-way mistway that links central Paridon to eastern Nova Vaasa. It is a temporary mistway that only activates during a moonlit but foggy night.

"No doubt Jack the Ripper excused himself on the grounds that it was human nature." ~ A.A. Milne



Nosos



Nosos



Nosos is industrialization taken to an abusive extreme. Created by Malus when he burned down the forests of Nosos (in revenge for a dead mother and an inattentive father), the smoke blocked out the sun, and the smog killed the plants. And he's only kept going since then. Once the trees were gone, he set himself to the task of extracting every last possible resource from the land itself, and has made himself very rich in the process — along with accidentally creating a class system of the poor and downtrodden, versus the rich and uncaring.

Smog and pollution are everywhere in Nosos. No natural plants (except fungus) live here anymore, outside of greenhouses and conservatories, and if it wasn't for the fact that merchants from the Shadow Sea and the Nocturnal Sea seem to be able to navigate here regularly (though even they don't know how), it would soon be a domain of the dead from starvation. As it is, only the poor starve, while the wealthy hide in their mansion and throw extravagant galas for each other. And none of them care — neither poor nor rich care for anyone beyond their own families. They're just trying to stay afloat without drowning in the sewage that is encroaching on them.

Despite their different living conditions, the poor and the rich have some similarities. Both are pale-skinned, blue-eyed, and light-haired. Though there are exceptions to this rule, they are not that common. Though, the commoners dress in what would be mid-1800s earth fashion while the upper class dresses in garments and rich but dirty outfits.

The harshness of both Nosos has worn heavily on the people, leaving them to accept that this is a violent, cut-throat world where only the strong survive; adapt or die. So, you better hold on to what you have and do what you can to make it. Some are even thinking that anarchy is no longer doing the people any good and some form of government is needed.

Two of the biggest ways to socially climb the ladder in the city is to attend the masquerades of the wealthy, the other is to become a mistress (or gigolo if you are male) of a wealthy person. It is not that the Nosians do not know what monogamy is, they just find no reason for it. The sad thing is that the supply outnumbers the demand. Unless you are attractive, talented, and witty enough, your relationship will be a few years at best before you are replaced. There is little protection outside of leaving if your "client" is abusive.

Any children conceived are treated as the property of the client and their spouse, not yours. Thankfully, most clients are decent enough to let the mistress nurse her children or let the gigolo see his offspring.

Adventures in Nosos should focus on the impact of pollution — in effect, Nosos has become a running commentary on the effects of unchecked pollution. Having the heroes become "eco-warriors", who are fighting to either hold off the effects of the waste or lessen them, is something that is hard in a domain where everyone is paranoid, and only really looking after themselves.

The class struggle would be a possibility as well, though in a domain ruled by wealth and money, and dominated by indifference, getting a group to work together to change the system may prove nearly impossible.

"Fog everywhere. Fog up the river where it flows among green airs and meadows; fog down the river, where it rolls defiled among the tiers of shipping, and the waterside pollution of a great (and dirty) city ... Chance people on the bridges peeping over the parapets into a nether sky of fog, with fog all round them, as if they were up in a balloon and hanging in the misty clouds."

~ Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*

Culture Level:	Industrial Revolution
Climate & Terrain:	Urban, polluted cityscape
Year Formed:	732 BC
Population:	6,000
Races (%):	Humans 95%, Other 5%
Languages:	Common, Nos, Zherisian (only among traders)
Religions:	None
Government:	Anarchy (Money talks)
Ruler(s):	Malus Sceleris
Darklord(s):	Malus Sceleris
Nationality:	Nosian
Analog:	The Great Smog of London

Local Fauna:

Most of the inhabitants of Nosos probably wish that the local fauna had gone the same way as the plants — even if most of it has. The domain is overrun with rats of all kinds, attracted by the mounds of refuse. These are rats of all kinds: normal ones, giant ones, and wererats. They live wherever they can, avoiding the attention of both darklord and population.

Nosos

Local Flora:

Nosos is so heavily polluted that no natural plants survive there. The trees were razed long ago by Malus during his purge of the forests that his father so loved. The rest simply died when Malus turned his attention to exploiting the natural resources and industrializing Nosos into a production powerhouse.

During all this, pollutants and refuse have piled up around the domain, and a lot of new forms of life could be developing there. For now, the only plants that grow (at least outside of private homes) are fungus. The fungus is inedible to humans and most humanoids as it is infused with disease and pollutants.

Native Horrors

Oozes of all kinds are disturbingly common here, possibly created by the effluence and run-offs from Malus' experiments or created naturally by the disturbing combination of garbage and chemicals on the edges of the domain.

The final threat to the inhabitants here are the corporeal undead, but especially those that are in the process of rotting, such as zombies and ghouls. The stench everywhere in the domain is so prevalent that it can mask even the unnatural odors of ghosts.

Terrain type

Nosos is heavily urbanized and industrialized. Everywhere is built on — whether that's a residential area or the entrance to a mineshaft. It is a dystopian nightmare of bricks, soot, and poor maintenance. Even the rich areas of Nosos cannot escape the ever-encompassing smog of the domain, and the sun is almost entirely blocked out on even the sunniest of days. On those days Nosos goes from gray, disgusting, and smelly to being pale-yellow, disgusting, and smelly.

Amazingly there is still some (relatively) clean water to be found in Nosos. Deep wells drawing from underground reservoirs still provide the rich with water to drink and bathe in. The poor are not so lucky.

Important Landmarks

Black Iron Bores

One of the up and comers in Nosos, this mining company was founded by Douglas Black Iron, a Dwarven immigrant from Darkon. Fueled by but one drive, he will stop at nothing to control all resource mining in Nosos, and eventually the city itself. He is ruthless in his exploitation of his workers and what little nature remains unexploited, using means both fair and foul to destroy the competition. If there is any soul darker than Malus' in Nosos, it is his.

Burnt Colossus

Before the coming of Malus Sceleris and the deranged druids of The Green, Nosos was a place of pride and glory. While still dirty from industrialization, the bounty of its growing industry was to beautify the city with public parks, libraries, and monuments. One of the most famous was Perfected Man, a statue claimed for its trade with Paridon (true/false history is up to you). Wrought from solid steel, it depicts an idealized human man, handsome and muscular, holding a clockwork planet, depicting how man's domination of nature through technology was the key to human divinity. With the growing pollution from the growing greed and carelessness of the upper class, the statue is now a ruin. Coal smog has stained its skin black, with rusted patches looking like burn scars. Its once handsome face is now completely burnt away by years of acid rain, and the planet it holds is now a perfect model for the city of Nosos: a dirty little world. It is considered a sacred site by the rumored Circle of Rust, mad city druids who worship the growing corrosion.

Mansion of Malus (Sceleris Mansion)

Malus' mansion is more an industrial complex than a regular mansion, and sits on the border between the poor quarters and the rich quarter, straddling them like a jockey does a horse. Chimney stacks protrude from the roof, and it looks more like a factory. Only a small part of it is dedicated to Malus' quarters and storing his riches, while the rest is a vast laboratory and production facility for metals, chemicals, and more. A small laboratory, accessible only to Malus, contains the equipment that he needs to produce the diseases that occasionally ravage the poor of Nosos. Workers go to and from the complex at all times, and all of them are thoroughly cowed by Malus and his thugs.

Poor Quarters

The poor quarters are cramped hovels, and 95% of the population lives in miserable conditions here. Most of the areas resemble and smell like open sewers, and it's only mildly better inside the buildings. Everything is run down and dilapidated as the locals have little time to clean or repair their own housing while having to work in the various factories and foundries that dot the landscape in the poor quarters.

Rich Quarter

The rich quarter of Nosos is a lot cleaner than the poor quarters, but they do not smell much better, in spite of all the cleanup efforts that the rich fund. The buildings here are far larger than the small (only

Nosos

5% of the total population of Nosos) number of residents would ever need. Poor servants work here at all times of day, while the rich dedicate themselves to managing their businesses during the day, and celebrating themselves in grand fashion in the evenings. Their bodyguards are housed on the edge of the rich quarter — the rich recognize that the poor envy their positions and that they need protection, but they do not want to extend the luxury that they enjoy to those protecting them.

Sceleris Hydroponics and Cannery

To support the dietary needs of the city in the growing environmental collapse, and to expand its wealth and power, Malus Sceleris has invested much into this artificial farming and canning factory. Sided by great greenhouses to grow fruits and vegetables (which only the wealthy can afford), and a larger black glass tinted “darkhouse” which grows molds and fungus (the real staple of the poor), all the while the factory floor functions as a combination cannery and slaughterhouse. The conditions are filthy and abusive, with worse hours than even the worst poorhouse elsewhere. The ground is covered in filth and grime, rats scurry freely and often fill more cans than real meals do (not that the poor mind the surprise protein.) And the bovines are a truly horrid sight, for Malus has used his diseases to swell the bovines with tumors to ensure more cheap meat to sell. Around the cannery, the workers mill about in the company town, drinking away their salary or selling their bodies for more.

The Lowerburg

The fuel for Nosos’ “great” industry is its heavy coal mining, with the city itself lying on an ever more precarious foundation as more and more mine shafts are dug to fuel the city’s furnaces. Down in the mines, men toil and risk life and limb for a pittance. Some mines become shanty shelters to avoid the acid rain and garbage smell from above, all who choose such a life risk getting buried alive. Considering the number of ruined subareas from rediscovered shafts, and the hungry undead known as “coughers” within, such a fate is not uncommon. One of the greatest threats though is the shafts which also lead to natural tunnels that connect to the sewers of Timor. While the miners know to avoid them and recognize signs of the mysterious sewers in the growing tunnels, accidents tend to happen.

The Sewers

The sewers are where things get difficult for Malus and the Nosians, as they are not in control of them. Instead, here they face invaders from Timor - the same creatures that have been harassing Paridon for so long. This is a recent development, only happening within the last few years, and so far the Nosians have blocked off sewer access in most places, and just counted themselves lucky that they have not been affected by the illness that triggers the transformation in the people of Paridon, turning them into monsters (though Malus is looking into this intently, hoping for a way to harness its power). The reason that not all of the sewers have been blocked off, but are instead heavily guarded is that Nosos has finally found a trading partner, one that Malus can export food to, and get money from in return. Such work is incredibly dangerous and requires the workers to move through the sewers, through the domain of the Hive Queen — only 1 in 10 of all caravans make it. But those that do are extremely lucrative for Malus and the other nobles of Nosos.

Towns and villages:

None — Nosos itself IS a city.

Neighboring domain(s):

Paridon (Through Timor), Timor

Fun Fact:

The poor of Nosos only rarely bathe. Part of this is because of the lack of clean water, but they generally do not care about personal hygiene. The rich bathe frequently, and the easiest way to tell the difference between the two classes is by the smell. This is often how the bodyguards of the rich root out the poor who try to gain a foothold and infiltrate the frequent galas.



Malus Sceleris

"Smoke and fire. The tortured sound a stone makes when a pick bites into it. A river turning green then black.

I remake nature on my whim. I bring rot and ruin to my enemies. I drain the life from the land.

I will take your life. I will take your wealth. I will grind you to death in my mines.

And you will beg me to keep doing it."

~ Malus Sceleris

Malus is a human male in his early twenties, with dark hair that he keeps very short. His skin is as pale as parchment and his eyes are light blue. Malus is handsome and always has a carefree smile. To outsiders, he seems easy going and like he doesn't have a care in the world. When he loses his temper, however, his true nature is apparent.

Malus is vindictive and arrogant. He truly believes he is the center of the universe and everyone else exists to serve him. When not visiting one of the dozens of coal mines or smelting plants that corrupt his domain, Malus can be found in his lab. Malus is the foremost expert on disease in the Demiplane of Dread and loves injecting prisoners, outsiders, or anyone foolish enough to get caught by his guards, with a host of deadly infections and then watching the disease ravage its victim.

Background: Malus was born to a pair of druids who were committed to defending their ancient forest against civilization. Malus' mother died in childbirth, and his father, Eramas, never forgave Malus. His father constantly travelled, defending the forest his wife had loved so much, and when he did return to his son he was cold and distant. Malus soon became resentful of the forest and his absent father. By the time Malus was a teenager, he hated Eramas and the forest. Malus plotted to murder them both, but knew he would never stand a chance against his powerful father in direct combat. Malus considered using poison for a time, but didn't think his father would fall victim to such a predictable attack. After months of plotting Malus found his weapon. Malus came across a deer suffering from rabies. The disease had ravaged the animal's nervous system, leaving it paralyzed. Malus didn't know why, but he knew to stab the beast in the brain. Malus took the dagger home and coated his father's sleeping blankets in the blood and spinal fluids of the deer. Malus knew it would never work, that it shouldn't work, but he would coat his father's blankets in the blood of every diseased animal he found in the forest. After a week, Malus began killing animals and letting the corpses rot. Hewiped the liquified remains onto his father's blankets. Soon Malus was killing animals, sentient creatures, anything he thought would rot and create disease. Malus started taking captives from among the creatures he found in the forest. He infected the poor creatures with a bewildering variety of diseases, trying to breed more virulent infections. Even though it seemed impossible, Malus' father never noticed his blankets were becoming increasingly disgusting. Malus knew that his father should have seen the blankets, smelled the foulness that festered there, but he didn't. As the disease began to take hold, Malus took more direct actions against his father. He dressed as a young nobleman and hired mercenaries to dress as lumberjacks and start deforesting the land. When Eramas intervened the mercenaries sprung their ambush. Eramas, slowed and wracked with pain from a myriad of infections, was badly wounded before he could escape. Eramas retreated to the simple camp he shared with Malus. His father begged Malus for help, but to no avail. Malus laughed at his dying father, he reveled in his victory. When his father finally died hours later, Malus leaned in and inhaled his father's last breath. With his revenge against his father complete, Malus turned his attention to the woods his father had fought so hard to protect. He burned the sacred grove first, then began to move through the woods lighting the underbrush. The smoke didn't rise however, but settled back down into the burning forest, becoming a thick mist.



Malus Sceleris

Current Sketch: Malus focuses all his efforts on his two passions, coal and disease. The coal mines of his domain have made Malus incredibly wealthy. Great caravans of coal are sent from Nosos to domains all over Ravenloft, guided by merchants that seem to find their destination through mists and dimensional boundaries. Malus cares less about the money than using the mines to take revenge against his dead father.

Malus may be the foremost expert on disease in the Demiplane of Dread. He brings prisoners into his castle where he infects them with a variety of diseases that range from the mundane to the magical. While his victims suffer, Malus takes careful notes about every facet of the disease's progress. The people of Nosos even whisper that Malus even creates new diseases and unleashes them on his suffering people.

Darklord's Tactics: Malus avoids combat whenever possible. He's a businessman and prefers negotiation to melee. When combat is unavoidable, Malus first charms his enemies to make them his slaves. Malus can use his charm ability at any time, but hates having to do so because he has painful headaches for hours afterwards. If his charm ability doesn't have any effect, Malus' touch can cause virulent diseases. The diseases caused by Malus' touch are incredibly resilient to healing magic, and can only be healed by a cleric or druid of 10th level or higher.

Borders: When Malus closes the borders, massive mounds of garbage surround his domain. Any attempt to climb requires an Strength (Athletics) check with disadvantage. The creature fails no matter what they roll, but if they roll a 10 or less they take 17 (5d6) slashing damage and 17 (5d6) poison damage. If the creature rolls a natural 1 on either dice, they are pulled into the wall of garbage and slain. A creature that attempts to fly over the wall is pulled into the heap of garbage by giant tentacles made of rotting corpses and sewage.



Malus Sceleris

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (Studded Leather +1)

Hit Points 9 (1d10+1)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +3, Con +3

Skills Deception +7, Medicine +4, Nature +6, Persuasion +7, Survival +4

Damage Resistances acid

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Poisoner. Malus can prepare and deliver deadly poisons, granting him the following benefits:

When he makes a damage roll that deals poison damage, it ignores resistance to poison damage.

He can apply poison to a weapon or piece of ammunition as a bonus action, instead of an action.

With one hour of work using a poisoner's kit and expending 50 gp worth of materials, he can create 2 doses of poison. Once applied to a weapon or piece of ammunition, the poison retains its potency for 1 minute or until he hits with the weapon or ammunition. When a creature takes damage from the coated weapon or ammunition, that creature must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 2d8 poison damage and become poisoned until the end of Malus' next turn. Malus can create 2 doses of any type of poison as described in DMG.pg 257.



Malus Sceleris

Second Wind. Malus has a limited well of stamina that he can draw on to protect himself from harm. On his Turn, he can use a Bonus Action to regain Hit Points equal to $1d10 + 1$. Once he uses this feature, he must finish a short or Long Rest before he can use it again.

Charming Man. Malus is a capable judge of human character and knows how to manipulate people in the best manner to ensure the best possible reaction and performance from them. Malus can cast *charm person* at will and his target rolls the saving throw with disadvantage and remains charmed for 1d4 days. The DC for this ability is 15. When Malus uses this ability, he suffers from blinding headaches for $1d6 + 1$ hours that give him disadvantage on ability checks that rely on Wisdom.

Cause Disease. Malus causes a debilitating or fatal disease in a creature he touches that fails a DC 15 Constitution Saving Throw. The exact details are decided by the DM, but the following effects are typical. This spell cannot inflict lycanthropy, and any disease it inflicts can be cured only if Malus decides it or with a *wish* spell.

Debilitating: The disease takes effect immediately, the creature loses 1 point of Strength per hour until the score is reduced to 2 or less, at which point the victim is weak and virtually helpless. Without a Strength score, a creature loses 10% of their hit points each day, down to 10% of their original hit points. Recovery requires a period of 1d4 weeks.

Fatal: This wasting disease becomes effective immediately. Infected creatures have no benefit from magical healing while the disease is in effect, and natural healing is reduced to half of its normal rate. The disease proves fatal in 1 month. The creature permanently loses 2 points of Charisma.

Dum Dum Fever: The disease takes effect after 1d6 days, the creature must succeed on a Constitution saving Throw per day or temporarily lose 1 point of Intelligence, Charisma and Wisdom until 5 points have been lost. If this effect brings the creature down to 2 or less, it becomes comatose and is virtually helpless. Afterwards, the victim begins to suffer from the same symptoms of a randomly determined madness effect. This madness does not incur ability damage, nor can it be removed by psychological therapy. The influence of madness persists on the victim until the illness is removed. Each day, the victim continues to make Constitution saves to try to throw off the effect. There are a variety of distinct symptoms of the illness, including fever and profuse sweating. Their speech starts to slur, forget important details, and act erratically as the victim loses his mental ability. In addition, Malus has seen that Dum Dum fever is characterized by rumors as a disease borne by prostitutes. This mixture of intellectual and reputational assault is more than enough to permanently remove any opponent.

Disease Hardened. Malus experimentation with diseases has made his body magically stop any pathogen. He is immune to diseases and his ability scores cannot be decreased.

Innate Spellcasting. Malus' innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components: At will: *ray of sickness*, *contagion*, *detect poison and disease*, *poison spray*

Actions

Shortsword +1. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 ($1d6 + 3$) piercing damage.



Paridon



Paridon



Born from the sins of Sodo, Paridon is a domain of murder and disguise, one where fear of the killings of Bloody Jack (and other mad serial killers) rules the night, and where appearances cannot be trusted. Anyone can be a doppelganger or be turned into one of the nightmarish creatures that haunt Timor.

Originally Paridon was part of Gothic Earth (see that domain), but the sins of Sodo, when he murdered the elders of his doppelganger clan as well as those who doubted him, rewarded his crimes with his own domain. Food was never abundant in Paridon, as only a little arable land could be found outside the city limits, but during the Grand Conjunction, that land disappeared, and starvation ensued. This situation, ironically, improved when Timor appeared and Paridoners started turning, seemingly at random, into marikith fleeing to the sunless depths of the sewers and into Timor. This was further helped when a route to Nosos was discovered, and food caravans started coming through from that domain, albeit irregularly. The food might be of dubious quality at best, but it allows the population to survive. The dwindling population meant an increase in the overall wealth of those who survived, as the possessions of the dead passed into the hands of the survivors. They became a very lucrative market for Nosos.

The people of Paridon pride themselves on their stoicism, their manners, and their restrained behavior, all of which shows in both the way they dress and the way they act in times of trouble. Despite the fact that there are perceived to be multiple serial killers on the loose in Paridon (and the fact that the law officers seem incapable of catching them), the Paridoners merely continue their daily lives. Every day they walk to work, they toil, and they return home. Each day is the same unless interrupted by extraordinary events. And that is the way they like it, thank you very much. But it was not always this way. It wasn't always a matter of stiff upper lip and "keep calm and carry on", nor were their methods of dress so suppressed that a woman showing an ankle was indecent or heading out without a hat or bonnet was inappropriate. They used to love life, and love living it, but that was all taken from them when Paridon entered the Mists on its own.

Paridon has divided itself into three classes: the rich, the working class, and the poor. At the top of it all are the rich — they buy the best food they can, wear the best clothes, pay the law enforcement officers, and generally live a good life. The working class pro-

vides the muscle, and lives in harsh conditions where they must work every day, and only take home a mere pittance of a wage to their families. The poor live wherever they can, often squatting in a building for a few days before officers evict them, or sleeping under bridges. There's a lot of mobility between the poor and the working classes: getting work is easy when people die at random, but jobs equally lost for the slightest hint of disagreement with a superior. The rich meanwhile keep to themselves and dissuade attempts to improve the lot of those below them.

Adventures in Paridon should look to tap into these themes. How the Paridoners do not take action often themselves, and how anyone could turn out to be a doppelganger or turn into a marikith, at any time. Tapping into the issue of the serial killers in Paridon could also lead them into dark waters, as they discover that a particular serial killer is actually multiple doppelgangers working in unison, or perhaps the deeds of multiple serial killers are actually the work of one creature — one that has managed to mask its presence, much like Sodo itself.

"Remember, it is not enough to be hit or insulted to be harmed, you must believe that you are being harmed. If someone succeeds in provoking you, realize that your mind is complicit in the provocation. Which is why it is essential that we not respond impulsively to impressions; take a moment before reacting, and you will find it easier to maintain control."

~ Epictetus, The Art of Living: The Classical Manual on Virtue, Happiness, and Effectiveness

Culture Level:	Renaissance
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, urban
Year Formed:	551 BC
Population:	12,000 (and declining)
Races (%):	Humans 99%, Other 1%
Languages:	Common, Nos (only among traders), Zherisian
Religions:	Divinity of Mankind
Government:	Aristocratic republic
Ruler(s):	City Council
Darklord(s):	Sodo
Nationality:	Paridoner
Analog:	Victorian London and Paris

Paridon

Local Fauna:

Paridon was never known for having many animals before it was separated from the rest of the world by the Mists. It relied too heavily on imported foodstuffs for this, but when the famine hit, everything with even a little bit of meat on it was eaten. As a result, there are no wild animals in Paridon — even the rats were eaten. The Paridoners have only slowly started seeing domesticated animals such as cats and dogs again, and then only as pets for the ultra-rich.

Local Flora:

Paridon used to have parks and public spaces, and even wild plants. These are all long gone. Any open patch of land, whether a former park or even the small window boxes that some homes have, is filled with vegetables and fruit. In a domain that has no open spaces, those areas are at a premium, but the weather in Paridon is not conducive to growing crops and as a result, yields are very low. In fact, Paridon was unable to sustain its population for many years and suffered a long period of famine. The City Council allocated the majority of food to the rich on top of this, further causing trouble for the poor. Many homes in Paridon are therefore empty, and though they are now practically in ruins, they were never in great condition to begin with. The situation is now slowly improving thanks to the food that comes through from Nos. Most of the food from there is of poor quality, but it feeds the destitute and working classes, leaving room for the rich to grab more of the better food.

Native Horrors

There are no monsters in Paridon, with the exception of doppelgangers and marikith. The marikith come up from the sewers of Timor at night, and disappear again by dawn, dragging their victims down with them. Occasionally, a seemingly random person in Paridon will spontaneously twist and mutate into a marikith, but none know why that is. The doppelgangers hide themselves from society, feasting upon anyone they wish, and sometimes replacing them. But the worst monsters in Paridon (apart from Sodo) are the humans. Something in Paridon seems to drive people into crazed murder sprees (at least twelve of which are on official record), and more worryingly, drives others to copy them when they are caught. Legends such as Bloody Jack have persisted for over a century, the mad murderer who strikes every thirteen years. Some small hope was extended to the Paridoners just over a decade ago when a creature that used Bloody Jack's methods was killed. Paridoners now hold out hope that the real Jack is gone, but they wait with bated breath until the full thirteen years have passed before allowing themselves a sigh of relief. They're hoping that for once they won't wake up after six terrible nights, to find six even worse murders.

Terrain type

Paridon is a city of gray on gray. The buildings are all in muted colors, built from brick and stone, with baked clay or wood tiles for roofing (both of which are always gray). It rains practically every day here, with the sun only coming out rarely. And when it doesn't rain, the city is often drowned in fog, making it very difficult for travelers to tell if they're being misled by the Mists or if it is just normal fog.



Paridon

Important Landmarks

Bloodhaven Estate

Bloodhaven Estate now lies abandoned, but it was once a rich mansion owned by Edward Bloodsworth, a renowned investigator and monster hunter. Just over a decade ago, the man was unmasked and revealed to be a terrible shape-changing monster, the one that had terrorized Paridon for so long, under the guise of Bloody Jack. Now, the mansion is believed cursed, though the Paridoners merely claim that it is abandoned due to weather damage. No true Paridoner “would believe such nonsense”. But even so, the neighbors whisper that during the hours of darkness, they’ve seen lights in the old windows once more.

Temple of the Divine Form

The Paridoners do not believe in deities. Instead, many believe in the inherent divinity of mankind, and of those touched with its magnificence. Humans, half-elves, aasimar, and tieflings — anyone with human blood in them is considered nearly perfect (with the exception of half-orcs and tieflings. The Paridoners see these as perfection corrupted beyond redemption and will shun them whenever possible). The believers of the Church of the Divinity of Mankind state that as a result, it is their divine right and duty, for anyone to strive towards perfection through hard work and perseverance.

The Temple itself is considered proof of that as it is magnificently built, and well maintained, even today. It is filled with paintings of the highest quality, originally from all over the Gothic Earth domain, classical statues, and marble tiles. At the center is the Library of Higher Learning, where anyone can come — regardless of whether they are poor, working-class, or rich — to get an education. That said, it is not perfect, and there are areas where only the richest citizens can go, usually for the information that requires a higher level of education, as opposed to the basics.

Towns and villages:

None (Paridon is a city)

Neighboring domain(s):

Nosos (via Timor)

Timor

Fun Fact:

Paridoners consume more tea than any other residents of the Mists. They use this as their regular brew of choice, but for special occasions, they break out exotic blends and variants. Fruit tea is viewed as an abomination, however.



Sodo

"He committed the only crime his people abhor, and for that he pays an eternal price. His skin changes into every shape he has ever taken at the same time.

It mimics the chaos in his soul, and peace is ever beyond him."

~ Rudolph van Richten

Describing Sodo's physical form is like trying to describe shattering glass. His shape constantly changes, with features mixing and matching in insane ways. Sodo jumping out of the shadows to wrap his hands around a victim's neck has caused more than one to pass out.

Sodo revels in his strange appearance in front of other doppelgangers, but rails against it when he is alone. Ironically, his fits of temper cause him to shapechange even faster.

Background: Sodo was one of a large clan of doppelgangers that operated out of an abandoned complex of warehouses and sewers in the city of Paridon on some long forgotten world. The duke of Paridon used the doppelgangers as his own personal army, silencing his critics and stopping rebellions in their tracks. For their service the doppelgangers were well paid and protected by the duke's influence. Sodo was one of nearly a dozen assassins for the clan. Sodo was a cold blooded bastard, even for a doppelganger. He reveled in taking the lives of unsuspecting victims. Unlike the other assassins in his clan, Sodo rarely used weapons, preferring to strangle the life out of his victims. The rattle of a collapsing windpipe was music to his ears. Yet, despite his enjoyment of his work, Sodo wanted more. The humans were using the doppelgangers. The clan were little better than hired thugs. When a doppelganger was discovered by the citizens of Paridon, and set upon by an angry mob, the duke didn't do anything to protect them. Sodo and his clan feared the humans of Paridon, but it should have been the other way around. Sodo and his clan should have ruled the humans.

Sodo preached his message to the rest of the clan dozens of times, to no avail. The elders listened, but didn't want to risk the wrath of the duke. Eventually the elders stopped listening, followed by the rest of the clan. Sodo was considering leaving, striking out on his own and leaving Paridon, when everything changed. Sodo was tasked with killing a human wiz-

ard that had angered the duke for some small reason or slight. After a while, the duke's mewling was just plain boring. As his victim fell asleep, Sodo wrapped his fingers around the scrawny mage's throat and began to throttle. Strangling wizards was boring, they were too weak to fight back and their necks were too thin to be interesting, so as he worked, Sodo glanced around the room. His attention was drawn to an ornate hat that the wizard had kept away from the rest of the items in the room. Sodo couldn't stop looking at the hat. Something about it drew him in. As the wizard stopped thrashing, Sodo took the hat, and instantly knew he could use it to assume any humanoid form, even another doppelganger. A plan formed immediately.

In a series of very carefully arranged accidents, every doppelganger older than Sodo was discovered by the humans of Paridon. Their deaths followed shortly after. Soon Sodo had only one person, the chief elder, in his way. Sodo knew his time had come. He strangled the chief elder and used the hat to assume his shape. As the chief elder finally died, his body exploded into mist, joining a wall of mist that settled down onto Paridon. When the mists cleared, the humans of Paridon seemed unchanged, but other gangs of doppelgangers appeared and swore fealty to Sodo (in the disguise of the chief elder) and his clan.



Under the guise of the chief elder, Sodo slew human nobles and took their place. In a matter of months, Sodo became the de facto ruler of the Paridon. Once the final human noble was slain, Sodo suddenly screamed, as a change befell him. His shape began to change uncontrollably, his skin flowing like water, forming new features quickly, before melting into another. If Sodo concentrated, and stayed calm, he could keep one shape for a short time, a minute at most, but when he was excited or agitated his shape would change every few seconds.

Sodo

Current Sketch: Sodo sits in the center of a complex web of assassins, spies and thieves. He has human agents that run the largest gangs of Paridon, extorting money and information from the local populace, and several of his pet doppelgangers are the heads of noble houses controlling goods that flow through the city for trade. He has ruled the doppelganger clans of Paridon for over a century, but his situation has recently become unstable. The leaders of the other clans have started to rally under the banner of Sir Edmund Bloodsworth, a doppelganger that poses as a prominent human noble. Bloodsworth has rallied the humans under his rule against Sodo's agents and underlings. War is brewing on the streets of Paridon..

To make matters worse, Bloodsworth has recently found the Fang of the Nosferatu, a powerful dagger that can make its wielder invincible. If Bloodsworth discovers what the *Fang of the Nosferatu* can do, Sodo may not be the dark lord of Paridon for much longer.

Darklord's Tactics: Sodo has to touch his victims to feed on their pain and fear, but his touch ultimately heals his victims. No matter how hard he hits an opponent, how many times he punches a victim, or crushes their throat in his hands, he is forever robbed of the kill. The victim wakes up a few minutes later, convinced it was all a horrible dream. Many victims carry deep mental and emotional scars after meeting the doppelganger, but they always walk away.

Sodo's curse has changed his tactics. Now he uses agents to isolate his victim, and then he pounces. Sodo likes to play a dangerous game. He wants to strangle his victim where his victim can hear their friends nearby, fighting for their lives, screaming in pain, while he strangles them into unconsciousness. The victim's pain as their trachea is crushed and their fear for the lives of their friends proves intoxicating to the doppelganger.

Borders: When the borders of Paridon are closed, all the alleyways that make up the edges of the domain twist and split to form a moving maze. Creatures trying to leave the domain find themselves heading back toward the center of the city. No matter which alley the creature takes, they end up at the center of the domain.



Sodo

Medium monstrosity (shapechanger), chaotic evil

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +4

Skills Acrobatics +8, Deception +6, Insight +3, Stealth +8
Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Shapechanger. Sodo can use his action to polymorph into a Small or Medium humanoid he has seen, or back into his true form. His statistics, other than his size, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to its true form if he dies.

Ambusher. Sodo has advantage on attack rolls against any creature he has surprised.

Surprise Attack. If Sodo surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 10 (3d6) damage from the attack.



Sodo

Glamour. Sodo can magically alter the appearance of objects on his person as a bonus action. The object's basic material can't be changed, though the quality can change. The items revert back to their true form if separated from Sodo by at least 5 feet.

Cunning Action. On each of his turns, Sodo can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Fast Hands. Sodo can use the bonus action granted by the Cunning Action to make a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, use his thieves' tools to disarm a trap or open a lock, or take the Use an Object action.

Second-Storey Work. climbing does not cost Sodo extra movement. In addition, when Sodo makes a running jump, the distance he covers increases by 5 feet.

Uncontrollable Shapes. Sodo cannot hold a single shape for more than a few moments. When he is calm, he can hold a shape for a full minute, but when he is agitated or excited, he flickers from shape to shape every two or three seconds. Many of the humanoid shapes Sodo assumes are bestial and horrifying, so seeing him requires a DC 14 Wisdom Saving throw, on a failure the creature that sees Sodo becomes frightened for as long as Sodo is within their line of sight. A creature that succeeds, becomes immune to this effect for 24 hours.

Addicted to Pain. Sodo is addicted to the pain and terror of his victims. He must experience these emotions at least once every five days or be in so much pain that he suffers disadvantage on all attack rolls and ability checks.

Unsteady Aim. Sodo, cannot accurately point a weapon at an enemy due to his uncontrollable frantic shape changes. Sodo suffers disadvantage on attack rolls made with weapons while he is agitated or excited. He prefers strangling his enemies.

Unable to Kill. Sodo has been cursed to not be able to murder anyone. Sodo's touch eases pain and ultimately resurrects any who die (as per the *resurrection* spell but without any penalties for Sodo or the resurrected). As a result, the victims always survive his attacks, no matter how violent. Most believe they have merely suffered a frightening nightmare.

Hat of Disguise. Sodo can cast the *disguise self* spell at will.

Magic Resistance. Sodo has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. Sodo makes two melee attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6) bludgeoning damage. Instead of dealing damage, Sodo can grapple the target (escape DC 12)

Strangulation. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d12) bludgeoning damage.

Read Thoughts. Sodo magically reads the surface thoughts of one creature that it can touch. Sodo can continue reading its thoughts, as long as it's touching the victim. While reading the target's mind, Sodo has advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion) checks against the target.

Significant Possessions

Hat of Disguise, Fang of Nosferatu



A black and white photograph of an ancient stone structure, possibly a tomb or a part of a temple. The structure features three large, arched openings. The central opening is the largest and is flanked by two smaller ones. The stone is weathered and shows signs of age. The entire image is framed by a highly ornate, dark border with intricate scrollwork and floral patterns.

Timor

Timor



Before the Grand Conjunction Timor was a different domain. It consisted of two parts: an upper-level metropolis that could house 30,000 people (though these numbers had been reduced to 5,000 before the Grand Conjunction), and a lower-level sewer system that none dared penetrate. Ironically the upper level looked a lot like the current Paridon and was infested with doppelgangers, while the lower level was the same as it is now, lightless tunnels dominated by the marikith. All were subject to the rule of the Hive Queen, who had dictated that all bullies in the domain would be forcibly transformed to match their proclivities: those who used subtle means would transform into doppelgangers, while those who resorted to brute force would become marikith. These transformations were immediate and caused many inhabitants to see monsters everywhere, and suspect each other of secretly being monsters, or at the very least a part of whatever conspiracy or plot was going on.

After the Grand Conjunction, the lower parts of Timor resettled underneath Paridon, while the upper level disappeared. Whether it still exists somewhere in the Mists is unknown, but its inhabitants would recognize Paridon as being much the same as the Timor of the past. The tunnels (or sewers depending on how close to the surface you are) are places where the light goes to die. It is not a figure of speech as no light, no matter how strong (and whether magical or mundane) can penetrate more than 15 feet around the source. Beyond those 15 feet, everything turns to darkness, and everywhere a haze of sewer gas blurs even that light. Not even those that can see in the dark can see past those 15 feet.

Carrying open flame comes with the risk of igniting sewer gas as well, as pockets of flammable gas are found throughout the tunnels of Timor. They have the same smell and look as the haze itself, so they can hit without warning. The tunnels are also extremely hard to navigate for non-marikith. They are incredibly similar, and with the haze and darkness covering everything, those visiting the domain could spend hours or days walking in circles without ever realizing. And then there are the marikith that eat people.

Adventures in Timor should focus on the fear of the dark and on the presence of the marikith. Danger could strike from anywhere in the lightless tunnels, and anyone coming here, even those used to the underground worlds elsewhere, should feel out of place. Whether by the lack of light or by the smell, nothing

should ever feel comfortable. So why would anyone come down here? Well, the marikith Hive Queen is exceedingly intelligent (unlike her subjects) and might have knowledge that the heroes need, but as she is content with her marikith kingdom and believes her subjects superior to the humans that they once were, she is going to be hard to negotiate with. More likely something or someone precious was taken by the marikith during one of their night-time raids on Paridon, perhaps through the very plumbing system that the marikith use as their home. Now the heroes will have to brave the lightless and odorous depths to retrieve their friend.

"Nature never appeals to intelligence until habit and instinct are useless. There is no intelligence where there is no need of change."

~ H.G. Wells, *The Time Machine*

Culture Level:	Stone Age
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, underground
Year Formed:	620 BC
Population:	0 (only marikith live here, in unknown numbers)
Races (%):	Marikith 100%
Languages:	None
Religions:	None
Government:	Feudal monarchy
Ruler(s):	Hive Queen
Darklord(s):	Hive Queen
Nationality:	Timori
Analog:	Morlocks from H.G. Wells <i>The Time Machine</i>

Local Fauna:

There is no wildlife left in Timor, as anything that's even remotely fleshy has been hunted to extinction by the marikith. Nothing lives here, and nothing moves if it knows what's good for it.

Local Flora:

There are no plants that make their home in the depths of Timor. The lightless tunnels and the sewage that has collected over the centuries provide a ripe breeding ground for mushrooms of all kinds. Much of the sewage is also used in the city above to provide fertilizer for their limited food stocks. Strangely the marikith are strictly carnivores, raiding and eating the humans in Paridon, so edible fungi is plentiful in the tunnels. Anyone brave enough to delve into the tunnels, and who somehow manages to stave off the hordes of marikith will, as long as they can recognize the safe types of mushroom, never run out of food,

Timor

and there is a plethora of choice available. Some of the mushrooms here would be considered exotic delicacies in most domains. Very few mushrooms here are dangerous as nothing feeds on them, though a particular type of mushroom, known as Giggleshrooms by the few Paridoners that know of it, causes minor hallucinations and giggling fits. While that may not cause a problem when safe in Paridon, in the tunnels of Timor, the noise of the laughter can carry for miles, and will inevitably attract attention from the marikith who know where these patches are.

Native Horrors

The marikith comprise the entire ecosystem, and anything entering their domain is swarmed by hordes of them until it succumbs. It is then either eaten on the spot or taken to the Hive Queen for her to consume. Occasionally a smuggler or doppelganger from Paridon gets it into their heads that they can use the tunnels for storage, but while the marikith leave the goods alone, the intruders are eaten. This has led to caches of valuables being strewn across the top of the domain, without the owners ever reclaiming them. Outsiders have sometimes compared the marikith to driders, for their arachnid appearance, and to many the similarities are striking. The marikith retain more human-like features than the elven appearance of the driders though, and they are far less intelligent or dangerous on their own.

Terrain type

Timor is a darkness-infused hell of sewage. The walls are clay-baked bricks in the upper levels, before turning to earth in the lowest levels. Navigation is impossible for any non-marikith due to the haze of sewage gas, the oppressive darkness, and the sheer number of tunnels that branch off from each other. Should the marikith ever be driven to extinction and an attempt to map the tunnels be made, it would easily take decades before such an endeavor would be complete.

Important Landmarks

The Lightless Tunnels

Spreading out beneath Paridon, the lightless tunnels make up the entirety of Timor. They stretch far into the depths, though no one knows how deep they go. Travel is dangerous, due to the obstacles, the lack of light, and the marikith. Only the truly lucky (or unlucky) ones make it all the way to the Hive Queen. The lightless tunnels used to simply connect Timor to Paridon, but now it also connects with Nosos. Malus Sceleris has taken this opportunity to attempt to export food to the people of Paridon, in return for mon-

ey. There is no schedule, but every time a caravan moves through her domain, the Hive Queen knows, and the caravan is attacked. The attacks are normally successful (90% of the time the marikith exterminate the caravaneers), but it is lucrative enough that Malus keeps sending them. Even if only 1 in 10 caravans make it through, Malus is still coming out on top.

The Court of the Hive Queen

The Court of the Hive Queen is located somewhere in Timor, though only the marikith know where. Here, the monstrous Hive Queen lays her eggs, and slaughters any newly born marikith queens, before they have a chance to rise up against her. Before the Grand Conjunction, she did not lay eggs and was far more mobile than she is now (the marikith numbers were instead filled by the bullies of Paridon that succumbed to the transformation process mentioned above), and before that she was human. A glimmer of her humanity remains still as she has had her marikith subjects collect luxury items to make her day more comfortable, though she has strictly forbidden anything with reflective surfaces.

Anyone making it here should prepare themselves, as they will be consumed the moment they show any weakness. Only those with something that interests and benefits the Hive Queen should expect a non-hostile audience with her. And even that may turn deadly at a moment's notice.

Towns and villages:

None

Neighboring domain(s):

Nosos
Paridon

Fun Fact:

Marikith have only the basest of cultures and intelligence, but they produce some excellent, if disturbing, pieces of art. Dotted around the tunnels of Timor, one can find depictions of the Hive Queen and her marikith subjects, rendered in remarkable detail. It would be best not to think about what was used for paint though.



The Hive Queen

"A score times a score of years.

Her mother sits on a throne, vain and merciless.

A princess covets her mother's power and despises those she rules.

A plot is hatched. The death of a queen and the rise of another.

She rules still, but a new kingdom.

Click clack, click clack. They scurry, they crawl. They wait.

They are hungry."

~ Urilek the Thrice Damned Minstrel

The Hive Queen is an abomination in every sense of the word. Eleven feet long, her exoskeleton is covered in a thick midnight black hide, spotted with bright red and orange splotches. Her mouth stretches from ear to ear and is full of wicked, white fangs. Her canines are longer than her other teeth and are white at the base to sickly green near the tip.

As terrifying as her face is, her body is even worse. She stalks the sewers of Timor on four arachnid-like legs and her four arms are tipped with menacing claws. Perhaps the worst feature is her tail. The Hive Queen's barbed stinger constantly oozes a vile sludge. The sludge sizzles when it hits the ground and even the slightest drop could kill an ogre with ease.

Background: The Hive Queen is one of the most enigmatic darklords in the Demiplane of Dread. She either can't or won't tell anyone her name or where she came from. Most of the information about her comes from the mad sage, Urilek the Thrice Damned Minstrel. When his prophetic fits came upon him, Urilek would fall into a trance and rant about the future or events in distant lands. The day he told about the history of the Hive Queen, Urilek was wracked with seizures and fell into a coma, his face contorted in pain and terror. Three weeks later Urilek's eyes opened, and exploded into geysers of blood as he died screaming.

According to Urilek, the Hive Queen was born a princess on a forgotten world centuries ago. Her mother was a vain and greedy ruler who taxed her people mercilessly. The queen wanted to build the greatest city her world had ever seen, a monument to her reign and her power. The plateau she chose was surrounded by the sea on one side and vast plains on

the other ensuring that the city would be visible for miles around and have formidable natural defences. Under the plateau was the largest nest of marikith her planet had ever seen. Marikith were vicious insect predators that slaughtered people indiscriminately. Building the city on top of the lair costs thousands of lives.

The princess didn't care about the lives that were lost during the city's construction, nor her mother's grand dreams. She hated both in equal measure. The princess hated the peasants for not being able to support her mother's desires, and her mother for ruling over such a pathetic kingdom.

As her hatred of her mother grew, the princess began to plot the downfall of the queen and her own rise to power. The princess brought her lover, the head of the Royal Marikith Hunters into her confidence and began to plan. The princess' lover wanted to be king as badly as the princess wanted to rule, and told the princess everything he knew about the queen's plans.

The queen had one phobia, marikith. She had chosen the plateau deliberately because it had a large population of marikith inside, and the queen wished to prove to herself that she was beyond such a petty emotion as fear. Armed with this new knowledge the princess formed her plot.

The princess seduced a wizard in service to her mother and made him promise to cast a powerful illusion on the princess at the upcoming royal feast to celebrate the completion of the city. The princess wanted to look like a monstrous marikith queen with the princess' head. The princess hoped the shock would be too much for the elderly queen's heart. Once the queen died the princess would blame the wizard and have him painfully and publicly executed.

The plot progressed until the wizard heard the princess and her royal lover discussing the plan just before the feast. The wizard, furious at being manipulated, formulated his own plans.

At the preordained time during the feast, the wizard stood and cast his spell. Where once stood the princess, now stood a hideous marikith with the princess' head, hideously mutated. The first part of the plan worked perfectly, the elderly queen was overcome by her daughter's new form and she died, quaking with fear.

The Hive Queen

The princess laughed as her mother died, but so did the wizard. The wizard condemned the princess as a harlot and relished telling her that he had not cast an illusion, but actually polymorphed her into her new form. The princess, realizing the wizard spoke the truth, flew into a killing rage. The princess tore through the palace and into the city itself. Her royal lover was forced to assemble a hunting party and drive the princess into the sewers beneath the city. As she crawled into the sewers, the mists of Ravenloft claimed her.

Current Sketch: The Hive Queen is relatively happy in her imprisonment. The marikith are completely obedient to her will and can take care of themselves. The sewers of Timor are comfortable enough for her new form. The Hive Queen's only fear is that she will lay an egg containing a new marikith queen. The Hive Queen slays any new born queens she lays.

Darklord's Tactics: The Hive Queen is a whirlwind of poisoned fangs and claws in combat. She rushes into the middle of her foes with abandon and tries to bite as many of them as possible. One specified foe will be stung with her tail. The tail injects a paralytic poison and a marikith egg into the victim, ensuring the newborn marikith has plenty to eat when it hatches. If the battle turns against the Hive Queen, she will order her marikith to swarm her opponents while she retreats into the maze of sewers and tunnels that make up the domain of Timor.

Borders: When the Hive Queen wishes to close the borders, the tunnels that lead to the surface are flooded with poisonous gas. Any creature, except a marikith, that enters the cloud is incapacitated until the Hive Queen dissipates the clouds. The clouds are not affected by magical or natural effects.



Hive Queen

Large monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 178 (17d10 + 85)

Speed 30 ft., burrow 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	8 (-1)	20 (+5)	20 (+5)	11 (+0)	3 (-4)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +9, Int +9

Skills Athletics +8, Deception +0, Intimidation +0, Stealth +3

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Telepathy 240 ft. (Marikith only), Zherisian, telepathy 240 ft.

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Many Legs. The Queen has advantage on saving throws and ability checks to avoid being knocked prone.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the Queen fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Sense Disruption. The Queen senses any disruption to her domain, such as those created by a paladin or the reality wrinkle of a fiend or celestial. When a paladin or a celestial /fiend creature enters her domain for the first time or casts a spell, she immediately knows the approximate location of the creature.

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the Queen can move up to her speed toward a hostile creature that she can see.

Ambusher. The Queen has advantage on attack rolls against any creature she has surprised.

Pack Tactics. The Queen has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the Queen's allies is within 5 ft. of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Relentless (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). If the Queen takes 15 damage or less that would reduce her to 0 hit points, she is reduced to 1 hit point instead.

Shadow Stealth. While in dim light or darkness, the Queen can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

Spider Climb. The Queen can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Tunneler. The Queen can burrow through solid rock at half her burrow speed and leaves a 10-foot-diameter tunnel in her wake.

Fear Aura. Any creature hostile to the Queen that lays its eyes on her must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw, unless the Queen is incapacitated. On a failed save, the creature is frightened until the end of its second next turn. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to the Queen's Fear Aura for the next 24 hours.

The Hive Queen

Actions

Multiattack. The Queen makes four slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the Hive Queen hits a Medium or smaller creature with a slam twice in the same turn, she can grapple the target (escape DC 16). While grappling, the Queen makes one less slam attack and can't grapple another target.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one grappled creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) piercing and 13 (3d8) poison damage and the target must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the target is poisoned for 1 week. While poisoned in this manner, the target is unconscious and their Constitution score is reduced by 1d4 each day. When they reach 0 the creature becomes a Marikith under the Queen's control. A lesser restoration in combination with a Remove Curse casted upon the victim before it turns, removes the condition and the lost constitution points recover at a rate of 1 per long rest, otherwise, only a *wish* spell can return a Marikith into the person it was before.

Abdomen Stinger(5-6). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) poison damage and the target must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution Saving throw or die.

Legendary Actions

The Queen can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Queen regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Command Marikith. A marikith that the Hive Queen can see uses its reaction to attack a target of the Hive Queen's choice.

Pincer Leg. The Queen makes a *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Skitter Away. The Queen moves half her speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Lair Actions

When fighting inside her lair, the Queen can invoke the ambient magic to take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the Queen can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

Sewage Water Blast. A pipe breaks or a tunnel floods to hit all enemies of the Queen. Creatures in a 20ft straight line that fail on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, take 2d6 bludgeoning and 2d8 poison damage and fall prone. On a success the creatures do not fall prone and take half damage.

Emission of Noxious Gases. The lair fills up with a noxious gas that makes breathing hard and fills the eyes with tears. All creatures that are not immune to the poisoned condition must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned and blinded. Rolling a successful saving throw at the end of each of its next turns ends the conditions.

Snuff the Lights. A burst of foul wind snuffs out all non-magical light sources.

The Queen can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and she can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

Regional Effects

The region containing the Queen's lair is warped by the creature's presence, which creates one or more of the following effects:

◇ Random noises create echoes and headaches. Creatures in the tunnels have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks related to hearing and concentration checks rolls.

◇ The radius of magical sources of light are halved and non-magical lights will randomly extinguish themselves or flicker as in panic.

◇ Pockets of flammable gas fill areas of the tunnels. These can be spotted with a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. If an open flame is brought within a pocket, each creature within 20 feet must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take 22 (5d8) fire damage.

If the Queen dies, with no marikith queen to take her place, Timor will begin to crumble, ending all regional effects immediately. Each 10-foot section of wall causes 2d6 points of damage to all underneath it, falling in a pattern radiating from the center of the web of tunnels. If the group manages to escape from the labyrinth of shafts, they will still have to face the army of irate citizens who are distraught at the destruction of their city. Only the most cunning use of stealth and evasion tactics will allow the party to escape intact. The buildings crumble and teeter as the disintegration of the tunnels undercuts their foundations. The rivers flowing through the city burst through their thin retaining walls and overflow onto the streets, eroding the buildings even further. People run screaming throughout the city. The doppelgangers and the marikith are so busy finding ways to flee themselves that they have no time to feed on the concentrated terror of the people. Each round, every member of the band must make a Dexterity Saving throw with a -2 penalty or be hit by the falling masonry. This causes 1d6 to 3d6 points of damage, depending on the size of the falling item and the whim of the DM. After 20 rounds the players may find themselves at the edge of the city, the mists lying directly ahead. If they turn to look at the city before fleeing into the mists, they see jagged rifts in the earth racing directly toward them, widening even as they approach. They spout a dusty haze into the air, choking and blinding those near the chasms. The rocks inside crumble together, grinding and gnashing like a giant's teeth. Finally, just before the party steps into the mists, the city of Timor collapses into the huge crater the land has become. Then it fades away into the mists. If the group watches carefully, they may see shapes and forms fleeing from the holocaust that Timor has become. If they approach these figures, they may very well see that not all of these are typical citizens of Timor. Some of the escapees are doppelgangers and many are fleeing marikith. Some carry strange bundles of almost humanoid proportions, except for the spiderish abdomen. It is possible that the marikith flee to establish themselves elsewhere.



Islands of Terror

"The worst thing someone gets is isolation. Isolation is the darkest part of any condition."

~ Annie Lennox

Overview

Horror takes many forms, but is a common theme in diverse cultures throughout history. From Ancient Egypt to Creole Louisiana, from Feudal Japan to the Industrial Revolution; all societies have had their scary stories to tell in the dark. Maybe mummies and ghosts, cruel emperors and liches don't frighten you; but fear is a very personal experience. Maybe living dolls or Lovecraftian Eldritch Horrors are what keep you awake at night?

The Islands of Terror (Kalidnay, Bluetspur, Al Kathos, Staunton Bluffs, Souragne, The Endless Road, G'henna, l'Cath, Nosos, Odiere, Rokushima Taiyoo, and Kislova) are sure to contain at least one Domain that will frighten even the hardest adventurer. These horrific lands share no geographical border with the rest of the Core, but travellers through The Mists can find themselves there just the same. These lands isolate their Dark Lords and folk from everyone and everything. What is more difficult once one arrives is finding one's way back out.

Mistways

The Heretic's Egress connects G'henna to Darkon.

The Shattered Passage connects Kartakass to Bluetspur.

The Wake of the Loa connects The Nocturnal Sea to Souragne.

The Way of Venomous Tears connects The Sea of Sorrows to Rokushima Taiyoo. Mount Frostin Rokushima Taiyoo is also connected to Anhalia in Sebua.

The Road of Burning Amber connects The Verduous Lands with the Amber Wastes, passing through the Domain of Al Kathos.

The Path of Innocence is a one-way mistway from Valachan to Odiare.

Chronology

570BC — **Kalidnay** forms.

581BC — **Bluetspur** forms as part of the Core.

586BC — **Al Kathos** forms.

630BC — **Staunton Bluffs** forms.

635BC — **Souragne** forms.

690BC — **The Endless / Winding Road** forms.

702BC — **G'henna** forms as part of the Core.

732BC — **l'Cath** forms.

732BC — **Nosos** forms.

738BC — **Odiare** forms.

740BC — The Grand Conjunction; Bluetspur and G'henna removed from the Core, become Islands of Terror.

740BC — **Rokushima Taiyoo** forms.

748BC — **Kislova** forms.

In addition to the Islands of Terror listed above, additional, solitary Domains officially within the Shadowfell itself were introduced during the 4th Edition. Their chronology is not well characterized, but is summarized below. A few are reported to predate the formation of Barovia. Whether this is simply a difference in how years are counted from one Material Plane to another, a trick of shifting chronology due to the properties of the mist factor, or if these domains served as precursors and practice runs for the beings that formed The Core, is lost to time.

~ 200BC – Margoth the Mad orders the sacrifice of all first born children – **Darani** forms.

~ 200BC – Fotari corrupts the druidic rituals – **Bakumora** forms.

~ 200BC – Silvermaw allows humans to burn the forest – **Timbergorge** forms.

~ 550BC – Ivanya Dreygu and Vorno Kahnebor unite in forbidden matrimony – **Sunderheart** forms.

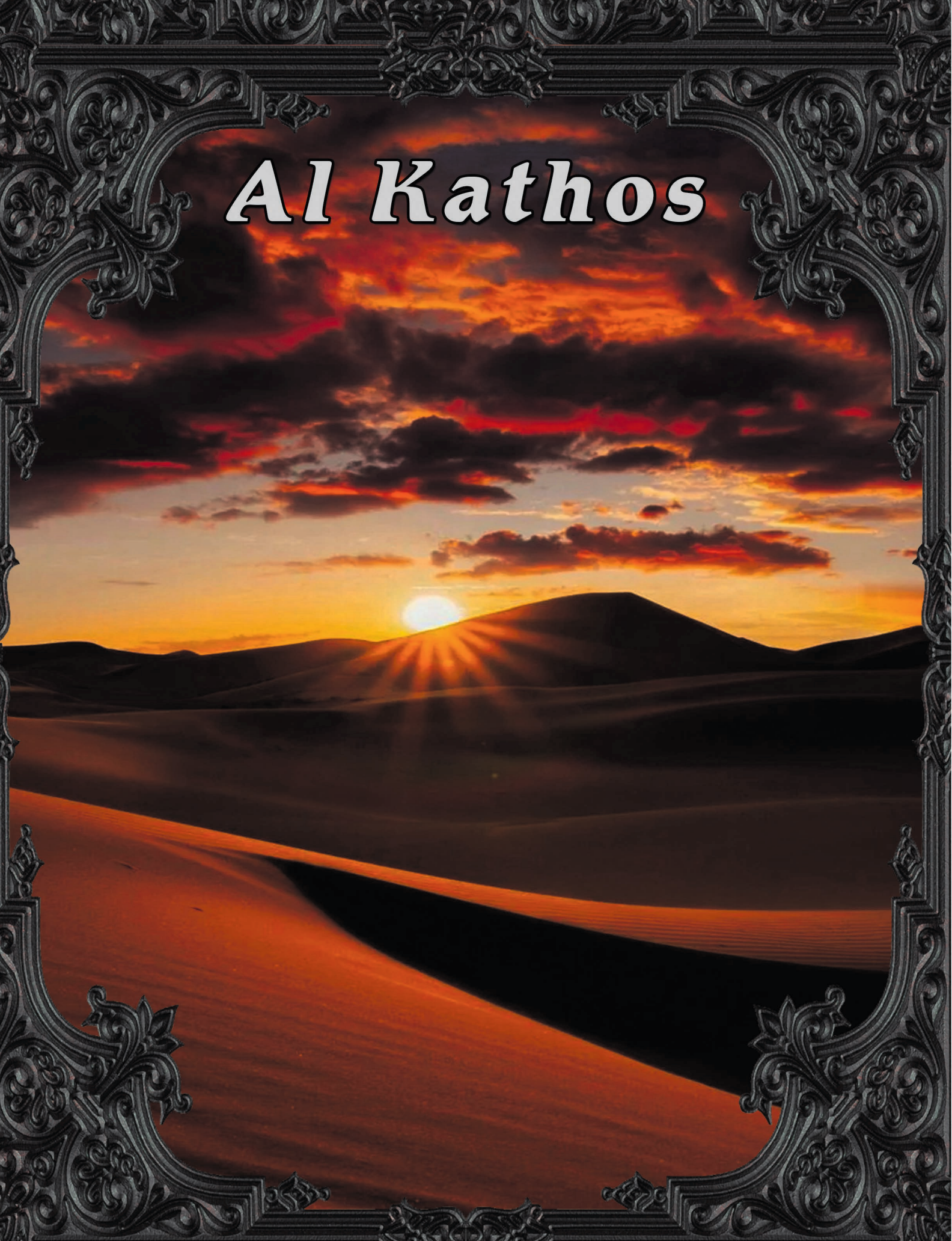
~ 600BC – Durven Graef refuses to send his son to war, but kills him anyway – **Graefmotte** forms.

~ 650BC – Artius and the Rag Man fail to show forgiveness – **Histhaven** forms.

690BC – Eli van Hassen orders the execution of 'The Horseman' – The **Endless Road** forms.

~ 750BC – Arantor slaughters civilians and his daughter – **Monadhan** forms.

Al Kathos



Al Kathos



Al-Kathos is the result of a single creature's pride and desire to be something else. Malbus, an efreet from the Elemental Plane of Fire wanted something more, and believing that he could escape Fate, he conducted dark magical experiments that allowed him to be reborn as a human. Something went wrong during the casting, and instead of being born into a noble family, he was born as the son of a slave. Though he himself was free, he was low-born and would never be able to ascend to the heights of power. Worse, the magic had caused him to lose all memory of his real time as an efreet. He became known as a source of font and wisdom, a man who carefully judged his words before uttering them. However, his true nature would not be denied, and he was only happy in this role until he had his first taste of power.

He was asked to advise the sheikh and happily accepted his place at the sheikh's side, giving his advice in return for fine foods and company. But soon it was not enough. He saw men lacking wit and intelligence who surpassed him in power and ignored his advice, even when they knew he was right. All for petty power plays and pride. He started enjoying his advisor role less and less and was soon beset with a hunger for more. His hunger made him impatient, and one day the sheikh asked for advice on how to deal with a group of merchants near his palace. Merchants who claimed to be under the protection of Malbus, and who were injured. In his haste, he advised the sheikh to attack them, not knowing what he had said, nor knowing that HE was indeed the Malbus of which they spoke.

It is said that he regretted his decision, but that didn't stop Abd-al-Mamat. As the wisest among men, and with all of the sheikh's older sons dead in the attack, he was elected vizier and regent for the sheikh's youngest son, and he taught him well, or so he thought. The man was prone to violent rages, and as time went by, he too started going against the word of his regent. One day, he was found to have killed a young woman in a gruesome manner while drunk, and the vizier was called upon to dispense justice. He pondered for seven days and seven nights, heard all the testimony, and questioned everyone who knew the sheikh and the victim. In the end, his decision was harsh and just, in accordance with the law of the land: The sheikh would be tortured and killed in the same manner as his victim. He stood, and watched it all with tears streaming down his face.

The men of the city came to him, and asked him to take up the mantle of leadership, as none of the noble family were left alive, but they would surely prosper under the leadership of the wisest man of all. Reluctantly, Abd-al-Mamat agreed, but he refused to take the title of sheikh, calling himself instead the vizier, as he was the steward of the people.

And so he dispensed justice, harsh and unrelenting, in accordance with the law of the land. Thieves lost their hands, liars and gossips lost their tongues, and murderers lost their lives.

But one day, a woman came to his town, and for the first time, his heart melted. He judged her to be the most beautiful in the land, a wisp of a woman with the grace of the djinn themselves, and skin of alabaster. But she was betrothed to a merchant. He made a bid for the woman, offering a chest of jewels and gems. But the merchant said no. And suddenly, he was accused of stealing an apple by an old man. And the vizier judged him a thief and had his hand chopped off. The same night, he offered the man his hand, and still the merchant said no. And so it went, both hands, both ears, an eye, and finally his tongue for being a gossip. Finally, Abd-al-Mamat accused him directly of being heartless and exposing his future bride to such torture — and he instantly judged him. His heart was ripped out of his chest, as having lost his tongue he could not speak in his defense. And the next day, he judged that all the belongings of the man, including his bribe should revert to the city, and therefore to Abd-al-Mamat. She chose to jump off from the highest point of the city rather than accept his hand in marriage, but she did not die, rather disappearing.

Abd-al-Mamat mourned her loss, but continued his work, until everyone in the city but he was maimed, and visitors started shunning the city. One night though, vengeance finally came for him, and a literal storm of swords descended, cutting him to ribbons and carrying away his flesh and bones, all but his skull. For most mortals, the story ends here, with his skull landed here, but this was where Malbus awoke once more, in the Burning Citadel, having felt his flesh torn to shreds. And then, in his arrogance, he believed that this was because he'd been granted another chance, one that would allow him to do better in the next one. But the ritual to be reborn is one that takes time, and Malbus can only transform every 75 years — as the descendants of the inhabitants of the Wounded City find the parts of their beloved vizier again, so is he getting ready to be reborn. However, he is doomed to once more forget his time as Malbus, and commit the

Al Kathos

same errors. And so the wheel turns over and over. The story of Al-Kathos doesn't begin and end with Malbus however, as the land is far older than his influence, stretching back thousands of years into the past and the future. In the past, the land was known as Har'akir, and in the future, the land would become known as Sebu. In spite of all his attempts, and his tries, his land was doomed to fall, whether he was involved or not. All these slices of what happened before his time, and what became of the land after he was dragged into the Mists.

Adventures in Al-Kathos should center around the idea of justice and when justice becomes vengeance. Perhaps one of them is accused of a crime they didn't commit while visiting the Wounded City, and depending on when they come there they'll either find the vizier at his most generous and listening or near the end of his reign when he is an unholy terror. Perhaps it's simpler and they have not paid tribute to Malbus, and will instead have to contend with the full might of his hellish legions — but how can one pay the taxes when the lord wasn't home and the Burning Citadel was empty?

"Glory be to Him who changes others and remains Himself unchanged!"
~ Anonymous, The Arabian Nights

Culture Level:	Iron Age
Climate & Terrain:	Warm, desert, oases, and mountains
Year Formed:	Unknown
Population:	10,000
Races (%):	Humans 99%, Other 1%
Languages:	Akiri, Pharazian
Religions:	Akiri pantheon, Rotting Gods, Fate
Government:	Despotism, sheikh tribal leaders
Ruler(s):	Malbus/Abd-al-Mamat
Darklord(s):	Malbus/Abd-al-Mamat
Nationality:	Akiri
Analog:	Arabian Nights

Local Fauna:

There are few animals within Al-Kathos, with most mammals being smaller ones such as hamsters. The only larger mammals in Al-Kathos are camels and horses. Camels are used by the desert-dwelling natives, while the horses are prized possessions of rich nobles and the occasional bandit — valued for their speed and endurance, but a liability due to the amount of water that they need to survive. Insects, arachnids, and reptiles are far more common here, though they tend to hide during the day, as it gets too warm even for them. Scorpions are the most dangerous animals here as they can be found within the deserts, the oases, and the tent cities. Their poison can kill even the largest man in minutes, and natives fear them greatly.

Local Flora:

Most of Al-Kathos is empty landscape. Sand and stone dominate. Only near the oases is there any form of animal life, beyond some extremely hardy cacti. In the oases, however, Al-Kathos comes to life. Each oasis is either surrounded by tents or kept a deep secret to those who know of them. Often, the desert winds cover an oasis in the sand for months, while uncovering new ones. The plant life here is mostly palm trees, though the natives use the water as best as they can to grow crops. They've become incredibly good at this, and the crops that they do have (wheat, beans, and lentils) are grown in huge quantities here, ensuring that the population generally speaking has enough food.

Native Horrors

Al-Kathos is home to werejackals — often referred to as the Jackal-headed priests of the Rotting Gods. These werejackals aren't trying to infect the population with lycanthropy, except as needed to maintain their



Al Kathos

numbers, but are instead trying to convert the populace to the worship of the Rotting Gods. The Rotting Gods are generally considered to be undead versions of the gods of the Akiri Pantheon, in particular Anubis who they worship as the Feaster Upon Corpses, their literal father. Another threat are the Sand Singers — spirits that resemble banshees, but instead of horrible screeches, they sing beautiful songs that can burst the heart of an audience with the beauty of their voices. After killing their victim in this manner though, the Sand Singers consume the souls of the unfortunates who heard their song.

Worst of all though are the minions of Malbus. They are dormant during the time where their lord is in the guise of Abd-al-Mamat, perpetuating the legend that the vizier somehow is able to convince Malbus to leave the population alone. These minions resemble fiends, but most are simple gargoyles. A few are more powerful, however, and Malbus' most powerful minion is a unique cornugon named Bloodfeaster. This particular cornugon is far more intelligent than his compatriots but got stuck within the Mists due to a failed summoning by a visiting wizard to Al-Kathos. After slaying the wizard, it sought out Malbus, in an attempt to establish superiority. Soundly beaten it now serves sullenly, but effectively, still looking for a way out. Whenever Malbus is in human form, Bloodfeaster works on its experiments hellbent on trying to escape.

Terrain type

Al-Kathos is a land of burning sands and grating stone. It is always hot, and during midday, all but the hardiest creatures seek refuge either underground or in the shade. The mountains are only slightly more hospitable than the desert, in that they're not filled with scourging sands. Instead, they're unstable and rockslides are common. As a result, only the bravest live in the mountains.

The oases are like little slices of heaven in this hot environment. It's even possible to feel cool here, but only the biggest oasis, the one that the Wounded City grew up around, is permanent. All the others come and go at the whim of the desert winds. And while rare, the desert storms are powerful enough to rip the hide from an unprotected camel.

Important Landmarks

Burning Citadel

The Burning Citadel resembles a fortress straight out of the infamous City of Brass. The fortress is made from beaten brass, with four towers that hold a commanding view of the surrounding desert. The towers of the for-

ness stretch up over 120 feet from the desert floor, and all of them have an open-topped design, from which gargoyles, Malbus, Bloodfeaster, and others can fly into the countryside. The gates of the fortress are always open, and there is, during the times of Malbus, a constant stream of merchants moving to and from the fortress — they're all here to give tribute to Malbus. Those that pay their tribute are under his protection during their travels across the land, but those that fail to pay are free game for bandits and Malbus' minions.

When Malbus is not here, the gates are closed and none may enter. During this time, merchants prosper as they avoid the strict taxes of their Lord.

Towns and villages:

The Wounded City

The Wounded City is the largest settlement in Al-Kathos and it is home to some 5,000 souls. It is under constant change, depending on where in the cycle it is. When Abd-al-Mamat is in control, the city is in good repair, with the grand Hall of Judgement sitting at the center. From here, the vizier rules over the city, dispensing his harsh brand of justice. When he falls, the city rapidly deteriorates, as it suffers from the depredations of Malbus and his minions. Whenever the vizier is in place, the population is heavily maimed. Almost everyone is missing an arm, a foot, a tongue, or something similar. This is the result of his judgment and the population's lack of it. Abd-al-Mamat holds the population to the highest standards and they always fall short. When Malbus is present, the older population shows off the maimings with pride and talks about the good old days. They'll admit that the laws were harsh, but claim that they were just and that there was peace and prosperity during that time.

Neighboring domain(s):

None

Fun Fact:

Al-Kathos is in the unique position of being the terminus of two different Mistways known as the Molten Amber Mistways. The first is situated within The Elephants' Graveyard of the Wildlands. It starts in a particularly large skull of an old bull elephant, where most people have to crawl through on all fours, and ends in the mountains near the Wounded City. The other travels from a few miles south of the Burning Citadel to Har'Akir, near the Valley of the Pharaoh's Rest. Neither of these are particularly reliable, and often do not work, but they offer a rare escape route from one domain to another.

Malbus

"He is an abomination. He drinks the blood of the guilty, but delights in the blood of the innocent. Death will not take him. He has died and then returned.

He is a beast. I pray to any gods that are left that they deliver us from him."

~ Unnamed Merchant (deceased)

Malbus stands nearly twice the height of a man, sporting massive ram horns and a bestial, snarling face, with fangs that weep thick drops of black saliva and poison. His skin is red and covered in scars. His eyes glow red, pinning anyone who looks into them to the spot. He is heavily muscled, and his hands end in thick talons.

Malbus wears loose black robes that gather at his waist with a thick black belt. His emblem, a silver skull with ram's horns, is emblazoned on the back.

Background: In a city of the exceptional, Malbus was a titan. He was born of fire, thousands of years ago. He was an efreet, a master of one of the primal forces of creation. But efreet are born everyday, and at first glance Malbus was like so many others. But to dismiss him as average would be fatally wrong. Malbus had a fundamental understanding of how magic functioned. He had mastered rituals that could augment his power with the abilities of other beings.

Malbus' first victim was a fiend from the Nine Hells. The fiend was powerful, and devouring his essence had come at a cost. Malbus' head, once the pinnacle of efreeti beauty, was contorted into the head of a ram. Malbus took the lesson in his stride and continued his studies.

Despite his extraordinary abilities and his new head, which Malbus considered striking after a time, other efreet didn't notice him. The common efreet were too worried about the nobles. The nobles were too worried about the sultan. The sultan was too worried about himself. None of them saw the magnificence of Malbus. It drove Malbus to the edges of insanity. It was obvious that he was their superior, just why couldn't they see it?

After a few centuries of studying the magic of the Inner Planes, Malbus turned his attention to the Material Plane. The fountains of creation each contributed to the Material, and the domains of belief, called the Up-

per and Lower Planes, fought for the essence of the creatures that lived there. Malbus realized the creatures that lived there had mastered advanced magics in a fraction of the time that it had taken Malbus. Malbus studied the Material Plane dwellers more and found humans. Humans lived short lives but reached heights of power that other species, even those with powerful innate magic like the genie, could never hope to rival. Quickly, Malbus put a plan into motion. If he could be born a human, with all he knew now, he could use their ways to gain more power. He would be born again and again. Eventually the petty nobles and the ridiculous sultan would be forced to recognize his greatness. Malbus worked quickly and devised a ritual that would place his soul in the body of an unborn human. Once he was in a human body he was sure he could discover the secret of how they gained power so quickly. The ritual went exactly as planned, but Malbus had worked too quickly, and had made serious mistakes. The ritual was supposed to make him the son of a mortal noble, instead Malbus was born a slave, although Malbus himself was free. Even worse, he had no memory of his time as an efreet. In his human body, Malbus was named Abd-al-Mamat. Although in his first life Malbus was cruel, petty, and vindictive, as a human he became known for his wisdom. He was careful with his words, and soon pilgrims came to visit him and hear his wisdom. After a while, something in Malbus remembered his true nature in a subconscious way, and he began to crave power. Malbus was born to slaves, and could never achieve real power. A kernel of envy formed in Malbus. Eventually the sheikh himself summoned Abd-al-Mamat before him and listened to his wisdom. The sheikh was so impressed that he asked Abd-al-Mamat to stay by his side and advise him on important matters. At first Abd-al-Mamat was happy in his new role. The sheikh gave him power, luxurious rooms, and exquisite food, but it couldn't last. Every day Abd-al-Mamat saw high born fools that were given levels of power he couldn't dream of reaching. He began to turn bitter and cold. Abd-al-Mamat's advice became tinged with viciousness and anger. Abd-al-Mamat's council was still excellent, but without remorse. Only the sheikh's youngest son could penetrate the haze of resentment and anger around Abd-al-Mamat. The boy was innocent and somehow always managed to make Abd-al-Mamat smile. Soon Abd-al-Mamat faced another problem. The servants began to swear he stalked the palace at night, calling himself Malbus and issuing strange commands. Abd-al-Mamat didn't remember giving the commands and saw the servants as a threat to everything he had earned for himself. He had the servants quietly killed. One night the sheikh

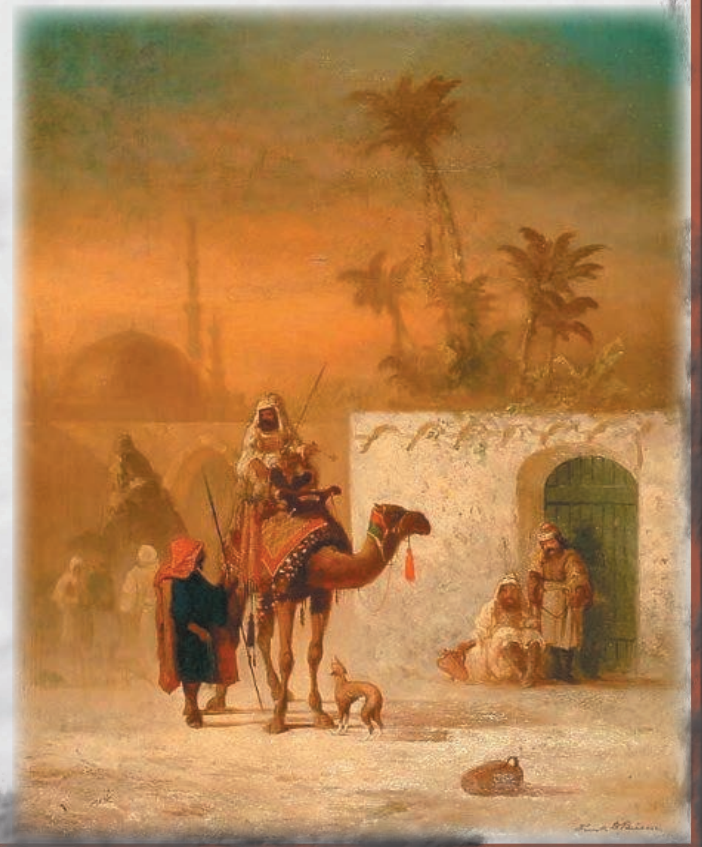
Malbus

summoned Abd-al-Mamat before him. Merchants had appeared outside the city gates demanding the protection of the city guards as they rode across the desert. The merchants said the protection was promised by a counselor to the king named Malbus. The name formed a knot in the pit of Abd-al-Mamat's stomach and he advised the sheikh to attack immediately. The merchant caravan was large and well protected by professional mercenaries. The sheikh's forces fought hard and well, but casualties were high. The sheikh and all of his eldest sons were slain in the fighting. Abd-al-Mamat was asked to educate the youngest son and make him ready for the heavy burden of leadership. The boy hated the lessons and the responsibilities of ruling, becoming prone to psychotic rages. One night the young boy, in a fit of drunkenness, used a small blade to flay the skin from a servant's arms. He was caught in the act and Abd-al-Mamat was asked to dispense judgement. Abd-al-Mamat truly cared for the boy but had no choice. The wise man delayed his judgement for seven days before declaring the prince must die the same way the serving girl had. Abd-al-Mamat watched the torturers flay the skin from the screaming young man, weeping the entire time. After the death of the prince, Abd-al-Mamat was asked to assume the mantle of leadership. He did so, but refused to be called sheikh, only allowing himself to take the title of vizier. As vizier, Abd-al-Mamat grew harsher, and soon most of the people under his rule were missing a hand or an eye. The vizier handed out punishments with no thought of extenuating circumstances or outside influences. To make matters worse, Abd-al-Mamat started to abuse his power. He had a merchant killed slowly, piece by piece so the vizier could claim his bride. Dozens of minor crimes were punishable by death. It became too much. The people and the palace guard flooded the Burning Citadel and tore Abd-al-Mamat apart. Malbus awoke in the Burning Citadel, but things had changed. The efreet was in his original body and remembered his past lives. An army of loyal devils occupied the citadel, awaiting his command, and more human lackeys eager to do his bidding. Malbus descended on the city with a vengeance. He slaughtered and rampaged until he was slain by adventurers, only to be reborn as Abd-al-Mamat. Malbus' body exploded when he died, scattering to the far corners of the realm. And so the eternal cycle began. Abd-al-Mamat rules for seventy-five years from the Hall of Justice while Malbus' minions search for his body and perform the ritual that awakens the efreet. Then Malbus rules over an abattoir of violence and degradation until he is slain. Nothing seems to stop the pattern, and while Malbus remembers everything, Abd-al-Mamat has no memory of his terrible alter ego.

Current Sketch: Malbus rules Al-Kathos with an iron fist. As Malbus, he feasts on human flesh and his devils tear his domain apart. As Abd-al-Mamat, the devils are locked in the Burning Citadel but the population lives in fear of losing life or limb for minor infractions. Malbus has become convinced he can split Abd-al-Mamat off from himself. He has devised several bloody rituals to achieve this, but each has failed. Malbus knows he is getting close.

Darklord's Tactics: Malbus carries no weapons except his flail, Bel's Vengeance, which he mainly uses to torture his victims or in really desperate situations, which are too rare. He loves the feel of flesh splitting beneath his claws and blood gushing around his fangs. Malbus is a straightforward combatant, but is intelligent and vicious. If the battle goes poorly for him he will retreat and formulate new plans. If an enemy proves formidable, then Malbus will trap them in his domain and wear them down with constant attacks from his diabolic minions before moving in for the kill. Abd-al-Mamat does not engage in combat. He will summon his guards and attempt to flee at the first sign of danger.

Borders: When the borders of Al-Kathos are closed, the domain is surrounded by a hoard of cackling devils. Any creature foolish enough to approach the border is attacked by the diabolic swarm.



Malbus



Malbus

Large monstrosity (fiend), lawful evil

Armor Class 23 (Full Plate +1, Shield +2)

Hit Points 325 (26d10 + 182)

Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	16 (+3)	24 (+7)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Int +11, Wis +9, Cha +14

Skills Insight +9, Intimidation +14, Medicine +9, Persuasion +14, Religion +11

Damage Immunities fire, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantite

Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Abyssal, Akiri, Common, Ignan, Infernal

Challenge 26 (90,000 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. Malbus' innate spell casting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 22, +14 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic*

3/Day: *deseccration**, *enlarge/reduce*, *inflict wounds*, *searing smite*, *tongues*

2/Day: *contagion*

1/Day each: *conjure elemental* (fire elemental only), *gaseous form*, *invisibility*, *major image*, *wall of fire*

*New spell found in this book.

Lust and Fear. Malbus is fearful of women. The many women in his domain taunt him by their very presence; he wants to get close to them but cannot, as his fear of them grows stronger the closer they draw near to him. Malbus rolls all attack rolls and ability checks with disadvantage against a humanoid female creature. When a woman touches or attacks him he must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving

throw or become frightened of her for as long as he keeps eye contact and knows that she is in close proximity. The frightened condition only applies against the female characters. If Malbus succeeds on his saving throw, he is immune to this condition against that female character for 24 hours and becomes terribly violent against that character, ignoring other targets when possible.

Regeneration. Malbus regains 20 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point.

Pillar of Flame 1/Day. Malbus summons a howling red wind carrying thick dark flames to cover an area in a 20-foot radius, 40-foot-high cylinder centered on a point within 300ft range. The area is heavily obscured, and flammable objects are ignited. When a creature enters the area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must make a Constitution saving throw. A creature takes 6d6 fire damage on a failed save, and half as much on a successful save. The flaming winds in the area are so strong that making headway is difficult. The pillar's area of effect is considered difficult terrain. The pillar of flame lasts for 1 minute and Malbus can use a bonus action to move it 20ft in a straight line each turn.

Create Infernal Soldier. Malbus can summon the power of the devil Bel, to create infernal soldiers. As an action, Malbus transforms a single willing humanoid creature or a humanoid creature that is unconscious and on the brink of death to an Infernal Soldier under his absolute command. The creature keeps their original stat block with the only changes being the ones mentioned in the Infernal Soldier Template. It takes 1 minute for the transformation to be completed and if Holy Water is sprinkled on the transforming body, the transformation reverts and stops.

Crusher. Malbus is practiced in the art of crushing his enemies, granting him the following benefits:

Once per turn, when he hits a creature with an attack that deals bludgeoning damage, he can move it 5 feet to an unoccupied space, provided the target is no more than one size larger than him.

When he scores a critical hit that deals bludgeoning damage to a creature, attack rolls against that creature are made with advantage until the start of his next turn.

Debilitating Aura. Malbus radiates a malign aura that causes enemies within 10 feet of him to take a -1 penalty to their Armor Class.

Rejuvenation. If Malbus dies, his body disintegrates in a flash of fire and puff of smoke, leaving behind only the

Malbus

equipment he was wearing or carrying. 24 hours later he reforms naked sitting on his throne, in the throne room.

Fiery Hatred. Malbus' melee attacks deal an extra 2d6 fire damage (included in the attack).

Lawful Sense. The presence of chaos registers on Malbus' senses like a noxious odor, and law rings like heavenly music in his ears. As an action, Malbus can open his awareness to detect such forces. Until the end of his next turn, he knows the location of any chaotic or lawful creature within 60 feet of him that is not behind total cover. Malbus can use this feature 6 times. When he finishes a long rest, he regains all expended uses.

Unholy Smite 3/Day. When Malbus hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, he can charge his weapon with negative energies to deal 3d8 extra Necrotic damage to the target, in addition to the weapon's damage. In addition, all of Malbus' melee attacks are infused with necrotic energies. Whenever Malbus hits a creature with a melee weapon, the creature takes an extra 1d8 necrotic damage (included in the attack)

Dueling Style. When Malbus is wielding a melee weapon in one hand and no other weapons, he gains a +2 bonus to damage rolls with that weapon (included in the attack).

Mental Fortitude. Malbus is immune to charms, illusions and other mind-affecting magic.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Malbus fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when Malbus hits with it (included in the attack).

Axiomatic Flail. Malbus' Flail, Bel's Vengeance, is enchanted to hunt down Chaotic aligned creatures. When it strikes such a creature, it deals 2d6 extra damage.

Magic Resistance. Malbus has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Battle to Death. As long as Malbus fights in a battle, it is near impossible to stop fighting. Nobody — including Malbus — can retreat or decide to live to fight another day. The participants of the combat have their blood boil and do not even consider fleeing or stop fighting. If a creature wants to retreat, they have to succeed on a DC 22 Charisma saving throw. Those that succeed can flee normally. Those that fail will fall into a battle frenzy and are not allowed to willingly try to escape. The battle frenzy lasts until Malbus calls off the fight or all opposing forces are dead or unconscious.

Actions

Multiattack. Malbus makes two Bel's Vengeance attacks or uses his Hurl Flame twice.

Bel's Vengeance. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (2d8 + 10) bludgeoning plus 7 (2d6) fire damage plus 2d8 necrotic damage.

Hurl Flame. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +14 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (5d6) fire damage.

Razor Sharp Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing plus 1d8 necrotic plus 2d6 fire damage.

Feast on Mortal Flesh. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one incapacitated humanoid creature within 5ft. *Hit:* The target takes 55 (10d10) piercing + 2d6 fire damage. On a to hit roll of a 19-20, the target loses a random body part determined by the Dungeon Master.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of Malbus's choice that is within 120 feet and is aware of him must succeed on a DC 22 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Malbus's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.



Bluetspur



Bluetspur



Bluetspur is a land of waking nightmares. The surface is barren and pounded by lightning storms constantly, a sign of the brain activity that takes place deep within its underbelly.

Bluetspur used to lie in the Core before the Grand Conjunction, but during that turmoil, it disappeared and people have been speculating that it may be an Island of Terror at this point, afloat in the mists somewhere, with only links like the Black Spire mistway in Hazlan connecting it with the rest of the lands in the mists. The truth is far worse: It is now both easier to get to and less than it has ever been before, as it can be accessed from almost every domain if only the technology was there. The alien place has taken the place of the moon, though none can see it.

Though the moon now has a somewhat breathable atmosphere, it remains the same on the surface, though now wracked by lightning storms. Within, however, the domain of the God-Brain has dramatically expanded. And while Mt. Makab still exists, it is now on the dark side of the moon, where astronomers can no longer observe it. Not only that, but while the God-Brain remains the only Elder Brain within Bluetspur, it has gone from having only one illithid city under its control to having a nation of them, with several massive cities under its guidance. It has grown massively in the process as well, nearly doubling in size and with its power now extended across the moon.

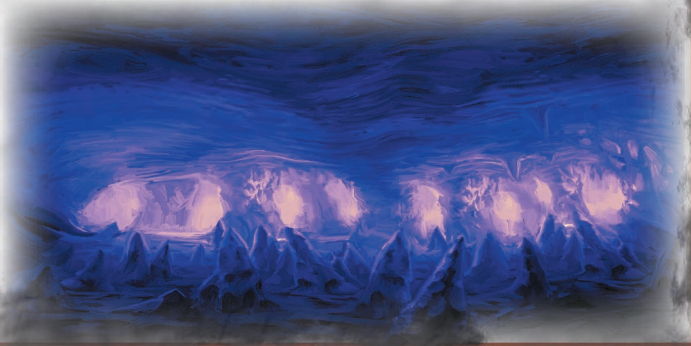
A few other constants remain: The illithid are vastly outnumbered by their human, Thaani, slaves, but these are far too cowed to be anything but tools and fodder for the illithids. Any thought of revolt is instantly quashed by the God-Brain itself. And even if it didn't, the power of the illithids would be too much for humans to handle. Another constant is the threat of the illithid vampires — unlike other kinds of vampires, when illithids turn, they lose their incredible mental capacity, to be replaced by ravenous, unthinking hunger, which should make them easy targets for the illithids. But unfortunately, the undead are immune to many of the tricks that the illithids would normally use. Worse, they are the creation of one of the God-Brain's most powerful servants, the High Master Illithid who is attempting to usurp the power of the God-Brain, and having worked together with Lyssa von Zarovich — a vampire relative of Count Strahd von Zarovich of Barovia. Though Lyssa left when the scheme initially failed, the God-Brain had the personality of the High Master Illithid reimplanted in another

tadpole, and regrown. The God-Brain is well aware of what is happening and is finding itself amused by the attempts of the High Master Illithid. Eradicating the threat would be but a moment of frontal lobe activity for it, but it is enjoying the game of cat and mouse far too much for it to end, even if it occasionally has to restart the scheming by restoring its servant to another body without memories of the failed coup.

Adventures in Bluetspur should revolve around either the conflict of the High Master Illithid with the God-Brain or around the escape of the slaves from the domain (nigh-impossible though it may be). Perhaps they discover that one of their friends has been abducted or perhaps one of their own number is. More likely though is that a person they need has been taken and they'll need to rescue them from the moon. Once they arrive they might find that person mid-transformation into an illithid, and from there it's a race against time before the transformation is complete.

"The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown."
~ H. P. Lovecraft.

Culture Level:	Dark Ages (The illithid would be counted higher, but they have no need for technology, rather using their mind powers or slaves)
Climate & Terrain:	Cold mountains and plains (on the surface), temperate underground
Year Formed:	581 BC
Population:	Unknown
Races (%):	Humans 85%, Illithid 15%
Languages:	Common, Illithid, Thaani
Religions:	None
Government:	Psionic consensus
Ruler(s):	Illithid God-Brain
Darklord(s):	Illithid God-Brain
Nationality:	Thaani
Analog:	The Underdark, Cthulhu Mythos



Bluetspur

Local Fauna:

Nothing living survives on the surface of Bluetspur. The lightning storms are too fierce for any normal creatures to survive there, and the few that could do it are smart enough to stay away, even if they could somehow cross the night sky to gain access to the domain. Beneath the ground the story is much the same — the only living creatures are the Thaani and the illithids. Together with the sparsity of plant life (described below) that leaves the matter of food for the inhabitants. The illithids eat the brains of their thralls and victims, but the food of the slaves may well be more horrific: Whenever a creature has its mind devoured by one of the illithids, the body is brought to a series of enormous vats in each illithid city, and dunked. After a lengthy, if simple, process, the result is a gelatinous goo that the thralls can then eat. In effect, they've been forced into cannibalism of their own kind, and they don't even know it.

Local Flora:

The surface of Bluetspur is completely and utterly devoid of plant life. Nothing can survive on the surface, even though there is both some brackish water and air. But the lack of natural sunlight prevents much of anything from growing, and anything that tries to grow is destroyed in the relentless lightning storms that rage across the surface of the domain. In fact, the lightning storms are constant, and the lightning so heavy that any creature exposed for more than one round is hit by lightning.

The underground is a different story. Underneath the surface are a multitude of tunnels. The tunnels are slick with moisture, and even the air is slightly damp. The water isn't quite clean fresh water, but close. It comes with a slightly briny aftertaste. Here is where you can find edible fungi, though not all of them are. The fungus comprises some of the Thaani's diet, so they spend their time cultivating it, when not doing other work for the illithids. The illithid themselves do not eat the fungus, but instead, use some of it for lighting when needed and ground into powder and mixed to create inks for magical work. Some of the fungus is even big enough to be hollowed out and lived in, or dried (though it is difficult in the moist environment of Bluetspur) and used for cooking fires.

Native Horrors

To put it mildly, the illithid natives ARE the horrors of the domain, and within the reach of the God-Brain, nothing can exist without its approval. However, a few alhoon (illithid lichens) have managed to avoid its notice and there are rumors among the normal illithids that vampiric ones have arrived. If this is true, it could pose a grave danger to their way of life.

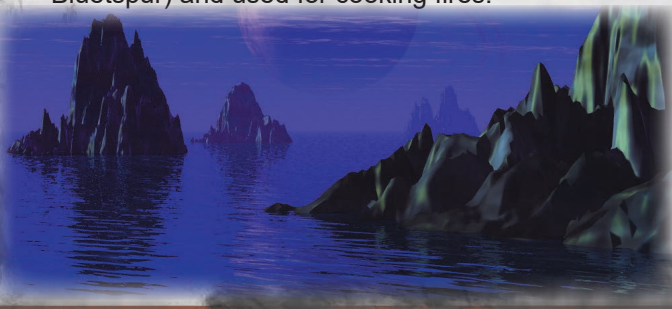
Terrain type

The surface terrain of Bluetspur is a frigid and lightning-blasted wasteland of mountains and valleys. The surface is uninhabitable because of the extreme hostility of the domain, which worsened after its transport from the Core and into the sky. Before the Grand Conjunction, only the night was racked with lightning storms, but now there is no difference, both night and day are filled with them. And all the while, the purple sky above remains the same.

Underground is warmer, almost comfortable, but very moist. The moisture permeates everything, and anyone visiting is covered in a sheen of briny fluid within minutes, though it never grows thick enough to truly annoy. The tunnels here are strangely organic, almost as if they were grown from the very ground, rather than tunneled or the result of tectonic activity. The caves, except for the Lair of the Elder Brain, are all artificial constructs, either dug by the labor of thousands of thralls, or the magic and mind powers of their illithid masters.



Once or twice a month, Bluetspur is rocked by a strange kind of quake. Known as a psychic quake, these affect the brain of every living being within the domain, causing them to have searing pain running through their heads as their brains are rocked within their skulls. The really unlucky ones have blackouts and nosebleeds. These psychic convulsions are caused by the God-Brain experiencing a strange form of headache whenever it encounters another darklord on its astral travels. Usually, these quakes subside in seconds as the God-Brain brushes past, but sometimes it lingers on the activities of that darklord for hours. Only it knows why it chooses to do so, in spite of the pain it causes both itself and its subjects.



Bluetspur



Important Landmarks

Lair of the Elder Brain

The Lair of the Elder Brain is only accessible via teleportation magic, usually that of the God-Brain or the High Master Illithid. Those who manage to get here find themselves in a cave that is 100 feet tall and find most of the ground here giving way to a steaming, glowing, briny pool some 50 feet deep. Within it sits the God-Brain, and the only part of this domain that isn't within reach of the brain is a wide shelf of rock some 100 feet wide and 200 feet long, where the God-Brain's petitioners can stand without drowning in the pool.

Within the pool floats the God-Brain and a host of illithid tadpoles, the young of the species. Requiring no sustenance beyond the pool, the God-Brain never allows anyone but the tadpoles to come closer to it than the shelf above, except for when it is time to implant a new tadpole into a victim. It levitates itself up to the edge of the ledge, bringing one of the young with it. It psionically places the tadpole at the nasal cavity of the victim and then watches with glee as the tadpole enters the nose and devours the victim's brain, eventually turning it into another mind flayer.

Towns and villages:

Mt. Makab

While not the only settlement in Bluetspur after its transformation, it is by far the most important, as it is the home of the God-Brain, as well as being home to the largest concentration of illithids and slaves. (Some 6,000 mind flayers make their home here, along with approximately 35,000 Thaani thralls. A few more make their homes here, such as captive dwarves and elves, but they are incredibly rare).

Mt. Makab's tunnels are a nightmarish maze that resembles purple blood veins as they stretch organically beneath the ground for miles. Within these tunnels are massive caves where slaves are kept in

pens, ready for feeding, along with the dwellings of the mind flayers and the laboratories where they conduct psychic experiments upon their captives. Most horrific of all is likely the Arena and the Lair of the Elder Brain (described above). The Arena is an amphitheater with hundreds of seats around it, and on the center stage is a single table. From here, one of the artists of the illithids will host a "performative eating", where they project the thoughts and emotions of the person whose brain they are eating onto the waiting crowd. These sessions are always well attended.

Leading the city of Mt. Makab under normal circumstances is the High Master Illithid, a creature of prodigious power, and even greater ambition. It wishes to replace the God-Brain as the ruler of Bluetspur, something that is of endless amusement to the God-Brain, as the plot stands no chance of succeeding.

Neighboring domain(s):

None (all with a moon in the sky)

Fun Fact:

Occasionally, mind flayer "strike teams" teleport down to the surface of one of the other domains, to replenish the gene pool of their thralls. These strike teams are almost never seen, but many of the unexplained disappearances of people in various domains are due to these. The teleportation magic that they use is unknown but only seems to work when the moon is visible in the sky of their target domain. They seem unable to choose a specific domain, instead arriving in one where it is clear. Verbrek seems to get more than its fair share of these visits, much to the annoyance of the mind flayers who find that the mind of the lycanthropes has an acrid taste that makes them almost inedible.



The God-Brain

"It placed something inside my head.

I was brought before it and my head was forced into this disgusting pool.

Others were there. They changed. Soon they became the tentacled monsters that were everywhere in the chambers.

I didn't change. But I can hear its thoughts.

It's inside me. Telling me what to think.

I don't know where I stop and it begins."

~ Found scrawled on a piece of parchment outside the Kartakkan Inn

The God-Brain resembles a massive gray-green brain spanning nearly twenty feet across. The brain floats in a pool of brine, ganglia floating around it, and swarmed by massive numbers of mind flayer larvae. The chamber reeks of ammonia and salt. Intelligent creatures with an Intelligence of 4 or more feel the thoughts of the God-Brain scraping the inside of their skulls.

Background: The God-Brain started life in a sea of gray cloud and thought. The God-Brain had found a base on the Astral Plane, a realm of timeless thought. There is no gravity on the Astral Plane, so the God-Brain floated in a ball of brine, deep under an abandoned githyanki colony. The githyanki are ancient enemies of the illithids, and the God-Brain relished the irony of using one of their colonies as its base of operations. Like most illithid elder brains, the God-Brain was ruthlessly intelligent and ambitious. It hatched a plan to renew the mind flayer empire and rule it forever as the newest of the illithid.

Its sent agents from the Astral Plane to every corner of the multiverse. They created cults of the God-Brain, who they portrayed as a deity of knowledge and learning, spreading its worship far and wide. At the same time, agents of the God-Brain began infiltrating kingdoms across the multiverse as advisors and grand viziers.

There is no time on the Astral Plane, so as long as the God-Brain remained there, it would forever escape the effects of aging, minimal as those effects are to an elder brain. After nearly a millennia, the God-Brain began to feel buoyed by the power of its worshippers. Smaller kingdoms on various worlds were completely

in its thrall, with worship of the God-Brain becoming the state religion. The plan was working, and the God-Brain had all the time in the multiverse to continue its domination. Eventually, such an accumulation of power couldn't go unnoticed. The God-Brain was approached by a single illithid it didn't recognize. The illithid resisted all attempts to be controlled or telepathically scanned. A presence filled the chamber, all emanating from that one mind flayer. The illithid approached the God-Brain and bade it not to attempt to become a god. The gods of the Illithid race jealously guarded their power; this was the only warning the God-Brain was going to get. The God-Brain had its servants tear the intruder apart. Soon things began to go wrong. The cults of the God-Brain began to fall apart. The kingdoms it controlled from the shadows erupted into rebellion, and perhaps worst of all, the githyanki found it. They appeared one day with hundreds of troops, and dozens of dragons. The minions the God-Brain had on hand were nowhere near enough to deal with the forces arrayed against them, and they were slaughtered.

Movement on the Astral Plane has nothing to do with the physical body, but the power of the mind. The God-Brain fled. The githyanki chased the fleeing God-Brain, but weren't fast enough. Unfortunately for the God-Brain, the dragons were another matter. Several ancient red dragons kept pace, even if they couldn't catch the God-Brain, and they were close enough to use their fiery breath weapons. The githyanki on the backs of the dragons peppered the God-Brain with arrows. Soon the God-Brain was burned, and punctured by dozens of arrows. Desperate to escape, the God-Brain plunged through a wall of mists that formed in front of it. The world went black. When the God-Brain awoke, it was in a vast underground chamber. It was being attended by loyal mind flayers and thralls. It had escaped the githyanki, but had no idea where it was or what had happened.



The God-Brain

Current Sketch: The God-Brain of Bluetspur quickly realized its predicament. Since that day it has moved quickly to explore the length and breadth of Ravenloft and learn what it can of the dark powers that control the demiplane. It has an army of spies and operatives across Ravenloft. The God-Brain maintains telepathic contact with its spies across the demiplane of Ravenloft. Whatever they learn, the God-Brain learns as well. It seems to be searching for something, a powerful artifact, a means of escape, or a specific person or animal, no one knows for sure.

Creatures that have explored the surface of Bluetspur claim they feel the God-Brain digging into their minds, learning their thoughts and memories. Some sages speculate the God-Brain is living vicariously through the creatures that come to its domain.

The most powerful illithid in Bluetspur, known as the High Master Illithid, has been brewing rebellion against the God-Brain. The High Master Illithid is arrogant enough to think that it can mask its thoughts from the God-Brain. The God-Brain finds the foolishness of the High Master amusing, and has even implanted post hypnotic suggestions into the High Master to improve his plans.

Darklord's Tactics: The God-Brain cannot make physical attacks but it is an incredibly powerful psion. It can melt the brain of any creature within miles of its lair. It can telekinetically pull enemies into its brine pool and hold them at its bottom, drowning and being devoured alive by hundreds of larva. It can rip the souls from its enemies and use them to power its own spells and abilities. The God-Brain is a terrifying opponent, arguably one of the strongest darklords in Ravenloft.

In addition to its own tremendous might, the God-Brain is constantly surrounded by hundreds of mind flayer attendants, slaves, and bodyguards. The God-Brain will gladly sacrifice each and every one of its minions to ensure its survival.

Borders: When the God-Brain closes its border, the tunnels that lead to the surface are sealed with tons of stone. Any attempt to meld with or teleport past the stone fails. On the surface the domain is surrounded by a wall of pure psionic force. Any creature that comes into contact with the wall is stunned for one hour. When they wake they have been teleported 1d10 miles into the domain of Bluetspur.



The Illithid God-Brain

Huge aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 375 (30d12 + 180)

Speed 5 ft., fly 20 ft. (hover), swim 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	23 (+6)	30 (+10)	19 (+4)	25 (+7)

Saving Throws Int +18, Wis +12, Cha +15

Skills Arcana +18, Deception +15, Insight +12, Intimidation +15, Persuasion +15

Damage Immunities cold, poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, prone

Senses blindsight 240 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages understands all languages but can't speak, telepathy 5 miles.

Challenge 25 (75,000 XP)

Insanity. All non-aberrations chosen by the God-Brain within its telepathic range automatically lose 1 point of Intelligence per round at the start of the God-Brain's turn. Creatures that are immune to the charmed condition or those who can block telepathic abilities are unaffected. This effect can be averted if the creature is wearing a headdress made out of lead or tin over their head. A *greater restoration* spell restores all lost points, otherwise the loss is permanent for as long as the creature remains within the domain. Outside of Bluetspur, one point per day is regained.

Magic Resistance. The God-Brain has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

The God-Brain

Psychic Defense. While the God-Brain is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, its AC includes its Wisdom modifier.

Innate Spellcasting. The God-Brain's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 26, +18 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect thoughts, shield, shocking grasp, telekinesis*
3/Day each: *confusion, dominate person, lightning bolt, wall of force*
1/Day each: *dominate monster, feeblemind*

Creature Sense. The God-Brain is aware of the presence of creatures within 5 miles of it that have an Intelligence score of 4 or higher. It knows the distance and direction to each creature, as well as each one's Intelligence score, but can sense nothing else about it. A creature protected by a mind blank spell, a nondetection spell, or similar magic can't be perceived in this manner.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the God-Brain fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Telepathic Hub. The God-Brain can use its telepathy to initiate and maintain telepathic conversations with up to twenty creatures at a time. The God-Brain can let those creatures telepathically hear each other while connected in this way.

Overwhelming Mind. The God-Brain's mind is overwhelming in its power and alien structure. It is immune to any effect that would sense its emotions or read its thoughts, and divination spells. The first time a creature other than an aberration makes mental contact with the God-Brain it must succeed at a DC 26 Wisdom saving throw or suffer an indefinite madness. On a successful save, the creature cannot take reactions and can make either an action or a bonus action (not both) for 1 round; creatures that are immune to being stunned are unaffected. This effect can occur whether the God-Brain initiates mental contact (such as via a dream, or once per round merely by telepathic communication) if it so desires, or another creature attempts to do so (such as via detect thoughts or dominate monster). Once a creature is exposed to the God-Brain's overwhelming mind, it is immune to this effect for 24 hours.

Intellect Discorporation. If the God-Brain is killed, its body immediately fades away into a noxious cloud of otherworldly vapour that fills a 70ft area. This cloud blocks vision as per *fog cloud* but can't be dispersed by any amount of wind. Any creature in this area must succeed at a DC 26 Constitution save or be poisoned for as long as it remains in the cloud and for an additional 1d10 rounds after it leaves the area. Poisoned creatures cannot take reactions or bonus actions.

Reel. The God-Brain can, as a bonus action, pull each creature grappled by it up to 30 feet straight toward it.

Bud Brain Golem. Once per day, the God-Brain can bud a portion of its flesh, forming a golem like creature composed of fused and hardened brains. The God-Brain can never have more than three active brain golems at a time.

Regeneration. The God-Brain regains 20 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point.

Absolute Mind. All psychic contests and saving throws against any of the God-Brain's powers are made with a 5 penalty. Any Intelligence based ability check the God-Brain takes has a +10 bonus on the roll.

Actions

Multiaction. The God-Brain makes two tentacle attacks.

Tentacle. Melee Weapon Attack: +18 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. Hit: 28 (4d8 + 10) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Huge or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 26) and takes 9 (1d8+5) psychic damage at the start of each of its turns until the grapple ends. The God-Brain can have up to six targets grappled at a time.

Spark Tentacle. Melee Weapon Attack: +18 to hit, reach 30 ft., one creature grappled by the God-Brain. Hit: 32 (4d10 + 10) psychic damage. If the target is Large or smaller, it must succeed on a DC 26 Intelligence saving throw or be incapacitated until the grapple ends.

Mind Blast (Recharge 5–6). The God-Brain magically emits psychic energy. Creatures of the God-Brain's choice within 60 feet of it must succeed on a DC 26 Intelligence saving throw or take 37 (5d10 + 10) psychic damage and be stunned for 1 minute. A target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Psychic Link. The God-Brain targets one incapacitated creature it can perceive with its Creature Sense trait and establishes a psychic link with that creature. Until the psychic link ends, the God-Brain can perceive everything the target senses. The target becomes aware that something is linked to its mind once it is no longer incapacitated, and the God-Brain can terminate the link at any time (no action required). The target can use an action on its turn to attempt to break the psychic link, doing so with a successful DC 26 Charisma saving throw. On a successful save, the target takes 10 (3d6) psychic damage. The psychic link also ends if the target and the God-Brain are more than 5 miles apart, with no consequences to the target. The God-Brain can form psychic links with up to twenty creatures at a time.

Sense Thoughts. The God-Brain targets a creature with which it has a psychic link. It gains insight into the target's reasoning, its emotional state, and thoughts that loom large in its mind (including things the target worries about, loves, or hates). The God-Brain can also make a Charisma (Deception) check with advantage to deceive the target's mind into thinking it believes one idea or feels a particular emotion. The target contests this attempt with a Wisdom (Insight) check. If the God-Brain succeeds, the mind believes the deception for 1 hour or until evidence of the lie is presented to the target.

Brain Consumption. Melee Weapon Attack: +18 to hit, reach 5 ft., one incapacitated humanoid grappled by the God-Brain. Hit: The target takes 78 (12d12) piercing damage. If this damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the God-Brain kills the target by absorbing its brain and gains 20 temporary hit points.

The God-Brain

Legendary Actions

The God-Brain can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. It regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Tentacle. The God-Brain makes a tentacle attack.

Break Concentration. The God-Brain targets a creature within 120 feet of it with which it has a psychic link. It breaks the creature's concentration on a spell it has cast. The creature also takes 1d4 psychic damage per level of the spell.

Psychic Pulse. The God-Brain targets a creature within 120 feet of it with which it has a psychic link. Enemies of the God-Brain within 10 feet of that creature take 10 (3d6) psychic damage.

Sever Psychic Link. The God-Brain targets a creature within 120 feet of it with which it has a psychic link. It ends the link, causing the creature to have disadvantage on all ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws until the end of the creature's next turn.

Esoteric Reality (2-Actions). The God-Brain imposes one of the following effects:

Wipe a Spell from History. The God-Brain picks a spell that a creature has used against it or its allies. This spell no longer exists for any of the participants, for the duration of the combat or until a different spell is picked.

Swap Minds. Randomly swap two enemy character sheets or stat blocks for the rest of the battle or until this ability is used again.

Burn Slot. The God-Brain targets a creature that can cast spells and burns one spell slot of a level chosen by the target.

Lair Actions

When fighting inside its lair, the God-Brain can invoke the ambient magic to take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the God-Brain can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

- Cold aura permeates a 20-foot radius centered on a point the God-Brain can see within 120 feet. Creatures in the area must succeed on a DC 26 Constitution saving throw or take 14 (4d6) cold damage.
- Liquid shadows afflict a 20-foot radius centered on a point the God-Brain can see within 120 feet. Creatures in the area must succeed on a DC 26 Wisdom saving throw or suffer a short-term madness.
- The God-Brain casts *wall of force*.
- The God-Brain targets one friendly creature it can sense within 120 feet of it. The target has a flash of inspiration and gains advantage on one attack roll, ability check, or saving throw it makes before the end of its next turn. If the target doesn't or can't use this benefit in that time, the inspiration is lost.
- The God-Brain targets one creature it can sense within 120 feet of it and anchors it by sheer force of will. The target must succeed on a DC 26 Charisma saving

throw or be unable to leave its current space. It can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

- The God-Brain chooses two creatures within 120 feet that it can see. The targets must succeed on a DC 26 Intelligence saving throw. On a failure, the creature moves up to 10 feet in a direction of the God-Brain's choice, without provoking opportunity attacks or causing the target to leave a solid surface or a body of water.

The God-Brain can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and it can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

Regional Effects

The region containing the God-Brain's lair is warped by the creature's presence, which creates one or more of the following effects:

- Creatures that sleep within 1 mile of the lair can sense the God-Brain's thoughts interacting with their dreams. Dreamers may be inspired, frightened, or gain a temporary madness.
- Psychic storms rampage the land around the God-Brain's lair. Every 10 minutes a psychic lightning flashes down from the clouds. Each creature within 15 feet of the point it struck must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 3d10 psychic damage and cannot cast spells for 1d4 turns on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
- Intelligent creatures within 5 miles of the lair may gradually develop various forms of madness. The more sensitive or powerful the intellect, the worse the madness.
- Creatures within 5 miles of the God-Brain feel as if they are being followed, even when they are not.
- The God-Brain can overhear any telepathic conversation happening within 5 miles of it. The creature that initiated the telepathic conversation makes a DC 26 Wisdom (Insight) check when telepathic contact is first established. If the check succeeds, the creature is aware that something is eavesdropping on the conversation. The nature of the eavesdropper isn't revealed, and the God-Brain can't participate in the telepathic conversation unless it has formed a psychic link with the creature that initiated it.
- Any creature with which the God-Brain has formed a psychic link hears faint, incomprehensible whispers in the deepest recesses of its mind. This psychic detritus consists of the God-Brain's stray thoughts commingled with those of other creatures to which it is linked.

If the God-Brain dies, the effects fade immediately.

Donskoy's Land



Donskoy's land



Donskoy's Land, like its lord, is beset by rot, both physical and spiritual. The domain has two stories told about how it was created, but not even Donskoy remembers which is real, as the rot has slowly taken his memories. The first story tells of a time where Donskoy was in the employ of Azalin Rex, and where he had sought out a tribe of Vistani. Believing them to be spies, he had them slaughtered and left to rot in the open. When that happened, he was supposedly drawn into the Mists and the realm created around him, with clear memories of the castle being gifted to him by Azalin.

The second story tells of how he was gifted the keep by Azalin, and how he married a Vistani woman. Against her will, he forced himself upon her. Late in her pregnancy, he lost his temper and disemboweled her, causing the loss of the child. With her dying breath, she cursed him to rot and die at the hands of his own blood, before she threw herself into the ravine at the center of the keep. At that time the Mists rose up and claimed the prize. And with that, the rot that had set in at the core of his morality became physical too, in both him and the domain around him.

Adventures in Donskoy's Land should focus on the decay (both moral and physical) that anyone who enters the domain starts to suffer. Food starts to go stale immediately, and while it is not obvious at first, every living creature who comes here starts to lose something of themselves (often their minds, but perhaps their internal organs start to fail — nothing immediately apparent). It is rare that Donskoy's land is entered on purpose, but rather a matter of getting lost within the Mists, often getting ambushed by Lord Donskoy's bandits.

Though perhaps the adventurers are here to rescue someone from the domain (likely to be Donskoy's new wife) or to recover something that was stolen by the bandits in his employ. It should be noted that a third way of getting here would involve following Jacqueline Montarri, the headless beauty, and thief, from Barovia. Donskoy has a working relationship with the woman, and can often be found flirting with her, though he seemingly considers it a "working relationship" only, as he is only interested in someone who is young and pure to rescue him from his curse.

"How can one be well...when one suffers morally?"
~ Leo Tolstoy, War and Peace

Culture Level:	Chivalric
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, hills, forest, and marsh
Year Formed:	351 BC
Population:	500
Races (%):	Humans 99%, Other 1%
Languages:	Common, Darkonese
Religions:	None
Government:	Despotism
Ruler(s):	Lord Milos Donskoy
Darklord(s):	Lord Milos Donskoy
Nationality:	Donskoyar
Analogue:	None

Local Fauna:

There isn't much in the way of nourishment for animals within Donskoy's Land, and the animal life here is practically non-existent. The only exception is the Vista-Chiri, birds that supposedly follow the Vistani around, and which are said to carry the souls of the Vistani into the heavens when they die. Though the Vistani avoid Donskoy's Lands whenever they can, they can't entirely do so during their travels, and the locals will sometimes hunt the birds for sport. Most of the life within the domain is found in the stinking marshes, where eels slither and toads hop and squat around the muck.



Local Flora:

The trees and other plants within Donskoy's Land are all affected by the same strange rotting effect that has taken hold of the living creatures here. The trees here were once conifers of various kinds, but now they are hard to tell apart as they all have gray tree trunks and have lost their leaves. The grass, in the few places where it is visible, is yellow and dried, even if it has been raining recently. And if broken, all of it is rotten on the inside, though this requires close inspection to be noticed. Instead, the branches aren't as strong as they should be and break more easily, and no nourishment can be taken from the grass. Few crops take well to the land here, and most of the food is imported from elsewhere, courtesy of Lord Donskoy's trade with lands beyond his borders.

Donskoy's land

Native Horrors

There aren't any monsters within Donskoy's Land, but what there are is Lord Donskoy's own men — bandits and thieves to a man. Travelers who are lost in the Mists often find themselves within the borders of his lands, where they are waylaid and murdered by his henchmen. Their goods are traded to Jacqueline Montarri (who visits whenever the Mists allow it, using her magical carriage to take the goods off Donskoy's hands. They normally do not leave any survivors behind, but they take special care to murder the Vistani, as Donskoy believes that they are the reason he is caught in the Mists. He has found a special liking for their murder as well and indulges whenever he can.

Terrain type

The terrain within Donskoy's Land is quite hilly, but the hills are covered in forests that were once lush and thick so that it is difficult to tell what kind of terrain it is on. The marshy areas are very flat however, and quite treacherous with sinkholes hidden beneath the surface. Nowhere does the land relent, and as a result, there are no named settlements within Donskoy's Lands, though sometimes a few houses are clustered together that could, at least elsewhere, be considered a hamlet.

Important Landmarks

Donskoy's Castle

Donskoy's Castle sits on the highest point within the domain, straddling an ancient ravine. It was once a formidable structure, but like everything else here, the rot is trying to take it. Part of it is still in good condition, and this is where Lord Donskoy and his servants live, while other parts are so broken down that they are dangerous to traverse. A single tower rises slightly above the rest of the building, and the locals say that this is where Donskoy intends his wife to live, once he finds a suitable match. The ravine inside the castle walls is potentially haunted, as this is where Donskoy's first wife killed herself following the death of her unborn child.

Towns and villages:

None. The locals live scattered around Donskoy's land.

Neighboring domain(s):

None

Fun Fact:

Donskoy maintains relations with Darkon, and, on occasion sends goods to Azalin and is still, albeit rarely, used by the lich for his own purposes.



Lord Milos Donskoy

"I'm a simple man.

I have come from nothing and made myself a lord.

All I ask is that you obey me.

Even if you don't want to, YOU WILL OBEY ME!"

~ Lord Milos Donskoy

Lord Milos Donskoy is a human male in his early fifties. His mustache and much of his hair has gone white, although peppered with a little brown. His eyes are heavily lidded with a startling shade of light blue. His mouth is thin and delicate. He is always cold to the touch.

Lord Donskoy can be most charming when he wishes to be. He can't keep the facade up for long. Sooner or later, it all falls apart, to reveal him as the petty bully he truly is.

Milos dresses well, preferring dark clothes. His breeches and jacket are usually black or dark gray, matched with a lighter linen undershirt. He is usually armed with a hidden dagger, but he rarely uses it. He is surprisingly strong and fast.

Background: Milos Donskoy's early years are shrouded in mystery. He had obtained the title of lord through association with the lich king of Darkon, Azalin Rex. Milos gained Azalin's favor through his service. Any item the lich charged Milos to obtain, he delivered. How Milos got the items is a matter of debate, but he has mentioned that he bought his lordship with blood. The blood was conceivably not his own.

Soon after earning his lordship, Milos married Valeska, a Vistani woman. The marriage wasn't sanctioned by Valeska's tribe, which tore at the foundations of the marriage. When Valeska was with child, an argument between husband and wife turned into a battle. This continued until Milos drew his knife, threatening Valeska and their unborn child. Maddened with his rage, Milos tore the child from Valeska's womb, screaming that it wasn't his. Valeska cursed Milos to die by his own blood, then threw herself from the top of the tower. His rage not abating, Milos waited until Valeska's tribe held their monthly ritual to summon their guardian spirit, Ravallah. As the ritual reached its peak, Milos descended on the Vistani in terrible wrath. With his slaughter of the entire tribe, Milos drew the attention of the dark powers, earning him his domain.

Current Sketch: Milos has recently remarried. His wife is young and beautiful, but far too curious about Milos' past and how he became a lord. Milos has become increasingly controlling of his bride, and their union has started to show cracks. On some level Milos knows this, but he refuses to acknowledge it.

The lord has recently started an affair with Jacqueline Montarri, a thief and con artist of exceptional skill. Montarri is far older than she appears and her manor house is a nightmare made real.

Milos is far more concerned with the rot. Everything in his domain slowly rots from the inside out. Fruit picked from the tree has to have the rotten sections cut out. Freshly baked bread rots and grows spots of mould in the middle. Even worse, Milos can feel the rot growing in himself from the inside out. Everyday the rot takes a little more.

Darklord's Tactics: Milos rarely engages in melee combat, he has minions for that. He always has his guards nearby to handle any problems. Milos likes to believe this is because melee combat is beneath someone of his station, but in truth, he's a coward and a bully. He can't stand anyone that refuses to obey him.

Borders: When Milos closes the borders of Donskoy's Land, the mists confuse anyone that enters them. The creature is lost in the mists for 1d6 hours before they exit the mist at the same spot they entered.



Lord Milos Donskoy

Lord Milos Donskoy

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (hide armor)

Hit Points 91 (14d8 + 28)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +6, Dex +5

Skills Athletics +6, Deception +4, Intimidation +4

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Darkonian

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Pack Tactics. Donskoy has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of his allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when Donskoy hits with it (included in the attack).

Touch of Decay. Any nonmagical item made of metal that Donskoy touches, corrodes. If it is a weapon or armor, after being touched, it takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to damage rolls or armor class. If its penalty drops to -5, it is destroyed.

Actions

Multiattack. Donskoy makes three melee attacks.

Wooden Greatclub. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Withering Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) necrotic damage.

Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, Donskoy can utter a special command or warning whenever a non-hostile creature that he can see within 30 feet of him makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand Donskoy. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if Donskoy is incapacitated.

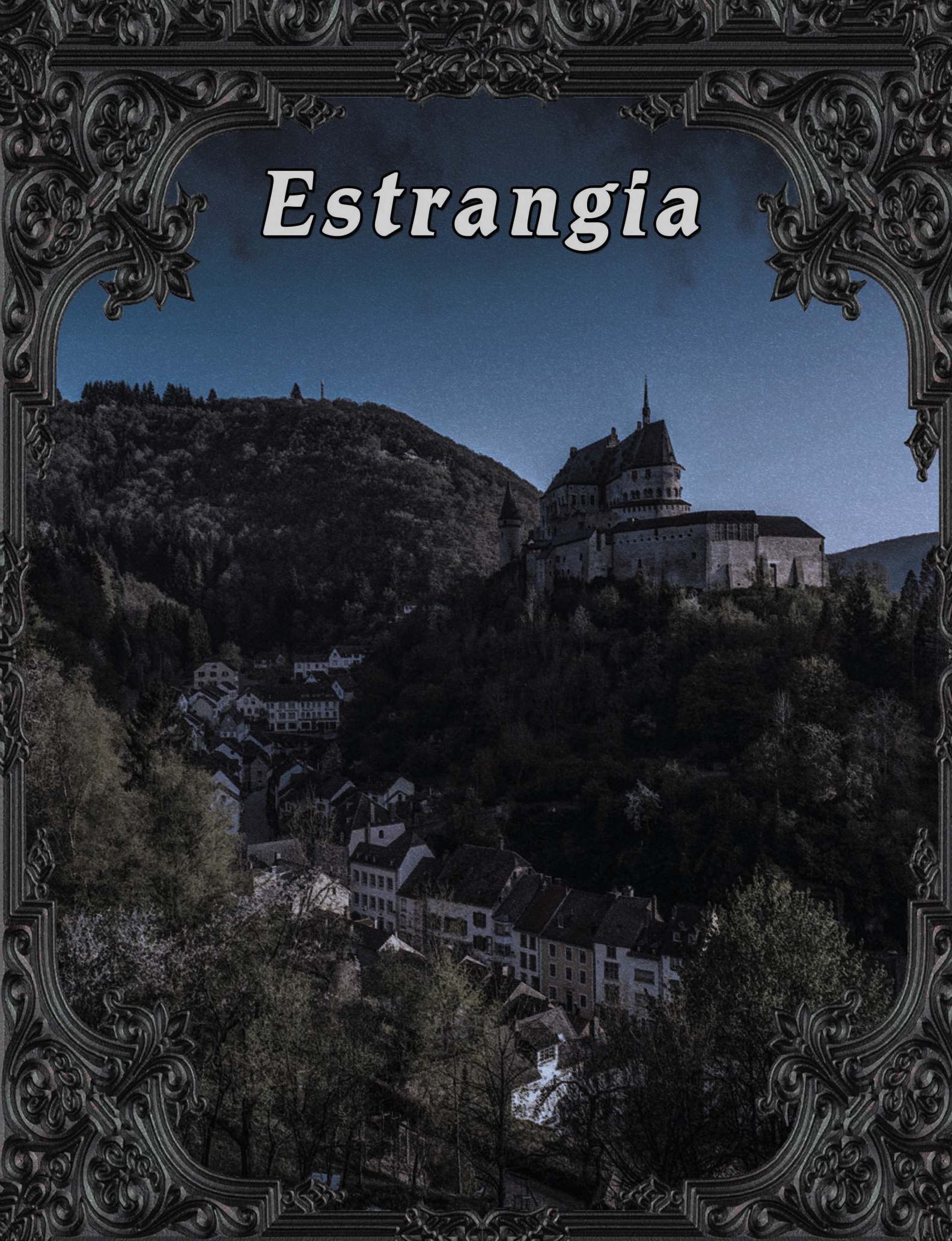
Reactions

Parry. Donskoy adds 2 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so Donskoy must see the attacker and be wielding a weapon.

Redirect Attack. When a creature Donskoy can see targets him with an attack, Donskoy chooses an ally within 5 feet of it. Donskoy and the ally swap places, and the chosen ally becomes the target instead.



Estrangia



Estrangia



strangia is a name shared between a valley (The Valley of Estrangia) and a town (Estrangia). They're the result of a religious massacre performed by Friar Whelm, before he ever became a friar, where he took out the frustrations of being the "second best" son, on the clergy that he had been inducted to. He fell under the dark influence of a woman, whom he didn't know, and as she whispered her lies to him, his heart grew dark.

On the day that he murdered all the brothers of his order, he was drawn into the mists, coming across the town of Estrangia, where the God of White Hope had a great cathedral waiting for him. When he entered the cathedral, he found that the statue of the god there, resembled himself to such a degree that it couldn't be a coincidence, and when the bell tolled for the first time, the Friar held his first sermon. Such it has been ever since.

Estrangia exists in a similar manner to G'henna: As the result of misguided hope and religion. But where Yagno Petrovich rules with an iron gauntlet, Friar Whelm rules with a silk glove. He has managed to convince the populace, over many years, that their good deeds will earn them his favor, and that of his god. He's convinced them that curiosity is dangerous, and through the clever use of his personal boogie-man, the vampire Crave, he's managed to convince them that keeping quiet and docile is in their own best interest. All the while, under the guise of a god-fearing and helpful priest, he feasts.

Adventures in Estrangia are likely to revolve around attempts to destroy Crave. Perhaps one of the heroes has been bitten by the vampire, and they need to destroy Crave before their friend turns into another one of the undead. Perhaps they simply arrive here, and hear rumors of the vampire, and decide to seek it out. Regardless, they should soon find that Crave isn't the worst monster here and that the face of the helpful friar who told them where to go, hides a terrifying monster. The populace will be in total denial of any hints that Friar Whelm is anything but a good man until given incontrovertible proof of the monster's true nature.

"Goodness without wisdom always accomplishes evil."

~ Robert Heinlein

Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, valley and urban
Year Formed:	551 BC (suspected)
Population:	3,500
Races (%):	Humans 99%, Other 1%
Languages:	Common
Religions:	God of White Hope
Government:	Meritocracy
Ruler(s):	City Council
Darklord(s):	Friar Whelm
Nationality:	Estrangian
Analog:	Gothic horror version of Luxembourg

Local Fauna:

Estrangia is too small in and of itself to support much wildlife. What wild animals it does hold tend to be small, like rabbits and weasels, with a handful of deer as well. Much of the land within the valley has been farmed to such a degree that the wild animals can only survive by scrounging from the farmland. The farmers here have a number of cows, pigs, and chickens — enough that the people of Estrangia can enjoy a wide variety of food, a fact that the inhabitants all attribute to the God of White Hope and the good works of Friar Whelm.

Local Flora:

There are only a few conifer trees within the valley of Estrangia, mostly located in the southeast, in a small forest of trees. The trees are carefully tended by the residents, as without it, they wouldn't have any wood for their fireplaces or for building houses.

Most of the land surrounding the town of Estrangia is farmland, focused on growing wheat, rye, and barley. Almost all farmers have vegetable patches as well, allowing for a diverse diet for the inhabitants of the domain. One plant that the locals particularly treasure is a small white flower called Hopebringer. When smelled, it is a mild aphrodisiac and analgesic, enough so that it can relieve headaches and joint aches. When refined, it loses the aphrodisiac properties but instead increases the analgesic effect to the point where it can completely numb a body part for hours.

Native Horrors

Estrangia is small enough that it has few problems with monsters. Friar Whelm's true nature is unknown to the locals, but they greatly fear a vampire called Crave. Crave takes a new victim several times a month, and the populace all hope that they're not next. In reality, Crave is working with Whelm, targeting only the ones

Estrangia

that the darklord allows, so as to minimize the actual impact of his predations. Often, Whelm “comforts” the family of the victim, helping them pray for their souls — all while draining them of life, in a feast of his own.

Beyond Crave, there is one more vampire within the confines of Estrangia, but this one is kept imprisoned by Whelm, kept on the edge of starvation. It is there in case Crave ever gets ideas above his station and needs to be replaced. Crave knows nothing of this second vampire, and Whelm ensures it remains this way. Crave has also been forbidden by Whelm from making Vampire Spawn, except as needed for Whelm to maintain the control he has over the city, including letting a few “monster slayers” hunt down the spawn on occasion, as a way to secure a “victory” against Crave.

Terrain type

Estrangia lies as a valley that is protected on all sides by mountains, with only a single road leading to the town itself. As such it isn’t exposed to any extremes of weather, and is pleasant throughout the entire year, though it tends to get a lot of water during the fall. Deep wells allow for access to fresh water at all times of the year.

Important Landmarks

Temple of White Hope

The Temple of White Hope sits at the absolute center of Estrangia (both domain and town), and it is made of clean white stone that somehow remains pristine even in the worst muddy autumn weather. It is, to the locals, a shining beacon of hope and spirituality, one that draws them in for every daily sermon.

The temple itself seems to be of malleable size. There’s always room for all the people who wish to attend the sermons, even in the unlikely event that the entire town shows up. (It is usually about three-quarters full during sermons- The sermons often draw 500–1,000 locals into attendance.)

The temple holds Friar Whelm’s private quarters, though he is usually around town, comforting those in need, and helping as he can. The locals see him as a beacon of hope and often turn to him for spiritual guidance, guidance that he is happy to provide.

Within the temple, a single row of pews stands out. While the other pews are brown-stained wood, these pews are white and made of stone. This is where the favored of the Friar sit. These are the ones that have performed good deeds around town the prior day or

who have suffered the loss of a family member to Crave. These seats are so cherished that the people of Estrangia actively try to do good deeds to earn the Friar’s favor. In reality, these pews are his dinner table, and he feasts on a few of those sitting here, under the guise of performing the miracles of the God of White Hope.

Towns and villages:

Estrangia

The town of Estrangia holds most of the population of the domain. Some 3,000 people make their homes here. Estrangia is a clean, and well-maintained city, with most buildings made of stone and wood. The inhabitants here are all hard-working, honest, and overall helpful people. They are not brave people however and live in constant fear of the vampire Crave, who they know lives in the cemetery northwest of the city. They do not go outside of their homes at night unless absolutely necessary. Even the city watch does not patrol the streets during the night. In most places, this would lead to crime, but the small handful of criminals in Estrangia are equally terrified of Crave and prefer to do their work during the day.

A visitor to Estrangia might notice a few things that seem odd. No matter how many victims Crave claims, the city always seems to be expanding with more and more people coming here, both from outside and from within families. The city borders and the domain itself also seem to be constantly growing, with each year adding a few feet more to the valley.

Finally, they might notice that there are hardly any old people in Estrangia, though they are slightly more common in the outlying farms. This is because of Whelm’s predations. His feeding takes its toll, and none of his regular parishioners tend to survive past the age of fifty. A few exceptions exist, those that are too useful for Whelm to simply throw away, but individuals that are valuable enough for this are few and far between.

Neighboring domain(s):

None

Fun Fact:

Estrangia is expanding. Each year it has more inhabitants and more land than the year before. Even the locals have noticed this, despite their blindness to other things. They consider this proof of the blessings of their god, while in reality, it is a sign of Friar Whelm’s increasing power and ability.

Friar Whelm

"Come, my children!

Welcome to a place of light in these dark times.

There is room for everyone and more! The monster cannot enter this place of worship, I will not allow it.

Your faith, through me, keeps us all safe"

~ Friar Whelm

Most of the time Friar Whelm appears as a human male in his mid-sixties, with a smile and a wise word always at the ready. His brown eyes are warm and inviting, and he dresses in simple robes with the holy symbol of the God of White Hope emblazoned upon the front. He leans on a cane when he walks and often complaining of bad knees.

When angered, his whole demeanor changes. His eyes sink into black voids and his teeth become cracked and jagged. His bones and muscles stretch under his skin, which tears and becomes a ghostly white, closer to aged parchment than living skin. His hands elongate and fanged maws appear in his palms. Whelm is a rare type of undead called a coral-tan that drains the very life force of creatures nearby. Whelm is the first coral-tan, but others have since appeared.

Background: Whelm knew he was going to be given to the church, and because of this, he hated everything. The second son of a powerful noble house, his parents were bound by strict traditions. His older brother Karl, would inherit the land, the power and prestige, the endless wealth, and political connections. Even worse, Karl was intelligent, attractive, and a powerful warrior. Karl was instantly likable and had been sworn to an arranged marriage into the royal family by the time he was ten.

Whelm had a far different destiny. By being second born, Whelm was given to the church, the Temple of the White Hope when he was eighteen. The Temple believed in piety through hard work and abstinence, of which Whelm had no love for, and he hated the church, the White Hope, and the common folk because of it.

Even in his isolated monastery, Whelm heard of his brother's success. Karl had married his sworn bride, the king's niece, and was third in line for the throne.

He became second after the neighboring kingdom invaded and the king's youngest son was slain. Karl, of course, crushed the invading army in a bout of brilliant battles. All this while Whelm rotted in his monastery, forgotten by the outside world.

Whelm's hands were raw from forced toil in the monastery garden, his throat was sore from repeating the ridiculous hymns, and his knees were bruised from the constant kneeling and supplications. The other monks in the monastery were true believers and soon Whelm found himself isolated and reviled by his own brothers in faith.

Whelm had the first dream after being stuck in the monastery for a year. It was hazy at first, the vague impression of a beckoning figure. The dream became clearer over the next few months, the figure resolving into a beautiful woman with blonde hair, striking green eyes and soft skin. She offered Whelm everything he had been denied for the past year. In his dreams, Whelm had wine, food, and companionship, but as he awoke it was all gone.

Whelm lived in his dreams for another month, until the dark night when his dream woman disappeared, leaving Whelm in a void. Whelm was desperate. His life had been in his dreams, and the waking world was a nightmare.

Whelm was in hell for a week until she made her return. She would stay with Whelm forever if he would perform one service for her. She would give him the ability to drain the life force of all in the monastery, and once he did so she would always be waiting for him in his dreams.

Whelm agreed without hesitation, and screamed in pain as the results of his promise appeared. Fanged mouths ripped through his palms, and his hands grew larger and longer. He stared at his hands in horror. The fanged mouths were still there. His fingers were long twisted claws. A brother monk burst into Whelm's cell, called by the screams. Whelm held up his hands and a spark jumped from the monk to the mouths in his hands. The monk fell dead, and Whelm devoured his soul.

Whelm swelled with power. He traveled through the monastery, devouring the souls of his brothers. As he closed in on the last survivors, the friar of the monastery held up the holy symbol of the God of White Hope. Whelm felt the power of the friar's faith wash over him, but nothing else. As he butchered the last of the monks, the mists rose. When the mists cleared, Friar Whelm was alone in a cathedral in the heart of

Friar Whelm

a city called Estrangia. Parishioners approached him, asking for blessings and advice. Many acted as they had known him all his life.

It didn't take long for Whelm to learn about his new home. The city was under siege by a cruel vampire named Crave, and Whelm began to preach to his flock about stoicism and perseverance in the face of the threat. At night he wandered the city looking for the vampire. When they finally met, Whelm put a deal to the vampire. Whelm would continue to preach perseverance and Crave would retreat if Whelm ever faced him directly. Crave, arrogant and headstrong, refused and attacked the friar. Whelm easily overpowered the vampire and forced the undead creature to accept the arrangement.

Despite the meeting going exactly as he hoped, Whelm was shaken to his core. The vampire had attacked him, its claws had ripped open his stomach, but Whelm didn't bleed or feel pain.

Whelm carefully experimented with his new abilities. He soon discovered he could subtly draw out the life force of nearby creatures and use them to perform seeming miracles. The friar held weekly sermons, and soon all of Estrangia was in his thrall. Whelm learned to control his powers, subtle drawing on dozens or hundreds of people to cast his miracles and his victims are none the wiser

Current Sketch: The good friar continues to lead his flock. He preaches perseverance and stoicism in the face of Crave. It's well known throughout the city that his church is the only safe haven from the vampire's brutal reign of terror. The church is full during his weekly services and the friar welcomes as many people as the temple can hold.

Crave continues to play his part, and the simple deal between him and Friar Whelm benefits them both. Whelm knows another vampire that dwells in the city should Crave overstep his bounds.

In his dead heart, Whelm knows he is undead. He has tried to sleep, but cannot. The woman from his dreams lies forever beyond his reach.

Darklord's Tactics: Friar Whelm avoids melee combat, especially if he isn't sure that he can kill every witness. If alone with a victim or small group he can kill, the friar uses his life draining aura and soul sear attack to whittle his victims down before moving into drain their souls. If the friar has fed recently, he will use dark miracles to increase his number of attacks

and power his spells. Friar Whelm won't use his Yawning Void attack until pressed by a powerful foe or a large group of enemies.

Borders: When Whelm closes the borders of Estrangia, the domain is surrounded by a wall of sound. The sounds are a mix of chanting, singing hymns, and screams. Several hermits that live near the border try to write down the jumbled words and search them for prophetic visions. A creature that makes contact with the wall is overwhelmed by the insane discordance and incapacitated for 10 minutes. Crave always knows the location and distance to a creature incapacitated by the wall.



Friar Whelm

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor, shield)

Hit Points 262 (35d8 + 105)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +10, Cha +9

Skills Deception +14, Insight +10, Intimidation +9, Medicine +10, Perception +10, Persuasion +9, Religion +6

Damage Resistances necrotic, radiant

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 20

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Life Draining Aura. Any creature that casts a spell that heals hit point damage within 30 feet of the friar must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails the healing spell is countered and the friar heals ten hit points to himself.

Friar Whelm

Dark Miracles. The friar may sacrifice hit points to cast a cleric spell of 6th level or less. The friar must inflict 1d12 force damage on himself per level of the spell slot used to cast the spell. The friar's spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks).

Turn Immunity. The friar is immune to effects that turn undead.

Magic Resistance. The friar has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Telepathic Link. The friar can telepathically communicate a message lasting no longer than 1 minute to a creature he knows is present within 500 feet of it. The creature cannot respond but understands who the sender of the message is. In addition, the friar can choose up to 4 creatures and cast the sound and voice parts of the Thaumaturgy cantrip as a telepathy that only the targeted creatures can hear.

Ruler of the Undead. All intelligent undead creatures of a lower CR than the friar are automatically intimidated by him while they are within 120ft range and know that he is in the area.

Illusory Appearance. The friar is indistinguishable from any other human and no magic can reveal his undead nature. The only time when his real form is revealed is when he decides to enter combat.

The Light's Chosen (1/Day). The friar can attempt to charm a humanoid he can see within 60ft range by trying to convince it that it has seen the light. The targeted creature must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or become charmed by the friar, believing that the friar is his spiritual mentor and friend and acting as an ally to him for 1 hour or until the friar or his companions do anything harmful to it. When the spell ends, the creature knows it was charmed by the friar.

Distant Aid. The friar can cast healing spells without the need of touch, at a maximum distance of 120ft. In addition to any healing effect the spell has, the target also ages by 1d6 years for each spell slot level of the cast spell and the number of years is added to the friar's life span. An undead creature that is targeted by one of the friar's healing spells gains a level of exhaustion per spell slot level of the casted spell.

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If the friar fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Necrotic Blessing (1/Day). The friar can take some of his own necrotic animating force, and convert it to bolster other creatures. The friar can choose to take up to half of his current hp in damage but can use the same points of damage to distribute hit points evenly across any creatures of his choice within 30 feet of him. Any creature with hit points added this way also becomes resistant to necrotic, fire, and

cold damage and immune to becoming poisoned or poison damage for 1 hour. A creature that was poisoned is cured of poison. This ability does not age living creatures or give levels of exhaustion to undead ones as it uses the friar's own life force.

Innate Spellcasting. The friar's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *cure wounds, light, thaumaturgy, toll the dead*
3/Day each: *aura of vitality, mass healing word, prayer of healing*

1/Day each: *heal, mass cure wounds*

These spells cannot be used to heal himself. The friar only gains access to this ability after a weekly liturgy to feed off of the "energy" of his congregation so that he can channel some of this energy to perform the acts of healing.

Actions

Multiattack. The friar makes three soul sear or three cudgel attacks

Cudgel. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 18 (4d8) necrotic damage. The friar heals half the necrotic damage he inflicts with this attack.

Soul Sear. Ranged Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. Hit: 26 (4d10 + 4) necrotic damage. The friar heals half the damage inflicted by this attack. A creature that is reduced to 0 hit points by this attack is slain.

Yawning Void (recharge 5–6). The mouths in the friar's hands and the tears in its parchment-like skin stretch and moan. Every creature within 50 feet of the friar must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. They take 55 (10d10) necrotic damage on a failed save, and half as much on a successful one. Creatures reduced to 0 hit points by this attack are slain.

Reactions

Soul Drinker. When a creature dies within 100 feet of the friar, he may use his reaction to drink in the creature's soul. The soul is visibly sucked into the friar through the monster's eyes, nose, and mouth. The friar heals by 1d6 hit points per hit die of the creature killed. The slain creature cannot be raised until the friar himself has been slain.





Farelle

Farelle



Farelle is a small domain, some 15 miles long and 4 miles wide, and covered in forest. Only around its two towns is the domain broken by farmland.

Farelle was created when Jack Karn entered the Mists. Before, he took a guise as a simple tinker, one who fetched good prices for the high-quality work that he did mending pans and sharpening knives. Sometimes he'd even do it for free, in exchange for a bed for the night and a warm meal. But this was a ruse, as Jack is a jackalwere, and merely used his disguise and his abilities to get close to his victims before he killed and ate them. He finally found himself pursued by angry villagers after he got cocky and was caught, having slaughtered an entire family of husband, wife, and their nine children. The villagers caught him when he was devouring the youngest of the children, a mere toddler. As he fled, the Mists rose around him, and he found himself in Farelle.

Strangely, everyone here knows Jack, though none of them can see him for what he is, and it frustrates him to no end. Firstly, he thinks himself above the humans that fill his domain — to him, they're mere cattle. But more importantly, he used to ENJOY the danger, that he'd have to be smart to stay alive. And the Farellians cannot even sense the danger they're in. So while feeding is now easier than ever, the hunt is boring and Jack is left unfulfilled. Adventures in Farelle should differ from those in other domains in a simple way: Everyone here is open, friendly, and trusting. A nice reprieve from the paranoia that's like to meet a traveler in another domain. But the Farellians are too trusting, and the heroes should see that even in the face of obviously dangerous or treacherous people, they'll find themselves taken advantage of. The heroes might find themselves here after a Vistani caravan braves the Mists and transports them here, after telling them of this "strange land where everyone is accepted", and of course, they should run into Jack, the caring and mild-mannered tinker.

"The best way to find out if you can trust somebody is to trust them."

~ Ernest Hemingway



Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Warm, forest and plains
Year Formed:	597 BC
Population:	2,500
Races (%):	Humans 90%, Other 9%, half-Vistani 1%
Languages:	Common, Farellian
Religions:	None
Government:	Gerontocracy (each village is ruled by a council of five elders)
Ruler(s):	None
Darklord(s):	Jack Karn
Nationality:	Farellian
Analog:	Serengeti and surrounding countries

Local Fauna:

Farelle, while wild, is a relatively peaceful domain as the native animals seem affected by the strange truthfulness of the locals. The few deer and boars in the woods are not as skittish as they are elsewhere, and will on occasion practically wander straight into the arms of a hunter. The same cannot be said for the few predators in the domain. These are wild dogs and jackals that hide in the woods and on the fields, and they'll use whatever pack tactics that they can to bring a creature down. They only rarely attack groups during the day, but during the night, they become far more aggressive and will even suicidally attack groups that are too large for them.



Local Flora:

The woods of Farelle are dominated by fig and date trees that grow to massive sizes, and which serve as both lumber and firewood when needed, though it makes a lot of smoke. The areas near the two towns of Kaynis and Mortilis were cleared of trees long ago and have been used for farmland for decades. Here the farmers grow maize, sugar cane, and sweet potatoes, with the smaller kitchen gardens producing herbs and vegetables.

Farelle

Native Horrors

Farelle only has issues with a single type of monster, lycanthropes. Specifically, jackalweres who are controlled by Jack Karn, though most of them keep a low profile even when he is not around. Other lycanthropes have been noticed in Farelle, but these are quickly hunted down and slain by the jackalweres. Rumor among locals has it that there is at least one werewolf somewhere in Farelle, but there have been no confirmed sightings. Regardless, each time the rumor is stirred up, some of the jackalweres take it upon themselves to rid Farelle of the danger.

Terrain type

Farelle is flat and dominated by the woods of the domain. Even around the towns, the woods are never far away. The terrain offers little protection in and of itself (when out of the woods at least) against the oppressive summer heat and the extremely cold winter temperatures. Sometimes the temperature even changes dramatically just from the middle of night to day, where you'll have tropical sun in the morning and freezing temperatures during the middle of the night. Thankfully for the locals, they've managed to breed hardy crops that can survive the extreme temperature swings.

Important Landmarks

The Road

There is only a single road in Farelle, running the miles between Kaylis and Mortilis. It's fairly well-traveled by the farmers, but the most frequent traveler along the road is Jack Karn in his wagon. Everyone who travels the road has met and knows Jack quite well. They all believe that he's a helpful fellow and have nothing but the highest regard for him. The road is also Jack's favored hunting grounds, as disposing of the corpses here is fairly easy — simply feed them to the wild animals.

Towns and villages:

Kaylis

Kaylis is the slightly older and larger town of the two within Farelle, though it still only contains about 1,050 souls. More importantly, Kaylis is home to the biggest windmill within Farelle, and practically all farmers come here with their crops, as it gives the best quality flour within the domain. Kaylis is also slightly unusual for a town of its size in that it has no place for travelers to spend the night — there is no inn or tavern. Instead, those passing through will need to rely on the kindness of the villagers, though this is rarely a problem.

Mortilis

Mortilis is home to 950 people and the slightly smaller of the two towns. Unlike Kaylis, it does have a small tavern, run by a retired adventuress named Merinda. She was a wizard of some prowess before she retired, after being stranded in Farelle. She's also seemingly immune to the charms and effects of Jack Karn, and suspects that he is not what he appears to be, though she cannot prove it. Even if she could, she might still be unable to convince her trusting neighbors of the problem.

Neighboring domain(s):

None

Fun Fact:

Most Farelilian families make their own corn cob pipes out of the corn cobs from the fields. Each year there is a friendly competition amongst the cities as to which family can produce the best one. The same family has won the competition for ten years, and the opponents have really started upping their game to try and knock the winners from their perch.



Jack Karn

"Look at them. Smiling and laughing like the idiot children they are. I can still taste their blood, my fangs ache for their throats. But I can do nothing. I am surrounded by walls of contentment. There is no way out."

~ Jack Karn"

Jack Karn looks like a human male in his early fifties. His beard is starting to gray, and the same can be said of the tufts of hair and beard that peek out from under his floppy hat. His skin is tanned from a lifetime of walking in the outdoors. Jack's eyes are blue and surrounded by smile lines. His face is lined and Jack always looks like he's ready to share a good story or comfortable night around a fire. Jack travels the length of Farelle as a tinker, fixing small items for others they lack the tools to fix themselves. He is popular and loved by the communities he visits. For many of the residents of Farelle, a visit from Jack is a brief shining moment in an otherwise dreary existence.

Background: In the vast expanse of the Wildlands, every animal has a role to fill. King Crocodile is the lord of the domain and sits at the top of the food chain. The lions and wolves are the hunters. Gazelles and deer are the prey. Most of the animals lived on top of a great plateau where they were safe from the endless hunger of King Crocodile. The jackals are the cowards. Their elders teach their young that there is no shame in this, it is how jackals are made. They are scavengers that live off the scraps others leave. But their bellies were always full and their pack grew and prospered. One young jackal hated this way of life. Jackals were strong, he said, and could rule the plateau if they acted together. This jackal explored the swamp of King Crocodile, ran beside lions making kills, and stalked through the forests of the tigers. He returned to his pack and told other young jackals of his adventures. Soon he attracted a small pack that wanted to join him in his hunts. The initial hunts didn't go the jackals' way. The prey were too wary and the jackals were not used to working as a unit. But then the young jackal had a brilliant idea. He waited until the tigers and lions left to hunt the prey, and then fell on their undefended young. The jackals feasted as kings on the young of the lions, wolves, and tigers. They took gorilla and viper young when they could. Soon every other animal on the plateau had been the victim of the ravenous jackals.

But it couldn't last. Eventually the other animals caught the jackals feasting on their young and turned on the pack. Tigers and gorillas stalked them through the forest. Lions hunted them on the plains. Falcons

and eagles fept track of the pack and helped other animals find them. For seven days and nights, the pack was chased across the plateau. The pack was driven into the swamp of King Crocodile and left to the tender mercy of the Crocodile's endless hunger. The pack turned on the young jackal and drove him out. As he stepped into the fog, he heard the roars of King Crocodile descending on the rest of the pack and knew none of them would leave the swamp alive. The jackal stepped out of the mists into a snowy forest. Confused and distracted, the jackal didn't see the trap until it had sprung. Heavy metal jaws slammed shut on its legs. The jackal was trapped, and began screaming for help. A human appeared, amazed at the talking beast he had caught. He knocked the jackal unconscious and placed it in a cage. The tinker, a human named Jack Karn, took the jackal to a Vistani camp, hoping they could give it a good home. In the Vistani camp, the jackal discovered dogs and other canines would follow his commands. The jackal waited until the Vistani were asleep before he commanded the dogs to free him. Once freed, the jackal and the dogs turned on the humans and massacred the camp. As they feasted, the mists rose around them. When the mists cleared, the jackal had changed. He was a human now, a copy of the tinker that had trapped him. Other humans nearby smiled and waved like they knew him. Everyone called him Jack. Jack knew with some effort he could regain his old form or a hybrid of his human and jackal forms. Now he was the perfect hunter. The first time that Jack found a small human child, he transformed into a jackal and charged. The first wave of nausea hit him before he reached the child. By the time Jack reached the child, the sensation was overwhelming. Jack turned away from the child and disappeared into the forest. Jack soon discovered he couldn't hunt any innocent, no matter the species. He was forever denied the joy of tearing into young flesh.

Current Sketch: Endlessly denied the joy of the hunt, and rendered nauseous when he attempts to devour the innocent, Jack is forced to watch as humans spread to every corner of his beloved forests. Humans infest the domain like insects, spreading their filthy civilization everywhere. Everyone in the domain knows Jack and smiles when they see him. To make matters worse, they all seem to genuinely like him. Toddlers approach him, asking to be picked up. Their parents will offer conversation or bring some small trinkets for Jack to repair. For Jack Karn, Farelle is an endless torment. He often reeks of human, and there is nothing he can do about it.

Jack Karn

Darklord's Tactics: On the rare occasion that Jack finds a creature that he can devour, he attacks with glee. Jack flies into a berserker rage as he attacks, and he focuses on one target until he brings it down. That way, if Jack is forced to retreat, he can return to the battlefield later and devour his fallen foes.

Borders: Jack cannot close the borders of Farelle. If he is worried that prey will escape his jaws, he will order packs of dogs, wolves, and jackals to patrol the border. These packs are fearless and attack any creature they see on sight.



Jack Karn

Medium humanoid (shapechanger), chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor (12) + unarmored defence)

Hit Points 106 (9d8 + 8d12 + 18)

Speed 50 ft. (60 ft. in jackal form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +7, Dex +7, Con +6, Wis +5

Skills Acrobatics +7, Animal Handling +5, Deception +5, Intimidation +5, Perception +9, Stealth +7

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered

Senses passive Perception 19

Languages Common, Farellean

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. Jack has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Shapechanger. Jack can use his action to polymorph into a jackal-humanoid hybrid, into a jackal, or back into his human form. His statistics, other than his AC, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to his true jackal form if he dies.

Limited Shapechange. Jack is only able to escape back to his natural form for a few minutes each day. Jack can shapechange to a jackal for a minimum of 10 minutes, for each minute he

remains in jackal form after that, Jack must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw, or be returned to human form. The DC of this save is equal to the number of minutes that he has remained a jackal, and once he fails, he is unable to change for a full day. He greatly prefers this form to any other, and greedily indulges himself in it for as long as possible.

Immune to Old Age. Jack is immune to old age and to the ageing effects of spells and spell-like abilities.

Limited Magic Immunity. Jack can't be affected or detected by spells of 1st level or lower unless he wishes to be. He has advantage on saving throws against all other spells and magical effects. He is immune to all mind-influencing magic, and to the Vistani's evil eye.

Master Tinker. Jack has learned how to use his tinkerer's tools to create various useful items. He needs his tools to create any one of the following:

Lighter: The object has a small flame which sheds bright light in a 5-foot radius and dim light for an additional 5 feet.

Alarm. This device senses when a creature moves to within 15 feet of it without speaking aloud a password chosen when Jack creates it. One round after a creature moves into range, the alarm makes a shrill ringing that lasts for 1 minute and can be heard from up to 300 feet away.

Calculator. This device makes doing sums easy.

Lifter. This device can be used as a block and tackle, allowing its user to hoist five times the weight they can normally lift.

Timekeeper. This pocket watch keeps accurate time.

Weather Sensor. When used as an action, this device predicts weather conditions in a 1-mile radius over the next 4 hours, showing one symbol (clouds, sun/moon, rain, or snow) for each hour.

Canine Empathy. Jack is able to command any dog, wolf, fox or other jackal-like animal in the domain (although their limited intelligence greatly frustrates him) while they remain in Farelle. All canine creatures of Intelligence 7 or lower perceive Jack as an ally and obey his commands to the death. The poor animals do not get a saving throw against their lord's commands, although dog-like monsters, such as jackalweres, familiars, the animal companions of druids and rangers, and winter wolves can make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw to resist Jack's commands.

Mobile. Jack is exceptionally speedy and agile. When he uses the Dash action, difficult terrain doesn't cost extra movement on that turn. When he makes a melee attack against a creature, he does not provoke opportunity attacks from that creature for the rest of the turn, whether you hit or not.

Fast Movement. Jack's speed increases by 10 feet while he isn't wearing Heavy Armor (included).

Unarmored Defense. While Jack is not wearing any armor, his Armor Class equals 12 + his Dexterity modifier + his Constitution modifier. He can use a Shield and still gain this benefit.

Jack Karn

Danger Sense. Jack gains an uncanny sense of when things nearby aren't as they should be, giving him an edge when he dodges away from danger. He has advantage on Dexterity Saving Throws against Effects that he can see, such as traps and Spells. To gain this benefit, he can't be Blinded, Deafened, or Incapacitated.

Feral Instinct. Jack's instincts are so honed that he has advantage on Initiative rolls. Additionally, if he isn't surprised at the Beginning of Combat and isn't Incapacitated, he can act normally on his first turn, but only if he uses his rage ability before doing anything else on that turn.

Bestial Abilities. Jack's climbing speed is equal to his walking speed. He can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check. When he jumps, he can make a Strength (Athletics) check and extend his jump by a number of feet equal to the check's total. He can make this special check only once per turn.

Tinker's Curse. Even if Jack is killed, the tinker's curse prevents him from resting peacefully. Within a week, the jackalwere re-forms at his tinker's wagon. Jack can only be killed permanently when the tinker's vision of devastation has been actualized. As a jackal, Jack preferred to lead a life of bloodshed and destruction, in defiance of the normal ecology. Only when that ecology has been totally upset by the frantically advancing civilization of Farelle will Jack die for the last time.

Unable to Harm the Powerless. Jack cannot massacre innocent people. The only thing that has prevented him from destroying the simple folk of Farelle is a crippling disgust and boredom that overcomes him whenever he tries to attack. This terrible condition makes him unable to do anything more than weakly threaten and stagger about (reducing him to one partial action a round, and giving him a -10 to all attack rolls), but vanishes in an instant should his victim respond in anger. Then, Jack is free to vent his fury upon them. He is unable to attack those who simply defend themselves. Jack remains free at all times to attack dogs, jackals and other canines, and unnatural menaces like jackalweres and undead. He becomes nauseous when confronting human-like monsters, such as red widows and lycanthropes, but the aggressive natures of these monsters ensure that his nausea rarely troubles him for long. Karn is particularly relentless towards werewolves and werejackals, which he regards as hideous parodies of himself.

Pack Tactics. Jack has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of Jack's allies is within 5 ft. of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Raging Jackal. In battle, Jack fights with primal ferocity. On his turn, he can enter a rage as a bonus action. While raging, he gains the following benefits if he isn't wearing heavy armor:

- He has advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws.

- When he makes a melee weapon Attack using Strength, he gains a +2 bonus to the damage roll.

- He has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage coming from silvered weapons.

Jack's rage lasts for 1 minute. It ends early if he is knocked unconscious or if his turn ends and he hasn't attacked a hostile creature since his last turn or taken damage since then. Jack can also end his rage on his turn as a bonus action. Crippling nausea strikes him whenever he attempts to indulge his bloodlust. After his rage is over, he has disadvantage on all ability checks for 1 hour. Jack can rage 4 times per day and he must finish a long rest before he can rage again.

Reckless Attack. Jack can throw aside all concern for Defense to Attack with fierce desperation. When he makes his first Attack on his Turn, he can decide to Attack recklessly. Doing so gives him advantage on melee weapon Attack rolls using Strength during this turn, but Attack rolls against Jack have advantage until his next turn.

Canine Friends (1/Day). Jack magically calls 1d6 jackals or wild dogs (wolves). While outdoors Jack can call 2d4 dire wolves instead. The called creatures arrive in 1d4 rounds, Acting as allies of Jack and obeying his spoken commands. The Beasts remain for 1 hour, until Jack dies, or until he dismisses them as a Bonus Action.

Actions

Multiattack (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). Jack makes two attacks: one with his bite and one with his claws or handaxe.

Claws (Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 3) slashing damage.

Bite (Jackal or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with werejackal lycanthropy.

Handaxe (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Sleep Gaze. Jack gazes at one creature he can see within 30 feet of him. The target must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target succumbs to a magical slumber, falling unconscious for 10 minutes or until someone uses an action to shake the target awake. A creature that successfully saves against the effect is immune to Jack's gaze for the next 24 hours. Undead and creatures immune to being charmed aren't affected by it.



G'Henna



G'Henna



G'Henna is born of the ideas of a single man, shaped by his false beliefs and his delusional ramblings of a vengeful god. Beliefs that starve the population, keeping them underfoot, while priests and the soldiers of the false god are the only ones nourished. And in a harsh land that barely supports life in most places, resources are scarce and food even more so, especially when it is sacrificed to a false god in the hope that the god's vengeful aspect will turn to the benign one. Or so was the hope until recently.

G'Henna is a horror story of what happens when you convince others of the lies in your life, and when confronted with the fact that those lies are untrue, you simply grow more fanatical in your beliefs and attempts to prove others wrong. Instead of correcting your ways, you simply become more stringent, punishing those speaking out against you at first, then at dissenters, and then at the believers trying to keep them in line.

When Yagno's domain was created, his beliefs in a false god became manifest, and the vile ceremonies that he had performed before this idol were accepted by the whole country. Even the god's name "Zhakata" was merely a shared codeword between two Vistani brothers who had never encountered Yagno, but after found the inscription after spending the night in a dangerous forest, he believed it to be a holy name and dedicated himself to the powerful god that kept him safe.

The people within G'Henna are malnourished and teeter on the brink of starvation. Obesity is forbidden, and fasting is considered a holy act done in the name of Zhakata the Devourer. Starving oneself to death is thought to bring honor and glory to one's family as well as salvation in the afterlife, so most of the population has at least one member of their family fasting at any given time (the mandated time for this, by the priesthood, is fourteen days), and some have family members that are starving themselves to death — some voluntarily, others less so. The act is considered most holy when done voluntarily, but some who start down the road and regret it, find themselves changing their minds without their family helping them back on their feet. These people usually do not make it, but the skulls of these martyrs are turned into "guesting cups" and considered holy artifacts by their families — proof of their family's dedication to Zhakata.

The clergy itself is deeply corrupt and infighting is constant. Yagno is a master manipulator and constantly sets his minions at each other's throats so they pres-

ent no danger to him or his position. In this manner he not only prevents problems rising against him, but he has a constant supply of people that are put through the ritual called "The Stripping of Humanity" — anyone who rises above their station within the priesthood will inevitably be cast down sooner or later. It is only a matter of how useful they are to him. Furthermore, Yagno has declared ALL uses of divine magic to be against the holy will of Zhakata — partially from jealousy as he has no access to these powers himself, and his god never speaks to him as the clergy of other gods claim, but also because they present the very real danger that the population will realize that Zhakata is false: After all, if other gods provide healing and other powers to their priests, why doesn't Zhakata?

The priesthood observes two regular religious services (and whichever ones strike theirs and Yagno's fancy for as long as they want): Zhakata's Bounty and Zhakata's Dole. At the crack of dawn every morning, every family and person within G'Henna must bring the food from the day before to the priesthood, who take it as part of Zhakata's Bounty. They then sacrifice a (small) portion of it to Zhakata in a private ceremony only held observed by the priest. They redistribute most of the remainder to the other members of the priesthood and their soldiers. The remainder is then given back to the populace as the sun sets, in a ceremony known as Zhakata's Dole. This food is barely enough to keep the people fed, and anything not consumed by the family or person has to be returned the next day for the next Zhakata's Bounty. Of course, some try to eat or hide the fruits of their labor of the day, but any who are found to be breaking the law are severely punished. As almost everyone within the domain is a religious fanatic and willing to inform on others, even those who are careful are normally discovered.

Adventures within G'Henna should inevitably involve the clergy and the false god that they worship, even if it doesn't involve Yagno himself. Perhaps one of the heroes unknowingly reveals himself as a divine spellcaster (arcane casters are frowned upon, but aren't outlawed. Yet.) and are dragged off for interrogation and to be sacrificed on the altar of Zhakata — blasphemy is the ultimate sin. Or perhaps the heroes try to buy or sell food (both of which are illegal), or even help someone who is being starved by their family for "Zhakata's Glory" by their family. All of these run the risk of running afoul of the religious laws of G'Henna. And these laws change constantly, at the whim of Yagno, so being safe today doesn't mean being safe tomorrow.

G'Henna

"Anyone who thinks sitting in church can make you a Christian must also think that sitting in a garage can make you a car." ~ Garrison Keillor

Culture Level:	Classical
Climate & Terrain:	Cold to temperate hills, plains, mountains, and deserts
Year Formed:	702 BC
Population:	19,500
Races (%):	Humans 98%, Other 2%
Languages:	Balok, Common, Falkovnian
Religions:	Zhakata
Government:	Theocracy
Ruler(s):	High Priest Yagno Petrovna
Darklord(s):	Yagno Petrovna
Nationality:	G'Hennan
Analog:	Religious Fanaticism

Local Fauna:

G'Henna is singularly inhospitable to all kinds of life, and animals are few and far between with most being scavengers of various kinds, though there are a couple of wolf packs. These are diminished in number after G'Henna was ripped from the Core during the Grand Conjunction, and will probably die out within the next decade.

Goats are kept loose here for their wool, though they can barely subsist on the meager grass that the G'Hennan plains are covered in, and there are a few cows, treasured leftovers from when G'Henna was still part of the Core. All of these animals are, like the population, on the brink of starvation, and this has led to an unfortunate mutation or change in some of these beasts. These creatures have turned to eating the flesh of humanoids, but they're almost impossible to notice before it is too late. They look like any other starved animal, apart from their sharpened teeth. The locals say they are the holy chosen of Zhakata the Devourer and refuse to hunt them down. Killing them has not yet been made illegal by Yagno, but chasing them down is fraught with danger.

Local Flora:

G'Henna is mostly barren wasteland and nothing much grows here. The land is barely arable, and the work required to cultivate any crop is extremely exhausting. This also means that there aren't any trees growing here, nor anything much beyond grass — and even the grass can barely support the otherwise all-consuming goats. The only exception to this is in an area east of Dervich, known as the Fertile Valley. Elsewhere it would simply be considered normal, but

for G'Henna, it is an extremely valuable piece of land where crops can grow. Here the inhabitants grow potatoes and root vegetables (as these grow slightly better than other crops). As the food cannot be sold by the farmers, it must be given to the priesthood as part of Zhakata's Bounty. The priesthood then redistributes the food across the land as part of Zhakata's Dole.

G'Henna has only one unique plant of its own. A type of red grape that produces a decent (elsewhere it'd be considered mediocre at best) and plentiful wine. This wine is one of the few pleasures that the populace of G'Henna can enjoy freely, though drunken behavior is forbidden. For many, this alcohol helps dull the hunger pangs.

Native Horrors

In a starving land, monsters are scarce, but those here have an insatiable hunger. The hungry dead (the undead that feast on the living or dead flesh) are the most common, and G'Henna is home to at least a few vampires. Ghouls are the main threat, as they lurk near civilization and can often be found in the graveyards chewing on the bones of supposed martyrs. Many of them even seek out those on the brink of starvation and simply eat them alive.

Most worrying are the reports of a large tree-like humanoid whose footprints are filled with blood, and who devours everyone it encounters, an extremely large wendigo called the Lips of Zhakata. The monster supposedly hunts only during the long and cold winters and stays away from civilization.

Terrain type

G'Henna is a desolate and wind-blasted domain at the best of times, and a hellhole covered in blizzards at the worst. There is little cover as plant life is so scarce, and the bare hills and mountains provide scant protection for the wide plains of the land. The casual visitor to G'Henna will also note that the landscape doesn't provide any sources of fuel, and most homes are warmed by mixing goat manure with dried grasses from the plains. This also means that the cities smell terribly in winter, even when strong winds are blowing.

Important Landmarks

House of Bones

The House of Bones is an old, broken down temple with a gateway made from human skulls. Though it is mostly collapsed, it reeks of evil. Corpses of rodents and tiny lizards litter the area around it, though all of them are a few years old by now.

G'Henna

The House of Bones is forbidden ground for the G'Hennans, as it was — unbeknownst to them — a site where Yagno attempted to summon Zhakata with the help of a wizard ally. The summoning failed as it didn't bring Zhakata, but instead brought through a nalfeshnee from the Abyss, who taunted Yagno for his failure and revealed that Zhakata was a false god. It nearly escaped its bonds, and only the actions of a band of unknown heroes managed to contain it. Since then, Yagno has doubled down on his enforcement of Zhakata as a religion though the dual aspect part of the religion has been banned. Zhakata the Provider, the one who would supposedly save G'Henna from Zhakata the Devourer once enough food had been sacrificed, is now no more. Only the Devourer remains.

Temple of Zhakata: Made up of a complex of different buildings (from a university to an abandoned hospice), the temple's mosaic floors are of the teeth and bone chips of those that starved in the name of Zhakata. One of the most eye-catching features is the High Altar where Yagno does his three public sermons a week and his weekly "miracle" where he transforms three unlucky heretics into mongrelfolk.

Jackal's Run: Jackal, an elusive bandit leader, rules this narrow pass found in Dervich. Being a militant atheist (along with her followers), she runs raids against Yagno's soldiers and clerics in attempts to topple the darklord.

Towns and villages:

Zhukar

Zhukar, also called the City of Hunger, is the capital of G'Henna, and the home of the priesthood and Yagno. It is home to 9,000 souls, and houses the Inquisition as well as the rebellion movement that has risen in recent years. The city is covered in iconography dedicated to the beast-god that is Zhakata, with little bronze statues that look like various kinds of animals present everywhere. No two are alike, but all show powerful teeth and claws.

The city is completely under the control of the priesthood (and especially the Inquisition as they hunt down heretics and magic users), but there is a thriving black market where goods that originally came from other domains can be bought and sold. They're very wary of outsiders and especially so if they have had any encounters with the priests — the black marketeers didn't stay alive by being careless.

The rebellion hides here as well, with most members being mongrelfolk. The mongrelfolk are the result of the "Stripping of Humanity" — a ritual performed by

Yagno himself at the peak of the ziggurat-temple of Zhakata, where he flays the criminal (or, almost as often, a rival within the priesthood), and strips them of their humanity. They are then kicked down from the top tier of the ziggurat, and when they regain consciousness once more, they find themselves transformed into mongrelfolk. The Stripping draws huge crowds of the people of Zhukar, and they pelt the newly-created mongrelfolk with all manner of detritus, showing their disdain and shouting their hatred for the "disfavored of Zhakata".

Dervich

Dervich is the home of 7,000 people, and to the locals, more importantly, the home of G'Hennan Hellwine, the red wine that is brewed from the grapes grown in the fertile valley. The merchant houses used to make their homes here, trading with the other realms of the Core, but after the Grand Conjunction, they turned to infighting and are now a shadow of their former selves. The vineyard owners are still kept in high regard and are left to their own devices, as long as they make generous contributions to the priesthood. This used to be in the form of coin, but now, it is in the form of wine instead.

Neighboring domain(s):

None

Fun Fact:

Due to the domain's high child mortality rate, families do not name their children until they are six years old. Until then, they're not considered to be "real people".



Yagno Petrovna

"The beast he worships is just his excuse to inflict pain and suffering on everyone and everything he comes across.

What he worships is his own capricious nature and desire to dominate.

It would be pathetic if he wasn't so dangerous"
~ Gondegal

Yagno Petrovna is a middle-aged man with a long, pale, narrow face with features that are but thin lines. His bloodshot eyes are usually opened in slits and his thin lips sit in a wide, flat grimace. Yagno is never without his priestly garb of red and orange silk robes and a tight-fitting hood that only shows his face. Yagno is the head priest of the Church of Zhakata, and marks his station by wearing a cap with strange, stiff folds. His only other decoration is a braided cord worked with beads and human teeth that runs from over his left shoulder to under his right arm.

Background: They say nothing good comes from inbreeding and the Petrovna family were no exception. Survivors of Strahd's attack on Castle Ravenloft, Yagno's ancestors fled into the mountains of Barovia. In their isolation, they fell into inbreeding. Odd even by the standards of the Petrovnas, Yagno was mercilessly tortured by his brothers. Yagno coped by creating imaginary beings in the forest, from humble people who would ease his loneliness to hulking monsters that wanted to eat him. After a few years, these imaginary beings were as real to Yagno as his family. Tiring of his eccentricities, his brothers locked the then 20-year-old Yagno out of the house. To escape the harsh weather and the "monsters" that he was sure were out to get him, Yagno hid inside a cave. The stress and fear of his ordeal pushed the young man beyond the brink of exhaustion, and he soon fell asleep. When he got up, he found himself unscathed with the word "Zhakata" etched into a wall. In his isolation, Yagno's imagination went into overdrive. He began subconsciously creating a false god that he must appease. At first it was fevered prayers, but eventually Zhakata wanted more and Yagno's family started finding members and servants dead. It all came to a head when he tried to sacrifice his sister's infant daughter to his hungry deity. Yagno was caught and chased into the mists. When the mists parted, Yagno was in a new realm, G'Henna. At first, Yagno was in awe of a domain that worshipped his god, but it didn't last. Yagno tried to be a faithful priest, but he was riddled with doubt. His doubts became so powerful Yagno lost communion with Zhakata. Desperate, Yagno hired a wizard to try and summon the god of beasts. Instead he got a powerful demon named Malistroi. The cackling demon told Yagno that Zhakata didn't exist, and everything Yagno stood for was a lie. Enraged, he killed the wizard and sealed the fiend in a magical circle. Five years ago, a secret society called

The Circle of Darkness, was under the delusion that Yagno had sealed away the Provider aspect of Zhakata in the magical circle. Instead the poor deluded fools freed Malistroi. With Malistroi freed, he destroyed a great part of the domain and was narrowly defeated by Yagno. Chalking his victory as a sign of Zhakata's approval, as always, it was short-lived.

Current Status: Yagno believes that he is the prophet of Zhakata, so his domain is built around the bestial god. His people suffer under his rule, but Yagno knows that it will be better for them in the long run. The faithful will be rewarded a happy afterlife by Zhakata's side. However, the isolation of his domain from the rest of the core has shaken his faith. In secret, Yagno has begun to wonder if the demon, Malistroi, was right. Maybe Zhakata doesn't exist. In a feeble attempt to make up for this, Yagno has become more desperate and fanatical in hopes that it will erase his doubts.

Darklord's Tactics: Even though he's a master of the dagger, Yagno relies on his Altar for most of his powers. From the Altar, he can charm the masses. Anyone who listens to him three times a week for more than a turn must make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw. Creatures that fail suffer the effects of a charm person spell for 24 hours. Once a week, Yagno will use his special ability to turn incapacitated humanoids into mongrelfolk. He can do this up to three times a day by raking his fingers against the victim's temples and chest. While the victim gets no saving throw, Yagno can reverse this, but has yet to. The other way to reverse this is to cast *remove curse* during a windstorm or with a *polymorph other* spell. While within the confines of his temple, Yagno increases his AC and all of his saving throws by +3. If Yagno is within 30 feet of the altar he regenerates 10 hit points at the start of his turn.

Closing the Borders: A wall of jeering animal and humanoid skulls appears before anyone attempting to leave. Extending as far as the heavens, no amount of magic or muscle can budge the wall.



Yagno Petrovna

Yagno Petrovna

Yagno Petrovna

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 45 (7d8 + 14)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Con +5, Wis +5

Skills Medicine +8, Performance +10, Persuasion +7, Religion +7

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Abyssal, Balok, Common, Falkovnian

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Divine Eminence. As a bonus action, Yagno can expend a spell slot to cause his melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If Yagno expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

Spellcasting. Yagno is an 11th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Yagno has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy, toll the dead*

1st level (4 slots): *guiding bolt, inflict wounds, sanctuary*

2nd level (3 slots): *calm emotions, silence, spiritual weapon*

3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic, remove curse, spirit guardians*

4th level (3 slots): *death ward, guardian of faith*

5th level (2 slots): *flame strike, geas, summon celestial*

6th level (1 slot): *planar ally*

Piercer. Once per turn, when Yagno hits a creature with an attack that deals piercing damage, he can reroll one of the attack's damage dice, and he must use the new roll. When he scores a critical hit that deals piercing damage to a creature, Yagno can roll one additional damage die when determining the extra piercing damage the target takes.

Great Altar of the Temple. The great altar atop Yagno's temple grants him special abilities as long as he is within 300ft distance or has a piece of it on his person. To use these powers upon an unwilling subject, Yagno must preach before a flock of worshippers.

Charm the Masses. Yagno gains the ability to charm the masses. Anyone listening to his sermon for more than one turn must make a successful DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or suffer the effects of a charm person spell. For natives, the duration of the spell is 1 month.

Transform into Mongrel. Yagno has the ability to change humanoids into mongrelfolk (CoS, pg.234). He can do this three times per day merely by raking his fingers across the victim's temple and chest. His victims receive no saving throw. At any time, Yagno can reverse the process with another touch, but he never does. The only ways to restore his victims are either by casting remove curse during a windstorm, or with a polymorph spell. This power cannot transform anyone who does not believe in Zhakata. The mongrelfolk created in this process are driven into the wilderness. Yagno may also use this power as a polymorph spell upon any of his loyal followers or himself. Lastly, Yagno gains a +3 bonus to both his Armor Class and all saving throws when within range of the great altar. The Altar will also allow Yagno to regenerate at the rate of 1 hit point per turn. If he dies and his remains are within the Altar's range, the regeneration pauses for 1 minute, and then continues to regenerate normally, bringing him back from death. If Yagno is convinced that Zhakata does not exist, he will stop receiving the altar's benefits.

Harness Divine Power. Yagno can, as a bonus action, touch his holy symbol and utter a prayer to regain one expended spell slot, the level of which can be no higher than 2. He can use this feature twice per day and regains all expended uses when he finishes a long rest.

Blessed Strikes. When Yagno damages a creature with a cantrip or a weapon attack, he can also deal 1d8 radiant damage to that creature. Once he deals this damage, he can't use this feature again until the start of his next turn.

Divine Intervention. Yagno can call on his deity to intervene on his behalf when his need is great. Yagno uses an action to implore Zhakata's aid. Yagno describes the assistance he seeks, and rolls percentile dice. If he rolls a number equal to or lower than 12, Zhakata intervenes. The DM chooses the nature of the intervention; the effect of any cleric spell or cleric domain spell would be appropriate. If Zhakata intervenes, Yagno can't use this feature again for 7 days. Otherwise, he can use it again after he finishes a long rest.

Dark Devotion. Yagno has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Contagious Zealotry. When Yagno casts a level 1 or higher spell that deals damage, one of his allies that Yagno can see can use its reaction to make a weapon attack. If the attack hits, the creature suffers 1D8 extra psychic damage.

Actions

Dagger +2. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

l' Cath



I'Cath



I'Cath is a domain built on hatred, pride, and power. In her overconfidence and wanting no man to have power over her Tsien Chang, and eventually her pride led her into defying the gods.

Four daughters, four towers, four bells, and four trees stand in I'Cath. Testament to Tsien Chang's obsession with the number four. It's the number of the seasons and in her mind, the power of the multiverse lies somewhere within this. And the fact that the gods did not see fit to share this secret with her offended her greatly. But the origins of I'Cath, and the depths of Tsien's hatred goes back far further than the existence of the domain.

Tsien Chang was once a princess, the favored daughter of a Shou Lung king. But despite her being the favored daughter, he still wanted a son, one to inherit his throne, and he forbade Tsien from studying "manly pursuits". Smart and beautiful, the headstrong princess did not take well to being told about things that she wasn't able to do. She seduced the men she needed to teach her the ways of war, the ways of rulership, and the ways of dark magic. Each, she seduced, and each she discarded — usually too broken to tell anyone else of what has happened. And with each death that she caused, her heart grew colder and harder.

Eventually, she turned her eyes to her father, as he got older, and his mind started to falter. She started poisoning him, slowly driving him insane. And when he died, she arranged for every single male heir to die as well, in what looked like the attack of an enemy. The elders of the clan had no choice but to name her ruler, to avoid shame on their clan.

She was an extremely capable leader, but a harsh and cold one. Her kingdom grew rich, and she soon started subjugating those around her. By the end, even the Emperor was afraid to cross her. But she had sworn an oath of loyalty to him, one that the gods themselves held sacred.

As she grew older, her beauty and appeal to men started to fade, but she took four lovers, one in each turn after having held tournament after tournament to discover who was a good suitor, with those participants who failed, killed by the others. But those who died before the courtship could begin were the lucky ones. The others, she each had a daughter with, and then she killed them, slowly and painfully, vowing to never again be beholden to a man. Meanwhile, the bones of her suitors (and later, those of her daughters) were used to build her palace. Three of her daughters,

named Scream, Hate, and Spite, took after their mother. Evil creatures who would throw away the lives of their suitors in endless petty rivalries, trying to appeal to their mother. The fourth, named Nightingale, took after her father. She was beautiful, far beyond that of her sisters and mother, with a singing voice that caught the attention of anyone listening, even the gods themselves. And of course, her mother loathed her for her softness, trapping her in a tower away from the others, a gossamer, endless tower created from "the broken promises of men, and therefore are without number." Soon her hubris became greater and as she got older she got obsessed with staying alive, coming to believe that immortality could be found in the secrets behind the number 4. In her pursuit, she — like before — sought out great philosophers, men of wisdom, and drained them of all they knew. And then she discarded them, dead, broken, or useless. Nightingale pleaded with her to stop, but every time, Tsien beat her. And soon the gods started taking notice that their "songbird" was less than happy. And every time Tsien beat the girl, storms started rumbling overhead as a warning to stop. A warning she didn't heed. And one final time, Tsien stood before the last great man, the Emperor himself, and tried to drain him of his knowledge — the son of the sun MUST be holding something back she thought — and Nightingale interfered. This time though, her three sisters struck, and so did Tsien, before finally striking down the Emperor and breaking her sacred oath. The gods had finally had enough, and they struck her down, but as she lay there, she reached out to something else, swearing that if they killed her and sent her to the Nine Hells (as she feared), she would take Nightingale's soul with her, and they would never hear her song again. And something listened, and as the Mists rose, Tsien laughed, thinking she had found a way to spite the gods and win. She could not have been more wrong.

Now, Tsien and her daughters live in I'Cath, a domain where the only living people are those bound to the trees of the groves, forever trying for their affection in vain. Tsien herself believes that the Mists surrounding the domain are the gods trying to reach her and that only her power is holding them at bay. She longs for the day where she can control the world again but inevitably ends up killing anyone who comes into the domain as they displease her. Ironically, she doesn't realize that the very thing she believes is her own power keeping the gods at bay is what prevents her domain from joining up with others, and her increasing her power. She is too blind and too obsessed with power to see it any other way.

I'Cath

Adventures in I'Cath are incredibly dangerous due to the power of Tsien, and the only somewhat lesser power of the three daughters. Adventurers that come here should either be strongly discouraged from facing the Tsien Chang or should be of great power of their own, to stand a chance. Adventures should center around Nightingale. Anyone who comes within a mile of her tower can hear the song of the young woman caught at the top of the endless tower and will be filled with yearning to see the person who can make such beautiful music and sounds. She is a true innocent, and the actions of her mother torture her daily. Alternatively, perhaps one of the heroes' friends disappeared recently into I'Cath, and they may be trying to get him out.

"It is the certainty that they possess the truth that makes men cruel. ~ Anatole France

Culture Level:	Classical
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forest
Year Formed:	732 BC
Population:	5
Races (%):	Other 100% (not including the people enslaved by the trees)
Languages:	High Shou
Religions:	None
Government:	Feudal monarchy
Ruler(s):	Tsien Chang
Darklord(s):	Tsien Chang
Nationality:	Shou
Analogue:	Shou Lung (Forgotten Realms), China under the Dowager Empress and Chinese ghost stories

Local Fauna:

There are no wild animals of any kind in I'Cath. The only animal here is the songbird form of Nightingale. She sometimes descends from her tower to gaze upon those who have been trapped in the groves and weeps for them. In those times, she may appear as either a nightingale of great beauty or simply an immaterial song.

Local Flora:

I'Cath is covered in a deep bamboo forest, but there are four trees that stand out among them. These are at the center of the four groves, with each type of tree a unique tree. But nothing else grows here in this land of the dead, almost as if life itself is daring Tsien Chang to be wrong about her power to command it.

Native Horrors

The only horrors native to I'Cath are Tsien Chang and her three daughters, Scream, Hate, and Spite. The fourth daughter, Nightingale, while related to the other four is not a monster but a true innocent caught in a web of evil.

Terrain type

I'Cath is flat, without any hills to break the monotony. Only the fact that the trees of the forest and groves grow to different heights makes it possible to tell areas apart. Around the shrines, tower, and palace, the forest has been pruned back, and here can be found a tiny bit of grass. The weather seems almost stale, and changes only very slowly, almost as if it's afraid to annoy Tsien Chang by changing too quickly. As such, the seasons of the year are practically the same, and it's very easy to lose any sense of time while in I'Cath.

Important Landmarks

The Bells

Bell of Discord

The Bell of Discord is tied with the daughter, Hate. It, like its sisters, sits in the center of a clearing and appears much as a shrine to a god would. The bell rings out automatically once per round if any creature of non-evil alignment comes within 90 feet (though this can be canceled with spells like *silence*) which causes everyone nearby to be filled with hatred, and potentially go berserk upon the nearest living creature, including close friends (as if they got a roll of 7-8 while under the influence of the *confusion* spell. This effect has a save DC of 20). Hate may only be slain if the bell is destroyed first.

Bell of Doom

Tied with Scream, the bell of doom looks like its sisters. When it rings out, it summons an oni each round until anyone within 90 feet is slain. Only once all non-evil creatures within 90 feet are slain does the bell fall silent. The oni disappear a round after this. Only by destroying the bell first can Scream be killed.

Bell of Lament

The Bell of Lament is tied with Nightingale, who is immortal like her sisters. If the bell is destroyed, she becomes mortal and can be killed (potentially a mercy, considering her family's behavior towards her). Any non-good creature that comes within 90 feet takes 10 (3d6) points of radiant damage each turn (with undead and fiends taking double this damage).

Bell of Treachery

Tied with Shame, the Bell of Treachery has a strange

I'Cath

hard sound to it when it rings. When it rings, four elementals are summoned, one of each element, and while the bell rings, they each regain 10 hit points per round. (i.e. the bell rings, and they gain 10 hp, and when it happens again, they regain another 10). This goes on while any non-evil creature remains within 90 feet, and only affects the four elements while they're within 90 feet of the Bell.

The Palace of Bones

The Palace of Bones is where Tsien Chang and her three daughters, Scream, Hate, and Spite live. It is made from the bones of the suitors that were discarded and killed, with carpets of their hair and walls painted with their blood. It is a truly horrific structure with nails for the roof tiles, and doors made of teeth. Here, on her throne sits Tsien, plotting revenge and her next move against the gods, as well as furthering her dark magic in her laboratories. These magical discoveries are what has given Scream, Hate and Spite their current ghostly forms, as well as deepened Tsien's understanding of nature, and given her the ability to transform into a treant.

Tower of Broken Promises

The Tower of Broken Promises is an impossibly tall building with endless stairs surrounding a delicate tower. The tower appears to be made from a wispy form of ivory — literally the broken promises of men. Whenever a man breaks a promise, the tower gets that tiny bit taller. It is impossible to scale the tower, and the only way to get up there is to be assisted by Nightingale, who can take her bird form and fly a creature up to the top. Winning her trust is incredibly difficult after the decades of abuse that she has suffered. Whenever she sings from the top of the tower, it can be heard faintly across the domain, and within a mile of her tower, it fills those listening with a deep sense of sorrow.

The Groves

In each of the groves sits a number of immortal men, surrounding the magical trees. They are sustained by the fruits and leaves of the trees and forced into suffering for all eternity. Underneath the description of each tree is the explanation of how each tree is unique.

Tree of Malice

The Tree of Malice is a mulberry tree and anyone who eats the fruit from it is filled with evil thoughts. Anyone eating one of the fruits must make a Wisdom save DC 20 or turn chaotic evil for four days. Those who reside under the tree spend their time plotting against each

other eternally, in an unending cycle of betrayal. Failing two saving throws in any four-day period (to maintain immortality, the fruit must be eaten each day) makes the alignment change permanent. Creatures who are already chaotic evil find the fruit extremely delicious but are otherwise unaffected.

Tree of the Ravenous

The Tree of the Ravenous is a cherry tree, underneath which dozens of warriors fight each other. A few have weapons and armor, but most are reduced to nothing, scratching and clawing at each other. The fruit is so delicious that anyone who eats it and fails a Wisdom save DC 20, so infatuated that they wish to do nothing save eat the fruit. And they will kill anyone who tries to stop them or take the fruit. As the fruit turns the warriors immortal as well, this means that they're stuck in an unending cycle of violence and eating, while their weapons and equipment fall apart from sheer use, reducing them to unthinking animals.

Tree of Unending Lamentation

The Tree of Unending Lamentation is a willow tree, underneath which several dozen men are found, each crying out their heart with grief. The leaves here are the cause, and while they look delicious (anyone attempting to not eat them must make a Wisdom save DC 20), those who do eat them are overcome with grief and unable to do anything except weep pitifully.

Tree of Venom

Unlike the other trees, the Tree of Venom is not surrounded by living beings, but by skeletons. The tree here bears overwhelmingly sweet-smelling oranges, but anyone who eats one must make Constitution save DC 20 or die immediately. Even those that succeed lose 1d6 hit points permanently.

Towns and villages:

None

Neighboring domain(s):

None

Fun Fact:

From her seat at the top of the Tower of Broken Promises, Nightingale has noticed something new in I'Cath. Her tower seems to be weakening, almost as if something is trying to break loose, something that is trying to keep a promise. What that is, she doesn't know, but she believes it might be the Emperor of old who is trying to come back. He did promise her that he would love her forevermore, and would save her no matter what. She hopes that this is that.

Grove of the Tree of the Ravenous

Map of I'Cath



Tower of Broken Promises

Grove of the Tree of Unending Lamentation



Shrine of the Bell of Doom



Shrine of the Bell of Discord



Palace of Bones



Shrine of the Bell of Treachery



Shrine of the Bell of Loveliness

Grove of the Tree of Venom



Grove of the Tree of Malice

Tsien Chiang

"Evil often hides behind a beautiful face.

Tsien is unique in that her outside can change to reflect her true nature.

I suspect in many ways she prefers that form."

~ Rudolph van Richten

Tsien Chiang is a human female in her mid forties. In her youth, she was beautiful, and men would compete for her slightest favor. As she grew older, her looks faded and became hard and cruel. Tsien dresses immaculately in silk robes, favoring bold greens and yellows. Tsien's eyes are cold and hard. She cares little for others, especially men. Tsien believes men are expendable at best and completely useless fools at worst.

Tsien is usually accompanied by several ladies in waiting who attend to her every need. They are rarely kind to visitors and often pretend they can't hear them.

Background: Tsien Chiang was born into a noble family in l'Cath, part of the continent of Kara-Tur in the Forgotten Realms. Tisen's father ignored and degraded his daughter from the day she was born. As far as Tsien's father was concerned, she was only good to marry another noble family and produce useful boys. Tsien's dislike of her father soon turned into a raging hatred of all men.

Tsien's father forbade her to learn the arts of war. She sought out the best battle masters and studied. He forbade her to learn the dishonorable arts of poison, and she became one of the best poison crafters in l'Cath. Finally, he declared that she would never learn the arts of sorcery. She became one of the most powerful wizards on the continent. In l'Cath the symbol for the number four and the symbol for death are one and the same. Tsien swore she would harness the power of that symbol.

After years of abuse, Tsien brewed four poisons into one vile concoction and poisoned her father. As he choked on his own tongue, she gleefully told him how she had defied his every edict.

When Tsien's father died, his power and title passed on to Tsien's brother. Tsien was the youngest of four and a woman. She would never inherit her father's power if she just waited. She cast an enchantment on her mother and three brothers to shatter their sanity and rip away their mental acuity. The clan would never allow them to rule in this state, so they made Tsien

their ruler. Tsien was forced to take a powerful oath of loyalty to the emperor to be permitted to take control of her clan. She would never kill or betray him, no matter what.

Tsien's beauty meant dozens of suitors arrived at her palace every year. From those, she took a husband and had one child. She did this three more times, each time having a daughter and slaying her husband with poison, magic, or blade.

Her first three daughters were named Scream, Spite, and Hate. They were evil and dim witted, but completely loyal to their mother. The fourth child was intelligent and kind, much to the chagrin of her mother. She was named Nightingale.

After the death of her fourth husband, Tsien declared she would no longer take a husband, finally revealing the depths of despair she felt for men.

Tsien turned her attention back to the symbol of death and its connection to four. She summoned wise men and sages from across the realms. None could answer her questions. All were slowly tortured to death.

Tsien was hated and feared by the other lords and princes with neighboring kingdoms. Several allied together to try and force her to give up her clan. They failed miserably. Tsien used her keen military mind and powerful sorceries to scatter her opponents' armies and take their castles. Soon she was the most powerful person in Kara Tur.

Gifts were sent to her. Trees came from the kings in the south. She wove potent spells around four of them and planted them in the heart of sacred groves. The emperor himself visited and brought her four bells made of celestial gold. Tsien used her magic to corrupt the bells and placed the souls of her three oldest daughters in them. Tsien tied her life force to all four bells. Because of her dark magic, Tsien and her daughters stopped aging. When the emperor tried to leave, Tsien forced him to stay. No one dared risk her wrath by saving him.

Tsien's power brought many suitors for her daughters. Tsien made them fight to the death for her amusement and tortured the survivors. Only Nightingale objected and she was savagely beaten by her sisters and mother. Four times Nightingale objected and four times she was beaten. Each time, the gods sent ominous storms as a warning, but Tsien held them in disdain. The final time the gods sent their storm, but to no avail. The emperor tried to stop Tsien, but she

Tsien Chiang

slew him without a second thought. As the emperor lay dying, the mists rose around the palace. As they cleared the palace was gone.

Current Sketch: Tsien believes she has managed to hide herself from the wrath of the gods with her spells and trickery. Her abilities as a spellcaster have grown since she came to Ravenloft, and her ties to the land have given her a frightening new ability. Tsien can transform into a massive treant at will. She delights in her opponents assumptions that she is a frail spellcaster before moving in close and tearing them to shreds.

Tsien's three eldest daughters have been transformed into evil spirits that haunt the groves of I'Cath. Each daughter and Tsien herself are attended by a small army of evil tree spirits that have cloaked themselves in illusions to look like ladies in waiting and servants.

The body of Nightingale is locked in the tallest room of the Tower of Broken Promises. She is a kind spirit that travels the domain as a living song. She tries to warn travellers about her cruel family, but often only sends them to their doom.

Darklord's Tactics: Tsien is a powerful spellcaster, arguably the strongest in Ravenloft that is still human. She prefers spells that cause pain and as much damage as possible. Tsien also commands the loyalty of all the evil spirits in I'Cath and will summon them as soon as possible.

If her spells, minions, and daughters are not enough to crush her enemies, Tsien can transform into a massive malignant treant. In this form she wades into the middle of her enemies and gleefully bludgeons them to death. Tsien knows that if she dies she will be resurrected in a matter of minutes, so she has no fear of death.

Borders: Tsien cannot close the borders to her domain. Surrounding the Palace of Bones are four shrines, each containing one of the unholy bells. They are called the Bell of Doom, the Bell of Discord, the Bell of Treachery, and the Bell of Lament. If Tsien and her daughters are to be killed, these bells must be destroyed first. Only a *disintegrate* spell or *wish* will destroy them. A *silence* spell will prevent the ring of any of the bells. When all four bells are destroyed, then Tsien becomes mortal and may be slain in combat.



Tsien Chiang

Tsien Chiang

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (16 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 110 (20d6 + 40)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +11, Wis +10

Skills Arcana +11, History +11

Damage Resistances necrotic

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages All

Challenge 18 (20,000 XP)

Complete Spellbook. Tsien's spell book contains all the spells from each of the wizard schools except spells of illusion and enchantment.

Transform into Treant. Once per long rest and as a bonus action, Tsien can transform into a malignant treant. Tsien's game statistics, including ability scores, are replaced by the statistics of the malignant treant. She retains her alignment and personality. Tsien assumes the hit points of her new form. When she reverts to her normal form, she returns to the number of hit points she had before she transformed. If she reverts as a result of dropping to 0 hit points, any excess damage carries over to her normal form. As long as the excess damage doesn't reduce her normal form to 0 hit points, she isn't knocked unconscious. Tsien is limited in the actions she can perform by the nature of her new form, and she can't cast spells, or take any other action that requires hands or speech. Tsien's gear melds into the new form. She can't activate, use, wield, or otherwise benefit from any of her equipment.

Tsien Chiang

Spellcasting. Tsien Chiang is a 20th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks). Tsien Chiang has the following Wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, infestation, message, mage hand, toll the dead*

1st level (4 slots): *cause fear**, *mage armor, ray of sickness**, *shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness**, *hold person, misty step, ray of enfeeblement**, *scorching ray*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead, counterspell, spirit shroud, summon undead spirit**, *vampiric touch***

4th level (3 slots): *blight**, *summon greater demon*

5th level (3 slots): *dance macabre**, *enervation**, *negative energy flood**

6th level (2 slots): *circle of death**, *create undead**, *eyebite**, *soul cage**

7th level (2 slots): *finger of death**, *tether essence**

8th level (1 slot): *Abi-Dalzim's horrid wilting**

9th level (1 slot): *time ravage**

Arcane Recovery. Tsien Chiang has learned to regain some of her magical energy by studying her spellbook. Once per day when she finishes a short rest, she can choose expended Spell Slots to recover. The Spell Slots can have a combined level that is equal to or less than 10, and none of the slots can be 6th level or higher.

Grim Harvest. Tsien Chiang gains the ability to reap life energy from creatures she kills with her spells. Once per turn when she kills one or more creatures with a spell of 1st level or higher, she regains hit points equal to twice the spell's level, or three times its level if the spell belongs to the School of Necromancy. She doesn't gain this benefit for killing constructs or undead. Necromancy spells are marked with an asterisk*.

Human Determination. Tsien Chiang is filled with a determination that can draw the unreachable within her reach. When she makes an attack roll, an ability check, or a saving throw, she can do so with advantage. Once she uses this ability, she can't use it again until she finishes a short or long rest.

Spell Mastery. Tsien Chiang has achieved such mastery over certain spells that she can cast them at will. She can cast *mage armor* and *ray of enfeeblement* at their lowest level without expending a spell slot when she has them prepared. If she wants to cast either spell at a higher level, she must expend a spell slot as normal. By spending 8 hours in study, she can exchange one or both of the Spells she chose for different Spells of the same levels.

Signature Spell. Tsien Chiang gains mastery over two powerful Spells and can cast them with little effort: *summon*

undead spirit and *animate undead* are her signature Spells. She always has these Spells prepared, they don't count against the number of Spells she has prepared, and she can cast each of them once at 3rd Level without expending a spell slot. When she does so, she can't do so again until she finishes a short or long Rest. If she wants to cast either spell at a higher level, she must expend a spell slot as normal.

Undead Thralls. When Tsien Chiang casts *animate dead*, she can target one additional corpse or pile of bones, creating another zombie or skeleton, as appropriate. Whenever she creates an undead using a necromancy spell, it has additional benefits:

- The creature's hit point maximum is increased by 20
- The creature adds her +6 bonus to its weapon damage rolls.

Inured to Undeath. Tsien Chiang has spent so much time dealing with undead and the forces that animate them that she has become inured to some of their worst effects. Tsien Chiang's hit point maximum can't be reduced.

Command Undead. Tsien Chiang can use magic to bring undead under her control, even those created by other wizards. As an action, she can choose one undead that she can see within 60 feet of her. That creature must make a Charisma saving throw DC 19. If it succeeds, she can't use this feature on it again. If it fails, it becomes friendly to her and obeys her commands until she uses this feature again. Intelligent undead are harder to control in this way. If the target has an Intelligence of 8 or higher, it has advantage on the saving throw. If it fails the saving throw and has an Intelligence of 12 or higher, it can repeat the saving throw at the end of every hour until it succeeds and breaks free.

War Caster. Tsien Chiang has practiced casting spells in the midst of combat, learning techniques that grant her the following benefits:

- She has advantage on Constitution saving throws that she makes to maintain her concentration on a spell when she takes damage.
- She can perform the somatic components of spells even when she has weapons or a shield in one or both hands.
- When a hostile creature's movement provokes an opportunity attack from her, she can use her reaction to cast a spell at the creature, rather than making an opportunity attack. The spell must have a casting time of 1 action and must target only that creature.

Share Pain. Tsien Chiang is always under the protection of her faithful undead servants. When Tsien takes damage and an undead servant is within 20ft of her, half of that damage is transferred to it, after determining resistances and immunities.

Tsien Chiang

Ring of Turning. While Tsien is wearing this ring, she has advantage on saving throws against any spell that targets only her (not in an area of effect). In addition, if she rolls a 20 for the save and the spell is 7th level or lower, the spell has no effect on her and instead targets the caster, using the slot level, spell save DC, attack bonus, and spellcasting ability of the caster.

Holding on for Dear Life. Unless all four magic bells are destroyed, Tsien reforms three rounds after she is killed with full hit points and all spells memorized.

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Tsien Chiang can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

The Bell of Doom: This bell rings summoning one oni. The bell's ring must be audible for the oni to appear. The oni only attacks those who are within 90ft of the bell. If this bell is destroyed, then the body of *Scream* may be slain.

The Bell of Discord: This bell rings with a clashing cacophony of mismatched tones. Anyone within the 90-foot radius of effect becomes filled with hatred and must succeed on a Charisma saving throw DC 19 or go berserk and attack the nearest living creature, including close friends. The saving throw must be made at the end of each affected creature's round. If this bell is destroyed, then the body of *Hate* may be slain.

The Bell of Treachery: This bell clangs with a cold, hard knell. It is guarded by four air elementals that magically appear when the bell begins to ring. At the beginning of each round that the bell rings, the elementals regain ten points, while all enemies within 90 feet of the bell take three points of damage. The elementals will only attack any creature that is within 90ft of the bell. If this bell is destroyed, then the body of *Spite* may be slain. **The Bell of Lament:** This bell contains the trapped soul of *Nightingale*. If any creature that is not good in alignment, aside from Tsien Chiang or any of her daughters and allies, is within 90 feet of this bell, when it rings, they take 2d10 necrotic damage. If this bell is destroyed, *Nightingale's* body becomes mortal and may be slain. Tsien Chiang can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and she can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

Significant Possessions

Bag of Tricks, Onyx, Figurine of Wondrous Power, Ebony Fly, Staff of Swarming Insects, Ring of Spell Turning

Malignant Treant

Huge plant, neutral Evil

Armor Class 21 (natural armor)

Hit Points 114 (12d12 + 36)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +7

Skills Athletics +9

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities prone

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Understands all languages it knew in its human form but can't speak

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

False Appearance. While the malignant treant remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal tree.

Siege Monster. The malignant treant deals double damage to objects and structures.

Transform into Human: As a bonus action, the malignant treant can transform back into human form. When the treant reaches 0 Hit Points, it transforms back to human form, with the statistics it had before it transformed into a malignant treant.

Actions

Multiattack. The treant makes four *Constricting Vine* attacks.

Constricting Vine. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage. A creature hit is automatically grappled and restrained and can take no other actions than to attempt to break the vines with a successful Athletics roll DC20. The vines have 16 hp and an AC of 12, when they reach 0 hp, they are destroyed. The malignant treant can grapple up to four creatures at a time and it can continue attacking with the same vines, dealing damage to both the restrained creature and the creature targeted.

Sap Spray (5–6). The malignant treant exhales Acid in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw, taking 55 (10d10) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Animate Trees (1/Day). The malignant treant magically animates up to two trees it can see within 60 feet of it. These trees have the statistics of a treant, except they have Int and Cha scores of 1, they can't speak, and they have only the Slam action option. An animated tree acts as an ally of the malignant treant. The tree remains animate for 1 day or until it dies; until the malignant treant dies or is more than 120 feet from the tree; or until the malignant treant takes a bonus action to turn it back. The tree then takes root if possible.

Kalidnay



Kalidnay



vast desert, heat, and no sign of life. That is what a visitor to Kalidnay is likely to observe. But with the passage of time, they'll realize that there's far more to it. Kalidnay is all about power. Ultimate power, and the power to control others, and none are more subject to the lust and excitement of power than Thakok-An, the darklord of the domain. She lusted for the recognition of Kalid-Ma, the Sorcerer-King of Kalidnay, and she was loyal beyond a fault to her King. But when a threat came, she wanted him to recognize that she was the one that averted it, so she attempted to hasten his rise and help him on his way to becoming a Dragon. To that end, on the night where he was conducting his slow and methodical ceremony, one of many, she sacrificed her family on the ziggurat above him, tapping into the power of blood to speed him along. She succeeded, but she doesn't know this. Instead, she saw his ziggurat break and his body lying comatose, and only through the sacrifice of blood can she keep him alive and from inadvertently draining the life from the domain and killing himself and everyone else. She has now spent decades in this manner, looking for and researching a way to restore him to life. But while she wants this more than anything, she also fears it. After all, she was the cause of failure — will she lose status in his eyes? Will he punish her? And what about the power she's gathered in the meantime, will she have to let it go? But she still loves him, in her own way. And she still owes him her loyalty. Adventures in Kalidnay should focus on the struggle that the people have — just surviving is difficult. And avoiding the attention of Thakok-An and avoiding being sent to the arena is even more difficult. While facing her directly might be folly, surely a rebellion can happen? And that is likely the way heroes will come to the domain, in an attempt to help Xaltan-Re to overthrow Thakok-An. But what happens once Kalid-Ma is no longer fed the life force from the arena? Will he waken or will he remain asleep, slowly draining all life from those caught in Kalidnay?



Culture Level:

Classical (no metals are prevalent in the domain, so while technology is classical, bone, stone, and wood are the most used materials)

Climate & Terrain:

Desert

Year Formed:

570 BC

Population:

2,500

Races (%):

Humans 50%, Dwarves 10%, Elves 10%, Gnomes 10%, Halflings 10%, Others 10%

Languages:

Common, dwarven, elven, gnomish, halfling

Religions:

The Sorcerer-King Kalid-Ma

Government:

Theocratic Despotism

Ruler(s):

Kalid-Ma (with Thakok-An as regent)

Darklord(s):

Thakok-An

Nationality:

Athasian

Analog:

Athas, desert slave empires

Local Fauna:

When it comes down to it, there isn't much wildlife in Kalidnay, as most of the desert, especially the Silt Sea surrounding the island, proves too harsh an environment for most creatures to survive. That said, there are a few species of desert mice that manage to survive, along with crodlu. Crodlu are a type of bipedal lizard that resembles a scaled ostrich, apart from a curved axe-like beak. They're very hardy and strong, and the locals use them both for personal mounts and for caravan work. Most of what you'll find in Kalidnay are insects, and some have a humanoid cast to them, though they do not seem to be able to communicate with other humanoids. Most of the populace remembers the humanoid insects that inhabited the lands that once surrounded Kalidnay before it was cast into the Silt Sea, but these creatures are even more feral than those, perhaps their degenerated descendants.

Local Flora:

There are no plants beyond the edges of civilization in Kalidnay. There simply isn't enough water in those areas to sustain life, and while there is water that lies beneath Artok-An and Kalidnay (the city), it is bitter and unpleasant, though drinkable. The land itself doesn't take well to crops either, and the farmed areas around the capital are poor. Only around Artok-An is it possible to grow enough food to sustain the meager population of the domain. Here they grow wheat and beans, though this gets rotated with potatoes and

"We avoid the horror of our enslavement because it is so painful to see it directly..." Unknown

Kalidnay

rice on occasion, to prevent the ground from growing infertile. Even so, it barely produces enough food to keep people dying from starvation. If there were to be a single season of bad harvests or a breach in the supply line to the capital, hundreds would likely die.

Native Horrors

Apart from these, you'll find ankhegs and bulettes that survive by burying deep beneath the sands of the domain, only coming to the surface when they sense the presence of food. While the ankhegs will eat both meat and vegetable matter and present a danger to Artok-An, the bulettes have a strictly carnivorous diet and hunt living beings. Rumor has it that there is a particularly large bulette that lairs somewhere in the deep deserts of the domain, completely black from head to toe, that has killed more than any other creature in the domain, and that it'll even attack caravans of armed soldiers. Luckily for the inhabitants of Kalidnay, there are few monsters in the domain. Those there tend to be the inhabitants, like the templars and the guard force of the kalid-do (in the local language this translates as the Fist of Kalid-Ma). One notable exception to this is the thraxes. Apparently, a form of vampire that survives on the blood in humanoid bodies, the thraxes were originally descendants of a noble family that, when Kalidnay was pulled into the Mists, were bathing in their pool — a luxury that extremely few could afford in their dry homeland and that even fewer would indulge in. Even then, it was considered the epitome of hedonism.

Terrain type

Kalidnay is dry and hot. Temperatures during the day average 115 degrees Fahrenheit and drop only to about 85 during the night. As a result, most Kalidnay dwellings have a basement level that is somewhat cooler, for people to sleep. Other buildings have a continual draft, with walls and windows angled to create a pleasant breeze during all hours of the day while staving off the worst effects of the sun. Sand is everywhere in Kalidnay, stretching from the beaches of the Silt Sea to the very heart of the domain. Even the Silt Sea which surrounds the island on all sides is sand, although it is so thin and more like dust that everything but specially made skiffs will sink into it. Those who sink into the Silt Sea are doomed to drown in sand. And beyond the Silt Sea can be found the Mists, though in this domain it is so hot that they can only rise at night.

Important Landmarks

Arena

The arena of Kalidnay once seated thousands of

people, and today it can easily seat the population of the entire domain, though it has never been called upon to do so. Each week, gladiators and criminals fight here, as a way of honoring the Sorcerer-King and serving out their sentences. Some fights are to first blood, while others are to the death. Usually, the death matches are reserved for criminals who have committed horrifying crimes, with anyone who survives five of these events allowed to go free. So far, none have survived more than three in a row. The gladiators spill their lifeblood as well, though in less amount, both against each other, against criminals, and on rare occasions (for holy days) against monsters that have been caught in the lands beyond the Silt Sea. Underneath the arena lies the casket of Kalid-Ma, with the blood spilled in the arena above serving to keep him alive in his comatose state. He was moved here in secret by Thakok-An, who still pretends that the Sorcerer-King is alive and well in the palace. Thakok-An's attempts to help Kalid-Ma turn into a dragon were, unbeknownst to her, successful, and a dragon made from living shadow and defiling magic (though unlike normal Athasian dragons, devoid of reason) was unleashed upon the world of Athas. When finally defeated, its spirit was returned to the body of Kalid-Ma and reunited, turning him into an actual Athasian Dragon. What she doesn't realize is that the magic she uses to keep him alive is actually keeping him trapped. Only once the bloodsports stop and he drains all living creatures in the domain of their life force, will he be returned to full strength.

Empty Districts

Kalidnay originally held seven times the current number of inhabitants. Now, most of the city falls into disrepair, despite the efforts of the inhabitants. The areas are eerily devoid of life, with only the wind for company, howling through empty windows and doorways, spreading sand everywhere. Within the shadows lurk the seedy underbelly of Kalidnay. Rebels, bandits, and monsters that can pass for humans all find a home here. Most of the time, unless repairing buildings, the rest of Kalidnay's populace stays away from here, afraid of what they might find.

Kalid-Ma's Palace

The palace of the Sorcerer-King is a magnificent building in a decrepit land. Made from white stone it stands out like a beacon among the sand-blasted and sand-colored buildings around it. From here Kalid-Ma supposedly rules, locked away in his chambers contemplating the future. In reality, he is locked in a special casket underneath the arena, and while Thakok-An keeps his chambers pristine, they're not in use. She lives in quarters close to his, in her own, only-slightly-less opulent chambers. It is here that she

Kalidnay

plots and plans, all while hoping for, and fearing for, his eventual return.

Kalid-Ma's Ziggurat

Kalid-Ma's Ziggurat was where the Sorcerer-King was attempting his apotheosis, to turn himself into one of the legendary Dragons. During the ceremony, Thakok-An interfered, and in an attempt to hasten the ceremony, she sacrificed her own family in a bloodbath atop the ziggurat while the Sorcerer-King worked his magic inside the ziggurat. The ceremony succeeded, but not in the way Kalid-Ma or Thakok-An anticipated. Thakok-An and the body of Kalid-Ma were transported into the Mists, and later on, Kalid-Ma's soul, which had been caught in the dragon form, followed thereafter. The ziggurat was originally created for the apotheosis ceremony, but that was not the story that everyone was told. Instead, they were told that this was a place for the King to be buried. Regardless, the place now stands eerily empty, and the whole building is cracked down the middle, from the release of the energy collected on that fateful night.

Towns and villages:

Artok-An

Sitting about two days of travel north of the capital, and while a lot smaller at only 500 inhabitants, it is the breadbasket of the domain. Practically all the food in the domain comes from here, and three-quarters of it is sent directly to the capital each month, escorted by the kalid-do themselves to protect the caravans from bandits and attack. Artok-An is controlled extremely harshly, far beyond what is seen in the capital, due to the importance of the city and its food production. Everyone in the city is enslaved, and directly owned by the Sorcerer-King, and by extension, Thakok-An herself. And dissension is dealt with in a simple manner: anyone associated with any form of rebellion or revolution is sent to the arena to die. Ironically, this merely makes the people of Artok-An more likely to rebel. This is exemplified by Xaltan-Re, a supposedly young nobleman, who has been teaching the people of Artok-An the Hidden Way, his path to enlightenment via the invisible mind arts. In reality, Xaltan-Re is much older than he appears, something which Thakok-An and the other people in Kalidnay ascribe to his mastery of the mind powers, but he plays the role of empty-headed nobleman rather well, so no one suspects that he is behind a series of successful raids. They're just successful enough to get enough food back to the people of Artok-An, but not so much as to draw unwanted attention. It's a fine line, but Xaltan-Re has walked it for almost two centuries.

City of Kalidnay

The capital and namesake of the domain, the city is home to 2,000 souls and it is the center of everything in the domain. It's also very empty (see the Empty Districts above) as it was supposed to have more than 15,000 inhabitants when it originally entered the Mists. It is likely that these other people lost their lives when the Sorcerer-King ascended, but no one knows for sure, and Thakok-An doesn't want to think about it. Within the city's borders lies the administrative centers of Kalidnay, and from here Thakok-An rules. The kalid-do work as the city guards here, operating with absolute impunity to root out any issues within the domain, but they do not find much to do, so they often spend their time lounging about. The people of Kalidnay have been indoctrinated for decades into following the law absolutely, so for the vast majority of them, there is no reason not to. This also means that any interaction with outsiders is likely to be reported to the kalid-do, whether legal or not. This means that it is incredibly difficult for anyone who is not native to the area to avoid being noticed and drawing attention. Only those people within Kalidnay with their own agendas are likely to work with foreigners, and they have their own reasons for avoiding the authorities.

Neighboring domain(s):

None

Fun Fact:

All the inhabitants of Kalidnay have some form of mental power, making them a choice target for the illithids of Bluetspur. The inhabitants of Kalidnay have become so used to being separated from the rest of the world, that they never suspected that the moon might be host to other creatures, much less monsters who think that they taste delicious!



Thakok-An

"I made one mistake. Just one.

I didn't understand the ritual, true, but that's not it.

I didn't go far enough. Not enough of the city was devoured by the god king.

We shall sustain him with the sacrifices in the arena, but we shall awaken him with the sacrifice of the city."
~ Thakok-An

Thakok-An is a half-elf from a desert world far removed from the rest of the multiverse. She stands a little over six feet tall with a wiry build. A dark red sun hangs low in the sky over her world, and her skin is a rich bronze. Her eyes are an unnatural yellow. The templar covers the top of her face with a jewel encrusted bone mask. The mask is elaborately carved to show her station and anyone who recognizes the intricate scriptures treats her with equal amounts of respect and fear.

Background: Thakok-An's world is ravaged by magic and long abandoned by its gods. Her world has close ties to the Inner Planes and most clerics call on the elements for aid. Most, but not all. Some clerics worship ancient sorcerer kings of immense power. These clerics, called templars, are among the most powerful spellcasters on her planet and wield tremendous political and military influence as well.

Perhaps the most unusual aspect of this desert planet is the rarity of metal and its arcane magic. Some arcane casters have learned to power their spells by drawing on the life force of the creature, plants, and even the land around them. These spellcasters defile everything around them to grab more power. Kalid-Ma was one of the greatest of these wizards, and a gifted psionic as well. He was one of a dozen or so sorcerer kings that ruled the city states that dotted the desert. Kalid-Ma ruled the city state of Kalidnay with an iron grasp. He was strict, but fair, unusual for one of the sorcerer kings..

Thakok-An was Kalid-Ma's most fervent templar. She ruthlessly enforced his laws while heralding his praises. The templar loved Kalid-Ma and was infamous in other city states for her sheer ability to capture assassins. Kalid-Ma was powerful, embarking on a quest to place his mind in the body of a dragon. If things went to plan, a series of rituals would grant Kalid-Ma the

physical powers of an ancient dragon while allowing him to retain his powerful spellcasting and precognitive abilities.

Thakok-An knew the sorcerer kings from the neighboring city states were aware of Kalid-Ma's plans and feared he would succeed. As the king performed more of the necessary rituals, assassination attempts became more frequent, with over a dozen occurring in the last year.

Eventually, no matter how diligent she was and how observant, Thakok-An knew one of the assassins would get lucky. They would evade her guards and spies, her carefully placed wards, and strike at her beloved king. Thakok-An decided to wait until the next ritual to make her move. She would perform a ritual at the same time as Kalid-Ma, one that would complete the transformation and place the sorcerer king's mind in the body of an ancient dragon.

Thakok-An had her guards seize her family and drag them to the top of the ziggurat in the center of Kalidnay. There she used a bone dagger to rip the hearts out of her screaming relatives and burn them in the great altar. She sacrificed her own children as Kalid-Ma completed his ritual. The ziggurat cracked. A wave of necrotic energy tore out of the temple. Thakok-An was knocked unconscious by a falling rock.

When she awoke Thakok-An found her city devastated, with only a thin circle of survivors at the farthest reaches of the city and her templars alive. Kalid-Ma lay deep under a mountain of rubble, alive, but sleeping, his form unchanged.

Current Sketch: Kalid-Ma sleeps. Nothing has been able to awaken the powerful wizard, and Thakok-An hates and loves him for it. She rules Kalidnay now, but she has been denied his favor and the taste is bitter.

As he sleeps, Kalid-Ma instinctively uses his life-draining magic to sustain himself. If left on his own, Kalid-Ma would drain the life force of every living creature in the domain. Thakok-An fears that trying to kill the sleeping mystic king might awaken him, and she would bear the brunt of his wrath. Through brutal trial and error, Thakok-An discovered that creatures slain in the arena feed her sleeping king, and she regularly holds games in his honor. Thakok-An fears the life-draining magic that she saw Kalid-Ma use to decimate his foes. Any wizards she finds in her domain, she takes to the arena. There they are stripped, handed a bone dagger and forced to fight Thakok-An's deadliest fighters and most vicious beasts.

Thakok-An

Darklord's Tactics: Thakok-An is a powerful priest and psionic. She prefers to fight from a distance and commands her lesser priests to engage the enemy in close combat while she supports them with spells. She can see glimpses of the future, even while in combat and directs her underlings to counter her opponents moves before they make them.

Thakok-An has noticed that many of the recent strangers that travel through Kalidnay have metal weapons and armor. She takes the metallic items from anyone she kills and secrets them away in her temple complex. She uses it for her elite guards and highest ranking priests.

Borders: When Thakok-An closes the borders of Kalidnay, the domain is encircled by a shimmering wall of heat. Any creature that moves into the walls takes 1d6 fire damage. For every 10 feet the creature moves into the wall the fire damage increases by 1d6. This damage ignores resistance and treats immunity as resistance.



Thakok-An

Medium humanoid (half-elf), lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (breastplate)

Hit Points 93 (17d8 + 17)

Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +6, Wis +7

Skills Acrobatics +5, Deception +5, Insight +7, Intimidation +5, Religion +6, Sleight of Hand +5, Survival +11

Condition Immunities frightened

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Tyrian, Elven, Draconic, Auran

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Fey Ancestry. Thakok-An has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic cannot put her to sleep.

Deductive Intuition. Whenever Thakok-An makes an Intelligence (Investigation) or a Wisdom (Insight) check, she can roll a d4 and add the number rolled to the total ability check.

Magical Detection. Thakok-An can cast the *detect magic* and the *detect poison and disease* spells with this trait. She can also cast the *see invisibility* spell with it. Once she casts a spell with this trait, she can't cast that spell again until she finishes a long rest.

War Caster. Thakok-An has advantage on Constitution saving throws that she makes to maintain her concentration on a spell when she takes damage. She can perform the somatic components of spells even when she has weapons or a shield in one or both hands. When a hostile creature's movement provokes an opportunity attack from her, she can use her reaction to cast a spell at the creature, rather than making an opportunity attack. The spell must have a casting time of 1 action and must target only that creature.

Ambusher. Thakok-An has advantage on attack rolls against any creature she has surprised.

Forest Camouflage. Thakok-An has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in forests and forest-like terrain.

Lay on Hands. Thakok-An's blessed touch can heal wounds. She has a pool of healing power that replenishes when she takes a long rest. With that pool, she can restore 60 hit points. As an action, she can touch a creature and draw power from the pool to restore a number of hit points to that creature, up to the maximum amount remaining in her pool. Alternatively, Thakok-An can expend 5 hit points from her pool of healing to cure the target of one disease or neutralize one poison affecting it. She can cure multiple diseases and neutralize multiple poisons with a single use of Lay on Hands, expending hit points separately for each one.

This feature has no effect on undead and constructs.

Nature's Wrath. Thakok-An can invoke primeval forces to ensnare a foe twice per day. As an action, she can cause spectral vines to spring up and reach for a creature within 10 feet of her that she can see. The creature must succeed on a DC 13 Strength or Dexterity saving throw (its choice) or be restrained. While restrained by the vines, the creature repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns. On a success, it frees itself and the vines vanish.

Protective Aura of Warding and Courage. Ancient magic lies so heavily upon Thakok-An that it forms an eldritch ward. She and friendly creatures within 10 feet of her have resistance to damage from spells, can't be frightened and whenever they must make a saving throw, they gain a +1 bonus to the saving throw while Thakok-An is conscious.

Divine Smite. When Thakok-An hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, she can expend one spell slot to deal radiant

Thakok-An

damage to the target, in addition to the weapon's damage. The extra damage is 2d8 for a 1st-level spell slot, plus 1d8 for each spell level higher than 1st, to a maximum of 5d8. The damage increases by 1d8 if the target is an undead or a fiend, to a maximum of 6d8.

Divine Health. Thakok-An is immune to diseases.

Spellcasting. Thakok-An is a 12th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Thakok-An has the following paladin spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *compelled duel, ensnaring strike, speak with animals*

2nd level (3 slots): *moonbeam, wrathful smite*

3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic, plant growth*

Psionic User. Thakok-An is a psionic user which grants her the following abilities. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks).

-Psychokinesis: Thakok-An's psychic powers allow her to cast *mage hand* at will, in addition, twice per day she can cast each of the following spells: *telekinesis, Tenser's floating disk, catapult* and *levitate*.

-Psychoportation: Thakok-An can innately cast the following spells twice per day each: *teleport, dimensional door, misty step, thunder step*.

-Mental Defenses: Thakok-An can innately cast the following spells once per day each: *mind blank, enhance ability* (Intelligence or Wisdom only). In addition Thakok-An can raise a mental barrier for 1 hour per day which stops any attempts to read her thoughts or detect her location via divination magic and gives her advantage to any wisdom or intelligence saving throws. The first time she fails an Intelligence or Wisdom saving throw, the advantage to those saves ceases.

-Telepathic: Thakok-An can innately cast *ego whip 4* and *detect thoughts* twice per day. In addition she can cast *message* at will.

Actions

Multiattack. Thakok-An makes two weapon attacks or one life drain attack.

Life Drain. *Melee Spell Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 +3) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Bone Club +1. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning + 1d8 radiant damage.

Bone Spear +1. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing + 1d8 radiant damage, or 4 (1d8) piercing + 1d8 radiant damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack. If used as a ranged attack the extra radiant damage is ignored.

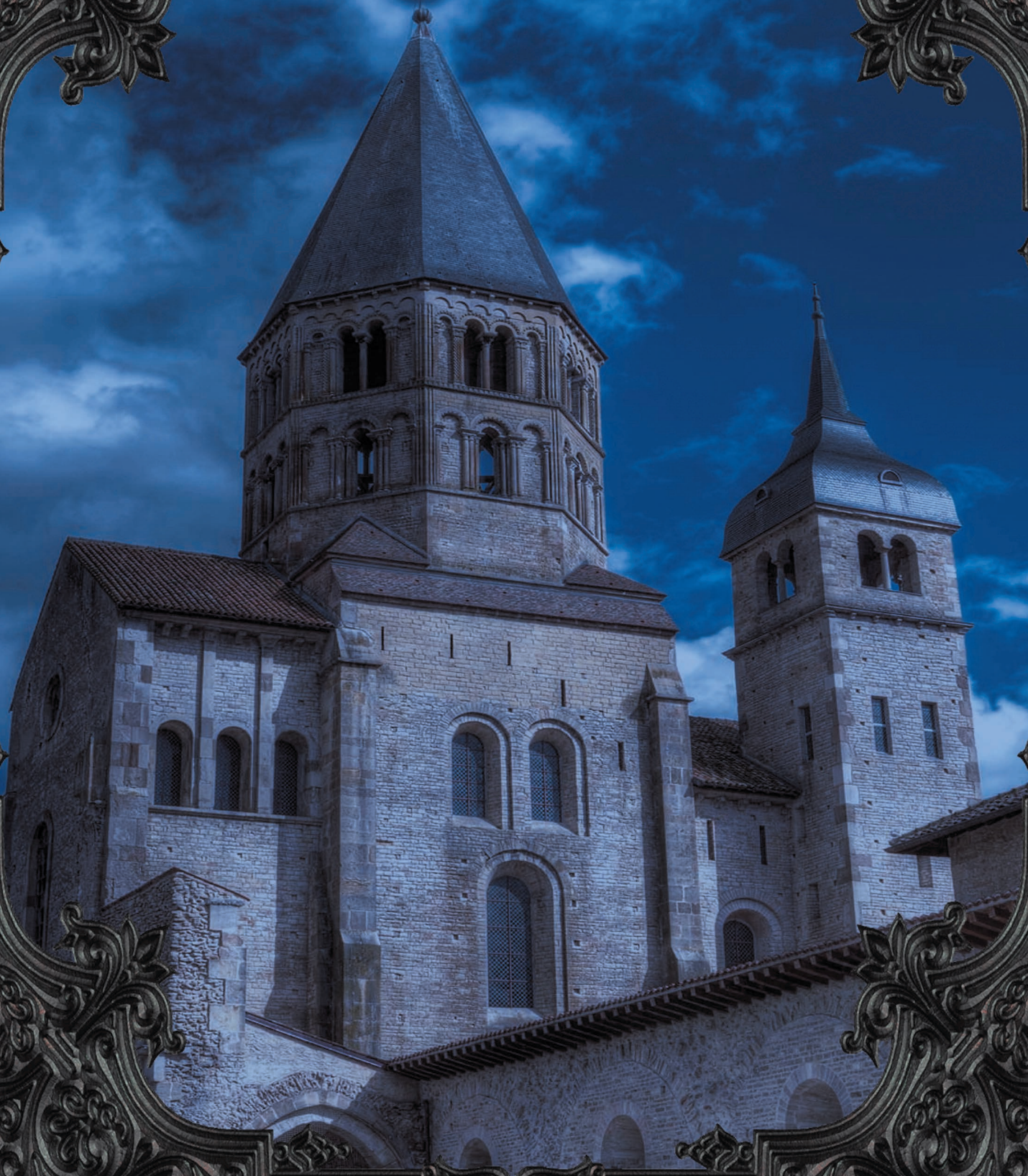
Bone Dagger +1. *Melee:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing + 1d8 radiant damage. On a critical hit, the target bleeds for 1d4 damage per turn until they succeed on a DC 13 Medicine check or until they are magically healed.

Poison Dart Blowgun +1. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 25/100 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 piercing + 1d4 poison damage.

Intimidating Gaze. A creature of Thakok-An's choice that is within 120 feet and aware of her must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Thakok-An's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.



Kislova



Kislova



The land of Kislova is under a spell. Not a magical one, but one of charm. The charm is that of the Baroness of Blood, IIsabet Obour. By day she's the loving and caring wife of Peto Casse, the incurably ill and paralyzed Baron of Kislova, but each night she takes pleasure in murdering any victim in front of him, right before she takes his life. And then, the next day, when he inevitably wakes up in his bed again, he has forgotten, and she does it all over again. And again. And again. Kislova in many ways is a reflection of IIsabet, a cold and deadly, but beautiful and rich land, from which no escape is possible. At the same time the inhabitants are a very emotional lot, their tempers running hot and their passions fierce. Adventures in Kislova should focus on these aspects, and any run in with IIsabet during the day should portray her as a slightly distant but caring ruler, but during the night, she descends into her torture chambers in the dungeons of Nimbus Castle. The inhabitants of Kislova are unaware of what truly happens, but Baron Peto is beloved, and they worry for him, though they do not suspect that she is the cause of his illness. If they found out, they'd likely rip her to pieces as the living embodiment of the rule and rulers that they despised and suffered under for centuries.

"I wish I had been born a man, I would have killed thousands in battle, taken over countries, burned witches - I would have been a hero."

~ Elizabeth Báthory

Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forest, hill, mountains
Year Formed:	748 BC
Population:	5,000
Races (%):	Humans 99%, Other 1%
Languages:	Common, Kislovan
Religions:	None
Government:	Feudal monarchy
Ruler(s):	Baron Peto Casse
Darklord(s):	Baroness IIsabet Obour
Nationality:	Kislovan
Analog:	Hungary

Local Fauna: Most of the species in Kislova have been domesticated, save for a few stray sheep. The main predator of the domain is the simple wildcat. Even the wolves that are so endemic in other domains are mostly absent here. The few wolves that are present, however, are very likely to be werewolves. But they are not the main threat, and neither are the vampires and wights that exist here. In Kislova, the threat comes from the people and their tendency to let their feelings run wild. Vendettas and duels are common, as are feuds that last for decades. Even at the best of times, you might find that you've married your worst enemy, and you won't know until it is too late. Above them all rises the specter of the Baroness of Blood.

Local Flora:

The local forests consist of various types of evergreens, with barley and rye being the main crops. The lower mountains and hills are rich with grass. The most common types of herb and flower in Kislova though, are either poisonous or have strange properties when prepared in the right manner. This allows IIsabet to continually produce new poisons and concoctions to try to kill Baron Peto. The common folk are well aware that these herbs can be dangerous, but local folklore has informed the way they eat, so that cooking renders them a harmless spice. Only access to the proper equipment can turn them into the strange alchemical powders and potions that IIsabet uses.



Terrain type

Kislova is a land of evergreen forests, plains and mountains. The mountains are rich with gold, especially in the Tygelt region, and that allows nobles to inflict harsh taxes. These taxes have been lowered under Baron Peto, but IIsabet yearns for the day when she will strike down the peasants that cost her father his life. There are numerous crops, especially around Pirie, with rye and barley growing well, but most of the region's riches come from beneath the soil, though the trees grow tall, strong, and fast here.

Kislova

Important Landmarks

Nimbus Castle

Nimbus Castle, the home of Ilsabet Obour and Peto Casse, is more than 300 years old and has been built in segments, with the dining hall the sole remainder of the first wooden lodge that served as the Obour home. The thick walls and tall towers were built by the descendants of the Obours as they slowly conquered Kislova and the surrounding regions. That cycle was only broken by the death of Ilsabet's father, and even then she has made her own additions to the castle, in the shape of the hidden dungeons underneath, where she tortures her victims. One tower lies mostly abandoned. Ilsabet believes her mother haunts the bedroom in which she died of a virulent illness. Ironically, it wasn't haunted until Kislova joined the other domains of dread within the misty borders. The castle itself stands on a defensible position at the very end of a peninsula at a bend in the Aider River.

Tygelt Mountains

The Tygelt Mountains lie two days' travel by horseback from Nimbus Castle, and are the treasure chest of Kislova. They are rich in gold, but the inhabitants are in constant semi-rebellion, even after Peto Casse took over as Baron. They've been exploited by the rulers of Kislova and beyond for far too long, struggling with heavy tax burdens and increased demands for man-power. Their resistance grows which provides Ilsabet with plenty of fodder for her dungeon.

Towns and villages:

Pirie

Pirie lies near Nimbus Castle. The capital of Kislova and home to 600 people, it is an unremarkable place, save the town square where Ilsabet's father used to burn rebels on pyres. It relied on fishing, and shipping to survive, but the entry to the mists has meant both these industries were lost. Through necessity they've increased their farming and have become a manufacturing village, rather than a trading one. This change has meant that the city has remained in a position of importance, despite the wealth of the Tygelt Mountains. A series of vineyards lie a little to the west of Pirie. They produce a variety of different wines but the most famous and expensive one is the "Voros Rose" which, despite its name, is of a deep green color.

Neighboring domain(s):

None

Fun Fact:

Inheritance in Kislova runs through the male side of a family, unless only female heirs remain. The first-born girl of any family is set up for an arranged marriage, but the second born is free to do as she pleases, though it is often expected that they devote themselves to advising the heir.



Kislova

Map by Raymon Brugman

Deneri

Zwarte woud

Prahova

Zolten rivier

Zwarte woud

Kopem

Celarita

Arvis rivier

Olt

Zolten rivier

Brasov heuvels

Nimbus

Zwarte woud

Arvis rivier

Brasov

Castle Nimbus

Charnathulka gebergte

Pirre

Timisoara

Botosani

Midheivels

Mesoges

Magolina rivier

Brudil moerassen

Dambodis bossen

Dambovita

Saalaj

Grensgebergte

Tirgu

Galatoj

Grensgebergte

Gurai

Tyselt

Mount Tyselt



Ilisabet Obour

"She is like her damned spiders. Everything she touches becomes riddled with poison. She can slay with the slightest touch.

What's worse is that she doesn't do it because she is vindictive or evil. She does it because, like the spider, it's in her nature."

~ Baron Peto Casse

Ilisabet Obour is a young woman in her mid twenties. She rules Kislova in the name of her husband, Baron Peto Casse. The people of Kislova think the young baroness rules the country while trying to find a cure for her ailing husband. The truth is far darker. Baron Peto is Ilisabet's prisoner, and she tortures him to maintain her youth and beauty, and keep a horrible wasting disease at bay. Ilisabet can absorb the psychic suffering of others, an act she calls feeding. Baron Peto is Ilisabet's favorite victim.

If Ilisabet has fed, she is breathtakingly beautiful. Her hair is long, blonde, and styled in thick braids that reach past her waist. Ilisabet's eyes are bright blue and using makeup would only mar her natural beauty. If Ilisabet has not had a chance to feed, then her hair becomes white and stringy, falling out in huge clumps. Her skin becomes so thin it is almost transparent, with black veins forming spider web patterns all over her body. Her back is hunched, twisted and she must walk with a cane.

Background: Ilisabet Obour is the youngest child of Baron Janosk Obour, and is much like her father in many ways. As a young girl Ilisabet was struck with the same wasting disease that killed her mother. Because of the disease, Ilisabet was thin and pale, and often chilled to the bone, with nothing able to relieve her.

Ilisabet had a keen mind, an iron will, and was absolutely ruthless. To further hone her mind, Janosk had his loyal friend, Lord Jorani, teach her history and philosophy. Jorani also taught Ilisabet alchemy, a science she excelled in, most especially with poisons.

Despite her poor health, Ilisabet was brought to her father's side after he defeated the rebels that had plagued his country for decades. Janosk wanted to see what she had learned and see if she could be as ruthless as an Obour had to be. When confronted with the defeated rebel leader, Dark, Ilisabet more than justified her father's faith in her. Under Ilisabet's command, Dark's compatriots were burned alive. Once his allies were ash, the rebel leader's eyes and tongue were cut out and his hands were mangled with red hot irons. Ilisabet watched the torturous

ordeal believing she had done the right thing. After Dark was maimed and tortured, he was set free as a warning to not cross the Obour family. As Janosk dined with his daughter that night, he discussed his plans to invade the neighboring barony of Sundell. Little did they know the invasion would prove disastrous.

Dark was rescued by soldiers of the Baron of Sundell, Peto Casse, and brought before him. Dark and the rebels warned Peto of the coming invasion, giving the baron ample time to prepare. Janosk's army was routed and soon Peto launched an invasion against Kislova itself. Janosk tried to fight, but soon was forced to accept the inevitable. Kislova was conquered. The Obour were defeated.

Janosk offered his life for the lives of his children, which Peto accepted. The night before his execution, Ilisabet was brought to her father. Janosk made his daughter swear to avenge his death. Ilisabet readily agreed, setting upon a path that would doom herself and her country.

To prepare for her revenge, Ilisabet began to study poison, both natural and her own creations. While testing a new batch on a servant, Ilisabet realized the pain and suffering of others relieved her wasting disease and enhanced her considerable beauty. The relief was only temporary, but welcome all the same. Even as the spirits of the dead that she had fed on returned to haunt her, Ilisabet drank more and more deeply of the suffering of castle servants and innocent townsfolk.

Ilisabet's beauty captured the attention of Baron Peto. Marrying Ilisabet would ensure that Peto's children would inherit both Sundell and Kislova. To Peto, it seemed an easy choice. Ilisabet was resistant at first, Peto had killed her father after all, but soon came around. She could conquer Sundell and avenge her father by first marrying and then slaying this fool of a baron. The marriage quickly became strained, as several of the baron's servants succumbed to unusual or rare poisons after Ilisabet took up residence at her husband's home, Shadow Castle in the heart of Sundell. Ilisabet retreated to little explored areas of the castle to continue her studies. While exploring she made an amazing discovery: an ancient book of alchemy. Locked within its pages were the means of bringing the dead back to life. These alchemical vampires needed to regularly ingest blood as would traditional vampires, else they would wither away and die a second time. Ilisabet wasted little time in creating two of these alchemical vampires to serve as guards and spies. The predations of the two vampires did much to

Ilsabet Obour

relieve Ilsabet's sickness and keep her looking young and beautiful. Ilsabet infused some of the spiders she found within the castle walls with new poisons and elixirs she learned from the ancient text. After a few years of testing, Ilsabet had created a monstrous hybrid whose webs were poisonous, and whose bite was certain death. Ilsabet brought her monitor, Jorani, with her, and soon the two became lovers. When Ilsabet became pregnant with her son, Lekai, she was unsure who the father was, but cared little. Peto loved the boy, and tolerated her presence because of him.

Despite the brief respite given to Ilsabet by Lekai, relations between husband and wife soon soured. Ilsabet continued to refine her poisoning techniques on her husband's servants. Ilsabet was starting to grow desperate, and consulted a seer, Sagesse. The seer warned Ilsabet that she would bring ruin upon herself and her people if she didn't change her ways. Sagesse told Ilsabet that she would even try to murder her own son if she stayed on this path. Enraged, Ilsabet stabbed the old seer and fled.

Peto had decided to return to Sundell, along with Lekai, forcing Ilsabet to act quickly. She poisoned Peto with a rare mixture of toxins that left him paralyzed, but aware of everything that happened around him. Ilsabet pretended to be the dutiful wife and tended to her husband, but kept him helpless in his bedchamber.

Jorani, horrified at what his lover had become, began to feed Peto a mix of herbs and honey that would slowly undo Ilsabet's poison. Jorani aided the Baron on one condition: Ilsabet would not be killed or harmed. Peto could keep her from killing, but would not harm her. Having little choice, Peto agreed.

Matters came to an abrupt end when one of Peto's loyal supporters, Shaul, tried to rescue the baron. Jorani moved quickly to cure Peto, who was able to move, but was weak. Jorani told Ilsabet that Lekai could not be his, as he could not have children. For a second, overcome by her hatred of Peto, Ilsabet did nothing as one of her monstrous spiders slid down its web toward her son. Jorani and Shaul tried to save the boy, but were slain by strands of webbing. The child's nursemaid, Sagra, took the child and ran into a mist that had enveloped the castle. Ilsabet brought Jorani back to unlife as an alchemical vampire and ordered him to feed on Peto. The baroness stayed and watched, feeding off of Peto's despair and horror. As the two monsters fed, the mists poured through the windows and doors of the castle.

Current Sketch: Ilsabet rules a country that loves

her, but which doesn't realize she is the root of all their suffering. She uses Jorani to feed regularly, keeping the alchemical vampire docile and loyal. She rides through her kingdom during the day and chooses her victim from amongst the cheering throngs. She always brings her victim back to Peto's room, forcing the Baron to watch one of his beloved subjects die at the hands of Jorani. Ilsabet feeds off the despair of the peasant and her husband. They are locked in an endless cycle, and torturing Peto is Ilsabet's only joy. No matter what she tries, it seems Peto cannot die. She has tried poison, decapitation, exsanguination, and a dozen other horrible fates, to no avail. Peto returns, helpless but alive at each dawn. Ilsabet rules Kislova, but must rule in the name of the man who killed her father, and it drives her mad. Ilsabet has agents looking for Lekai. They scour Kislova and any other domain they can find, but so far have found nothing.

Darklord's Tactics: Ilsabet avoids direct combat, preferring to use poison or one of her monstrous minions. Ilsabet is never far from one of her monstrous spiders or alchemical vampires, and the monsters will leap to her defense if she is attacked. The people of Kislova love Ilsabet (or more accurately, her husband), and will help her if she is attacked. Ilsabet is a gifted alchemist, especially with poisons. If she does have to use her dagger it will be coated in her most virulent venoms.

Borders: When Ilsabet closes the borders of her domain, the mist becomes impenetrable. Any creature that approaches the mist is filled with unreasoning fear. No magic will breach the fog and wind does not disperse it...



Ilsabet Obour



Ilsabet Obour

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 84 (13d8 + 26)

Speed 30 ft.

STR **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

9 (-1) 15 (+2) 14 (+2) 17 (+3) 13 (+1) 9 (-1)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +5, Int +6

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Medicine +4, Perception +4, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +5

Damage Resistances acid

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Kislovian, Draconic, Infernal, Abyssal, Elven, Dwarven

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Coat the Dagger. Ilsabet can use an action to cause thick, black poison to coat the blade. The poison remains for 1 minute or until an Attack using this weapon hits a creature. That creature must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 2d10 poison damage and become Poisoned for 1 minute. The Dagger can't be used this way again until the next dawn.

Create Poison. Ilsabet can create any poison found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (pg.257.) The time needed to create one of these poisons is 10 minutes per 100gp of the original total cost. All poison costs are halved for Ilsabet. As long as she is within her residence, she has access to any type and quantity of these poisons. Ilsabet is trained in the safe handling of substances, and never risks accidentally poisoning herself when handling poisons.

Powerful Poisons. Ilsabet creates such powerful poisons that creatures that are normally immune to poison damage only have resistance to them and creatures with resistance have none. This does not apply to damage from weapons but only to the damage caused from a poison.

Poison Master. Poisons created by Ilsabet have 2 extra dice worth of damage (poisons that deal no damage now deal 2d6 if she wishes) and if the victim is unaware, they have disadvantage on the saving throw. Ilsabet can analyze poisons she did not make herself and learn the ingredients of the poison. This consumes a dose of the poison.

Poison Specialist. *Ilsabet can coat any weapon with poison as a bonus action, even in the middle of combat.*

Misleading Appearance. Ilsabet has learned how to disguise her poisons. She can make them taste and smell sugary and they appear to most as a sweet drink. People who drink her poisons have disadvantage and a -5 penalty to rolls made that aim to discern the nature of the poison.

Brew Potion. Ilsabet can brew potions of any formula she knows. Ilsabet can make any wizard spell of up to 3rd level into a potion. It takes 1 hour per level to create such a potion and the DC for the contained spells is 15. The potions lose their effectiveness 48 hours after they were made and only Ilsabet can use them.

Rust Metal Potion (3/Day). Ilsabet flings a potion at a target she can see within 20ft range. The creature must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or any nonmagical armor or weapon made of metal that the target wears or holds, corrodes. The armor/weapon takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to armor class/damage rolls. If its penalty drops to -5, the weapon is destroyed. Non magical ammunition made of metal that is hit is destroyed instantly.

Necklace of Adaptation. While wearing this necklace, Ilsabet can breathe normally in any Environment, and she has advantage on Saving Throws made against harmful gases and vapors (such as *cloudkill* and *stinking cloud* Effects, inhaled Poisons, and the Breath Weapons of some dragons).

Cloak of Resistance. Ilsabet has advantage on any saving throws while wearing this cloak.

Create Alchemical Monsters. Ilsabet has acquired the knowledge and resources to create an alchemical vampire, a venomweb spider, or ooze creature. It takes 4 days to create an alchemical vampire, 6 hours to create 1d4+3 venomweb spiders and 2 hours per CR of the ooze creature she wishes to make.

Actions

Dagger Of Venom. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/40 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Significant Possessions

Dagger of Venom, Cauldron of Brewing, Ring of Acid Resistance, Necklace of Adaptation, Cloak of Resistance

Odiare



Odiare



Odiare is a domain stuck in a cycle of growth and death, though neither the inhabitants nor their darklord has realized this yet. Years ago, when Odiare and Maligno were drawn into the mists, he had killed many of the adults in the city, in an attempt to receive only love and adoration from the children. He succeeded, but his further attempts at killing the rest of the inhabitants were foiled by brave adventurers who managed to rescue everyone above the age of thirteen from Odiare. Regrettably, Maligno retained his hold over those younger than thirteen and kept them in Odiare. Now they live in a mixture of fear and adoration of the evil puppet who has become a bogeyman to them. But the time comes where those who were once thirteen have become adults, and where they now have children of their own. Maligno is now eyeing up the children for an adoring audience, while his carrionette brothers and sisters eye up the adults as targets for them to take over. It is only a matter of time, a few years at most before another bloodbath takes place in Odiare.

"Would someone please like to tell us of a characteristic that separates humans from the rest of the animal kingdom?"

"Cages."

~ Carlo Collodi, The Adventures of Pinocchio

Culture Level:	Medieval (though Renaissance before the loss of the adults)
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, urban
Year Formed:	738 BC
Population:	100
Races (%):	Humans 100%
Languages:	Odiaran
Religions:	None
Government:	None
Ruler(s):	Maligno
Darklord(s):	Maligno
Nationality:	Odiaran
Analog:	1880s Tuscany (Italy), <i>Pinocchio</i>



Maligno himself is the cause of all this — a hateful creature who, when his lack of humanity was exposed, turned to hatred and forced the father who loved him to create more of his kind? His acts of cruelty are many, and his wanton murder of so many townsfolk, over a lack of acceptance, is unforgivable. Adventures in Odiare should center around the fact that the children are now coming of age, and are getting to a point where they're in danger. Will they be able to pass on their knowledge in time for the younger ones to learn, and have an easier time than they did? Or will Maligno and his minions strike before they can complete the process? And what exactly DID happen to those adults that were, according to the surviving children, rescued by heroes? What if those weren't heroes, and what if the adults are stuck elsewhere, cursed to be looking for their children? And just as importantly, can other heroes break Maligno's cycle? After all, he can't be killed until Guiseppe is destroyed — otherwise, the old man will rebuild him.

Local Fauna:

There are no wild animals as such in Odiare, though there are plenty of animals that started their lives as pets, and then eventually escaped or were used for food. Dogs, cats, rabbits, mice, and the like are all present in Odiare, but there are no rats nor other vermin. This has helped keep the populace relatively healthy as there are no animals to spread disease or filth.

Donkeys make an occasional appearance in Odiare, though no one knows where they come from. They usually appear shortly after an inhabitant disappears, leading to a number of rumors as to what is going on. Some believe that foolish children are turned into donkeys somehow.



Odiare

Local Flora:

Odiare doesn't have much in the way of flora, as it is kept to a single settlement within the domain, and nothing outside the Odiare hamlet makes its way into the domain. Any flora within the domain is therefore limited to what you'd typically have found in the settlement. This is typically vegetables such as lettuce, onions, carrots, tomatoes, and the like, as well as certain types of fruit. Unfortunately, while the Odiarans look very well after their vegetables and fruit, the produce often grows small and decrepit.

Native Horrors

There are no monsters here, apart from Maligno and his carrionettes. As such, Odiare can be safe for most people if they stay away from the puppet master and his brothers and sisters. Making your way into the sewers and basements is a recipe for disaster, however, as that is where the monsters await.

Terrain type

The settlement of Odiare is completely and utterly urbanized, though it's bigger than its current population requires, capable of housing 3–400 inhabitants, rather than the 100 it currently does. The buildings are mostly whitewashed and made with brick and terracotta tiles for roofs. They're not in great condition anymore, as the inhabitants no longer have the resources available to them that they once did.

Important Landmarks

Guiseppe's Workshop

Guiseppe's Workshop is a simple building with a small storefront, with large windows. Anyone who looks through the windows into the shop itself will see a crowded work area, littered with toys in various shapes and sizes and levels of completion. Marionettes of all kinds dominate the scenery. Everything is covered in a layer of dust and soot, and there is evidence to show that someone tried to burn down the shop, but that they failed. Guiseppe still lives here, though he stays upstairs all the time. The children bring him drink and food, as the utterly insane elderly man cannot take care of himself anymore. Maligno has given orders that the old man must be kept safe, though it's clear that he hates him.

Alchemy Shop

Argon, an Italian alchemist from Gothic Earth's Italy, runs an alchemy business in Odiare. Unfortunately, he is a con artist, and the majority of his concoctions have little to no impact. If compelled or intimidated, he can concoct basic mixtures and magical potions of common rarity.

Secolo Theater

Maligno's major playing area is the Secolo Theater. It is the site of Maligno's slaughter of the majority of Odiare's adults. Following the slaughter, it became haunted by their spirits, who now look after imaginary children as if nothing had occurred.

Towns and villages:

None (Odiare itself is a hamlet)

Neighboring domain(s):

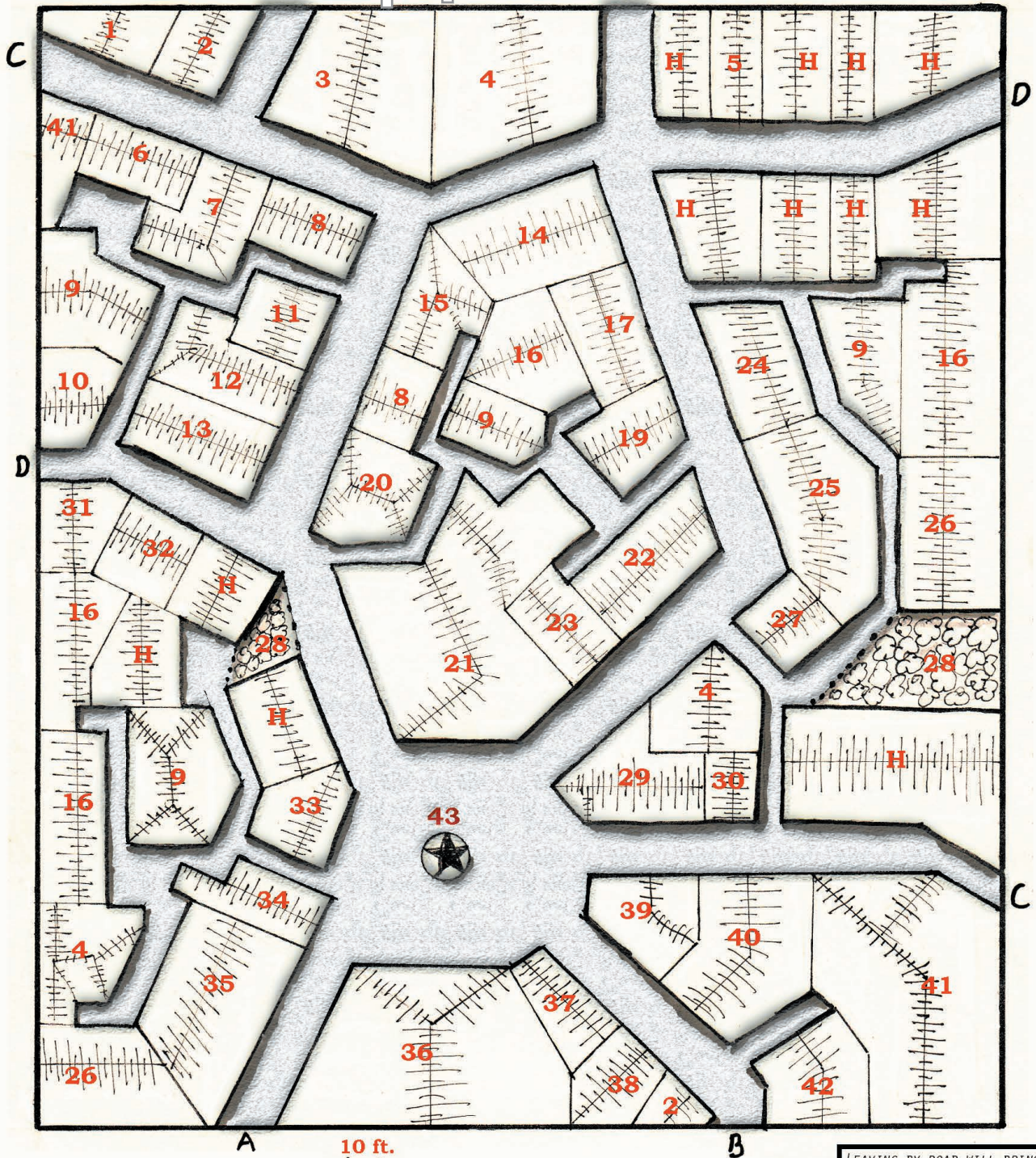
None

Fun Fact:

Visitors to Odiare who make foolish decisions are likely to be turned into donkeys by the mists, as they sustain the local legend of people who make an ass of themselves.



Map of Odiare



- No. BUSINESS
1. ALCHEMIST
 2. CANDLER
 3. TRADE MERCHANT
 4. TAVERN
 5. SERTINO HOME
 6. KNIFE GRINDER
 7. APOTHECARY
 8. LEATHER WORKER
 9. LIMNER (SIGNS, HERALDIC SYMBOLS)
 10. COBBLER

12. WOODWORKER
13. WIZARD'S CHARMS
14. SILVERSMITH
15. TOYMAKER
16. WAREHOUSE
17. VEGETABLE MARKET
18. TAILOR
19. FISHMONGER
20. LEECH DOCTOR
21. SECOLO THEATER
22. BREWER
23. POTTER

24. BUTCHER
25. BLACKSMITH
26. ABANDONED
27. BAKER
28. GARDEN COURTYARD
29. BOARDING HOUSE
30. ASTROLOGER
31. SCRIBE
32. BASKETWEAVER
33. FRESHGAME MARKET
34. JEWELLER
35. CONSTABULARY

36. INN
37. SPICE MERCHANT
38. BOWYER/FLETCHER
39. MONEYLENDER
40. STABLE & COACH HOUSE
41. TEMPLE
42. UNDERTAKER
43. TOWN SQUARE (WITH STATUE)
- H. PRIVATE HOUSE

LEAVING BY ROAD WILL BRING YOU BACK ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE VILLAGE (THE OPPOSITE OF EACH LETTER)
THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM ODIARE.



Maligno

*"A complete sadist who revels in the pain of others. I do not know who is responsible for the creation of this twisted creature, but they must be one of the vilest forces that haunt our troubled land."
~ Rudolph van Richten*

The darklord of Odiare is a marionette, a puppet possessed by an evil spirit. The puppet's face is brightly painted, with a bright and cheerful smile. Maligno has been dressed in a white shirt, with bright green shorts and jacket, and wears a yellow cap with a white feather thrust through its band. When he speaks, his voice is shrill shrill, with his laugh a maniacal giggle.

Maligno's wooden body is highly articulated, with dozens of movable parts. The contortion this affords him allows him to squeeze through incredibly tight spaces. His face is capable of a wide range of expressions

Children instinctively trust Maligno, and he is very good with them. He gains their trust by plying them with treats, most especially candies, and once that trust is gained, Maligno starts his work of turning child against parent.

Background: Giuseppe was the most skilled toymaker in all Odiare. He loved children, but he and his wife were never blessed with any of their own. All the children of Odiare loved Giuseppe, who was always ready with a kind word, a pat on the head, or a sweet candy. When his wife passed away after their third decade of marriage, it proved too much for the toymaker. He became feverous, shaking with delirium. The people of Odiare took care of their much loved toymaker as he lay at the brink of death. After lying close to the end for nigh a month, Giuseppe suddenly made his recovery. Waking one day, he set to work, his carers astonished to find him in his workshop, hard at work. Giuseppe worked feverishly, nearly day and night, not accepting any interruption, for over a month. With the completion of this, Giuseppe's meister work was complete. He had carved the most complex and fantastic puppet of not only his career, but perhaps in all the history of Odiare. As he finished carving the puppet, it turned its head, looked at him, and with a fiendish intelligence in its eyes, thanked its father for giving it the gift of life.

Giuseppe loved the puppet, who he named Figlio. Giuseppe believed that Figlio was a living being and presented him to the people of Odiare as his true son. Figlio's childish antics made the townsfolk laugh, as did Giuseppe's notion that a wooden boy had a heart. The laughter rang out loud and long. The adults of

Odiare had sealed their own doom. The children, though, that was a different story. They loved Figlio as much as Giuseppe did. The puppet would caper for the children, singing and dancing all the while, whilst telling them fantastic stories. "Truly" thought the children, "Figlio is a real boy".

Figlio carried on living with Giuseppe as son and father. Time passed, and Giuseppe started to notice little things about Figlio that didn't sit right. The way he'd sometimes just sit staring into the air; when Giuseppe would do his chores, the hair would stand up on the back of his neck, and as he turned, he'd find the puppet watching him.

One day, Giuseppe asked his father for a boon. His shrill voice spoke. "Father. I am lonely. I love the children here, but none of them are like me. Carve for me brothers and sisters, so that I may play with them."

By now, Giuseppe had grown terrified of his creation. He set to work.

Figlio's brothers and sisters were cold and emotionless. They followed the commands of Figlio like automatons, but paid Giuseppe no heed. Figlio named his siblings his carrionettes, and they would prove the master stroke in his plan to kill each and every adult in Odiare. With the adults removed, Figlio could bask in the adoration of the children forever.

Figlio sent Giuseppe to announce a phantasmagorical show, a true theatre of delights, a performance to show the town the magic of his amazing "clockwork puppets". The whole town was invited, and as the audience took their seats, the show began. The puppets capered, sung, danced, with all kinds of tricks and pratfalls. As the show reached its finale, Figlio's dark plan came to its conclusion. As the puppets drew long silver needles from their garments and fell upon the audience, Figlio declared he was Figlio no more. Now, he would be known only as Maligno. His shrill laughter rang out. As the carrionettes fell upon the terrified adults, they discovered a new ability. As they plunged their needles into the necks of the adults, they found that they could possess their bodies. Maligno realised his true deeply held desire. He wanted a living body, not one crafted of carved wood and springs. He plunged his needle into the neck of a victim, yet nothing happened. Over and over he tried. Yet he could not possess an adult body. As the last of his victims' life blood seeped out, the furious puppet finally turned his attention to Giuseppe.

Maligno

He commanded his carrionettes to turn their human bodies upon Giuseppe. They surrounded the hapless and terrified little toymaker, and drew their needles. As the first wound was inflicted on Giuseppe, Maligno discovered his own weakness. Every injury that befell the toymaker was mirrored on his own carved self. For Maligno to survive, Giuseppe would have to live.

As his carrionettes corralled the children together, the mists rose, as the dark powers pulled Odiare into Ravenloft.

Maligno kept control over the town, yet this was nearly broken when a band of adventurers destroyed his carrionettes and freed the possessed adults. Maligno retreated to a hidden lair and waited for the adventurers to leave. Once the meddlesome outsiders had left, he convinced Giuseppe to make more carrionettes. This time Maligno didn't bother about possessing the town. Every adult in Odiare was slaughtered in a massive orgy of bloodshed.

Current Sketch: Maligno is desperate to escape his puppet body. He finds his body of wood, twine and springs repulsive, and longs to have a flesh and blood body.

It has been years since the slaughter of the adults of Odiare, and many of those who were children have become young adults. Some are even starting to have children of their own. Maligno hasn't been seen by any children for well over a decade and has become a bogeyman. The young parents of Odiare tell tales of a living puppet to make their children eat their vegetables and get to bed on time.

The only person in Odiare who knows Maligno is real is Giuseppe. The toy maker is ancient and feeble, and the events of his life have left him a broken man. Maligno hates the old man but needs him, as Giuseppe is the only person that can repair the evil puppet if he is seriously damaged. Maligno checks on Giuseppe regularly to make sure he is being fed and his house is cleaned by the townspeople. If Giuseppe is sick or injured, Maligno becomes unhinged. The evil puppet only calms down when Giuseppe is well. Maligno hates the old man, but needs him.

Darklord's Tactics: Maligno prefers to hide amongst toys and study his foes. He has dozens of carrionettes nearby at all times, and will gladly sacrifice them to keep himself safe. The puppet is intelligent and patient, preferring to let his foes walk into an ambush, and have them beset by dozens of screaming mario-

nettes attacking from every direction. Maligno wants to overwhelm his foes and cause chaos in their ranks by having carrionettes possess the strongest member and turn them on their friends. If his initial plan fails, Maligno will quickly retreat to plan a second strike.

Maligno carries over a dozen long silver needles with him at all times. These needles paralyze living creatures and the puppet can throw them with pinpoint accuracy. Maligno likes to aim for the limbs of his foes, taking away their ability to escape and fight back piece by piece. Once his foe is helpless, Maligno will approach his victim and drive a needle into the back of their neck, completely paralyzing them. Maligno cannot transfer his consciousness into the body of a living creature, which drives him mad with rage and feelings of inadequacy. Instead the living puppet carries a four inch razor. He slits the throats of his paralyzed victims and giggles as their blood pools on the ground under them.

Borders: When Maligno closes the borders, the roads of Odiare twist and turn into an impossible maze. The roads travel through treacherous woods, thick fog banks and dive into steep ravines before returning the travelers to the heart of Odiare. Maligno finds the frustration and helplessness of his victims absolutely delightful.



Maligno

Maligno

Small construct, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 31 (9d6)

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Int +6

Skills Performance +8, Stealth +7

Damage Immunities cold, lightning, poison

Condition Immunities paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Nimble Escape. Maligno can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of his turns.

Ambusher. Maligno has advantage on attack rolls against any creature he has surprised.

Immutable Form. Maligno is immune to any spell or effect that would alter his form.

Curse. Maligno is cursed to be unable to inhabit a human body. He is also unable to kill Giuseppe as any harm that befalls the toy-maker is inflicted upon Maligno as well.

Innate Spellcasting. Maligno's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dissonant whispers*, *puppet*, *Tasha's hideous laughter*, *taunt**, *ventriloquism**

3/Day each: *animate objects*, *Otto's irresistible dance*

1/Day each: *antipathy/sympathy*

Spell Immunity. Maligno is immune to all non area-effect spells, except those that cause burning damage or affect wood.

Repairable. Maligno regains 1 hit point when *mending* is cast upon him. By using an action, Giuseppe or any of the carrionettes can repair one hit point per round. However, if Maligno takes more than 24 points of damage, only Giuseppe can repair him.

Impossible Death. If Maligno is reduced to 0 hit points, he is unable to move, although he can still talk and use his spell-like abilities. Only when his doll-body is burned to a cinder, can he be considered "dead" but not destroyed. Giuseppe can still build a new body for him. As of yet, no one knows if Maligno can be completely destroyed.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Maligno deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 ft. of an ally of Maligno that isn't incapacitated and Maligno doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Animate Toys. Maligno's most potent ability is without a doubt his power to animate toys. He can do this to any toy that he can see within 30 feet of him. He can animate no more than 6 toys a round and can have no more than 24 total toys animated at a given time. The toy stays animated until Maligno decides to remove his control. Animating toys does not prevent the puppet from moving or attacking in the same round.

Animated Toy Statistics

Tiny - HP: 20, AC: 18, Attack: +8 to hit, 1d4 + 4 damage, Str: 4, Dex: 18

Small - HP: 25, AC: 16, Attack: +6 to hit, 1d8 + 2 damage, Str: 6, Dex: 14

Medium - HP: 40, AC: 13, Attack: +5 to hit, 2d6 + 1 damage, Str: 10, Dex: 12

Large - HP: 50, AC: 10, Attack: +6 to hit, 2d10 + 2 damage, Str: 14, Dex: 10

An animated toy has the same basic combat abilities as a carrionette. It does not have wall climbing or silver needles. It is immune to poison, cold, lightning, and mind-affecting spells. Each toy will have a special ability related to its design. For example, a jack-in-the-box automatically gets surprise when it pops out of its box. A toy horse moves with a speed of 40ft. A toy soldier does 1d4 points of damage. You will have to determine the special ability of each toy as necessary.

Antimagic Susceptibility. Maligno is incapacitated while in the area of an antimagic field. If targeted by dispel magic, Maligno must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against the caster's spell save DC or fall unconscious for 1 minute or until removed from the field.

Nimbleness. Maligno can move through the space of any creature that is of a size larger than his own.

Naturally Stealthy. Maligno can attempt to hide even when he is obscured only by a creature that is at least one size larger than himself.

Freedom of Movement. Maligno ignores difficult terrain, and magical effects can't reduce his speed or cause him to be restrained. He can spend 5 feet of movement to escape from nonmagical restraints or be grappled.

Assassinate. During his first turn, Maligno has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn. Any hit Maligno scores against a surprised creature is a critical hit.

Actions

Folding Razor. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) Slashing damage.

Throw Silver Needle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 15/30 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage, and the creature must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is restrained. It must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends. On a failure, the creature is paralyzed for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If the creature is already restrained, it becomes paralyzed right away. If the creature is already paralyzed, a saving throw is not permitted.

Richten Haus



Richten Haus



Richten Haus was once simply a normal house, but it was abandoned long ago by Rudolph van Richten for having too many bad memories. The deaths of his wife, son, and numerous friends led him to leave it.

Servants tended the house for many years. Until one dark night when the final caretaker of the house, Josef Bierce, and his small group of staff died as Karl Mueller listened to the voices in the dark (in reality, Madame Radanavich in her ghostly form) and killed them all, before hanging himself.

In this manner, Richten Haus was almost artificially made, unlike most domains — a trap set by Madame Radanavich to trap van Richten here. What was not anticipated was that the estate became a domain, nor that van Richten would not only defeat her (although unable to destroy her) but would spend the rest of his life curtailing her efforts to seek revenge or leave the domain.

Due to van Richten's efforts, his house is likely the safest domain found, with the only friendly ghosts adventurers are likely to find.

Adventures involving Richten Haus can therefore be split in two: Before and after the fall of Madame Radanavich. If the heroes arrive before the fall, the ghost of Radanavich will be angry as they are not the targets, and she'll try to eliminate the interlopers as quickly as possible. They'll witness a groundhog day as the events of the last day of the Day ghosts repeat themselves over and over. Stopping the events, without the help of van Richten, should be difficult though not impossible. Stopping Madame Radanavich without his intentional sacrifice is a different matter.

Heroes arriving after the defeat of Madame Radanavich could come here for a few reasons: As part of the Weathermay-Foxgrove twins' investigation into the disappearance of the famed monster hunter (if they're here to rescue him, he will refuse to leave) or they could be here seeking his expert advice on the dangers of the Mists. Even after arriving here, van Richten has penned several tomes (with the help of the now-friendly ghosts) on all kinds of monsters beyond even his normal guides. Of course, he has not been able to publish them, but they have nevertheless given him pleasure in the writing, and van Richten is a man who loves to be prepared.

"The strongest of all warriors are these two — Time and Patience." ~ Leo Tolstoy, War and Peace

Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate forest, hill, mountains
Year Formed:	750 BC (built in 637, on the outskirts of Rivalis in Darkon)
Population:	1
Races (%):	Humans 100%
Languages:	Balok, Common, Falkovnian, Lamordian, Mordentish, Vaasi
Religions:	None
Government:	None
Ruler(s):	Madame Radanavich
Darklord(s):	Madame Radanavich
Nationality:	Darkonian
Analog:	Haunted House



Local Fauna:
There are no natural animals native to Richten Haus. It floats in the void of the Mists, and unless visitors bring animals with them, there are none. Should animals be brought here, they are filled with terror at the slightest approach of any of the inhabitants.

Local Flora:
There are no plants native to Richten Haus, though van Richten has tried to cultivate enough food in the kitchen garden so that he can survive. They are bland vegetables and fruit, but it is enough to keep him alive.

Richten Haus

The Night Ghosts were forced by Madame Radanavich to attack van Richten, but their hearts were not in it, as they all respected him and the work he had done. Some even loved him. In the end, Madame Radanavich was defeated, though not destroyed, and van Richten stayed here to curtain her evil.

Terrain type

Richten Haus stands on a small plot of land, straight out of Darkon. The grass is always caught in the time of early autumn, and the seasons never pass.

Important Landmarks

None

Towns and villages:

None

Neighboring domain(s):

None

Fun Fact:

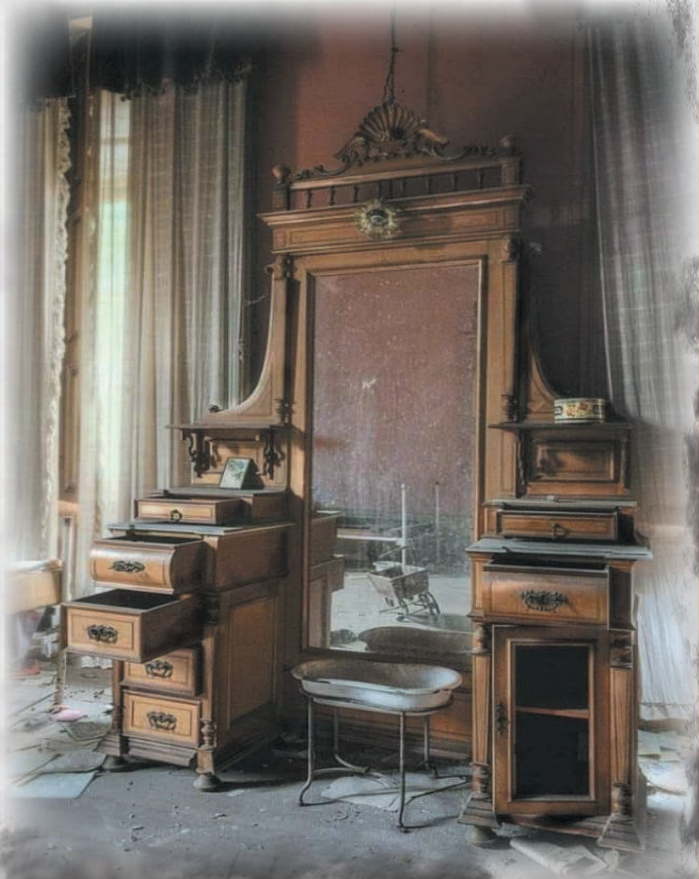
An empty building still stands in Rivalis where Richten Haus once stood. It has been thoroughly searched by the Weathermay-Foxgrove twins who believe, rightfully, that Rudolph van Richten is caught somewhere in the Mists within a simulacrum of the estate.

Native Horrors

Richten Haus is home to two types of ghosts, distinguished by the time of day that they are active, the Day and Night ghosts. The Day ghosts are the remains of the people who lived in the house when it was drawn into the Mists. There are five Day ghosts: Josef Bierce, his daughters Elice and seven-year-old Gretta, Casimir, their servant, and Karl Mueller, the porter and murderer. A fifth ghost can join them, Thane, the faithful hound of Casimir, poisoned by Karl on the final night.

Every morning at dawn the Day ghosts appear as they would in life, fully formed and physical, believing themselves to be alive. They reenact their final day as Karl poisons Thane, abandons Gretta on an island (he unknowingly does this, intending to bring her back, but with his suicide at the end of the day, she eventually starves), accidentally strangling Elice (who he loves, but it is not mutual), and kills both Josef and Casimir, while Josef is accusing Casimir of stealing. This unending cycle was never broken until the arrival of van Richten and the Heroes.

The Night Ghosts are spirits drawn in by Madame Radanavich, dead allies of van Richten that she hopes to turn against him. These are Alanthir the half-elfen druid, Davvyd the fallen priest, Dr. Harmon Ruscheider — a brilliant man of science, Erasmus van Richten (the young son of van Richten and the cause of his crusade against evil in all its forms), Geddar a dwarven watchman of Darkon, the wife of van Richten — Ingrid, Ottelie Farringer a young woman scholar, Samuel, a herbalist from Darkon, and Claudia DeShanes, a psychic woman who was killed by a child vampire.



Madame Irena Radanavich

"NO!

Not that one! She is the source of my greatest shame.

She took my son from me and turned him into a monster.

I have slain her once, although her death haunted my dreams. I shall slay her again."

~ Rudolph van Richten

Madame Radanavich appears as she did at the end of her life. Her hair is long and white. She wears large hoop earrings and over a dozen bracelets to match her flowing white skirts. Irena's face is aged and wrinkled but her eyes retain much of their youthful glee. She would look like a mischievous prankster if she wasn't translucent. Irena is a powerful ghost and completely insane. She hates the living, especially Rudolph van Richten, and refuses to go to the afterlife while the vampire hunter lives.

Background: Irena Radanavich was born into the Corvara tribe of Vistani on a moonless night. Mother's labor was long and painful. Many scholars believing she didn't survive the birth. As she grew, Irena developed a natural gift in fortune telling and tarokka. By the time that she was in her early twenties, Irena had complete control of the Corvara. Her gift of fortune telling and lack of morality soon rewarded the Vistani tribe with wealth and influence. They knew when a band of giorgios would let down their guard. She was an expert at setting ambushes that left no survivors but never harmed anything valuable. The Corvara specialized in finding people that piqued the interest of discerning vampires. The tribe's association with vampires gave them a level of protection. Soon the name of Irena Radanavich was feared throughout the Core. Other Vistani bands paid the Corvara respect and would ask Irena to read their fortunes. They would follow Irena's advice. Soon she controlled a shadow empire across the Core. Irena had several sons that made the tribe stronger. Her sons were every bit as ruthless as she was, and loyal to their mother. Her eldest, Radovan, was her favorite child. He was always the first to know of her plans and kept the rest of the tribe in line. He was tall, strong, and could put anyone at ease. As the Corvara made their way through the demiplane, Irena's Tarokka deck revealed a vampire who was looking for a companion he could easily dominate. Just the kind of thing Irena could provide.

Baron Metus, the vampire in question, promised Irena a small fortune if she could deliver a suitable companion for him. Things went wrong almost from the beginning. Radovan was wounded trying to kidnap the Baron of Rivalis' daughter. He had climbed the outer wall of the baron's manor house only to come face to face with the Baron's bodyguard.

The wound was deep. Irena knew her son was dying. The healers of the tribe tried to help him but failed. Irena consulted the tarokka and discovered a local healer that people said could work miracles. The healer was in a small manor house the locals called Richten Haus. The doctor, a man named van Richten, tried to heal Radovan, but the wound was deep and the young Vistani had already lost much blood. As Radovan died, Irena flew into a rage. She threatened to curse van Richten, to bring doom down upon him and everyone he held dear. The doctor panicked and begged for his life. He implored Irena to take anything she wanted, just to spare him. Irena smiled, then left. The Corvara left the next day. Erasmus van Richten was securely tied in the back of one of the wagons. The doctor had told Irena to take what she wished after all. They left the corpse of Radovan as a warning and a reminder to the doctor. After selling Erasmus to Baron Metus, Irena followed the tarokka to Barovia, where would-be adventurers were hunting a cabal of vampires. Before the tribe could find the vampires, Rudolph van Richten appeared at the head of a small horde of undead. After the Vistani had left Richten Haus, Rudolph discovered his son was missing. He set off after them immediately. The doctor encountered Azalin Rex in his headlong pursuit. The lich was at the head of a small army of zombies, ghouls and ghastrs. Before the lich could kill him, Rudolph begged to be given command of the undead so the Vistani who stole his son would pay. Azalin, never having a great love of the Vistani, agreed and commanded the undead to obey Rudolph.

Rudolph demanded the return of his son. Cackling, Irena told Rudolph it was too late. Erasmus had been sold to Baron Metus days ago and was most certainly his slave by now. Rudolph commanded the undead to attack. The Corvara fought bravely. They fought with the fury of people who had nothing to lose, but in the end they lost. As zombies tore into her stomach, Irena cursed van Richten. He would spend his life surrounded by monsters. They would never kill him, but everyone close to the doctor would die under the claws and fangs of beasts. Irena breathed her last. So great was Irena's hatred for van Richten that she refused to stay dead. She returned as a disembodied ghost, and

Madame Irena Radanavich

her tribe returned as zombies and ghouls. The horde shuffled to the abandoned Richten Haus, and Irena began to plot her revenge. She has watched Rudolph van Richten for decades, and constantly schemes her revenge. She became adept at ensnaring the souls of van Richten's companions and trapping them in the Richten Haus, now also known as the Bleak House. As she began to trap the souls, Irena discovered she couldn't leave the house. The dark powers gave her a domain and she would suffer forever for it.

Current Sketch: Madame Radanavich is obsessed with breaking the mind and spirit of Rudolph van Richten. Her last living relative forgave van Richten for his assault against her family nearly a decade ago and Irena has been mad with fury ever since. She recently resurrected Baron Metus, and together with Daclaud Heinfroth she wants his mind broken. Only once van Richten is a hollow shell of the man he was, will she kill the ancient vampire hunter.

Darklord's Tactics: Irena will not move into combat until her tarokka deck indicates the time is right. Until then she will send waves of her undead minions at her foes to wear them down. Once the time is right, Irena will move in and target her most formidable foe with her *dominate person* ability. Then she attacks any healers first. Irena will command undead minions to grapple melee combatants and hold them in place so she can isolate and kill spellcasters. She doesn't care about her minions and will gladly sacrifice every one of them to slay one opponent. She can always make more.

Borders: When the borders of the Bleak House are closed the mists rise and travel to right next to the manor wall. Any creature foolish enough to enter the mists is hounded by laughing, cajoling spirits. After 2d6 hours the creature finds themselves back inside the Bleak House. The creature gains no benefits from their next Long or Short Rest.



Madame Irena Radanavic

Medium undead (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 71 (11d8 + 22)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +8

Skills Animal Handling +8, Arcana +6, Deception +3, History +6, Insight +12, Medicine +8, Nature +6, Performance +3, Religion +6, Sleight of Hand +5

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Darkonese, Halfling, Elven, Falkovnian, Lamordian, Mordentish, Tepestani, Vaasi, Patterna

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Ethereal Sight. Irena can see 60 ft. into the Ethereal Plane when she is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement. Irena can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. She takes 5 (1d10) force damage if she ends her turn inside an object.

Foresight. As a bonus action or as a reaction Irena can see into the near future. When she uses Foresight she may choose one of three things to happen:

1. Until the start of her next turn, enemies attacking her gain disadvantage on their attack roll.
2. Until the start of her next turn, she gains advantage on saving throws.
3. Until the start of her next turn, she gains advantage on attack rolls.

Irena can use this ability 4 times before she needs to take a long rest.

Madame Irena Radanavich

Spirit Absorption. When an opponent dies within 10ft of Irena, she absorbs the essence of their spirit, temporarily increasing the modifier of one of her abilities by one until she takes a long rest. Each ability can only be increased once.

Leader's Presence. At the start of Irena's turn she gains 1d6 temporary hit points if she starts her turn next to an ally. Additionally, at the start of her turn all allies that are adjacent to her gain 1d6 temporary hit points.

Reactive Predictions. Irena has 2 reactions each round. She can only use 1 reaction on any given event that allows her to use a reaction, such as only being able to make a single opportunity attack when a creature leaves her range. If the same type of trigger occurs twice however, she may use more than one reaction on the action it allows her to perform (Such as a creature leaving her range twice in one turn, which typically allows one to attempt opportunity attacks). She can only cast any particular spell as a reaction once between turns, meaning spells like shield do not have their effects stack. Finally, she can only hold one action each turn, and cannot use her additional reactions while she is holding any action. However, she can drop the held action (wasting the reaction, any held spell and associated spell slot) to perform a reaction if she so chooses.

Warded Sanctums. Irena can designate a room no larger than Huge size as her sanctum. Those who seek to enter it uninvited must succeed at a DC16 Charisma save, failure means they cannot enter it, though they may try again after one hour. Irena can change the designation of her sanctum by performing a 10 minute ritual, but she can only do so once per week.

Unmatched Instinct. Irena can see events unfolding seconds before they happen. She can add her Wisdom modifier to her Initiative and Dexterity saving throws. Additionally, she can always act in a surprise round and cannot be surprised.

Raunie Hexes. Irena can twist magic to hex others. All hexes are performed as an action targeting a creature Irena can see within 30 feet. Once Irena performs a hex, she cannot do so again until she finishes a long rest.

-Hex of Ill Omens. The target must make a DC 16 Charisma saving throw or have disadvantage on all rolls and saves. Regardless of whether the save is successful or not, the target takes 4d6 necrotic damage.

-Hex of the Shattered Mind. The target must make a DC 16 Intelligence saving throw or be incapacitated. Regardless of whether the save is successful or not, the target takes 4d6 psychic damage.

-Hex of the Iridescent Night. The target must make a DC 16 Intelligence saving throw or be mentally overwhelmed by shimmering darkness, rendering them Blinded, Deafened and unable to speak.

-Hex of the Broken Seal. The target must make a DC 16 Charisma saving throw or gain vulnerability to one type of

damage and become unable to concentrate on spells.

The hexes last until Irena hexes a different creature or until a remove curse is casted upon the target. If the latter is how the hex was removed, Irena takes 4d6 psychic damage and is blinded for 1d4 turns.

Haunting Presence. Irena is constantly followed and assisted by the spirits of the dead Vistani. As an action, she can command them to affect her surroundings in a variety of ways:

- The spirits cause all nonmagical flames within 10 feet of Irena to flare and dance.

- Spectral whispering can be heard and is perceivable up to 30 feet away.

- An ominous wind blows, causing windows to clatter and loose objects to shift and fall.

- The shadows within 10 feet of Irena move in accordance with her will.

- The chosen property lasts until she dismisses it (no action required). She can have up to two of these effects active at any given time.

Steadfast Determination. Irena is immune to mind-affecting spells.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Irena fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Conjure Van Richten's Fallen (1/Day). Irena has learned from the Gentleman Caller how to imprison and conjure the spirits of van Richten's fallen companions. As an action, she summons 1d8+2 shadows and 1d4 ghosts. The conjured beings remain until destroyed or dismissed and on their own initiative, act as allies to Irena.

Innate Spellcasting. Irena's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *guidance, resistance, toll the dead*

3/Day each: *bestow curse, counterspell, hex, hold person, inflict wounds, sanctuary, sleep, spiritual weapon*

1/Day each: *animate dead, blindness/deafness, control weather, dispel magic, enhance ability, spirit guardians, spirit shroud*

Actions

Touch of Scars. *Melee Spell Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* target's Charisma drops by 1 point. If the target's charisma drops to 0, they immediately die.

Etherealness. Irena enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. She is visible on the Material Plane while she is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet she can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Horriying Visage. Each non-undead creature within 60 ft. of Irena that can see her must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If the save fails by

Madame Irena Radanavich

5 or more, the target also ages 1d4 x 10 years. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to Irena's Horrifying Visage for the next 24 hours. The aging effect can be reversed with a *greater restoration* spell, but only within 24 hours of it occurring.

Possession (Recharge 6). One humanoid that Irena can see within 5 ft. of her must succeed on a DC 16 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by her; Irena then disappears, and the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. Irena now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. Irena can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn undead, and she retains her alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to being charmed and frightened. She otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies. The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, Irena ends it as a bonus action, or she is turned or forced out by an effect like the *dispel evil and good* spell. When the possession ends, Irena reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 ft. of the body. The target is immune to Irena's Possession for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.

Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, Irena can utter a special command or warning whenever a nonhostile creature that she can see within 30 ft. of her makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d6 to its roll provided it can hear and understand Irena. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if Irena is incapacitated.

Reactions

Immediate Foresight. Irena's Sight allows her to use her magic to foresee and hopefully avoid disaster. As a reaction to an attack, spell or effect, she can spend a spell slot in order to gain a bonus equal to the level of that spell to either her AC or any one saving throw. This effect applies only against that specific attack, spell or effect.

You Struck True. As a reaction to an ally Irena can see, missing a weapon attack, she can immediately reroll the attack. Her ally must accept the new roll.

There Is No Escape. As a reaction to an enemy, Irena can see that is adjacent to one of her allies attempting to escape (whether it's through the use of teleportation magic, the disengage action, or any other means), she can force the enemy to roll a DC 16 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, the enemy wastes their attempt to escape and remains where they are.

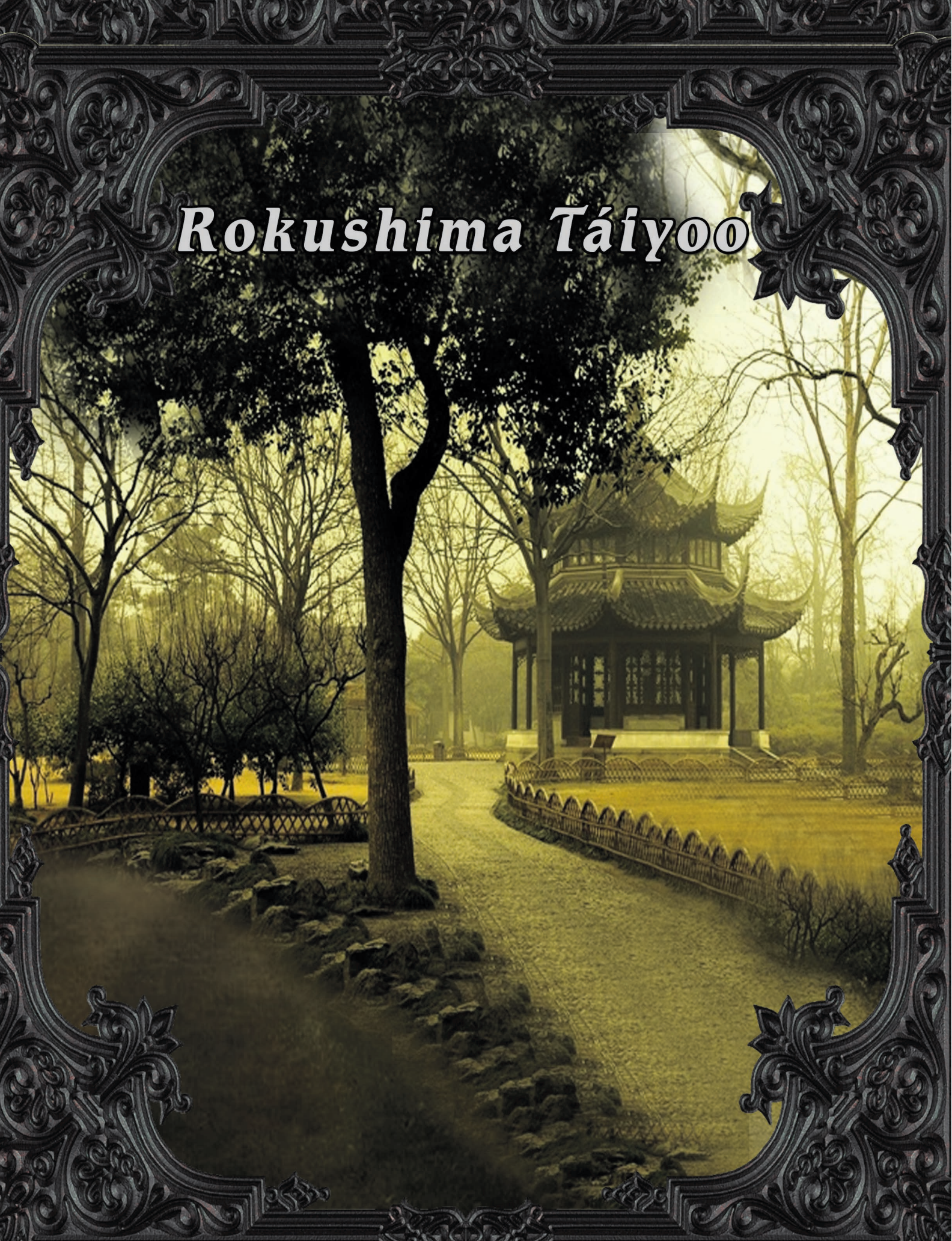
It Was Only A Warning. As a reaction to herself or an ally she can see failing a saving throw, Irena can immediately reroll the save. She or the ally must accept the new roll.

Mist Cushion. Whenever Irena or one of her allies within 30 feet is hit with a weapon attack, she can spend a reaction. The damage of the attack is reduced by 10.

Evil Eye. Irena's foes crumble and fail under the force of her derision and baleful glare. As her reaction, Irena can cause any creature within 60 feet of her to take disadvantage on any attack roll, ability check or saving throw it is currently making. Irena can use this ability two times before she needs to finish a short or long rest.



Rokushima Táiyoō



Rokushima Táiyoo



Rokushima Táiyoo (also called the Six Islands of the Sun) is a land built upon betrayal and treachery, hidden in a thin veneer of honor. A few decades ago, Haki Shinpi was a warlord who used underhanded means of defeating his enemies. While seemingly adhering to the warrior code of bushido, Shinpi was undermining his rivals from within by the use of assassins, poisonings, betrayal, bribery, and any means that he could find. All to serve the greater goal of having him crowned as emperor of the six islands. He finally accomplished his goal and for a few years there was peace, before he contracted an illness that would eventually kill him. On his deathbed, he made his six sons swear to keep the peace and divide the realm evenly between them. However, his body wasn't even cold yet before the six brothers started squabbling and soon Rokushima Táiyoo descended into civil war. The war has raged since, and two of the sons have lost their lives, leaving only the four that now rule the islands. When two of their brothers died, within seconds, their islands sank beneath the waves of the Poison Sea and the rest of the islands realigned themselves around the Great Mirror Lake. For most, this would likely have been the cause of concern, but the four remaining brothers are so blinded by their greed that they cannot see that killing another would lead to the diminishing of the realm once more. In this manner, the Mists keep them forever at a stalemate, and even if one should gain an advantage, it would only last for minutes before the newly conquered territory would disappear.

To outsiders, the four islands are unnamed, but to those living within Rokushima Táiyoo, the islands share the name of the largest settlements on them — a mere inflection of the way it's pronounced and a slight marker in written language, reveals whether the intent is to talk about the settlement or the island. The commoners themselves are a lot like the ideal that the shoguns were supposed to resemble. They're restrained in their emotions, extraordinarily polite to both each other and outsiders, and they have an appreciation for the beauty in everything, and a particular love for the arts, especially the theatre. They're stuck among these warring factions with the added problem of being the target of the yakuza, the organized crime gangs of Rokushima Táiyoo — though many consider these yakuza gangs to be criminals, most commoners think they're actually a step up from the warlords. Adventures within Rokushima Táiyoo should focus on the concepts of honor and the breaking of codes. Visiting heroes will find that the

common people are true to their word, honoring every agreement, but the warlords would betray them at any turn, should they so wish. Complicating things is the war that's been going on for years among all of them — though outright battles are rare, the use of spies and assassins is common. The shoguns are well-defended though, each sitting like a fat toad, safe in their castles, surrounded by swarming minions. Only by gradually wearing down the defenses of each, can any shogun hope to win — but with all the others looking for a similar advantage, it is a death sentence to focus too much on one opponent.

Heroes who end up in Rokushima Táiyoo will inevitably get caught up in the struggles between the shoguns. Perhaps they'll be asked (read: ordered) to assassinate one of the members of the court for a rival shogun, or maybe even strike directly at them. Should they succeed, they'll find the whole island vanishing under them, but the alternative would be to betray the shogun to his enemy and work as a double agent. Perhaps the heroes are asked to retrieve the corpse and crown of Haki Shinpi, the shogun's father, in an attempt to legitimize that particular brother, only to find that even carrying the crown and body makes them targets of all the other warlords, as well as the yakuza.

"Bushido is realized in the presence of death. This means choosing death whenever there is a choice between life and death. There is no other reasoning."

~ Yamamoto Tsunetomo, Hagakure: The Book of the Samurai

Culture Level:	Dark Ages
Climate & Terrain:	Archipelago with forest, hills, and mountains
Year Formed:	740 BC
Population:	19,000
Races (%):	Humans 99%, Other 1%
Languages:	Rokuma
Religions:	Nature Spirits (Kami)
Government:	Feudal hereditary aristocracy
Ruler(s):	Four shogun sons of Haki Shinpi
Darklord(s):	Haki Shinpi
Nationality:	Rokuma
Analog:	Feudal Japan around the time of the Ōnin War and leading into the Sengoku Jidai period

Rokushima Táiyoo



Local Fauna:

The islands of Rokushima Táiyoo have been mostly civilized, and wild animals are rare, though a few brown bears do lurk in the mountains, but in most areas, the biggest predator is the sable. The sable is highly prized and sought after by many of the artistically minded of the Rokuma for the fine hairs of their furs, as these make excellent painting brushes, both of the calligraphic script used by the Rokuma, as well as for paintings and the like. The most dangerous animal of the islands is considered to be the Rokushima boar. It's almost as big as a bear, and incredibly aggressive, and known to be able to take down several hunters at once. Only the most daring hunt this animal for food, as while the meat of the boar is delicious, the cost in lives is often too high.

There aren't any unusual predatory animals on any of the islands, as they've been mostly driven back by the onslaught of civilization. Shrews have taken well to the change though, and can often be found living within the buildings created by the Rokuma. Another animal that has adapted well is the red fox, where the Rokuma believe that they are the essences of kitsune, mischievous fox-spirits, that take vengeance on those who irritate them. As such, they've gone out of their way to ensure that the foxes are left alone.

Most food production that doesn't involve rice or vegetables is centered around the Great Mirror Lake, as it is filled with fish of all kinds, as well as crabs. The bounty of this lake would be enough to feed everyone in the domain, if not for the continual warring of the four shoguns, though they tend to avoid warfare on the lake.

Local Flora:

Evergreen trees flourish everywhere on the islands, whether on the hills or mountainsides and are used to build the wood-and-paper buildings that the Rokuma favor for their dwellings. The easternmost island of Eastern Torment is home to a type of incredibly beautiful cherry blossom trees, but the islands' hilly terrain

doesn't help with its crops, as they cannot grow well in the soil here. As a result, the Rokuma have moved most of their crops to plateaus that they have dug out from hillsides, and rice paddies and vegetable patches fill up the land around the various settlements.

Native Horrors

All four islands of Rokushima Táiyoo are home to many nature spirits, known to the locals as kami. Elsewhere, these would be known as various fey creatures like nymphs and dryads, though the ones within this domain look less human than their counterparts. Oni hide within the mountains, coming down on rare occasions to hunt for prey among the hapless humans in their midst. Rumor also holds that a dragon resides within the mountain range of Northern Torment, but no one has ever seen it, leading most to believe that it is a simple fairy tale.

The main issue facing any travelers on the four islands are the henchmen of the four shoguns, who are constantly at war with each other, invading other islands, and moving to protect them. They're no better than thugs in most cases, even though they claim to live up to an honor code known as Bushido. There is no honor left among these warriors, and they often press those that appear even mildly capable into service as soldiers for the shoguns.

The final group is, ironically, less savage and unpredictable than the soldiers, in spite of being criminals. These are the yakuza, the local gang members, and thieves' guilds. But unlike the soldiers, they stick to a code of honor among thieves and try to avoid getting civilians caught in the crossfire of violence between rival gangs and gangs and soldiers. This does not protect the civilians as such as they are still the targets of all kinds of crimes, but even this minor restraint makes them look more appealing to the normal population of the domain.

Terrain type

Rokushima Táiyoo is, in effect, an archipelago, but here it stands out. The islands do not begin at sea level but instead are surrounded by cliffs that go up hundreds of feet into the air, before they turn into something that most would recognize as land. In this manner, the islands protect the Great Mirror Lake at the center.

It is hilly in most places, and mountainous in the rest, and covered in evergreen trees. It has sweltering heat in the summer and is brutally cold in the winter, but the worst part is the winds. It is assaulted by typhoons for

Rokushima Táiyo

the warmer part of every year, where it rips through everything. The locals are used to this by now, and they have learned how to easily and quickly replace the paper and wood panels that their houses are built of.

The land is rather scarce in resources, especially when it comes to iron, and as such, the locals use wooden nails and have become experts in carpentry and joining of panels. Some have taken this skill to such an extreme that it's no longer possible to tell where one piece of wood begins and another ends. In the meantime, iron is reserved for tools and weapons, though armor is usually created from wood, and leather and spears and bows are popular, for their minimal use of iron to maintain their killing efficiency. Only highly decorated samurai warriors and the shoguns themselves carry swords and wear armor made from iron.

Important Landmarks

Mount Frost

Mount Frost is the tallest mountain within Rokushima Táiyo and the locals believe that it is favored by the Kami nature spirits. It has more than a hundred shrines upon its slopes, dedicated to various nature spirits or the ancestors of specific families. One is never alone on Mount Frost, as an order of monks calls it their home. The Order of the Silent Breath are Sōhei, or warrior monks, that defend Mount Frost from the predations of the four shoguns. None of them ever speak, and they all wear masks so that their features cannot be seen, while wide-brimmed wicker hats cover their heads, and help protect them from the snow. Rumor has it that a portal exists somewhere on the slopes of Mount Frost that connects Rokushima Táiyo with the distant domain of Sebu, but that it only opens when a snowstorm is happening on the mountain, while a sandstorm is blowing in Sebu. No one has ever been able to confirm the claim, though many have disappeared. The monks say nothing on the matter, and the people of Eikoku fear that the monks are secretly killing travelers and stealing the offerings to the gods, in order to survive.

Nightmare Mists and the Eastern, Northern, and Southern Torment

The Great Mirror Lake empties out into the Poison Sea at four points. The Eastern, Northern, and Southern Torments are huge waterfalls that drop for hundreds of feet onto jagged rocks before the water spills into the Poison Sea. The Nightmare Mists are different. They are like a series of cascades that a skilled sailor can navigate, slowly taking a ship from the top to the Poison Sea hundreds of feet below. However,

at the bottom, the freshwater churns up the Poison Sea into a mist from which none have ever returned. Those that have been near, and have breathed it, are forever after haunted by nightmares, and wake up every night screaming, but without ever being able to remember what they dreamt or saw.

Poison Sea

Surrounding Rokushima Táiyo, the Poison Sea lives up to its name. Should anyone be unlucky enough to end up here, they'll quickly discover that the waters are as deadly as cyanide. Nothing lives here, and it is viewed with superstition by the locals, as it was the sea that swallowed the two lost islands.

Seven Towers

Seven towers are a large set of ruins, originally the eponymous seven towers, though none are sure who built them. The style of them is very different from the tiered castles used within Rokushima Táiyo, and instead resembles something that could more easily be found in Darkon or the Core. Of the seven towers, only one still stands and it thrums with energy when touched. None have successfully entered, but those who lean close and press their ears against the cold stone swear that they can hear the faint exhalation of breath...



The Four Castles

Within Rokushima Táiyo are four castles that were all constructed originally by Haki Shinpi for his sons, though two are now lost. Yoake Shiro (Dawn Castle) sits upon the northwestern island, Shiro-Koori Castle on the north eastern, Yoosai Kurai (the Fortress of Darkness) upon the southeastern, and finally Minami No Haikyo (the Southern Ruins) upon the southwest island. These are all built in a similar manner as tiered fortresses with strong stone walls. Originally they all had the same layout, but each shogun has laboured hard to make it their own, and to turn them into death traps for invading armies and assassins. Each is filled with traps and guards, making an uninvited visit a dangerous prospect at best.

Rokushima Táiyoo

Towns and villages:

Beikoku

Beikoku is the capital of the northwestern island, and is home to a population of 1,800. It is the smallest of the five cities of Rokushima Táiyoo, but easily the richest, as it has a thriving group of fishermen, who always seem to take home more fish than any other settlement in Rokushima Táiyoo. Locals ascribe this to the influence of a *majo*, a witch, that supposedly lives alone in a small house just outside of Beikoku. Whether this is true, no one knows, but no one has ever seen anyone enter or leave the house, though there is a fire going and smoke coming from a chimney at all times.

Chuugoka

The southwestern island's population is mainly located in Chuugoka and with 3,100 people living there, it is the largest city in Rokushima Táiyoo. However, it is beset upon by the trouble of the local warlord who live in Yoosai Kurai. It seems that the distance from the fortress of the shogun doesn't insulate it's people from his wrath, and they're taxed more heavily than anyone else within the domain. The armies of the shogun often recruit from Chuugoka, and visitors here should expect to hide when the press gangs come through, or be forced into servitude.

Eikoku

Eikoku, with its population of 2,300, sits relatively close to Mount Frost at the tip of the northeastern island, and for many Rokuma could be considered a holiday-destination, as the area is rife with hot springs, and places to relax within them. The people of Eikoku have turned this into a way of life for themselves, with many of them catering to the warriors of the shogun, and setting up luxury establishments for them to use for relaxation. In this manner, the locals get a much lighter touch from the warriors and samurai than the locals elsewhere, as they depend on them for relaxation. The downside is that the *yakuza* are rife here, ready to take advantage of any sort of vice and less than legitimate ways of relaxation that the warriors get up to. Violence is very rare here, but crime is common instead.

Floating City

The Floating City is the only true free place within Rokushima Táiyoo. No one knows how many live here, but it likely rivals Chuugoka in population, though because of the boats that it's built on, it is somewhat smaller in physical size. It floats at the center of the Great Mirror Lake, upon years and years of flotsam and debris, though no one knows how

it got started, or even seems to care. What the inhabitants care about is their freedom, and they fight fiercely to defend themselves against any soldiers or *yakuza* who try to take control. They watch outsiders with a vary eye, always on the lookout for trouble, and those who break the laws here, are drowned in the lake. Troublemakers are not tolerated, and those who are born here live their entire lives here, except for a single pilgrimage in their life, to the shrine at Mount Frost, and to find a husband or wife. Those who have already found one within the floating borders of the city never leave.

Roshiya

Roshiya plays host to 2,100 residents and is the least quiet town within the domain, due to the winds that constantly blow through it. As a result, the inhabitants are all nearly deaf and have resorted to either shouting (to non-locals) or communicating via sign-language among themselves. It is also rumoured to be home to a school of *ninja*, who practice the arts of moving without being seen within a city where everyone relies on sight.

Neighboring domain(s):

None

Fun Fact:

Spellcasters within Rokushima Táiyoo are among the few within the domains of dread that regularly use paper made from wood pulp, as opposed to vellum or papyrus. Most visitors would likely be amazed by the sheer amount of paper used everywhere as it would be far too costly anywhere else, but here it is readily available.



Haki Shinpi

"Every day my empire dies a little more. I watch my own children tear apart my legacy and their inheritance.

I'm privy to all their plans. I know all their secrets, but I can do nothing.

They squander all I have built, using the means I used to build it.

They keep me here. I would strangle them if I could.

All I knew in life was war. All I want in death is peace."

~ Haki Shinpi

In shadow, Haki Shinpi appears as an asian human. He stands tall, just under six feet, and is heavily muscled. He wears ornate armor, and carries the daisho that marks him as a samurai. Despite his imposing appearance, Shinpi is completely physically impotent. Once he steps into the light he is seen to be transparent, and his skin is sickly pale. Shinpi is a geist and cannot interact with the physical world.

Background: Haki Shinpi was born into the powerful Haki clan in a distant world. His clan shared lands with a dozen others, living on a chain of six large islands far isolated from the rest of the world. The clans of these islands lived their lives through a complicated code of honor, bushido, which governed their lives and especially how they waged war. War was a constant among the six islands of Rokushima Taiyoo. The clans fought over slights of honor, water and fishing rights, and control of the vital mountain passes that connected the lands of each clan.

Shinpi loudly sang the virtues of bushido and honor, but his words were truly hollow. He was young when he saw how the code could be twisted and used as a weapon against the other clans. By the time he took control of the Haki clan after his mother's death, he had trained dozens of operatives in his new style of war. Shinpi targeted one clan after another and tore them apart. Sometimes he would incite civil war between different factions of the clan, other times he would push two clans to war, using careful manipulation and sabotage. His favorite tactic was to kill the head of the clan and drive their children to war with each other. When the clan was too weak to defend itself, Shinpi would move in. The remaining nobles would be slaughtered and the peasants forced to toil for Clan Haki. By the time the remaining clans realized what was happening it was too late. They banded together, but Clan Haki was powerful and united behind a single leader. Clan Haki slaughtered the assembled samurai of the remaining clans in one great

and final battle.

Shinpi ruled his empire for three decades. He was cruel and harsh to the peasants and what remained of the defeated clans. His high taxes forced them to work constantly and give him the rewards.

When Shinpi's time neared, he called his six children to his bedside. He gave each an island and made them swear they would live in peace, then breathed his final breath. Legend says that the exhalation of his last breath became a mist that covered all the islands of Rokushima Taiyoo.

Shinpi's body hadn't even grown cold before his children began arguing over their inheritance. Much to Shinpi's horror, he could hear and see his ungrateful spawn as if he was standing in the room. When he roared for silence, his children ignored him. When he stepped in between them, they acted like he didn't exist. Finally Shinpi had had enough. He tried to cuff his eldest daughter on the ear, and his hand passed straight through her. Shinpi was a geist, cursed to watch his children tear apart everything that he had worked so hard to build.

Soon Shinpi's children retreated to their islands. Within a month his youngest son lay dead, poisoned. A week later Shinpi's eldest daughter was also slain. As they died lightning struck and a great earthquake pulled their islands down into the sea.

Current Sketch: Shinpi is forced to impotently watch as the empire he sacrificed so much to forge is torn apart by his own sons. Each of his four surviving sons has retreated to their island castles, and lives each day in paranoid isolation. Occasionally the sons engage in open, honest warfare, but they mostly scheme and try to kill each other through poison and subterfuge. Shinpi knows the constant conflict is what keeps him and his empire in Ravenloft, but is helpless to stop it.

Darklord's Tactics: In life, Shinpi was a powerful warrior. In death, he can't engage in combat unless it occurs in the Ethereal Plane. Most creatures don't even realize he's in the same room. He can no longer feel the thrill of combat or hold a material blade in his hand. It is his greatest curse. Shinpi can only project his feelings on creatures he senses or try to draw one creature that can see Shinpi to the ethereal plane to duel it. He can also try to possess a creature to try and talk sense to his sons but that has failed so many times that he no longer attempts it.

Haki Shinpi

Borders: When Shinpi closes the borders of Rokushima Taiyoo, a terrible wind surrounds the domain. Any creature attempting to move through the wind is forced back. The wind is impossible to fly through and teleportation magic doesn't work. The wind burns unprotected flesh and shatters wooden structures.



Haki Shinpi

Medium undead (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 112 (15d8 + 45)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +4, Con +7, Wis +8

Skills Acrobatics +9, History +5, Intimidation +4

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled

Senses Darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Rokuma

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Dueling. When Haki is wielding a melee weapon in one hand and no other weapons, he gains a +2 bonus to damage rolls with that weapon (included).

Second Wind. Haki has a limited well of stamina that he can draw on to protect himself from harm. On his turn, he can use a bonus action to regain hit points equal to 1d10 + 11. Once he uses this feature, he must finish a short or long rest before he can use it again.

Action Surge. Haki can push himself beyond his normal limits for a moment. On his turn, he can take one additional action. Once he uses this feature, he must finish a short or long rest before he can use it again.

Fighting Spirit. Haki's intensity in battle can shield him and help him strike true. As a bonus action on his turn, he can give himself advantage on all weapon attack rolls until the end of the current turn. When he does so, he also gains 10 temporary hit points. He can use this feature three times and regains all uses after a long rest. When he rolls initiative and has no uses of Fighting Spirit remaining, he regains one use.

Elegant Courtier. Haki's discipline and attention to detail allows him to excel in social situations. Whenever he makes a Charisma (Persuasion) check, he gains a +4 bonus to the check.

Indomitable. Haki can reroll a saving throw that he fails. If he does so, he must use the new roll, and can't use this feature again until he finishes a long rest.

Slasher. Haki learned where to cut to have the greatest result, granting him the following benefits: Once per turn when he hits a creature with an attack that deals slashing damage, he can reduce the speed of the target by 10 feet until the start of his next turn. When he scores a critical hit that deals slashing damage to a creature, he grievously wounds it. Until the start of his next turn, the target has disadvantage on all attack rolls.

Project Feelings. Haki can project any of three emotions to a creature he can sense within 30ft at will. The creature must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or feel any one of the following three feelings: Fear, Rage or Sorrow. The feeling remains for 1d6+1 hours and the creature can try to end the effect by rerolling the saving throw at the end of each hour. Haki's sons immediately fall victim to this effect when Haki is within 30ft of them.

Haki's Possession. Possession (Recharge 6): One humanoid that Haki can see within 5 ft. of him that who hasn't been in Rokushima Taiyoo for more than a month, must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by him; Haki then disappears, and the target is Incapacitated and loses control of its body. Haki now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. Haki can't be targeted by any Attack, spell, or other Effect, except ones that turn Undead, and he retains his Alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to being Charmed and Frightened. He otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, Class Features, or Proficiencies. The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 Hit Points, Haki ends it as a Bonus Action, or he is turned or forced out by an effect like the *dispel evil and good spell*. When the possession ends, Haki reappears in an

Haki Shinpi

unoccupied space within 5 ft. of the body in the Ethereal plane. The target becomes immune to Haki's Possession after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends. Haki's sons are immune to this effect.

Incorporeal Movement. Haki can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. He takes 5 (1d10) force damage if he ends his turn inside an object.

Haki's Curse. Haki cannot interact with anything on the Material Plane. He can only project his feelings to those who he can perceive or draw someone who can perceive him to the ethereal but only to duel them. He can never leave the Ethereal Plane except by possessing another creature. Haki is always invisible to creatures on the Material Plane except to those who can see into the ethereal, but he can perceive them normally. He can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when he is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Realm of Death. Haki can target a single enemy creature on the Material Plane that can see him and draw it into the Ethereal Plane to challenge it to a duel. This ability works like the *compelled duel* spell except Haki does not require concentration. The DC is 17 and a creature that saves on this roll becomes immune to this ability for 24 hours. Haki's sons are immune to this effect. The creature remains in the ethereal until it either defeats or is defeated by Haki, 1 minute passes or Haki is convinced to end the duel.

Actions

Multiattack. Haki makes three Katana attacks.

Incorporeal Katana +1. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target in the ethereal plane. *Hit:* 12 (1d8 + 8) slashing damage, or 13 (1d10 + 8) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Reactions

Defensive Duelist. When another creature hits Haki with a melee attack, he can use his reaction to add +4 to his AC for that attack, potentially causing the attack to miss him.

Legendary Actions

Haki can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Haki regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Hack and Slash. Haki makes one Katana attack.

Step into the Mists. Haki teleports 20ft away from his current location leaving behind a puff of mist.

Spirit Tornado (Costs 2 Actions). Haki thrusts forward a tornado of the souls of his defeated enemies dealing 2d6 psychic damage to all enemies in a 15ft line that fail on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw taking half damage on a success. In addition to the damage taken, the enemies that failed the saving throw are thrown 15ft up to the air and Haki can then teleport between the airborne enemies and attack each one once, then he decides if he will land on his feet or stay airborne as his enemies fall back to the ground taking an extra 1d6 falling damage.

Rokushima Taiyo



POLY
PIROPOS

Souragne



Souragne



Souragne is the result of the actions of Anton Misroi. A wealthy and young man, he had high passions and little patience. The grandson of the man who first explored the area of Souragne (before its entry into the Mists), he was the most powerful and rich of all the plantation owners in the land. He was also one of the cruelest. On his plantation, slaves were regularly beaten to death or forced to work until they dropped — after all, in his mind, they could always be replaced.

Even a man as despicable as he did manage to find love, and after a brief courtship, they were married. They were happy together for years, but Anton was ever a jealous man, and one day he came home to find his wife in the arms of another man. The innocent man had merely been teaching her a new dance, but Anton, having none of it, had them both thrown into the swamps to drown. Once they were in the murky waters, Anton dismissed his servants and sat down to watch as both instructor and wife slowly drowned, sucked down by the swamp. The instructor died first, bidding her climb onto his shoulders to survive longer, and she pleaded with her husband for her life. Her pleas fell on deaf ears, and with her dying breath, she cursed Anton, telling him he would die as they had.

Anton laughed, but then his laughter quickly stopped, as dead hands erupted from the swamp all around him, dragging him down to drown. Anton was dragged into the Mists, but he did not die. Instead, he rose as one of the undead, and as he staggered back to his mansion, his slaves drove him away with fire and arrows, shouting at the monster. In desperation, he ran back to the swamp that had claimed his life. He spent months here until he came upon the Isle of the Maiden. The Maiden of the Swamp took the bedraggled undead creature into her trust, believing him to be one of her own kind, the Loa, but one who was in need of guidance. This was a mistake — under her tutelage, Anton became the master of the Dance of the Dead, and did become one of the Loa. The most powerful of them all, the Lord of the Dead — but also the least compassionate. Anton returned to his mansion and slaughtered all he found, raising them from the dead to serve him for eternity as they had driven him away in life, and in time, all came to fear the Lord of the Dead.

Like the land that is split between farmland and swamp, so is the population split into two: the rich, and the poor. More than 90% of the population in Souragne belongs to the poor classes, all of whom are either

slaves or serfs — the distinction is barely noticeable for most, though the serfs aren't physically abused, as they, in theory, have rights. The remainder are the rich people who own the rest of the population. There's no real middle class because of the divide and even less fraternization among the two. Even the make up of the population is an odd mix — half the population has dark skin and usually black curly hair, while the other half have milky white skin and straight red hair. It should be noted though, the class divide is not tied into the racial divide between the two, and anyone, regardless of color, can be rich or poor. In fact, this racial divide seems to be the one thing that drives people together. Relationships between the two are just as common as they are within each, though the children born of such relations tend to take after the mother.

Adventures in Souragne therefore can be focused on either the class divide or the relationship that the inhabitants have with the Loa and the undead. Perhaps the heroes see an innocent dragged off into the swamp by zombies, while the inhabitants do nothing, merely ascribing it to "insulting the Lord of the Dead", or they could be contacted directly by Anton, who finds himself in need of their services. Any undead heroes, or perhaps especially necromancers, will find their powers greatly weakened here, as Anton can control any undead within his realm if he so pleases. And while it sometimes amuses him to leave things as they are, such as with the graveyard in Marais d'Tarascon, Anton greatly prefers that everything is in, and knows, its place. He does not like chaos or disorder, and would rather slaughter the entire population of Souragne than see it fall into ruin — not that he cares for the living, as he barely gives them a thought, but he dislikes disorder that much.

The heroes could also be dragged into the shadow war between the rich and the poor. The rich own EVERYTHING in Souragne, and as such, they view the inhabitants as property too, and that includes those they can't immediately recognize as being part of their own class. So heroes that look dirty or disheveled might find themselves trampled by a passing carriage or arrested for loitering where they don't belong and thrown into a dirty dingy prison. Here they might witness a slave breakout, and find that the only way to get out of prison is to help the others escape. Alternately, rich-looking heroes might find themselves accosted and even robbed by the poor, only to be saved by the constabulary, and taken to the Mayor. There they could find themselves with a mission to infiltrate Freehome and expose the slave rebellion leader so that the person can be executed.

Souragne

"You may choose to look the other way but you can never say again that you did not know."

~ William Wilberforce

Culture Level:	Industrial Revolution (overall, no access to black powder due to the lack of saltpeter and sulfur)
Climate & Terrain:	Warm, grasslands and swamp
Year Formed:	635 BC
Population:	4,000
Races (%):	Humans 99%, Other 1%
Languages:	Souragnien (local variation of Common)
Religions:	Ezra, Lawbringer, the Loa
Government:	Plutocracy (aristocratic elected leader, independent settlements)
Ruler(s):	Mayor Foquelaine of Port d'Elhour
Darklord(s):	Anton Misroi
Nationality:	Souragnien
Analog:	Louisiana during the Antebellum era

Local Fauna:

Maison d'Sablet constantly buzzes with millions and millions of insects, some of which are the size of a human's thumb. It is also possible to find numerous types of birds, such as owls, vultures, ducks, and seagulls — due to the swamp's proximity to the ocean. People hunt for raccoons, turtles, beavers, and the occasional deer here, always careful to avoid the many alligators, leeches, and snakes in the swamp, of both the normal and giant varieties. The local populace do not tend to have many animals, though poultry is kept, especially chickens and ducks. Some of the rich families have horses, but larger animals aren't common here, as their weight would cause them to break through the crust of the earth, into the waterline.

Local Flora:

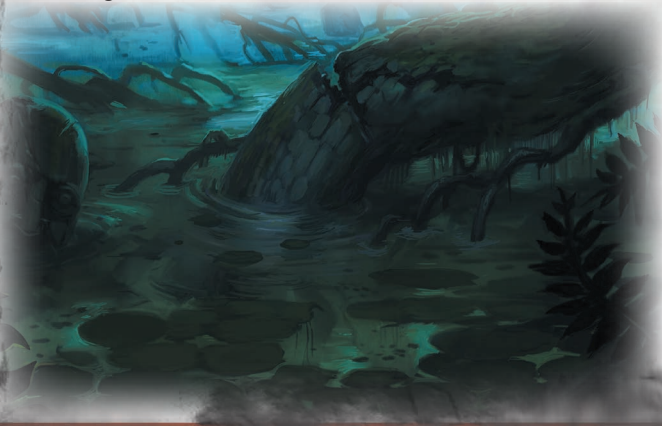
The grasslands are dominated by plantations of sugarcane and cotton, but within the last few years, an increasing number of rice farms have appeared, replacing most of the traditional cornfields. This has allowed for an increase in available food across the domain, which has turned its fortunes around from being poor and near-permanently on the edge of starvation, into being a prosperous one, with lots of industry. The lucky few who have private gardens tend to grow cranberries, grapes, strawberries, and the occasional melon. The swamp is dominated by cypress trees and hardy grasses, hanging low over the numerous waterways.

Native Horrors

Within the depths of Maison d'Sablet lurk numerous horrors, like the undead (especially skeletons and zombies), shambling mounds, will o' wisps, and a few unique creatures, such as the black bass, dread treants, feu follet, and zombies. The zombies are what everyone remembers when they talk about Souragne, due to the sheer number of them that are seen on occasion. Many are the times where the locals have found themselves watched by one of these undead or speaking with the voice of the Lord of the Dead. This is why so many of them believe that the dead are to be left undisturbed for a week before being interred in the mausoleums. It is a tribute to the Lord of the Dead that the bodies of family members sometimes get up and walk out in to the swamp, there to serve the Lord forevermore. And then there are the Loa. Loas are intelligent animals, physical embodiments of spirits that have taken an animal form, and they vary from the benign Longears (a generally peaceful Loa that has taken the form of a giant rabbit) or the twisted, such as Brother-Snake, who has taken the form of an enormous python, and which eats any living creature it can find. These are worshipped by the lower class of Souragne, especially through the presence of the bocom, shamans who can communicate with nature and the Loas. In effect, the Loa is simply the Souragnien term for Fey and spirits, the things of nature and such, that they cannot explain otherwise.

Terrain type

The lands of Souragne are divided into two areas: the swamp and the grasslands, with Maison d'Sablet, the swamp, taking up the western two-thirds of the domain. The grassland takes up the remaining third in the east. The land is almost entirely flat and lies very close to the waterline. As a result, minor



Souragne

floods are common, and digging more than a foot into the ground means that you hit water — as a result, the locals took up the custom of interring the dead in mausoleums above ground. Storms are frequent here, especially during the summer, and the weather is always stiflingly hot.



Important Landmarks

Isle of the Maiden

The Isle of the Maiden was the home of the Maiden of the Swamp, the Loa, or nature spirit — a deeply powerful dryad that taught Anton Misroi the Dance of the Dead. She essentially mistook the nascent Zombie Lord for one of her fellow Loa, one that was still learning to control his powers. When she realized the horrible truth, it was too late, and Anton had gone from being a rather weak creature into an actual Loa, and the most powerful of them all, the Lord of the Dead. She deeply regrets this and works behind the scenes to set up conflicts with Anton, steering adventurers in the way of his plans, as well as those of other evil-doers. She hopes that she can atone for her actions in this manner.

Lake Noir

Lake Noir is a large lake on the eastern end of Maison d'Sablet, with waters so deep and dark that it appears like ink. On the eastern edge of the lake stands a hut that belongs to a practitioner of Loa-worship called Chickenbone. Chickenbone has not been seen in years, and it is unknown if he is still alive, or if one of his profane rituals finally insulted or failed the Lord of the Dead. Since his disappearance, the area has become even more dangerous than before, and the lake's waters hide hordes of zombies that only await the call of their master.

Misroi's Manor

Misroi's manor is a huge building, lying at the center of a plantation. It is draped with air-moss — a moss native to Maison d'Sablet — and cobwebs, and sits about a meter off the ground, supported by wooden supports, to keep it out of the moisture of the swamp. Surrounding the mansion is a huge, badly kept lawn

with exotic birds like peacocks strutting around.

The plantation is open to the land around it, though it has an enormous iron-wrought gate that closes the path to the main house, and looks to the undiscerning eye much like any other plantation, but the workers bear special attention. They work with a slow methodical pace, always in the exact same pattern and rhythm, as they are zombies, animated by the will of Anton Misroi, who keeps them laboring for him for all eternity. Inside the Manor sits Anton, waiting, ever patient and uncaring, hoping to find another Larissa Snowmane to rouse his passions once more.



Towns and villages:

Freehome

Freehome is the hidden settlement of escaped slaves. They seek to help others escape enslavement and to escape the domain itself, if possible. If not, they hope to engineer the downfall of the current system of slavery and class divide. The settlement consists of no more than fifty people, most of whom are untrained laborers, but with one or two trained outdoorsmen who are teaching others the skills needed to survive in the swamp, such as building decent shelter and finding food. The people here are rumored to be led by a former mercenary of Port d'Elhour, but so far, no outsiders have been able to determine who that person is.

Marais d'Tarascon

Marais d'Tarascon is the smaller of the two settlements in the domain. It houses 400 people and is under the control of the wealthy Tarascon family. The Tarascons are the second richest family in Souragne, after the Malehins, but unlike that family, the Tarascon family keeps to itself, well away from the hustle and bustle of high society in Port d'Elhour. The Tarascons have an unfortunate reputation for mental illness, though they have inspired great loyalty in the villagers of Marais d'Tarascon simply for being less abusive than the other nobles of the domain. All of the people who live in the village are free, none are kept

Souragne

as slaves, and while these conditions are only marginally better elsewhere in Souragne, here the story is different. People are clothed and well fed, with none of the physical punishments seen elsewhere. Simply put, within Souragne, it's about as good as it gets. Too bad that the cemetery, the oldest in Souragne, is a magnet for undead activity.

Port d'Elhour

Port d'Elhour is home to 3,500 people, with 95% of them living in the Poor Quarters, while their masters reside in the Rich Quarter. The poor are kept in line by their own, mercenary soldiers hired to protect the rich from the masses, in case of uprisings. No one is quite certain what to do with the foreigners that visit, as they fall outside the normal rich/poor classes, so rather than dealing with the issue, they're housed apart from everyone else, though the Foreign Quarter only consists of a dozen buildings. Both rich and poor welcome foreigners as natural allies in their struggles, but they do so with caution, as they cannot be certain which way these newcomers will decide to go. Port d'Elhour is also the site of recent innovations with steam. The city has established a previously impossible drainage system with steam-pumps running to clear sewage and prevent the city from flooding. Originally, the system was designed solely for steam-pumps, but the city council determined early on that the steam-pumps should only be turned on in times of great need, as they are expensive to run. Instead, manual pumps have been fitted that are manned by slaves supplied by the ruling families. These pumps run twenty-four hours a day, and it is not uncommon for slaves to be worked to death at the drainage station.

Among the lower classes, it has become something of a morbid joke of referring to someone dead as "having gone to the steam bath. Regardless of the dangers of using steam, the endeavor has proven tremendously successful and the power of steam has been harnessed into other parts of the domain, allowing for it to, for the first time ever, produce enough food to comfortably feed everyone, and a dramatic increase in the cotton trade, using the Wake of the Loa (as described below) as increased the wealth disparity between rich and poor. The poor have seen nothing of this wealth, while the rich sit in their comfortable mansions counting their profits. The Malehin family in particular have earned their keep, as they provide ships and transportation for the other families of the domain.

Neighboring domain(s):

None

Fun Fact:

Setting sail from Port d'Elhour and sailing northwest allows one to leave Souragne through a relatively reliable mistway called the Wake of the Loa. Ships that move through this may end up anywhere within the Domains of Dread, though it is impossible for those using the mistway to predict where they'll end up. The only requirement seems to be that there is open water. Most of the time (90%) the ship can return through the same route (though other ships cannot), but on rare occasions, the mistway closes once a ship has moved through.



Anton Misroi

"I don't go into that swamp.

Zombies? Fine.

Gators? Fine.

Zombie gators? No."

~ Unknown

Anton Misroi is a tall, thin, human male in his early thirties. His hair is long, dark, and usually tied back. Anton is incredibly pale, with gray eyes and sunken cheeks. From a distance, he could easily be mistaken for a well dressed skeleton. Anton is well dressed, but his clothes are slightly out of fashion. Anyone who mentions this soon disappears into the swamps around Misroi's manor.

Background: Anton Misroi was born to a wealthy family with an ancient noble lineage. In his youth, Anton discovered he was a talented magic user, especially as a spellsinger. Spellsingers are a rare variety of arcane magic users that learn spells as a form of song, and Anton could have excelled, but only learned enough magic to impress the bored plantation owners that lived nearby. Anton never felt he needed magic. He was powerful, well connected, and rich beyond his wildest dreams. Anton was untouchable and he knew it. He even attracted a band of ruffians to do his dirty work and give him a clean alibi. Anton used these thugs to kidnap those who displeased him and drown them in the swamp, or feed them to any of the alligators that infested the wetlands. One night Anton and his thugs returned from a night of revels in a local tavern. Anton found his wife in the arms of another man. In truth, nothing dishonorable had happened, the pair were old friends and she was confiding in him about her terrible marriage and fears that she would never escape her husband. Anton wouldn't hear it and had the couple bound and taken deep into the swamp. Anton's favorite murder hole was a pool of quicksand just deeper than a tall man could stand. His thugs threw the pair in. Anton and his men laughed as the couple sank into the quicksand, and begged for their lives. Finally the man told Anton's wife to climb on his shoulders and save herself. Anton waited until he was sure the man was dead, then took a pole and pushed his wife down as well. As his wife's head slipped beneath the surface, she spat a curse at her husband, he would die in this swamp and never leave. Anton laughed, but darker figures heard and took heed. After his wife slipped below the surface and the quicksand had finally settled, Anton decided to tell his wife

good riddance. Anton leaned close to the surface of the pool. He had just begun to speak when arms tore from the quicksand. Anton screamed and tried to flee but the hands dragged and pulled at his coat and hair. The thugs sobered with astonishing rapidity and fled as their master was pulled toward the pool. As Anton was pulled under, he begged for his life. As before, dark figures heard.

Anton emerged from the pool sometime later as a powerful but hideous monster known as a zombie lord. Anton stumbled through the swamp to his manor house, but his shocked servants used fire and pitchforks to drive them back into the swamp.

Anton lived in the swamp for years. He became a grisly figure of death for the locals, some of whom gave him the nickname of the Lord of Death. Anton discovered he could animate any corpse he found in the swamp and they were loyal to him.

During his travels, Anton met a hamadryad that was revered by many of the locals as the Lady of Life in the swamp. She mistakenly believed Anton was a creature like herself, a force of nature that had forgotten its way. She taught Anton many secrets of Ravenloft and how to bind himself to the land. Most importantly, she taught Anton the Dance of the Dead and a ritual that would tie him to the very essence of the swamp. By using the Dance of the Dead, he could cast any spell that was associated with death and undeath.

Anton immediately performed the ritual and regained his lost humanity, but was now tied to the swamp in body, mind, and soul. He could never leave his swamp, although inside its bounds, he was powerful beyond reckoning.

Current Sketch: Since regaining his human form, Anton has reclaimed his manor house in the swamp. He slew all of his former servants and their families and animated them as zombies. They serve him eternally now as they did in life. Occasionally one of the zombies in his manor house will stop working and shamble towards the edge of the swamp, but an act of will from Misroi soon gets them back to work. Anton knows some of the secrets of the Demiplane of Dread and resists Souragne joining the Core. The few living inhabitants of his domain consider him the Lord of the Dead and whisper his name with something approaching reverence. Anton completely dominates Souragne, and has no intention of letting that change. Unlike many darklords, Anton has no interest in the day to day running of his domain. His edicts are few, but strictly enforced. Chief among these laws is only

Anton Misroi

divine magic or magic the necromancy school can be cast in Souragne. Anyone caught casting any other type of spell is fed to one of the hundreds of zombie alligators that lurk in the swamp.

The hamadryad still lives in the swamp and is the only kernel of light in this dark domain. She offers travellers what aid she can, but will not confront Anton directly.

Darklord's Tactics: Anton is one of the most formidable darklords in combat. He can animate any number of corpses in his swamp, and they all follow his commands. The swamp around his manor is full of Anton's past victims and he has made sure everyone of them is animated. Anton can cast any necromancy spell at will and gladly targets his minions as well as his enemies.

If his enemies get too close for spells, Anton can use powerful punches and rotting aura abilities. One of his favorite tactics against living foes is to grab them and pull them into the swamp. Anton does not need to breathe, but almost all his enemies do. He holds his struggling victim under the water until he has a new minion to animate.

If the battle starts to turn against the Lord of the Dead, Anton can sink into the ground or step into a tree and reappear anywhere in his swamp. When he reappears he has also healed to maximum hit points.

Borders: When the borders of Souragne are closed any creature that enters the wall of mist finds themselves roaming the swamps in another section of the domain.



Anton Misroi, Lord of the Dead

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 127 (17d8 + 51)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Constitution +7, Wisdom +4, Charisma +9

Skills Intimidate +9, Perception +4, Persuasion +9

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with wood or natural elements-

Damage Immunities necrotic, poisoned **Condition Immunities** poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan

Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Anton fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Undead Control. As a bonus action, Anton Misroi can take control of any undead within line of sight. Any undead must make a DC 17 Wisdom save or be dominated. Any undead created by Anton (by any means) can be affected at any range while they are within Souragne and they automatically fail the save. For undead with an Intelligence of 8 or higher, this effect lasts for 1 hour, or until the undead is no longer within line of sight from Anton, whichever comes first. For intelligent undead with 7 Intelligence or less, the effect does not expire, though they get a new saving throw each week thereafter. There is no limit to the amount of undead that Anton can control in this manner.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces Anton to 0 hp, he must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, he drops to 1 hp instead.

Undead Minions. Undead created by Anton Misroi always have maximum hit points for their hit dice, and they add half his proficiency bonus (+5, i.e. they add +2) to all saving throws.

Actions

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+2) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) necrotic damage. Instead of dealing necrotic damage, Anton Misroi may instead infect the target with the zombie plague (see the **plague zombie** in appendix A) unless the target makes a DC 17 Constitution saving throw.

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+2) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or its hp maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. Anton heals an amount of damage equal to the amount lost by the target. If a target dies from this damage, they rise on the following round as a **zombie** under Anton's control.

Anton Misroi

Dance of the Dead. Anton can use the dance of the dead to cast any necromancy spell up to 9th level. This takes him one action per level of the spell, and may require him to use actions in multiple rounds for specific spells.

Raise the Dead. Anton targets a humanoid corpse within 60 feet, which rises as a **zombie**, **plague zombie**, or **souragnien zombie** under his control.

Legendary Actions

Anton can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Anton regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Command the Hordes. Anton commands any undead under his control to strike swiftly. On their next turn, any undead under Anton's control, regardless of distance, is affected as if *haste* had been cast on them.

Life Drain (Costs 2 Actions). Anton makes a life drain attack.

Call the Swamp (Costs 3 Actions). Anton calls upon the swamp to protect him, and the ground reaches up to swallow him. This works as a *tree stride* spell, but does not require any tree, only that he is touching the ground of the swamp. He can emerge anywhere within 500 feet. This also allows him to transfer his mind to any corpse within Souragne, regardless of distance. That corpse immediately assumes his appearance. If outside of Maison d'Sablet, he must immediately return there.

Lair Actions

While Anton is in Maison d'Sablet, he can take lair actions as long as he isn't incapacitated.

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Anton can take one of the following lair action options, or forgo using any of them in that round:

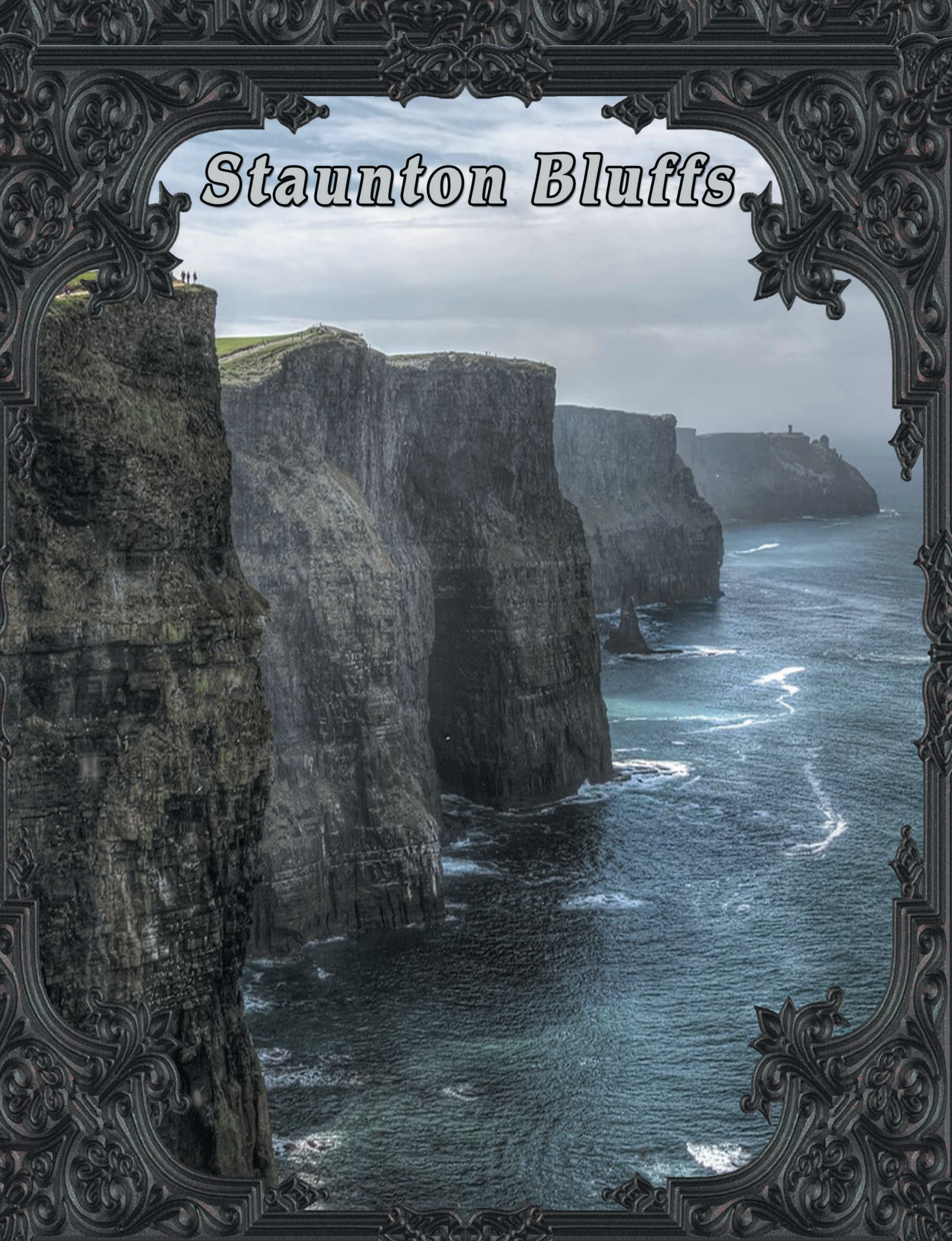
Raise the Dead. Anton calls upon the swamp, which summons up a corpse that rises as a **zombie**, **plague zombie**, or **souragnien zombie** under his control.

Tremble with Fear. Anton targets a single creature that he can see, and inflicts them with the same fear he felt when being swallowed by the swamp. If the target fails a DC 17 Wisdom save, they are frightened while they can see Anton. Only one creature can be affected at a time.

Flushed Away. Anton targets a single creature and the swamp flash floods that creature in moments. If the target fails a DC 17 Strength save, they're blasted away 30 (1d6 x 10) feet and take 3 (1d6) points of bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet they move.



Staunton Bluffs



Staunton Bluffs



Staunton Bluffs is the result of treachery and envy on behalf of the darklord, Torrence Bleysmith. He was a man who wanted everything, but through his own arrogance, he ended up with nothing. Worse than nothing in fact, as he ended up taking his own life, even failing in that.

Before he became a darklord, Terrence was part of the Bleysmith family, where he had an intense rivalry with his eldest brother. The two were well-matched, equals in everything, but both wanted more. When war came with the neighboring duchy of Avergny, his brother rode off to war, while Torrence was forced to stay at home. He coveted his brother's position, and in his perfidy, ended up sending several secrets to the enemy, such as troop movements, and even the plans to the ancestral castle. His ploy worked, and his brother was ambushed and killed. But this is where things started to go wrong for Terrence. The enemy didn't hold to their agreement and invaded the Bleysmith family's lands. And when they came for Castle Stonecrest, it fell in short order — after all Terrence had given them all the secrets to the land. In the end, every one of his family died, except for Terrence, who'd hid in a pantry.

Nearly mad with grief, Torrence swore vengeance, and within the woods of the land, he cast a mighty spell to replace the lost troops of the army. Every living Stauntonian came under his control, and he sent them towards the army of Avergny. He gloated with his success, but then it all came tumbling down again. The enemy's army was full of seasoned veterans and hardened killers, while Torrence's army consisted of brain-washed peasants. It was a slaughter and they all died. Now entirely mad, and convinced that the gods were against him, Torrence hung himself in the central hall of Castle Stonecrest, cursing the gods for his luck as he went. But that wasn't the end of him, and when he awoke, he found himself a ghost in a strange land. His homeland was gone, replaced with Staunton Bluffs, and beyond its borders lay only swirling mist. His people had been replaced with the descendants of the Avergnite settlers who had moved to the land. And all his own Stauntonians now roamed the eastern part of the land as disembodied undead creatures. Soon he found that when people died of natural causes in Staunton, they were added to the ranks of the spirits of Staunton Bluffs, but when they died due to his duplicity they rose as corporeal ones, though unintelligent, but stuck within the Castle walls, as unintended and uninvited guests.

Adventures in Staunton Bluffs should involve Torrence Bleysmith or at the least Castle Stonecrest, for simply put, the domain is peaceful. The villagers who live here only just scrape by, but they live in safety as the spirits keep to the eastern sections, and monsters are few and far between. And as Torrence is the direct cause of misery here, it seems like an obvious opportunity. Perhaps the heroes come across the Castle before they meet any of the inhabitants of the domain: After all, what adventurers can resist a ruined castle that may be full of treasure? But when they encounter Bleysmith, he should try to convince them that he hates his current situation (true), and that he wants their help in ending it (false). He'll then send them to the eastern part of the domain, where he'll claim that an item of great power lies, a family heirloom that'll help him break the curse. This is a lie of course, but Torrence is wary of a fight close to his physical body. Should they somehow survive that, he'll try to trap them within his home, and either starve them to death or have parts of the building collapse on them. Should they still survive, he'll fake death and disappearance, only to strike at another time. At heart, Torrence is a coward and acts like one.

"Resentment is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die." ~ Carrie Fisher

Culture Level:	Chivalric
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate cliffs, forest, hill, swamp, and plains
Year Formed:	630 BC (suspected, but unknown)
Population:	1,000
Races (%):	Humans 99%, Other 1%
Languages:	Common, Avergny
Religions:	Cult of the Morninglord, Ezra, Hala, Erlin
Government:	Direct democracy
Ruler(s):	None (important decisions are done via direct voting among the entire populace)
Darklord(s):	Sir Torrence Bleysmith
Nationality:	Avergnite
Analog:	Kent, White Cliffs of Dover

Staunton Bluffs

Local Fauna:

As can be expected with a land split into two sections, different types of creatures can be found in the two areas. In the western half, the land is mostly prairie. Not particularly fertile, but treated with great care by the locals, it manages to sustain some life. But due to the small nature of the realm, the locals have no domesticated animals beyond a few cats and dogs. Wildlife is equally scarce, consisting of mice, rats, hares, and a few wolves, but there are no bigger predator or prey animals here. The area simply cannot sustain it. In the eastern section of the land, which COULD sustain it, it is even scarcer as the presence of the undead drives most animals away.

The one thing that both sections do have is birds. There are a lot of them in Staunton Bluffs, with most having a strange resemblance to seagulls, even though there is no ocean in sight. These normal birds are often hunted by the locals as a source of meat, as well as by the nighthawk, the one hunting bird of Staunton Bluffs. Where most animals in Staunton Bluffs are active during the day, the nighthawk, as its name indicates, is nocturnal. It also seems to be the only animal that is willing to stay in the eastern section of the land once darkness falls.

Local Flora:

The western section of Staunton Bluffs is dominated by prairie and grassy, as the land is quite flat. The river Willis that bisects the land, along the cliffs, brings water to both sections of the land, but it's clear that the higher elevations of the eastern section are far more fertile than the western section. It is also far more beautiful to look at, as are the bluffs themselves, as the white cliff sides reflect sunlight for much of the day. It's a taunting reminder to the populace that beauty and wealth could be within their reach, but due to the danger, folks stay away.

There are a few patches or clumps of trees in the western part of Staunton Bluffs, but they are carefully guarded by the populace who knows that wood is in short supply (as a result, they've started heating their home with peat), and they've been actively growing trees in recent decades, so a lot of younger trees are beginning to grow, but it'll take another decade or two until the oldest of them are ready for use. In the meantime, they guard them heavily.

The eastern section of Staunton Bluffs is far more alive with vegetation, being home to swamp, marsh, and forest. The trees here are thick and old, untouched for decades and centuries, and the only real break in the

tree line is the marshes and the single rutted wagon trail that leads from Castle Stonecrest and into the lowlands of the west, where it turns into a proper road. And in the middle of it stands the Staunton Bluffs, made from chalk, a soft white, very finely grained pure limestone, which gives them a distinct appearance.

Native Horrors

The main threat to life within Staunton Bluffs comes from accidents, but if one moves into the eastern section of Staunton Bluffs that changes. During the day you're safe (though the locals will physically restrain you from going there), but during the night, the place comes alive with ghosts and spirits, the remains of the Stauntonians that died at the hands of the Avergnites after being used by Torrence. Within Castle Stonecrest, the problem changes slightly to be corporeal undead, typically skeletons and zombies, though a few more powerful undead exist there. All of them are without intelligence, and under the control of Torrence Bleysmith, who is, of course, the main threat to life within the Castle walls.

Terrain type

Staunton Bluffs is quite small, at only five miles wide by five miles long, and it is bisected by its namesake, the white cliffs of Staunton Bluffs. Atop the cliffs rises the highlands that have forest, swamps, and a generally hilly feel to them. West of the cliffs (and below) are the lowlands, which are dominated by prairie and the few clumps of trees. The entire domain is wet, cold, and windy with fog a constant companion in the morning, though the sun usually disperses it during the early parts of the day. On those days, the smell of burning peat hangs heavy on the lowlands, as the natives huddle close to their hearths for warmth.

Important Landmarks

Castle Stonecrest

Castle Stonecrest is several hundred years old and is in a bit of a state. The windows have blown in, most of the doors hang loose on their hinges, and the place is decaying with loose stones and the occasional collapsed ceiling. Despite all this though, the place remains strong, and could potentially be restored to its former glory, if not for the infestation of the undead, and the presence of Torrence Bleysmith. The castle lies at the end of the single road that traverses Staunton Bluffs, though on this end, it's barely more than a wagon trail. The castle commands a great view, sitting atop the highest point of the cliff, and overlooking the entirety of the domain, though, with its gray walls so starkly outlined against the white

Staunton Bluffs

cliffs, it mostly resembles a sleeping gargoyle waiting to strike. The castle is surrounded by two lines of defense, a moat, and a pit. Both of which are straddled by the drawbridge. Close examination will reveal that the second pit isn't actually a pit due to its nature, but because it prevents people from escaping when the drawbridge drops down, effectively crushing anyone caught underneath it. Several adventurers have met their end in this way, courtesy of Sir Bleysmith. The castle otherwise contains all the things you'd expect from a defensive fortification that also served as a noble home: kitchen, smithy, armory, stables, a jailor's tower, and so on. All of these can turn into deadly traps at the behest of Torrence, so the wise hero treads carefully here.

Towns and villages:

Willisford

Most of the population of Staunton Bluffs live in cottages dotted around the countryside of the western portion of the domain, but the hamlet of Willisford is home to 200 of them and more on the two weekly rest days. (The Avergnites work five days a week, and rest for two). On these two days, Willisford comes alive with drinking, general festivities, and quite frequent cooking competitions. The domain has somehow, in spite of its limited resources, fostered a very delicate cuisine, and the inhabitants are quite happy to have newcomers judge these competitions. Willisford doesn't stand out from any other hamlet of its size, except for the fact that it does not have a jail.

In fact, there is no means of incarceration in Staunton Bluffs. There is barely any crime, but what little there is, is punished harshly. Theft is punishable by having one's hands chopped off, and the locals have found this to be an excellent deterrent to petty criminals. The other thing that they enforce is that no one, not even visitors to Staunton Bluffs, is to enter the eastern parts of the domain, and they'll explain this in very forceful terms to newcomers, even physically restraining those who still try. To them, it has always been this way, and for good reason, as everyone has seen the spirits that float around at the top of the cliffs. One nasty secret that hides in the area around Willisford, but which the locals have not yet caught on to, is that a small group of werewolves has moved in. A family of five that live a short distance from the hamlet, and who keep their predations very quiet. They usually throw the bodies of their victims into the river, letting them flow into the mists.

Neighboring domain(s):

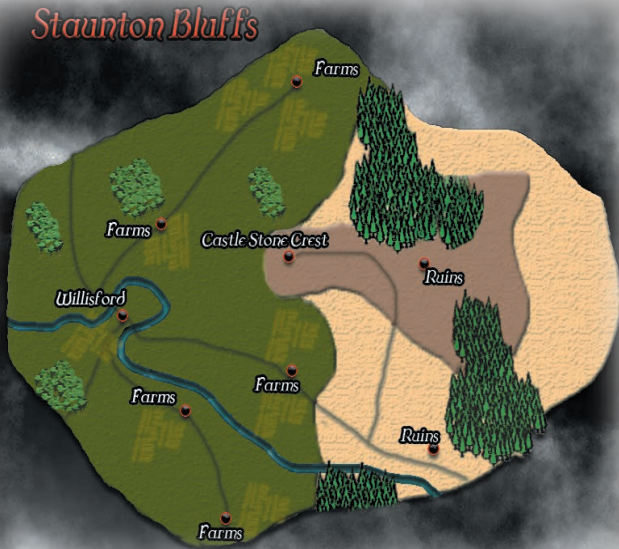
None

Fun Fact:

Much as the inhabitants of Staunton Bluffs struggle from day to day, they don't realize how lucky they are. Their domain, at least from the viewpoint of those living here, is one of tedious dullness. Nothing happens here, and they're as safe as can be, as long as they stay away from the eastern portion of the domain. Not only that but they're surrounded by natural beauty.



Sir Torrence Bleysmith



"He died a traitor's death and suffers for it.

In some ways I pity him, in others I think he gets what he deserves.

Maybe it's a little of both.

*Still going to destroy him if I ever get the chance."
~ Dr Rudolph van Richten*

Sir Torrence Bleysmith's ghost appears as a tall, long-haired man in his mid twenties. Clad in a long, brocaded coat over a ruffled shirt, black leather breeches, and tall leather boots with spurs, his clothes are dull and faded.

His finely shaped features have grief and rage deeply etched into them. His hollowed eye sockets are entirely empty, unless he is enraged, when his eyes erupt into spectral flames. His neck is broken and his head hangs at an odd angle, accompanied by a grinding sound as it moves. The most noticeable thing about him is the noose that hangs around his broken neck. The hemp noose has torn and abraded the skin as if it took some time for his neck to snap. His left arm hangs uselessly at his side, twisted as if smashed it with a large, blunt object. It only adds to his aura of wrath, lending him an air of helpless fury

History: Sir Torrence Bleysmith was the youngest of Count Rupert Bleysmith's five offspring. Winning their father's love was an endless battlefield for the children. By the time Torrence was a young man, only Torrence and his eldest sibling, August, still fought for the Count's affection. Too busy with courtly intrigues and politics, the sons had to resort to more and more flamboyant measures to gain attention. Even becoming knights was not enough to draw one affectionate word from their father. It did not help that the brothers were equals in nearly every way. Finally after decades of endless conflict between the two brothers, the elderly Count finally approved of both sons. But it was too late, the competition between the siblings had moved beyond the need for a father's love. It had become a bitter feud between the two brothers. Things came to a pass when Count Bleysmith decided to attack the neighboring duchy of Avergne. The count placed August in charge of running the duchy while he was away. Enraged at this slight, Torrence vowed revenge upon his father and brother. Torrence betrayed his family and country by selling secrets to Avergnite agents. Several times Torrence tried to have his brother killed in ambushes, but the elder sibling evaded or fought his way out of every trap.

Desperate, Torrence pretended to swallow his pride and offered his services as chief advisor. Taken back by his humility, his brother agreed. Using this newfound trust, he arranged for the Avergnites to raid along the Staunton border, knowing his brother would have no choice, but to personally repel the invaders. Torrence arranged for August to get surrounded in a small manor house by a small army of Avergne agents. When the smoke cleared, August was finally dead. Before Torrence could revel in his victory, he was betrayed by the Avergnites who continued deeper in Staunton. Torrence's proposed raid to slay August turned into a full scale invasion of his homeland. Aghast by this, Torrence tried to turn the tide of the invasion, but it was too late. Since he had stupidly sold the invaders the secrets and even maps of his castle, the ancient fortress fell easily to the invaders. Torrence's family were chased through the halls and slaughtered like sheep. Only Torrence escaped. Hiding in a cesspit for days until the besiegers left. To his horror, his ancestral home was ransacked and violated like he was a filthy commoner. Torrence was filled with rage and shame. In one final act of revenge, he turned to his past magical studies and concocted a dark, blasphemous ritual that turned the surviving inhabitants of Staunton into mindless puppets. Taking up whatever they could use as a weapon, they marched

Sir Torrence Bleysmith

to the invading army and attacked. Torrence believed that the overwhelming numbers of civilians and the element of surprise would break the Avergnite army. At first the attack went well, but the Avergnites were battle hardened and disciplined. Glee turned to rage and despair as every attacking subject of Staunton was wiped out. Overcome with rage and remorse, Torrence hanged himself in the burnt shell of his castle. His last thoughts were of revenge, hatred and guilt.

Current Sketch: Despite his death, Ravenloft had other plans for Torrence Bleysmith. Now a ghost, he is doomed to wander the halls of his castle with the knowledge that his life's work had come to naught. Torrence takes out his frustration upon not only those who try to storm his castle, but the citizens of Staunton Bluffs, all of whom are Avergnites who settled in the duchy after the war. For it is Torrence's curse that despite his hatred of the Stauntonians, he will not destroy them. Torment them, yes, occasionally even kill, but he will not, by action or command, slaughter the mortals that infest his domain.

Soon after rising as a ghost, Torrence discovered that anything that happened to his body echoed onto his spectral form. A rock smashed the bones of his body's left arm some years ago and Torrence ethereal form has mimicked the injury ever since. Destroying the bones is the only way to destroy the darklord and Torrence is convinced the Avergnites are looking for his body to do just that. Torrence has commanded all the undead in his domain not to attack the Avergnites.

Darklord Tactics: Torrence tries to avoid conflict. He will act like a friend and ask anyone he considers a threat to help end his miserable existence. Torrence will send them to the far corners of Staunton Bluffs into quagmires full of the restless dead. If they return, Torrence will congratulate them and send them off to an even more dangerous location.. While it is possible to harm his incorporeal form, damaging Torrence's corpse will cause him pain and stun him for 1d6 rounds. Torrence is immune to turning.

Closing the Borders: When the borders of Staunton Bluffs are sealed, a spectral army surrounds the domain. The closer the creature gets to the border, the more solid the undead become until they form a wall of dead, rotting flesh that no amount of hacking can break. Any attempts to dig under or fly over the wall will cause the corpses to stack on top of each other, preventing any escape.



Sir Torrence Bleysmith



Sir Torrence Bleysmith

Medium undead (humanoid), lawful evil

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 60 (11d8 + 11)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	19 (+4)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Cha +6

Skills Acrobatics +4, Deception +9, Performance +6, Persuasion +9, Sleight of Hand +4, Stealth +7

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Avergnite, Draconic, Infernal, Halfling, Mordentish

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Ethereal Sight. Torrence can see 60 ft. into the Ethereal Plane when he is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement. Torrence can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. He takes 5 (1d10) force damage if he ends his turn inside an object.

Undead Immunity. Undead creatures cannot harm Torrence or his corpse.

Sense the Living. Torrence can tell whenever any living creature larger than a tiny bird enters his home, and where that being is within the estate.

Malignant Will. Torrence can influence the workings of Castle Stonecrest. Doors blow shut for no apparent reason and windows slam closed, shattering the panes of glass remaining in them. Ghostly howls echo through the deserted passages, sending chills through the blood of listeners. Torrence can cast the minor illusion, knock and shatter spells at will while he is inside his estate. He can cast these spells anywhere within the castle regardless of vision, distance or material components.

Harm Comes at Night. Although Torrence can move about his castle during the day and influence the material of the castle, he cannot enter the material plane and harm intruders until nightfall. Only one exception applies to this rule. During thunderstorms, Bleysmith may appear sporadically as if the spell blink was cast on him. It is at night that he comes into the full measure of his powers, and can deal with intruders as he wishes.

Turn Immunity. Torrence is immune against any effect that turns undead.

Rejuvenation. Even if Torrence reaches 0 hit points, when he is destroyed, he will rejuvenate inside his castle two days later at midnight. Bleysmith can be permanently destroyed only if someone claims the western half of the realm in the name of the Bleysmiths. That person need not destroy the citizens, but only assert the right of the Bleysmith family to the land. This process, unfortunately, renders the resident Avergnites susceptible to the dubious charms of the ghost lord, and Bleysmith knows when he can begin assaulting the inhabitants. Those who wish to rid the land of his evil whims must therefore move quickly before he lays waste to the innocent farmers. Next, the skeleton of the malevolent ruler must be found and destroyed so that he is laid to rest. Since he had it hidden in the cellar among a pile of some of his former victims, this will be quite an accomplishment in itself.

Connected to the Bones. Bleysmith is intimately connected to his bones and will immediately magically teleport to defend them. He can even materialize in daylight if his bones are threatened.

Torrence's Bones. While damage to his bones causes Torrence great suffering, he takes no actual damage from them. When someone strikes at his bones, he must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become incapacitated by the pain, recovering after 1d6 rounds. The bones have an AC of 20 and 15 hit points. Only if holy water is sprinkled on them, followed by a *bless* or similar spell, and finally a remove curse, can Bleysmith be ultimately destroyed.

Sir Torrence BleySmith

Hanging Rope. Torrence has a hanging rope around his neck at all times. He cannot remove that rope and if a creature succeeds on a DC 15 Sleight of Hands check to pull on the rope, Torrence becomes frightened and flees for 1d6 rounds.

Cannot Harm Avergnites. Torrence and his undead cannot harm any of the living people found in his domain unless someone opposes his rulership. When someone claims the land in the name of the BleySmith family, then he can indirectly harm the Avergnites by convincing them to harm their loved ones or even themselves. His undead are free to harm residents during this time too.

Create Undead. Any creature that dies due to Torrence's deception rises as a ghoul or a specter under his control. If Torrence is permanently slain, all of his created undead turn to mist and disappear.

Borrow Skill (4/Day). Torrence can use the abilities of others he can see within 60ft. When he needs to make an ability check, he can use the ability modifier of another creature instead of his own.

Forgotten. Torrence is completely forgotten in his domain. There are no mentions of him in official papers, no memory of him exists in the people's minds and generally no way for someone to find any information regarding his life or unlife. Any investigation check to find information on Torrence or spells such as *legend lore* immediately fail.

Actions

Withering Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (4d6 + 1) necrotic damage.

Heavy Blade +2. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

Etherealness. Torrence enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. He is visible on the Material Plane while he is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet he can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Horrifying Visage. Each non-undead creature within 60 ft. of Torrence that can see him must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If the save fails by 5 or more, the target also ages 1d4 x 10 years. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to Torrence's Horrifying Visage for the next 24 hours. The aging effect can be reversed with a *greater restoration* spell, but only within 24 hours of it occurring.

Possession (Recharge 6). One humanoid that Torrence can see within 5 ft. of him must succeed on a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by him; Torrence then disappears, and the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. Torrence now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. Torrence can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn undead, and he retains his alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to being charmed and frightened. He otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies. The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, Torrence ends it as a bonus action, or he is forced out by an effect like the *dispel evil and good* spell. When the possession ends, Torrence reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 ft. of the body. The target is immune to his Possession for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.

Lair Actions

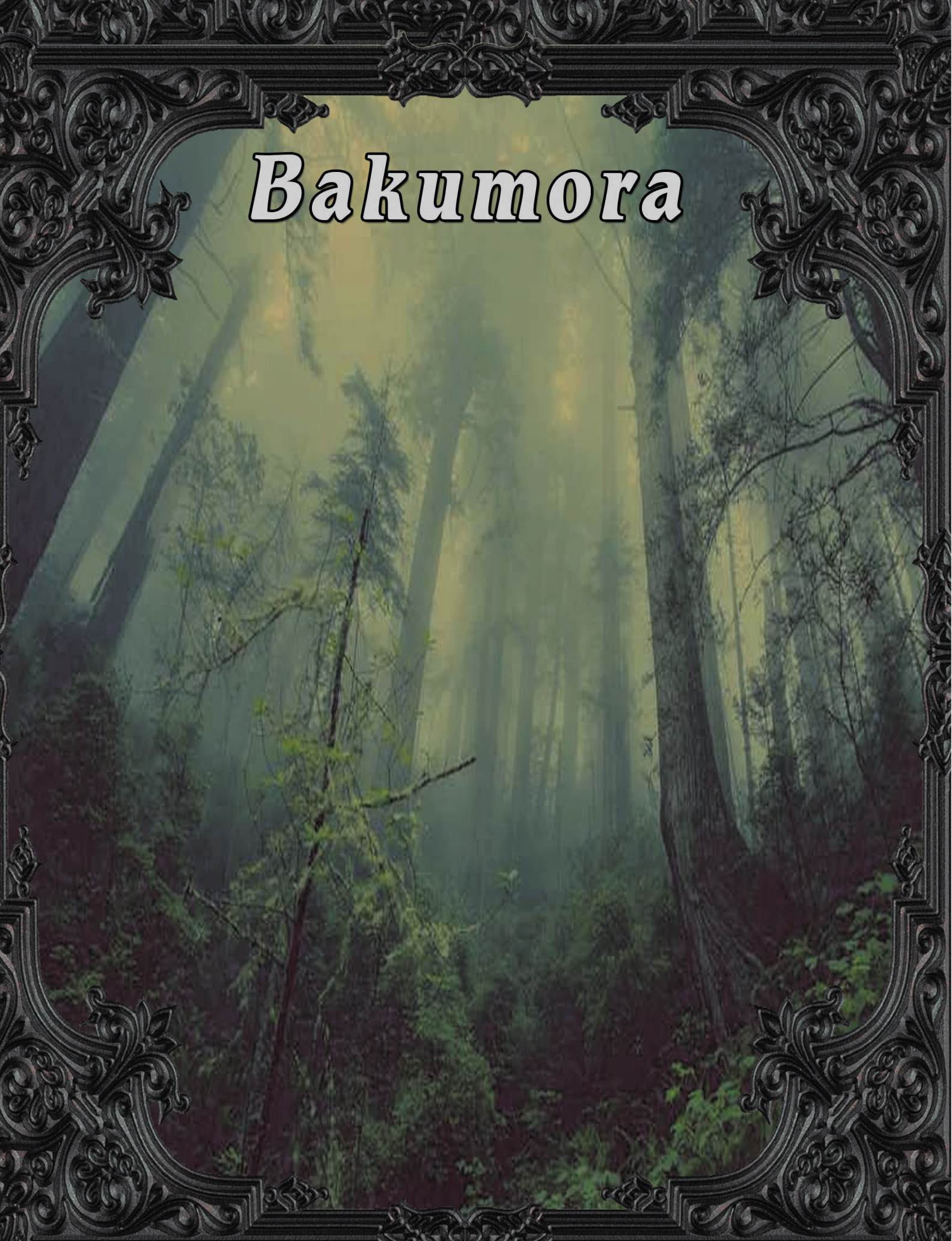
When fighting inside his lair and only when defending his bones, Torrence can invoke ambient magic to take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Torrence can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

◇ Loose bricks and other objects fall from the ceiling to hit any creature below them. All creatures in the skeleton room, take 4d8 bludgeoning damage or half if they succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw.

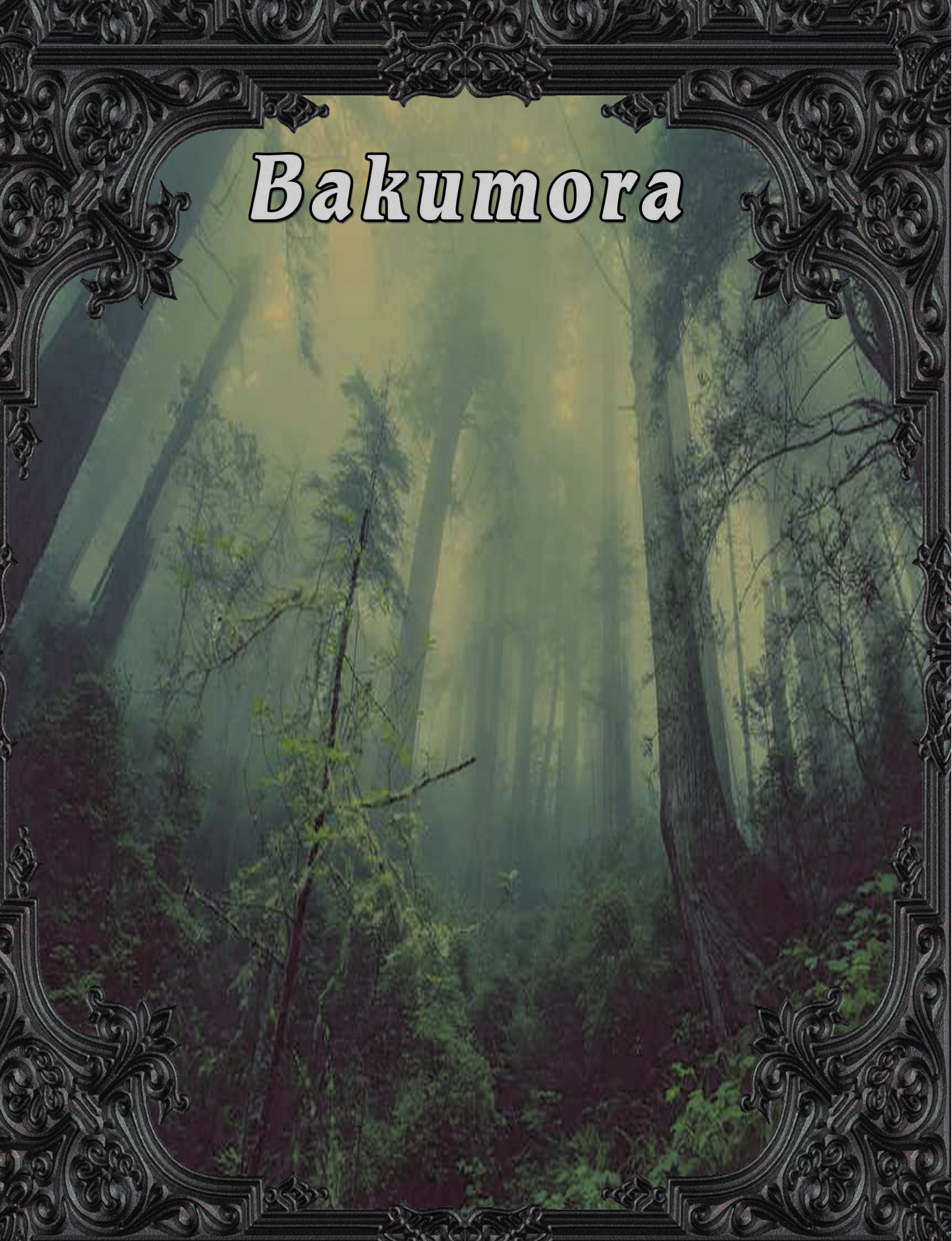
◇ Suddenly all winds in the estate open and a stream of strong and hot wind engulfs Torrence's enemies. Each creature that starts its turn in the wind takes 1d10 fire damage and must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be pushed 15 feet away from you in a direction following the line. Any creature in the line must spend 2 feet of movement for every 1 foot it moves when moving closer to the bones. The gust disperses gas or vapor, and it extinguishes candles, torches, and similar unprotected flames in the area. It causes protected flames, such as those of lanterns, to dance wildly and has a 50 percent chance to extinguish them.

◇ The whole of the castle trembles as if from an earthquake. A cloud of dust forms to obscure vision. All walking creatures that are within the castle must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone. The cloud of dust spreads around corners, and its area is heavily obscured. It lasts for the duration or until a wind of moderate or greater speed (at least 10 miles per hour) disperses it.

Torrence can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and he can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.



Bakumora



Bakumora



Bakumora is the result of one man's insanity and dedication to his god. Fotari was once the religious leader of the Kayebo village, but that changed one day when blue fire tore through the land and through the druid himself, changing his worship of Ubtao into something worse, the worship of Ifalakuntho, a madened aspect of the formerly benign (if harsh) Ubtao. Fotari went on a pilgrimage of sorts, taking a year away from everything, but when he came back, he led a group to the Temple of Omi Keyoka and drove out the yuan-ti, slaying them all. He further awakened the dracotaur from their slumber. But then his madness turned and he united the dracotaur and lizardfolk for a brief time, leading them into the Kayebo Village and demanding tribute for Ifalakuntho. When they refused he slaughtered them all, and the Mists claimed them all.

Adventures in Bakumora should focus on either curbing Fotari's madness, as he will inevitably return to try his luck again with the Kayebo Village. To that end, it's either possible to conquer the lizardfolk and dracotaurs and then defeat him, or perhaps to unite all the clans. Perhaps the adventurers arrive here, and see the gigantic dinosaurs walking the land, and run for cover, only to end in a confrontation between villages and lizardfolk. Perhaps they're sent by those concerned about the disappearance of a whole valley in Chult, who want it investigated, and restored if possible. Or perhaps they're sent by true believers of Ubtao or Ifalakuntho who think that the true path and answers can be found here.

"There's nothing quite as frightening as someone who knows they are right." ~ Michael Faraday



Culture Level:	Stone Age
Climate & Terrain:	Warm, jungle and marsh
Year Formed:	741
Population:	1200
Races (%):	Humans 45%, Lizardfolk 40%, Dracotaur 10%, Other 5%
Languages:	Chultan, Common
Religions:	Ubtao, Esowdow
Government:	Tribalism (Clans)
Ruler(s):	No political ruler
Darklord(s):	Fotari
Nationality:	Chultan
Analog:	Chult, sub-continental Africa

Local Fauna:

Within the jungles of Bakumora, life flourishes. There are animals everywhere with birds flying overhead and a number of mammals stalking the jungle itself. The unconditional kings of the jungle, at least among the animals however, are the dinosaurs that can be found here. While the vast majority of these are peaceful herbivores, the lizardfolk have tamed a few allosauruses for use as mounts. They even whisper that a single albino Tyrannosaurus Rex makes its home in the valley, though none can claim to have seen it and lived. Within the marshy parts to the east, the unlucky explorer will find a number of venomous snakes, reptiles, and insects. For the most part though, normal animals have fled the area.

Local Flora:

Plants within Bakumora grow as ferociously as they did back in Chult, except where they are exposed to magic. When exposed to magic, the plants quickly wither and die as if they aged several years in a single second. Most noticeable of all are the kapok trees that dominate the jungle and marsh. They stand upwards of 240 feet meters tall and while the green canopy above is quite thick, a lot of sunlight still gets through, allowing for smaller bushes and the like to survive. As with animals, food is plentiful here with a minimal amount of effort, though one has to be careful with not running afoul of carnivorous plants like the assassin wine.

Native Horrors

Within Bakumora, there are a number of yuan-ti, mainly around the marsh and specifically the Temple of Omi Keyoka which they have taken over from the previous dracotaur owners. The dracotaurs have settled into a small settlement on the outskirts of the marsh. Elsewhere in the domain, humans battle with lizardfolk for supremacy with the lizardfolk engaging

Bakumora

in frequent raids on the human villages. The single most powerful creatures within Bakumora, apart from the darklord Fotari, are the albino T-Rex of the jungle and the frogemoth of the marsh. Of the two, the frogemoth is probably the easier one to defeat because of how stupid it is. The T-Rex on the other hand is far smarter than the rest of its kind and has human levels of intelligence, allowing it to plan ahead, rather than simply relying on hunger and rage. It is also at least half again as large as a normal T-Rex and only hunts at night, preferring to stay out of sight during the day due to its albinism.

Terrain type

Bakumora is one unending flat jungle and marsh, surrounded by mountains shrouded in Mists. These mountains are impossible to scale as once one gets to the Mists near the tops, the intrepid climber loses all sense of direction and vertigo sets in, causing many of them to drop to their deaths. Those few that continue into the Mists are never seen again. The only place that is reachable within the mountains is Votaran, an old fortress lashed by constant storms.

Important Landmarks

Shrine of the World Serpent

Dedicated to an unknown god, this Shrine predates the arrival of humanoids in Chult and the valley of Bakumora by at least 40,000 years. A dozen broken statues stand here, depicting serpentine creatures with tails instead of legs, but humans from the waist to neck, but none of them have heads still. Who the World Serpent was, or is, is unknown to anyone in Bakumora, but both lizardfolk and dracotaurs see the area as sacred.

Temple of Omi Keyoka

The Temple of Omi Keyoka was originally built by yuan-ti who had dedicated it to their creator, a serpent god. Before the arrival of Fotari, these yuan-ti were destroyed by a group of intrepid adventurers, and the temple has been left to languish since. It is now occupied by Fotari who uses the inner sanctum as his personal retreat. The temple itself is oddly built for yuan-ti and features none of the usual affectations that they use, such as rounded tunnels, openings instead of doors, and poles instead of stairs. This seems to suggest that they had humanoid servants — likely the ancestors of the people who now live in Kayebo village — and that they were not afraid of being attacked. Scars from their final battle with the adventurers mar the walls everywhere.

Votaran

Votaran is no longer a fortress but a ruin. It has been reduced almost completely to rubble by the raging storm that is Ifalakuntho. The only building left standing here is a single guard tower, that has somehow managed to resist the raging tempest..

Towns and villages:

Kayebo Village

This human village is home to some 500 people. Onyeka Kayebo leads the village here, and she had, until recently, managed to maintain a truce with the lizardfolk of Bakumora. Now though, they're openly warring against each other, and she worries that the wooden palisades won't be enough to protect the wooden huts of the villagers, should the lizardfolk attack in force. Many of the huts here stand empty, a result of Fotari's murderous rampage on the night when Bakumora was dragged into the Mists.

Neighboring domain(s):

None

Fun Fact:

The people who live in Chult where Bakumora once belonged have a tale about the valley that vanished. They believe that it was eaten by the World Serpent Dendar and that the empty hollow where it once stood serves as an entrance to her lair in the planes beyond. Going here is a death sentence, except for those with no fear — they say that they may gain a boon from Dendar if they can entertain her for a day.



Fotari

"The Storm rages. It is powerful.

But it must be maintained.

Yes, the Storm needs energy.

Your soul isn't given in vain. You are being given to a higher purpose.

It waits for you. It will feed on you and it will save us.

We thank you." ~ Fotari

Fotari is a tall human male, appearing to be in his mid forties. His skin is lined with deep scars forming intricate patterns, while his left hand is nothing but bone, wreathed in green flames. Faces randomly form in the flames, sometimes appearing to silently scream, while other times whimpering and begging for mercy. His eyes glow bright white, and his gaze seems to take in more than the world around him.

Fotari speaks to himself as much as he does to others. He is dedicated to his god Ifalakuntho, and will often mention his deity as he raves.

Background: Fotari was the spiritual leader of Clan Kayebo, a clan of humans that dwelt deep in the jungles of Chult. The druid communed with his god, Ubtao, the most powerful of the nature spirits of the jungles of Bakumora, fighting against the machinations of the yuan-ti that made their serpentine lair nestled in the foothills of the mountains, deep within the temple of an ancient snake god. The temple was surrounded by several tribes of lizardfolk that worshipped the yuan ti and their cruel gods.

Fotari was happy with his life. His service in protecting his people gave him a great sense of satisfaction, and the young people who left his tribe to see the world always returned after a few years, ready to marry and raise a family. Those who returned often had powerful abilities and were accompanied by friends that aided in the fight against the snake people. Then the blue fire came.. and everything fell apart. The blue fire swept through Chult changing everything; the island became a peninsula, magic twisted in upon itself and broke, only to be reforged in strange ways. Worst of all, Ubtao changed. The peaceful nature spirit rejected its name of Ubtao and became Ifalakuntho. Ifalakuntho was a spirit of storms and anger. Worse, Ifalakuntho demanded souls to grow in power and

sustain their new body. Fotari had worshipped Ubtao for decades, and the two had become like one entity living in two bodies. When the blue fire ripped through Ubtao, it tore into Fotari as well. Fotari's hand burnt with a green flame that ate at his flesh, burning down to the bone. His skeletal hand continued to burn, even with no fuel to fan the flames. Scars magically appeared, carving intricate designs into his flesh. As his eyes took on the appearance of glowing white orbs, Fotari disappeared into the jungle. He returned a year later, demanding that Clan Kayebo follow him into the jungle. Fotari had cleansed the temple of the yuan-ti and awakened its true masters, centaur-like creatures he called dracotaurs. The happy druid had been replaced by a new man, full of rage, that burnt like the flames of his hand. Demanding the villagers' service, rather than asking, the Fotari that the clan knew had died on the day of blue flame. When the village elders refused, Fotari slaughtered them and gathered his students. The dracotaurs and lizardfolk raided the clan the next day. They bound their screaming captives, dragging them to the yuan-ti temple. They were never seen again, but rumors were whispered that they were sacrifices to Fotari and his twisted god. The clan gathered what they needed and left, attempting to flee Bakumora and settle somewhere else, but found the valley surrounded by a thick wall of mist. The clan returned to their village and prepared to fight for their survival.

Current Sketch: Fotari stays in the Temple of the Oni Ketoka, leading his students and lizardfolk in rituals to Ifalakuntho. Any intelligent creature that is slain in Bakumora has its soul drawn into the vortex of the storm spirit, bolstering its body for a short while. Fotari is convinced that returning Ifalakuntho to Ubtao is the only way he can escape from Bakumora. Fotari thinks that if he can feed Ifalakuntho enough souls, the nature spirit will be able to overpower the dark powers and return Bakumora to Faerun.

Darklord's Tactics: Fotari keeps his distance at the start of combat. He commands his lizardfolk and dracotaurs to engage his foes in melee while he supports them with spells. He casts *foresight* on himself when combat begins. When his spells run low, Fotari will catch as many of his foes as he can in a *fire storm*, before taking the form of a triceratops and goring whatever foes remain before him.

Borders: When Fotari closes the borders to Bakumora, any creature that enters the mists is lost in its swirling embrace and gains one level of exhaustion. The mists clear one turn later and the creature finds itself at a random location inside Bakumora.

Fotari



Fotari the druid

Fotari

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (hide armor, shield)

Hit Points 132 (24d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +9

Skills Insight +9, Medicine +9, Nature +5, Perception +9, Survival +13

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses passive Perception 19

Languages Common, Druidic, Primordial

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Spellcasting. Fotari is an 18th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft, produce flame, shillelagh*
1st level (4 slots): *entangle, longstrider, speak with animals, thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *animal messenger, barkskin*
3rd level (3 slots): *conjure animals, meld into stone, water breathing*
4th level (3 slots): *dominate beast, locate creature, stone-skin, wall of fire*
5th level (3 slots): *commune with nature, mass cure wounds, tree stride*
6th level (1 slot): *heal, heroes' feast, sunbeam*
7th level (1 slot): *fire storm*
8th level (1 slot): *animal shapes*
9th level (1 slot): *foresight*

Land's Stride. Moving through difficult terrain costs Fotari no extra movement. He can also pass through plants without being slowed by them and without taking damage from them if they have thorns, spines, or a similar hazard (including magical plants and terrain). In addition, Fotari is immune to the effects of plants that are magically created or manipulated to impede movement, such as those created by the *entangle* spell.

Nature's Ward. Fotari can't be charmed or frightened by elementals or fey, and he is immune to disease.

Nature's Camouflage. Fotari has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in any natural terrain.

Actions

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

Change Shape (2/Day). Fotari magically polymorphs into a beast or elemental with a challenge rating of 6 or less, and can remain in this form for up to 9 hours. He can choose whether his equipment falls to the ground, melds with his new form, or is worn by the new form. Fotari reverts to his true form if he dies or falls unconscious. He can revert to his true form using a bonus action on his turn. While in a new form, Fotari retains his game statistics and ability to speak, but his AC, movement modes, Strength, and Dexterity are replaced by those of the new form, and he gains any special senses, proficiencies, traits, actions, and reactions (except class features, legendary actions, and lair actions) that the new form has but that he lacks. He can cast his spells with verbal or somatic components in his new form. The new form's attacks count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistances and immunity to nonmagical attacks.



Darani



Darani



The domain of Magroth the Mad, or Emperor Magroth, was once the capital of the Empire of Nerath, before it fell from grace, following the rule of the Mad Emperor. Magroth was obsessed with control and with conquering the world, and an exceptionally powerful spellcaster, one that many thought immortal. Unfortunately as powerful as he was, he was equally insane, and inflicted many atrocities on his enemies (entombing prisoners of war alive, torture, and the torching of villages), as well as on his own populace. The final straw came when a traitor was found and Magroth chose for the punishment for the traitorous action to be the death of at least one person per family in Darani. At this point in time, Krondor, one of the knight-commanders of the Imperial Guard, finally had enough and stabbed his Emperor in the neck, before he was killed, by his own brother — the man who became the Death Knight, Kalaban.

Darani was stuck in the Mists for centuries until a priestess of Orcus approached Magroth and offered him a way out. Three tasks that all had to be carried out within a year and a day. If he succeeded, he would be free. Magroth agreed and set out to complete the tasks. Fortunately for the rest of the world, he failed, and was killed once more by the revenant of Krondor, a man who had risen as a champion of the Raven Queen to lay the lich to rest once more.

Magroth was returned to Darani at that point, but how or why is unknown but when they returned both he and Kalaban had changed. Magroth, for centuries, had a dagger stuck in his neck, and that was now stuck in his heart, and Kalaban had been able to speak and had an unfailingly loyal personality, although one with a sarcastic wit. Now, he never speaks. Some say that the real Kalaban was left behind outside the Mists, once more a man of his own free will, though still a death knight, perhaps to atone for his deeds or perhaps to fall once more and find himself in his own domain?

Adventures in Darani should focus upon the struggle that Magroth faces — he wants to escape, but he cannot. Only through working with the forces of Orcus is this possible, but Orcus has not yet given up on such a powerful pawn, and still wants to retrieve him. Perhaps the heroes are tricked into helping with this task by a disguised priest or priestess of the Lord of the Undead into completing the ritual and killing the last of the Nerathi royal bloodline on the altar at Andok Sur? Perhaps, and more likely, they're there to attempt to rescue that person, only to come to the attention of

Magroth himself — after all, Magroth is insane, not stupid, and would try everything in his power to make the prophecy come true, so that he may escape.

"No great mind has ever existed without a touch of madness." ~ Aristotle

Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, urban
Year Formed:	402 BC
Population:	30,000
Races (%):	Undead 100%
Languages:	Balok, Luktar, Vaasi, Sithican, Forfarian, Thaani
Religions:	Orcus, Baphomet, Tharizdun, other demon lords
Government:	Autocracy
Ruler(s):	Magroth the Mad
Darklord(s):	Magroth the Mad
Nationality:	Darani
Analog:	The city of Lothric from Dark Souls

Local Fauna:

The animals found within Darani are all undead, but they still behave as they would have when they were alive. The sheep in the Old Hills still try to graze, while cats still stalk undead mice within the city, and skeleton dogs bark silently at passersby. None of them have any real impact on the lands around them, as they do not need anything, but their bodies still act out their old lives in a silent and macabre theater of death.

Local Flora:

Within the capital, there is no plant life, but on the outskirts of the capital, a tiny bit of grass that clings to life. It is yellow and withered and falls apart at the slightest touch, but it is still alive, if only barely. Any plants larger than strands of grass have died out long ago.

Native Horrors

Darani is filled with undead creatures. Zombies, and skeletons make up the vast majority of these, though not all of them were once humanoid — the zombie spiders of the goblin tribes of the Old Hills are particularly vile to see, though the goblins themselves, even though they're alive, aren't much better. They serve as the source of food for Magroth, though he denies such sustenance to the spawn of Sareth Castle. They're deathly afraid of him, for good reason, but he shepherds them like a farmer would a flock of way-

Darani

ward, chaos-causing, sheep. Within the Imperial Palace, one can find the remnants of the Imperial Guard that once guarded Emperor Magroth, with their spirits forever tied to their armor and reanimated as helmed horrors, and led by the Imperial Guard knight-commander Kalaban, who himself is now a death knight. Further protection for the Emperor is provided by the stoneguard, a group of stone golems that Magroth himself has created. Secure in their utter and unflinching loyalty, they're trusted even above Kalaban. Worst of all is naturally Magroth himself, a lich who has also gained the powers of a vampire after he fought and defeated the vampire Sareth and gained the powers of that creature. Surprisingly, there is a single living creature within Darani, a fiendish adult green dragon that makes its home underneath the eastern part of the capital itself.

Terrain type

The majority of Darani is taken up by the urban sprawl of the capital that shares the name. The remainder of the domain consists of a series of hills that surround the capital. They were once thriving and alive, but no more. The hills north of Darani are known as the Old Hills, and stand far taller than the rest of the hills, almost on the cusp of being mountains. A small lake, filled with skeletal fish, once functioned as the center for the monsters who made their home here.

Important Landmarks

Andok Sur

Andok Sur, or the Necropolis of Orcus once stood separate of Darani, but became a part of it at some point, though none of the inhabitants are clear on when that happened or how, though it seems tied to the point where the dagger in Magroth's neck moved to his heart. Again, none are sure how that happened. What is certain is that Andok Sur hides out of sight under the Old Hills, almost as if it's on a different plane within the plane. Access is only possible with the use of a Necropolis Stone, an obsidian ritual key created by the faithful of Orcus. Though only one is known in Darani and is in the possession of Magroth, making a new one would not be difficult for a follower of Orcus, if they can get hold of the obsidian. The necropolis consists of thousands of tombs and mausoleums that line cobbled streets, like a macabre city, while statues, gargoyles, and holy symbols of Orcus can be seen in the funerary gardens everywhere. Many of the buildings and walls have toppled following a great earthquake at some point in the past, and the necropolis is filled with dormant undead warriors who all bear signs of having been buried alive. Their insignia varies and they were clearly not part of the same armies, lending credence to the belief that the armies of Nerath

entombed the prisoners of war that they took, leaving them to die within their gravesites. An altar, dedicated to Orcus, stands at the center of the necropolis and an inscription reads "When the last of Nerath's kings and queens dies on this altar, the dead will roam free". Presumably, this is a way to awaken the undead warriors, though who the ruling family has become in the centuries since the fall of Nerath is unknown.

Avenue of Glory

The Avenue of Glory was once an underground trade route that connected the old empire of Nerath and the Old Hills. How it ended up in Darani is, like Andok Sur, a mystery, but seems tied to when Magroth came back from his year's exile. Now it connects the capital of Darani with the Old Hills instead, though finding one's way through the labyrinthine corridors is nearly impossible, and if a traveler gets lost here, they inevitably make their way to the Temple of the Horned King. Statues of angels (or possibly heroes) and demons line the entrance for the Avenue of Glory in the Old Hills, with weapons drawn as if they're ready to attack each other. Half the statues on each side are missing at least one limb, though it's not clear if the destruction is natural or if someone has been doing it on purpose. The most likely suspects would be the undead cultists of Baphomet or Tharizdun who wage a private holy war here, but they both seem to avoid doing damage to the statues. Unlike the undead elsewhere, they have not retained their intelligence, but attack anyone who doesn't wear a symbol dedicated to their god.

Imperial Palace

The Imperial Palace still stands strong in spite of the centuries in which it has been stuck in the Mists. The building sits at the center of the capital and utterly dwarfs any other building there. On the outside, the building is white marble, gleaming in the sun, though there are no windows and only two entrances into the palace. The day gate, which is used by Magroth's undead and construct servants, and the doors that lead onto the balcony that overlooks the plaza in front of the palace. From here, Magroth would pronounce his edicts and it was here that Magroth originally found his end at the hands of Krondor, Kalaban's brother and fellow Imperial Guard knight-commander. Inside the palace everything is dark. It used to be lit by torches and lanterns, but now, everyone here has no need of light to see, so it is left dark. Inside the halls, the undead servants of Magroth roam freely, tending to his every mad whim, while elaborate constructs stand silent guard, ready to strike out at any moment at an intruder.

Darani

Kalton Manor

Kalton Manor, like so many other places here, was not originally part of the domain of Darani, but following Magroth's return, it appeared on the southern border of the domain. It is a ruined manor, the holdover of some minor lord from back when the Empire of Nerath was still in its infancy. It was only ever half-built, having been intended to be a stronghold on the borders of the empire. But the empire expanded much faster than anticipated and left the Manor behind. While it stood for centuries, the half-finished keep slowly fell into ruin as the noble Kalton family tried to stave off the inevitable. Eventually, the family died out, and the keep was left to its own devices. Rumor has it that the Kaltons were far richer than they led people to believe, and a fortune in gold and magic can be found in secret chambers beneath the ruins. If so, they're well-warded as even Magroth's minions have failed to find anything.

Old Hills

The Old Hills lie north of the capital and were once considered dangerous territory due to the tribes of minotaurs, gnolls, and giants that lived here. Now the minotaurs and giants fight an unending war between themselves, as they rise anew each morning after having killed each other the past day. The gnolls vanished following Darani being dragged into the Mists, and it is generally believed that they were drawn into Yeenoghu's realm in the Abyss instead, to serve their demonic lord.

Sareth Castle

Sareth Castle once belonged to the Vampire Lord Sareth, and it is still inhabited by some of his vampire spawn. Sareth was killed by Magroth during his year outside of the domain and Magroth took some of his powers for himself. Now the castle lies east of the capital and Magroth uses Sareth's coffin as a place to hide his phylactery, secure in the knowledge that none of the spawn can open the coffin. More importantly, Magroth seems to have "inherited" the control over the spawn that the vampire lord would normally have exerted, and he has kept them here since. The spawn here are ravenous and attack any living being without thought — they are starving, though not dying, due to the lack of living creatures in Darani.

Temple of the Horned King

The Temple of the Horned King lies somewhere within the Avenue of Glory, though only the minotaurs that call the Old Hills home know exactly where it is. The temple and the tunnels that lead to it are decorated with many carvings of the Prince of Beasts. Looking at them leaves most living beings with stabbing headaches and deep feelings of nausea. At the center of the Temple lies a single stone altar, with an enormous horn protruding from each corner of the stone table. It is slick with old dried blood, where the minotaurs once sacrificed the living to their god.

Towns and villages:

Darani (Capital)

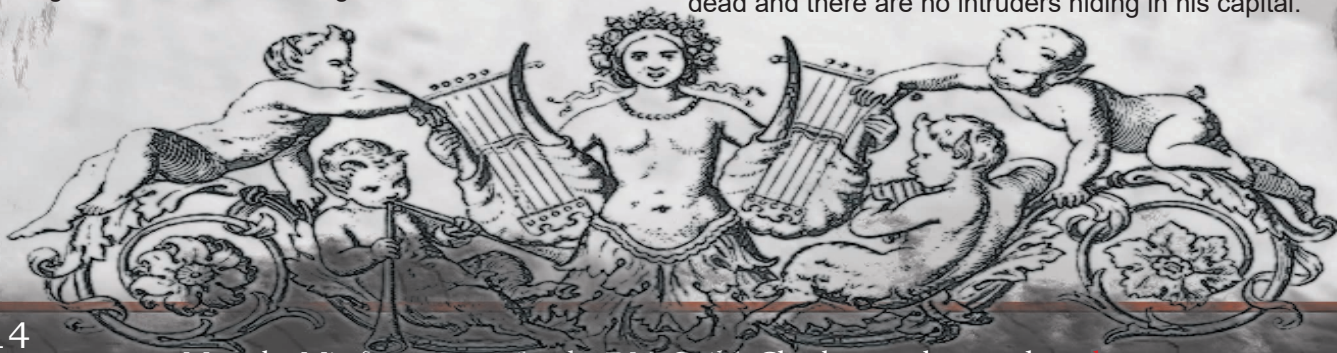
Darani, the capital of the domain and once the capital of the Empire of Nerath. 50,000 people used to live here. Now it's a ghost town. When the city was drawn into the Mists, many of the people rose as undead, though many have decided to end their existence in the centuries since, or met their final death at the hands of more powerful undead. The streets are cobbled, and are still of great quality, as Magroth demands that a capital worthy of him must be kept clean and maintained. The buildings are all tall, with most carved in black stone, and filled with leery-eyed gargoyles and columns. A single great plaza lies in front of the Imperial Palace at the center of Darani, where the white walls of the palace stand out the most from the buildings around it. Life goes on in Darani, as much as it can, following the deaths of all its inhabitants and the dragging into the Mists, with many of the undead creatures having retained their intelligence. Guards still drill and commoners still go about their business, maintaining some semblance of life.

Neighboring domain(s):

None

Fun Fact:

Once in a while, Magroth commands all the undead in Darani to fight each other. He knows that any undead destroyed will rise again, and his only reason for this is simple enjoyment. He is desperately trying to feel as if he still commands armies to send to slaughter. It also helps to ensure that all of his subjects are still undead and there are no intruders hiding in his capital.



Magroth the Mad

"A creature with all the strengths of nosferatu and lich.

Such a thing haunts my waking thoughts and turns my dreams into nightmares.

Even if he has the weaknesses of both, it is little consideration."

~ Rudolph van Richten

Magroth the Mad appears as an ancient mummified humanoid, with cracked skin and glowing red pinpoints for eyes. Wisps of long hair and beard still cling to bits of rotten flesh. Magroth wears dark purple robes made of the finest silk, and the crown of Nerath adorns his head. In his hands, he carries an ornate staff, brimming with magical power. Anyone that gets too close to Magroth will notice his canines are far too long. Almost like a wolf or a vampire.

Background: Magroth ruled the empire of Nerath for nearly 500 years. In his youth, he had made a pact with Orcus, demon lord of undeath to exchange sacrifices for magical power and longevity. Eventually, Magroth became a lich. He was a cruel and pitiless tyrant, but his magical and military prowess decimated every usurper that rose against him. Magroth ruled through terror and intimidation. This would spell his doom.

After a most violent and large rebellion, Magroth ruled that every family in Darani, the capital of his empire, would give him their oldest child for sacrifice. As Magroth began the ritual, an assassin of the Raven Queen, Krondor, attacked.

Krondor was slain by one of Magroth's elite guards, Kalaban, but it was too late. The ritual was interrupted and mystical energy tore and raged across the capital. Every citizen of Darani was slain and raised as undead. As Magroth battled to control the dark energies he had unleashed, the mists closed around Darani.

Magroth found himself in the Shadowfell, ruling a domain of the undead. For 500 years he ruled, but it was an empty rule. Nothing could challenge the lich, but his empire had been reduced to a single pathetic province. Even worse, everyone in Darani was undead. They obeyed his every command with soulless efficiency, but were listless and Magroth's fearsome reputation meant nothing to them. After half a millenia, Orcus offered Magroth a reprieve. If the lich could accomplish a series of trials, Orcus would free him

from the grasp of Darani. Magroth took his most loyal servant, Kalaban, and left for the material plane. The first task involved killing the vampire lord Serath. For a being as powerful as Magroth, this was easily accomplished. Once the vampire was eradicated, Magroth realized that the amulet the vampire wore was drenched with magical power. Magroth took the amulet and donned it without hesitation. He was granted vampire abilities in addition to his formidable lich powers, but also cursed with their weaknesses. Worse, the amulet constantly attempted to dominate the lich lord. A distraction even at the best of times.

Current Sketch: The final trial is an ancient ritual that will animate a forgotten necropolis and dedicate them to Orcus. Magroth hopes to pervert the last trial and use the power of the ritual to tear himself free from Orcus. It's a daring plan, as the demon lord of undeath is powerful and wary, but Magroth knows it's the only way he can escape both the dark powers of the mists and Orcus. In order to corrupt the ritual, Magroth will have to sacrifice Fallon. It is a price that he is more than willing to pay.

Darklord's Tactics: Magroth is a terrifying opponent. He melds the charm and physical abilities of a vampire with the arcane mastery of a lich. Magroth has minions, but no friends. Sacrificing those around him to obtain his goals means little to the ancient lich. Inside Darani, Magroth is nearly unstoppable and has an army of guards and clerics to aid him. Magroth would think nothing of having his guards hold an attacker still and then casting a *fireball* on all of them.

Borders: The borders of Darani are always closed. Any creature that walks into the mists surrounding the domain are torn to shreds by hordes of spectral undead. These undead cannot be turned and they are immune to damage.



Magroth the Mad

Magroth the Mad

Magroth the Mad

Medium undead (shapechanger), lawful evil

Armor Class 22 (natural armor, robe of the archmagi)

Hit Points 212 (25d8 + 100)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 14 (+2) **DEX** 17 (+3) **CON** 18 (+4) **INT** 21 (+5) **WIS** 8 (-1) **CHA** 17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +11, Con +12, Int +13, Wis +7, Cha +11

Skills Arcana +21, History +13, Insight +7, Perception +7, Stealth +11

Damage Resistances cold, lightning, necrotic

Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Dwarvish, Elvish, Giant, Infernal

Challenge 25 (75,000 XP)

Shapechanger. If Magroth isn't in sunlight or running water, he can use his action to polymorph into a Medium cloud of mist, or back into his true form. While in mist form, Magroth can't take any actions, speak, or manipulate objects; he is weightless, has a flying speed of 20 feet, can hover, and can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. In addition, if air can pass through a space, the mist can do so without squeezing, and it can't pass through water. He has advantage on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saving throws, and he is immune to all nonmagical damage, except the damage he takes from sunlight.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Magroth fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Misty Escape. When Magroth drops to 0 hit points outside his resting place, he transforms into a cloud of mist (as in the Shapechanger trait) instead of falling unconscious, provided that he isn't in sunlight or running water. If he can't transform, he is destroyed. While he has 0 hit points in mist form, he can't revert to his vampire form, and he must reach his resting place within 2 hours or be destroyed. Once in his resting place, he reverts to his vampire form. He is then paralyzed until he regains at least 1 hit point. After spending 1 hour in his resting place with 0 hit points, he regains 1 hit point.

Regeneration. Magroth regains 20 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If he takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of Magroth's next turn.

Vampire Weaknesses. Magroth has the following flaws:

Harmed by Running Water. Magroth takes 20 acid damage if he ends his turn in running water.

Stake to the Heart. If a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into Magroth's heart while he is incapacitated in his resting place, he is paralyzed until the stake is removed.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. Magroth takes 20 radiant damage when he starts his turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, he has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Spellcasting. Magroth is a 20th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 25, +17 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, mage hand, prestidigitation, ray of frost*

1st level (4 slots): *burning hands, detect magic, magic missile, shield, thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, Melf's acid arrow, mirror image, scorching ray*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead, counterspell, dispel magic, fireball, haste, magic circle*

4th level (3 slots): *blight, dimension door*

5th level (3 slots): *cloudkill, teleportation circle*

6th level (1 slot): *disintegrate, globe of invulnerability, chain lightning*

7th level (1 slot): *finger of death*

8th level (1 slot): *dominate monster, power word: stun*

9th level (1 slot): *power word: kill*

Turn Resistance. Magroth has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

Rejuvenation. Magroth is a most peculiar undead with a dual nature. As a vampire-lich, he has a phylactery, and if his body is destroyed, he gains a new body in 1d10 days, regaining all its hit points and becoming active again. The new body appears within 5 feet of the phylactery, which is stored amongst vampire ashes inside a coffin hidden in Sareth castle. Magroth can only be completely destroyed if his body is destroyed and his phylactery is destroyed too, or if he is successfully damaged six times by one of his direct descendants, wielding the dagger used to assassinate Magroth when he was still alive. That dagger instantly destroys the phylactery and the body of Magroth after six successful hits, turning both to fine black dust.

Fear Aura. Any creature hostile to Magroth that starts its turn within 30 feet of him must make a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw, unless Magroth is incapacitated. On a failed save, the creature is frightened until the start of its next turn. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to Magroth's Fear Aura for the next 24 hours.

Command Over Constructs. Magroth's bloodline has been enchanted eons ago with the ability to demand total obedience from any construct. The constructs are obliged to follow any verbal command from Magroth but will disregard his commands to follow the commands of a descendant, prioritizing the commands coming from the youngest descendant.

Sense Magic. Magroth senses magic within 120 feet of him at will. This trait otherwise works like the *detect magic* spell but isn't itself magical.

Magic Resistance. Magroth has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magroth the Mad

Medallion of Orcus. Magroth wears a medallion that cursed him with vampirism. That medallion belongs to Orcus and once every day, randomly, it tries to take control over the body of Magroth. Magroth must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw, rolling with advantage or lose control of his body. Magroth has never lost control of his body to the medallion and if he does, it's up to the DM to determine what happens. Magroth can try to regain control once every day at dusk by succeeding on a Charisma saving throw.

Staff of the Magi. While holding the staff, Magroth can use an action to expend some of its charges to cast one of the following spells from it, using his spell save DC and Spellcasting ability: *conjure elemental* (7 charges), *dispel magic* (3 charges), *fireball* (7th-level version, 7 charges), *flaming sphere* (2 charges), *ice storm* (4 charges), *invisibility* (2 charges), *knock* (2 charges), *lightning bolt* (7th-level version, 7 charges), *passwall* (5 charges), *plane shift** (7 charges), *telekinesis* (5 charges), *wall of fire* (4 charges), or *web* (2 charges).

Magroth can also use an action to cast one of the following spells from the staff without using any charges: *arcane lock*, *detect magic*, *enlarge/reduce*, *light*, *mage hand*, or *protection from evil and good*.

The staff has 50 Charges for the following Properties. It regains 4d6 + 2 expended charges daily at dawn. If Magroth expends the last charge, roll a d20. On a 20, the staff regains 1d12 + 1 charges.

*(cannot be used in Ravenloft)

Actions

Multiattack (Vampire Form Only). Magroth makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

Unarmed Strike (Vampire Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. Instead of dealing damage, Magroth can grapple the target (escape DC 18).

Bite (Bat or Vampire Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by Magroth, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Magroth regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain in this way and then buried in the ground rises the following night as a vampire spawn under Magroth's control.

Charm. Magroth targets one humanoid he can see within 30 ft. of him. If the target can see him, the target must succeed on a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed by Magroth. The charmed target regards Magroth as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under Magroth's control, it takes his requests or actions in the most favorable way it can, and it is a willing target for Magroth's bite attack. Each time Magroth or his companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours

or until Magroth is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect.

Paralyzing Touch. *Melee Spell Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) cold damage. The target must succeed on a DC 25 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Staff of the Magi. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage, or 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Reactions

Spell Absorption of the Magi Staff. Magroth can use his reaction when another creature casts a spell that targets only him. If he does so, the staff absorbs the magic of the spell, canceling its effect and gaining a number of charges equal to the absorbed spell's level. However, if doing so brings the staff's total number of charges above 50, the staff explodes as if its retributive strike was activated.

Legendary Actions

Magroth can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Magroth regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Move. Magroth moves up to his speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Unarmed Strike. Magroth makes one unarmed strike.

Bite (Costs 2 Actions). Magroth makes one bite attack.

Cantrip. Magroth casts a cantrip.

Paralyzing Touch (Costs 2 Actions). Magroth uses his Paralyzing Touch.

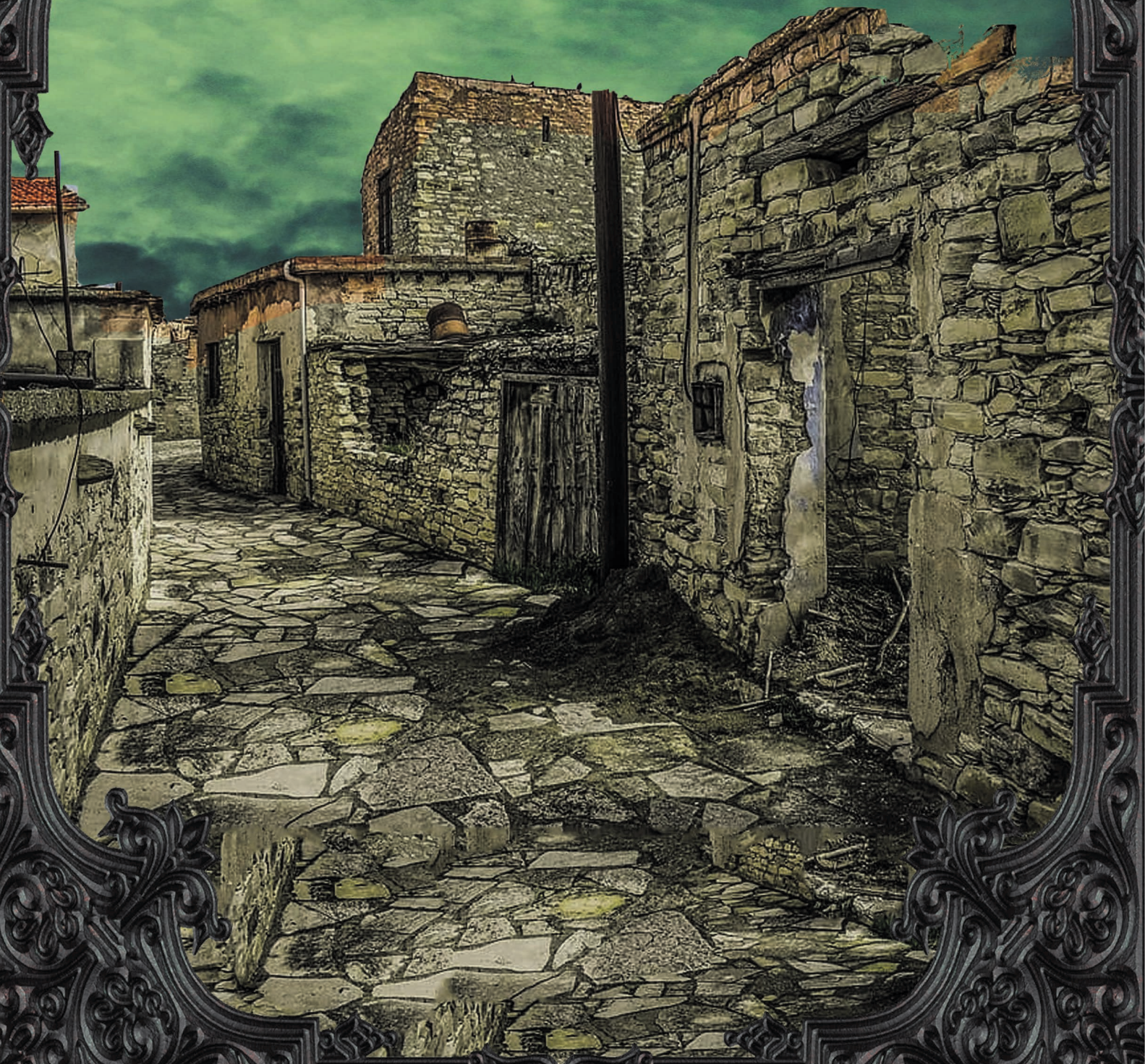
Frightening Gaze (Costs 2 Actions). Magroth fixes his gaze on one creature he can see within 10 feet of him. The target must succeed on a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or become frightened for 1 minute. The frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to Magroth's gaze for the next 24 hours.

Disrupt Life (Costs 3 Actions). Each living creature within 20 feet of Magroth must make a DC25 Constitution saving throw against this magic, taking 21 (6d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Significant Possessions

Robe of the Archmagi, Staff of the Magi, Orcus Medallion

Histaven



Histaven



The first thing that strikes anyone who enters Histaven is the feeling of being sick. The next thing that hits them is the smell of rot in the air. That is the smell of moral decay. Histaven, also known as the Withered Lands, is the story of three men, only two of whom are still alive. Years before Histaven was drawn into the Mists, it was presided over by Count Artius the Elder. The old count was a likable man, a former adventuring bard, but one that hid a snake behind his smile. He was well-liked, but unbeknownst to the people of the village, the count also arranged for any who challenged his authority or even just got in his way, to die. Usually at the hands of himself, his guards, and, on rare occasions, his former adventuring companions. One of the people he arranged to die was a man who was young and sickly, but who had an attractive wife. But the Old Count was not going to let that stand in his way. Unfortunately, after the young man's death, his mother killed himself and the father left. The Young Count had witnessed the murder but had done nothing to prevent it. And with his silent acceptance, he started down the same path himself. For he too fell for a young woman that resembled the wife that his father had coveted. And though she eventually left, his heart ever longed for her. Years passed, and as the Old Count grew older, the Young Count started to despise his father's weakness, seeing in him a vision of what was to come for himself. If it hadn't been for what happened next, the Young Count Artius might well have murdered his own father, but that was before the Rag Man appeared. A vision of vengeance, intent upon killing the Old Count, people started whispering that it was the young man that had been killed, who had come back to life to take his revenge. And Artius laughed at the misery the Rag Man spread, and enjoyed the fear on his father's face. And when the Rag Man slew his father, Artius became Count in name as well. But, if he thought it was to end there, he was mistaken. For the Rag Man turned on him, and drove his sword through his heart. Later the young Count Artius awoke, with shattered dreams of it all, with nothing making sense, but he knew that the Rag Man had been after him. As he searched for the Rag Man to stop him, he discovered that his lands were now bounded by impenetrable Mists, through which he could not escape. And as the new moon rose over the horizon, rumors started spreading that the Rag Man was coming again. Not only that, but the crops had started rotting in the fields and the food turned to ash. Such it has been for a century, in unending cycles that the locals call the Season of Rot. Roughly corresponding with the

phases of the moon, during the new moon, the Rag Man first appears, and during the waxing moon he starts killing anyone he believes is allied with Count Artius. On the night of the Full Moon the two face off against each other — most often, though by no means always, the Rag Man kills the count. Depending on who wins, the waning moon and the night of lunar eclipse are different. If the Rag Man wins, until Artius is reborn, the crops are fresh and new, the taste and smell of rot disappear and the people generally are better off. If Artius wins, the rot remains and grows worse. On the night of the lunar eclipse, whichever man lost is reborn with scattered memories of what happened, with the Count absolutely convinced that he was merely wounded rather than slain — no one knows the Rag Man's thoughts, but most suspect that he knows exactly what happened. The Histaven Mansion and the Grove of the Rag Man are both restored on that night along with their inhabitants. Adventures in Histaven should focus on this moral decay and possibly the quest for vengeance, but they're unlikely to be drawn into Histaven by anything other than pure coincidence. Simply put, the Rag Man is not interested in ending his own curse (without some convincing in the form of threats to Naeva at least), and as such the Mists normally leave the domain alone. Any adventure within Histaven could therefore focus on either the rot at the core of the village (such as the count's spy or the werewolves that hide there) or try for a redemption story for the two eternal combatants. As such a confrontation would require physical danger to an innocent in the form of the Vistani Naeva (see Ghostwalker Camp below) only the most convincing or powerful adventuring groups would be able to pull it off.



"Men are more moral than they think and far more immoral than they can imagine."

~ Sigmund Freud

Histaven

Culture Level:	Chivalric
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forest and plains
Year Formed:	604 BC
Population:	250
Races (%):	Humans 90%, half-Elves 6%, Elves 3%, Other 1%
Languages:	Common, Elven, Forfarian, Sylvan
Religions:	Belenus (the Shadow Circle), The Lawbringer (abandoned)
Government:	Aristocracy
Ruler(s):	Count Artius
Darklord(s):	Rag Man
Nationality:	Histaven
Analog:	None

Local Fauna:

The few animals within Histaven are ravenous. The constant cycle through the Season of Rot leaves its mark on the creatures. They eat well for about half the time, but the other half of the time, they're on the brink of starvation. As a result, while there are a number of deer, boars, wolves, and bears within the Night Wood, those that fare the best are carrion eaters like foxes, vultures, and crows. They're especially prevalent around the grove of the Shadow Circle when they've had one of their "rituals".

Near the village of Histaven, the only animal that one can find are chickens, pigs, and goats. The chickens are especially prized for their eggs, though they have to be grabbed quickly before they go bad. The eggs seem to be slightly more resistant to the rot that sets in within Histaven than any other type of food, and a strange local delicacy has been created that they refer to as the Rot Man's Meal — a process where the eggs are soaked in a fluid made of water, salt, lime, lye, and tea leaves for three months, after which they're buried for up to another three months. This creates an egg that is already rotten, but which is possible to eat — those not used to the dish had best cover their noses.

Local Flora:

The Night Wood dominates the Withered Lands. It is a large deciduous forest, and while the Lonely Path cuts through it (curving dangerously close to the Rag Man's Grove), it is generally avoided by the populace who stick to the plains on the eastern border of the domain, which has all been turned into farmland. The forest is filled with trees like oak, birch, and beech, but far from all of them are alive. In fact, more than a third of them are dead, and the same is true for all the do-

main's plants, except for the farmland. The farmland is slightly better off, but only just. This is because the farmers within the village of Histaven spend a lot of their time clearing the rotted crops from their fields. Most of the time, they do not bother to harvest the wheat before they need it, as it seems to keep better on the stalks. It does mean that there's a lot of food wasted in this way, but they believe that it's better than to leave it to rot in a pile in a barn.

Native Horrors

Werewolves have infiltrated the domain of Histaven, and are most common among the druids of the Shadow Circle, though at least one has infiltrated the village itself. Corrupted dryads are also present in the Night Wood, though one of the dryads has been corrupted far more than the rest. She is Lady Ghostfire, and while she resembles a dryad, she has become one of the undead — she resembles a lich, but has no spellcasting powers, though she needs a phylactery. Experts such as van Richten would label her a wight, but an incredibly powerful and intelligent one, and one that is difficult to kill as she is tied to her phylactery — the tree that she was bound to as a dryad in life.

Terrain type

Histaven is flat, with barely even a hillock to its name. 80% of it is covered in the Night Wood, with only the 20% or so in the northeastern part of the domain claimed by the village and the farmland. Surrounding the domain are impenetrable mists that the locals avoid at all costs, believing them to be haunted by the Rag Man.



Histaven

Important Landmarks

Ghostwalker Camp

The Ghostwalkers are a tribe of Vistani that are stuck in Histaven. Here they have set their wagons in a protective circle, setting it up as a defensive wall against the world around them. While they still — cautiously — welcome outsiders they make certain to check them thoroughly first as they do not want the attention of the Rag Man to come to their camp. One of their number, a red-headed half-elf girl named Naeva, resembles the long-lost love of the Rag Man and she has a strange draw on Count Artius as well. She is unaware of this connection and chafes under the direction of her father who has ordered that she is not allowed to leave camp. While the Vistani would greatly like to leave Histaven, they've been unable to do so, though their raunie leader is unsure why this is the case. What they have discovered is that while the villagers of Histaven are mysteriously replaced by the Mists, the Vistani are not so lucky, and over time their numbers have dwindled, adding further fuel to their paranoia and seclusion from the rest of the domain.

Grove of the Shadow Circle

The Grove of the Shadow Circle is the largest clearing in the Night Wood, at around 100 in diameter. Six ancient trees, each connected to one of the corrupted dryads that guide the Shadow Circle, stand around a natural dais, where a great stone altar has been placed. The place reeks with blood and decay from the hundreds of victims that the Shadow Circle has sacrificed to the glory of Belenus.

The Shadow Druids, as the Circle names itself, doesn't just consist of druids. Instead, it consists of anyone who has a tie to the forest, druids, rangers, woodsmen, dryads, and lycanthropes. They all believe that they have been selected by the god Belenus as his chosen and that Histaven is their purgatory. Only by showing their worthiness through sacrifices will he free them.

While they would happily sacrifice everyone within the domain to their god, they realize that they're heavily outnumbered, so even while they fill the villagers of Histaven with terror, they are careful to only strike when they can be certain of victory. Even so, at every full moon, they grab someone and initiate a great hunt throughout the Night Wood. There is no reprieve for the poor victim, for even if they somehow survive the night, the Shadow Druids merely hunt them down later and then sacrifice them on the altar of Belenus.

Histaven Manor

Histaven Manor is the only building in Histaven that appears to be in good repair, but it has seen some hard times, courtesy of the unceasing conflict between Count Artius and the Rag Man. Lying half a mile east of Histaven village, it is easily recognizable as it is much larger than any of the other buildings in the domain, with a dozen rooms showing the trophies of a long adventuring career — courtesy of Count Artius' father. Two dozen soldiers patrol the manor, and they are not friendly. They will stop anyone about 50 feet short of the mansion's outer walls and will shoot first and ask questions later if anyone breaches that perimeter without first checking in with them.

These poor soldiers are replaced in the Season of Rot, as they are slaughtered by the Rag Man just before he confronts Count Artius — no matter how much they prepare or how well trained they are, the Rag Man and the Count are destined to confront each other. Any damage done to the manor during their showdowns is restored through the power of the Mists (if burned down or the like) or through the workforce of Count Artius' men. This means that it's always either in good repair (while Artius is alive) or a complete ruin (while he is dead). Once the Season of Rot starts, it magically rebuilds itself if destroyed before.

The Rag Man's Grove

This small grove on the southwestern edge of the Night Wood — and diametrically across from the village on the other side of the domain — is the only place in Histaven that is untouched by the kiss of rot that is so prevalent elsewhere. A pool fills the center of the grove, filled with silvery clear water, which, on starry skyed nights, becomes luminescent in the dark. This is where the Rag Man is reborn each time he is killed, and where he finds rest. It is the one place in Histaven that he can be reasoned with, as he is overcome with melancholy and longing for a time before all of this. Here he sits and plans his revenge against Count Artius, so lost in his own thoughts that he'll ignore anyone here, provided they do not attack him. Like the Histaven Manor, the Grove restores itself at the beginning of the Season of Rot, so any damage done to the Grove is not permanent and doesn't bother the Rag Man, though he refrains from doing so himself.

On dark nights, the Grove is filled with the images of spirits — the victims of all those killed by either Count Artius, the count's father, or the Rag Man in their quest for vengeance upon one another. The Count's father's spirit is here though it simply looks sad and tired and doesn't communicate with anyone.

Histaven

Two other spirits stand out though — one is remarkably similar to the Vistani girl Naeva, while another looks like the Rag Man before he died. At the end of each night, the woman approaches the man, but before he can see her face, they all disappear.

Towns and villages:

Village of Histaven

200 people make Histaven their home, but their memories of the place are disturbed and vague. They know that the current state of affairs has lasted at least a century, but beyond that the details are vague. This is likely for the best, or they would realize how many of them the Rag Man has killed over the years, with his victims numbering in the thousands. Somehow, the people who died are replaced by others, though no one remembers how, and just have a vague memory of “Oh, they’ve always been here”. In this manner, the population always remains around 200, no matter how many people the Rag Man kills, or how many are recruited as soldiers by the count (and then destroyed by the Rag Man). The hamlet is in poor condition, because of these rampages.

Buildings have been burned down many times, only to be slowly restored by the inhabitants, and at any given time, at least a quarter of the population lives in the center of town in what is known as Rag Town. This place is where those who have lost their homes to either the fights of the count and the Rag Man or the skirmishes with the Shadow Druids. It’s a place of ugly tents and squalid lean-tos, covered by rotting skins, and occasionally the count has his guards clear out the place, fearing that the Rag Man might hide among them. The unofficial mayor of the town is Elderik the Blacksmith, a strong man of good heat — or at least that is what the villagers believe. In reality, the man is a spy for Count Artius, but a smart one, who has managed to keep his allegiance hidden. Anything that happens in the village is passed on to the Count by their trusted leader.

Neighboring domain(s):

None

Fun Fact:

Anyone who enters Histaven immediately feels slightly ill, as the ever-present rot sets in. While this fades in time and doesn’t cause any real harm, it never stops until the affected person leaves the domain.



Count Artius

"Not again!"

~ Count Artius"

Count Artius was once a handsome man, but his looks and youth have been stolen away by worry and fatigue. His eyes are bloodshot and are surrounded by deep lines. Artius' hair and beard are still black, but have started to gray at the temples and at the corner of his mouth.

The count's clothes are well made, but are starting to become threadbare, though he hardly seems to care.

Background: Count Artius was the son of a famous bard who retired from adventuring after his king rewarded him with land and titles. The bard had a reputation for being a kind and honorable man, but this truly was a lie. The bard hadn't lived through years of dangerous adventure by being honorable. Artius' father jealously guarded his new station and wealth, eliminating rivals by means of poison, a dagger in the night, or a small army of thugs.

One unfortunate victim was a young man with a wife that the count desired. The man was sickly, and clearly didn't deserve such a beautiful wife. Young Artius witnessed the murder. Not long after, the young man's mother took her own life in despair and the father simply disappeared.

An innocent merchant was another victim of the bard and his army of thugs. In the dead of night, the bard, his son Artius, and the band of thugs broke into the merchant's house and dragged the screaming family into a clearing in the woods. The merchant and his wife begged the townspeople for aid, but none came, as windows stayed shuttered and doors remained tightly locked. Once in the clearing, the bard commanded the merchant to leave town. The next time he returned, the merchant would be killed. Artius stopped his father. "Why take the risk?" asked the son.

Artius had his father's thugs take hold of the merchant and watch as they killed the wife and young child. Then he commanded the men to take heavy mallets to the merchant's limbs and shatter them. Artius and his father left the merchant to die of exposure. As they left, the merchant screamed his promise that he would do anything to get his revenge.

Things went well back in the village for a few weeks. Then the Rag Man came for the first time. The people of the village didn't recognize him, but Artius did. The merchant had returned. Possessed of superhu-

man rage and unstoppable fury, the Rag Man butchered guards and townspeople alike. As the Rag Man cut down guards and fought his way into the manor house, Artius found self preservation the better part of valour, stabbed his elderly father in the knee, and ran for his life.

The Rag Man slaughtered the bard and came for Artius. Artius ran the Rag Man through, but it didn't even phase the berserker. The Rag Man crushed Artius' head with the pommel of his greatsword. Artius groggily awoke a few hours later, still alive.

Artius and the Rag Man have fought dozens or hundreds of times since then. Artius has lost count. Both men have had opportunities to repent, Artius for his cruelty, the Rag Man for the indiscriminate murder and the endless suffering that he brings to Hithaven. Neither will. Their rage and endless hate brought Hithaven into the Demiplane of Dread, and it will keep them there forever.

Current Sketch: The count spends most of his time in his manor house, drunk and brooding. He doesn't care that the people of Hithaven are constantly on the verge of starvation. He dreads the passage of time. Every day brings the Rag Man closer. Every day is another day where he might see the berserk lunatic's burning eyes and flashing sword. No matter how many times he kills the Rag Man, he always returns. When the Rag Man murders the count, Artius wakes in his own bed a few hours later. Groggy, but alive. It's a never ending circle, and Artius is sick of his cursed existence.

Darklord's Tactics: The count is an experienced swordsman that had been trained by the best tutors his father's money could buy. He is proud of his skills to the point of hubris, but it's all an illusion. The count is a coward. He will gladly sacrifice his friends or guards if it means he can escape the Rag Man's wrath one more time. When cornered the count is a deadly fighter, but will flee given an opportunity.

The count's guards are fanatically loyal and will sacrifice their lives without hesitation.

Borders: Count Artius cannot close the borders of Hithaven.



Count Artius



Count Artius

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (chain mail)

Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 30)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +6, Wis +5

Skills Deception +7, Insight +5, Intimidation +7, Persuasion +10

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Coward's Advantage. Artius deals an extra 2d8 damage against an enemy he is flanking.

Mockery. Artius mocks one enemy he sees within 10ft range, trying to distract his opponent as a bonus action. The targeted creature provokes an opportunity attack if they fail on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw.

Call to Arms. The first time Artius reaches half his maximum hit points, as a reaction he gives an order to his remaining guards to rally and move 15ft closer to him and if they can, make a melee weapon attack against one enemy in their reach.

Fighting Style. Artius knows the following fighting styles:
-Dueling. When Artius is wielding a melee weapon in one hand and no other weapons, he gains a +2 bonus to damage rolls with that weapon (included in the attack).
-Defense. While Artius is wearing armor, he gains a +1 bonus to AC (included).

Second Wind. Artius has a limited well of stamina that he can draw on to protect himself from harm. On his turn, he can use a bonus action to regain hit points equal to 1d10 + 10. Once he uses this feature, he must finish a short or long rest before he can use it again.

Impossible Vendetta. Artius cannot simply die in battle. If he is slain, he resurrects in his manor the next full moon. If Count Artius and the Rag Man forgive one another and break the cycle of violence then this ability ceases.

Action Surge. Artius can push himself beyond his normal limits for a moment. On his turn, he can take one additional action. Once he uses this feature, he must finish a short or long rest before he can use it again.

Indomitable. Artius can reroll a saving throw that he fails. If he does so, he must use the new roll, and he can't use this feature again until he finishes a long rest.

Rallying Cry. Artius can inspire his allies to fight on past their injuries. When he uses his Second Wind feature, he can choose up to three allied creatures within 60 feet of him. Each one regains 10 hit points, provided that the creature can see or hear Artius.

Inspiring Surge. When Artius uses his Action Surge feature, he can choose one allied creature within 60 feet of him. That creature can make one melee or ranged weapon attack with its reaction, provided that it can see or hear Artius.

Slasher. Artius learned where to cut to have the greatest results, granting him the following benefits:

- Once per turn when Artius hits a creature with an attack that deals slashing damage, he can reduce the speed of the target by 10 feet until the start of his next turn.
- When Artius scores a critical hit that deals slashing damage to a creature, he grievously wounds it. Until the start of his next turn, the target has disadvantage on all attack rolls.

Actions

Multiattack. Artius makes two attacks.

Longsword +1. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d8 + 6) slashing damage, or 11 (1d10 + 6) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Reactions

Parry. Artius adds 2 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, he must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

The Rag Man

"You have taken everything from me!

So I will take everything from you! And then I'll do it again. And again! And again!

Forever!"

~ The Rag Man to Count Artius

From a distance it's easy to mistake the Rag Man for a ghoul or fast moving zombie. His breath comes in ragged gasps and he is covered in torn clothing and crude bandages. His face is always concealed by a hood. His wounds constantly weep blood, even as they heal before your eyes. When Count Artius has been slain or the Rag Man newly reborn, he can be quite calm. He will even engage in conversation, but is always distant and cold. Any mention of the Count sends him into a rage.

Background: No one knows what started the feud between Count Artius and the Rag Man, but it can never end. As the new moon rises, the Rag Man appears at the edge of town, his sword covered in blood, his eyes wide with rage. The Rag Man will slaughter anyone that gets between him and the Count. This always results in a bloody rampage through the village towards the Count's manor.

Current Sketch: The domain of Hithaven consists of the village of Hithaven, the Hithaven Manor House and the Nightwoods. Locals fear the passage of time as the domain bends to the will of its master. When the Rag Man has slain the Count or is slain by the Count and his men, Hithaven enjoys a few weeks of respite where villagers can find enough food, but it never lasts. When the Count or the Rag Man are reborn, the food rots in the cellars and in the field. As the Rag Man starts to lose himself to his insane rage, the land starts to wither and the rivers and ponds are fouled. Wolves prowl the edges of the town and the night lasts so much longer than the day. The villagers call this the Time of Rot.

Darklord's Tactics: The Rag Man is as subtle as an explosion. He has no fear of death or pain and will charge directly into a line of archers or spearmen without pause. Injuries and pain drive him into even more of a frenzy. By the time he is near death he is a storm of hacking steel and howling rage. If he is slain he knows he will return in time.

Borders: When the borders of Hithaven are closed, the woods surrounding the village become impassable. Trails turn back on themselves, the mist makes it impossible to see and following the trail returns you to the village.

The Rag Man's Lair: The Rag Man's Grove

The Rag Man's Grove is the only place in Hithaven that doesn't have an undercurrent of rot. The grove is a peaceful place, a small clearing around a still pond. The grove is the Rag Man's only respite in his endless quest for vengeance. Spirits dance and sing in the trees surrounding the grove, but ignore any living creature. The Rag Man spends his time staring into the pond and listening to the songs. Any violence in the grove causes the Rag Man to attack with lethal force. The Rag Man encountered in his lair has a challenge rating of 14 (11,500 XP)



The Rag Man

Medium humanoid (shadar-kai), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 189 (25d8 + 75)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	15 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +10, Con +8, Wis +8

Skills Intimidation +7

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non magical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, stunned

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

The Rag Man

Regeneration. The Rag Man regains 10 hit points at the start of his turn. If the Rag Man was dealt damage by a melee weapon wielded by Count Artius, this trait doesn't function. The Rag Man only dies if he starts his turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate. If the Rag Man starts his turn with 0 hit points and regenerates, he gains 50 hit points instead of 10. When killed, the Rag Man reappears at full hit points during the next new moon.

Marked for Death. At the start of his turn the Rag Man may mark one creature within 30 feet as his prey. That creature must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. If they fail the Rag Man gets advantage on all Sword of Vengeance attacks against that creature until the start of his next turn. If Count Artius is within 30 feet the Rag Man will always target him with this ability, and Count Artius automatically fails the saving throw.

Whirlwind of Death. If the Rag Man starts his turn with less than 100 hit points after regeneration, he makes one extra Sword of Vengeance attack when he uses the Multi-attack action and, inflicts plus 1d6 slashing damage when he hits. If the Rag Man starts his turn with less than 50 hit points after regeneration he makes two extra Sword of Vengeance attacks when he uses the Multiattack option and he inflicts plus 2d6 slashing damage when he hits.

Actions

Multiattack. The Rag Man makes two Sword of Vengeance attacks.

Sword of Vengeance. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage plus 18 (4d8) necrotic damage. Creatures hit by a Sword of Vengeance attack must make a DC 18 Strength saving throw. If they fail they are knocked back 10 feet and fall prone.

Reactions

Avenging Riposte. The Rag man adds 2 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him, in addition he makes a single attack against his attacker. If his attack lands, the creature takes 1d10+5 slashing damage and is pushed 10ft away. To do so, the Rag man must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Legendary Actions

The Rag Man can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Rag Man regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Sword of Vengeance. The Rag Man makes one Sword of Vengeance attack.

Hunter's Stare. The Rag Man locks eyes with one creature within 30 feet. That creature must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. Creatures that fail are overwhelmed by the madness they see in the Rag Man's eyes. They are incapacitated until the end of the Rag Man's next turn.

Phantom Stride. The Rag Man may move up to 30 feet. This movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity. At this time, the Rag man can move through other creatures and Objects as if they were Difficult Terrain. He takes 5 (1d10) force damage if he ends his move inside an object.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), The Rag Man can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:
◇ The Rag Man gains 20 temporary hit points.

◇ The songs of the spirits in the trees become angry howls. Every creature in the grove except the Rag Man must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. They take 21 (6d6) psychic damage on a failed saving throw and half as much on a successful one.

◇ The spirits in the trees come and dance around a creature the Rag Man chooses within the grove, distracting them. The creature must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. If they fail they may only take a move action, action, or a bonus action on their next turn.

The Rag Man can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and it can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

How to defeat the darklord

The Rag Man may be the only darklord that can end his imprisonment at any time. All he must do is forgive Count Artius for whatever caused the Rag Man to hate him so much. It is likely the Rag Man will never be free.



Graefmotte



Graefmotte



Graefmotte was created in a single night, where Lord Durven Graef beat his son to death, and subsequently died in battle with a marauding band of gnolls.

Lord Graef was a minor lord in the Nerath empire at the time when it came under attack by demonic forces, especially hordes of gnolls. His son, Geoffrey, was the last of his children, and he wanted to head off to war, to fight for his homeland, but Durven would have none of it. As the last of his line, he wanted to protect his son from dying on a far-away battlefield, especially as he believed such a death would be in vain. They argued for weeks and months, until a young messenger came, seriously wounded and on death's door, with a message that they had been summoned to battle.

As his servants tended to the messenger, Durven got into another argument with Geoffrey, who was packing to leave. Words came to blows, and Durven struck his son, knocking him to the floor and breaking his skull. Standing over his son, Durven believed that it was better for his son to die there than on the battlefield, so he left him in the tower and ran from his own crime, unwilling to acknowledge what he had done.

Regrettably, a band of gnolls had followed the messenger to Graefmotte, hoping to find riches, and they fell upon the unprepared village. Durven and his men fought bravely, with the lord losing an arm and taking a grievous wound to the stomach, and managed to stave off the attack, though only at great cost. And, as he lay there dying, Durven's thoughts turned to his son and he yet again decided that he had done right. At that point, the Mists claimed Graefmotte and when Durven woke, his wounds had healed, though his son had died and become a ghost. And still, there were gnolls on the prowl.

Adventures in Graefmotte are unlikely to see much of filicide in Graefmotte, as there's enough misery going on with the starvation that everyone is facing. Instead, heroes are likely to face the ghouls, gnolls, and the living eaters of the dead in an effort to help or rescue the inhabitants. But to defeat the Lord, he must admit his own crime and face his son. Something he is very loath to do, and even the ghost of the son doesn't know where his body is anymore — which would be required for a proper burial and laying to rest the whole ordeal. Could it be somewhere in the Ill Wood or maybe hidden in town?

"It is sweet and fitting to die for the homeland." ~ Quintus Horatius Flaccus

Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forest and hill
Year Formed:	615 BC
Population:	450
Races (%):	Humans 98%, Halflings 1%, Half-elves, Other 1%
Languages:	Common, Elven, Halfling
Religions:	Asmodeus, Doresain, The Lawbringer, The Raven Queen, Yeenoghu (by the gnolls)
Government:	Despotism
Ruler(s):	Lord Durven Graef
Darklord(s):	Lord Durven Graef
Nationality:	Graefen
Analog:	None

Local Fauna:

The villagers in Graefmotte have long since slaughtered the animals within the village itself. Five generations of being stuck in a domain with no way out have taken their toll and they're all on the edge of starvation.

The situation is slightly better outside of the city, but the presence of the gnolls hasn't been without consequence either. Only the most secretive and well-hidden animals have survived, but unlike the humans within the village, the gnolls have no issue with cannibalism, and happily eat their own when required — which is most of the time.

Local Flora:

Graefmotte is dominated by the Ill Wood, a pine forest that fills the valley and the foot of the hill where the village itself stands. The pine trees here stand close together and cast the entire area into deep dark shadows under which few other plants can survive. In fact, there are no edible plants in Graefmotte outside of the village, but it is home to a native plant named *olt*. *Olt* is a black-leafed herb that grows on the forest floor, and which, when chewed, has a boon for many inhabitants in Graefmotte: It suppresses feelings of hunger, though it stains one's teeth black. It is not addictive in and of itself, but in a land where starvation is close, being able to ignore your stomach's rumblings is a boon. The only other plants that live in Graefmotte are those grown in garden beds in the village itself, which extends itself only to some sickly tubers and vegetables. Nowhere near enough to keep the village fed at all times.

Graefmotte

Native Horrors

Depending on where you go in Graefmotte, you'll meet different kinds of dangers, but all are hungry. Outside the village, in the Ill Wood, the gnolls are in power. They're the descendants of the invaders that Lord Durven had to fight off, these demonic cannibals hang on, showing far more tenacity than they had been given credit for. They survive by eating their own kind, and whichever villagers that they can get hold of.

A number of other creatures make their way here too as if drawn by the misery that Durven Graef has caused, and the forest is home to ghosts, zombies, and a few other undead creatures as well.

At the bottom of the village of Graefmotte, at the Low Tier, a visitor is safe during the day, but during the night, the hungry dead come out. They're ghouls, the undead remnants of those villagers that succumbed to cannibalism, of which there have been many over the five generations that the domain has been stuck in the Mists. They prowl the city at night, usually staying in the Low Tier, but occasionally climbing up into the Mid Tier, though they never go higher than that.

One more threat remains in Graefmotte, one rarely, if ever, spoken of by the locals. The eaters of the dead. These are the villagers who in their own private homes, and away from prying eyes practice cannibalism knowingly, kidnapping others and cooking them up for their own ends. They're well aware that what they're doing is wrong, but starvation has driven them mad. They take no pride in what they do, and some of them try to make certain that their prey is killed mercifully and swiftly. Most however are slowly twisted by their actions, and eventually start taking pleasure in their work — though they take great care to hide the screams of their victims by doing their work at night, where it's unlikely to be heard over the noise of the ghouls prowling the village.

Terrain type

Graefmotte sits in a mountain valley, wedged in between two mountain tops that are so high that the entire valley is cast in shadow, except at midday, where the sun just peeks through the wedge between the mountains. The village of Graefmotte sits on a very tall hill, almost a small mountain, one with only a thin layer of soil over solid stone.

Important Landmarks

Graef's Graft

This old inn of dwarven make sits right on the treeline between the Low Tier of the village and the Ill Wood that surrounds it. It has an ominous reputation and a clientele that is shady at best, and downright murderous at worst. However, it is safe and peaceful, and even the ghouls that stalk the Low Tier avoid it. This is all due to Brother Edgar. Brother Edgar is an excommunicated priest of Asmodeus, but still a true believer in his faith. His spells and mace have smashed apart so many ghouls that they now avoid the place, as they're too afraid of him to bother his clients.

House of Mourning

Dedicated to the Raven Queen, this church has seen better days, as has the priestess Madelyn Osterford. Both are well past their prime, and while Madelyn still goes about her duties, she doesn't really *believe* anymore and has lost many of her powers because of it. She was once a powerful priestess, but now she has trouble performing anything but the smallest of miracles.

It's clear that both the church and the priestess were once beautiful, but Madelyn has no teeth left in her mouth, as a result of the chewing of olt, but unlike many others in the village, she has not succumbed to the call of hunger that has driven many of them mad.

The Halfway House

This inn sits in the Mid Tier, and is one of the few places to serve food in Graefmotte, though the quality and origin of it all is dubious at best. The owners — Martha and Guy — have a terrible secret. They worship Dore-sain, the King of Ghouls, and they're the source of many of the ghouls that live in the Low Tier of Graefmotte. They entice those who have succumbed to cannibalism when they're ready, and then they turn them into ghouls. They believe that it is only a matter of time before either the ghouls or the gnolls overrun the city, and they intend to be on the winning side. Until then, they're happy to continue with their services to Dore-sain in return for the food that he's promised them.

Three more people work in the Halfway House, a surprisingly good bard named Rudolf and two dancers and maids named Anna and Breen. Anna and Breen are getting desperate, and while none of the three have any idea of what Martha and Guy are up to, the two maids will do anything for food.

Graefmotte

Butcher's Block

Located in the Mid Tier, and run by Rolf, a 7-foot tall man that looks like a mix of orc and dwarf, this is the source of most of the meat eaten in the village. No one wants to know where the butcher gets his meat, and while there's plenty of human, half-elf, and halfling meat in there, he sometimes gets lucky and gets real meat. While most suspect this to be the case and don't ask questions, the truth might surprise them: Rolf is a coward and he's allied himself with the gnolls outside of the city.

He provides them with information about the city watch and warns them when Lord Graef sets out on his gnoll hunts, in return for food. He hopes to make himself useful enough that when the gnolls take the city (as he believes they will), he'll be spared.

Graefmotte Keep

With stone walls covered in ivy, it's clear that the keep isn't occupied most of the time. This is because it is haunted by the ghost of Geoffrey Graef. Although the ghost leaves most people alone, it constantly harasses Lord Durven and reminds him of his misdeeds. As a result, the Lord is only present in the keep for one day each week, as he returns to re-provision and prepare for the next gnoll hunt.

Towns and villages:

Village of Graefmotte

The village of Graefmotte is home to 450 people, who live in houses that are carved straight into the rockface of the hill with only about a third of the house protruding from the hillside, while the rest is tunneled in. That makes the houses of Graefmotte remarkably strong and sturdy, and in a twist of irony, would have provided a great fortification for defense against the invading gnoll horde that Lord Graef fought against if only he'd prepared. The village is divided into three parts, depending on how high up that part of the city is. At the bottom, bordering the Ill Wood is the Low Tier, then comes the Mid Tier, and finally, the Upper Tier with Graefmotte Keep situated at the very top of the hill. The people here are constantly on the edge of starvation and live in terror of the gnolls, ghouls, and Lord Graef's dictatorial edicts and harsh punishments. What they don't know is that while they fear Lord Graef and he fights against the gnolls constantly, it is his power as a darklord that keeps the gnolls at bay. If he was to fall, the settlement would be overrun in hours. Most of the people here would likely then find themselves in even worse situations as their souls are doomed from the acts of cannibalism that so many have resorted to or ignored.

Neighboring domain(s):

None

Fun Fact:

The people of Graefmotte have spent more than five generations working the stone of the hill, and have become master craftsmen, on par with many of the best dwarven stonewrights.



Lord Durven Graef

"I can feel them in the woods.

Bands of slaving beasts. They watch us.

If we let down our guard for even a second, they will come for us.

They will slaughter our women and children!

They are beasts! Nothing better than animals!

I will kill them all! I will be free."

~ Lord Durven Graef

Lord Durven Graef is a tall, powerfully built human male in his early fifties. His hair is black, just starting to turn gray at the temples. His eyes are shadowed and ringed with thick worry and anger. He dresses in well tailored tunics that are always black or gray. A signet ring adorns one hand. At his side hangs a beautifully crafted longsword, its well worn blade speaking volumes of its deadliness in battle.

Background: The Empire had stood as a bulwark of learning and trade for centuries. Its armies protected the borders and expanded the Empire's territory. All that ended when the Empire brought one of its greatest foes to heel. The lich's name, like that of the Empire he hated, is long forgotten. When the paladins led the final charge against the lich and his undead army, they praised their gods as the undead were smashed and the lich was driven to catacombs beneath his castle. Singing hymns to their gods, the paladins found the lich's phylactery and smashed it, thinking the battle was won.

Instead the amulet exploded with arcane fury. A portal to the Abyss opened and dozens of demons streamed out. As long as demons flooded through the portal, it would stay open. The paladins and their army were slaughtered. The demons flooded across the borders of the Empire and ripped into the heartlands. As the weeks passed more intelligent and powerful demons found the portal. They performed eldritch rituals and spilled gallons of blood to lock the portals open. More demons began to flood through while demonic sorcerers opened new portals to deeper layers of the Abyss. The largest portal was opened to the 422nd layer, the layer of Yeenoghu. Tens of thousands of demonic gnolls and hyenas surged through, desperate for slaughter. A local legend of an albino gnoll of prodigious size and intelligence called the White Ruin began to circulate and warbands flocked to his banner.

The Empire's armies were beset on a dozen fronts and were bled white in a matter of months. Every family was required to send sons and daughters to the front to fight. Lord Durven Graef was a minor lord far from the front. His lands were peaceful and stories of pillaging bands of gnolls seemed like fairy tales used to frighten children.

His only son Geoffrey completely disagreed. The young man was anxious to take his blade and go fight for the survival of the empire. Durven would hear none of it. Geoffrey was his only heir and, if the tales were true, Durban would not send his son to be ripped to shreds by the slashing claws and fangs of an army of demons.

Geoffrey was a dutiful son, and followed his father's commands. All that changed when a messenger arrived from the court of the emperor himself. The young man was badly wounded and about the same age as Geoffrey. His missive instructed the young lord to report to the imperial city and called his honor into question. Geoffrey was determined to go, no matter what his father said.

Geoffrey was in his chambers preparing to depart when Durven found him. Father and son argued, and as they did, the villages around the castle died. A band of gnolls tracked the messenger across the empire, hungry for treasure and slaughter. While Durven and Geoffrey argued, the gnolls fell upon the unsuspecting village.

Durven and Geoffrey argued, their words becoming increasingly heated. Durven, in his rage, struck his son. Geoffrey fought back, but Durven was a large man and a seasoned warrior. One blow staggered Geoffrey, who fell and smashed his head on a low table. Geoffrey died instantly.

As Durven stared at his son's body, his seneschal ran through the door, screaming of the attacking gnolls. Durven led what forces he had in a counter attack. Over the course of the night Durven unleashed all of his hate, rage, and self loathing onto the gnolls. Leading the band was the White Ruin himself.

When the morning came, the gnolls fled into the surrounding woods, leaving the village and castle to count their dead. Durven was carried back into his castle suffering horrible wounds. One arm had been torn off above the elbow by a massive hyena. His intestines hung from a spear wound in his stomach, a parting gift from the White Ruin himself.. Even the spirits seemed to acknowledge his death, as mists

Lord Durven Graef

rolled out of the woods and crept through every part of the village. Instead the next day Durven awoke fully recovered, his arm regrown and his wounds healed. He could feel the land had changed. Soon Durven discovered he was locked in a small island surrounded by white walls of mist.

Current Sketch: Lord Durven Graef still rules his small castle and the village of Graefmotte as if nothing has changed. His son's body still lays in his chambers, the doors were sealed years ago. The woods surrounding Graefmotte are teeming with gnolls, and Durven is convinced they have cursed him somehow. Lord Graef constantly sends men into the woods to hunt the White Ruin. Durven is convinced that the White Ruin could break the curse and free him if properly motivated. Durven has carefully selected a cell just for the massive gnoll when he is captured. The lord would sacrifice every person in his village and castle without a second thought to free himself from the dark powers.

Lord Graef sees his son's face every time he closes his eyes, and every time he is filled with self loathing and dread. When he sleeps, Durven is trapped in a black room forced to stare into the dead eyes of his child until he wakes.

Darklord's Tactics: Durven does not believe he can die. As a result he is fearless in battle. Durven will ride into battle with his lance to try and skewer the strongest opponent before dropping his lance and setting about him with his ancestral sword, Graefling.

Borders: When Durven closes the borders of Graefmotte, the mists are filled with bands of gnolls. Any creature that traverses the mists will be attacked by huge numbers of gnolls. The gnolls grow in power and size until they are the size of giants. After 1d6 hours the mists clear and the creature finds themselves back in Graefmotte.



Lord Durven Graef

Lord Durven Graef

Medium humanoid (shadow), lawful evil

Armor Class 22 (plate, shield, ring of protection +1)

Hit Points 153 (18d8 + 72)

Speed 30 ft.

STR **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

21 (+5) 11 (+0) 18 (+4) 10 (+0) 14 (+2) 16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +2, Dex +6, Con +10, Int +2, Wis +8, Cha +2

Skills Animal Handling +6, Insight +6, Intimidation +7, Nature +4, Perception +6, Persuasion +7

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Guarding Presence. All allies of Durven feel safe around him. Each ally within the 15ft aura that Durven emits gain a +2 bonus to AC and Wisdom saving throws. This Aura does not affect Durven.

Regeneration. Durven regains 5 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point. If Durven takes radiant damage, this trait ceases to function.

Graefling's Traits. Once per day, Durven can use a free action when he strikes an enemy to inflict 5 necrotic damage to each enemy creature adjacent to him. The affected creatures then grant advantage to attack rolls when being attacked by Durven until the end of his next turn. When used against targets that are missing any of their hit points, Durven can reroll any 1 damage die and must accept the result. This ability can be used again after Durven takes a long rest.

Ring of Protection +1. Durven gains a +2 bonus to saving throws and armor class (included).

Immortal Curse. Durven cannot die from natural causes and cannot be slain by mortal hands. If reduced to 0 hit points, he rises in his personal chambers with full hit points after 24 hours. Durven can be destroyed only if reduced to 0 hit points by a creature with Celestial origins (Ex. Aasimar, divine soul sorcerer etc.).

Inspiring Cry. Each ally of Durven, within a 15ft radius centered on him, gains 10 temporary hit points and a +1 bonus to attack rolls until the end of Durven's next turn.

Deadly Charge (while mounted). When making a charge attack, Durven deals 2d6 extra damage.

Lord Durven Graef

Mounted Combat. While Durven rides a creature, he gains access to any special mount abilities it confers to its rider, plus the creature can also make Athletics, Acrobatics, Stealth checks using Durven's base skill check bonus rather than its own if Durven's is higher. He has advantage on melee attack rolls against any unmounted creature that is smaller than his mount. He can force an attack targeted at his mount to target him instead. If his mount is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails. He has advantage on saving throws made to avoid falling off his mount. If he falls off descends no more than 10 feet, he can land on his feet if he is not incapacitated. Finally, mounting or dismounting a creature costs him only 5 feet of movement, rather than half his speed.

Indomitable. Durven can reroll a saving throw that he fails. If he does so, he must use the new roll, and he can use this feature twice before he needs to finish a long rest to use it again.

Unwavering Mark. When Durven hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, he can mark the creature until the end of his next turn. This effect ends early if he is incapacitated or dies, or if someone else marks the creature. While a marked creature is within 5 feet of Durven, it has disadvantage on any attack roll that doesn't target him. In addition, if a creature marked by him deals damage to anyone other than him, he can make a special melee weapon attack against the marked creature as a bonus action on his next turn. He has advantage on the attack roll, and if it hits, the attack's weapon deals extra 6 damage. Regardless of the number of marked creatures, Durven can make this special attack only 5 times, and regains all expended uses of it when he finishes a long rest.

Warding Maneuver. Durven can fend off strikes directed at him, his mount, or other creatures nearby. If he or a creature he can see within 5 feet of him is hit by an attack, he can roll 1d8 as a reaction if he is wielding a melee weapon or a shield. Roll the die, and add the number rolled to the target's AC against that attack. If the attack still hits, the target has resistance against the attack's damage. He can use this feature 4 times and he regains all expended uses of it when he finishes a long rest.

Hold the Line. Durven can lock down his enemies. Creatures provoke an opportunity attack from him when they move 5 feet or more while within his reach, and if he hits a creature with an opportunity attack, the target's speed is reduced to 0 until the end of the current turn.

Charger. When Durven uses his action to Dash, he can use a bonus action to make one melee weapon attack or to shove a creature. If he moves at least 10 feet in a straight line immediately before taking this bonus action, he either gains a +5 bonus to the attack's damage roll (if he chooses to make a melee attack and hit) or push the target up to 10 feet away from him (if he chooses to shove and he succeeds).

Fighter's Traits. Durven is a 13th level fighter and can use Second Wind and Action Surge as they are described in the fighter class.

Actions

Multiattack. Durven makes three weapon attacks.

Masterwork Lance (usable only while mounted). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d6 + 7) piercing damage. If Durven scores a critical with this attack, or makes this attack against a creature granting him combat advantage, the target is also knocked prone.

Graefling Blade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d10 + 7) slashing damage. On a critical hit, the target takes an extra 2d8 necrotic damage.

Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, Durven can utter a special command or warning whenever a non-hostile creature that he can see within 30 ft. of him makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand Durven. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if Durven is incapacitated.

Reactions

Peerless Horseman (while mounted). When Durven's mount or he is hit by a melee attack, Durven's mount attacks back with its hooves and it deals 1d6+5 bludgeoning damage. Then, both Durven and the mount depending on who received the attack, reduce any damage received by 10.

Parry. Durven adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, Durven must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Significant Possessions

Graefling Blade, Ring of Protection +1



Monadhan

Monadhan



Monadhan is the domain of treachery, formed when the silver dragon Aranthor and his daughter Imrissa accidentally killed a camp of innocents, one they thought was filled with enemy soldiers, during a war. His daughter wanted to confess to their superiors immediately, while Aranthor balked at the idea. They argued, and eventually, they fought, and the father slew his daughter in his rage and knocked her out of the sky. Afterward, he disappeared, but he kept attacking groups of the enemy until they finally had enough and sent out a group of dragonslayers to kill him. Aranthor fought like he was possessed, but the dragonslayers were too well trained and armed, and as they drove a spear into his heart, he welcomed the darkness and the peace from his own guilt at the murder of his daughter.

Rest was not to be his. He awoke in the domain of Monadhan, one that seemingly was created to torment the dragon. Not finding much to like about the jungle itself, Aranthor found a deep, dark cave and settled in to live out his days. But when his days came to an end, his body stayed alive, in undead form.

Dragon lives are long and centuries had passed since Aranthor arrived, and other creatures had found their way into Monadhan since then, almost all of them with similar stories behind them. Everyone was involved in treachery — some great, some small. But all who come here are untrustworthy one way or another. And those few unlucky enough to be born here are even worse as they know nothing but the law of the jungle — to them, it is survival of the fittest and the strongest. And nothing should stand in the way of survival.

Adventures in Monadhan should involve treachery at every turn. Not a single one of the allies they find should be trustworthy. Even getting here should involve treachery, on behalf of the heroes. Perhaps they didn't fulfill the requirements of an agreement, perhaps they turned on their allies at the last moment, or perhaps they were manipulated into doing so. In Monadhan, even the heroes are untrustworthy, or at least that's what the locals believe. For high-level heroes, perhaps redeeming Aranthor will become their goal, but more likely they'll simply be trying to escape from this hot jungle of hell.

"Weakness is not treachery, but it fulfills all its functions."

~ Kaiser Wilhelm II

Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Tropical, forest and swamp
Year Formed:	593 BC
Population:	3,200
Races (%):	Humans 75%, Halflings 10%, Elves 9%, Gnomes 3%, Half-Elves 1%, Dwarves 1%, Other 1%
Languages:	Common, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Halfling
Religions:	None
Government:	Anarchy
Ruler(s):	None
Darklord(s):	Aranthor
Nationality:	Monadhani
Analog:	None

Local Fauna:

Monadhan has the animals you'd expect from a domain that is dominated by jungle and swamp. Alligators, bloodsucking insects, tigers, and more. They are all here, but with a twist. Every single animal within the domain is a form of predator, even ones that would otherwise be innocuous. Everything preys on everything else. And this worsens in the jungle, as one gets deeper into it. Within the depths of the jungle can be found tigers the size of horses, constrictor snakes large enough to crush an elephant, and insects ranging from the size of a human's head to the size of an actual human.

The lake is filled with blackfish — the smaller ones are about a foot long and make for a tasty (if vicious) meal, while the older ones are the size of an ogre and easily capable of overturning a small boat. The lake is also home to several types of parasitic fish that look like blackfish, except they drain the blood from anyone that they bite.

Local Flora:

Monadhan consists of three parts: The jungle, Blackfish Lake, and the swamp to the west called Tangledeep. The jungle is a wild tropical rainforest with a dense canopy that blocks out what little comes down of the sun, rendering the days into twilight and the nights into pitch blackness. On the edges of the jungle, such as near the lake and the rivers, the woods are relatively open and many of the plants are edible — though not always tasty. The further into the jungle that a traveler goes, the more inhospitable it becomes, giving way to dense trees, nettles, and underbrush and carnivorous plants that survive by devouring flesh and blood.

Monadhan

Tangledeep is a place of warped and dead trees that sink down through the muck, giving some stable ground around them. Nestled among the dead trees, the only plant that lives here is the long grass that is capable of floating, like lily pads. The lake teems with life, though most of it is animal in nature. Reeds are plentiful here, and when harvested make for strong fibers to make baskets and roofs from. They also provide excellent cover for the various kinds of fish that live in the lake.

Native Horrors

Monadhan is home to several hydras, especially in the swamps though they occasionally make their way to the lake. There are a number of pods of chuul as well, that the inhabitants of Monadhan have to cull on occasion. The chuuls are exceptionally large and ravenous here, often warring among themselves and attacking the fishermen on Blackfish Lake. The most dangerous common enemy though is the death giants that are unique to Monadhan. These black-skinned gigantic undead creatures serve Arantor as bodyguards, and actively hunt down those close to escaping. They have never been seen to communicate with anyone, but they are clearly intelligent as they employ tactics whenever they're dealing with an opponent. The most dangerous inhabitant of Monadhan though is Arantor, and when Arantor takes wing from his cavern beneath Shantytown, the whole domain cowers before his might as he eradicates anyone and everything he comes across. There is only one exception to this, as there is a single creature here that might best Arantor if it came down to it. The vampire Kas. How Kas manages to get to Monadhan from Tovag is a mystery, and no one is sure if Kas was in Monadhan first and then escaped, only to be caught in Tovag, or if he managed this feat after he arrived in Tovag. Regardless, it is certain that Kas can move between his fortress in Tovag and Monadhan as he pleases, using a gateway hidden in the Halls of the Betrayer. The halls are guarded by two vampires in Kas' service, Gwenth and Rolain, who are bored with their stationing here, but both remain loyal to Kas, safe in the knowledge that their lives will not be thrown away in the war with Vecna.

Terrain type

In a land where the sun barely ever makes it through the cloud cover, Monadhan still manages to make life unbearably hot and humid. The cloud cover is constant, but the lighting is dim. And anyone here starts sweating within seconds of arriving.

Monadhan is basically one great jungle, only interrupted by the swampy expanse of the Tangledeep on the western end. Surrounding the valley at the center of the domain, a series of large sheer cliffs rise up from the valley floor, blocking all ways out that aren't already covered by the Tangledeep. While these cliffs are possible to climb, only the most foolhardy do so, as the Mists have been known to creep up here and either take the climber somewhere worse. Worst of all, some of the climbers here attract the attention of Arantor.

Important Landmarks

Halls of the Betrayer

Kas the Betrayer sometimes refers to this as his summer retreat. The Halls of the Betrayer is a series of caves to the east of Blackfish Lake where he has a small contingent of his henchmen, the two vampires Gwenth and Rolain, and a number of other undead agents. What Kas does here is unknown, as is the reason why he holds this location, but anyone who comes close disappears forever unless they're chosen to join the ranks of his warriors.

Heart of Darkness

The Heart of Darkness is the lair of Arantor, and lies underneath Shantytown. Death giants guard the cavern entrance to his underground retreat and do not suffer any intruders. The area is dimly lit by phosphorescent fungus, reflecting off the stalagmites and stalactites that fill the area. A subterranean river moves through here slowly, and moves into the Blackfish Lake, taking minerals with it. Those few who have braved the cave and returned talk about whispers that fill their minds with dread and remind them of their past victims and misdeeds.



Monadhan

Monadhan Outpost

The Monadhan Outpost is an old and somewhat decrepit fortress that sits at the center of Shantytown. It's the most defensible area of the whole town, and the gangs of the town vie over it constantly. When it falls, it is usually at great cost to the attacker, leaving them vulnerable for others to attack from other gangs. In this manner, the place is in a constant state of flux with various factions controlling it. If anyone manages to capture and hold it though, they'd have almost total control of the town.

The Pit

The Pit is, according to the locals, a bottomless hole. No light escapes from here, and anyone who goes there never returns. As such, no one can remember the last time anyone was stupid enough to go here.

The rumors aren't quite true, and the Pit is what holds the key to redeeming Arantor, as here, in a cocoon and in suspended animation, lies the body of his daughter Imrissa. If anyone manages to wake her, the body serves as an anchor for her spirit, and facing Arantor becomes much easier as the sight of his daughter would break his spirit. After that, it would be a relatively simple matter of killing him — not that killing a dracolich would ever be easy.

Towns and villages:

Shantytown

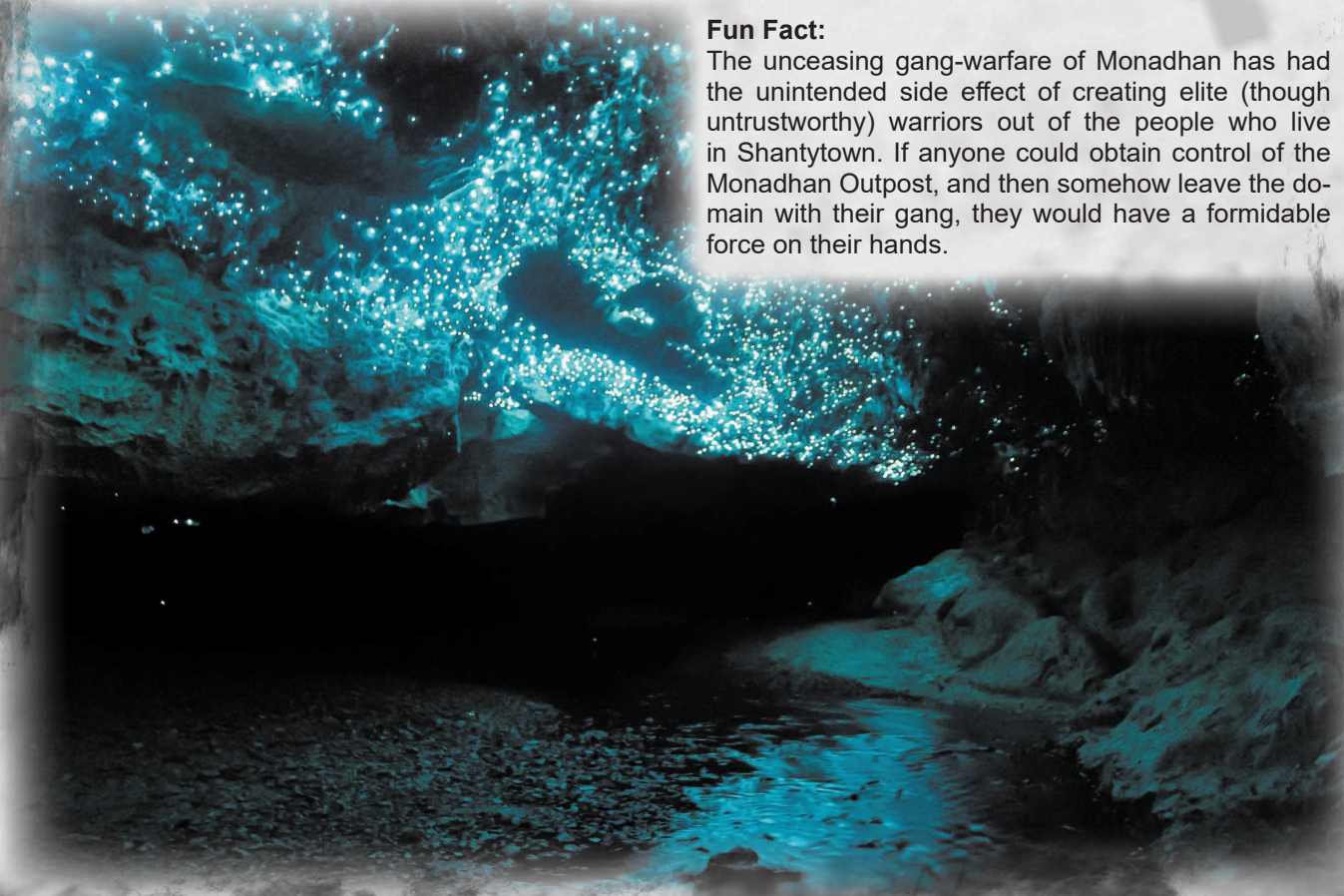
Shantytown, Campton, The Town, and a number of other (and less flattering names) are all appended to this town of 3,000 inhabitants. It is made up of ragged tents, badly built shelters, and shoddily made huts. The only permanent building is the Monadhan Outpost at the center. The place stinks of offal, refuse, sweat, death, and all the unpleasant smells of a throng of humanity. The inhabitants here are paranoid as their lives are as impermanent as their town. None of their lives are permanent, and the inhabitants constantly shift around, as neighbors kill each other, people occupy new buildings, and gangs fight each other over in constant turf wars. Those who are new here had better get used to it quickly, or they too will fall like chaff before the scythe. The only ones who have a measure of safety are craftsmen. They're valued greatly by the gangs for their weapon and tool-making skills, but they're under constant pressure to join one gang or the other. They either join or they have to run the risk of carefully balancing their work for one gang against all the others lest they become another victim of the gang violence.

Neighboring domain(s):

None (Gateway to Tovag)

Fun Fact:

The unceasing gang-warfare of Monadhan has had the unintended side effect of creating elite (though untrustworthy) warriors out of the people who live in Shantytown. If anyone could obtain control of the Monadhan Outpost, and then somehow leave the domain with their gang, they would have a formidable force on their hands.



Arantor

"There is a certain amount of subtlety one expects from those cursed with their own domains. Most could pass as men or women until they reveal the insanity that lies beneath the facade.

Arantor is a monster on the inside and out. He makes no attempt to hide what he is.

For some reason that terrifies me more."

~ Rudolph van Richten

When at rest, Arantor looks like a heaped pile of dragon bones. Dull silver scales cling to ancient bones that are slowly turning to dust. Inside the rib cage sits the skeletal remains of a smaller dragon. This smaller dragon always rests in the ribcage of the larger beast, right where the heart should be. The dragon's great skull lies on a pile of platinum coins large enough to bury a man. Arantor looks like a dragon that laid down to rest and never got up.

Despite appearances, when Arantor moves it is with deadly swiftness. Arantor fought in wars so ancient that modern scholars have forgotten the planets the war was fought on exists. The great dragon's bones look like they are grinding away, but they are as hard as steel. His claws and fangs are as deadly as ever. Arantor can slaughter a small army in minutes. He hates his undead state and constantly seeks to escape the Demiplane of Dread so he can die and move on finally.

Background: Millennia ago, Arantor was one of thousands of dragons that, along with millions of dragonborn, engaged in an endless war against an empire of devil worshipping humans. Arantor and his daughter, Imrissa, were famous for their sudden, devastating attacks that massacred dozens of the devil worshippers in seconds.

Arantor soon gained a reputation as a peerless warrior and a paragon of honor. On rare occasions, he even spared honorable opponents. .

The war dragged on for decades, wearing down the warriors of both sides. Arantor was ordered to attack an enemy force before they could pass through a nearby valley into the dragonborn empires' heartland. The enemy was moving fast. They had already started building a fortress to cover their advance.. Arantor and Imrissa left immediately. Arantor arrived above the enemy camp as a fierce storm erupted. The two dragons dove through the storm and tore apart the enemy camp. Large groups were frozen into grim stat-

ues, buildings were smashed apart by tail and claw. In mere minutes, the enemy was routed and fleeing into the forest. The enemy hadn't even fought back.

It was Imrissa that discovered the horrible truth. The camp was full of women, children, and old men. None of them had the marks of diabolic possession or augmentation the devil worshipping humans displayed. These were refugees fleeing the fight.

Arantor was far beyond furious. He had been lied to and his reputation and honor were shattered. The only way out of this was to make sure none heard of it. Imrissa was horrified. She tried to reason with her father, but Arantor wouldn't hear of it. Imrissa told her father she was heading back to report what happened no matter what he said, and took to the sky. Arantor let his daughter gain altitude before he took off after her, and, as he soared high, pounced on his daughter from above.

Imrissa was a skilled and powerful warrior, but no match for her father. Soon her broken body was falling to the ground below.

Arantor knew he had gone too far. He turned and systematically hunted down every refugee that had fled into the woods. After that he left the dragonborn empire.

Arantor became a terrifying specter for the human empire. Caravans and isolated fortresses would disappear overnight, leaving behind shattered buildings and frozen victims. The human empire dispatched dozens of dragon hunter groups to end the beast. Finally, after years of failure, one group succeeded, and Arantor fell to a carefully laid ambush.

Arantor awoke, alive and healed in the lair that he had shared with Imrissa all those years past. Arantor had abandoned the lair after he had slain his daughter, not even bothering to take his hoard. Outside Arantor could see the valley where he lost his honor, which was impossible, the valley was miles away. Even worse, he could see the shanty town he had destroyed.

It didn't take long for Arantor to realize something was horribly wrong. He was trapped in a small realm, and no matter how many times he destroyed the refugee camp, it returned by the next morning. Arantor tried dozens of ways to escape, to no avail. Soon he decided to wait. Dragons live thousands of years but are not immortal. Arantor hoped death would release him from this strange prison.

Arantor

When he finally died, Arantor was horrified to discover his mind was trapped in his rotting body. He was neither alive, nor dead. Over the next few decades, his flesh rotted and his scales sloughed off. Eventually all that remained was his skeleton.

As his ribcage was uncovered, Arantor discovered a small skeleton of a dragon where his heart should be. As Arantor stared at it, the tiny dragon began to whisper the names of all the innocents that he killed. Worse, it was his daughter's voice he heard.

Current Sketch: Arantor spends years in his lair, not moving, resting on his hoard. The skeletal heart constantly whispers the names of the people he killed, insane conspiracy theories, motives of the dark powers, and ways to escape his torment. Arantor ignores his realm and will not attack anyone unless they touch his hoard or attack him directly.

Eventually the whispers will drive Arantor to stalk restlessly about his lair, trying to think of ways to escape his torment. Arantor will endlessly track around his lair attacking any creature he sees. The dragon will try and end his life in any number of ways, but the whispers never cease and the attempts never succeed. The dark powers refuse to free their prize.

After a few weeks, Arantor will be driven mad with rage and grief. He will tear out of his lair and attack the shanty town that has grown up nearby. Arantor will slaughter the town then engage another dragon in phantom combat, then return to his lair and the process begins again.

Darklord's Tactics: Arantor fights with reckless disregard for his own safety. He breathes on groups of enemies and dives into the middle of the survivors, hoping to get surrounded. The skeletal heart that sits in his chest constantly assaults any creatures nearby, turning them on their closest friends. Once his foes have surrounded him Arantor breathes on the largest group and then charges. The insidious whispers of the skeletal heart makes allies of his enemies and leaves chaos and confusion in its wake. Arantor has been killed dozens of times and the dark powers refuse to let him stay dead. Arantor always wakes on his hoard at dawn the next day.

Borders: When Arantor closes the borders of Monadhan, any who enter the mist are lost for 1d4 hours. The mists are filled with the dead spirits of all the creatures slain by Arantor over the last few thousand years.



Arantor

Huge undead (dragon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 262 (21d12 + 126)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	13 (+1)	22 (+6)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Con +12, Wis +7, Cha +7

Skills Arcana +9, Athletics +12, History +9, Insight +7, Perception +13, Stealth +7

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned, exhaustion

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 23

Languages Common, Draconic, Elvish, Giant, Infernal

Challenge 20 (25,000 XP)

Two Souls. Arantor acts twice each round, once on initiative result 20 and once on initiative result 10. The first is Arantor's turn, and the second is Imrissa's turn, which determines which powers Arantor can use on each turn. Arantor can only move through the Dragon Stride legendary action while Imrissa can move normally. mmmmm m

Shattered Prison (when Arantor drops to 0 hit points).

Arantor's corpse cracks open and releases Imrissa, who continues to fight. She is Large instead of Huge, has 150 hit points, does not benefit from two souls, can move normally, cannot use legendary actions and only uses powers that can be used on Imrissa's turn.

Arantor

Undead Fortitude (Arantor). If damage reduces Arantor to 0 hit points, he must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, Arantor drops to 1 hit point instead.

Bloodied Breath (Arantor). The first time Arantor reaches 131 HP or lower, he exhales a cloud of vaporized blood and viscera in a 30ft cone dealing 8d10 necrotic damage or half to those that succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw.

Influential Whispers (Imrissa). Imrissa whispers devilish secrets into the subconscious of a target that she can see within 60ft. The target takes 2d12 psychic damage and must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or become charmed by the dragon. At the start of its turn, the target must move and attack its nearest ally (this does not provoke opportunity attacks). The effect lasts for 1 minute and the target can try to break the charm by rolling another saving throw at the end of each of its turns.

Fear Aura. Any creature hostile to Arantor that starts its turn within 20 feet of him must make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw, unless Arantor is incapacitated. On a failed save, the creature is frightened until the start of its next turn. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to Arantor's Fear Aura for the next 24 hours.

Limited Magic Immunity. Arantor can't be affected or detected by spells of 3rd level or lower unless he wishes to be. He has advantage on saving throws against all other spells and magical effects.

Turn Resistance. Arantor has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

Rejuvenation. Physical destruction cannot end the existence of Arantor. Without the fulfillment of specific conditions, the remains of Arantor lie still and slowly disincorporate into mist. Meanwhile the horizons darken and a strong wind begins to blow as a violent thunderstorm rolls in. At dusk, Arantor awakes within the storm and reenacts the night he murdered Imrissa before returning to his lair. During the storm it is possible to depart Monadhan through the mists. However, renewed patrols of death giants will attempt to stop anyone from escaping in such a manner. The only way to permanently destroy Arantor and dissolve the domain is to have him truly repent for the murder of his daughter and to utter her name in genuine sorrow.

Actions

Multiattack. Arantor makes three attacks: one with his bite and two with his claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing and 2d8 Necrotic damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) slashing and 2d4 cold damage.

Breath Weapons (Recharge 5-6). The dragon uses one of the following breath weapons.

Cold Breath. Arantor exhales an icy blast in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Betraying Breath. Imrissa exhales dazing gas in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed for 1 minute or until they successfully attack one of their allies. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Legendary Actions

Arantor can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Arantor regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Dragon Stride. Arantor teleports 50ft away from its current position.

Furious Onslaught. Arantor attacks once, all enemy creatures within 20ft radius with a claw attack.

Wing Attack (Costs 2 Actions). Arantor beats his wings. Each creature within 20 ft. of Arantor must succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw or take 28 (4d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone.



Sunderheart



Sunderheart



The story of Sunderheart is the story of love that died. Two lovers, Ivania Dreygu and Vorno Kahnebor, born into rivaling noble houses, their love was denied by their elders. But the two conniving lovers defied their families, and their love grew ever stronger until they swore a pact with each other to always be together. Through trickery, deception, poison, and murder, they killed both of their families until they were the only ones left standing. And then they departed their home city for Harrack Unarth.

As they got there, their ability and their deviousness caught the eye of the Emperor of Bael Turath, and he recognized in them two who were as corrupt as he was. For they both carried dark secrets — Ivania was what her family had called a “troubled child”, arranging accidents for her nursemaids and servants, and Vorno was a cannibal, though his family (and later Ivania) had managed to hide this fact. Both of them had sunk further into depravity after they got together, and they both partook in debauchery of all kinds.

Harrack Turath was therefore chosen to be the first city in the empire to deal with the devils of the Nine Hells, and Ivania and Vorno agreed to a contract with Nephigor, a chain devil. They were promised that they would live their lives together for all eternity, and for that their souls were forfeit, for Nephigor knew that in time their love would die. Both lived for decades though, and the experiments with the devils and the contracts that the empire engaged in got worse. But then the two slowly started to fall out with each other. Vorno withdrew into himself and became more and more paranoid, aware that ANY danger now threatened his very soul along with his life. Ivania, however, took joy in living instead, each day drawing further into a deep pit of continued debauchery. She tried, time and time again, to draw out the man that she had loved, but she only ever managed to do so for brief moments, and finally, she had enough.

She selected the most beautiful girl she could find and gave the girl everything: food, drink, spices, alcohol, and drugs. And then she left her for Vorno to find, knowing that he could not deny his craving when he saw her flesh. And he reacted exactly as she suspected, but unbeknownst to him, Ivania had fed the girl with toxins, and while the girl felt nothing, Vorno felt every agonizing moment of his own death. At that point, they were drawn into the Mists.

Now, the two have become one — always living together, fused at the spine. During the day Lady Ivania is in charge and she diverts herself with all manner of unsavoury entertainment, while the undead Ghoul takes over during the night, and stalks the empty halls of the Tomb City side of the palace.

Like them, the city is split. Living City and Dead City. Black Water Bay and Town, Night and Day. Adventures in Sunderheart can either focus on this clash in dualities or on the idea of love turned sour. Perhaps they came here looking for the Witch of Drowning Street, sent by her sister from the outside world. Perhaps they arrived here as one of the strange shipwrecks that end up sloshing flotsam against the First Wall. Regardless, they should soon find themselves embroiled in the dichotomy of the living and dead — even surviving the first night might be difficult if they have nowhere to go. Should they survive and slay any undead, they might even find the relatives knocking on their door complaining about how they killed their ancestors. If there is a particularly good-looking member of the adventuring party, they might even find themselves invited to Lady Ivania’s palace where she’ll hire them for a number of jobs, lulling them into a false sense of security as she asks them to deal with various, real, threats. All the while she’ll be planning on subverting the party member and having her way with them, one way or the other. But only the gods can help them if they mention the obvious Ghoul upon her back.

*“If music be the food of love, play on,
Give me excess of it; that surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.”*

~ William Shakespeare, Twelfth Night

Culture Level:	Chivalric
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, urban, lake, and swamp
Year Formed:	450 BC
Population:	3,000
Races (%):	Humans 80%, Halflings 15%, Tieflings 4%, Other 1%
Languages:	Abyssal, Common, Halfling
Religions:	Zehir (an aspect of Seth)
Government:	Aristocracy
Ruler(s):	Lady Ivania Dreygu
Darklord(s):	Lady Ivania Dreygu/ The Ghoul
Nationality:	Sunderian
Analog:	Romeo and Juliet

Sunderheart

Local Fauna:

As the city of Sunderheart is split into two, so too is the land itself, with the upper part being the city, and the lower parts, outside the First Wall, being the Black Bay.

The Black Bay is the only part of the city that holds any real form of animal life, save what pets the living may keep in the Living City. Here, on the Farm Islands, human and halfling farmers breed pigs that give birth to dozens of piglets. Other animals either breed too slowly or aren't hardy (or tasty) enough for the farmers to bother with, so they stick to pigs.

The waters of the Black Bay are also fairly well filled with fish, which are caught from small boats used to sail on the Bay itself. While the boats are also used on the Grimriver canal that cuts through the city itself, the locals avoid fishing there for fear of waking the undead.

Then there are the Forest Islands, as the locals call them. These islands appear on the edges of the Black Bay, coming and going within the Mists, seemingly without rhyme or reason. Here unfortunate travelers might find dire wolves, worgs, and gigantic boars if they're not careful. All these fearsome animals are exceedingly aggressive and will attack any humanoid they see.

Local Flora:

As with animal life, plant life is limited to the islands of the Black Bay. The Farm islands with their pigs and farmers are home to some hardy crops that are incredibly abundant, even though the actual crops look disfigured and inedible. They are all perfectly safe, even though they look terrible.

When the Forest Islands appear, locals take to them quickly and harvest whatever lumber they can find, though they never leave sight of their boats — to get lost on one of these islands, when they're reclaimed from the Mists, is to be lost forever.

Native Horrors

The waters of the Black Bay are almost entirely black, even at the height of a bright summer day. Light only penetrates about five feet down, and none are foolish enough to go swimming here. Both hydras and chuuls have attacked from the waters in the past, taking fishermen, farmers, and dredgers on the First Wall with them. The locals suspect that something worse lurks in the depths, but they do not know what that might be. All they know is that the chuuls and hydras appear to be fleeing from something on oc-

casion. In reality, the black color of the waters is due to the wastrilith that makes its home on the bottom of the Black Bay. It is usually dormant, and not overly interested in escaping, as it was originally sent to Harrack Unarth to counter the influence of the devils that the empire of Bael Tunarth was working with. It was dragged into the Mists along with the rest of the domain and has found that the independence from its superior in the Bleak Bleak Abyss fits it well.

Within the Second Wall, people are likely to meet those with devilish blood in them. For the most part, these are horribly disfigured half-devils, or even, rarely, full devils. These are the unfortunate survivors of the horrific experiments with devilish blood that the Bael Turath attempted before the empire fell.

Finally, there is the Tomb City with its hordes of undead. During the day they stay in their tombs and broken down buildings, but during the night, they descend into the Living City in great funeral barges, looking for victims. They avoid any building that is dark, or where the door is locked (even if it is not otherwise heavily barred or defended. Those who let light out into the street through anything more than a stained glass window, even a crack in the shutters, are assaulted as are those who forget to lock their doors. These unfortunates are never seen again.



Sunderheart

Terrain type

Sunderheart is dominated by the four parts of the domain: The Tomb City, the Living City, the Bleak Abyss, and the Black Bay. The Black Bay is the lowest part of the domain, a large lake that covers the southern part of the domain until it terminates in the Mists, from which the Forest Islands appear. At the northern end of the domain is the Bleak Abyss, with the northernmost parts of the Tomb City hanging precariously above it — each year, more and more of the Tomb City drops away into the Bleak Abyss. The Bleak Abyss itself is exactly what it sounds like, a drop of several hundred feet until it is wrapped entirely in darkness, and even the Mists that otherwise surround the domain disappear into the darkness here.

No one knows what is at the bottom, as any who go here are too terrified to explore further. Even those who have despaired of ever leaving Sunderheart and decided to take the final way out, find that they're too terrified to jump into the Bleak Abyss from the Tomb City, and instead choose the certain death of a jump into the Living City.

The City itself is divided into two parts, the Tomb City in the north, and the Living City in the south. There's a separation between the two of several hundred feet.

Important Landmarks

Broken Library

The Broken Library sits on the very far end of the Tomb City, overhanging the Bleak Abyss, though it never quite seems willing to topple into the vast darkness below. The library holds lore, books, and artifacts from the time of Bael Turath, but only a few survivors from the time when Sunderheart came into being know of this, mainly the Wizard of the White Tower, Lady Ivania Dreygu, and the Witch of Drowning Street who suspects this — though she was dragged into the Mists later.

The Broken Library holds something unusual, the ghost of the chain devil Nephigor, who arranged for the contract between Hell, Lady Ivania Dreygu, and Vorno Kahnebor when they wished for their lives to be together forever. When they died, Nephigor had expected to be returned to the Nine Hells in the normal fashion, but instead, he found himself trapped as a unique spirit within the Tomb City. He ever seeks to escape, preferably by destroying both Lady Ivania Dreygu or The Ghoul, so that they'll get sent to the Nine Hells and he will escape home.

First Wall

First Wall is more of a dam in nature, separating the Black Bay and the Living City from each other. It allows a trickle of the Black Bay into the city, where it flows through the Living City, the Tomb City, and eventually ends up in the Bleak Abyss (though the Bay never runs out of water), in a steady network of canals called the Grimriver. Every day, dredgers cast their lines, poles, and nets from the top of the First Wall and into the black waters of the Bay, sifting through the mysterious parcels, barrels, and boxes that flow out from the Mists, past the Farm and Forest Islands, and end here. The goods fished out from here end up in the markets of the city, where they generate a small amount of income for the dredgers. Anything living fished up by the dredgers is normally quickly killed, as the Sunderians fear that such creatures are evil and have been sent by the Mists.

Glimmerhope Crag

Glimmerhope Crag surrounds the Black Bay on the westerns and eastern sides, rising up hundreds of feet from the waters. It forms an impassable barrier as it is far too sheer to climb. At the bottom of the crag, just barely above the waters, a small farming community of tieflings has settled, splitting their time between farming and mining gold and copper from the rock-face. They guard their territory vigorously and anyone who tries to steal from them ends up face down in the waters of the Black Bay itself, as food for the chulls and fish.

Living City

The Living City bustles with boat traffic on the many canals across the Grimriver canals, and foot traffic on the bridges. The people here act as they would in any other world, except for their haste in returning to their houses at night. For at night, the living dead sail out in funeral barges from within the Tomb City, and kill anyone they encounter, though they leave locked buildings alone. None of the buildings here have normal windows. They are either empty openings that have wooden shutters or they are stained glass. This is due to a decree from Lady Dreygu that forbids any reflective surface bigger than a hand mirror, which includes windows — so that she is not forced to witness the abomination strapped to her back. A night hag makes her home on Drowning Street, disguised as a local, the Witch of Drowning Street, a seer with eyes in her hands, and the eyes in her head sewn shut. She's constantly searching for a way out and seems to share some sort of connection with her sister, who lives in the ruins where Harrack Unarth once stood. Both would like to reunite, but they've yet to find a way to pull the Witch from the grip of the Mists.

Sunderheart

Prison

The city watch of Sunderheart has few rules. Nothing keeps the guards from subjecting the prisoners to abuse, but few are arrested without being caught in the act or having several witnesses confirm the crime. Simply put, Lady Dreygu does not want the hassle that such disorder would cause. Unbeknownst to her though, the city watch has been infiltrated by cultists of Zehir, an aspect of Seth. These snake-worshippers hide yuan-ti among their numbers, who plot to overthrow Lady Dreygu and take her place as rulers of Sunderheart. To anyone who has ever met normal yuan-ti, these snake-like people are clearly insane, suffering from some maddening plague, though this is not evident to anyone who has never met the otherwise cold-blooded serpents.

River Palace

Home of both Lady Dreygu and The Ghoul, the River Palace straddles the divide between the Living City and the Tomb City. The northern end of the Palace is in the Tomb City and is mostly in ruins. This is where The Ghoul roams during the night when he is in charge of their shared body. The southern end of the Palace lies in the Living City and is still fully intact. This is where Lady Dreygu holds court during the day, though she prefers to distract herself with balls, galas, elaborate dinners, and such. All the people who work here have been specifically selected from among the Sunderians because their deformities are either minor or easily hidden, as the Lady does not like being reminded of the creature that is bound to her. Anyone who does so — though these are few as the servants are likely to warn anyone who encounters the Lady — suffers a terrible and painful death.

Second Wall

The Second Wall separates the Living City from the Tomb City, and it is a stout fortification though the populace has been banned from mounting it. Both the dead and living obey this command as the sealed halls and corridors hold the tortured remains of the experiments from Bael Turath, most of whom have devil blood in them. What they exactly are, no one knows, but anyone who goes here dies without fail, and if even the undead are avoiding it, surely the living should too.

Tomb City

This city of the dead overlooks the Living City like a menacing shadow. Graves cluster in alleys, mausoleums merge with ancient mansions, and this gigantic graveyard serves as home to the dead Sunderians, who are buried here by the locals with reverence — at least during the day. During the night, it is filled with the undead and avoided by anyone with sense.

White Tower

The White Tower is home to a once-powerful wizard, now turned lich, though he too is stuck here. The tower has no doors or windows, and the only opening is a balcony several hundred feet in the air. From here, the Wizard of the White Tower watches the rest of the undead every night, as they lay claim to the Living City for a few hours. Though he seeks to escape from Sunderheart, the lich takes glee in scrying upon Lady Dreygu during the night, watching her wrestle with her conscience as The Ghoul goes to work.

Towns and villages:

None

Neighboring domain(s):

None (Some suspect that jumping into the Bleak Abyss will deposit the jumper in the Shadow Rift, but this has never been tested.)

Fun Fact:

For one night each month, the living and the dead coexist peacefully. On the Night of the Black Carnival, the living don masks for the night and the doors and windows are flung open while light floods the streets from lanterns and fireworks. Great feasts are prepared on tables for the living and their ancestors and the citizens make merry with the undead. On this night, there is no danger to the living, unless they fail to wear a mask.



Lady Ivania Dreygu and Vorno Kahnebor

"Enter! Welcome to my gala!

Tonight's theme is....

What's that? My back?

Such a shame. I was looking forward to getting to know you."

~ Lady Ivania Dreygu

Ivania Dreygu is a statuesque tiefling standing near six foot tall. Her hair is raven black, as are her eyes, which perfectly compliments her magenta skin. A delicate set of horns rised from her forehead. She is always immaculately dressed in a dress that appears newly cut and made. Jovial and friendly, one thing disturbs — hanging from her back is an absolute horror.

The Ghoul is a predator, nothing more. His pale skin is torn and rent by deep cuts. These cuts don't bleed and heal rapidly, quickly reopening elsewhere on The Ghoul's skin. The Ghoul's teeth are cracked and his lolling tongue hangs loosely from his mouth. He lopes with surprising speed through the hallways of his castle and the rooftops of the flooded city, dropping onto prey and savaging it. Ivania hangs loosely from his back, occasionally weeping as The Ghoul tears into an innocent.

Background: Ivania Dreygu and Vorno Kahnebor were born into noble houses in a devil worshipping empire that ruled half the world. Their noble houses, the Dreygu and the Kahnebor, hated each other and had engaged in a shadowy war for millennia. It was inconceivable that any members of the two houses wouldn't attempt to kill each other, and it was incomprehensible that two members would fall in love. When Ivania and Vorno did just that, the lords and ladies of the households agreed on something for perhaps the first time in over a thousand years. To make matters worse, the two lovers were deeply troubled, even by the standards of a debauchorous devil worshipping empire. House Dreygu considered Ivania's appetites to be disconcerting. House Kahnebor made sure that anyone who seemed curious about Vorno's distressing Midnight Feasts disappeared.

But despite, or perhaps because of their parents objections, love between the two grew. Eventually they had to be forcibly separated to preserve the honor of their families. Vorno cut his way out of his own house the following day, and at midnight he raided the Dreygu compound and the lovers disappeared into the night.

The lovers ran for the next few years. Their houses sent bounty hunters and troops after them, but the hapless hunters had their heads sent back to the two families by Ivania and Vorno. The story of the young lovers outrunning and outfighting their own families became famous after a time. Plays were written about them. Short novels described Vorno's bloody flight from his house and raid to free Ivania. Soon even the Emperor had heard of them.

Gaining the attention of the Emperor turned Ivania and Vorno from fugitives to rebels. Gaining his favor turned them from rebels to celebrities. The young couple began to arrange debaucheries for the Emperor and his closest allies. Slaves were brought in from the farthest reaches of the world to fulfill their debased appetites.

Soon, the young couple were being given the throne of the empire's greatest city. The mayor of the city was conveniently drowned and the young couple moved into his castle.

The couple threw a gala to announce their arrival, and in the back rooms and hidden chambers of the castle it never ended. Ivania lorded her power over the others, choosing temporary lovers amongst her sycophants and bringing them to the bed she shared with Vorno. He, for his part, had elaborate feasts with delicacies from all over the world. As the night moved on, the courses became more elaborate until at midnight, drugged humans laid on massive silver platters were placed on the tables. Vorno and his guests devoured them alive.

When the Emperor decided to move beyond worshipping devils and desired to make a pact with them to secure his rule forever, he came to Ivania and Vorno. Ivania and Vorno had many friends and one of the closest was Nephigor. Nephigor was a fixture at their many revelries and only the couple knew his secret. He was a chain devil from the depths of Hell. Nephigor had pushed their parties far beyond what the mortal plane could offer and brought delights that only eternity could provide.

After helping the Emperor receive immortality, Nephigor made similar deals with Ivania and Vorno. They would not die from age nor disease, but if they did die, their souls belonged to Nephigor's mysterious masters.

By the time it was fashionable amongst the empire's elite to bargain with devils for eternal youth, Ivania and Vorno had been young for decades.

Lady Ivania Dreygu and Vorno Kahnebor

Despite the fierceness of their love in younger years, Vorno began to brood. One simple fall or an assassin's blade would consign him to an eternity of torment. He soon became jealous of Ivania's lovers and petulant when she didn't pay him attention.

Ivania, for her part, began to tire of Vorno's constant whining. After a decade she had had enough. She found the most beautiful woman in the city, and brought her to the palace. There she intoxicated the young woman with dozens of elixirs and compounds. She knew Vorno would be watching, he always did. She finally left the young girl on a silver platter in the middle of Vorno's chambers. Vorno couldn't resist. He devoured the young woman. By the time he tasted the poison, it was already too late.

Ivania had carefully drugged the woman, then injected her with poisons that would take hours to have any effect. Vorno died in agony, Ivania watching and smiling the entire time.

At the funeral march a blizzard roared in from nowhere, the rivers that ran through the city jumped their banks. The Dark Powers claimed their prize.

Current Sketch: Ivania rules Sunderheart during the day. She makes her servants throw her grand balls everyday. During the day, The Ghoul hangs from her back, sleeping. Ivania never wears the same dress twice, always eats the finest food, and dances with the prettiest people at her galas. If a servant fails her, or the dress isn't beautiful enough, the food is lackluster or her dance partner falters, guards appear from nowhere and drag the offender away. Ivania and the rest of the party guests pretend not to notice. Ivania hates to be stared at. Even a glance at her back will bring the guards to her side.

As the sun hangs low in the sky, Ivania excuses herself and returns to her bed chambers. Her servants and guests wait until she has left the room, then flee for their lives. On her way to her chambers Ivania ignores the screaming, struggling victims bound hand and foot outside her door.

Once inside Ivania lays on her bed and closes her eyes, and The Ghoul awakens. The Ghoul is a predator and immediately moves to devour the tasty morsels outside his door. As The Ghoul feasts, Ivania hangs from his back, pretending to sleep. She ignores the cracking bones and pleas for mercy, even as tears stream from her eyes. The Ghoul stalks the castle at night, moving into the flooded city only if the castle is empty. The Ghoul is intelligent and loves to stalk his

prey before he closes in. The look of surprise and terror on a victim's face before he strikes is like the finest wine for him. Many of Ivania's servants lock themselves in their chambers to tear apart her old dress and try to turn it into something new. No one leaves their chambers. Anyone outside is food for The Ghoul.

Nephigor is trapped in the Broken Library, but has lost his physical form. The chain devil now resembles a ghost more than a fiend, and the change has driven him quite mad.. He may move anywhere within its walls, but cannot set foot outside. Nephigor has used his time well, he knows more about Sunderheart and the conjoined dark lords than any creature. Nephigor cannot be permanently killed while in the library. If he is slain he reforms three days later in the lowest catacomb.

Darklord's Tactics: Even though Ivania claims the day, The Ghoul rules the night, both are awake and act with one will if they are attacked. If Ivania or The Ghoul attack an individual, especially one that can't fight back, the sleeper will often pretend to be asleep so they don't rob the awake dark lord of their fun.

Ivania and The Ghoul are incredibly difficult opponents to fight. Both sides of the darklord roll for separate initiative, and both can move their conjoined body. The Ghoul is a vicious melee combatant that prefers to hit and run while Ivania keeps her distance and uses spells. The Ghoul is a natural climber and will end his turn in a good position for Ivania to cast spells. They have been melded together for decades and have developed a unique martial art that makes full use of their abilities and the couple are deadly combatants. Ivania and The Ghoul live in the River Palace within the city and Dread Domain of Sunderheart. Ivania never leaves the palace as she wishes to stay ignorant of her city's true fate and The Ghoul rarely leaves as he is too busy hunting and eating servants within the palace. Ivania has a challenge rating of 27 (105,000 XP) if she is encountered in her lair.

Borders: When either darklord closes the borders of Sunderheart, the mists that surround the domain become an impenetrable wall. Creatures that enter the mist are lost inside for 1d10 hours. Shadowy creatures lurk beneath the seas in the mist and many of the creatures that enter it never return.

Lady Ivania Dreygu and Vorno Kahnebor



Ivania Dreygu

Medium humanoid (tiefling), lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (17 with mage armor)

Hit Points 340 (40d8 + 160)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 13 (+1) **DEX** 19 (+4) **CON** 19 (+4) **INT** 19 (+4) **WIS** 17 (+3) **CHA** 22 (+6)

Saving Throws Con +12, Wis +11, Cha +14

Skills Arcana +12, Deception +14, Insight +11, Perception +11, Persuasion +14

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, petrified, stunned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 21

Languages Common, Infernal

Challenge 26 (90,000 XP)

Rejuvenation. Ivania cannot be permanently destroyed until she atones for her past sins. If she dies, her spirit remains and comes back to life within her Domain of Dread with all her hit points and The Ghoul attached in 1d10 days.

Dread Symbiosis. Ivania always shares her hit points with The Ghoul, but they both roll initiative independently and act on their own turns in combat. Ivania also shares her space with The Ghoul and if she moves, The Ghoul moves with her. If Ivania is targeted by a spell, she can choose for The Ghoul to become the target instead. In addition, Ivania has advantage on saving throws against being blinded, deafened, stunned, and knocked unconscious, and when a creature provokes an opportunity attack from her, she can use her reaction to let The Ghoul make an attack in her stead.

Infernal Wrath. If a creature harms Ivania or The Ghoul, Ivania has advantage on melee attacks made against the creature

before the end of its next turn. If such an attack hits, it deals an additional 14 (4d6) fire damage.

Innate Spellcasting. Ivania's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. She can innately cast the following spells (spell save DC 22), requiring no material components:

At will: *false life* (5th level), *levitate* (self only), *mage armor* (self only), *silent image*
1/Day each: *feeblemind*, *finger of death*

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Ivania fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Ivania has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Spellcasting. Ivania is a 17th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 22, +14 to hit with spell attacks). She regains her expended spell slots when she finishes a short or long rest. She knows the following warlock spells: Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast*, *fire bolt*, *friends*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*, *shocking grasp*
1st–5th level (4 5th-level slots): *banishment*, *burning hands*, *flame strike*, *hellish rebuke*, *magic circle*, *scorching ray*, *scrying*, *stinking cloud*, *suggestion*, *wall of fire*
6th level (1/Long Rest): *mass suggestion*
7th level (1/Long Rest): *forcecage*
8th level (1/Long Rest): *power word stun*
9th level (1/Long Rest): *power word kill*

Actions

Multiattack. Ivania makes two shadow ray attacks.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage.

Shadow Ray. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +14 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) cold plus 11 (2d10) necrotic damage.

Legendary Actions

Ivania can take 5 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Ivania regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Cast a Cantrip. Ivania casts a cantrip.

Cast 1st–5th Level Spell (Costs 3 Actions). Ivania casts a spell, expending a 5th-level spell slot.

Cast 6th–9th Level Spell (Costs 4 Actions). Ivania casts a spell of 6th to 9th level.

Cast Innate At Will Spell. Ivania casts an innate at will spell.

Cloak of Shadowy Flight (Costs 2 Actions). Ivania and The Ghoul magically teleport, along with any equipment they are wearing or carrying, up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space Ivania can see. If the chosen space is in dim light or darkness, Ivania and The Ghoul become invisible until the start of Ivania's next turn or until either of them makes an attack or casts a spell.

Lady Ivania Dreygu and Vorno Kahnebor

Flesh Bond (Costs 3 Actions). Ranged Spell Attack: +14 to hit, range 120 ft., two creatures that are within 5 feet of each other. Hit: 15 (2d8 + 6) cold damage plus 14 (4d6) acid damage. If the attack hits both targets, they are fused together and become restrained. The condition lasts until a creature spends an action to tear the fused flesh with a successful DC 16 Strength check or by hitting either of the targets with a weapon that deals slashing damage. When the condition ends, both targets take 3 (1d6) slashing damage.

Ghoul Lunge (Costs 2 Actions). The Ghoul moves up to half its speed and makes a melee attack.

Shadow Ray (Costs 3 Actions). Ivania makes a shadow ray attack.

Lair Actions

When fighting inside her lair, Ivania and The Ghoul can invoke the ambient magic to take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), they can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects, each tied to their name listed below:

Until initiative count 20 on the next round, Ivania's dark magic weighs heavily on her enemies. A hostile creature in the lair can't expend spell slots or use abilities that recharge on a short or long rest.

Until initiative count 20 on the next round, when a hostile creature in the lair fails a saving throw, Ivania can use a reaction to magically paralyze the creature until the end of its next turn.

The Ghoul releases an otherworldly shriek to call upon an erinyes (MM, pg. 73) that carries a rope of entanglement. Roll initiative for the erinyes which acts on its own turns and appears in an unoccupied space within 60 feet of The Ghoul, obeying its commands.

The Ghoul's ferocity overcomes his mind. Until initiative count 20 on the next round, The Ghoul can either turn a miss of one of his own attacks into a hit or turn a hit into a critical hit

Ivania and The Ghoul can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and they can't use the same effect two rounds in a row. Each of them can take a lair action only every other turn (for example, if Ivania takes a lair action in round 1, only The Ghoul can take a lair action in round 2, then Ivania can take one in round 3, and so on). The DM decides who takes the first lair action.

The Ghoul

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 17

Hit Points -

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	24 (+7)	19 (+4)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +13, Dex +15, Con +12

Skills Acrobatics +15, Athletics +13, Intimidation +12, Stealth +15

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned, stunned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 26 (90,000 XP)

Dread Symbiosis. Ivania shares her hit points with The Ghoul, but they both roll their own initiative independently and act on their own turns. The Ghoul also shares its space with Ivania and if it moves, Ivania moves with it. If The Ghoul is targeted by a spell, The Ghoul can choose for Ivania to become the target instead. In addition, The Ghoul has advantage on saving throws against being blinded, deafened, stunned, and knocked unconscious.

Grave Gaze. When a creature that can see The Ghoul starts its turn within 30 feet of The Ghoul, The Ghoul can force it to make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw if The Ghoul isn't incapacitated. On a failed save, a creature becomes vulnerable to necrotic damage until the end of its next turn. Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't see The Ghoul or Ivania until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at The Ghoul or Ivania in the meantime, it must immediately make the save.

Into the Fray. The Ghoul adds a d10 to its initiative rolls.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If The Ghoul fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. The Ghoul has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Rampage. When The Ghoul reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, The Ghoul can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.

Actions

Multiaction. The Ghoul makes three attacks. If The Ghoul hits the same target with three claw attacks during the same turn, the target becomes cursed, and must succeed on a DC 21 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. Until the curse is removed, the target can't regain hit points.

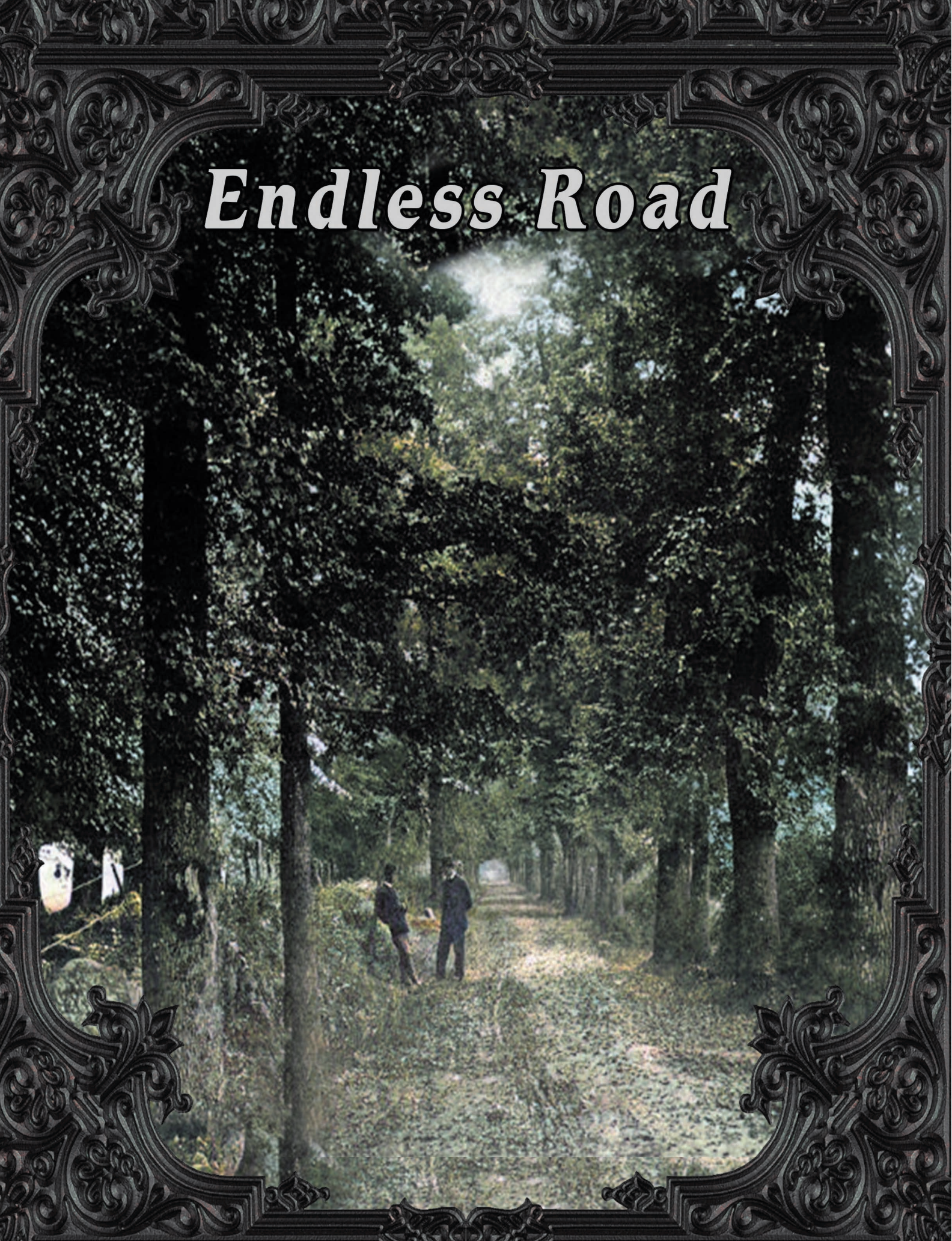
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d12 + 5) piercing damage plus 22 (4d10) necrotic damage. Ivania regains hit points equal to the necrotic damage dealt.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) slashing damage. If the target is a creature other than an elf or undead, it must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Reactions

Bestial Leap. When a hostile creature comes within 5 feet of The Ghoul, The Ghoul can make a claw attack against the creature and jump 20 feet in a direction of its choosing without provoking opportunity attacks.

Endless Road



The Endless Road



In spite of its name, the Endless Road is not a single road. It is more like a network of them, laid out in an intricate pattern, in which can be found the estate of the darklord Eli van Hassen, as well as those unfortunates who have been caught within the domain. There are, however, roads here that are endless, and which will continue to go on and on. These two main thoroughfares always bring travelers back to the network, but if one sticks strictly to the road, one will find no end.

The man named Eli, and his daughter Talitha are the cursed here — father having convinced daughter to accuse a hero of a horrible crime, one that carried the sentence of death. The hero's only real crime was to be charming, dashing, and save the community from a hydra. Making himself more popular than the patriarch of the van Hassen family was a mistake from which he would never recover.

Upon the decapitation of the Horseman, whose name has been forgotten, the van Hassen estate and all those within it were dragged into the Mists, and the Endless Road formed. But where the estate transformed slightly, buildings moved a bit, the fence was no longer wood but wrought iron, and so on. Minor changes, but ones that were enough to convince Eli and his servants that they were somewhere else. But as the surroundings changed, so did the nature of the Horseman. Gone was the noble hero, and in its place was a villain whose heart was every bit as dark as Eli's and one who was far more deadly. For in a different reality, the Horseman had not been a noble hero, but a dark villain who had made a deal with the devil himself. And this Horseman sought vengeance upon Eli for the loss of his head. And now, for the man who wanted to rule, he is tormented by the fact that he can never leave the estate without the Horseman coming to take him. No one comes to the winding road on purpose. Instead, it comes for them, dragging them in here, to remind Eli of his imprisonment and the conflict with the Headless Horseman. As such, the heroes should inevitably find themselves at the gates of the van Hassen Estate, potentially pursued by the Horseman, and they should soon find that while their host might seem gracious at first, strange accidents befall any who stay here, and who aren't a part of the household.

"I would rather be a little nobody than to be an evil somebody." ~ Abraham Lincoln

Culture Level:	Chivalric
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate hills, woods, and plains
Year Formed:	704 (presumed)
Population:	4,500
Races (%):	Humans 99%, Other 1%
Languages:	Common
Religions:	The Laughing God, various as people have come from all over to the domain
Government:	Aristocracy
Ruler(s):	Eli van Hassen
Darklord(s):	Eli van Hassen
Nationality:	Barovian
Analog:	The Legend of Sleepy Hollow

Local Fauna:

Wolves are the main threat within the Endless Road, sticking mainly to the Wailing Wood, and there are few other predators present. Most that are here, have ended here in the same manner as the inhabitants — by pure bad luck.

The van Hassen Estate and Havenshire are both safe enough from predators that they've been able to breed a few normal animals, especially cows and sheep for their meat, milk, hide, and wool. Horses are cherished far beyond all other animals for their (hopeful) ability to outride the Headless Horseman and his fearsome steed. As a result, the horses of the Endless Road are all incredible specimens of their kind, with more strength, endurance, and speed than horses almost anywhere else.

Strangely, there are no birds within the Endless road, almost as if they have been scared away before the road can manifest to take them.

Local Flora:

The Endless Road is dominated by deciduous trees, especially along the road network. They're all old and gnarled, with branches that stretch like grasping hands towards those that dare use the roads. The Wailing Wood and the trees therein are so thick that almost no other plantlife makes it here, apart from some rather dangerous predatory ones like assassin vines and poisonous mushrooms.

Native Horrors

Apart from the Headless Horseman and his entourage, the Wailing Wood is beset with predatory plants, wolves, and ghosts, the remains of those that died within the woods. The Stone Orchard is also home

The Endless Road

to a number of undead creatures, especially ghouls. These undead only rarely stray from their homes, unless ordered by The White Reeve (a unique shadow that rules them) or Tavnanda (a lich that serves as the Reeve's court magician). Locals also claim that fey can be found in the Wailing Wood, but no traveler has ever been able to verify this.

Terrain type

Underneath the woods and the farmland can be found rolling hills, as they wind themselves through the land around the road network. When the road sucks in its victims the lands around them slowly change, with a light mist draped over everything, until it looks like another one of the endless roads within. There are no extremes of cold and hot here though, with mild winters and cool summers. The wind and rain can get rather depressing though, especially for those who haven't been here for long.

Important Landmarks

The Abbey of Cherished Jocularity

This walled monastery is filled with monks who are friendly and jovial, often offering travelers a night or two of safety and a chance to visit their chapel or meet the laughing abbot.

They are all mad and worship the Laughing God, and their abbot preaches that it is not their faith that keeps the headless horseman at bay, nor their strong walls, but their laughter and good spirits. Any who frowns or fails to laugh at the abbot's jests find themselves ambushed by the monks as they attempt to murder the traveler — laughing maniacally all the time as they tear the unfortunate soul to pieces.

The Crossroads

The Crossroads is at the center of the road network that makes up the Endless Road, and no matter what anyone does, the Crossroads is *always* exactly 149 miles from the grave of the Horseman. Locals whisper that this is a place of power, and that dark fey gather here on moonlit nights and tempt mortals to their deaths.

The Horseman's Grave

A small patch of ground swells here, an unmarked grave, but one that never has any grass or other plants growing on it. Every time the Horseman rides, whether on the Endless Road or the Winding Road, he always makes a stop here. Anyone found to be disturbing the grave is slaughtered. Those who appear to respect it are usually left alone.

The Stone Orchard

The Stone Orchard is the cemetery of the Endless Roads, an expanse of rolling hills, absolutely covered in gravestones. A single man, known only as the Groundskeeper, is responsible for this. Most of the time, he is here burying the dead, but otherwise he can be found, sitting in his mule-drawn cart, driving along the roads, and attending the small communities. Any that do not have room for their dead, who cannot afford the burial cost, or who died on the road, are taken by him and taken to the Stone Orchard and given a proper burial. Somehow, it seems as if the Groundskeeper always knows the proper burial rituals for any given person.

Inside the Stone Orchard can be found both the groundskeeper's shack — a rather rickety wooden building where he keeps his tools and his mule. He's hardly ever home, as he is always working. The other thing that can be found inside the Stone Orchard is the Village of the Dead. It is home to hundreds of undead, especially ghouls, all ruled by the White Reeve. They live in warrens underneath the graveyard that stretch out for miles around. They rarely bother anyone here unless they are here after nightfall, at which point they become a danger. Strangely, neither Horseman nor the undead EVER bother the Groundskeeper.

The Wailing Wood

The Wailing Wood takes up the majority of the domain when one is away from the roads, apart from a few very small communities (no more than fifty people, outside of Havenshire and the Van Hassen Estate). Like the road, the forest stretches out forever in all directions, and many have lost their lives here, trying to escape the horseman, only to find themselves dying of thirst or starvation.

The Whispering Well

The Whispering Well stands at an intersection of roads. It's an old stone well that has fallen into disrepair with missing bricks in the stone, a leaky roof, and a rope that can only barely hold up the old rusty bucket. But something lives here. *Something* with knowledge, including how to escape from the place or who really holds power (as most assume it is the Horseman). What it is, no one knows as no one has seen, and such knowledge comes at a price.

Van Hassen Estate

The Van Hassen Estate rests on several hundred acres of land, and some 500 people live here in total by now. Only about fifty of these followed the Van Hassens as their original servants while the

The Endless Road

rest have sworn fealty to Eli van Hassen as payment for being kept safe behind the strong stone walls that surround the entire estate. The walls are engraved with the holy symbols of numerous faiths, but the Lawgiver is especially prominent — Eli believes that his faith and the strength of these symbols is what keeps the Headless Horseman from pursuing him onto the grounds. Only here is he safe. Within the grounds are several small forests, and much farmland, which has made Eli quite rich over the years, as he owns everything here. Three places hold special interest to a visitor here: Traveler's Rest, the Rose Garden, and the Van Hassen Manor. Traveler's Rest is a four-storey inn, run by a gnome bard called Carspen Rhenk. Carspen was one of Eli's first new servants after he found himself stuck on the Endless Road, and he's been running the inn ever since. Here, visitors can find lodgings — those who swear fealty to Eli get it for free until new houses can be built for them on the Estate grounds and they can find work.

Others have to pay, but are constantly watched. The Rose Garden is the haunt of Talitha, the daughter of Eli. She's found that this is one of the few places where she can get away from her own sense of guilt, and so she spends her time here, a drab and black vision among the colorful flowers. The Garden also serves as the cemetery for those who die on the estate, as they are buried here, and serve as nourishment for the plants. The van Hassen Manor is a large stone house with intricate columns, and more than one hundred rooms. Glass windows allow light into each room, while vibrant tapestries bedeck the walls.

Eli has a large staff of guards and servants to serve his every whim, though even they do not know all the rooms, especially as the manor seems to react to Eli's wishes, with some rooms sealing off with troublesome visitors inside them when needed, while others come and go.

Towns and villages:

Havenshire

Havenshire is a large town of some 3,400 inhabitants. It is located on a small island of arable land, with a sluggish river surrounding it, and keeping them safe from the Horseman as the only access is a sturdy wooden bridge that they retract at night. The people here are extremely unfriendly, if not downright hostile though. Their island is running out of space for people, and they do not want anyone else coming in and taking up their space and safety. They're desperately scrabbling for safety from the Headless Horseman, and any visitors are likely to jeopardize this. Unlike most settlements of this size, there is a large constabulary force that consists mostly of retired mercenaries and soldiers. They've proved their mettle in the past and are more than capable of handling most adventuring companies.

Neighboring domain(s):

None (tied with the Winding Road)

Fun Fact:

When on the Endless Road, the Headless Horseman is subject to the wills of that domain rather than his own, and when here, it is impossible for him to cross running water.



Eli van Hassen

"All I was doing was protecting my family, my people!

He was a threat and I ended it.

That was my job, I was the richest of them all!

I am being punished unfairly.

PLEASE! Let me leave this cursed land!"

~ Eli van Hassen

Eli van Hassen is a human male in his late forties. He wears simple dark gray breeches, a white linen shirt and black jacket. His hair is long, and most of it has gone gray, leaving just the tips as the raven black of his youth. Eli's face is deeply lined, and his eyes are bloodshot. Eli rarely sleeps and when he does he has nightmares of rusty sickles and charging horses.

Background: Tranquility was the meaning of boredom. The van Hassen's ruled the town by default, not because of royal fiat, nor election of adoring townspeople, but because they had the most money and land. The van Hassen's had ruled for generations, and most of them had proved to be competent and reliable overlords. They collected the taxes, but passed it along to the king's agents. They turned the wheat into grain, but only because they owned the mill. Only one road passed through Tranquility, and most travellers didn't even realize they were passing through a town.

Eli van Hassen was the last male of the van Hassen line. He ruled by default, like his ancestors, but hated the town and its people. He had plans for his life, but felt trapped by Tranquility and its pathetic simple folk. Eli's wife died giving birth to the only person that Eli actually cared for, his daughter Talitha.

Eli was a stern if fair ruler, and was generally liked by his people. He hated Tranquility and the boring towns around it. The boredom was shattered one day when a monstrous hydra rampaged out of the surrounding woods and into the farms. Dozens of livestock, pets and neighbors were devoured by the raging beast and none of the peasants had a prayer of stopping it. Eli locked his daughter and servants behind the strong walls of his manor and refused to come out.

A group of peasants left the town looking for help, and returned two weeks later. With them came a man

dressed all in black, riding a charcoal black steed and accompanied by a dozen soldiers. The townspeople, overly excited by the dashing figure, began to call him the Horseman. The Horseman found a room at the inn and spent the night drinking and feasting. He was a talented lute player and regaled the crowd with stories of daring deeds and harrowing adventures. The crowd hung on his every word. Sitting front and center, Talitha was entranced by the brave Horseman who only seemed to have eyes for her.

The next day the Horseman and his soldiers vanished into the woods to hunt down the beast. For three days the town sat with bated breath, only to be relieved when the Horseman and six of his soldiers reappeared, carrying the heads of the beast.

The town sang the praises of the Horseman, and begged him to stay. Much to everyone's surprise, the Horseman agreed to stay for a time. Eli was sick with envy. Even more so once he discovered how much time the Horseman was spending with Talitha. The two went on long walks in the woods, sat for hours talking in the town square, or sitting under the night sky in contented silence. The Horseman never took advantage of Talitha or attempted to sully her honor.

Eventually the Horseman's soldiers left, but he stayed. By this time Eli was mad with jealousy. The townspeople loved the Horseman, none more so than Talitha, and the Horseman had enough gold from his successful adventuring career to purchase far more land than Eli had.

Eventually Eli couldn't stand it any longer. He pulled Talitha aside and told her the Horseman was dangerous. That he could cost the van Hassen's their land and station. Talitha listened and it never even occurred to her that her father might be wrong. She agreed to set a trap for the Horseman.

The next day Talitha and the Horseman were walking by the van Hassen barn when they were beset by dozens of guards. The Horseman fought bravely, using a rusty sickle that was close at hand. He killed several of the guards before their numbers proved too much for him. The Horseman was savagely beaten and taken to the town square.

Talitha told horrible stories about the Horseman. She said he had forced himself upon her and threatened her father if Talitha didn't give into his lewd advances. While the Horseman begged for his life, a woodsman brought an axe. The Horseman's hands were bound and he was forced to kneel. It took a few chops to re-

Eli van Hassen

move the head. The Horseman swore his innocence until he could speak no more. The head was thrown into the stream that ran past Tranquility and the body was buried in a shallow grave near the road. Eli was happy for the first time in weeks. As the sun set, he called for an elaborate feast to be prepared. Still, before he could eat, something felt wrong somehow. He called several of his guards and left his estate to check on the town. As soon as Eli left his estate he was set upon by a demon in black. The creature looked like a man dressed all in black, wielding a sickle and riding a charcoal black charger. Eli panicked and ran for his manor house, abandoning his guards to their fate. Before he had gone twenty paces, his guards stopped screaming. Eli looked back to see a headless man astride a black horse charging at him. Fear gave Eli's legs speed he never knew they had. He sprinted for his manor and arrived just ahead of the Headless Horseman. The Horseman stopped at the edge of the manor house as if he had collided with an invisible barrier. At first Eli was relieved, but then he realized he could never leave his manor house again.

Current Sketch: Eli is trapped in his own domain and rues the day the Horseman came to his small town. Unlike most darklords, Eli is not the most powerful creature in the Winding Road by a considerable margin. The Headless Horseman is an unstoppable titan compared to Eli. Forced to remain in his estate, the hamlets outside of Eli's farm are forever beyond his reach. The knowledge of this drives him mad with frustration and envy. Seeing a wagon travel slowly down the lane outside his farm will send Eli into an apoplectic rage for hours. Eli will not voluntarily leave his estate for any reason, save to rescue Talitha.

Although Eli, Talitha, and their servants have been trapped in Ravenloft for nearly four decades, none of them have aged more than a year. They cannot die from old age or disease.

Darklord's Tactics: As a merchant and a farmer, Eli has practically no experience with weapons. He relies on his guards and minions to win his battles for him. If Eli is directly threatened then the land itself manifests his defense. Eli cannot control this ability and has no idea what may happen. His opponent may slip in mud, or a branch may fall from a nearby tree, striking someone about to do him harm. Eli is usually too busy running to care what happens.

Borders: Eli cannot close the borders of the Winding Road. The darklord himself is effectively trapped within the walls of his estate. Fear of the Horseman keeps Eli a prisoner behind his walls.



Eli van Hassen

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (half plate)

Hit Points 82 (15d8 + 15)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Cha +5

Skills Deception +5, Insight +3, Performance +5, Persuasion +5, Sleight of Hand +4

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Evasion. If Eli is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, Eli instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, Eli can utter a special command or warning whenever a non-hostile creature that it can see within 30 ft. of it makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand Eli. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if Eli is incapacitated.

Nimble Escape. Eli can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of his turns.

Jinx. Eli is protected by a special ability that causes misfortune to afflict those who transgress against him. Yet he has little conscious control over how it will manifest, and it works only in his own estate. All creatures within Eli's estate that are not allied to him, roll all dice with disadvantage with a -5 penalty. All roll results of 10 and under count as a critical failure. When a critical failure occurs, turn the situation to its most probable unfortunate result.

Cringe and Cover. Eli gains a +2 bonus to all Saving throws when he's within 10ft of at least two allies.

Eli van Hassen

Actions

Rapier +1. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Reactions

Parry. The noble adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the noble must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Legendary Actions

Eli can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Eli regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Look Out, Sir! Eli's men are so loyal to him that they would gladly sacrifice themselves. Eli switches places with an ally that he can see and that is within 10ft of him without provoking attacks of opportunities.

Rapier Strike. Eli makes a Rapier attack.

False Order (Requires 2 Actions). Eli commands an enemy he can see within 60ft to attack one of their allies. The targeted creature must succeed on a DC12 Charisma saving throw or move to the closest ally they can see and attack them once. If the closest ally is further than their walking speed, the targeted creature moves as close to them as possible without attacking.

Lair Actions

When fighting inside his lair, Eli can invoke the ambient magic to take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), he can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

Fickle Fate: One creature that threatens Eli takes 2d8 psychic damage and must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall victim to one of the following effects.

1d6 Effect

- 1-3: Knocked Prone
- 4-5: Slowed until the end of the target's next turn
- 6: Incapacitated until the end of the target's next turn

A Foul Fortune: One creature that threatens Eli becomes prone and takes 2d6 psychic damage and must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take one of the following effects until the end of its next turns:

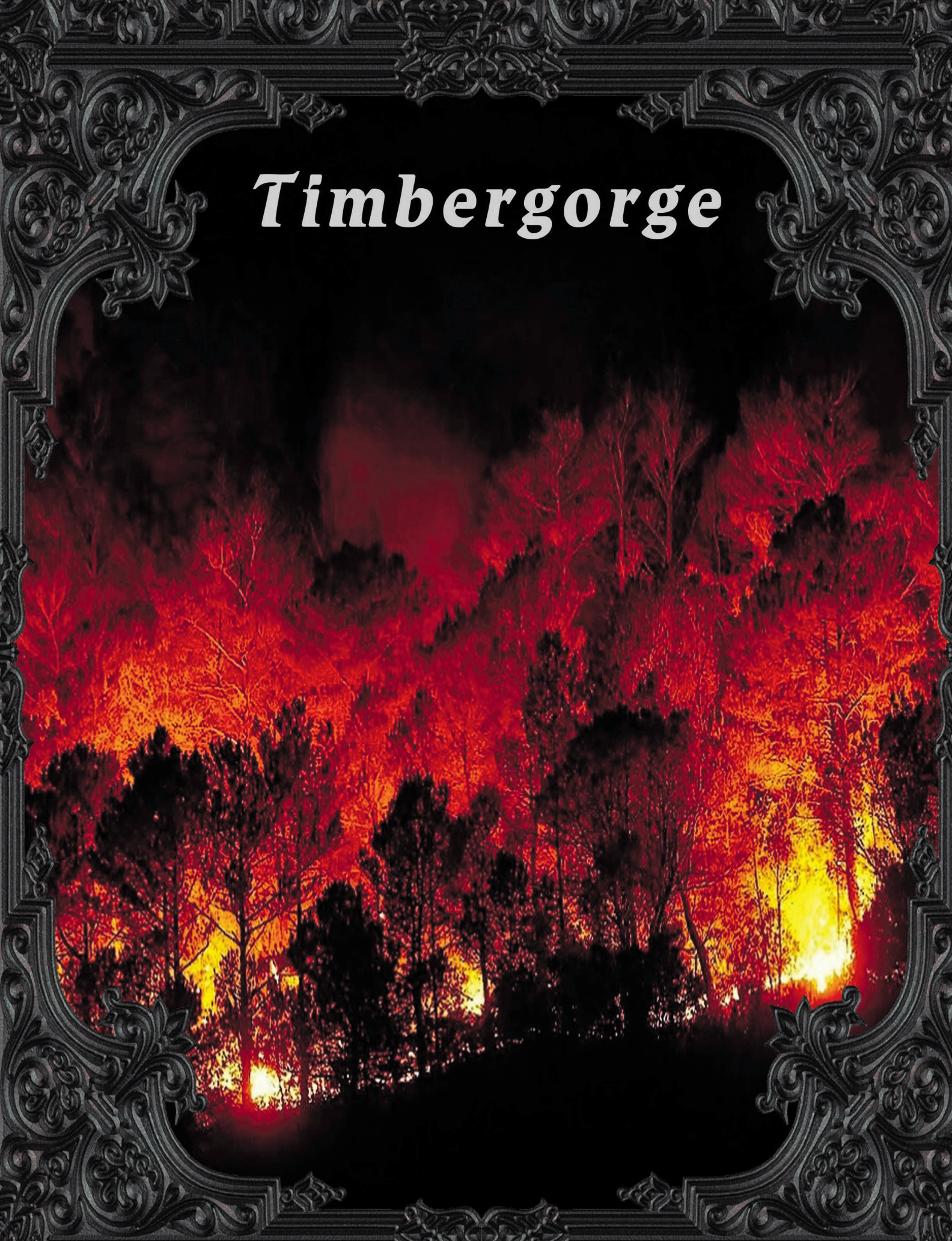
1d6 Effect

- 1-3: Slowed
- 4: Restrained
- 5: Frightened
- 6: -2 penalty to all attack rolls and ability checks.

Eli can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and he can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.



Timbergorge





Timbergorge

Timbergorge was once called Green Quills and was a part of the archfey Aurusel's domain in the Feywild. As all things do in the world and the Feywild, creatures are born and creatures die, and so it was for the guardians of Green Quills, at least until guardianship fell to a young treant whose name has been stricken from fey memory. For the young guardian failed in his task, and while he had been warned about the city-building fey of the eladrin and elves, he had not been told of the humans. And one fateful day, the Green Quills were connected to the Prime Material Plane and a group of humans came. The treant approached them and determined that they were not elves or eladrins and seemed unlikely to build cities within the Feywild, so when they asked for permission to hunt, he granted it. He took their skins for pelts and thought of them as little more than beasts, but he soon regretted his decision, for the humans brought fire for Green Quills, and built a bonfire that raged out of control. In his desperation to stop it, the treant too caught fire. Seeing the destruction Aurusel decided to sever the Green Quills from the Feywild, but instead of being stuck in the Prime Material Plane, the Mists caught the domain and more importantly, the agonized treant. Maddened with pain from the fire, the treant massacred the interloper humans, scattering the survivors throughout the forest, after which he withdrew to his grove to heal. And heal he did, but his hibernation lasted longer than he expected as he dreamed of revenge. During the time that the treant was hibernating, somehow the survivors caught the curse of lycanthropy and when he woke again, he found that they were much harder to kill, and not only that, but they had built a settlement and a stockade to keep him out. He destroyed it all, and in the wreckage, he found the remains of their silverware. Using the flames on the borders of his domain, he melted down the silver and coated the sharp edges around his mouth with it. He became Silvermaw, and swore to kill every last one of the werewolves. Adventures in Timbergorge should focus on restoring the balance of nature, whether that is by killing the werewolves so that Silvermaw finds rest, by destroying the treant so the druids or werewolves can take over, or by following Tikmek's idea and helping the werewolves escape is up to the heroes. Perhaps they come here by accident and come across the Spire of Lost Friends and see the werewolves hanging there, or perhaps they're sent by Aurusel himself to restore the Green Quills back to the Feywild once more.

"By Red Flower Bagheera meant fire, only no creature in the jungle will call fire by its proper name. Every beast lives in deadly fear of it, and invents a hundred ways of describing it."

~ Rudyard Kipling, The Jungle Book

Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate forest, hill, mountains
Year Formed:	741 BC
Population:	40
Races (%):	Werewolves 100%
Languages:	Common, Sylvan
Religions:	Aurusel
Government:	None (patriarchy among the Metsuri Clan)
Ruler(s):	None
Darklord(s):	Silvermaw
Nationality:	None
Analog:	The Feywild

Local Fauna:

There are no natural predators left in Timbergorge as they have all been exterminated by the werewolves of the Metsuri clan, and with time the normal prey animals have become scarce as well. Large animals like deer are gone by now, and while there are a few boars left, they've mostly been hunted to extinction as well. That leaves only the smaller animals like rabbits, squirrels, shrews, and birds within the domain, but in time, they too will die out, either from overhunting by the werewolves who aren't exactly known for their restraint when transformed — admittedly, they are trying, but suppressing the urge to hunt in their wolf blood is very difficult for them. The fish of the Cold River is the best choice for sustenance for anyone here, but the river isn't deep enough to sustain a large fish population, especially as both the northern and southern ends of the river end in the flaming border, and are just walls of steam.



Timbergorge

Local Flora:

Timbergorge is more or less a single deciduous forest, filled with maple, ash, and ash trees. These are all covered in ash from the eternal flaming border that surrounds the valley. There are many other plants in the area, but all are covered in ash or soot depending on how close to the border it grows. These grasses, fungi, flowers, and herbs all come in strange colors underneath the gray layer of grime they're covered in, the result of their fey heritage. Most of them are dying, due to the lack of sunlight, the constantness of the season — being stuck somewhere between autumn and winter — and the acidity of the ash that is now covering them. While some of them are edible, none of them are tasty anymore.



Native Horrors

Timbergorge is home to two groups of werewolves — the Metsuri Clan and the Sunlit Circle. The two groups don't fight, as they're family, but they argue a lot, as they have vastly different opinions on how to improve their lot in life. The Metsuri Clan wants to kill Silvermaw and take control of the domain, the Sunlit Circle wants to kill him, and then have the domain rejoin the Feywild where it originally came from. And working against them both is the daughter of the Metsuri Clan patriarch — an older man named Kologg — Tikmek, who wants them all to escape and who believes that the way out of the domain goes through the walls of steam at either end of the Cold River. To that end, she is trying to build an enormous raft, but after two failed attempts where Silvermaw destroyed it — thinking they were to create a new set of homesteads — she is being a lot more careful this time. Strangely, lycanthropy seems to affect the Metsuri Clan somewhat differently, and they have not been corrupted or turned evil by the nefarious curse.

There is, of course, Silvermaw who is the most dangerous inhabitant of Timbergorge, but there are a few dryads left in the domain too, though there used to be dozens. But after all this time in the Mists, they've detached themselves from their previous emotions, and are now dull and dreary versions of who they once were. Their flesh has turned gray or black where once it was brown. One of their ancient companies, Chuck, is trying to get them to escape their prison of ennui but he cannot be everywhere at once. He blames himself for those dryads that lost themselves so that they eventually became one with their trees and forgot who they were.

Terrain type

Timbergorge is a single river valley, filled with trees. The land on either side of the Cold River that splits the domain in two, slopes down gently from the outskirts of the domain towards the river banks. Surrounding it all is a wall of flaming trees, fire, and smoke that becomes impassable with but a few steps. Luckily for the inhabitants, the fire doesn't spread inwards, but the ash covers everything in the domain in a thin layer, and close to the edges in soot as well. The smoke generated by the fire is enough to almost completely block out the sun, leaving it but a pale yellow disc in the sky. The weather in Timbergorge never changes, and the season is stuck somewhere between autumn and winter, which would leave it bitterly cold, like the river, if it hadn't been for the flames.

Important Landmarks

Face of Aurusel

At a bend in the Cold River stands a stone cliff that rises about 40 feet up from the waterline. The cliff face looks roughly like the face of the archfey Aurusel, at least according to the surviving dryads. The werewolves of the Sunlit Circle believe that they can talk to the land through the face, and leave offerings for it there. Silvermaw tends to avoid it as he believes it is frowning at him, blaming him for the failures that led to the Green Quills becoming Timbergorge. He furthermore believes that once he has exterminated the werewolves, that the land will smile on him once more.

Metsuri Camp

The Metsuri camp is a small tent village that often splits into multiple groups. It is a gathering of the Metsuri Clan, who avoid building permanent settlements after the destruction of the Old Metsuri Homestead. They only gather rarely, for in Timbergorge, there is no safety in numbers, only in solitude and separation.

Timbergorge

Old Metsuri Homesteads

These ruined homesteads were where the Metsuri Clan originally tried to set down roots and build their homes. When Silvermaw rose from his slumber, he razed the small settlement to the ground, and even now he often comes back to make certain that they're not trying to rebuild. Tools and heirlooms lie scattered around the area, which the Clan avoids out of superstition. Tikmek believes that these tools would enable her to build her planned raft much faster, but she is too scared to go here alone, and as she's trying to keep the raft hidden, she's not confided in her family, especially as she believes her father Kolegg would destroy it.

Silvermaw's Grove

Hidden in a secluded part of Timbergorge, on the eastern side of the domain where the Metsuri Clan rarely dare to go, is Silvermaw's one refuge. When he is not out and about in the domain, sowing destruction — or, far more rarely, talking to the dryads who are the only ones who can break through his rage — he spends his time here, sulking over his cruel fate and pondering what to do next.

Spires of Lost Friends

This circle of dead trees stands as a memorial to the trees that Silvermaw failed to protect, a silent reminder of his culpability in the destruction of Green Quills. Here, he hangs the bodies of the werewolves that he catches alive, leaving them impaled on branches and leaves on the blackened husks of the trees he once called friends, while the blood of his victims feeds the ground underneath. Of course, with creatures as hardy as werewolves, dying can take days or weeks, and their screams of pain fill the air around the circle. Something about the trees here is different and where the werewolves would normally be immune to the damage caused by such crucifixion, here they feel it.

Towns and villages:

None

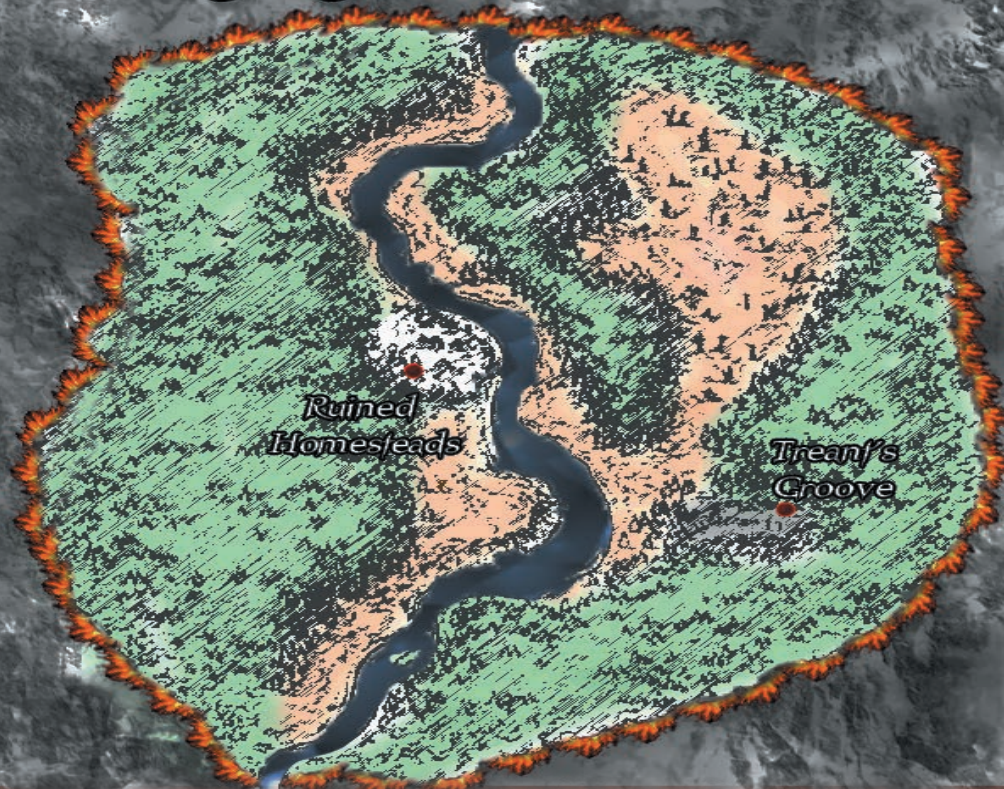
Neighboring domain(s):

None

Fun Fact:

Timbergorge is home to an intelligent woodchuck, named Chuck, who lives among the Ashen Dryads, moving from one tree to another to keep them company. And yes, he is sick of being asked that question and will chuck wood if you ask.

Timbergorge



Silvermaw

"Our legends say the beast appeared from nowhere, bringing bloodshed and death.

It tore our village to the ground and razed our fields. We barely survived the next winter.

This is our home, as cursed as it is, and I will see that wooden monsters dead before I die!"

~ Patriarch Kolegg

Silvermaw is a massive tree standing nearly thirty feet tall. The treant's two largest branches end in thick splintered claws. His eyes are full of hate and his central maw is coated in glistening silver. Wherever he steps, small black flowers bloom in his footsteps for a few seconds before turning to ash. Silvermaw's bark is rotting and the treant reeks of decay.

Background: Before he was the dark lord trapped in the Domain of Dread, Silvermaw was a young treant assigned to protect a part of the Feywild's vast forest. The area was known as the Green Quills and was part of the realm of Aurusel, a powerful fey lord that loved its tightly packed conifers and gently babbling creeks. It was always autumn in the Green Quills, and the sun always sat right at the very edge of sunset.

Silvermaw was warned against the dangers of the eladrin, who marred the landscapes with their cities, twisted fomorians, and subtle hags. He kept a constant vigil for these threats, but was young and inexperienced with beings from outside Green Quills.

The Feywild is constantly in flux and occasionally parts of it transition to the Material Plane. So it was that one day Silvermaw found his land invaded by new creatures, humans. The treant approached these humans, who wore furs like animals. The humans fell on their faces and begged permission to hunt in Silvermaw's woods. Nothing was said about building cities and they only seemed to care about hunting, so Silvermaw acquiesced to their requests.

After giving his permission, Silvermaw left to patrol his domain for other new and strange creatures. A few hours later, Silvermaw instinctively knew something was wrong. The Green Quills felt wrong. Looking into the sky Silvermaw realized why. Thick columns of black smoke lanced into the sky. Fire. The humans had brought fire into his domain. Silvermaw raced toward the flames and soon he was surrounded by deadly flames. Silvermaw howled, trying to put out the flames from the trees around him even as his own bark smoldered and his leaves burst into flame. So

it was that the enraged treant found the source of the problem. The foolish humans had cut down trees and built a great bonfire too close to the branches of several trees, starting the conflagration. Silvermaw crashed into the bonfire, casting the logs into a nearby stream. The humans, who had been staring and trying to put out the fire with primitive buckets, stood awestruck at the power of the treant.

Awe turned to terror as the smoking treant rose out the stream and ripped the human's elder in half, screaming all the while. Silvermaw scattered the humans and slaughtered any he caught.

As the sun fell, the natural pull of the Feywild brought the Green Quills back from the Material Plane. Aurusel saw the burning domain and used his own immense power to sever the Green Quill's ties to the Feywild while the domain was in transition, sending the domain hurling through the planes. The despair of the burning trees, the fear of the fleeing humans and the anguish of Silvermaw drew the domain to the Shadowfell. Once the fire subsided, Silvermaw, his own body badly burned, collapsed and sent his roots deep into the soil, trying to regrow. Silvermaw slept. While he slept, he drank in the very essence of the Shadowfell. The humans that survived built a small village and palisade for protection. While Silvermaw dreamed, they hunted and prospered. The humans considered the new domain to be theirs and christened it Timbergorge. After a few decades, the children born to the tribe were true lycanthropes. Soon all the humans of Timbergorge were werewolves.

After nearly a century of slumber, Silvermaw awoke. He had drawn deeply of the Shadowfell and now could feel the wretched humans in his domain. He attacked the village, shattered the wall and scattered the humans. As Silvermaw murdered the women and children, the mists closed in, and a new dark lord was born.

Current Sketch: Silvermaw has not completely healed from his burns all those years ago. He rots eternally and wherever he steps, black flowers bloom and turn to ash a few seconds later. Death and decay cling to the treant like a shroud. Silvermaw realized soon after awakening that the humans he sought to exterminate were now werewolves. Silvermaw found discarded silver coins amongst the ruined village. The treant melted the silver down and poured it on the sharp branches surrounding his mouth, giving Silvermaw his nickname. Silvermaw now hunts through Timbergorge, convinced Aurusel will bring the domain back into the fold once all the humans are wiped out.

Silvermaw

Darklord's Tactics: Silvermaw is by far the deadliest creature in Timbergorge, and he knows it. Silvermaw uses his immense size and strength to fling opponents into trees and stomp on any prone targets nearby. Silvermaw is direct, but knows Timbergorge intimately. He will flee a losing battle to set up an ambush if confronted by powerful foes.

Borders: Silvermaw cannot open the borders of Timbergorge. The borders are constantly sealed by a ring of fire. Silvermaw feels the pain of the burning trees that are caught in the ring of fire. Their screams haunt him wherever he goes.



Silvermaw

Huge plant, neutral evil

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

Hit Points 375 (30d12 + 120)

Speed 30 ft.

STR **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

26 (+8) 12 (+1) 23 (+6) 20 (+5) 25 (+7) 8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +14, Con +12, Wis +13

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 30 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Common, Druidic, Elvish, Sylvan

Challenge 20 (25,000 XP)

False Appearance. While Silvermaw remains motionless, he is indistinguishable from a normal tree.

Siege Monster. Silvermaw deals double damage to objects and structures.

Black Flower Blanket. Silvermaw is always surrounded by a blanket of black flowers that bloom around him as he moves, only to wither away as he leaves the area. Enemy creatures that end their turn in the area within 10ft of Silvermaw take 10 necrotic damage or 15 if Silvermaw has half or less remaining hit points.

Wooden Body. Whenever Silvermaw takes fire damage, he is set on fire and takes 5 fire damage at the start of his turn.

Resilient Nature. If Silvermaw begins his turn affected by an effect that a saving throw can end, he can make a saving throw against it even if the effect requires for the roll to be made at the end of the turn. For each such saving throw he attempts, he takes 5 damage.

Vengeful Slam. When an enemy scores a critical hit against Silvermaw or when Silvermaw reaches half or lower Hit Points, Silvermaw can make one Slam attack as a reaction against the creature that triggered the effect.

Regeneration. Silvermaw regains 15 hit points at the start of its turn if he has at least 1 hit point. This ability does not function if Silvermaw took fire damage this turn.

Radiant Absorption. Whenever Silvermaw is subjected to Radiant damage, he takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the radiant damage dealt.

Rejuvenation. If Silvermaw is destroyed, he regains all of its hit points in 1d4 hours and emerges in his grove unless the grove is burned to ash. At the moment of his rejuvenation, all trees and plant creatures within 100ft of the grove wither away as Silvermaw uses their life force to come back. This ability can only be used once a month.

Innate Spellcasting. Silvermaw's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom. He can innately cast the following spells (spell save DC 21), requiring no material components:

At will: *entangle*, *fog cloud*, *spike growth*, *thorn whip*
3/Day each: *grasping vines*, *insect plague*, *plant growth*, *wall of thorns*

Actions

Multiattack. Silvermaw makes two attacks.

Silvered Maw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (2d10 + 8) piercing damage and the target must make a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or take an additional 9 (2d8) piercing damage at the start of their next turn. (Silvermaw's teeth count as silvered weapons).

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (3d6 + 8) bludgeoning damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, range 60/180 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (4d10 + 8) bludgeoning damage.

Silvermaw

Animate Trees (1/Day). Silvermaw magically animates one or two trees he can see within 60 feet of it. These trees have the same statistics as a treant, except they have Intelligence and Charisma scores of 1, they can't speak, and they have only the Slam action option. An animated tree acts as an ally of Silvermaw. The tree remains animated for 1 day or until it dies, whichever is the lesser; until Silvermaw dies or is more than 120 feet from the tree; or until Silvermaw takes a bonus action to turn it back into an inanimate tree. The tree then takes root if possible.

Grasping Vines (Recharge 5–6). Silvermaw shoots vines full of thorns in a 20-foot radius around himself. Each creature in that line must make a DC 21 Dexterity saving throw, taking 26 (4d12) piercing damage and be pulled 10ft closer to Silvermaw on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Legendary Actions

Silvermaw can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Silvermaw regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Maw. Silvermaw makes one silvered maw attack.

Plant Stride (Costs 2 Actions). Silvermaw plants his roots and magically leaves his body to enter another tree of similar size within 100ft that is not on fire, ending any effects that might have tortured his previous body.

Razor Leaf Storm (Costs 3 Actions). Silvermaw chooses an unoccupied 5-foot cube of air that he can see within range. An elemental force that resembles a storm of razor sharp leaves appears in the cube and lasts until the end of the turn. Any creature that ends its turn within 5 feet of the storm must make a DC 21 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 1d12 slashing damage and has Blood Algae enter its bloodstream. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and isn't infected. The storm moves up to 30 feet in any direction chosen by Silvermaw at the end of a creature's turn. Creatures infected with Blood Algae lose 2d4 hit points per minute and if they die they are raised as vine blights after 1 day. Burning the corpse stops this transformation and a *lesser restoration* ends this disease.

Lair Actions

When fighting inside his lair, Silvermaw can invoke the ambient magic to take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Silvermaw can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

Roots and plants burst out of the ground, grappling and lashing at creatures. The area within 60 feet around Silver-

maw becomes difficult terrain until initiative count 20 on the next round. Huge or larger creatures are not affected.

Silvermaw and allied plant creatures within 60 feet of it, plant their roots and are healed for 18 (4d8) hit points but cannot move or be moved this turn.

A green mist fills the lair. All creatures within 60 feet of Silvermaw must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw, taking 13 (4d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Silvermaw can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and he can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

Regional Effects

The region containing Silvermaw's lair is warped by the creature's presence, which creates the following effects:

Blights (p.31 MM) and other plant creatures appear around the resting place in the lair of Silvermaw and start to spread their poison and create a defensive barrier, replacing harmless plants with brambles, toxic weeds, and others of their kind to protect Silvermaw's Grove.

Herbivore animals have developed a poison resistance and if eaten by a humanoid creature, that creature must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or contract a disease as per the contagion spell. Small animals that live in the trees become vicious and aggressive, attacking all humanoids that approach within 5ft.

Evil, cackling faces appear in the trees' bark. Sometimes they mutter something cryptic about a character's loved one or laugh maniacally. Each night, the trees uproot themselves and change location making the forest difficult to traverse.

If Silvermaw dies, the first two effects will fade over the course of 3d10 days.



Nightmare Lands

"They've promised that dreams can come true – but forgot to mention that nightmares are dreams, too. ~ Oscar Wilde

Overview

As you toss and turn in your bed, a disjointed dream full of dread offers visions of unspeakable creatures you know cannot and must not exist, and deeds you hope your waking mind could not commit. In the dream you are assaulted by a great, constricting serpent. Its unhinged jaw drips the warm, wet saliva of decay upon you. As you wake, you are soaked in sweat, and impossibly intertwined with your bedclothes. There is a moment, where the borders of your mind blur, and the dream is so realistically vivid, it is impossible to tell the illusion from the reality. In the dream you were ready to end yourself to avoid the crushing agony of death within the coils. After stabbing the serpent repeatedly to no avail, you were ready to turn the blade upon yourself. As you wake, you find your mattress disemboweled of its filling, and a jagged knife that is not yours in your hand. You drop the blade, astonished at your predicament. You move to escape the clutches of the covers, only to fall to the floor. Yet there is no impact. You continue to fall. Seemingly forever into darkness. The sensation of falling is terrifying in itself; to not know how long it might continue another fear entirely. Yet, then, when all hope is lost, there is a light. The end is near. As you rush towards the brightness, you catch movement in the darkness.

The slithering coils of that infernal serpent begin to constrict again. Once one has truly visited The Nightmare Lands, the illusions of The Nightmare Court (The Nightmare Man, Hypnos, Mullonga, The Ghost Dancer, Morpheus, and The Rainbow Serpent) become inseparable from your reality. Whether this is a physical place or exists only in the depths of your own mind is irrelevant. The terror, and the madness they induce is very real.

Mistways

Since the Grand Conjunction, it has been reported that one can reach The Nightmare Lands via the Sea of Sorrows. Stories of the Nightmare Court suggest one can be drawn into their Domain from anywhere within the Domains, but a direct link is believed to exist between The Clinic for the Mentally Distressed in Egertus, Nova Vassa, and the City of Nod in the Nightmare Lands.

Chronology

The Nightmare Lands were first described sometime after the formation of Nova Vassa in 682BC but the actual date the cluster was formed remains unknown.

703BC~ – Davion miscasts a *wish* spell and as a result becomes a Darklord. **Davion** forms inside one of the dreamspheres.

740BC – The Grand Conjunction transforms the Nightmare Lands into an Island of Terror.

Nightmare Lands



Nightmare Lands



Nightmare Lands



The Nightmare Lands are an amalgamation of what is and what isn't, what has been, and what can be. They're a terrifying middle ground between the real world and the world of dreams. A place where nightmares become real. But only your nightmares. Nice dreams? Forget about them. Here is where despair lives, sadness reigns, and madness is king. This is where those who commit atrocious acts find themselves when they are hit by the realization of what they've done. Do they come here on their own? No, the Nightmare Court often helps them right along, preying upon those who find themselves in a moment of weakness susceptible to their machinations. And once you fall in their clutches, you may never leave again.

The most common way of getting into the Nightmare Lands is through nightmares. Somehow the nightmares tied to the Nightmare Lands transcend physical boundaries, and you'll find yourself carried to the alien landscape simply through those dreams. Others find it by crossing through the misty border in the Nocturnal Sea, leading some to speculate that it might be an island, rather than a floating domain. The truth remains unknown.

Adventures in the Nightmare Lands should focus on these nightmares that mortals suffer, even though there are areas less affected by these (the Terrain Between). Typically this would involve rescuing someone from the clutches of the Nightmare Court, or discovering that you're caught and how to get out. This is especially true as the dreams that can get one here can be shared. An extreme few were here when the nightmare lands took in the Clinic for the Mentally Distressed, but they grow fewer in number by the day. Anyone who finds themselves at that facility should leave as soon as possible.

"What we have been, or now are, we shall not be tomorrow."

~ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*

Culture Level:

Any (dreamscapes), Stone Age (The Terrain Between), Chivalric (Clinic of the Mentally Distressed), Renaissance (City of Nod)

Climate & Terrain:

Any

Year Formed:

Unknown (prior to 682BC)

Population:

Unknown

Races (%):

Unknown

Languages:

Abber, Common, Any

Religions:

None

Government:

Tribal (Abber), None

Ruler(s):

None

Darklord(s):

Nightmare Court

Nationality:

Abber

Analog:

The Dream World

Local Fauna:

There are no local animals living in the Nightmare Lands. The City of Nod lies abandoned, the Clinic for the Mentally Distressed holds only humanoids (and the occasional rat), the Terrain Between is practically empty of life, though the seas around the Nightmare Lands hold some forms of carnivorous animals, such as sharks and giant octopi. Inside the dream spheres, any form of life can be found, depending on the nightmare that the person is experiencing. These animals are not real, however, and cannot leave the spheres. Strangely, anyone who kills and eats an animal while in the dreamspheres finds themselves still full and sated when they leave, and this is believed to be how the Abber sustain themselves. The Abber are a strange lot as well, who believe that nothing they can't see at that moment is real, and all of them are clinically insane from the viewpoint of any outsider. Their knowledge of the relative safety or reliability of the dreamspheres seems instinctual at this point, and they've not developed any kind of civilization as a result.

Local Flora:

Like the animals, there is no reliable plant life in the Nightmare Lands. It can all change at a moment's notice, and while some plants might be there one day and be edible, by the next they might be gone or be poisonous. Again, the Abber use the dreamspheres for a marginally safer form of nourishment.

Native Horrors

The most notable horrors found within the nightmare lands are the Dream Spawns and the Monsters under the bed. Both of these type of monsters prey on unwary victims when they are most vulnerable. During their sleeping time. In addition, any type of monster or



Nightmare Lands

creature can be found in the Nightmare Lands, especially those who are intelligent and could be trapped by the Nightmare Court. In the dreamspheres they could be temporary creations and unable to leave.

Terrain type

The Terrain Between is the general physical layout of the Nightmare Lands, the areas not affected by the dreamspheres. These consist of the rocky shoals that surround the island, preventing any ship from getting close without having its bottom ripped open. Only the most skilled of sailors can successfully navigate this treacherous area.

The Outlands is a stark and bare land, consisting of broken ground, rocky canyons, and jagged cliffs. The sky above is filled with thunder and lightning, but the rain never saturates the dry ground. The Outlands are also home to the Ring of Dreams — a ring of crystalline spheres ranging from 3 to 300 feet in diameter. Within each sphere is the particular nightmare of a tortured dreamer, a small pocket dimension of that person's very own hellish experience. The spheres are transparent, and an onlooker can see into them and enter them. Only the Abber seem to know how to leave them again, something they do on an instinctual level. The Forest of Everchange is a trackless wilderness, a forest where the landscape is constantly changing, and cannot be relied upon. A mountain might appear there one morning, only for it to disappear 10 minutes later. Nothing can be relied upon, and the forest itself, while mostly forest, can change from deciduous jungle to ice-covered tundra in minutes. There is simply no consistency to it, especially as it is sometimes not even a forest — though it does seem to most often come to the form of a deciduous forest, which perhaps is its true form.

Important Landmarks

The Clinic for the Mentally Distressed

The Clinic for the Mentally Distressed actually has two locations. The first lies slightly outside of Egertus in Nova Vaasa. This clinic is abandoned and worn down, having been taken away years ago. The other version of the Clinic lies on the outskirts of the City of Nod. It was a state-of-the-art medical facility when it arrived, mostly due to the influence of Dr. Illhousen, who preached a regime of forgiveness and rehabilitation. His colleague, Dr. Tasker, was of a different opinion, believing that wrongdoers and the insane could only be taught through consequence, and so would frequently punish or torture these.

In this manner, he believed that they could learn the “proper behavior”. He was wrong, but his experiments and the pain they caused were enough to drag the facility into the Nightmare Lands. Only Dr. Illhousen and one of the nurses, Caroline Dinwiddy, were the only ones to escape from the Clinic when it arrived in the Nightmare Lands, kept safe by a “dreamcatcher”, while everyone else was caught inside, though many have been slain by Mandalain, a Night Terror creature that took the form of a dead nurse, and who has terrorized the remaining staff and patients. Suffice it to say that the treatments of Dr. Tasker have not become any kinder after his arrival in the Nightmare Lands, and now extends to both patients and staff. The methods used are merely different.

The Forest of Everchange

As described above, the forest has no permanent structures for Morpheus to call home. It may be through his chaotic influence that the Forest continues to change and warp. He calls the entire forest home, and woe betide those that he comes upon.

The Ghettoes

The Ghettoes are a series of ramshackle tenements within the City of Nod, one that is even older than the millennia-old city itself. It is also considerably more decrepit. This is the home of the witch Mullonga, who spreads fear and loathing throughout. The district is not locked in place within the City of Nod, instead seeming to roam the City, like some hungry beast stalking its prey.

The Grieving Cathedral

The Grieving Cathedral sits at the northern end of the City of Nod. It is the tallest and most easily recognizable building in the City, and makes for a good landmark, as it hardly ever changes. The facade of the building is covered in stains, and the shattered windows over the doorway make it look like the crying face of a mourner. It sits in the middle of a cemetery, surrounded by a rusted iron fence. A few fountains are visible in the cemetery, bubbling with blood, while gargoyles stare out at the city from atop the gothic buttresses of the building. The cathedral is covered in stained glass windows, each window of which shows the current happenings in the dreamspheres in the Ring of Dreams. Each glass shows a different dreamsphere, and each dreamsphere has one. This allows the Nightmare Man, the sole inhabitant of the Grieving Cathedral to soak in the misery at any time, while he lurks near the altar at the center of the cathedral.

Nightmare Lands

The Park Primeval

The Park Primeval houses the Rainbow Serpent. The Park is an overgrown jungle held enclosed by an iron fence and three gates. Above each gate are signs for "The Park Primeval". It has a distinct feel compared to the rest of the City of Nod. It feels far more feral and primitive, like a beast from an older era, one that gave birth to those that came after it. And one which is hungry.

The Spire of Sleep

The Spire rises almost as tall as the Grieving Cathedral, but its white stone is unbroken. There are no doors nor windows, and it is surrounded by a moat of magical water. From these churning waters rises a mist that puts all visitors to sleep. Inside this stone tomb is a glass coffin, one that contains Hypnos. And though he never leaves the tower (he might not even be able to), his influence extends into the dreams of people everywhere.

The Theater Macabre

Home to the Ghost Dancer, the Theater Macabre is a brown foreboding building, decorated with three tortured stone muses: one laughing, one crying, and one scowling in anger, but all three are tormented and in pain. A grand lobby, empty except for thick cobwebs fills the entranceway, but deeper in, an auditorium provides a stage for the Ghost Dancer and her tragic ballets.

A crowd of undead fill the seats, animating only when she takes to the stage. Anyone watching her risks falling under her spell, never to leave the Theater again.

Towns and villages:

City of Nod

The City of Nod is a vast ruined metropolis, roughly circular, one saturated in broken dreams, discarded hopes, millennia of fears, guilt, and forgotten terrors from the nightmares of people long lost. It sits in the center of a spider web that stretches to the ends of the multiverse, lodged in the nightmares of everyone, waiting to pounce on the unwary, those who fail to protect themselves during the night — waiting to draw them into the clutches of the Nightmare Court.

Neighboring domain(s):

Davion (through the dreamspheres)
The Nocturnal Sea (sometimes)

Fun Fact:

Dr. Illhousen and the former head nurse, Caroline Dinwiddy, can still be found roaming the Nightmare Lands. In spite of their predicament, the two have grown close, where before their relationship was merely professional. She is now expecting a child and the two plan to marry should they ever escape.



Morpheus

"He has the same plan as a tornado, and just as much mercy." ~ Kaleb Dawnblighter, planar scholar

Morpheus appears as a muscular man with skin the color of blood, a thin mustache and pointed ears. He dresses in expensive clothes from the waist up. He doesn't have legs, rather his torso rests on a mass of vapors.

Background: Trying to discover anything about Morpheus' past is an exercise in frustration. He constantly changes his form and his story. Compared to the other members of the Nightmare Court, Morpheus is almost friendly. It counts for little, as Morpheus will give a different answer to every question, even if the same question is asked twice in succession.

Current Sketch: Morpheus is endless chaos. He draws power from dreams that confuse and shock his victims. He revels in madness, and quickly becomes bored if not causing chaos. He enjoys taunting his foes from out of reach and then changing into a new form to attack. Morpheus will change his form constantly in combat. He prefers the shape dragons and other creatures that cause fear or have ranged attacks

Darklord's Tactics: Morpheus will change his form constantly in combat. He prefers dragons and other creatures that cause fear or have ranged attacks. If his opponents seem to be forming a plan or becoming accustomed to his current form, he will quickly change to another one.

Morpheus' Lair: The Forest of Everchange

The Forest of Everchange constantly shifts its terrain from one landscape to another. It's as if the Feywild is deep within a nightmare. Travellers walk through a pine forest one second and then find themselves on a beach the next. Even standing still won't help, as the forest changes around them. Mountains will change into ravines, but the changes won't happen fast enough to leave a creature hanging in midair as a pit yawns beneath them. Morpheus encountered in his lair has a challenge rating of 15 (13,000 XP)



Morpheus

Medium undead (shapechanger), chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 187 (22d8 + 88)

Speed fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	17 (+3)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Cha +10

Skills Intimidation +10, Perception +8, Persuasion +10

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non magical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages All, Telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Lightning Reflexes. If Morpheus is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw and half damage if he fails.

Magic Resistance. Morpheus has advantage on saving throws versus spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. Morpheus' attacks are magical.

Turn Immunity. Morpheus is immune to effects that turn undead.

Teleport. Members of the Nightmare Court can use their move action to teleport anywhere in the Nightmare Lands-

THEY LIVE INSIDE! MUST GET THEM OUT! OUT! OUT!

Morpheus

Actions

Multiattack. Morpheus makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d4 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Change Shape. Morpheus can use an action to change himself into any creature with a CR 14 or less. Morpheus retains his Alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, saving throws, skills, and hit points. He uses the AC, Speed, Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, and actions (including legendary actions or reactions, if any) of his new form. Morpheus can use a bonus action to change back into his true form.

Force Change. If Morpheus is in his true form, he may choose any creature within 30 feet and force them to make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. The creature may choose to voluntarily fail this saving throw. Morpheus can polymorph a creature that fails into any creature that is CR 14 or less. The creature retains its Alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, saving throws, skills, and hit points. The creature uses the AC, Speed, Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, and actions (including legendary actions, if any) of its new form. The creature may repeat the saving throw at the end of its turn to return to its true form. Otherwise the creature stays in its new form until Morpheus changes it into another or the creature is subject to a *dispel evil and good* spell or similar effect.

Lair Actions

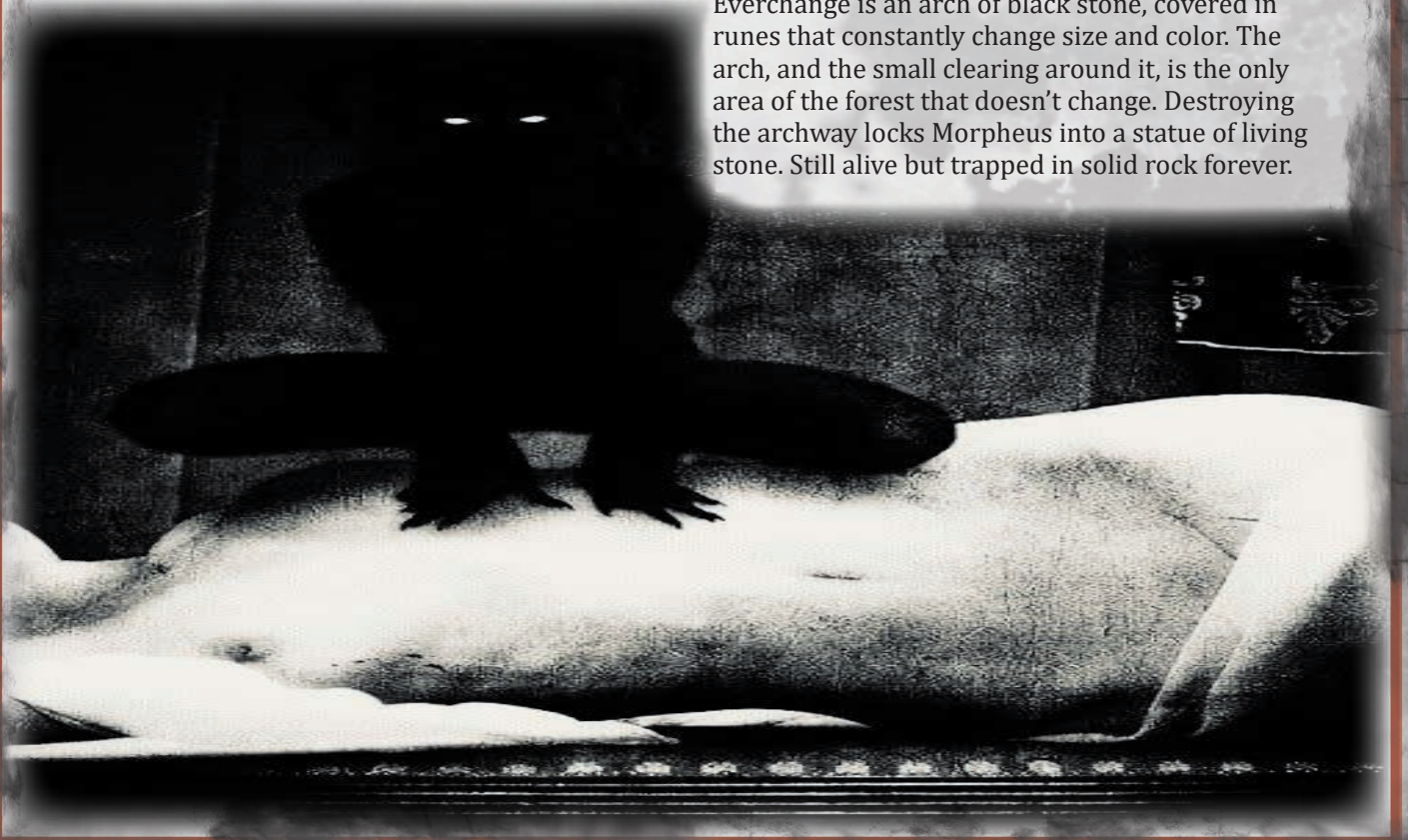
On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the Morpheus can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

- Morpheus chooses a point within 100 feet. Creatures within 30 feet of that point must make a DC 16 Strength saving throw as the ground turns into clinging mud. Creatures that fail have their Speed reduced to 0. Creatures caught in the mud may repeat the saving throw at the end of their turn to regain their normal speed.
- Morpheus chooses one creature within 50 feet and forces them to make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw. Creatures that fail take 18 (4d8) piercing damage as fast growing shoots of bamboo explode out of the ground and into their feet and legs, then rot away.
- Morpheus chooses one creature within 50 feet and forces them to make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw. Creatures that fail fall into a pit that opens beneath them. They take 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage and are knocked prone. They must find their own way out of the pit

Morpheus can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and he can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

How to defeat the Darklord

Deep within the shifting pathways of the Forest of Everchange is an arch of black stone, covered in runes that constantly change size and color. The arch, and the small clearing around it, is the only area of the forest that doesn't change. Destroying the archway locks Morpheus into a statue of living stone. Still alive but trapped in solid rock forever.



Rainbow Serpent

"I don't know. I don't remember.

Alright, alright. I'll try to remember.

A smile. Scales.

Red, black and yellow.

Daggers in the dark, glinting like fangs.

No...no I don't believe I will try to remember anymore." ~ Elion. Last of the Silver Dawn Adventuring Company (location unknown).

The Rainbow Serpent takes the form of a four foot long winged serpent. Its scales are red with bands of black and yellow. The Rainbow Serpent can change the colors of its scales in an instant to blend in with its surroundings. The Rainbow Serpent perpetually smiles, but the smile is that of a predator that has cornered its prey. Those fortunate enough to survive an encounter with the serpent rarely remember anything but that mocking smile. The Rainbow Serpent never speaks, but seems to understand every language.

Background: No one has ever heard the Rainbow Serpent speak, much less has any idea where it came from.

Current Sketch: The Rainbow Serpents revels in mistrust and secret deals. It will follow a group of intruders for days. It will target members of the group that seem especially close. The Rainbow Serpent delights in tearing apart romantic couples. Their arguments echoing through the trees are music to its ears. The Rainbow Serpent uses a unique form of telepathy. It doesn't use words, but pictures. The creatures it communicates with often think the ideas are their own.

Darklord's Tactics: The Rainbow Serpent avoids physical combat. It prefers to use shadow asps, other minions and the dangers of the Park Primeval to wear down its opponents before it moves in for the kill. If combat is unavoidable the Rainbow Serpent will try and turn as many sticks into shadow asps as possible before joining the fray. The serpent will continue to turn branches and sticks into shadow asps until it has an overwhelming number of minions. The serpent will mix in with the shadow asps and use them as cover for its attacks.

The Rainbow Serpent's Lair: The Park Primeval

The Rainbow Serpent dwells in the Park Primeval, a massive park inside the City of Nod. The park is a labyrinth, and visitors become lost in its winding corridors seconds after entering. The park is crawling with thousands of serpents of all types. A careless step or brushing against a tree branch can result in a venomous bite and a slow death. The Rainbow Serpent is often found in the Tree of Suspicion, a huge tree with bleeding runes cut deep into its bark. The Rainbow Serpent is always encountered in the Park Primeval.



Rainbow Serpent

Small monstrosity, lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 180 (24d6 + 96)

Speed 30 ft., Fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	22 (+6)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex + 11, Wis +9, Cha +10

Skills Perception +9, Stealth +11

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non magical attacks, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, poison

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 19

Languages Understands All but won't speak, Telepathy

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Echoes of Shadow. Any creature reduced to 0 hit points by the Rainbow Serpent or one of its shadow asps will rise as a shadow (Monster Manual pg 269) under the control of the Rainbow Serpent. The creature cannot be resurrected until the Rainbow Serpent is slain.

Rainbow Serpent

Regeneration. The Rainbow Serpent regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the Rainbow Serpent takes radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the Rainbow Serpent's next turn. The Rainbow Serpent only turns to mist if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Snake Attack. If the Rainbow Serpent has an ally within 5 feet of a creature it is attacking with a melee attack, it inflicts plus 4d6 poison damage on a successful hit.

Innate spellcasting. The Rainbow Serpents spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 19). The Rainbow Serpent can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect thoughts, suggestion*

3/Day each: *charm person*

Actions

Multiattack. The Rainbow Serpent makes two bite attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage plus 27 (6d8) poison damage and must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. Creatures that fail fall unconscious for 1 minute. After that minute the creature may repeat the Constitution saving throw at the end of their turn. If they succeed they wake up. If a creature takes damage or another creature uses an action to shake the unconscious creature after the first minute they automatically wake up.

Shadow Asp (recharge 5-6). The Rainbow Serpent changes 2d6 unattended sticks or branches into shadow asps. Treat these as giant poisonous snakes (Monster Manual pg 327) that cannot be frightened or charmed. These snakes are friendly to the Rainbow Serpent and will follow its commands.

Legendary Actions

The Rainbow Serpent can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The monster name regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Bite. The Rainbow Serpent makes a bite attack.

Chameleon Scales. The Rainbow Serpent becomes invisible until the start of his next turn.

Fly. The Rainbow Serpent can move up to half its fly speed.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the Rainbow Serpent can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

- The Rainbow Serpent chooses a point within 50 feet. Every creature within 20 feet of that point must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. Creatures that fail become vulnerable to poison damage until initiative count 20 of the following round. Creatures immune to poison damage lose their immunity until initiative count 20 of the following round.
- The Rainbow Serpent chooses one creature within 50 feet. A massive snake bursts through the ground at that creature's feet. That creature must make a DC 18 Strength saving throw or be restrained until initiative count 20 of the following round.
- The Rainbow Serpent chooses a creature within 100 feet. That creature must make a DC 18 constitution saving throw. Creatures that fail take 13 (3d8) poison damage and are poisoned until initiative count 20 of the following round.

The Rainbow Serpent can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and it can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

How to defeat the Darklord

The Rainbow Serpent's relic is a massive tree in the middle of the Park Primeval. Runes are carved into the tree's bone white bark. Attacking the tree will cause it to animate. This tree has the stats of a treant with maximum hit points.



The Nightmare Man

"Can't sleep. He's waiting. He's always waiting. Can't hide from dreams. Can't hide from dreams. Can't sleep. Can't sleep. Can't sleep..."

~ Patient Englund, ravings after lobotomy (deceased)

The Nightmare Man is a tall thin humanoid covered by a thin robe. From a distance the robe looks thin and made of black silk. As a creature gets closer the robe appears to be twitching. Once a creature gets within five feet, they can tell the robe is covered in dozens of spiders, constantly weaving sections of the robe. The figure wearing the robe seems to shift. One second it will be a dead loved one, the next a grinning skull, and the next a mirror image of the creature viewing it.

Background: Nothing is known of the Nightmare Man before he became the lord of the Nightmare Court. The Nightmare Man rarely speaks and when he does it's in confusing riddles. If any one has ever asked him and gotten a direct answer, they have not lived to tell the tale. Perhaps the most disturbing theory is that each member of the Nightmare Court is a different facet of the Nightmare Man's personality.

Current Sketch: The Nightmare Lands are unique among the domains of Ravenloft. They exist in the minds of sleeping creatures on dozens of different worlds. Recently the Nightmare Man has been keeping his victims locked in an endless nightmare, unable to wake up or break free. The Nightmare Man is drawing power from these trapped souls, but no one knows why.

Darklord's Tactics: The Nightmare Man rarely engages in physical combat. He prefers to trap victims in endless nightmares, never letting them go, but never letting them die. When the Nightmare Man does enter combat his bony fingers turn into jagged claws and he becomes a whirlwind of death. The Nightmare Man's claws are so sharp that his victims don't realize they've been cut until they start bleeding. The Nightmare Man can also call upon spectral fire. This fire is shifting and spectral and alters itself to affect each victim differently.

Borders: The only way to escape the Nightmare Lands is to wake up. If the Nightmare Man lets you.

The Nightmare Man's Lair: The Grieving Cathedral
The Nightmare Man makes his lair in the ancient Grieving Cathedral, deep in the City of Nod. The Grieving Cathedral is a massive structure covered in scowling gargoyles that seem to move when not being watched. The interior may be the only place in the Nightmare Lands that doesn't change to match the whims of the Nightmare Man. The air inside is stale and sounds echo endlessly. The catacombs beneath the cathedral are said to be a labyrinth of dark, claustrophobic hallways, filled with packs of starving ghouls. The Nightmare Man has a challenge rating of 16 (15,000 XP) when encountered in his lair.



Nightmare Man

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 203 (27d8 + 81)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	21 (+5)	19 (+4)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Dex 9, Int +10, Cha +11

Skills Intimidation +11, Perception +9, Stealth +9

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non magical attacks, necrotic

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 19

Languages All, Telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

The Nightmare Man

Living Nightmares. The Nightmare Man can make parts of his dreamscapes appear while his victims are awake. These will usually be subtle references, a person whose smile is normal, but keeps spreading until it stretches from ear to ear or some who covers their face, silently weeping. These images will only last a second before they are gone. A creature seeing these images must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. Those that fail are incapacitated by fear for 1 minute. Victims can do nothing but curl into a fetal position and weep.

Magic Weapons. The Nightmare Man's attacks are magical

Magic Resistance. The Nightmare Man has advantage on saving throws versus spells and other magical effects.

Turn Immunity. The Nightmare Man is immune to effects that turn undead.

Lord of the Dreamscape. The Nightmare Man can change the dreamscape around him at will. Verdant plains will suddenly become dense forest or fetid swamp. The Nightmare Man cannot be surprised and rolls initiative with advantage.

Teleport. Members of the Nightmare Court can use their move action to teleport anywhere in the Nightmare Lands.

Actions

Multiattack. The Nightmare Man makes four bone claw attacks.

Bone Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* + 10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) slashing damage. Creatures damaged by these claws must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw. Creatures that fail have disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws until the end of the Nightmare Man's next turn.

Green Flame (recharge 5–6). The Nightmare Man stretches out his hands and fills a 30 foot cone with green flame. The green flame doesn't burn, but unlocks the subconscious terrors of the target's mind. Creatures in the cone must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. Creatures take 63 (18d6) damage. The damage type is psychic unless the creature is vulnerable to a damage type, then the damage type changes to that damage.

Legendary Actions

The Nightmare Man can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn.

The Nightmare Man regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Bone Claw. The Nightmare Man makes one bone claw attack.

Shadow Walking. The Nightmare Man steps into a shadow and reappears in any shadow within 300 feet.

Dreamweavers. The Nightmare Man flings dozens of the tiny spiderlike creatures known as Dreamweavers that cover his robes, targeting a creature within 10 feet. The creature must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw. Creatures that fail are restrained until the end of the Nightmare Man's next turn.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the Nightmare Man can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

◇The Nightmare Man chooses a point within 50 feet and a 10 foot radius, 40 foot high cylinder of silver mist forms. Creatures in the cylinder must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. Those that fail are teleported to a random location inside the Nightmare Lands.

◇Dozens of dreamweavers swarm a space within 50 feet of the Nightmare Man. Treat this as a swarm of spiders (Monster Manual pg 338) that will attack any creatures in this space on this initiative count. The swarm lasts until initiative count 20 of the following round then disperses.

◇The cathedral bells, although rusty and frail, begin to ring. Creatures within the cathedral must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. Creatures that fail take 17 (3d10) thunder damage and are knocked prone. This sound can be heard up to a mile away.

The Nightmare Man can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and he can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

How to defeat the Darklord

Destroying the body of the Nightmare Man is barely an inconvenience for the dark lord. If the Nightmare Man is reduced to 0 hit points he fades away. He reappears one hour later, fully restored and plotting revenge. The only way to permanently slay the Nightmare Man is to find his relic in the Grieving Cathedral. The Altar of Dreams is a beautiful altar carved from white stone. The Altar of Dreams is magically hardened, with AC 18 and 180 hit points. The Nightmare Man can use an action to teleport the altar to any room on the Grieving Cathedral.

Mullonga

"Come dearie. Drink up. This will take the sting out of the poison. You were so brave fighting all those ghouls. Everyone else just hid behind you. I don't know why they let you do it all on your own..."

~ Mullonga

Mullonga appears as a small elderly woman leaning on her gnarled staff. Her skin looks like worn leather and she has a ready smile. Her eyes are bright and cheery. Her nails are strange, growing and shrinking when no one looks. Mullonga is quick to offer aid to adventurers on the run from horrifying monsters. She will even force other members of the Nightmare Court to spare their victims. Once she is trusted by the party, she reveals her true nature.

Background: Mullonga appears friendly but never talks about her past. No one seems to know where she came from, or how she joined the Nightmare Court. She has a vast knowledge of plants, potions, and poisons which implies she may have been a healer. Her mastery of undead points to a darker story.

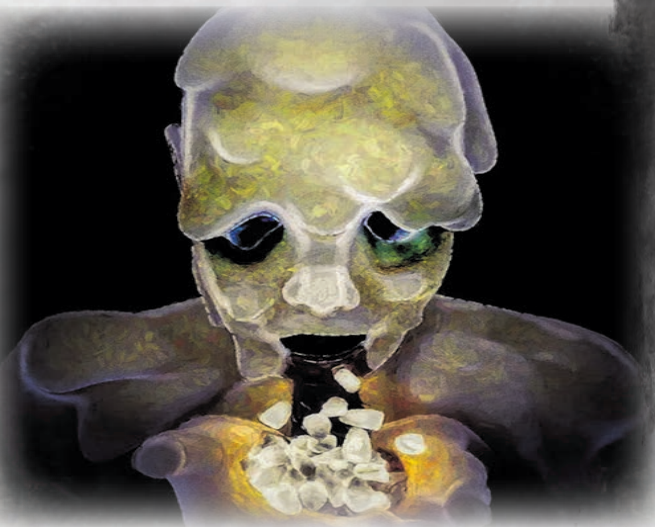
Current Sketch: When adventurers meet her she is friendly and knowledgeable. Mullonga is an oasis of calm in the middle of a storm of madness. She will wait until a party of adventurers is nearly overwhelmed by a horde of rotting undead before she appears and saves them. Mullonga will take them somewhere safe and give them potions to heal their wounds and let them rest. Only once the group starts to trust her, does Mullonga begin to tear them apart. Mullonga thrives on fear and betrayal.

Darklord's Tactics: Once a group starts to trust her, Mullonga will spread innuendo and whispers to turn them against each other. The hate grows until it explodes into violence. Then Mullonga is in her element. Her claws can extend in an instant to the length of spears. Mullonga enjoys bloodshed, but loves the hunt. She will use hordes of undead to separate her victims. Mullonga chooses one and lets them run. She will extend the chase for hours. Once her prey is too exhausted to flee, Mullonga moves in for the kill.

WHY DO WE ALL SHARE
THE SAME NIGHTMARES?

Mullonga's Lair: The Ghettoes of Nod

Mullonga's lair is a series of collapsed buildings in the heart of Nod, the City of Dreams. In the center of these collapsed buildings is Mullonga's massive cauldron. Any liquid poured into Mullonga's cauldron will boil on her command. Mullonga can seemingly turn random ingredients into potions in this cauldron. She delights in choosing the most disgusting ingredients possible. Perhaps her greatest secret is that Mullonga's lair has nothing to do with the buildings. Mullonga can use lair actions within 100 feet of the cauldron. She can perform a special ritual that takes 10 minutes to call the cauldron from its current location to herself. Mullonga encountered within 100 feet of her cauldron has a challenge rating of Monster 15 (13,000 XP)



Mullonga

Small undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 165 (22d6 + 88)

Speed 40 ft. burrow 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Wis +10

Skills Deception +9, Nature +10, Perception +10, Persuasion +9

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non magical attacks, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 20

Languages All, telepathy 120 ft

Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Mullonga

Magic Resistance. Mullonga has advantage on saving throws versus spells and other magical effects.

Potions Master. Mullonga can brew any potion in the DMG in her massive cauldron. Brewing a potion takes 2d6 hours and can involve rare and hard to find ingredients.

Dreamcaster. Mullonga can cast spells without using verbal, somatic, or material components.

Turn Immunity. Mullonga is immune to effects that turn undead.

Teleport. Members of the Nightmare Court can use their move action to teleport anywhere in the Nightmare Lands

Spellcasting. Mullonga is a 13th level spellcaster. Her default spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). Mullonga has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, poison spray, thorn whip*
1st level (4 slots): *charm person, cure wounds, fog cloud, thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, lesser restoration, pass without trace*

3rd level (3 slots): *call lightning, dispel magic, sleet storm*

4th level (3 slots): *blight, confusion, polymorph*

5th level (2 slots): *contagion, geas*

6th level (1 slot): *wind walk*

7th level (1 slot): *fire storm*

Actions

Multiattack. Mullonga makes two claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10ft., one target.
Hit: 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage plus 11 (2d10) poison damage.

Legendary Actions

Mullonga can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Mullonga regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Claw. Mullonga makes one claw attack.

Thorn Whip. Mullonga casts *thorn whip*.

Burrow. Mullonga burrows into the ground and can move up to half her burrow speed.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Mullonga can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

- Smoke boils out of the cauldron. Every creature within 30 feet of the cauldron (except Mullonga) must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. Creatures that fail are poisoned until initiative count 20 of the following round.
- 2d8 crawling claws skitter out of the cauldron. These claws are friendly toward Mullonga and will follow her commands.
- Mullonga takes a drink from the frothing liquid in the cauldron. Mullonga regains a 1st level spell slot.

Mullonga can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and she can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

How to defeat the Darklord

Mullonga's relic is her cauldron. Mullonga keeps her cauldron well guarded and there are dozens of ghouls in the buildings surrounding the cauldron at any given time. If the cauldron is destroyed, then Mullonga ceases to exist.



Hypnos

"He is the manifestation of your own failure. He is your secret desire to fail and the paralysis of indecision. Hypnos is the most patient of the Nightmare Court, and he drains his victims slowly over years or decades. He can afford to be patient, his victims cannot escape."
~ Dr. Illhousen

Hypnos is the personification of sleep. Hypnos appears as a well dressed man sealed inside a glass coffin. The coffin has no hinges or latch and is made of a perfectly clear glass. Any attempt to mark or smudge the glass only lasts for a few seconds before it disappears. Hypnos' hands are folded across his chest and his breathing seems slow and steady no matter what is going on around him. Despite appearing to sleep, his right eye is open and blazes with madness.

Background: Hypnos appears to be a wealthy gentleman. His clothes are impeccable and perfectly tailored. His monocle chain and rim are made of pure gold and the lens is crystal. Hypnos' clothes are of Victorian style, and he does not carry any weapons.

Current Sketch: Dreamers in Hypnos' realm are constantly frustrated by their own failings. Nothing ever works as it should. Plans go awry and if they do succeed there are tragic consequences for others. Hypnos' dreams drain his victims sense of self worth. Survivors are shallow husks of their former selves, with hollow eyes and constantly whispering.

Darklord's Tactics: Hypnos cannot engage in physical combat. He is sealed inside his coffin which does not have a latch, hinges, or any other visible way to open. Hypnos is still an extremely dangerous opponent, using his spells and possession abilities to turn his attackers against each other. Hypnos always has minions nearby and is quick to summon them if he needs.

Hypnos' Lair: The Spire of Sleep

The Spire of Sleep is a tall tower made of white marble shrouded in mist. The tower is full of traps designed to incapacitate intruders and leave them helpless to the monsters that prowl its hallways. Hypnos' whispering can be heard anywhere in the spire. No attempt to block out the sound works. Creatures that have returned from the spire claim the whispering is like a needle digging into their skull. The Spire of Sleep has no windows or doors and must be entered through magic. Hypnos is always encountered in the Spire of Sleep.



Hypnos

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 10 (natural armor)

Hit Points 117 (18d8 + 36)

Speed 0 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	3 (-4)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)	24 (+7)

Saving Throws Int +9, Wis +8, Cha +12

Skills Deception +12, Intimidation 12, Perception +8

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non magical attacks, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, prone

Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages All, Telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Glass Coffin. Hypnos' prison is also his greatest defense. The glass coffin grants Hypnos total cover. The glass coffin has AC 16, 150 hit points and is immune to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from non magical attacks, cold, and psychic attacks. The coffin is resistant to acid, fire, and lightning damage. The glass coffin is unnaturally heavy, weighing 1,000 pounds.

Magic Resistance. Hypnos has advantage on saving throws versus spells and other magical effects.

Teleport. Members of the Nightmare Court can use their move action to teleport anywhere in the Nightmare Lands.

Turn Immunity. Hypnos is immune to effects that turn undead.

Hypnos

Innate Spellcasting. Hypnos' innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 19). Hypnos can cast the following spells, requiring not material components:

At will: *mage hand*, *minor image*, *prestidigitation*, *vicious mockery*

5/Day each: *bane*, *charm person*, *dissonant whispers*, *silent image*

3/Day each: *crown of madness*, *enthrall*, *hold person*, *silence*

1/Day each: *confusion*, *hypnotic pattern*

Actions

Song of Sleep (recharge 5–6). Hypnos' eternal whispers become a drowsy lullaby. Every creature within 30 feet of Hypnos must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. Creatures that fail fall unconscious for 1 minute. Unconscious creatures may repeat the saving throw at the end of their turn to end the effect or if another creature uses their action to try and awaken them. Unconscious creatures automatically awaken if they take damage.

Possession (recharge 6). One creature that Hypnos is aware of within 100 feet of him must succeed on a DC 18 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by Hypnos. Hypnos' body disappears and the target is incapacitated and loses control of their body. Hypnos controls the body, but does not deprive the target of awareness. Hypnos can't be targeted by an attack, spell, or other effect while in possession of someone else's body. Hypnos retains his alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma and his condition immunities. He otherwise uses the target's statistics and gains access to the target's knowledge and class features. Hypnos may cast spells but may not use his song of sleep action while possessing another creature.

The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, Hypnos ends it, or he is forced out by a *dispel evil and good* spell or similar effect. When the possession ends Hypnos reappears in his coffin. The target is immune to Hypnos' possession for 24 hours after the possession ends.

Legendary Actions

Hypnos can take 2 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Hypnos regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn..

Vicious Mockery. Hypnos casts *vicious mockery*.

Suggestion. Hypnos casts *suggestion* (save DC 18).

Cacophony. Hypnos creates a 30 foot cone of angry psychic shrieks. Creatures caught in the cone must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. They take 21 (6d6) psychic damage on a failed save and half as much on a successful one.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Hypnos can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

Hypnos chooses one creature within 100 feet. That creature must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. Creatures that fail fall asleep (as per the spell) for one minute.

Hypnos chooses a creature within 30 feet. That creature must make a DC 18 Charisma saving throw. Creatures that fail are trapped in a featureless 10 foot room until initiative count 20 of the following round. The room has no windows or doors. They will reappear in the space they were previously in, or the nearest open space.

One of Hypnos' minions appears. The Spire is full of creatures and the DM is encouraged to be vicious, but Hypnos mainly prefers ghosts, wraiths, banshees, and other incorporeal undead.

Hypnos can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and it can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

How to defeat the Darklord

Hypnos' relic is his glass coffin. Shattering the glass coffin causes Hypnos to awaken. Hypnos looks around confused for a moment and then screams as his body withers away to dust in a matter of seconds.



The Ghost Dancer

"She is exquisite! Her movements are sublime. Her face is the perfect mix of sorrow and beauty! To watch her dance is the greatest accomplishment of your life.

Alas, it will also be the last."

~ Jaim Ilee Cartas, theatre critic

The Ghost Dancer is a breathtakingly beautiful young woman who appears to be in her late teens or early 20's. She constantly dances, weaving around the room, even in the heat of combat. The Ghost Dancer's movements are perfect and absolutely entrancing. The Ghost Dancer never speaks. Her throat is a mass of ugly bruises, and many speculate that she cannot speak. When she wishes to communicate she does so through her haunting and beautiful dancing.

Background: The Ghost Dancer's dreamscapes always foster emotions of loss and shame. The bruises on her throat could be marks left by a noose, leading some sages to believe the Ghost Dancer had taken her own life.

Current Sketch: The Ghost Dancer spends her time in the Theater of the Macabre. She endlessly dances, her face a mask of shame and regret. Her movements are perfect, but she takes no joy in it.

Darklord's Tactics: The Ghost Dancer strikes from the air as often as possible. She will target spellcasters and any creature with an obvious ranged attack first. She will concentrate on a creature until they fall, adding to her audience for her next performance.

Ghost Dancer's Lair:

Theater of the Macabre

The Ghost Dancer haunts the Theater Macabre in the city of Nod. Inside captive audiences are forced to watch her dance for eternity, their joyous cries filling the halls of the theater. The Ghost Dancer feeds on the ghosts trapped in her theater. She devours their souls even as she basks in their applause. The Ghost Dancer encountered in her lair has a challenge rating of 14 (11,500 XP)



Ghost Dancer

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 165 (22d8 + 66)

Speed 40 ft., Fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	23 (+6)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +11, Wis +7

Skills Performance +10

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non magical attacks, necrotic

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Understands all but does not speak

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Danse Macabre. The Ghost Dancer is reluctant to engage in physical combat, preferring to charm her opponents into doing her bidding and forcing them to watch her dance. When combat begins the Ghost Dancer will start attacking with her chilling touch attack. If combat goes on too long or becomes too dangerous the Ghost Dancer becomes a figure of rage. Scimitars appear in her hand and her dance, while still beautiful, becomes frenzied. When the Ghost Dancer falls below 140 hit points, she will stop using her chill touch attacks and start using her spectral scimitars.

THE EPHALTES ARE REAL...
WAKE UP!

The Ghost Dancer

Ethereal Dancer. The Ghost Dancer can use a bonus action to cast *ethereality*. In addition, attacks of opportunity are made against the Ghost Dancer with disadvantage and if she is required to make a Dexterity saving throw to avoid damage, she takes half damage on a failed save and no damage on a successful one.

Magic Weapons. The Ghost Dancer's attacks are magical.

Turn Immunity. The Ghost Dancer is immune to effects that turn undead.

Please Take Your Seat... If the Ghost Dancer kills a humanoid within the Theater of the Macabre their soul is transported into the main theater and they become part of her audience. The humanoid cannot be resurrected by any means until the Ghost Dancer is slain.

Actions

Multiattack. The Ghost Dancer can use her entrancing dance. She then makes two chilling touch attacks or 3 spectral scimitar attacks.

Chilling Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) cold damage. Creatures struck by a chilling touch attack must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. Creatures that fail have disadvantage on Strength saving throws, ability checks, and attack rolls until the start of the Ghost Dancer's next turn.

Spectral Scimitars. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d6 + 6) slashing damage plus 9 (2d8) cold damage. Creatures struck by a spectral scimitar must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. Creatures that fail gain one level of exhaustion.

Entrancing Dance. The Ghost Dancer may choose any number of creatures within 60 feet of her that is aware of her presence. Those creatures must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. Creatures that fail are entranced by the dancing and are incapacitated until the end of the Ghost Dancer's next turn. If the creature's saving throw is successful or if the effect ends for it, that creature is immune to the Ghost Dancer's entrancing dancing ability for 1 hour.

Legendary Actions

The Ghost Dancer can take 3 legendary actions after she has been reduced to below 140 hit points, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Ghost Dancer regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Spectral Scimitar. The Ghost Dancer makes one spectral scimitar attack.

Misty Step. The Ghost Dancer casts *misty step*.

Blank Eyes, Empty Soul. The Ghost Dancer locks eyes with a creature she can see within 30 feet. That creature must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw as they are overwhelmed by a wave of despair and the sense that nothing matters. Creatures that fail have disadvantage on saving throws until the end of the Ghost Dancer's next turn.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the Ghost Dancer can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

- One creature within 50 feet of the Ghost Dancer must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw as the Theatre Macabre tries to drain their life force to empower its mistress. Creatures that fail have their speed reduced to half its normal value until initiative count 20 of the following round. While the creature's speed is reduced, the Ghost Dancer can dash as a bonus action.
- Spectral dancers appear around the Ghost Dancer following her entrancing movements. Until initiative count 20 of the following round to hit rolls made against the Ghost Dancer have disadvantage.
- The Ghost Dancer chooses a point within 50 feet of her. Creatures within 10 feet of that point must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw as spectral blades fill the area. Creatures in the area take 8d6 slashing damage on a failed save and half as much on a successful one.

The Ghost Dancer can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and she can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

How to defeat the Darklord

Above the lobby of the Theater of the Macabre is a massive, ornate chandelier. The lobby's ceiling is 50 feet above the floor and the chandelier is held in place by thick iron chains. Cutting the chains and destroying the chandelier will kill the Ghost Dancer.



The Redheaded Child

"He is the death of innocence. He is our collective realization that our childhood dreams will never come true."

~ Scratched into a wall of the Solitarius Orphanage. Author unknown

The Redheaded Child appears as an emaciated child covered in rags. He will often appear in the background of a victim's dreams before they start to haunt them. The Child's eyes stare through people. Creatures fortunate enough to survive an encounter often remember dead eyes and an endless longing.

Current Sketch: The Redheaded Child's dreamscapes are about the loss of innocence and memories of happier times. Their dreamscapes often start off as happy, but quickly become stark dreamscapes filled with bitterness and hate.

Darklord's Tactics: The Redheaded Child's victims rarely remember their dreams. They find it difficult to focus on mundane tasks. Eventually its victims become lost in a world of memories, with only brief periods of lucidity when they can beg for help.

The Redheaded Child's Lair: Solitarius Orphanage

The Solitarius Orphanage is a dull gray three story building in the City of Nod. The orphanage is surrounded by high walls crowned with iron spikes. Creatures that enter the grounds cannot hear the sounds of the city outside. They can only hear the quiet weeping of hundreds of children. The orphanage does not allow the children that lived there to leave, and the building is full of their dead eyed ghosts. The Redheaded Child encountered in its lair has a challenge rating of 14 (11,500 XP)

CAN'T SLEEP. WON'T SLEEP.
SO TIRED...

SO TIRED...



Redheaded Child

Small undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 156 (26d6 + 72)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	18 (+4)	16 (+6)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Wis +7, Cha +10

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non magical attacks. Necrotic, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages All, Telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Bad Luck. An enemy within 20 feet of the Redheaded Child makes saving throws with disadvantage.

New Best Friend. The Redheaded Child fixates on one enemy creature. Against that creature, the Redheaded Child has advantage on all attack rolls and knows the direction towards and general health of that creature while the Redheaded Child is within 10 miles of it.

Teleport. Members of the Nightmare Court can use their move action to teleport anywhere in the Nightmare Lands.

The Redheaded Child

Actions

Multiattack. The Redheaded Child makes two weapon attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) psychic damage and the creature must make a DC 18 Intelligence saving throw. Creatures that fail lose 1d4 Intelligence. The Intelligence returns after a long rest or after a *lesser restoration* or similar magic.

Slash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 6) slashing damage.

Shadow Walking. The Redheaded Child steps into a shadow and disappears. It instantly reappears in a shadow up to 300 feet away.

Legendary Actions

The Redheaded Child can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Redheaded Child regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Slam. The Redheaded Child makes one slam attack.

Rage. The Redheaded Child unleashes a scream of pure rage from centuries of frustration and neglect. Every creature within 30 feet of the Redheaded Child must make DC 15 Constitution saving throw. Creatures take 55 (10d10) points of thunder damage and are knocked prone on a failed saving throw. Creatures take half damage and are not knocked prone on a successful saving throw.

Long Lost Friends. One creature within 50 feet of the Redheaded Child must make a DC 17 Charisma saving throw. Creatures that fail are filled with images of long lost loved ones and fond childhood memories. The creature is overwhelmed with emotion and is incapacitated for 1 minute. The creature may repeat the saving throw at the end of their turn to end the condition.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the monster name can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

- The Redheaded Child chooses a point within 30 feet. Every creature within 10 feet of that point must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw as the ghosts of dozens of starving children appear. The children pause before they open their mouths filled with hundreds of spectral teeth. Creatures in that area take 23 (5d8) force damage on a failed saving throw and half as much on a successful one.

- The Redheaded Child chooses one creature within 30 feet. That creature must make a DC 17 Charisma saving throw. Creatures that fail are reminded of every failure, defeat and humiliation they have ever endured. That creature will believe the Redheaded Child is the cause of these failures and must use their next turn to move towards the Redheaded Child and make a melee attack against it. If the creature cannot make a melee attack against the Redheaded Child, it loses its action.
- The Redheaded Child chooses one creature within 50 feet. That creature must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. Creatures that fail are surrounded by the ghosts of dozens of children begging for food and warmth. That creature gains one level of exhaustion. The level of exhaustion lasts for 1 minute.

The Redheaded Child can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and they can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.



Davion



Davion



Davion doesn't exist. Davion does exist, but it's different. Davion is the same it's always been. Within Davion everything is transient, dependent on the subconscious efforts of the four people who are caught in a single body. Whether Davion is real or not can be debated, as it exists within the dream spheres of the Nightmare Lands, the personal domain of Davion the Mad.

Davion shares the name of its darklord, which is fitting as he may or may not be the only real thing within it, but even he cannot be certain. The domain is in constant flux, but none of the natives notice the transitions, whereas visitors, who seem to be unaffected by the mutable reality of the place, certainly do.

Both darklord and domain are the results of a carelessly worded *wish*, but that was never Davion's intention.

Before he became a darklord, Davion was a power-hungry and greedy wizard, who hired three powerful individuals to collect knowledge and magic items for him: Boromar the fighter, Narana the priestess, and Augustus the mage. While they were out gathering their information, Davion came into possession of a *ring of three wishes* that had two *wishes* left. He spent days and months carefully crafting his *wish*, a 100-word long declaration that was intended to ensure that he got his *wish* absolutely right. As he started the incantation "I, Davion, wish..." he was interrupted by the arrival of his three hirelings, and in his excitement he burst out "give me everything you've got!"

That is what he got. All four people were combined into a single person, with only Davion aware of what had happened, but he soon discovered the downside of this: at any given moment, any of the other three could emerge, and the world around them would shift. None of the other three are aware of the existence of the others, but Davion is. He slowly went mad, and it wasn't long after that that the Nightmare Court discovered him. He was put into one of the dreamspheres and remains there to this day.

Adventures in Davion will inevitably revolve around one of the four personalities that are caught in the body, and of an attempt to cure them. Augustus is the only one of the three other personalities (Davion is still the one in control, even if he only surfaces 25% of the time like the others) that suspects what is wrong, but all three of them have noticed that they have memory lapses and blackouts. The reason they

have not noticed more than that is simply that the village in which they live changes character and physical buildup whenever the personality changes, which can happen in the blink of an eye. As such they never see the transition itself, but deep down they know something is wrong. Only powerful magic such as the spells *miracle* or *wish* can undo what has been done, and only powerful heroes should be drawn here, at least if they're to have any chance of curing the issue. Perhaps the heroes come here hired by friends of one of the three missing people (Davion had no family or friends beyond the three hirelings, as he was careful not to become attached to anyone) — perhaps to rescue them or perhaps to simply find out what has happened. Particularly for Narana, the church of Loviatar would likely be interested in finding out what happened to one of their high priestesses. Rescuing them from the clutches of Davion would be difficult as the man would try his best to retain control of the other three, retain power over his little realm, and retain their powers for his own. His madness knows no bounds, and he doesn't even realize that his attempts at holding on to their power are what is limiting his own growth.

"It is sometimes an appropriate response to reality to go insane." ~ Philip K. Dick, VALIS

Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forest, hill, mountains
Year Formed:	703 BC (suspected, as the inhabitants cannot tell the passage of time)
Population:	300
Races (%):	Humans 90%, Elves 5%, Halflings 4%, Other 1%
Languages:	Common, Elven, Halfling
Religions:	None (or Loviatar when Narana is in control)
Government:	Despotism
Ruler(s):	Davion the Mad
Darklord(s):	Davion the Mad
Nationality:	Davionites
Analog:	Dissociative Identity Disorder



Davion

Local Fauna:

Davion is remarkably stable when a visitor is not within the confines of the village that is caught here. To the west of the village is a decently-sized wood and to the east are the farmlands that the villagers use. Animal life here is benign with the biggest threat being the wild boars that roam the dense deciduous forest. Apart from the boars, the forest has a thriving population of deer, one that seems to be constant no matter how much hunting the locals do. The ash and birch trees are also home to a large population of red squirrels, whom the local children sometimes hunt.

The farmers who live in the eastern part of town hold horses, sheep, and cows, with each household having a few chickens or ducks. Pigs are unknown in Davion, a leftover from before Davion entered the mists.

Local Flora:

Davion isn't home to any unique native species of plant, but the farmland is quite fertile, and the wheatfields are a spectacular sight in autumn. Like the animal life, the plant life outside of the village doesn't seem to change with the personality of the darklord, and instead stays quite constant. This has allowed a certain amount of food to be harvested regularly so that no one in the domain is starving.

The forest west of the village is quite dense and old, with large deciduous trees, with birch and ash dominating.

Native Horrors

There are no monsters living within Davion, though they occasionally enter the dreamsphere through the Nightmare Lands. In this manner, any monster could be encountered here in theory. These monsters are usually hunted down and killed by the locals, whenever the village transitions into Boromar's Knoll.

Instead the dangers here are presented by the locals, who become rather feisty during their time under Boromar's control, and Davion.

Terrain type

Davion consists of forest on the west and farmlands on the east. There's no real variation in the landscape here, as it is mostly flat, apart from a single hill, the one that holds Davion's Mansion.

Important Landmarks

Davion's Mansion

Located on the northern edge of the village, Davion's Mansion always appears as a ruin. The mansion is literally the extension of Davion's psyche, a physical representation of how his mind has fallen apart over time. Should the darklord ever be cured, the mansion

will instantly complete itself, appearing as a grand old building that has withstood hundreds of years of abuse with pride. At the center of the mansion would be a portal that allows one to exit the dreamsphere.

Towns and villages:

The villages mentioned below are all the same village, but they take on various aspects and appearances depending on which of the four personalities is in charge. The people and buildings change at the same time, and might even vary from one manifestation to another. As such, a building that's a smithy in one might be a stable in another, and a tannery in the next one. Only generalities are therefore explained with each village, though each usually has a single permanent location, where the darklord's personality makes its home within that incarnation.

Arcanon

Arcanon is under the influence of Augustus, who keeps a small apartment above a shop that sells magic items and spell components. During this manifestation, the village has red brick streets and clapboard houses. The buildings are all in good repair, but they're well weathered and used. Most buildings are also painted a deep red with black tiles, but not everyone follows this trend. The weather in Arcanon is always overcast, but pleasantly cool. The people during this manifestation are always polite if a bit distant.



Davion

Boromar's Knoll

Boromar's Knoll is ruled by Boromar, who makes his home in the rooms of the local inn, maintaining a rough and tumble lifestyle. Boromar's Knoll looks like a pioneer town with log cabins, barns, and shops. The street is a dirt road with wagon ruts down the center, and mud everywhere. The inhabitants are seasoned pioneers accustomed to a hard lifestyle, and while honest, they can be rather blunt. The sky here is always clear, but the weather is cold, nearly freezing as winter approaches.

Pallatia

Pallatia is the home of Narana, and here the village consists of houses made of red brick with slate roofs. The streets are clean and newly paved with cobblestones, while the weather is warm and breezy like a late spring. Here, the inhabitants seem to have lost all restraint and sense of decency, wearing clothes that reveal so much that they'd be considered scandalous almost anywhere. Any kind of debauchery is visible, though many of the inhabitants tend to be somewhat sadistic. Narana makes her home in the temple to Loviatar, the goddess of pain.

Thornewood

Thornewood is when Davion is in power. Here the village lies in ruins as if it was hit a year ago by an earthquake and never rebuilt. What houses remain are made from timber with stone foundations and have thatched roofs. The streets are paved with cobblestones, but the roads have been broken apart by the earthquake and are completely impassable to any wagon. Here the breeze is warm, but the trees near town have begun to see a yellowing of leaves as autumn approaches. Davion makes his home in the mansion north of the town, even though it is broken down. He spends most of his time around town, talking to himself or to one of the other three personalities.

Neighboring domain(s):

Nightmare Lands

Fun Fact:

Nothing is permanent inside Davion unless brought in by outsiders. Any purchases are lost the moment the domain transitions to another personality, though any losses of resources are real. The money spent simply becomes a part of the dreamsphere, and is never seen again.



Davion the Mad

"They are mine!

They try to escape, but they cannot. I am the lord of master of all I survey!

I need more. More power, more knowledge.

As I absorb more beings into my form, I will gain their power as well.

I will become a god. Then more than a god.

Then I will be everything.

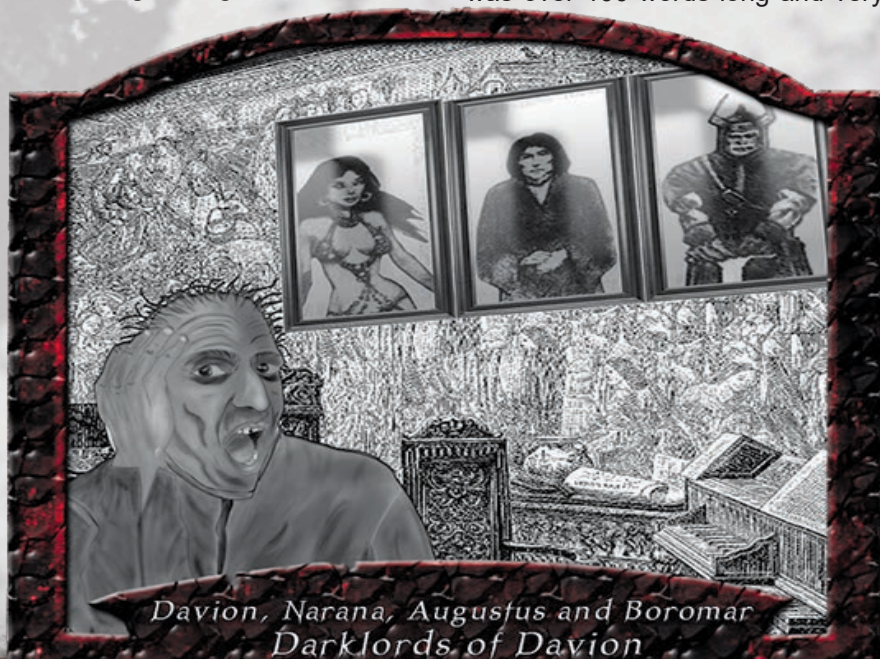
I am all."

~ Davion the Mad

Davion, when the Davion personality is in control, is a human male in his mid-fifties. His hair is rapidly thinning and he is rail thin, his threadbare loose robes hanging from his frame it can be seen that once these robes were white, but time and neglect have dulled them to a drab gray. Extremely powerful, Davion is obsessed with amassing as much personal power as he can. He constantly hunts for rare magical items and new spells to add to his armory. When Narana is in control, she is an attractive human female in her mid-twenties. She wears impractical armor made of metal scales, hung with hooked chains. She carries the holy symbol of Loviatar, the Mistress of Pain, as her weapon, a viciously barbed scourge. Loud and rude, Narana cares little for others, seeing them as little more than the tools to accomplish her goals. She is more prone to beat someone in need of healing than give them succor.

Augustus is a human in their mid-forties. They have dark hair and simple, well-crafted robes. They talk little, and when they do are blunt to the point of rudeness. They have no time for fools and aren't afraid to tell them so. A bard's worst nightmare, they hate stories and songs with a passion. Boromar is a massive beast of a man in his early thirties. He wears plate armor and carries a massive two handed sword. He talks to himself constantly, scanning his surroundings as if expecting an ambush from the shadows at any moment. He is brusque, but not to the point of rudeness. Rather, he is straightforward.

Background: Davion was obsessed with learning every last secret of magic, and he would pay any price to get it. He hired adventurers to find him lost scraps of knowledge and shattered magic items from around the world. The most effective of these adventurers were Boromar, a fighter, Augustus, a wizard, and Naranta, a priestess of Loviatar. Davion scoured libraries to find the faintest of arcane secrets, taking the books that contained them for his own library. It was the three adventurers that brought Davion his most prized possession. They had discovered a ring that held tremendous magical powers during their journeys but Augustus was unable to ascertain its properties. It was ancient and powerful though, that much was clear. Davion sent the adventurers off to find an armor set that had been forged to fight primordials before time began. Meanwhile he examined the ring. Davion studied the ring for months, finding that its magic was unusual, and hard to pin down. Eventually he discovered its secrets, that the ring could grant two wishes. Davion spent weeks carefully wording his wishes. The final wish was over 100 words long and very carefully crafted.



*Davion, Narana, Augustus and Boromar
Darklords of Davion*

Davion the Mad

He had just started to speak the words when the adventurers returned. Davion, desperate for power, screamed at the adventurers to give him all they had. The ring granted Davion's wish, leaving all four humans in Davion's body. The shock drove Davion mad.

In his madness, Davion rampaged through the countryside. Each personality tried to control the others, their powers and abilities randomly erupting from the gestalt being. Eventually Davion regained control and, in his madness, reveled in his new abilities.

When several adventurers approached Davion and offered to separate him into his component beings, Davion refused. When the adventurers pressed their case, Davion slew them. Davion took his time tearing the adventurers apart. As he reveled in their pain, a mist rose from the ground and surrounded Davion and the village, Thornewood.

Current Sketch: Davion is the darklord of Davion, and the only one of the four who share his body that realizes what truly happened. Davion revels in the powers he gained from the wish, but also suffers a crippling madness.

The other personalities of Davion know nothing of their situation, although Augustus is starting to suspect something is wrong. The wizard suffers from extended black outs and they wish to know the reason.

Boromar suspects something is wrong, but doesn't want to look into it too deeply. Narana doesn't believe anything is amiss but if she can be convinced that something is wrong she will use the remaining wish in the ring to separate herself from the other beings.

Darklord's Tactics: Davion's combat abilities change depending on who is in control. Davion can access all the powers and abilities of the other three beings that share his body. This makes him wildly unpredictable in combat. One round he may be using a greatsword with ferocity and skill, before casting a healing spell and then summoning a blast of fire to destroy his foes.

While lost in the fury of combat, Davion may lose control of the beings that share his body. Each personality fights with its own abilities, but can't access the abilities of the other beings. If one personality is slain then another random personality will take over. If all four personalities are slain then Davion will fade away and reform somewhere in his domain at an unknown time.

Borders: Only Davion has the ability to close the borders. When the borders of Davion are closed the domain is closed; anyone attempting to leave finds it impossible. When the town disappears over the horizon it reappears in front of the fleeing creature.

Davion the Mad

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (16 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 97 (15d8 + 30)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +8, Wis +7

Skills Arcana +12, History +12, Investigation +8, Persuasion +7

Damage Resistances damage from spells; non magical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing (from stonewood)

Condition Immunities charmed

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elvish, Giant, Infernal

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Magic Resistance. The archmage has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Spellcasting. Davion is a 15th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared: Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, friends, mage hand, prestidigitation, shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person, mage armor*, magic missile, puppet, sleep*

2nd level (3 slots): *crown of madness, hold person, mirror image, misty step, Tasha's mind whip*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, enemies abound, fear, hypnotic pattern, lightning bolt*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment, confusion, fabricate, fire shield, stonewood**

5th level (2 slots): *cone of cold, dominate person, geas, scrying, wall of force*

6th level (1 slot): *globe of invulnerability, mass suggestion*

7th level (1 slot): *power word: pain*

8th level (1 slot): *feeblemind*

*cast before battle

Split. Davion's body hosts four different personalities that once were four different beings. Davion, Boromar, Narana and Augustus exist simultaneously and only appear when they control Davion's body. The other three personalities do not acknowledge the existence of the others, and only Davion understands what is truly happening. Davion is in control

Davion the Mad

most of the time. The DM is free to decide when a personality takes over and controls the body. The only way to split the personalities is with a carefully worded wish spell. When the wish is correctly made, the four beings separate and get their own body that appears 5ft. away from Davion. Each personality uses its own statblock. Davion can use the abilities and fighting skills of each personality as well as his own abilities whenever he is in control; any abilities used by Davion count as if they are used by the personality that shares it. Whenever a personality takes control, the domain of Davion changes to match what the current personality perceives it to be. During combat, with each new round, there is a 5% chance that the personality shifts to one decided by the DM, completely healing all damage the body has taken. When a personality is killed, another one takes its place with full hit points. Dead personalities return 1d4 days later. Davion cannot use the powers of a dead personality. If all personalities die, then Davion is killed.

Arcane Recovery. Davion can regain some of his magical energy by studying his spellbook. Once per day when he finishes a Short Rest, he can choose expended spell slots to recover. The spell slots can have a combined level that is less than or equal to 7, and none of the slots can be 6th level or higher.

Hypnotic Gaze. Davion's soft words and enchanting gaze can magically enthrall another creature. As an action, one creature that he can see within 5 feet of him, if the target can see or hear Davion, must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw against or be charmed by him until the end of Davion's next turn. The charmed creature's speed drops to 0, and the creature is incapacitated and visibly dazed. On subsequent turns, Davion can use his action to maintain this effect, extending its duration until the end of his next turn. However, the effect ends if he moves more than 5 feet away from the creature, if the creature can neither see nor hear Davion, or if the creature takes damage. Once the effect ends, or if the creature succeeds on its initial saving throw against this effect, Davion can't use this feature on that creature again until he finishes a Long Rest.

Instinctive Charm. When a creature Davion can see within 30 feet of him makes an attack roll against Davion, he can use his reaction to divert the attack, provided that another creature is within the attack's range. The attacker must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the attacker must target the creature that is closest to it, not including Davion or itself. If multiple creatures are closest, the attacker chooses which one to target. On a successful save, Davion can't use this feature on the attacker again until he finishes a Long Rest. Davion must choose to use this feature before knowing whether the attack hits or misses. Creatures that can't be charmed are immune to this effect.

Split Enchantment. When Davion casts an enchantment spell of 1st level or higher that targets only one creature, he can have it target a second creature.

Alter Memories. Davion gains the ability to make a creature unaware of his magical influence on it. When he casts an enchantment spell to charm one or more creatures, he can alter one creature's understanding so that it remains unaware of being charmed. Additionally, once before the spell expires, Davion can use his action to try to make the chosen creature forget some of the time it spent charmed. The creature must succeed on a DC16 Intelligence saving throw or lose 4 hours of its memories. Davion can make the creature forget a lesser period of time, and the amount of time can't exceed the duration of his enchantment spell.

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Boromar

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 21 (Defense, Full Plate +2)

Hit Points 102 (12d8 + 48)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +7, Dex +5

Skills Acrobatics +5, Animal Handling +6, Athletics +7, Intimidation +6

Condition Immunities charmed

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Dwarvish, Orc

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Javelin's Command Word. This javelin is a magic weapon. When Boromar hurls it and speaks its command word, it transforms into a bolt of lightning, forming a line 5 feet wide that extends out from Boromar to a target within 120 feet. Each creature in the line excluding him and the target must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 4d6 lightning damage on a failed save, and half as much damage on a successful one. The lightning bolt turns back into a javelin when it reaches the target. Boromar makes a ranged weapon attack against a target. On a hit, the target takes damage from the javelin plus 4d6 lightning damage. Boromar can use this ability 5 times and the charges are regained each dawn. In the meantime, the javelin can still be used as a magic weapon.

Recall Weapons. Boromar can use a bonus action to recall any weapon he has dropped or thrown. The weapon appears in one of his hands if they are empty. If both of his hands carry something, the weapon drops to the floor 5ft next to him.

Davion the Mad

Personality Formation. Whenever Boromar comes into control, his equipment magically forms on his body and hands. The equipment disappears if he is killed or if another personality comes into control. He wields a Defender Greatsword +4, a Javelin of Lightning and wears plate armor +2.

Second Wind. Boromar has a limited well of stamina that he can draw on to protect himself from harm. On his turn, he can use a bonus action to regain hit points equal to 1d10 + 10. Once he uses this feature, he must finish a short or Long Rest before he can use it again.

Action Surge. Boromar can push himself beyond his normal limits for a moment. On his turn, he can take one additional action. Once he uses this feature, he must finish a Short or Long Rest before he can use it again.

Indomitable. Boromar can reroll a saving throw that he fails. If he does so, he must use the new roll, and he can't use this feature again until he finishes a long rest.

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when Boromar hits with it (included in the attack).

Brutish Durability. Boromar's toughness allows him to shrug off assaults that would devastate others. Whenever he makes a saving throw, roll 1d6 and add the die to his saving throw total. If applying this bonus to a death saving throw increases the total to 20 or higher, he gains the benefits of rolling a 20 on the d20.

Great Weapon Fighting. When Boromar rolls a 1 or 2 on a damage die for an attack he makes with a melee weapon that he is wielding with two hands, he can reroll the die and must use the new roll, even if the new roll is a 1 or a 2. The weapon must have the two-handed or versatile property for him to gain this benefit.

Actions

Multiattack. Boromar makes two attacks.

Javelin of Lightning. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing.

Defender Greatsword +4. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (3d6 + 8) slashing damage.

Reactions

Defender. Boromar adds 4 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, Boromar must see the attacker and be wielding the Defender Greatsword.

Narana

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (leather armor, bracers of defense)

Hit Points 102 (12d8 + 48)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	19 (+4)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +8, Wis +8

Skills Medicine +12, Persuasion +7, Religion +9

Condition Immunities charmed

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Dwarvish, Goblin, Celestial

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Divine Eminence. As a bonus action, Narana can expend a spell slot to cause her melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If she expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

Spellcasting. Narana is a 16-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). Narana has the following cleric spells prepared: Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy, toll the dead*

1st level (4 slots): *bane, command, detect magic, false life, inflict wounds, ray of sickness*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, enhance ability, hold person, ray of enfeeblement, spiritual weapon*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead, clairvoyance, daylight, remove curse, vampiric touch*

4th level (3 slots): *blight, control water, death touch, death ward*

5th level (2 slots): *antilife shell, commune, flame strike, raise dead*

6th level (1 slot): *harm, heal*

7th level (1 slot): *symbol, resurrection*

8th level (1 slot): *antimagic field*

Harness Divine Power. As a bonus action, Narana touches her holy symbol, utters a prayer, and regains one expended spell slot, the level of which can be no higher than 2nd level. She can use this feature twice and she regains all expended uses when she finishes a Long Rest.

Reaper. When Narana casts a necromancy cantrip that normally targets only one creature, the spell can instead target two creatures within range and within 5 feet of each other.

Touch of Death. Narana can destroy another creature's life force by touch. When she hits a creature with a melee attack, she can deal 21 extra necrotic damage to the target. Narana can use this ability once per day.

Davion the Mad

Inescapable Destruction. Necrotic damage dealt by Narana ignores resistance to necrotic damage.

War Caster. Narana has advantage on Constitution saving throws that she makes to maintain her concentration on a spell when she takes damage. She can perform the somatic components of spells even when she has weapons or a shield in one or both hands. When a hostile creature's movement provokes an opportunity attack from her, she can use her reaction to cast a spell at the creature, rather than making an opportunity attack. The spell must have a casting time of 1 action and must target only that creature.

Personality Formation. Whenever Narana comes into control, her equipment magically forms on her body and hands. The equipment disappears if she is killed or if another personality comes into control. She wields a whip, wears a leather armor, bracers of defense and a Ring of Three Wishes with a single charge remaining. She does not know what the ring is or what it can do.

Actions

Poisoned Fingernails. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 piercing plus 1d4 poison damage

Whip. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Augustus

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral

Armor Class 15 (robe or protection +2 / 17 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +7, Con +5, Int +10, Wis +9, Cha +6

Skills Arcana +10, History +7, Investigation +7, Perception +6

Condition Immunities charmed

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Abyssal, Common, Elvish, Halfling

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Spellcasting. Augustus is an 11th-level spellcaster. Their spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). They have the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light, mage hand, prestidigitation*
1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, mage armor, magic missile, shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *misty step, suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fireball, fly*

4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility, ice storm*

5th level (2 slots): *cone of cold*

6th level (1 slot): *scatter*

Limited Telepathy. Augustus can magically communicate simple ideas, emotions, and images telepathically with any creature within 10 ft. of them.

Sense Magic. Augustus senses magic within 120 feet of them at will. This trait otherwise works like the *detect magic* spell but isn't itself magical.

Personality Formation. Whenever Augustus comes into control, their equipment magically forms on their body and hands. The equipment disappears if they are killed or if another personality comes into control. Augustus wields a mace of smiting and wears a robe of protection +2.

Actions

Mace of Smiting. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (3d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Gothic Earth

"We make up horrors to help us deal with the real ones."

~ Stephen King

Overview

By day, Gothic Earth looks like our own world in the 1890's. The industrial revolution rules the land. Factories belch thick columns of black smoke into the air and dump hazardous chemicals into the water. Desperate workers use any vice to forget the constant danger of their work or their bleak pointless lives. Gangs run rampant in dark alleyways, preying on the weak or foolish. But even the worst humans disappear when the sun sets, because at night the real monsters come out. Pale faces stare out of dark alleys and red eyed rats swarm the sewers. Hordes of children with sharp knives roam the street, chanting impossible words that shatter the sanity of anyone who hears them. Mist shrouds the street, turning figures into elongated, twisted shadows. Anyone desperate enough to venture into the night faces an army of gleaming fangs and madness. If they're lucky, they die quickly. Gothic Earth surrounds dozens or hundreds of smaller domains. Darklords rule these domains much as they do in Ravenloft, but they all owe fealty to one terrifying overlord. The Red Death rules Gothic Earth from the shadows. Sages argue about the nature of the Red Death, but no one knows anything for sure. Anyone who looks too deeply into the darklord of Gothic Earth disappears. Most are never found, at least not all of them. The ones that are found are shadows of their former selves. Their minds are shattered and their bodies wasted from the inside out.

Mistways

Mithras court station has a specific train line that connects to all domains found in Ravenloft. Anyone riding on the train that has the appropriate ticket can visit any domain. The Red Death can open one-way portals that lead from a place on gothic earth to an analogous domain in Ravenloft. For example a portal opened in Egypt would lead to Har'akir. Almost all domains have an analogue listed in their respective section. The Red Death cannot use these portals to leave Gothic Earth.

Chronology

351BC – **Gothic Earth** is formed.

664BC – Dr. Weldon performed illicit and brutal medical experiments on slaves of his plantation. When the slaves were freed, Dr. Weldon was grabbed by the mists. **Riverbend** is formed.

699BC – Sir Diederic destroyed Laginate Grimoire and the undead connected to it, but in the process he committed many foul deeds and became darklord of Malosia. **Malosia** is formed.

1845 BC~ – Lucius Knight sends British soldiers to be massacred to increase personal monetary gains. **Mithras Court** is formed.

Gothic Earth



Gothic Earth



The Gothic Earth is by far the largest domain in the Mists, and far too large to cover in this set of Encyclopedias with all the other domains. Its population could easily absorb any other domain without anyone noticing, if not for the fact that of them all, it has the least racial diversity.

Everyone on Gothic Earth is either human or considered a monster, even the exceptionally rare occasion when an elf or dwarf might journey here through the Mists, they'd still be thought of as humans — just misshapen ones. Gothic Earth is likely the oldest domain in the Mists — certainly the one with the longest history. It took shape first when Imhotep, an ancient Egyptian sorcerer and vizier to the pharaohs, tried to render his master, King Djoser, immortal. He partially succeeded, as he made himself immortal and turned the king into an undead monster, but unfortunately, his attempts, though they happened more than 4,000 years ago, shaped the future in unknown ways, as he inadvertently introduced magic to the wider world. Not only that, but his actions opened the way for the Red Death to enter Gothic Earth. The Death has since turned Gothic Earth into its own playground, working through the centuries and millennia towards its own unknown goal. Now, as the Gothic Earth nears the year 1900, the world is darker than ever, with increasing numbers of monsters doing the bidding of the Red Death and its plans nearing culmination. On the surface, the world is generally filled with optimism, but underneath is a roiling mass of decay, death, plague, and nihilism. The British Empire is at its strongest, with London sitting as the shining jewel in its crown, but it is about to start collapsing under its own power. The jewel that is London is about to experience some extremely cold winters, and its increased industry means the London smog is getting thicker and thicker. All the monsters of legend are found in this world, most of whom serve (either directly or indirectly) the Red Death. Legends such as Dracula, Jack the Ripper, Frankenstein's Monster, Professor Moriarty, Madam Blanque, Mr. Hyde, and many more. Opposing them are heroes like Sherlock Holmes, Allan Quartermain, Van Helsing, and even Dr. Jekyll. Some, such as Captain Nemo would be considered villains by most, but they steadfastly refuse to fall under the sway of the Red Death. Adventures within the Gothic Earth could (and should) involve the worst villains and most dangerous monsters of fiction, as many stories were wrought that take place in this time. Inspiration for these adventures could come from any of these stories — preventing Jack the Ripper from terrorizing

London, working with Holmes to stop Moriarty's crime spree, or perhaps exploring the ruins of Atlantis with Captain Nemo. But you should feel free to add your own literary adaptations, especially as while most Gothic Horror novels take place in Europe, there is nothing to prevent you from running a ghost story in the palaces of Edo-period Japan or from having the heroes infiltrate the Red Fort in India to stop a bloodthirsty cult worshipping a Rakshasa from drenching the region in a bloodbath. Just remember, that the Gothic Earth fairly closely resembles ours, so you should have a lot of resources on hand to show the players, such as maps, drawings, paintings, and photos from wherever the adventure takes place. Use this to your advantage to give them a more visual experience than you might otherwise have been able to. It is worth noting that the world of Gothic Earth is far too vast to be described in a book such as this. A book that's easily as big as this would be needed to describe it all, so here we are simply attempting to scratch the surface for you.

"Listen to them, the children of the night. What music they make!" ~ Bram Stoker, Dracula

Culture Level:	Varies from Stone Age to Industrial Revolution depending on location
Climate & Terrain:	Any depending on area
Year Formed:	351 BC
Population:	1,600,000,000
Races (%):	Humans 100%
Languages:	English, French, German, Greek, Spanish, Chinese and so on.
Religions:	All religions found on the real Earth of 1890.
Government:	Varies by Country
Ruler(s):	Varies by Country
Darklord(s):	Red Death
Nationality:	Any
Analog:	Earth in the 1890s, where all the horror novels are true.



Gothic Earth

Local Fauna:

The Gothic Earth is filled with animals of all kinds, most of them wild and some of them are dangerous. Wolves inhabit many regions, and are incredibly aggressive, especially in the US and Eastern Europe where they seem to be driven by some form of primal force. Dangerous animals inhabit all parts of the planet, with some more immediately obvious (tigers and lions) than others (snakes and spiders). Much of the Earth has been domesticated, so a traveler will find peaceful animals such as horses and cows that settlers have taken with them everywhere. Whenever one travels off the beaten paths, it pays to be wary as there seem to be fantastical and horrific creatures lurking in the shadows, as if the legends of yore have come to life.

Local Flora:

Gothic Earth is home to an astounding array of plants, trees, and flowers. But as with the animals, much of the planet has been domesticated, so you'll most commonly encounter "normal crops" such as wheat, rye, rice, and corn. In certain parts of the world, especially in Asia, vast fields of opium are found that, when prepared, can serve as both painkillers and pleasure through such tinctures as laudanum. Unfortunately, many countries now have large problems with drug addiction, with networks of opium dens having sprung up in large cities such as London. Tobacco is also remarkably common, having been exported to the rest of the world from South America, and smoking rooms are present in many clubs around the world.

Native Horrors:

Gothic Earth is home to all kinds of monsters. If it has ever been seen or imagined, it is likely to be here. And if it's not here already, the Red Death is likely to have his minions create them, or manipulate others, like Dr. Frankenstein, into making them. Ghosts and spirits are common, especially so in the eastern parts of the world, while the west tends to be dominated by the more physical monsters such as lycanthropes. And few know what lurks in the deep forests and jungles of the world.

Terrain type

The Gothic Earth is incredibly varied in its terrain and temperature. The planet does not exceed the "normal" limits meaning that with the right protection and forethought, humanity has been able to put its roots down everywhere. Some places may be uncomfortably (and deadly) hot or cold, but none of them reach the extreme levels seen in other domains or other planes of existence. No single feature of temperature or terrain dominates, apart from water. Water covers more than 70% of the surface, and in many cases, the depths of the oceans have yet to be plumbed, though most lakes have been charted by this point. Explorers such as the dreaded Captain Nemo and his underwater ship, the Nautilus, sail the seven seas, and he and his crew may be the only ones who have ever seen the dark wonders and horrors that lurk in the unlit depths.

Important Landmarks

Bran Castle

Known around the world as Dracula's Castle from Bram Stoker's novel, everyone around the world believes that the story of Dracula is fiction. In fact, it is the dying tale of an unknown man whose ravings Bram Stoker chronicled before the man's death. Stoker hoped that by publishing the novel, he would be able to contain, or at least hinder, the Count's escapades, but instead, he managed to convince the world that vampires are fictional, and the Count now moves more freely than ever before. He simply affects the mantle of a book aficionado, one enthralled with the story of Dracula, but who obviously denies the blood-drinking of the tale. In this manner, by hiding in the open, Dracula has become one of the Red Death's most effective agents, more so now than ever before, as he operates freely in the gas-lit districts of cities around the world. Even so, Bran Castle in Transylvania still serves the Count as his base of operations. A place where he can return and recuperate in peace, attended to by his servants and many brides.



Gothic Earth

Burg Castle

The castle from the tales of Frankenstein stands on a hilltop overlooking the village of Darmstadt in Germany. The castle is empty of life, but the machinery used to bring the monster to life is still evident in the halls. Described in the novel *Frankenstein* in 1818, Mary Shelley tells of the monster being brought to life by Victor Frankenstein, and the subsequent hunt that ended in the arctic. What Mary didn't describe in her novel was the fact that she had embellished the human nature and emotions of the monster. It did flee to the arctic, but it did not kill itself. Instead, it gleefully enjoyed Victor's last breath as it drowned him in the icy waters. While she does not know where the monster went, she dedicated her life to hunting down monsters, and became one of the foremost hunters of her age, until she died of an unknown affliction. Her encounters with the doctor and the monster left her seemingly cursed, and only one of her four children survived past infancy, due to the vengeful nature of the Red Death. The monster occasionally revisits Burg Castle in disguise, as it is effectively immortal. On those nights, thunder rumbles, and lightning strikes the tall spires of Burg Castle. These visits lead many locals to believe that the castle is haunted, and none have moved in since, though a few enterprising souls have attempted to copy or steal the doctor's equipment. They have all died at the hands of the monster, and the equipment returned.

Eiffel Tower

The Eiffel Tower was finished in 1889, the product of the genius of Gustave Eiffel. It served as the central focus of the Paris World's Fair and stood as a monument to how the next century would be better than the current one. Unbeknownst to the public, Gustave Eiffel was a madman, and the Eiffel Tower was to serve as a beacon to summon otherworldly entities to the earth to devour it. His plan was foiled by unknown adventurers, but the tower remains. Its architecture and alien alloys, cunningly hidden beneath a shell of steel, still draws unwelcome attention from creatures and monsters, and the Red Death itself has a keen interest in the Tower. Publicly, Eiffel is still working as an engineer, but secretly the man posing as Eiffel is a younger engineer, while the actual Eiffel has gone mad and is imprisoned within the Bastille.

Giant's Causeway

The Giant's Causeway is found in Northern Ireland and consists of a series of 40,000 basalt columns, most of them hexagonal in shape and upwards of 12 meters tall. Legend holds that these basalt columns held a bridge that spanned the gap between Northern Ireland and Scotland, and that two giants battled

on it. The truth is far worse. The Giant's Causeway is a bridge, but one that spanned between worlds. The connection was severed when the Gothic Earth was pulled into the Mists, and now, it seems to occasionally open into the afterlife. As a result, the Giant's Causeway is now one of the most haunted sites in the world, overrun with ethereal and hostile creatures, ones that only come out at night.

Hagia Sophia

It could be said that the Hagia Sophia is the greatest church or holy site in the world. It is certainly one of the most impressive ancient buildings to still stand. Located in Istanbul, it is one of the few places that both Christianity and Islam agree are important and holy. Its enormous size belies its age, as it is one of the very few buildings with such a level of sophistication involved. It would be centuries after it was built before any building would come close to matching its magnificence. It is home to a singular myth as well, that of the wishing column. More than 500 years ago, a man named Gregory the Wonderworker appeared near the column, and since then it has always been moist. Kissing the column is said to cure ailments and bring blessings upon the supplicant.

King Djoser's Step Pyramid

This large pyramid is located on the Giza Plains, amid the ruins of Saqqara. It serves as the prison for Imhotep, after his capture, following his attempts to make King Djoser an immortal. The attempt seemingly failed, turning King Djoser into one of the walking dead known as a mummy, and summoned the Red Death to Earth. Imhotep was granted immortality as his prize for releasing the Red Death, but Djoser's successors, King Akhenaten and Queen Nefertiti managed to trap the immortal within the pyramid dedicated to his master. In time, Imhotep has learned to leave the prison during dawn and dusk and poses a grave threat to anyone in those times, despite not having lost his mind.

Phidias' Workshop

The workshop of the architect and engineer Phidias is supposedly hidden underneath his greatest accomplishment: the Parthenon. Legend has it that it lies underneath the Acropolis and that it is filled with his unfinished work. Over 200 of his famous statues and decorations already cover the Parthenon itself. Legend also has it that somewhere in his workshop is a treasury that holds more wealth than even the greatest modern vault. Many local Athenians believe that the workshop has already been found and looted by their government and that they're merely keeping the legend alive to keep rich tourists coming from the rest of Europe and America.

Gothic Earth



Stonehenge

Many believe that Stonehenge is a calendar of sorts, and they are partially right. It was once used by ancient druids to predict the future. One fateful night, they saw the coming of the Red Death and felt it enter the world. That night they rededicated Stonehenge to curb its power. They were successful for a time, but where Stonehenge stood the test of time, in one form or another, the druids were slowly killed off over decades and centuries as the Red Death waged a war of attrition on them. It won, and the druids have all but died out. If anyone could decipher the powers and identify the correct rituals of Stonehenge they might be able to curb or hinder the Red Death, but any attempts to do so are met with instant violence, as the Red Death has moved one of its most dangerous creations to watch over the site: The Hound of the Baskervilles now resides here, after Sherlock Holmes chased it from Devonshire.

Temple Mount

Temple Mount in Jerusalem is easily one of the most contested sites in the world with multiple religions laying claim to it, and many wars have been fought over it, even entire crusades and jihads that drew in essentially early “world wars” just to drive the “unbelievers” from its location. Believed to be the holiest place in the world, most assume that it is safe from the Red Death’s deprivations, but such assumptions are wrong. Instead, the Red Death has manipulated many people into attacking this holy site and the lands around it, simply by whispering into the right ears. It takes great pleasure in knowing that a place that is dedicated to peace and harmony has caused such strife. And all it took was a little nudge.

Whitechapel

Whitechapel in London is a squalid area of despair and poverty. Dark houses huddle together as if protecting each other from the light, and shadows extend beneath them hiding all kinds of opium dens, brothels, gangs, and worse. The buildings here are run down and the air reeks with the stench of humanity clustered together. Sewage sometimes bubbles up from beneath the city streets and the workers (what few have jobs) that are employed in London’s trades, carry an air of the industrial world everywhere they go. These men and women are easily identifiable by the stench of steam, sweat, and coal that sticks to them. Whitechapel is the haunt of Jack the Ripper, Leather Apron, or the “Whitechapel Murderer”. The murderer has many names, and after his infamous rampage, every one of those names is on the lips of the people of London. The Ripper was never caught, and changed his methods afterward, though he often found himself pursued by both the local authorities, mercenaries and heroes, and even Sherlock Holmes. Where the murderer is now is unknown, but many unsolved deaths are likely to be at the hands of this terrible servant of the Red Death. Whitechapel also serves as the preferred hunting grounds of Mr. Hyde — who, despite what most believe, is actually a smaller man than his counterpart Dr. Jekyll. That does not diminish his counterpart’s evil, as Hyde engages in all kinds of debauchery and murders his victims with his bare hands. And behind both of these is found Professor Moriarty as he manipulates Hyde and Jack into killing those who could potentially impact his criminal empire and the work of the Red Death.

Towns and villages:

Athens

Athens is often considered the heart of the ancient world, home of great philosophers and innovative technologies. Even in this era people still hold it in great regard, with many trying to imitate (usually unsuccessfully) the architecture of the city and the feeling of pride that surrounds it. However, the reality of modern-day Athens is different. In the past twenty years, it has tripled in size from some 45,000 inhabitants to more than 120,000 and has burst at the seams, spilling out of the old city and into the surrounding countryside. The city hides many secrets, some of which are out in the open like the Parthenon, which supposedly has a treasury underneath it. Lately, there has been some worry among locals that some of the statues around the ancient sites come alive during the night. People have been suspecting both gargoyles, furies, and harpies, but none are sure of the truth, or if it is even truly happening.

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Beijing

Beijing, and indeed the whole of China, is under the rule of Empress Dowager Cixi, a ruthless and cunning woman who has manipulated, assassinated, and poisoned her way to rulership, ever since she first became a consort to the then-Emperor. Her rule is not unquestioned though and for the past few years, China has been affected by numerous natural disasters, something that local wisdom understands means that the “Mandate of Heaven” that Chinese rulers govern under has passed. Usually, this would mean a change in dynasty, but the Empress has somehow managed to hang on to her position through sheer force of will. Beijing at this time is seen as old and decadent by the rest of the world, somewhat truthfully. In fact, the famous Summer Place has just undergone renovation using funds that were originally intended to strengthen the Chinese Imperial Navy — seen as yet another sign that the Empress is corrupt.

Cairo Cairo is currently under the control of the British Empire and has been since the Anglo-Egyptian War of 1882. Cairo is almost a thousand years old and was built on the ruins of even older ruins. Cairo was powerful in the past, but now it feels the harsh hand of the empire on it, with the British army suppressing independent creators, artists, and free-thinking people. Of more immediate concern is that Cairo is within striking distance of Giza and King Djoser’s pyramid. That means that Imhotep visits here to take his victims, and as a result, Cairo has become a hotbed of cultist activity and a stronghold for the Red Death’s followers.

Dublin Dublin, by any definition, is an old city, but at this time, the city is relatively quiet. It is regularly haunted by fey creatures that are drawn here by the creative minds at places like Trinity College. Some are benign and function as muses for the many creative minds that the city fosters and furthers the appeal for the fey. Others simply work to create chaos and spread despair for any who visit. Over the past decades though, the city (and country) have been bleeding people, and many of them have left Ireland, taking their beliefs and superstitions with them. Notable people of Dublin at this time are Bram Stoker, George Bernhard Shaw, Oscar Wilde, and the (later on famous) James Joyce.

Istanbul

Istanbul, the City of the World’s Desire, and formerly known as Byzantium, Constantinople, and Stamboul, is one of the unsung wondrous cities of the world. In the 1870s the Ottoman Empire started a renovation and renewal program that introduced a modern water

system, sewage, and electrical lights throughout the cities. This has left the city feeling like a strange conglomeration of the old and the new, the worldly and the religious. The Hagia Sophia sits in the center of the old parts of town but is surrounded by modern installations. This leaves Istanbul as a thriving metropolis, but one where there are many opportunities for the agents of Evil to further their cause.

Jerusalem

The Holy City is one of the few cities in the world that predate the arrival of the Red Death, but it has not escaped its influence. Something about Jerusalem irks and irritates the Red Death, and the city has been utterly destroyed twice, besieged 23 times, captured and recaptured 44 times, and attacked 52 times. In short, it is likely the plot of land that has been fought over the most by humanity. Jerusalem has outgrown its old protection, the Old City walls, and is now bigger than ever. This causes mass tension in the region as domestic and foreign powers wage a shadow war over it. Every day sees assassinations, and every day sees more corpses dumped outside of the walls where they’ll never be found again. Tensions are rising, and soon, a powder keg will explode and Jerusalem will see open warfare once more.

London

London stands at the heart of the British Empire and is home to more than five million inhabitants, having grown at an exponential rate in the past century, far outstripping its capacity. It stands as a shining jewel to what humanity can accomplish, but it is also a monument to the hubris and evil of man. Industry abounds in the city, but vice follows where it goes. The Palace of Westminster is the seat of government and Big Ben towers above it all. But in those shadows live the people who have fallen between the cracks: criminals, the poor, and the monstrous. Though some monsters embrace the light and even have seats in parliament, most prefer to operate in the dark. London is home to the greatest villains and bravest heroes of the time: Jack the Ripper, Professor Moriarty, Sherlock Holmes, and Allan Quartermain all make their place here as do many others, less well known.

New York

New York is going through a period of change. For many years, the city has been overrun with gangs and other lowlifes, but a surge in ocean-going trade and the many steamships has ensured that New York is financially strong and prosperous. It is home to a reformation movement that’s sweeping through the city. The previously politically affiliated police force

Gothic Earth

is changing, with an increased focus on mental and physical activities (completed by the appointment of Police Commissioner Theodore Roosevelt who pushes through regulations and requirements to depoliticize the police force and ensure that they remain impartial but capable). New Yorkers find more wealth in their wallets, and bicycles are the new fad with everyone who can afford them biking everywhere. There is a seedy underbelly represented by the many taverns in the city, where alcohol flows a bit too freely and violence is common. Atop it all sits the first of what'll become the Five Families of New York, the 107th Street Mob, which later becomes the Morello crime family. Led by Giuseppe Morello, they're using any means they can while maintaining a strict code of behavior — one that often grates with their frequent partner in London, Professor Moriarty. The Red Death has plans for New York, though it has so far kept all knowledge of it from its underlings. It has shown a keen interest in the upcoming opening of Ellis Island, and many of the work crews who have been involved in the setup have unknowingly worked for the darklord.

in many cases than those of London, as they find it easier to hide here. Vampires abound, as do ghouls, especially around the Notre Dame, where they are led by the Hunchback — a monstrous creature that only vaguely resembles a human, and which is far more evil than it was described in Victor Hugo's "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" — indeed, the Inquisition here (while evil) were in the right in trying to rid the world of the creature. They failed, and it has taken up a seat at the table of the Red Death, spreading ruin to Paris, France, and beyond. On a daily basis, the dark side of Paris battles with C. Auguste Dupin and his compatriots, ever trying to win over Paris for the Red Death. Of recent note of the Red Death's activity was the captive orangutan that ran amok among the populace, killing several. Though the creature was eventually subdued, the press and Edgar Allan Poe who described the story, only knew of two murders committed by the creature, in Rue Morgue. In reality, its rampage was far greater and some twenty-three people faced their deaths at the hands of the creature before it was killed by Parisian constables.

Paris

Paris stands as the center of culture of Gothic Earth, a position it is constantly fighting for with Vienna. Here the people try to embrace a less industrious lifestyle than that of London and instead appeal to a more aesthetic side of things. It is, by far, a more visually pleasing city, but it is somewhat poorer and smaller than London, leading to a great many debates as to which city is the more important one. London plays host to many monsters and criminals, but Paris is not much better. The monsters of Paris are more bestial

Rome

Rome is in an odd position. It was conquered by the Italians in 1870, completing the Italian unification (the Risorgimento), but has always stood as one of the centers of culture in the world. Now it feels like a city that doesn't know itself. Paris and London have both overtaken it in terms of culture and trade, and Athens is at least as old as it is in terms of history. As a result, many Romans and Italians find themselves searching for their future and clutching at the accomplishments of the past. This has led to a rise in crime, and many

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of the young men born in this era will come to define crime in the decades to come. In the meantime, Rome holds many secrets and powers, especially in the religious buildings spread around the city, and they're just waiting for the right person to uncover them.

Venice

Filled with canals, Venice is a city that to many is slowly dying a beautiful death. Its bridges, canals, and buildings are depicted in images everywhere, and it is considered THE romantic getaway for young couples from all over the world. Venice hides an ugly truth though. While it sinks more and more each year, this is due to the machinations of the Red Death. The canals were its brainchild, originally built to create a gigantic magical rune. This rune was ruined by the efforts of Venice's inhabitants. They saw the good that the canals did for their city and expanded them, inadvertently destroying the rune and rendering it ineffective. As such, the city has been left to its own fate. The void left by the Red Death's minions' abandonment of Venice, left the city open to a different threat. Unbeknownst to the people of the city, the underwater sections are now overrun with aquatic creatures, who plot to sink the city faster, seize the buildings for their own, and feast on the people living there.

Vienna

Vienna is seen as the "great rival" to Paris and is home to many artists as well. It is the safest city on Gothic Earth — at least from the influence of the Darklord. The hymns written by Johann Sebastian Strauss (both Jr. and Sr.) are played here often, and these compositions — while great on their own - actually serve as rituals that keep the influence of the Red Death at bay. The tradition was handed down to them from their ancestors and predecessors who successfully kept the Red Death from embracing Vienna, but it also means that the city has been under attack numerous times by the servants of the Darklord — such as during the Turkish sieges a few hundred years ago. It is only a matter of time before the Red Death strikes again, and already the tendrils of its influence can be felt in the tensions that lurk within the Austro-Hungarian Empire with its racial diversity. Eventually, this could boil over — all it needs is the right spark.

Neighboring domain(s):

None

Fun Fact:

Gothic Earth is the only domain that doesn't have a darklord as such. In all other domains, there's some form of physical presence, but the Red Death does not have one. It is omnipresent, and somehow still directs its forces and henchmen. It is also the one that faces the most opposition as heroes arise here with much greater frequency than elsewhere in the Mists, and what's more — they sometimes win, even if only temporarily.



Red Death

"It's everywhere. It's the air you breathe and the ground you walk on. You can't kill it any more than you could kill the planet."

~ Prof. Robert Van Houten

The Red Death rules one of the largest Domains of Dread. Its domain is a planet sized domain called Gothic Earth. Gothic Earth is technologically advanced compared to most domains in Ravenloft, with firearms, airplanes and railways being commonplace.

Hidden Overlord.

The Red Death has never been seen, even by its most loyal vassals. Most don't even realize they are under the sway of an intelligent, shadowy overlord.

Formless Evil.

Despite never being seen, the Red Death permeates its domain like a miasma. It's everywhere. Every petty landlord that profits from its tenant's squalor, every arms dealer that prays for a war to start, all these serve to feed the Red Death.

Servant Ranks of the Red Death

Demilord, Lord, Mite, Overlord, Renegade, Underling

Known Servants of the Red Death

Delphine LaLaurie, Dorian Gray, Frankenstein's Monster, Imhotep, King Djoser, Mihnea, Professor Moriarty, Tanner Edmund Jacobbi, Vlad Tepes.

Fighting the Red Death

The Red Death doesn't lower itself to fight its enemies, it's not above attempting to slay its enemies though. As its plans are thwarted the Red Death starts to notice its foes, who will eventually become the target of the Red Death's ire.

Minor Incursions

Minor Incursions are the Red Death's first attempts to deal with its foes. The Red Death has noticed its enemies, but at this time they are little more than gadflies to it. For a minor incursion roll a d8 and consult the following table:

1. A group of 2d4 zombies attacks the party. These are normal zombies (MM, pg.316) except they make Wisdom saving throws with advantage to resist being turned.
2. One character becomes the target of a curse and has disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws for 12 hours.

3. A brightly glowing will o'wisp follows behind each member of the party for twenty-four hours. Everyone in the party has disadvantage on Stealth checks.
4. Animals are terrified of the party for twenty-four hours. Dogs bark and bare their fangs. Horses refuse to be ridden and will attempt to buck off any party member that tries to mount them.
5. The face of any creature that the party passes by becomes distorted into an illusion of eyeless, moaning undead. The party must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. Those that fail are frightened by every living creature they see for one minute.
6. A spectral headless horseman appears and condemns one creature. That creature must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. If they fail they have disadvantage on their next attack roll or saving throw.
7. On the first round of the next combat, vines burst through the ground at a creature's feet. That creature must make a DC 14 Strength saving throw. If they fail the vines wrap around their feet and the creature's speed is reduced to zero until they spend an action freeing themselves.
8. The next time the creature falls asleep, they must make a DC 14 Charisma check. If they fail, they have incredibly vivid dreams. In these dreams their life is perfect in every way. The creature may repeat the save every hour. The creature will only wake up when they successfully save or they take hit point damage. It is possible for the creature to die of starvation or exposure if they do not save in time.



Red Death

Major Incursions

Major incursions are for enemies that have angered the Red Death. For a major incursion roll a d8 and consult the following table:

1. A pack (2d8) of ghouls, led by a ghast, attack. These foul creatures will appear when the party is resting and usually inside a home.
2. The next time the party completes a long rest, they must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. If they fail they gain no benefits from having finished a long rest, but may gain the benefits of a short rest.
3. The party enters a building which suddenly collapses. Every creature in the party must make a DC 15 dexterity saving throw. Creatures take 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.
4. One member of the party is bitten by a large, hairy spider that has gotten caught under their clothing. That creature takes 5 (2d4) piercing damage plus 18 (4d8) poison damage. The creature must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. If they fail they are poisoned for 1 minute.
5. After being hit by an attack that inflicts hit point damage the struck creature must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. If they fail they become vulnerable to that type of damage for 1d10 rounds. This includes the initial attack.
6. A doppelganger becomes obsessed with a creature that has angered the Red Death. The doppelganger wants to learn everything they can about the creature so they can one day slay them and take their place. It starts stalking its prey, taking its appearance and talking to the victim's acquaintances, breaking into its house and stealing important items such as journals etc.
7. A pack (2d12) of wererats tries to steal the most valuable items owned by the party. The wererats will try to steal magic items first.
8. The next time a party member rolls 1 on an attack roll, the weapon they are using shatters. If the creature is using a magic weapon, the weapon loses all of its magical abilities for 1 minute.

Massive Incursions

Now the Red Death vents the full force of its fury against its enemies. For a massive incursion roll a d8 and consult the following table:

1. One character becomes the object of a vampire's desire. The vampire is ancient and powerful and will stop at nothing to possess the character.
2. A pack of werewolves have sworn a blood oath against the party. As long as the party is in Gothic Earth, the werewolves know the approximate direction and distance to them.
3. For 24 hours the party may not heal by magical or natural means.
4. One member of the party must make a DC18 constitution saving throw. If they fail, they are slain as the Red Death rips their soul from their body and devours it leaving nothing behind but splatter and gore. Creatures that are slain in this way cannot be raised by any means short of a *wish* spell or divine intervention, their soul always trapped by the Red Death.
5. A horde of (10d10) zombies claw out of the ground the next time the party begins a long rest. These zombies have maximum hit points and cannot be turned.
6. The next time the party rests they must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. Creatures that fail have incredibly vivid nightmares and take 27 (6d8) psychic damage and gain no benefits from completing a long or short rest.
7. One member of the party must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. If they fail, their blood is replaced by acid or fire. They are immediately slain and explode instantaneously. Every creature within 10 feet of the exploding party member must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. They take 21 (6d6) acid or fire damage on a failed save and half as much on a successful one.
8. Red mists engulf the area around the characters as an unimaginable face of horror forms in the red clouds above their heads. Creatures attacking the party have advantage on all attack rolls during the next combat and the party has disadvantage on all saving throws.

Red Death

The “Red Death” Disease.

Contracting the Red Death.

The disease called the Red Death is described as causing “sharp pains, and sudden dizziness, and then profuse bleeding at the pores” in addition, it leads to physical transformations, mind afflictions and even death within a certain amount of time. The Red Death is not like the other diseases or sicknesses, but a weakness (like the original sin) that is shared by all of humankind inherently and remains dormant waiting to be activated. The disease can be contracted and activated from wounds coming from vampires or vampire spawns and ghouls as well as any one that has it activated in their blood. Undead creatures can carry the disease but they rarely are affected by it. The disease can be contracted by coming into contact with infected blood (for example getting cut by a sword that has the infected blood on the blade or having infected blood splatter on your skin). When a creature comes into contact with infected blood, it needs to succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, or have the disease activate in their bloodstream. If infected blood is injected directly into the body then the DC is 18 and the target has disadvantage on the roll.

Effects

The Red Death: The first time an infected non-undead creature wakes up after a long rest, they start having sharp pains and sudden dizziness, their pores occasionally bleed and they gain one of the effects listed below. Roll 1d6 to see which effect takes hold. The DM can choose to not roll but pick an option of their choice instead.

Roll 1d6 - Result

1. Red Marking: The creature is marked, their skin becomes red as if blood splattered. Their eyes appear bloodshot and their blood becomes deep red, protruding veins prominent. Tongue and gums appear to be swollen and bleed easily. The infected person’s blood is also thicker and stickier, and it stays red and fresh even long after it leaves the body. The infected coughs blood often and their tears and urine contain blood too. The creature becomes vulnerable to slashing damage and any amount of bleeding is doubled. When taking slashing damage, the blood splatters up to 5ft. away increasing the chances of infecting more creatures.

2. Red Hunger: The person’s body rejects anything that is not fresh flesh, raw and dripping with blood. If the infected one goes 3 days without food and then they see or smell blood (not their own) they will have to succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw to resist attacking and trying to eat the bleeding creature. At the end of each turn, they can repeat the saving throw to stop and take hold of themselves. A creature that succeeds on the rolls, becomes resistant to the effect (rolls with advantage) for 24 hours. The DC is increased by 2 for each extra day passing after the third day. Eventually the infected one will have to eat something or they will starve.

3. Red Mania: The infected creature will become paranoid and believe that they must drink the blood of humanoid beings, their mind making up its own reasons why (The DM can use voices, give fake reasons or even grant stat boosts or make them regain Hit Points from doing this. Ex. You could have a totem barbarian learn from one of its totem spirits that he can gain power from eating the hearts of his foes, note that this is not the spirit of their ancestors speaking but the activated disease. Feel free to even give them negative effects if they do not drink blood. If their mind deeply thinks they will become weaker or slower because of the lack of blood, then it can lower stats through self-suggestion. If the creature decides to ingest the blood of a humanoid creature, then the Red Death becomes a curse and is no longer treatable as a disease, a remove curse must be used instead.

4. Red Guilt: The infected creature has random flashbacks of the sins committed by themselves and those committed throughout the history of humanity. Their dreams are troubled by nightmares depicting the cruelty of the human condition and their thoughts are filled with guilt that weighs heavily on their conscience with its passing hour. Each dawn, the infected



Red Death

creature must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or come under the effects of the *bane* spell which remains until the creature takes a long rest. The DC increases by 2 for each passing day. After a week has passed and the disease is not cured, the infected creature dies of a heart attack.

5. Tooth and Claw: The infected creature grows fangs and claws which constantly bleed. The infected creature gains the ability to bite a grappled creature or slash at them with their claws, using the following attacks: Bite; reach 5ft, 2d6 + Str, piercing damage and Claw; reach 5ft, 2d4 + Str Slashing damage. All humanoids treat the infected as a monster and decline any social interactions with them and might even turn aggressive to the point that they form a mob to chase the infected away or even kill them.

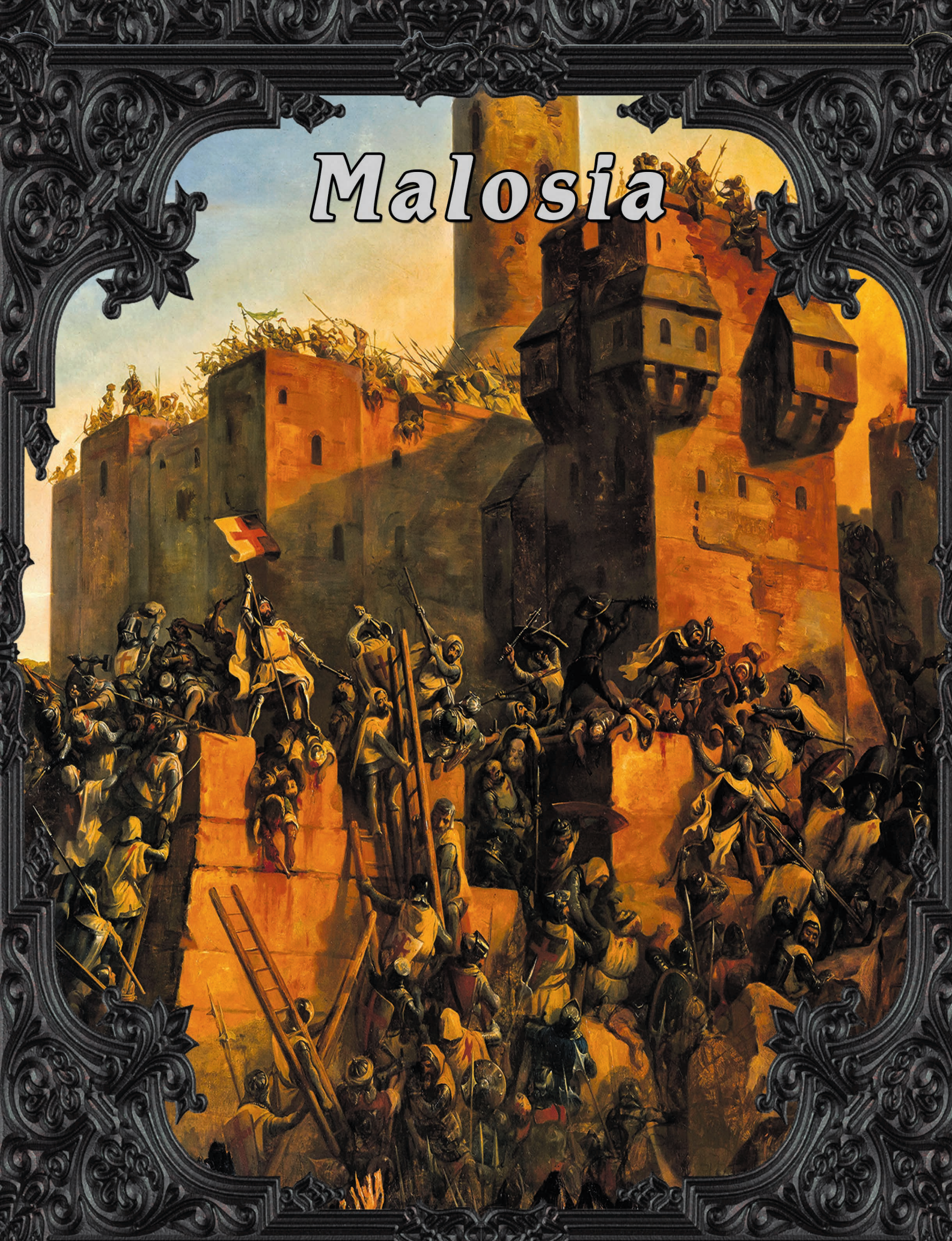
6. The Red Change: The infected creature transforms into a ghoul but they maintain self-control and any class levels but not racial benefits by choosing to drink blood from living humanoids. Each time they drink blood or eat flesh of a humanoid creature the next time they rest they gain a *point of change* (each point should make them look a little bit more like the monster they are turning into but the way in which this happens is up to the DM). When they get 10 points they start to wither away and eventually die the next time they go to rest. If the infected creature decides to resist drinking blood from living humanoids, they need to succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw rolled each dawn. Failing does not force them to drink immediately but after three consecutive failed rolls, they lose their sanity and self-control, becoming a generic ghoul under the DM's control.

Treatment

The Red Death disease cannot be cured but it can be suspended with a *lesser restoration* spell being casted at the infected person. The spell removes one active effect and makes the disease dormant for 1d4 hours. After these hours have passed, the creature must make a new Constitution saving throw with the initial DC. On a failure, the disease reactivates the first time a creature finishes a long rest. If the creature succeeds, the disease remains dormant until it is forced to reactivate.



Malosia



Malosia



Malosia was once known as the Holy Land. The place of Jerusalem, or at least it was before it entered the Mists. When it first arrived, it was greeted by a band of Vistani, ones who felt that the land was empty, that it, unlike all the others, had no darklord. As they make their living through knowing the lands of the Mists, they decided to stay while they discovered what was wrong.

Malosia is a land of belief, whether right or wrong. The Empyrean Church wants to convert the land for the belief in the one God Most High, but where the Holy Land from which they came had the Muslim Saracens, the land of Malosia does not. Instead, cults and witch-covens, and pagan faiths have their roots in this land instead. They're constantly plotting against the Church, which in turn is always trying to drive them out. But, where the heretic faiths gain powers from their worship, the followers of the God Most High do not. Instead, they rely upon sheer faith and utter ruthlessness to root out the evil within Malosia. In an ironic twist, they also believe that Sir Diederic de Wyndt is their savior, though it was his quest for vengeance and justice that brought them this mess. And in fairness to the man, he was likely not the intended darklord of the domain. Instead, it seems that was to have been his nemesis, the fallen priest Lambrecht Raes. Lambrecht had obtained a sacrilegious text, the Laginate Grimoire, believing it to hold the true word of the God Most High, one that would enable him to drive out the heresy that he perceived within the Church. His search for the book and the power it brought caused him to murder numerous people and drive hundreds insane. Eventually, it led him down a dark path that led him to embrace necromancy and raising the dead. That was, until Diederic caught up to him, and slew him, for crimes against the church and for the murdering of his fellow Crusaders. At that point, the mantle of darklord settled firmly on the knight, as he choked the life from the priest, hanging him from his gauntleted fist until he was dead and then throwing both the — now animated — corpse of the priest, and the book, into a raging fire. Now, Sir Diederic de Wyndt is hailed as a savior — the one who saved the Malosians from the Laginate Cabal, but he is doomed, though none know what his future holds. Is he doomed to repeat his mistakes, to ever try to escape, or will he eventually become like the priest he slew, a man who thinks his cause is just, but who is eventually replaced by someone else? What seems certain though is that Diederic knows that he is the darklord, and what a darklord is as it was explained to him by a Vistani raunie who originally helped him.

And he also seems more aware of the situation, but is even his impressive strength of will enough to hold off the inevitable lure of power and darkness? Adventures in Malosia should almost always involve the rooting out of heresy or heathens. Whether within the Empyrean Church or without, there should be perceived enemies everywhere, and the agents of chaos should be well-placed, so as to avoid immediate notice. Even the Pontiff of the Empyrean Church himself was found to be working with Lambrecht and the Laginate Cabal, and is currently awaiting execution in Perdition Hill after he was found guilty and stripped of all lands and titles. But more than the perceived theme of religion, adventures in Malosia should involve unthinking revenge — revenge where multiple paths to peace or escape have been ignored. For Malosia makes fanatics of everyone, eventually. So perhaps the heroes have come here in pursuit of an ally that had betrayed them, and this ally is now hiding somewhere within the hierarchy of the Empyrean Church, or maybe they've arrived months before the heroes and started their own cult, and now the heroes need the Church's help in rooting them out. Maybe one of them, or one of their friends, accidentally commits a religious crime and is thrown into Perdition Hill, and now they need to be broken free? Perhaps the heroes even hear of Sir Diederic or meet him as he is settling into the domain — can the man still be redeemed, or is this another path that he'll be offered but reject?

"Men of God are not just born, they are formed"
~ John Paul Warren

Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Warm desert, forest, plains, and mountains
Year Formed:	699 BC
Population:	40,000
Races (%):	Humans 100%
Languages:	Common, English, French, German, Greek, Spanish, Chinese, and so on.
Religions:	Empyrean Church, witch cults, and pagan faiths
Government:	Theocracy
Ruler(s):	First Confessor Oste van Brekke (until the election of a new Pontiff)
Darklord(s):	Sir Diederic de Wyndt
Nationality:	Malosian
Analog:	The Crusades (especially the fall of Jerusalem during the First Crusade), the Inquisition, and witch-hunts

Malosia

Empyrean Basilica

The Empyrean Basilica is based on the Scions Mount, the tallest area within Malosia — aside from the border mountains. The basilica consists of dozens of buildings linked by covered passageways and has a population of nearly 5,000 — all members of the Empyrean Church, from the lowliest scribes and monks, all the way up to the First Confessor and the Pontiff of the Church.

In the center of the Basilica is a golden dome, an enormous hemisphere that rivals the sun during the day, illuminating all around it and allowing the common people of Carecaelum to bask in the glory of God Most High. Rising up around the Basilica, surrounding it and splitting it off from the surrounding city is the outer wall, or rather the outermost buildings attached to the Basilica: libraries and dormitories and workrooms and shops, all intended to service the clergy so that none need ever descend into the city proper. These walls are whitewashed, so that they match the white marble walls of the central cathedral, and they gleam in the reflections of the large golden dome, as well as the minarets above.

Perdition Hill

Perdition Hill is a small mountain or large hill, capped with an old stone fortress. It's a squat building and one that reeks with fear and desperation. That is because the fortress is a prison filled with supposed heathens and heretics. For 90% of the population here, that isn't true, but the Empyrean Inquisition is both paranoid and thorough, so they'll imprison anyone they feel like here, under even the slightest of suspicions, and people lose years of their lives here — only the lucky ones are ever released, and apart from Sir Diederich and two of his compatriots, no one has ever escaped here alive. The prisoners here spend their days doing hard labor in the mines below the prison, those lucky enough not to have torture and interrogation scheduled for the day.

Towns and villages:

Birne

Birne is a village of about 500 people and typical of many of the dozen or so settlements within Malosia. It is many generations old and located in the midst of the Cineris Forest, which holds much of the Fair Folk population of Malosia. Unlike the other communities, it is home to a small group of druids who make sacrifices to the Fair Folk for a plentiful harvest, and for many years Birne has been a true breadbasket, a place of plenty. With the passing years though, the Fair Folk grew greedy, and where before small animal sacrifices were enough, by now they required regular human sacrifice before they provided their bounty. The druids have proven unable to find a regular supply of such sacrifices, though they are now turning to nefarious means, and as a result, the harvests have grown worse in recent years. Regrettably, the druids have a plan for how to correct the situation.

Caercaelum, the Heavenly City

The Heavenly City is the home of the Empyrean Church, a place that legend claims is paved with gold and lined with silver, but this could not be farther from the truth. While a small percentage of the 24,000 inhabitants do indeed live in luxury and religious observance, the vast majority are poor. They live in mud or stone buildings hidden away from the main thoroughfares, where their squalor cannot be seen. While they try to observe the religious edicts of the Empyrean Church, most simply struggle to survive and avoid the attention of the Inquisition. Those who are truly fanatical here are the ones that end up joining the ranks at the Empyrean Basilica, whether as troops or as low-ranking clergy. In order to rise to the higher ranks of the clergy, which carries great prestige, one would have to be a member of the rich families, as achieving such a rank requires a large amount of gold.

In the Heavenly City, gold is god, regardless of what the church might claim, and those who do not have gold are ungodly. The truly desperate or those who have rejected the teachings of the Empyrean Church often end up joining one of the many cults that are spread throughout the city.

While the cults here have to be more careful than elsewhere to avoid the attention of the Empyrean Inquisition, those that do so successfully become far more powerful than they would be able to if further away from the Basilica itself.



Malosia

Firalene Down

Firalene Down is the only town within Malosia that nests within the border mountains. It is also, on the surface at least, the most peaceful place in the domain, but to those with a discerning eye, it is obvious that the townsfolk live in fear, as do the city guards. But their fears are not the same. The citizens are convinced that the city is under siege by witches or evil spirits, after the murder of one of the youngsters in the city, along with the hanging of her supposed murderer. They now believe that the city is haunted by his spirit, summoned here by an evil witch. The city guards, especially the Reeve of the city, a man named Jesmond, are convinced that it's much simpler: The man who was hanged, as a result of mob justice, wasn't the actual killer, and the murderer is still on the loose. But he is singularly unwilling to summon the Emyrean Inquisition as he believes (correctly) that letting loose the Inquisition on the population may or may not result in the murderer being apprehended — but he is certain that many of the 1,000 people living here will be arrested for various crimes, whether real or imagined, and likely mostly imagined. Apart from this, the city is very organized with clean lines, especially on the outside of the city, and leading in. All roads are at 90-degree angles and uniform in size, though they get less so as one approaches the town square.

Parsimol

Some 800 people make their home in Parsimol, and it is big enough that it once had its own wooden fortifications, though these have fallen into disrepair and been ignored for at least the last generation. Finding Parsimol is exceptionally difficult as the locals often move the stones that mark the road. They do this to prevent the settlement from being easy to find, but also to keep the Emyrean Inquisition away from the witches that hide in their midst. Whether they work with the witches willingly or not is unknown, but all who have come here and managed to leave again speak of how the populace seems to live in fear of something unseen. They also whisper the name Bel-lustaire as if the name belongs to some dark power.

Neighboring domain(s):

None

Fun Fact:

In spite of their lack of spellcasting and their general beliefs, the waters used in the churches of God Most High still retain their holy water properties when taken directly from a font.



Diederick de Wyndt

*"Heroes rise to great heights and may still fall.
Villains that try to be heroes don't realize how far
they have fallen before embracing the darkness."*

~ Rudolph van Richten

Sir Diederick de Wyndt is a young man in his early twenties, but looks a decade older. He has seen enough bloodshed and war to last a thousand lifetimes. He wears maille like a second skin and his battle axe is never far from his hand. Wyndt's features are sharp and worn. He rarely shaves although he keeps his blonde hair cut short. His eyes were blue, but have lost much of their youthful vigor and joy. Wyndt is a weapon forged by his time. He has no interest in becoming anything else.

Background: When the walls of Jerusalem fell in 1099, Sir Diederick de Wyndt was one of the first crusaders to charge into the breach. Inside the city, he gave vent to the weeks of pent up frustration and fury that had possessed him. The streets ran red with the blood of Jews, Muslims, and Christians. Wyndt didn't revel in the bloodbath, but considered the slaughtered to be acceptable losses as the crusaders brought the holy city to heel. Wyndt's outlook changed when a friend of his was murdered by one of his own retainers. Wyndt went in search of the murderer only to discover that many in the city, innocent, defender, or attacker, were possessed of manic insanity. These poor souls would grab the nearest weapon and, giggling, turn upon those closest to them. If the maniac couldn't get close enough to a victim to slay them with their makeshift weapon, they would turn on themselves. As madness gripped the city, Wyndt saved a priest, Father Lambrecht Raes, from a horde of madmen baying for his blood. Raes immediately asked Wyndt's aid in discovering the source of the madness. Wyndt agreed. The two men came across half of an ancient grimoire in the catacombs beneath Jerusalem. Raes abandoned Wyndt to a pack of baying madmen, revealing he knew the book, known as the Laginate Grimoire, was the source of the madness. Wyndt nearly succumbed to the madness and stabbing knives of madness beneath the city, but eventually found his way back to the surface. Once there he confronted Raes and had the father arrested and placed on trial for witchcraft. The trial didn't go well. Raes had an answer for every question, a rebuff for every argument Wyndt possessed. Raes had only sought out the grimoire to learn its secrets and end the madness. Raes swore that Wyndt had been afflicted by the madness of the grimoire in the catacombs and had nearly slain Raes in his fury.

Wyndt refused to let Raes lie his way out of the execution that awaited him. He bribed a deserter to provide false testimony against the priest. Raes was convicted and sentenced to hang. The Laginate Grimoire was to be burned before Raes' eyes before he was to be hanged. On the day of the execution Raes was led to the noose. A bonfire was lit before his eyes and the grimoire thrown in. The book exploded, sending sparks and flaming logs spinning across the courtyard. A misty portal hung where the grimoire touched the flames. Raes wasted no time in plunging through the portal. Although he was injured by the blast, Wyndt followed.

Wyndt emerged from the portal far from Jerusalem in the land of Malosia. Local villagers witnessed the stranger stepping through the portal and fled, calling Wyndt a witch and soothsayer. Before Wyndt realized what had happened, he was arrested and sent to Perdition Hill, a prison built to hold witches.



Wyndt was able to escape Perdition Hill after a few months with help from two other prisoners. One was a Vistani named Violca. Violca possessed a rare gift, prophetic visions. Wyndt immediately wished to use her to find Raes. The other prisoner, Leonora Talliers, knew the local area. After a day of running through the forest, evading pursuit the three companions fell into an exhausted sleep. When Wyndt and Leonora awoke, Violca was gone. Wyndt and the remaining prisoner, Leonora, traveled through an ancient forest to Leonora's home. Witch hunter soldiers of Perdition Hill, known as the Redbreasts doggedly pursued the companions as they fled into a nearby forest. The forest was home to a large clan of fey folk that demanded tribute in blood before they would let the prisoners pass. Wyndt fooled several Redbreasts into parlay and struck them down, giving their blood to the fey, and ensuring his escape. Le-

Diederic de Wyndt

onora and Wyndt soon found their way to Leonora's home, a city named Birne. In Birne Wyndt discovered the existence of the Laginate Cabal. The cabal was one of the oldest of Malosia's cults. Diederic immediately started to hunt the cabal, looking for Raes. In tracking down the cabal Diederic brutally beat anyone that didn't give him information, even if he believed they knew nothing. Eventually, Diederic found Raes. The cleric had become a powerful member of Malosia's faith, the Emyrean Church. Raes had gained fame and power as a witch hunter, and was surrounded by dozens of guards. Diederic infiltrated the Emyrean Church's holy city, Caercaelum. As Wyndt approached the holy temple, chaos erupted.

Giggling madmen swarmed through the city, the Laginate Grimoire was clearly in there. Diederic fought his way to Raes, who used dark magic to animate the fallen and summon massive spiders. Diederic slaughtered them all. During the battle the deep corruption of the Emyrean church was laid out for everyone to see. In the chaos, Raes had escaped once more. Diederic finally caught up with the evil cleric a few days later in a remote church. The church was swarming with madmen and undead. Diederic and a small contingent of Redbreast guards charged the church and began fighting their way to Raes. As the Redbreasts died around him and the church burned, Diederic threw Raes into the inferno. Diederic left the guards to their fate and walked back to Caercaelum. Malosia had gained its darklord.

self. The people view Wyndt as a savior and respect him, but never ask for his assistance or require him to govern. His dreams are the worst part of his imprisonment. In them he sees dozens of times he could have chosen a different way. A slight hint of mercy that could have changed his destiny. He watches himself make the same choices over and over, resulting in him being trapped in this hell.

Darklord's Tactics: Sir Diederic is a pragmatic warrior. He prefers his well worn axe, but is proficient with dozens of weapons. He makes no pretense about using any trick or tactic that hurts his enemy or protects him. If he has the opportunity to stab an opponent in the back so much the better. It's hard to defend against a blow you don't know is coming. The knight is familiar with battlefields and bloody, lengthy sieges. He hates the slaughter that often occurs once one side has broken, but knows it's necessary to end his enemy's resistance.

Borders: When Sir Diederic closes the borders of Malosia, the domain is sealed by an invisible wall of madness. Creatures that cross the wall attack their companions or themselves with their most powerful weapons. They only stop if they are dragged back across the wall into Malosia. Of course any creature that crosses the wall to aid their companions will fall victim to the madness...



Current Sketch: Wyndt is a reluctant lord at best. He feels he had no choice in his actions that led to Malosia choosing him as its lord, and grows increasingly bitter. He spends much of his time trying to escape, but is constantly thwarted. He has even tried hurling himself from the walls of his castle, only to wake up in his chambers the next morning. Malosians recognize him as their lord, but the domain largely runs it-



Diederick de Wyndt

Sir Diederick de Wyndt

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral

Armor Class 21 (plate, shield)

Hit Points 93 (11d8 + 44)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +7, Wis +6

Skills Athletics +7, History +4, Insight +4, Religion +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common, French

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Implacable Mark. Diederick excels at foiling attacks and protecting his allies by menacing his foes. When he hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, the target is marked by him until the end of his next turn. A creature ignores this effect if it can't be frightened. The marked target has disadvantage on any attack roll against a creature other than Diederick or someone else who marked it. If a marked target is within 5 feet of Diederick on its turn and it moves at least 1 foot or makes an attack that suffers disadvantage from this feature, Diederick can make one melee weapon attack against it using his reaction. This attack roll has advantage, and if it hits, the attack's weapon deals 5 extra damage. Diederick can make this special attack even if he has already expended his reaction this round, but not if he has already used his reaction this turn. He can make this attack three times, and he regains all expended uses of it when he finishes a short or long rest.

Rejuvenation. Diederick is cursed to live until he makes amends to the Malosian people. If he is slain before that, he wakes up in his chambers the next morning.

Second Wind. Diederick has a limited well of stamina that he can draw on to protect himself from harm. On his turn, he can use a bonus action to regain hit points equal to 1d10 + 10. Once he uses this feature, he must finish a short or long rest before he can use it again.

Action Surge. Diederick can push himself beyond his normal limits for a moment. On his turn, he can take one additional action. Once he uses this feature, he must finish a short or long rest before he can use it again.

Martial Advantage. Once per turn, Diederick can deal an extra 3 (1d6) damage to a creature he hits with a weapon attack if that creature is within 5 ft. of an ally of Diederick that isn't incapacitated.

Brave and Steadfast. Diederick has advantage on saving throws against being frightened and can't be frightened while he can see an allied creature within 30 feet of him.

Slasher. Diederick has learned where to cut to have the greatest results. Once per turn when Diederick hits a creature with an attack that deals slashing damage, he can reduce the speed of the target by 10 feet until the start of his next turn. When he scores a critical hit that deals slashing damage to a creature, he grievously wounds it. Until the start of his turn, the target has disadvantage on all attack rolls.

Indomitable. Diederick can reroll a saving throw that he fails. If he does so, he must use the new roll, and he can't use this feature again until he finishes a long rest.

Shield Master. Diederick can use shields not just for protection but also for offense. If Diederick takes the Attack action on his turn, he can use a bonus action to try to shove a creature within 5 feet of him with his shield. If he isn't incapacitated, he can add his shield's AC bonus to any Dexterity saving throw he makes against a spell or other harmful effect that targets only him. If Diederick is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he can use his reaction to take no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, interposing his shield between himself and the source of the effect.

Actions

Multiaction. Diederick makes two melee attacks.

Battle Axe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.

Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, Diederick can utter a special command or warning whenever a non-hostile creature that it can see within 30 ft. of it makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand Diederick. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if Diederick is incapacitated.

Reactions

Parry. Diederick adds 2 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, Diederick must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Hold the Line. When a creature moves at least 1 foot within 5 feet of Diederick, he can make one melee weapon attack against that creature. If he hits, the attack's weapon deals 5 extra damage, and the target's speed is reduced to 0 until the end of this turn.

Mithras Court



Mithras Court



o one knows what crime Lucius Knight committed to be stuck in Mithras Court, but the tales are many. Those who are willing to talk, whisper VERY quietly that the man was responsible for the massacre of British troops at the Battle of Isandlwana — that he had somehow sold out the British forces to the natives, and this was the cause of the defeat. Not only that but that he had engineered the conflict as a means to increase his own power. Supposedly his thinking was that if more British forces were killed, recruitment would need to be increased and his own station would become more important. Due to his ambitions, more than 2,000 people lost their lives on both sides. Regardless of the cause, the man now controls Mithras Court and seeks to expand it. He wants more power in any way that he can get it.

Mithras Court has two nights per day, in between which are found a few hours of daylight. Bells ring out for first and second nights, warning of the darkness. During the dark hours, the zombies emerge, though they avoid areas of bright light. As a result of this, almost everyone in Mithras Court is armed and sticks to the areas lit by gas-lighting.

Mithras Court is dependent upon the Vistani for their supplies, though given the relative wealth of the people of Mithras Court compared to the rest of the domains in the Mists, they are well supplied by the travelers, and face little in the way of starvation. Access to Mithras Court comes in two ways, both of which are tied to Mithras Court Station: The train, and the station itself. The station itself can, at the behest of Lucius, travel to any part of Gothic Earth, and replace the station there. That means that anyone who wanders into the replaced station ends up at the Mithras Court station instead. While Lucius can place it anywhere, he can only have it there for two days at a time before it moves again, whether he wants it to or not. Lucius strongly prefers to keep his movement to places within the British Empire, as he believes it to be the center of civilization. The other way is through the train and thoughts of vengeance. To this end, Lucius sends out his agents, through the Mithras Court station, to entice people into his realm. Unfortunately, only those with vengeance in their hearts can enter, but when they do, they can unknowingly take others with them. As such, Knight sends out his agents, such as the man with a snake tattoo, to cause disasters on the trains of London. In this manner he hopes that someone will inadvertently board the train — the subterranean trams are especially liable for this, after the

construction of the London Underground — and bring others back with them, when the Mists draw them in. Adventures within Mithras Court should center upon vengeance. The heroes were pulled here for a reason, either their own thirst for revenge or that of one of the other passengers.

“These railway tracks are the only thing standing between you and me.”

~ Sir Lucius Knight

Culture Level:	Industrial Revolution
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate urban
Year Formed:	Unknown
Population:	87,000 (population of the districts around)
Races (%):	Humans 98%, Vistani 1%, Other 1%
Languages:	Common
Religions:	None
Government:	Corporatocracy
Ruler(s):	Sir Lucius Knight
Darklord(s):	Sir Lucius Knight
Nationality:	British
Analog:	Victorian Era London

Local Fauna:

There are no native animals within Mithras Court, apart from rats, which are an ever-present problem, as they dig through the foundations of buildings and infest the sewage system that underlies the domain, and pigeons that befoul everything with their droppings.

Local Flora:

Mithras Court has no native plants as everything is covered in buildings. The only living plants found here are those planted in kitchen gardens or in window sills.



Mithras Court

Native Horrors

Zombies roam the streets during nightfall, presenting a danger to everyone, even Lucius' minions. They tear apart anyone that they find, though they stay away from light, whether natural, from a gas lamp or a torch. While it doesn't harm them, it does seem to frighten them. The zombies resemble those unfortunates that were murdered by Lucius' people, in their attempts to nurture vengeance in the hearts of people. Those that are NOT avenged in this manner are those that join the ranks of the walking dead in Mithras Court, along with those that they catch here. A number of other undead make their home here too, though they are much less numerous than the zombies, though, against an experienced party of adventurers, they pose little threat. All of them suffer the same aversion to light that the zombies have. Little is known or understood of Lucius' henchmen. It's debatable whether they're even people or tangible, but if not they are certainly capable of taking human appearance.

Terrain type

Mithras Court surrounds a broad cobblestone court, with brick buildings on each side. During the night, it is lit by gas lamps, while the statue of a British soldier in their classic tall hatted uniform, stands guard in the center.

Important Landmarks

103 to Nowhere

The 103 to Nowhere is a train that only reliably ever stops at Mithras Station, as it is the literal definition of a Ghost Train. It, like the station, can move to anywhere else it wishes, including other domains that their darklords have sealed off — though it is separate from Lucius' influence. Those who board the train with a ticket (any ticket) will find that they arrive at their destination on time, and without issue, finding themselves refreshed. Those who do not, however, find themselves doomed. Some become permanent passengers on the train, some become ghosts forever doomed to haunt stations everywhere, and the really unlucky have their souls consumed to fuel the train's hellish engine. The train itself seems to be alive with malevolent intelligence, but any attempts to communicate with it can only result in madness.

Metropolitan Police Station

Made from blocks of quarried granite, blackened from years of coal soot, and decorated with ornate gargoyles and other statuary on every corner of every floor, the structure looks like a cross between a castle and a cathedral. A broad stone stairway topped by an arched entryway leads to four ironbound doors. The

constabulary that makes their home here cares little for the people that they are supposedly here to help. Instead, they enforce the laws as best as they can, though they ignore the walking dead as simply another fact of life. They're deathly afraid of Lucius and his minions and avoid any actions that might otherwise annoy the ruler.

Midnight Meat Market

Not much is known of the Midnight Meat Market, as even the locals do not come here very often. This rundown butcher's shop only opens for one hour per night, starting 30 minutes before midnight and closing 30 minutes later. The green chunks of gooey meat that are on display put off any but the most desperate people. The locals do not care much for the owner either, the man named Finch, as the short, almost dwarfish man, is covered in pustules, and reeks of blood.

Mithras Station

Mithras Station is the center point of Mithras Court, around which everything else happens. A deep underground station, stairs lead up to a broad cobblestone court, with brick buildings on each side. During the night, it is lit by gas lamps, like the rest of the domain, while the statue of a British soldier in their tall hatted classic uniform, stands guard in the center. This seems to be some form of mockery of Lucius Knight in that the soldier's face has been removed, and it bears no dedication. The Station is haunted by the specters and spirits of lost travelers, those who died elsewhere while looking for a destination that they never found. Now they are doomed to look forever for trains and platforms that do not exist. Furthermore, the subway tunnels are home to pockets of madmen. They have carved out small areas for themselves, kept lit by whatever they can find to keep the zombies at bay. These are the servants of Lucius who occasionally sweep up to the surface to do his bidding. It is rare that Lucius uses them, as he prefers subtler means, for which his lieutenants, such as the man with the snake tattoo, are better suited.



Mithras Court

Inn of Unquestioned Hospitality

The Inn of Unquestioned Hospitality is the only one of its kind here, marked with a sign of a foaming mug of ale. Owned by Fredericks, it has a tapestry that is unsettling to those who study it, as it seems to be able to foretell the future — usually, it does so in a manner that is only understood after the events. More importantly, the Inn is the first port of call for most of the newcomers to Mithras Court and many find themselves coming back here, until such a time that they can establish a residence. Fredericks accepts only paying customers, and those that cannot pay are thrown out just before the light fails, to survive if they can. Any come here in search of work, and it's the first place that the locals go to whenever they find that they need new workers. There's always someone here with the skills that they need, and on most days (and especially nights), the inn is full of people having a meal, a drink, or browsing the job notice board behind the bar.

Towns and villages:

None

Neighboring domain(s):

Gothic Earth

Fun Fact:

The one thing that everyone who comes to Mithras Court remarks on is the smell of mustard and decay. The place stinks, though it is especially bad at the station — and the locals ignore it as just another fact of life. Those who pay attention though, notice that the same smell emanates from the undead creatures that plague the domain. And the closer you draw to Lucius, the stronger the smell gets.



Sir Lucius Knight

"Escape?"

Why would I want that?

I am a god here. You are but a man. Not even worth my notice before I ruled my kingdom.

The only use I could have for you now is a servant, and I suspect you'll fail even in that simple task."

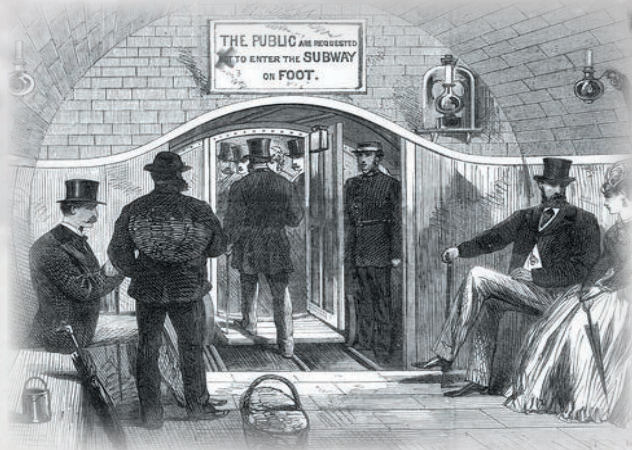
~ Sir Lucius Knight

Lucius Knight speaks softly, but with the assurance of those with complete confidence that they will be obeyed. Knight can magically speak with any within his domain and taunting foolish adventurers who think they can slay him is one of the few joys allowed him. Physically, Lucius Knight is unremarkable. He is the kind of person people meet and then forget about, or who can effortlessly blend in with a crowd. Only a thin outline of red light gives away his otherworldly nature.

Background: Lucius Knight's past is shrouded in mystery. Born one Lucius Meriweather on Gothic Earth sometime in the early 1800's, he was the first-born son of a farmer. He dreaded his inevitable inheritance, having a distinct hatred for the boredom of the farming life. His escape was certain when he took the Queen's Shilling and took his place in Her Royal Majesty's Army. Lucius was intelligent and his knack for keeping track of dozens of details allowed him rapid promotion through the ranks. His lowborn status and lack of commission let him rise no higher than the rank of colonel. Lucius rankled at the high born nobles that had bought their commissions. On their first day in the Army, they outranked him. He had to work for less than everything that they had been given. Many have whispered that Lucius eventually reached out to a dark power and offered to trade lives for power and influence. None know whom Lucius reached out to, nor what deal was struck, but Lucius was party to some of the worst massacres of British troops in history. During the Charge of the Light Brigade in Crimea, at Isandlwana, and over dozens of smaller conflicts, Lucius delayed orders, misplaced supplies, and slowed themarch. It is unknown how many men Lucius is at least partially responsible for murdering, but the number could easily be in the thousands. His duplicity was finally discovered by a group of academics and friends of the men that Lucius had effectively murdered, and they swore revenge. They found an ancient bronze tablet inscribed with a curse from

Roman times. They intoned the incantation and performed the intricate steps of the ritual in the hope that Lucius would be forever trapped in the netherworld. Little did they know all of Mithras Court would be given to Lucius to terrorize as he pleased. As Lucius set out to rule his new domain, he discarded the surname of Meriweather in favor of Knight. The name of the pathetic farm boy he was so long ago was behind him

Current Sketch: More than anything, Lucius Knight seeks to expand his power. He sends his agents to cause chaos and then flee back to Mithras Court. Knight hopes people injured by the chaos, or the relatives of those murdered, come into the Court and become trapped. As more souls are drawn into Mithras Court, Knight can feel his power grow. If Knight thinks he can increase his power by sacrificing a minion, even a loyal and powerful one, he will do so without hesitation.



Darklord's Tactics: Knight prefers to fight from the shadows. Before engaging, Knight will summon shadows and as many mad men as he can find. Once engaged, he fights with efficiency, bolstering his allies when possible and raising his enemy's dead to refill his own ranks. Knight is a skilled duelist with his rapier and an excellent marksman. Knight hates the light and secretly fears daylight. He will not fight during the day except under the most dire circumstances.

Borders: Knight keeps the borders of Mithras Court closed constantly. The border is unique, as those seeking revenge may enter the court, but cannot leave. Anyone that enters the mists surrounding the court must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. Creatures that fail die. Creatures that succeed exit the mist at the same point they entered. Strangely, the Vistani are free to come and go through the misty border at will.

Sir Lucius Knight



Sir Lucius Knight

Sir Lucius Knight

Medium undead (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)

Hit Points 90 (12d8 + 36)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	17 (+3)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Int +5

Skills Arcana +5, Deception +12, History +5, Intimidation +8, Persuasion +8, Stealth +7

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Incorporeal Movement. Lucius can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. He takes 5 (1d10) force damage if he ends his turn inside an object. Lucius cannot move through the walls, ceilings or the rails of any of his rails and subways.

Earth Bounding Railways. Lucius is cursed to never be able to fly or hover above any of his railways, he has to walk on them to pass to the other side.

Cursed Light! Lucius is fearful of both sunlight and artificial or magical light. When he is in an area brighter than dim light, he becomes frightened and tries to flee to a darker place. If the light is sunlight, he takes 1d8 radiant damage per turn he stays within the area. This curse extends to all of the undead native to his domain.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, Lucius has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Control All Undead. Lucius' control over the undead in his domain is absolute. All undead creatures that are native to Mithras Court will obey and protect Lucius to their best abilities. Lucius can command any undead in his domain to take a simple action, by using a bonus action.

Undead Eyes. Lucius can communicate with any undead telepathically. Additionally, as an action, he can see through the eyes of any undead native to his domain and hear what it hears until the start of his next turn, gaining the benefits of any special senses that the undead creature has. During this time, he is deaf and blind with regard to his own senses.

Intimidating Presence. Any creature of Lucius' choice that starts its turn within 15 feet of him must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is frightened until the start of its next turn. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to Lucius' Fear Aura for the next 24 hours.

Magic Resistance. Lucius has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Turn Resistance. Lucius has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces Lucius to 0 hit points, he must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, Lucius drops to 1 hit point instead. This ability does not work if Lucius is within an area of sunlight.

Rejuvenation. Lucius's essence is tied to his railway station domain. If he is slain, he will reform within his domain after 1d6+2 days. The only way for Lucius to be destroyed permanently is to die on the tracks of one of his railways by losing his last hit points, after being hit by one of his trains.

Confer Resistances. Lucius can, with a bonus action, grant resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage to a set of allies he can within 30ft of him. Up to 5 allied creatures can benefit from this ability. The bonus lasts until the beginning of Lucius's next turn.

Charming Character. Lucius can cast *charm person* at will. The DC for this ability is 15.

Summon Shadows 2/Day. Lucius summons 2d4+2 shadows to fight alongside him. The shadows act on Lucius's initiative and fight until slain or dismissed. The shadows cannot move further than 60ft away from Lucius and are destroyed if they enter an area of any type of source of light.

Sir Lucius Knight

Actions

Life Drain. *Melee Spell Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 22 (4d8 + 4) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Rapier +1. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Revolver +1. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 40/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Create Specter. Lucius targets a humanoid within 10 feet of him that has been dead for no longer than 1 minute and died violently. The target's spirit rises as a specter in the space of its corpse or in the nearest unoccupied space. The specter is under Lucius's control. Lucius can have no more than seven specters under his control at one time.

Exhume Fumes (Recharge 5-6). Lucius exhales a cloud of poisonous gas in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 16 (4d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Reactions

Parry. Lucius adds 2 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, Lucius must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Betray Ally. Lucius steps out of the way and drags an ally to take the damage for him. There must be an ally within 5 ft for this ability to work. If the allied creature is slain due to this ability, Lucius heals for 1d8 hit points and his maximum Hit Points increase by the rolled amount. This increase lasts until Lucius takes a long rest.

Battle Boon. Lucius can utter a special command or warning whenever a nonhostile creature that he can see within 30 ft. of him makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand Lucius.

Significant Possessions

Revolver +1, Rapier +1



Riverbend



Riverbend



Riverbend was created to spite Dr. Alistair Weldon, a man whose obsession with control overrode everything so much that he not only broke free from his lot in life, where he was born poor but became a doctor and a rich slave and plantation owner. One so rich that he need not practice as a doctor anymore, but whose obsessive desire for control led him to perform horrible experiments on his slaves, ones that they often died from.

Had he been raised less harshly things might have turned out differently, but as he was the result of a tryst with the Vistani, his supposed family never took much care of him.

When the North came to take the South following Sherman's March to the Sea, the slaves rebelled and burned the mansion. While Alistair lived and was drawn into the Mists, his wife and 6-year old daughter did not. His wife lives on in a horrid zombie state, one where she's still cognizant as punishment for her crime of silence in the face of her husband's cruelty. The daughter survives too, in a way, as a ghost, and as the sole good inhabitant of Riverbend. She doesn't seem to understand what has happened to her father, as he ignores the ghost of the child, but her mother's state terrifies her. She is the one good heart remaining within the domain, helping those caught here to escape.

Adventures within Riverbend are almost inevitably intertwined with a certain level of cruelty and abuse. Anyone who enters the domain, regardless of how they get there, eventually end up boring Dr. Weldon, and unless they can escape with Fanny's help, they're destined to be added to his stockpile beneath the barn and studied extensively while being dissected. Such tortures can last for months, as time never passes in this domain, stuck somewhere between half-sunlight and half-gloom with never changing overcast skies. The reasons for coming here voluntarily would almost inevitably include seeking information about rare diseases and conditions that affect the human body, as Weldon would be one of the few who would have access to such knowledge, but getting him to part with it may prove more costly than anyone would care to think about.

"As to diseases, make a habit of two things — to help, or at least, to do no harm."

~ Hippocrates

Culture Level:
Climate & Terrain:

Industrial Revolution
Temperate, forest, hill, mountains

Year Formed:
Population:

664 BC
1

Races (%):
Languages:

Humans 100%
English

Religions:
Government:

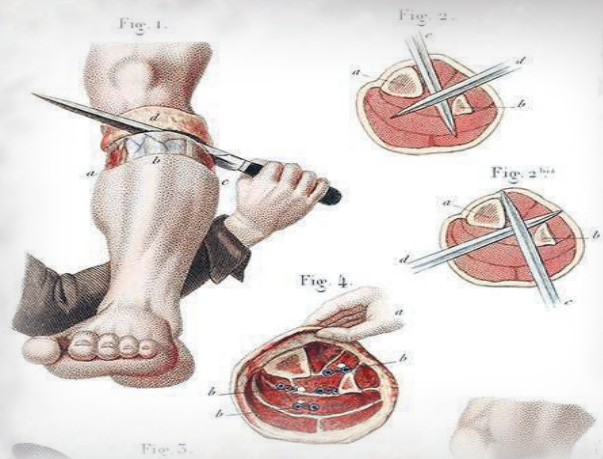
None
None

Ruler(s):
Darklord(s):

None
Dr. Alistair Weldon

Nationality:
Analog:

American
Antebellum Era Plantation



Local Fauna:

There are no living animals within the Riverbend Plantation. All were lost when the mansion was moved into the Mists.

Local Flora:

The only plants that live around the small plot of land that makes up the Riverbend Plantation is grass. It's short, but grows slightly longer down near the river, a few hundred feet from the main part of the mansion.

Native Horrors

Only three creatures make their homes here. The first is Dr. Alistair Weldon who is desperate for diversions, such as he used to have before he was dragged into the Mists. That those diversions were the killing and torture of other human beings doesn't bother him, and he has no regrets about his work, though he would like to turn it towards curing his wife. The second creature is his wife, Beatrice. When the plantation was set ablaze, she was burned alive inside the mansion, and now exists as a disfigured zombie, though an intelligent one. She partially understands what has happened to her, and keeps to her room all the time, never coming out, though she has smashed all the

Riverbend

mirrors there so that she isn't forced to see herself. The third, and only benign creature in the domain is Frances who goes by the nickname of Fanny. This is Weldon's 6-year old daughter, who didn't understand that her father was an evil man or what he was doing in his workplace beneath the out-building. Somehow she has inherited part of the Vistani heritage that her father carried and is able to traverse the Mists, though only back to the place that the Riverbend Plantation originally stood, and she uses this when she can to help others escape her father — though it is very difficult for her to do, and almost impossible to maintain, so each time she does, she is inevitably drawn back into the Mists.

Terrain type

Riverbend is a flat piece of land that slopes down gently towards a riverbank where a small river floats by. The domain is barely a mile in diameter, and there isn't much to see here.

Important Landmarks

Weldon Mansion

The Weldon Mansion consists of many rooms though most are covered in dust and have clearly been neglected. Only the bedroom, the kitchen, and the library is used, as that is where Alistair Weldon spends his time, though he can prepare the guestrooms at a moment's notice if he needs to.

The library is filled with medical journals, most of which were penned before the Riverbend Plantation was dragged into the Mists, but many have been penned since by Dr. Weldon, and his work, while cruel beyond belief, is at the very forefront of medical technology. The outbuilding nearby, a small barn, reeks to death to those that have seen it. The barn itself is nothing special, with its red-painted walls, but underneath is a medical laboratory of horrific proportions. Here the remains of all his victims can be found, both those well in the past, such as his former slaves, and those that have been added later, like visitors in the domain. Dr. Weldon is terribly bored, and this is his way of relieving that boredom.

Towns and villages:

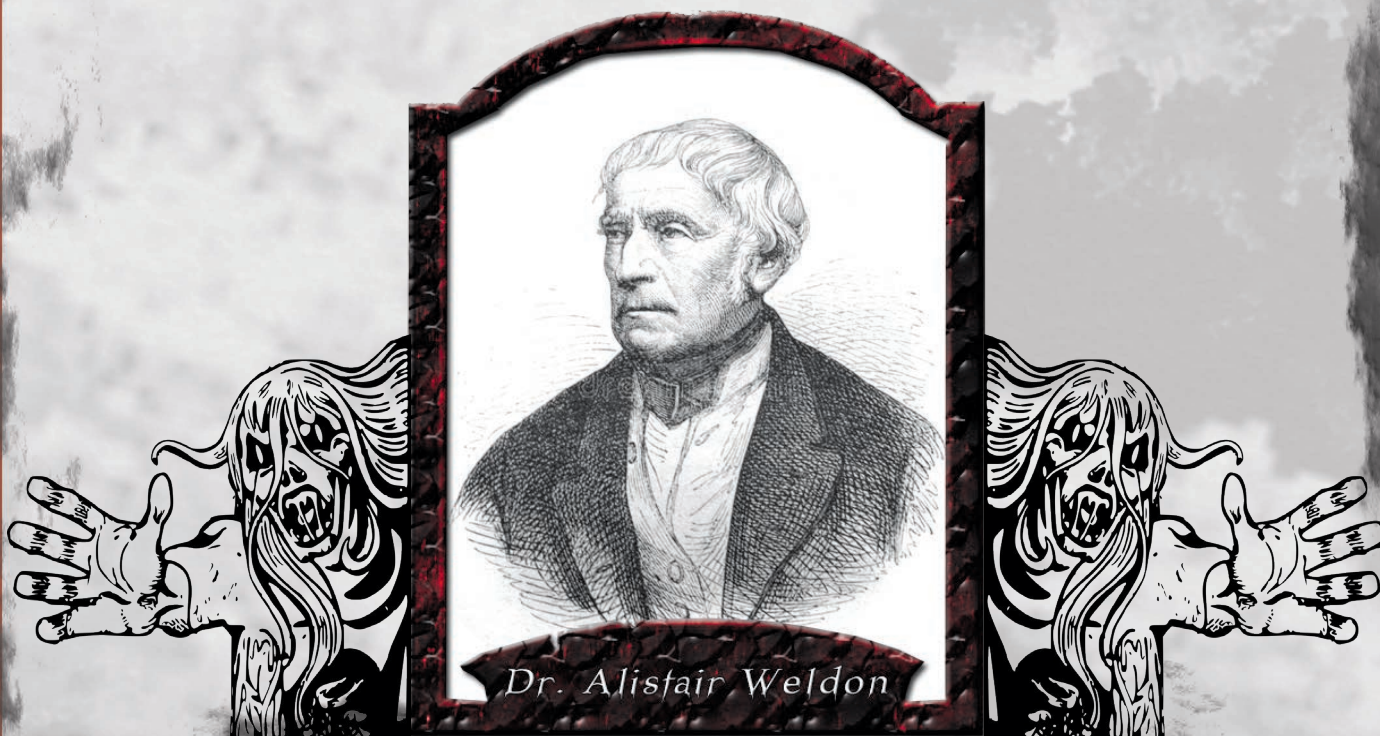
None

Neighboring domain(s):

None (though Fanny can traverse to Gothic Earth)

Fun Fact:

The Riverbend Plantation still stands in its original location on Gothic Earth, though it is a burned-down ruin where fog and mists cling to the remaining bricks. A distant relative of Alistair Weldon has inherited the land but believes it to be haunted so he has never even visited the plantation. He is more right that he thinks as anyone who visits the ruins risks entering the domain.



Dr. Weldon

"His whole life is a lie.

His wife and daughter hate him. He betrays his profession with every breath.

His servants, tied to his plantation by law and tradition, have fled from him.

He is utterly alone. He is a lie.

No one has ever deserved it more.

~ Former servant of the Weldons, name unknown.

Dr Alistair Weldon is a human male in his mid forties. He is short and has a slight build, with large green eyes that look through rather than at people. He dresses well, but his clothes often have unusual spots and stains. When not dissecting something, Weldon's hands twitch and appear like they are looking for something to grab and cut.

Background: Dr Alistair Weldon owned a small plantation, known as Riverbend, in Georgia during the American Civil War. Weldon cared nothing for growing cotton or managing a plantation, his real passion was the wonders of the human body. Unfortunately for Weldon, his station as a wealthy landowner prohibited him from studying medicine. Instead, Weldon taught himself by experimenting on his servants and slaves. The plantation was gripped with fear as anyone could be Weldon's next victim. In the chaos that accompanied Sherman's March to the Sea, the slaves rebelled. The slaves trapped Weldon and his family in the plantation house and set the house aflame, fleeing and hoping the cruel family would perish in the fire. As the flames reached out to encompass Weldon, his daughter dead and his wife burning next to him, Weldon was snatched away. He appeared in a copy of his plantation, accompanied only by the ghost of his daughter, Fanny Weldon, and his still burning wife, Beatrice. The plantation no longer burned, but it didn't take long for Weldon to realize he couldn't leave the grounds of his farm. He was trapped in Riverbend forever.

Current Sketch: Dr. Weldon is trapped in a haze of loneliness and ennui. He ignores the ghost of his daughter and what little remains of his wife is a burnt out husk of a creature. She has no personality and rarely does anything but cry. Weldon's every need is taken care of by invisible servants that occasionally whisper to the doctor, but never answer his questions and he never sees any evidence of their existence. Recently Weldon discovered the body of a man that he managed to nurse back to health. The man calls himself Trueblood and has since moved beyond the reach of Weldon.

Darklord's Tactics: The doctor has no training in combat, but is strong for his size and age. He has drowned full grown men with little effort before, but finds such tasks distasteful. He would much rather torture those that cannot defend themselves.

Borders: Dr Weldon cannot close the borders of his domain.

Dr. Alistair Weldon

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +4

Skills Athletics +4, Deception +2, Medicine +1

Senses passive Perception 9

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Inscrutable. Weldon is immune to any effect that would sense his emotions or read his thoughts, as well as any divination spell that he refuses. Wisdom (Insight) checks made to ascertain Weldon's intentions or sincerity have disadvantage.

Read Thoughts. Weldon magically reads the surface thoughts (such as what troubles it or possible complexes and traumas) of one incapacitated creature within 5 ft. of him that he can see. While the target is in range, Weldon can continue reading its thoughts, as long as his concentration isn't broken (as if concentrating on a spell). While reading the target's mind, Weldon has advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion) checks against the target.

Innate Spellcasting. Weldon's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). All the spells except the *invisible servant* and *mage hand* take the form of physical skills and do not appear to be of magic nature. He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *invisible servant*, *mage hand*, *mending*
3/Day each: *cure wounds*, *lesser restoration*, *sleep*
1/Day each: *hold person*

Mist Aversion. Weldon is fearful of the Mists and will do everything to avoid them. If he finds himself surrounded by the Mists, he will become frightened until he is sure there is a way to leave them behind.

Actions

Hunting Rifle. Ranged Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, range 80/240 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d10) piercing damage.

Scalpel. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5ft ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage.

The Burning Peaks

“...some men just want to watch the world burn.”
~ Alfred in *The Dark Knight*

Overview

The true nature of The Domains remains a mystery, seemingly hidden within the mists themselves. Some posit that unknown entities have created The Domains as prisons for those who commit acts so vile that The Hells are not a suitable punishment. It would make sense, then, that eventually The Mists would claim one of the most vile creatures to have ever lived in all of the multiverse. Few names instill fear across The Planes more than that of Vecna. This dark, powerful, uncontrolled being has wrought destruction wherever he has gone over the course of his uncountable years. The utter chaos with which he subjugates those around him is unfathomable to a sane mind. The Burning Peaks (Cavitus, Tovag, and Risibilos — all originating from Oerth) embody that chaos with endless, unwinnable war and conflict. Like so many opponents before, however, Vecna had planned for his possible imprisonment within The Mist. Machinations for his escape were in place before he was ever claimed. Never before had The Domains attempted to restrain such a powerful and chaotic being...and for the first time ever... The mists failed to contain the target of its ire. The situation remains clouded in occult mystery. No one knows where ‘The Whispered One’ has gone, or what might happen if he returns.

Mistways

There are no known Mistways into, or out of, The Burning Peaks; and this is a good thing.

A gateway hidden in the Halls of the Betrayer allows Kas to travel from Tovag to Monadhan and back again. It is unknown if it is a mistway or if other creatures can use it.

Chronology

732BC — Vecna attempts to ascend to godhood and fails. **Cavitus** forms.

750BC — Kas is captured by the mists. **Tovag** forms.

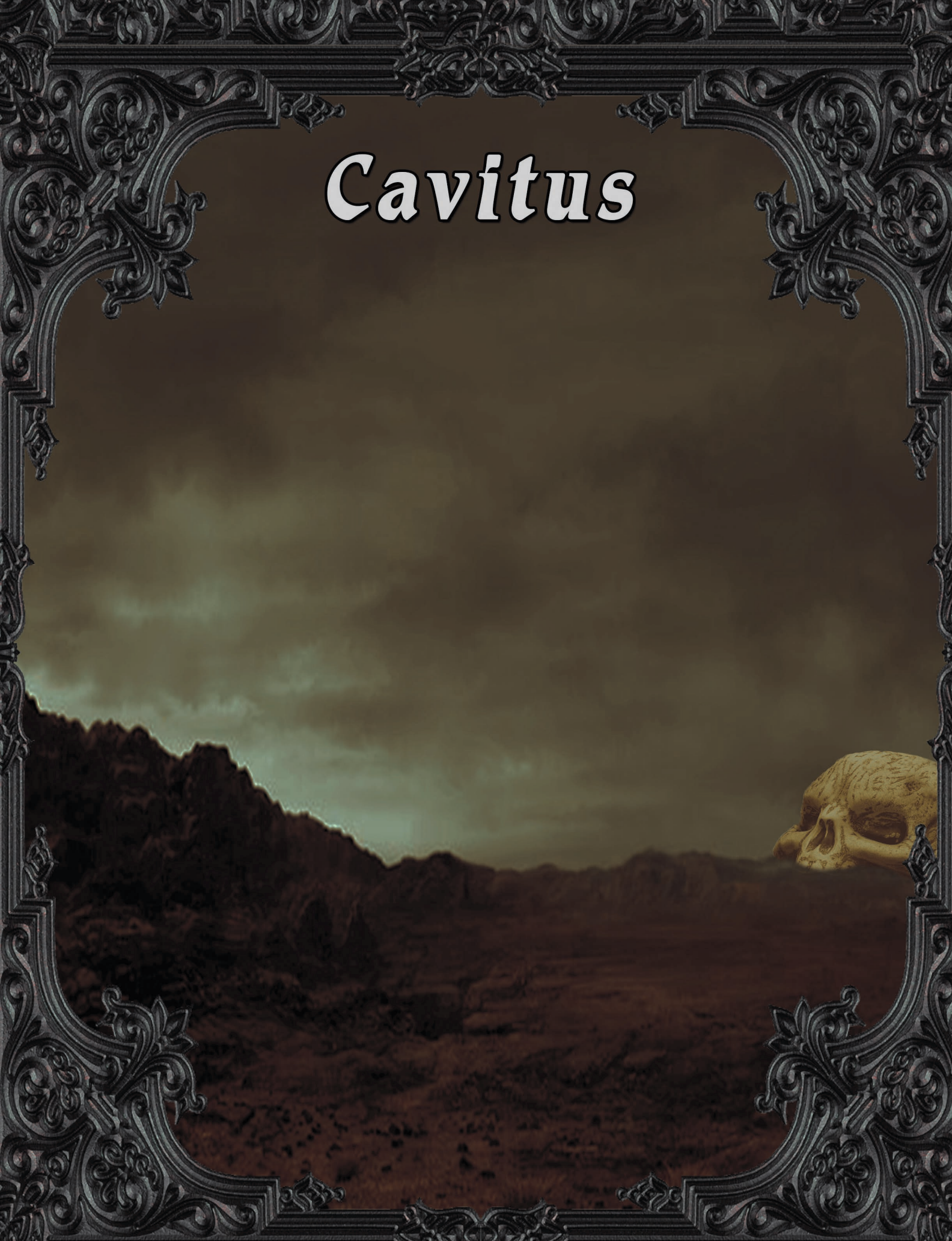
750BC — Goaded by the jester, Puncheron, his king brings in ‘The Laughing Law.’ **Risibilos** forms.

750BC — The **Burning Peaks** Cluster forms.

753BC — Vecna reportedly becomes the first being to successfully escape The Mists.



Cavitus



Cavitus



While Ravenloft itself functions as a prison, and in many ways is set to torture the darklords, the domain of Cavitus takes this to an extreme. Holding Vecna, the Maimed God, prisoner, is no easy task. A being once used to doing whatever it pleases now finds itself limited in its power — less so than other darklords perhaps, as Vecna still retains some of his godly powers, but to the Undying King, the restrictions are nigh unbearable. And having his worst enemy, the traitor that he once called General, next door in Tovag is even worse. And so, an endless war rages between the undead minions of Vecna and the seemingly unending hordes of humanity that Kas breeds. Unfortunately for everyone else, the prison that so effectively holds the Chained God also holds anyone else here within its borders. Nothing lives outside the walls of Cavitus and away from its roads. The ash desert that fills the domain drains the life from any creature or plant that tries to survive here and when they fall, they rise again as undead monstrosities. In many ways that is the saving grace of Cavitus for its living inhabitants: Life may be hard and short, but if they keep their heads down, they'll live a better existence than their counterparts in Tovag. The irony of course is that it's not actually because their lot in life is better, it's simply that Vecna's favored minions are the undead residents of Cavitus. And there are always more where those came from, especially with the supply of fresh bodies next door in Tovag.

Adventures in Cavitus should involve a loss of freedom, of choice and opportunity. If possible they should be sprinkled with unrelenting hate. Perhaps the heroes have found that an old enemy of theirs, one thought long dead, was brought to Cavitus and restored to unlife, and that old enemy is now a favored servant of the Maimed King. Perhaps they're sent here as agents of Kas or the Daggers of Kas, on a scouting mission. One that, if they do not complete it, could mean the loss of their loved ones in Tovag — if Kas is feeling especially cruel, he won't simply kill these loved ones, but instead send them to fight against Vecna's forces so that the heroes may lose them twice: first when they die, and secondly when they rise as undead.

Perhaps it's even simpler: the heroes want out, and with all the knowledge at Vecna's disposal and by extension his clergy, they might be able to gather enough information to leave. After all, it is what the god of secrets himself wants.

"Secrets, silent, stony sit in the dark palaces of both our hearts: secrets weary of their tyranny: tyrants willing to be dethroned."

~ James Joyce, Ulysses

Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Ash desert and mountains
Year Formed:	750 BC
Population:	10,000
Races (%):	Humans 100% (though filled with undead)
Languages:	Common, Cavitian
Religions:	Cult of Vecna
Government:	Theocracy (cult of Vecna)
Ruler(s):	Vecna
Darklord(s):	Vecna
Nationality:	Cavitian
Analog:	Oerth, the land of the dead

Local Fauna:

Outside of Citadel Cavitus, everything is dead in Cavitus. There is no life, and anything that moves into the ashen desert away from the citadel or the roads leading to it, dies within a few hours, as their life energy is sapped from them. (Each hour a creature spends away from the safe areas, its hit point maximum is reduced by 1d8 — there is no saving throw against this, nor any way to mitigate the damage taken). Not only that, but no healing is possible within the confines of the desert. As a result, nothing lives there.

Local Flora:

Outside of Citadel Cavitus, nothing lives and no plants have been known to take root here. Within the walls of the Citadel though, the populace sustains itself by growing hardy crops, especially vegetables. Though they grow here, they only do so with the utmost care and attention given. As a result, the living population tends to be emaciated, and in some ways, they resemble the corpses that surround them. This is not helped by the fact that Cavitus has no night nor day. There is no sun in the sky, and the domain is always bathed in a twilight-like gloom that the sun-sensitive undead among Vecna's Favored can move around in, but which most living creatures find to be oppressive.

Native Horrors

That is not to say that nothing moves within the domain. Far from it — Citadel Cavitus is full of life and unlife both, but outside the walls of the city, there is only the undead. The vast majority of them are corporeal, such as zombies, ghouls, wights, and the like — they are the favored minions of the Maimed King, but ghosts, spectres, and shadows can also be found here, as well as even rarer undead. Spellcasting undead are non-existent however unless they practice

Cavitus

clerical or druidic magic. The Undying King, as Vecna sometimes styles himself, does not tolerate other spellcasters in Cavitus unless they gain their powers from him. The Burning Peaks are an exception as they ride the borders between Tovag and Cavitus, but on the Cavitus side, they too are dead, although rare creatures can be found that dart from Tovag into Cavitus to scavenge and then retreat before they suffer harm. Such stints are, by necessity, incredibly short.

Terrain type

Cavitus is incredibly hot, a remnant of Vecna's time in the Quasi-Elemental Plane of Ash. In fact, in most ways, Cavitus resembles his old stomping grounds within that elemental plane. A barren wasteland of ash, dominated by a gigantic skull — Citadel Cavitus.

Important Landmarks

Roadway of the Brethren

The Roadways of the Brethren are the major roads in Cavitus. They lead from Citadel Cavitus to the only three passes found in the Burning Peaks. They are the only safe route through this hostile land, and to many their white cobblestones represent safety. As they start at the Citadel, they're bright and even, but closer to the border with Tovag, they are covered in blood and dirt, and become increasingly uneven due to the damage that many battles have done to them..

Temple of Vecna

While all of Citadel Cavitus could be said to be a temple to Vecna's power, the actual Temple of Vecna lies along the fortress' inner wall, between the two eye sockets that look out across the Ashen Wastes. The energy from the eye sockets can be felt, even through the thick walls of the temple, as they are not sockets, but instead enormous whirlpools of negative energy. Anyone touching them is doomed. The temple is built with an enormous balcony on which stands an altar to Vecna. This balcony can be seen from anywhere in the city, such that all may witness the glory of Vecna during worship. Within the walls of the temple, it is much less grandiose and simpler. Quarters for the priests, a library and kitchen facilities, and such. The servants are kept busy at all times in the underground portions of the temple, where the kitchen, bathrooms, and the like are, while 150 or so priests reside in the upper portions. The higher your ranking in the clergy, the higher up you will be in the temple.

Towns and villages:

Citadel Cavitus

Citadel Cavitus is the only place within Cavitus that can hold life. It is an ancient fortress, shaped out of

white stone (or at least, that's what the inhabitants hope), and takes the form of a gigantic skull, rising hundreds of feet up into the air from the Ashen Wastes. It is home to 10,000 people and half again as many undead of various kinds (most corporeal, but some have an incorporeal form — in particular, shadows strike fear into their living neighbors). The undead within the Citadel are referred to as the Favored of Vecna, and in any dispute between the living and the dead, the Reavers (an undead police force) take the side of the undead creatures. They manage to hold a tenuous peace, and most of the living are grateful for the Reavers' presence, as they curtail the worst excesses of the undead. Within the Citadel, and within Cavitus in general, Vecna's word is law, but the Chained God doesn't often bother himself with day-to-day activities and delegates the task to his priesthood. Usually, the title of Priest of Vecna is enough to strike fear into anyone listening, but they sometimes refer to themselves by their honorific of the Thoughts and Memories of Vecna. Below them are the Fingers of Vecna, their enforcers, who are really nothing more than common thugs. The high priests and priestesses are referred to as the Heart and Voice of Vecna, but these positions are mostly ceremonial with the deity himself so close at hand. Cavitus is also home to two golems — the Eye and Hand of Vecna. The first golem is formed of the eyes of sinners and liars that find their fate at Vecna's hands, while the other consists of their hands. None question their authority within Cavitus. Within the walls of the fortress, life is harsh: the undead are treated as (and often dress as) nobles, while the living are mere cattle. They are treated better than their counterparts in Tovag, even if that is mostly because they're ignored. Even those who normally feed on the living curtail their activities at the direction of Vecna. As long as they can find food and shelter within the walls, they're generally fine. Strangely, the living also comprise the majority of Vecna's priesthood — perhaps these individuals are looking for a way out.

Neighboring domain(s):

Tovag
Risibilos

Fun Fact:

The ash that can be found in the Ashen Wastes resembles that of the Quasi-Elemental Plane of Ash, which sits between the Elemental Plane of Fire and the Negative Elemental Plane. The ash is infused with fiery power and can be used as an additional material component in fire spells. Unfortunately, using the powder causes the spell to deal maximum damage, but only to the caster.

Lesser Deity, Vecna

"The Serpent speaks to me.

Magic itself speaks to me.

I was born with nothing on a forgotten world.

I became a mage.

Then I conquered death, and became a lich.

Then I became a GOD.

I will not stop there. I will free myself from these shackles and tear this prison apart.

I will rule this universe and beyond. I am Vecna. I am the beginning, the middle and end of everything.

I am."

~ Vecna

As a demigod, Vecna can appear in any form he wishes, but rarely chooses to disguise his appearance, preferring his natural form. Vecna is a withered skeleton, ancient beyond measure, garbed in robes of astounding beauty. He is missing his left hand and eye, but occasionally sports magical copies of each. These copies are made of pure force and function as a normal hand or eye for the Whispered God. Vecna doesn't need these replacements, but at times seems to prefer them.

The lich god rarely deigns to speak to mortals, but might talk to a visitor to his lair seeking to do him harm or steal his secrets. He is a calculating and curious demigod, and may want to know why someone seeks to harm him before he obliterates the hapless fool.

Background: Vecna was born millennia ago on a world that some sages believe was the first world in the multiverse. He was born into a harsh life, a member of the untouchable class in his homeworld, Vecna had no rights and could be abused or slain by anyone. Arcane magic was outlawed, so his mother taught him the art of wizardry in private. Before long, Vecna's mother was discovered and burned at the stake for practicing witchcraft. Vecna swore he would take revenge for the indignity heaped upon him by that ancient nameless city.

Vecna continued his research and after years of research and study achieved a mastery of the arcane arts never to be surpassed before or since. Legends claim he was tutored by the Serpent, the personification of magic who could claim the Lady of Pain, Ahri-man, and Jazirian as siblings.

Using his new power, Vecna recruited an army of undead, demons, and twisted mortals to his service. The most wicked of these servants was a human warrior named Kas. Kas was ruthless and cruel, and soon, with his help, Vecna ruled a vast empire. The people of this empire were filled with fear and ruled with mind-numbing brutality. Starvation was common and Vecna had whole villages created so he could have a consistent source of bodies for his magical experimentation. After achieving lichdom, Vecna raised an army of undead and demons and returned to the city of his birth, determined to bring it to its knees. The lich besieged the city and was on the verge of tearing the walls down when the city's elders offered to sacrifice themselves to save the rest of the city. Vecna accepted and had Kas kill them in an assortment of disturbing and bloody ways. Vecna moved his forces to the center of the city and used the bodies of his zombies and ghouls to create the Rotting Tower. The Rotting Tower was a potent reminder of Vecna's power and had a secret purpose. A few weeks after his forces occupied the city, Vecna planned a ritual that would drain the life of every living creature in the city, empowering the lich towards godhood. At the height of the ritual, Kas attacked his lord. The battle between the warrior and the lich destroyed the castle and seemingly, both combatants. Only Vecna's left hand and eye remained, now potent artifacts. The lich had conquered death before and refused to succumb to its embrace now. Vecna retained his consciousness through sheer strength of will, and slowly started to reform his body. As the decades passed Vecna received help from an unexpected source, worship. Mortal had started to worship Vecna as a god of secrets and magic. After decades of research in forgotten catacombs and abandoned churches, Vecna ascended to. As a god, Vecna sought to recreate his empire and force more mortals to his worship. The Whispered One began to assemble his armies and prepare his centers of worship to serve as the new capitals of his resurrected empire. The lich wanted to turn every living creature on his world into a worshipper, erasing the other gods and providing the Whispered One with an incredible power base. Unfortunately, this brought Vecna into a conflict with another god of tyranny who had noticed the lich's machinations and moved to protect his worshipers and empire. Vecna and the forgotten god of tyranny fought savagely, tearing and ripping at the nature of reality. Normally the mists could not touch Vecna, as his true form lived on the Outer Planes, but as Vecna's avatar and the other god used increasingly powerful spells, a link was forged between Vecna and the material plane. The dark powers were able to use this link to drag Vecna's fortress, Cavitus, into Ravenloft.

Lesser Deity, Vecna

Current Sketch: Vecna does not understand why he cannot break free of Cavitus. He has sworn not only to break free of the Demiplane of Dread, but to rip Ravenloft asunder and drain the dark powers of whatever they use for life force. When his rage overwhelms him, it shakes the foundations of Cavitus and Tovag. When he was first trapped in Ravenloft, Vecna was convinced he could escape if he could conquer Tovag and finally slay his treacherous lieutenant, Kas. After years of sending waves of undead into the mountain passes linking their domains, Vecna has begun to explore other avenues of escape. His rage is still terrible to behold, but his tremendous intellect is starting to unravel the mysteries of the demiplane faster than any darklord before him. Years ago, long before he was trapped in Ravenloft, Vecna laid a trap for other demigods to fuel his ascension to full godhood. Two stone tablets were buried with ancient civilizations enspelled with magic beyond the capabilities of mortal mages. Anyone reading the spell, which Vecna called *devouring*, would believe that casting the spells would drain the Whispering God of all his powers and transfer them to the caster, but it was a lie. The caster would instead sacrifice their divinity to Vecna, a new god of secrets, magic and undeath. Vecna has begun to have visions about the tablets and an ancient rival. A corpse god that has two forms, a twisted human and powerful cambion. This rival has found one of the tablets and is preparing to invade Cavitus and cast *devouring*. With his foe's might added to his own, Vecna believes he can shatter his bonds and rewrite the rules of reality itself. The lich god even believes he may be able to break the oldest laws of the multiverse and transport himself to Sigil, the City of Doors. Once there he will be able to feed upon the Lady of Pain and the primal forces of creation. He would be unstoppable, able to recreate the multiverse on a whim.

Darklord's Tactics: Vecna is a god. Any mortal foolish enough to rouse his ire is disintegrated in a storm of magical power. His spells cannot be countered and function perfectly in an antimagic field. Even being near Vecna can slay a weak willed opponent. He has access to hundreds of powerful magical items, can cast spells that would shatter the sanity of mortal mages, and does not need verbal, somatic or material components. Vecna casts his spells as an act of will. To challenge Vecna is a certain way for fools to die.

Borders: When Vecna closes the borders of Cavitus, thousands of crawling claws swarm the border. The claws swarm toward any creature that gets close to the border. The claws can teleport on top of a creature that tries to fly over. Despite his power, Vecna cannot close the border between Cavitus and Tovag. He sends hordes of mindless undead led by wights, vampires, and death knights to assault the neighboring domain.



Vecna

Medium demigod (lich), neutral evil

Armor Class 22 (natural armor)

Hit Points 230 (20d8 + 140)

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	25 (+7)	25 (+7)	25 (+7)	25 (+7)	25 (+7)

Saving Throws Str +16, Dex +16, Con +16, Int +16, Wis +16, Cha +16

Skills Arcana +25, Deception +25, History +16, Insight +16, Investigation +16, Perception +16, Persuasion +16, Religion +16, Stealth +16

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing attacks that are made with weapons of less than +4 enchantment; cold, lightning, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 26

Languages All

Challenge 30 (155,000 XP)

Magic Resistance. Vecna has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects. Any spell cast by a mortal against Vecna has a 70% chance to fail. Spells cast by demigods fail at a 40% rate, and those cast by gods of greater stature have a 20% chance of failure. In addition, he is immune to all spells from the school of enchantment, illusion, evocation and necromancy. No manner of polymorph or similar spell or spell-like ability can affect Vecna's form.

Extreme Initiative. Vecna automatically gains the initiative in any exchange with mortal creatures. No action, spell, or other condition can alter this fact.

Weak to Holiness. A Holy Avenger, a Sun Sword or a weapon blessed with *holy weapon* surpasses Vecna's immunities and can hit regardless of their magical bonuses.

Lesser Deity, Vecna

Aura of Evil. Vecna is cloaked in a permanent aura of absolute evil. Any creature that happens to be within 120ft of Vecna must succeed on a number of DC 24 Wisdom saving throws. The exact effect of this magical radiance depends on the enemy creature's level or hit dice as indicated on the table below.

Level Effect Duration

1-4 Permanent Madness check permanent
5-8 Long Term Madness check 1 month
9-12 Incapacitation check 1 hour
13-16 Frighten check 1 minute
17+ No effect N/A

It should be noted that these effects are cumulative, requiring a creature to make the check associated with their level plus all checks below it on the table. Thus, a 7th-level character who dares to look upon the form of the Whispered One must make a long term madness, an incapacitation and a frightened check. The effects last up to their duration or until a *dispel evil and good* is cast on the affected creature. A creature that succeeds on its saving throw is immune to Vecna's aura for 24 hours.

Demigod's Defenses. Non-magical creatures, no matter their total hit dice, can never harm Vecna. In addition, Vecna is immune to attempts that turn undead.

Multitasking. Vecna is able to do two simultaneous things without any penalty. Thus, he might attack twice in one round, cast two spells, cast a spell and employ a magical item, and so forth.

Innate Spellcasting. Vecna's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 24, +16 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following Wizard and Cleric spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *acid arrow, acid splash, animate dead, chill touch, command, counterspell, crown of madness, detect magic, dispel magic, fireball, mage hand, magic missile, mirror image, misty step, prestidigitation, ray of frost, shield, slow, thunderwave*
5/Day each: *banishment, blight, dimension door, greater invisibility, silence, spirit guardians*
3/Day each: *cloudkill, cone of cold, disintegrate, dispel evil and good, divine word, eyebite, forbiddance, hallow, word of recall*
2/Day each: *antimagic field, dominate monster, feebleshield, finger of death, maze, power word stun, true resurrection, power word stun*
1/Day each: *meteor swarm, power word kill, prismatic wall, wish*

Devil's Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede Vecna's darkvision.

Divine Awareness. Vecna knows if he hears a lie.

Inscrutable. Vecna is immune to any effect that would sense his emotions or read his thoughts, as well as any divination spell that he refuses. Wisdom (Insight) checks made to ascertain Vecna's intentions or sincerity have disadvantage.

Planar Telepathy. As a demigod, Vecna can speak to his followers wherever they might be. This power extends even beyond the Misty confines of Ravenloft, enabling Vecna to converse with his minions even on the Quasi elemental Plane of Ash, on the world of Oerth or even Gothic Earth.

Pantognosis. Vecna is able to speak and understand any form of language. This extends to such esoteric form of communication as sign language, color change patterns, and other nonverbal languages. This ability also applies to codes and any written form of communication.

Power Granting. Like any demigod, Vecna is able to grant his priests Cleric spells of up to the 5th level or be the patron for warlocks that wish to serve him. He does this as a reward for devotion to his unholy law. This ability is not limited by the confines of the Demiplane, so Vecna's priests on Oerth receive their spells just as if their god were not a Prisoner of the Mists.

Regeneration. Vecna regains 10 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point.

Rejuvenation. If Vecna is somehow slain, he will rejuvenate 1d100 days later with full hit points. The new body appears within 5 feet of a phylactery of his choosing. Vecna can create a phylactery by imbuing a piece of jewelry with a tiny sliver of his divine essence through an 8-hour ritual. He can have any number of phylacteries. If Vecna has a phylactery and dies, he gains a new body in 1d10 days, regaining all his hit points and becoming active again. If Vecna doesn't have a phylactery, but either his left eye or left hand remain in the world, Vecna will reform with a new body at a place of his choosing in 1d100 years. Unless reunited with his lost eye and hand, whenever Vecna gains a new body, his new body is missing those body parts.

Unhindered in Cavitus. Vecna can cast teleport at will while within his domain, Cavitus. This trait can benefit from Vecna's Multitasking.

Trapped in the Mists. Vecna is trapped in Cavitus. He cannot planeshift like other demigods and cannot send his avatar into other domains or planes. The only way for Vecna to be freed is for him to absorb the essence of Luz.

God of Secrets. Vecna is the demigod of secrets and as such, nothing can be kept from him. He knows instantly of everything that transpires within the walls of his citadel. This ability also extends to his followers even those outside the demi plane of dread. Beyond the confines of Cavitus, however, his perception fades. He must use divination means to learn the secrets of those beyond the mists. As patron god of secrets, Vecna is able to know when someone has a secret, especially one causing shame or dread. In addition to knowing that such a secret exists, Vecna need only exert his will for a second to know the nature of the secret. Vecna uses this power to protect against treachery and to blackmail potential enemies into service.

Lesser Deity, Vecna

Legendary Resistance (5/Day). If Vecna fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Dark Speech. Vecna can speak the foul language known as Dark Speech. When Vecna speaks only in Dark Speech on his turn, each non-evil creature within 15 feet of him (excluding deities) takes 10 (3d6) psychic damage.

The Maimed God. If Vecna is reunited with his left eye and left hand, his Challenge Rating increases to 40 (400,000 XP). He can then cast three spells as part of his Multicast action and he can take 1 additional legendary action each round. In addition, he loses the Vecna's Weakness trait.

Actions

Multiattack. Vecna makes two attacks.

Paralysing Touch. *Melee Spell Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d10 + 7) Necrotic damage and the target must succeed on a DC 24 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed until a dispel evil and good spell is cast on the target.

Read Thoughts. Vecna magically reads the surface thoughts of one creature within 100 ft. of him. The effect can penetrate barriers, but 3 ft. of wood or dirt, 2 ft. of stone, 2 inches of metal, or a thin sheet of lead blocks it. While the target is in range, Vecna can continue reading his thoughts, as long as Vecna's concentration isn't broken (as if concentrating on a spell). While reading the target's mind, Vecna has advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion) checks against the target.

Know Secrets. Ten creatures that Vecna can see within 120 feet must succeed on a DC 24 Wisdom saving throw. If it fails, Vecna immediately learns their entire history, including any embarrassing or vital secrets they might know.

Legendary Actions

Vecna can take 5 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Vecna regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Cantrip. Vecna casts a cantrip.

Move. Vecna moves (walking or flying) up to half his speed. Vecna does not provoke opportunity attacks with this movement.

Paralyzing Touch (Costs 2 Actions). Vecna uses his Paralyzing Touch.

Bone Liquefy (Costs 3 Actions). Vecna makes a melee spell attack (+16 to hit, reach 5 ft.) against one target that has a skeleton. If it hits it must then succeed on a DC 24 Constitution saving throw or drop to 0 hit points as the bones turn to liquid. On a successful save the target takes 42 (12d6) necrotic damage.

Cast a Spell (Costs 3 Actions). Vecna casts a spell from his list of prepared or innate spells, using a spell slot or spending a use as normal.

Soul Drain (Costs 4 Actions). Each living creature within 20 feet of Vecna must succeed on a DC 24 Constitution saving throw or take 35 (10d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Vecna regains hit points equal to half of the total damage dealt to all targets. If this damage reduces a creature to 0 hit points it dies, if Vecna has a phylactery, the soul gets trapped inside. A soul trapped in Vecna's phylactery for 24 hours is devoured and ceases to exist. If Vecna's phylactery is destroyed the soul is freed and it is returned to the body from where it came from.

Lair Actions

When fighting inside his lair, Vecna can invoke the ambient magic to take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Vecna can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

-Vecna conjures forth 2d8 skeletons, 2d4 wraiths, or 1 secret eater. The creatures appear in unoccupied spaces within 120 feet of Vecna, act on their own initiative, and follow Vecna's telepathic commands.

-Vecna curses his enemies. Until initiative count 20 on the next round, creatures hostile to Vecna with resistance to necrotic damage lose that resistance.

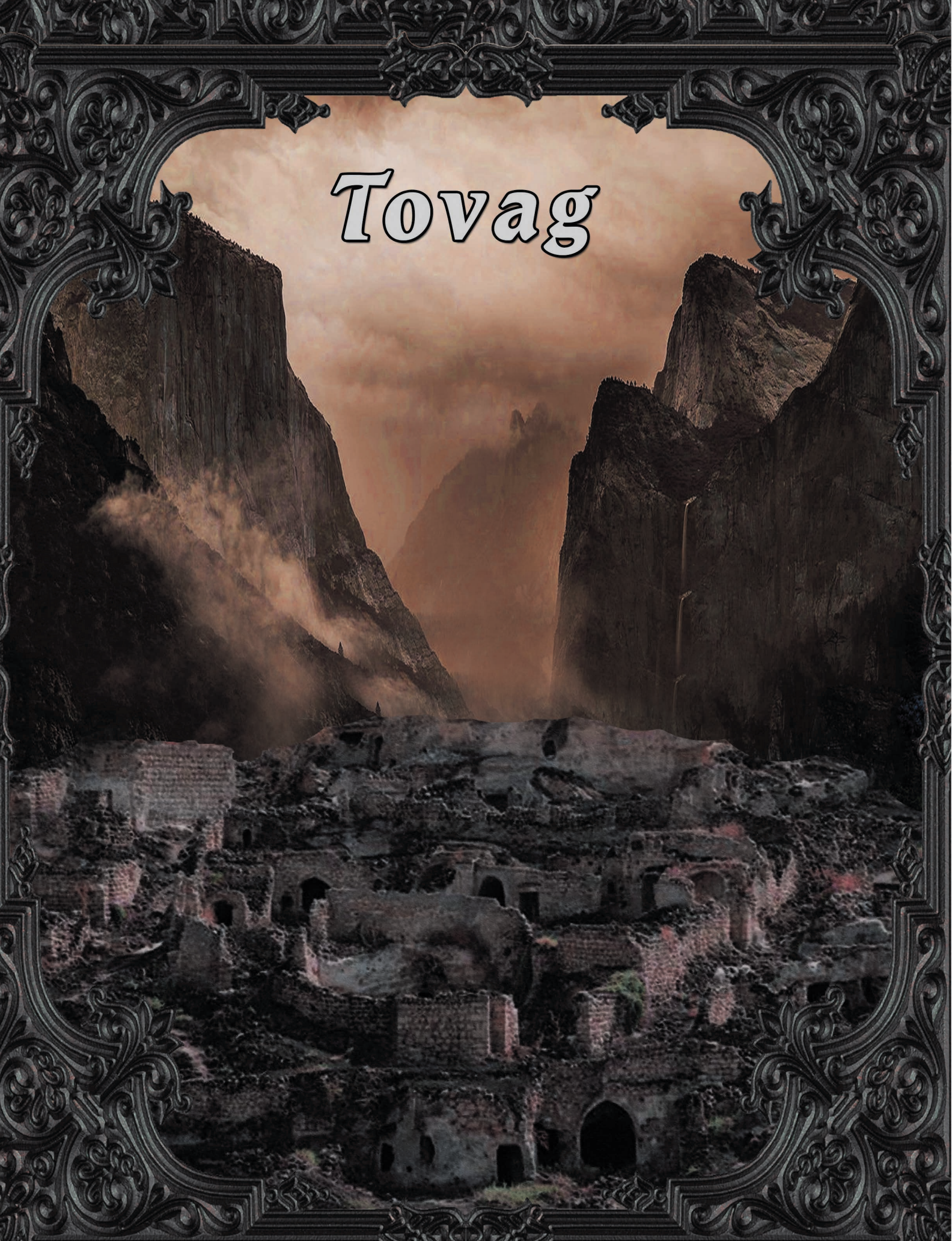
-Spectral hands extend from the ground, clawing at creatures hostile to Vecna. Until initiative count 20 on the next round, the ground is difficult terrain for affected creatures, and an affected creature must make a DC 24 Dexterity saving throw at the start of its turn, taking 22 (4d10) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

-Vecna hurls the lair into the Astral Sea and causes four massive fissures to break apart the lair into four pieces, hovering in place. Each fissure is 10 feet wide. While on the Astral Plane, a creature's walking speed is a number of feet equal to 3 x its Intelligence score, and all creatures hover through the air. If Vecna uses this Lair Action again, he can choose to move all pieces of the lair 10 feet further apart or 10 feet closer. If all parts are brought back together, the lair is hurled back to the plane it originated in. Any creatures in the Astral Plane that are outside of the lair are left behind if this happens.

Vecna can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and he can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.



Tovag





Tovag

ovag is the remains of an ancient war and a stunning betrayal. The war was waged between Vecna and his armies on one side, and all of creation — primarily the gods — on the other. Vecna's victory was close when his lieutenant, the vampire Kas, turned on him and brought it all crashing down. Shortly after that betrayal, both of them were swallowed by the Mists of Ravenloft. The two emerged, each in control of their own side of the Burning Peak mountains. An eternal war has raged between them since, with Kas' focus on trying to recover his sword (which he erroneously believes to be somewhere in Cavitus) so that he can finally conquer and kill the ancient lich god. Adventures in Tovag should focus on betrayal and the feeling of constant war. Anyone who grows up here is sent to war the moment that they reach the age of maturity (which happens nine years after being born, for humans), while one in ten is allowed to stay home and have a family. The risk of being drafted into Kas' armies and being sent off to the front is constant, and the heroes should spend their time ducking from one shadow to another, trying to avoid being dragged into the conflict.

"A nation can survive its fools, and even the ambitious. But it cannot survive treason from within. An enemy at the gates is less formidable, for he is known and carries his banner openly. But the traitor moves amongst those within the gate freely, his sly whispers rustling through all the alleys, heard in the very halls of government itself."

~ Marcus Tullius Cicero

Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate to cold, forest, hill, mountains, and plains
Year Formed:	750 BC
Population:	60,0000
Races (%):	Humans 75%, Dwarves 5%, Elves 5%, Gnomes 5%, Half-Elves 3%, Halflings 2%, Other 5%
Languages:	Common, Dwarven, Elven, Gnomish, Halfling, Oeridian
Religions:	None (Cult of Vecna is banned)
Government:	Militaristic Despotism
Ruler(s):	Kas the Destroyer
Darklord(s):	Kas the Destroyer
Nationality:	Tovag
Analog:	High Fantasy, Oerth

Local Fauna:

Tovag's animals are those you'd expect to find in a temperate to cold climate. There are many large animals, such as bears and caribou, along with domesticated cows and horses. Horses are particularly com-

mon in Tovag, as they serve a military purpose, and there are many horse breeders that raise particularly strong and vicious specimens for the army. There are a few hardy predators as well, such as wild cats and cougars. The most common predators are wolves, which infest the mountainous regions and swarm down during the winter, looking for food. Secondly are the bats that swarm in their thousands and completely engulf their victims, sucking them dry in moments. And finally, there are the rats that infest the grain silos and the city of Tor Gorak. They are a constant menace, often carrying disease, but they pose little threat to those who are prepared for them.

Local Flora:

Tovag is dominated by pine trees and crops. Generally speaking, any fast-growing plant can be found here and will be used as fodder for Kas' armies, either for keeping the army fed or well supplied with weapons. Everything happens in bulk in Tovag, so fields of crops are always grouped together, as are the trees in the forests. It's always the same type together, so it's easier for the populace to harvest and gather for Kas. All the fauna in Tovag is slightly subdued in color and less vibrant than they are in other domains as if Kas' oppression extended to the very air, water, and sunlight that the plants depend on for nourishment.

Native Horrors

There aren't many monsters within Tovag, as Kas doesn't generally tolerate them, especially the undead. Within the Fortress of Kas however, things are different. No one knows what lurks here, but vampires are a certainty as Kas is one of the eldest in existence, and he has sired (willingly and unwillingly) a number of these. They're kept on a tight leash, as he still needs the living to run his wars, and moving into Cavitus, even for a strong-willed vampire, is tantamount to falling under the control of Vecna.

Terrain type

Tovag is a land of extremes. On the western border are the enormous mountains that separate Cavitus and Tovag, and the rest of the domain is split between arable farmland and deep forests that provide plenty of lumber for the manufacture of siege engines and arrows. Splitting the land is the Kariscan Way, a well-made road that travels from the Fortress of Kas to Tor Gorak. In spite of its condition, it is rarely used by the populace for fear of attracting Kas' attention.

Tovag

Important Landmarks

Dagger Keep

Dagger Keeps sits upon the remains of an older castle, known to the locals as Castle Xiphos. It sits like a brooding spider at the center of Tor Gorak, and provides facilities for the Dagers, the henchmen of Kas, and the serving militia of Tor Gorak. The hardened appearance of Dagger Keep almost perfectly resembles the demeanor of the Dagers themselves. Castle Xiphos that lies beneath the walls of Dagger Keep is a much older fortress and served as the lair of Kas for decades. Kas also maintained that appearance for a long time after arriving in Tovag, but the cultists of Vecna revealed the ruse a few years ago, and it is well-known now that Kas resides in the Fortress of Kas, to the northwest of Tor Gorak, at the other end of the Karsican way.

Fortress of Kas

The fortress of Kas is a relatively new installation, especially when compared to his older abode, Castle Xiphos. It is set apart from the surrounding countryside by what can only be described as an army encampment. Hundreds of tents and cooking fires surround the fortress on all sides, with soldiers constantly mustering here. The fortress itself is a huge defensive building, built with multiple layers of protection and chokeholds that lead an enemy into a position of weakness. Deep in the halls of the Fortress sits Kas upon the usurper's throne, brooding and plotting how to obtain his sword once more. Nearby chambers hold his larders, filled with weakened villagers and people from his lands, ready to be drained of blood at a moment's notice.



Madhouse of Tor Gorak

Run by one of the local rich merchants, a man named Virianis, this is where the mentally ill and dangerous people of Tovag are kept. Tovag is infested with these people, as the dangerous conditions with the lands of Vecna nearby, the predations of the Dagers, and Kas himself have not helped. No one knows where Virianis has got his wealth from, but he consistently goes out of his way to help the inmates and the surrounding city district, always trying to improve the lot of the downtrodden.

Towns and villages:

Tor Gorak

While smaller villages dot the landscape around Tovag, there is only one big city. The bastion and metropolis that is Tor Gorak. This city of 40,000 souls is constantly on a war footing, readying for another attack on or from Cavitus.

Surrounded by huge walls, the place is filled with tenements, and people living in poverty. The tenements are overcrowded as the citizens are encouraged to raise large families, and Kas' officials give a bounty for each child born. The poverty is stifling otherwise, as all supplies go to the military citadel at the city's heart. Many young men and women find themselves drafted to the military as well, as the people in Tovag grow to adulthood in half the time they do elsewhere, providing nearly endless fodder for Kas' armies.

Many volunteer as well, as the army provides the only easy route to plentiful (or at least adequate) food. Part of this is to avoid the harsh laws as well as Kas has placed many restrictions upon the populace — even something as simple as owning books is illegal and punishable, as is education. The only things that the populace is supposed to learn is war and the trades that support those wars.

Much to Kas' annoyance, Tor Gorak has a cultist problem. These cultists worship Vecna and believe that with the right tools, they can open the defenses of Tovag, and ensure Vecna's victory. So far, they have posed little actual threat, but they are a constant nuisance to the constabulary.

Outside the city walls, the landscape is dominated by farmland. Crops are grown and horses are bred, to ensure a plentiful supply of food and mounts to the armies.

Neighboring domain(s):

Cavitus
Risibilos

Fun Fact:

Those living in Tovag grow to maturity in half the time that they would normally do. However, many do often not grow up mentally as quickly as they do physically, so it is quite common to find teddy bears and toys among the possessions of Kas' soldiers.

Kas the Bloody-Handed

"Find the blade! Find it!

I am the Bloody Handed! The Reaver! The end of days!

I sat in the bleak nothingness for centuries. Barely surviving, feeding off the dregs of the universe. I will have my revenge!

My enemy is just a god.

With that blade I will bring him to his knees! The Whispered One will divulge his secrets to me, and then he will die." ~ Kas the Destroyer

Kas the Betrayer. Kas the Bloody Handed. Kas the Destroyer. Names spat at Kas by dying enemies over centuries of war and slaughter. Kas is an ancient vampire, powerfully built in life, his transition to undeath has made him even stronger. He stands over seven feet tall and wears blood red plate mail. His face is lined with deep scars and his eyes are black orbs. When Kas is angry or hungry, his eyes turn blood red, starting to glow once battle is joined. Kas' hands never stray far from his sword. If lost in thought, his hands flex as if they are looking to rend a victim limb from limb.

Background: Kas is from an ancient world, and many sages believe he may have been born on the first world that could sustain life. He was a consummate warrior, living for the thrill of cutting through his opponents like a scythe after grain.

After years of bloodshed, Kas found himself in the service of the lich Vecna. Kas' brutality and complete lack of morality saw him rise through the ranks of Vecna's followers quickly. Soon Kas was Vecna's most trusted lieutenant, ruling a virtual empire in the lich's name. Vecna forged a terrible weapon, the Sword of Kas, and enchanted it with terrible and foul magic. With this sword, Kas became almost invincible. As a final step, Vecna placed some of his own avarice and thirst for power into the blade, giving the blade sentience. Despite having a thread of Vecna's soul bound to it, the sword had a personality all its own, and was nearly as bloodthirsty as its namesake.

As the years passed, Vecna used necromancy to extend Kas' life beyond what any mortal could ever hope to achieve. Eventually even Vecna's spells couldn't extend Kas' life any further, and the lich had a suit of armor forged. The armor was magically hardened

silver with a fanged mask that terrified all who saw it. The armor was steeped in necromantic magic and allowed Kas to extend his life by draining the blood of others with the fangs in the mask. His empire conquered, Vecna assembled an army to crush the city that had burned his mother alive for witchcraft. The Archlich planned to conquer the city, and use its hapless people's skulls to build the Rotting Tower. The Tower was a monument to death, and at its peak lay a large and ornate ritual chamber. The whole tower was designed to focus the souls of the thousands of people who died to create the tower into that room. Vecna would use their souls to fuel his ascension to godhood. Kas was the first over the walls of the doomed metropolis, gleefully hacking down guards and champions of good. Once Kas and his elite troops had taken the walls, the city soon fell. After years of his sword whispering venom into his soul, Kas had grown resentful of Vecna. Kas coveted the lich's power and wealth. The warrior plotted to slay the lich and usurp his empire. Kas waited until the height of the Ritual of Ascension, and then attacked. The combat shattered the Rotting Tower, sending decayed corpses raining down into the streets below. When it was over, Kas and Vecna were gone. All that anyone found of Kas was his great sword. All that remained of Vecna was his eye and left hand.

The magical energies unleashed during the titanic battle shattered the walls of reality, and Kas was flung into Vecna's fortress on the Quasi-Elemental Plane of Ash. The castle, Cavitus, was Vecna's most formidable stronghold. The sword of Kas flew from his hand, falling to the ground at the foot of the ruined Rotting Tower. Kas was shielded from the worst effects of the plane by his armor, but the years he spent there took a hideous toll. Kas slowly became one with his armor and the fangs of the silver mask joined with his own teeth. Kas had become a vampire, and was more powerful than ever. After centuries in planar exile, feeding on adventurers foolish enough to venture into his castle, Kas was suddenly torn from the Quasi-Elemental Plane of Ash when one of Vecna's endless attempts to conquer his homeworld failed.

Kas had landed in a new world. It didn't take Kas long to realize his closest neighbor was his ancient enemy, Vecna.

Current Sketch: Kas seeks to conquer Cavitus, Vecna's domain, and slaughter the demigod. Kas sends hordes of undead and conscripted soldiers over the mountains that separate Tovag from Cavitus. Kas knows the undead and conscripts don't stand a

Kas the Bloody-Handed

chance against Vecna's forces, but he has to send a steady flow of troops into the mountain passes that separate Cavitus from Tovag to keep Vecna's armies from pouring into his domain in an unstoppable tide. Kas is convinced he could crush Vecna if he can find his sword once again. Kas also believes the sword is hidden somewhere in Tovag. He has agents constantly searching for the sword. Anyone who has the blade, or any blade that appears to be the Sword of Kas, will be hunted by hordes of vampires and the darklord himself.

Darklord's Tactics: Kas truly loves melee combat and the thrill of screaming foes and spurting blood. As such, Kas prefers to fight without his vampiric abilities. Kas is tremendously strong, one hit from him is enough to kill an armored knight and his horse. If an opponent proves a worthy challenge, Kas relies on his powerful charm ability and summoned beasts to harass his opponents. Kas can control nearby undead and regenerates at a truly phenomenal rate. Because of his age, Kas doesn't have many of the weaknesses of a typical vampire. He cannot be turned, can cross running water, and suffers no damage when immersed in water. A wooden stake to the heart is instant death for most vampires, but Kas can only be slain by a stake cut from a tree from his forgotten homeland. A stake cut from any other tree will wound the darklord, and anger him greatly, but cause no lasting harm.

Borders: When Kas closes the borders of Tovag, the domain is surrounded by a wall of swirling blades. Creatures that start their turn in the wall take 28 (8d6) slashing damage. This damage ignores resistance and immunity. Once the creature has spent one minute in the wall they are pushed out of the wall into the nearest empty space to their entry point. Damage caused by the wall cannot be healed until the creature has completed a long rest.



Kas the destroyer

Kas

Medium undead (shapechanger), lawful evil

Armor Class 25 (+3 Black Plate Mail, +1 shield, +3 AC due to Ancient Status)

Hit Points 241 (21d8 + 147)

Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	24 (+7)	24 (+7)	24 (+7)	13 (+1)	24 (+7)

Saving Throws Str +14, Dex +14, Con +14, Wis +8

Skills Acrobatics +14, Athletics +14, Intimidation +14, Perception +8, Stealth +14

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing attacks from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities exhaustion, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Common, Elvish, Dwarven, Abyssal, Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 23 (50,000 XP)

Shapechanger. If Kas isn't in sunlight or running water, he can use his action to polymorph into a Tiny bat or a Medium cloud of mist, wolf, or back into his true form. While in bat form, Kas can't speak, his walking speed is 5 feet, and he has a flying speed of 60 feet. His statistics, other than his size and speed, are unchanged. Anything he is wearing transforms with him reverts to its true form if he dies. While in mist form, Kas can't take any actions, speak, or manipulate objects. He is weightless, has a flying speed of 60 feet, can hover, and can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. In addition, if air can pass through a space, the mist can do so without squeezing, and it can't pass through water. He has advantage on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saving throws, and he is immune to all non-magical damage, except the damage it takes from sunlight.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Kas fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Misty Escape. When Kas drops to 0 hit points, he transforms into a cloud of mist (as in the Shapechanger trait) instead of falling unconscious, provided that he isn't in sunlight or running water. If he can't transform, he is destroyed. While he has 0 hit points in mist form, he can't revert to his vampire form. Kas has no need of a coffin to rest in, therefore only needs to find a resting place that is obscured from sunlight. Once he has found a resting place and sleeps during the day, he reverts to his vampire form. He is then paralyzed until he regains at least 1 hit point. After spending 1 hour in his resting place with 0 hit points, he regains 1 hit point.

Regeneration. Kas regains 30 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If he takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of his next turn.

Kas the Bloody-Handed

Spider Climb. Kas can climb difficult surfaces, including crawling upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Vampire Weaknesses and Immunities. Forbiddance: Kas can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.

Harmed by Running Water. Kas takes 20 acid damage if he ends his turn in running water.

Stake to the Heart. Unless the stake comes from his home world of Oerth, stakes will not harm, nor paralyze Kas.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. Kas can function in daylight for 10 rounds. At the end of these, he takes 20 radiant damage when he starts his turn in sunlight and regains spent turns at dawn. While in sunlight, he has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks. Even if Kas is destroyed by sunlight, he will reform within 10d10 nights.

Aggressive. As a bonus action, Kas can move up to his speed toward a hostile creature that he can see.

Armor of Kas. Any critical hit against Kas becomes a normal hit. In addition, any time Kas is targeted by a magic missile spell, a cantrip that requires a saving throw, or a spell that requires a ranged attack roll, roll a d6. On a 1 to 5, Kas is unaffected. On a 6, Kas is unaffected, and the effect is reflected back at the caster as though it originated from Kas, turning the caster into the target. Kas has advantage on saving throws against all other spells and magical effects.

Into the Fray. Kas adds a d10 to his initiative rolls.

Shadow Blend. While in dim light or darkness, Kas can use a bonus action to become invisible, along with anything he is wearing or carrying. The invisibility lasts until Kas uses a bonus action to end it or until Kas attacks, is in bright light, or is incapacitated.

Standing Leap. Kas' long jump is up to 50 feet and his high jump is up to 40 feet, with or without a running start.

Turn Immunity. Kas is immune to effects that turn undead.

Magic Resistance. Kas has advantage on Saving Throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. Kas' weapon attacks are magical.

Hateful Aura. Kas and any allies within 30 feet of him gain a bonus to melee weapon damage rolls equal to Kas' Charisma modifier (included in Kas' attacks).

Actions

Multiattack (Vampire Form Only). Kas makes three attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

Sword of Unbridled Fury. Melee Weapon Attack: +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 16 (1d8 + 14) slashing damage, or 20 (1d10 + 9 plus 6) slashing damage if held in with two hands, plus 27 (6d8) thunder damage. The sword scores a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20. On a critical hit, the sword deals an additional 10 psychic damage and Kas gains 20 temporary hit points. On a critical hit against a creature with fewer than 50 hit points remaining that isn't a construct, must also succeed on a DC 22 Constitution saving throw or be slain instantly as the sword tears the target's life force from its body. Each swing of the sword creates a burst of thunderous sound that can be heard up to 100 feet away. In addition, the sword's fury can't be held back; any area of magical silence active within 30 feet of it is forcibly ended when the sword is used to make an attack.

Unarmed Strike (Vampire Form Only). Melee Weapon Attack: +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 18 (1d8 + 14) bludgeoning damage. Instead of dealing damage, Kas can grapple the target (escape DC 22).

Bite (Bat or Vampire Form Only). Melee Weapon Attack: +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by Kas, incapacitated, or restrained. Hit: 16 (1d6 + 14) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Kas regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain in this way and rises in 1d4 rounds as a Vampire or vampire spawn under Kas' control.

Betrayer's Whirlwind (Recharge 5–6). Roll a d4. Kas makes that many attacks with his Sword of Unbridled Fury against each creature within 5 feet of him. If a target is undead, Kas makes twice the number of attacks against it.

Children of the Night (5/Day). Kas can magically call 5d6 swarms of bats or rats, provided that the sun isn't up. While outdoors, the vampire can call 4d10 wolves instead. The called creatures arrive in 1d4 rounds, acting as allies of the vampire and obeying its spoken commands. The beasts remain for 1 hour, until the vampire dies, or until the vampire dismisses them as a bonus action.

Undying Servitors (1/Day). Kas magically calls 1d4 helmed horrors. They arrive on the following initiative count 20, acting on their own initiative as allies of Kas and obeying his spoken commands. The creatures remain for 1 hour, until Kas dies, or until he dismisses them as a bonus action.

Charm. Kas can target one humanoid within 30 feet of sight or the sound of his voice. If the target can see and hear him, the target must succeed on a DC 22 Wisdom saving throw at disadvantage or be charmed by Kas. The charmed target

Kas the Bloody-Handed

regards Kas as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under Kas' control, it takes requests or actions in the most favorable way it can, and it is a willing target for Kas' bite attack. Each time Kas or his companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw at disadvantage, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until Kas is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect.

Reactions

Kas' Parry. Kas adds 10 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, Kas must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon. If the attack misses, Kas can make a melee weapon attack against the attacker as part of the same reaction, using the weapon he used to parry the incoming attack.

Kas' Punishment. When a creature within 120 feet of Kas moves with a flying speed or takes the Dash action to move away from him, Kas attempts to magically punish the creature for its cowardice or dishonorable tactics. The target must succeed on a DC 22 Strength saving throw or be forcefully pulled towards the ground, landing prone, and having its movement speed reduced to 0 until the end of its next turn.

Legendary Actions

Kas can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Kas regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Move. Kas can move up to his speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Weapon Attack. Kas makes one melee weapon attack.

Kas' Challenge. Kas targets a creature he can see within 10 feet of him. For 1 minute while the target can see Kas, the target has disadvantage on attack rolls against all creatures except Kas and it takes 11 (2d10) psychic damage each time it attacks a creature other than Kas. Additionally, for the same duration, the target provokes opportunity attacks from Kas even if it takes the Disengage action.

Kas' Jaunt (Costs 2 Actions). Kas magically teleports, along with any equipment he is wearing or carrying, up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space he can see.

Bite (Costs 2 Actions). Kas makes one bite attack.

Lair Actions

Kas has two lairs: The Ruined Keep in the Dread Domain of Monadhan, and the Fortress of Kas in the Dread Domain of the Burning Peaks. When fighting inside his lair, Kas can invoke the ambient magic to take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Kas can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

Kas creates a wave of anguish. Each creature he can see within the lair must succeed on a DC 22 Wisdom saving throw or take 39 (6d12) psychic damage.

Kas magically opens a portal in an unoccupied space within 30 feet of him until initiative count 20 on the next round. The portal leads from the Ruined Keep to the Fortress of Kas, and vice versa.

Until the next initiative count 20, all vampires within the lair that are allied with Kas are enraged, causing them to have advantage on melee weapon attack rolls and causing attack rolls to have advantage against them.

Until the next initiative count 20, any dim light in the lair becomes darkness, and any bright light in the lair becomes dim light. A hostile creature that is frightened of Kas at the start of its turn takes 22 (4d10) psychic damage. Additionally, Kas and his allies are draped in a deeper shadow. Creatures that rely on sight have disadvantage on attack rolls against creatures draped in this shadow.

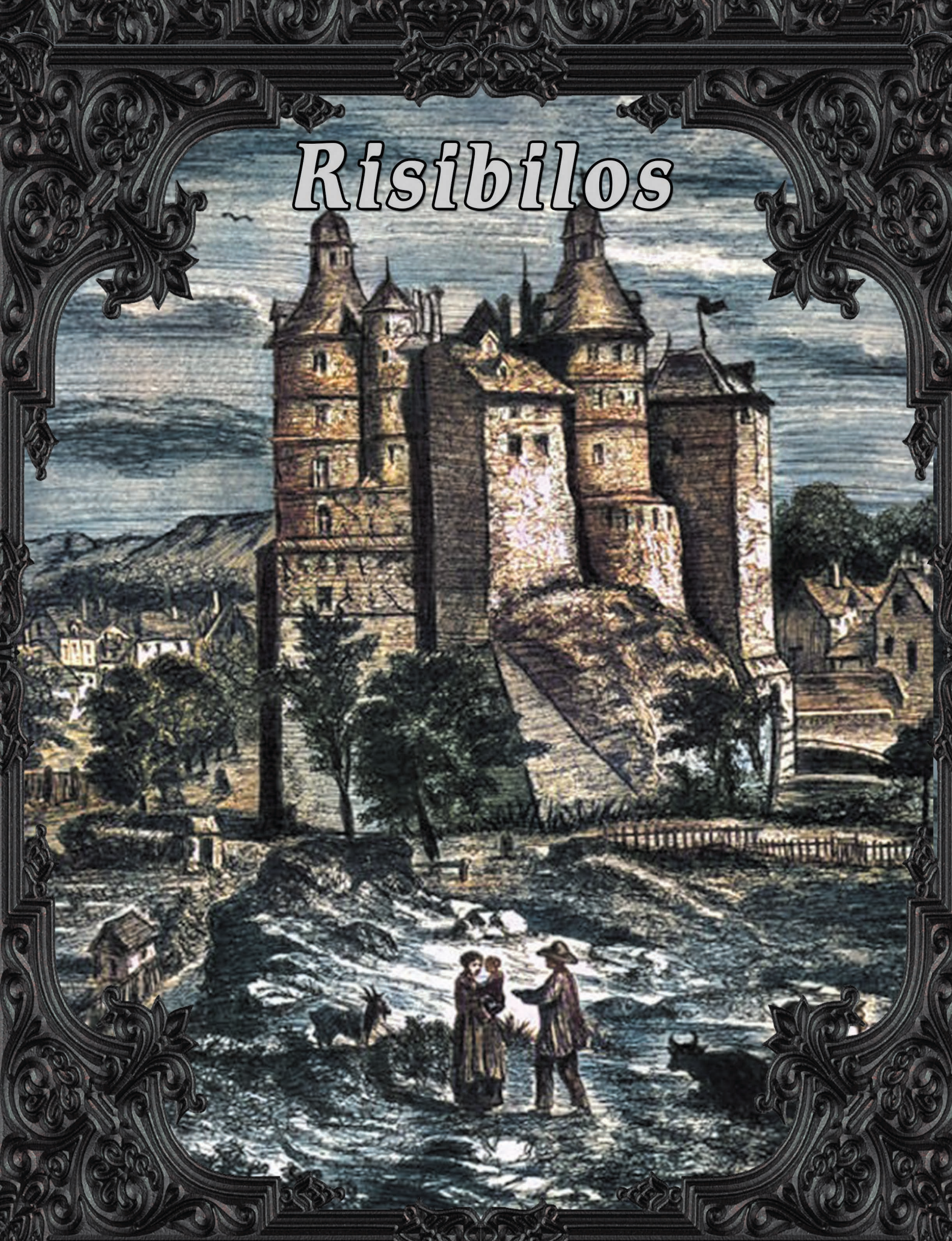
Kas can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and he can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

Significant Possessions:

Sword of Unbridled Fury, +3 Black Plate Mail, +1 Shield



Risibilos



Risibilos



he realm of Risibilos is the realm of laughter. But it is not the realm of mirth. Years ago, King Doerdon, an otherwise fair and just king, Unfortunately, he had no sense of humor, and in spite of trying to understand the nature of laughter and mirth, he failed. Eventually, his burgeoning paranoia caused him to outlaw jokes and toys, in an attempt to stop what he saw as his subjects mocking him. The dictates were impossible to enforce, as what constitutes a joke? So, instead, the king took this to the next extreme and outlawed any laughter. Any breach, no matter how minor of this law, was punished by death.

This still was not enough for the king, as rumors persisted that people now hid their mirth instead, hiding in cellars, laughing into pillows and the like — anything to avoid the notice of the king.

Finally, the king had enough, and he hired a mage to create a staff empowered with the *weird* spell. Using this, the mirthless king took to the street, and anyone who so much as smiled was slain.

This pushed him into the arms of the Mists, and one morning he awoke within the realm of Risibilos, a place that resembled his old home completely. But he was no longer alone. Instead, he was now joined by the jester Puncheron and he found that the law had been changed: Now everyone **MUST** laugh in every sentence, or face death. And the king now finds himself tortured by Puncheron's terrible jokes, jokes that he cannot resist laughing at, even though he and the Jester are the only ones exempt from the Laughing Law. In many ways, Puncheron acts as the inescapable shadow of King Doerdon. Because he **IS** the shadow of the king and the living embodiment of the *weird* spell.

Risibilos is technically a part of Tovag, and King Doerdon is now subservient to Kaz. However, Kaz does not care one bit for the humorless king, nor the paltry contributions to his military. As such, his forces ignore the place that they dismissively refer to as "The Land That Laughs". This results in Risibilos, in spite of its draconian laughing law, being the most peaceful place in Tovag. Adventures in Risibilos will almost inevitably involve running afoul of the Laughing Law, as only a few people know Risibilos in the first place, and even fewer know of the law, though Kaz's lieutenants are aware of this restriction and make sure to follow it on their rare visits. Heroes that come to Risibilos are unlikely to know of this, and while the locals won't say anything about it, they will summon guards if the law is

flaunted. They do not want to run the risk of attracting the deadly attention of their lord. If arrested, the heroes will be taken to the court for judgment, and Puncheron will act as the judge. No matter how good their reasons or explanations are, he will sentence them to trial by combat. Only by defeating their greatest foe, who Puncheron will summon a mirage of, can they escape.

*"If we couldn't laugh we would all go insane."
~ Robert Frost (attributed)*

Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate hill and plains
Year Formed:	751 BC
Population:	1,000
Races (%):	Humans 99%, Other 1%
Languages:	Common, Dwarven, Elven, Gnomish, Halfling, Oeridian
Religions:	None
Government:	Feudal monarchy
Ruler(s):	King Doerdon
Darklord(s):	Puncheron
Nationality:	Tovag
Analog:	The Princess Who Never Smiled and the fable The Clever Jester

Local Fauna:

Risibilos is somewhat less plagued by dangerous animals than the surrounding Tovag, though bears are still an issue here. Rats however are mostly non-existent within Risibilos, as the local farmers are very careful with their grain storage. Most of the animal life here is livestock. Cows are especially popular as are pigs for their meat. As in Tovag, almost all of it is handed over to the authorities for the war effort, but something of the original King Doerdon must still remain, as the taxes here are less severe than in the rest of Tovag. Like his overlord, however, he doesn't tolerate tardiness.

Local Flora:

Risibilos has been farmed since long ago. The only trees left are a few scattered remains of forests, while the rest is farmland. The people Risibilos mostly grow cabbage, leading to a terrible smell on occasion, one that Puncheron thinks makes for a great punchline. Beans are popular as well as they grow well in the soil here.

Risibilos

Native Horrors

Like Tovag, Risibilos is fairly peaceful, with no native monsters. There is an exception, however, as the land seems to attract the undead creatures called shadows. No one is sure why this is, though it seems likely to be tied to the nature of Puncheron. Any shadows that leave Risibilos are usually destroyed quickly by Kaz's forces, as he doesn't suffer any undead within his realm, in case they turn out to be in the employ of Vecna.

Terrain type

Risibilos is small, consisting mostly of a large hill upon which the entire domain rests. The land around it has been farmed for decades, and there's no wilderness left. A few scattered and small hamlets along with a couple of outlying farms are the only things that break the monotonous landscape of crops. Atop the hills sits the Dark Castle itself.

Important Landmarks

The Dark Castle

Home of Puncheron and King Doerdon, the Dark Castle is a massive and old castle, dating back to a prior age. The black stone is covered in crawling vines, while rain and wind have eroded previously sharp corners into rounded ones. Though old and slightly crumbling, it is still a mighty fortress, though its spires seem somewhat out of place, as if they were added as an afterthought. With the rounded roof atop each tower, the spires have an odd semblance to a jester's cap. A wide moat separates the castle from the rest of the land, crossable only via a sturdy wooden drawbridge.

Towns and villages:

Risibilos

Risibilos is a hamlet of some 350 inhabitants, and typical of the people who live in the domain, though it is by far the largest settlement there. The people here live in rough-hewn cottages fashioned mostly from stone taken from their fields. The thatched roofs are green with thick moss and the buildings generally appear as if their best days are behind them. The populace is much the same. Everyone wears a clearly fake smile, but their eyes are sad. Every sentence starts or ends with a flat "ha ha ha" — for such is the Laughing Law, both here and in the rest of the domain. The red tunics of the king's guardsmen are visible everywhere, as the domain is heavily patrolled, making it rather safe, as long as no one breaks the Laughing Law. They try their best to keep the peace in a place where their monarch has given up, but even they are breaking under the strain of having to enforce an unjust law on family and friends.

Neighboring domain(s):

Tovag

Fun Fact:

Something strange has happened after an incident where the Endless Road crossed paths with an adventuring party in Risibilos. At the time when that happened, all the idols of the Laughing God at the Abbey of Cherished Jocularly changed appearance to match that of Puncheron, and have remained so ever since. The monks believe that this is a sign that their god is imprisoned within the mists as well, and on the day that he escapes, they too will find release.



Puncheron

"-Why is blood red?

Because vampires drink it like wine!

-What knocks four times?

A mind flayer!

-What walks but has no legs?

The Worm that Walks!"

~ Puncheron

Puncheron looks to be a human male standing about five feet tall. When he smiles, which is often, his mouth opens wide, giving the impression that it is over large for his face, and he shows a set of yellow, cracked, and surprisingly long teeth. His beady eyes seem to change color randomly as the light hits them. Wisps of white and curly hair poke out from under his hood. Puncheron is dressed in the garish garb of a jester, tight-fitting and outrageously colored. The jester is easy to see for hundreds of feet away despite his size. He often carries an over-large warhammer, which he can barely lift, or a small replica of Doerdon's royal scepter, carved from wood.

Background: King Doerdon was a just, yet passionless, king. He could not understand jokes and thought laughter was a curious response to any situation. In a great effort to understand humour, the king invited every jester, playwright, and minstrel he could find to attend a two week festival dedicated to laughter. The king listened to every jester, watched every play, and listened to every bawdy song. At the end of the two weeks, Doerdon hadn't even cracked a smile. It wasn't long before the king's lack of humor became the butt of jokes in Risibilos. Doerdon, not understanding that this was a sign of affection for the intelligent and fair king, took it as an affront to his personal honor and a threat to his power. The king didn't know what a joke was, and so could not ban them, so instead he banned laughter. At first laughter was punishable by a fine, but it still continued. Then laughter was punishable by time in the dungeon, but it still continued. Finally the king declared that anyone caught laughing would be put to death. To show his commitment to the new law the king commissioned a staff that could cast the *weird* spell. The king traveled the streets of his own kingdom, slaying anyone he caught laughing. Eventually Risibilos and its brutal king were pulled into Ravenloft. Doerdon awoke one morning to find a ridiculously dressed jester, Puncheron, sitting at the side of his bed.

Puncheron told the king he was his shadow, and nothing the king could do could stop him. The king summoned his guards, and much to Doerdon's dismay, they could not remove the cackling jester. Even worse, when Puncheron told a joke, the king exploded with mirthless laughter. Doerdon would keep laughing until Puncheron allowed him to stop or one of the court wizards could unbind the magic forcing him to laugh. No matter how many times the magic was unbound, the king would laugh at the next joke. No one else laughed, well, Puncheron wasn't remotely funny. Slowly Doerdon sank into despair.

Current Sketch: At first glance Risibilos seems like a well run kingdom. The guards keep order, the streets are clean and well maintained, and the people work hard at their chosen profession. Talking to any native begins to unravel the illusion. Citizens of Risibilos end or begin every sentence with "ha ha ha". It's called the laughing law and it is the most important law in all Risibilos. Violating the law is a sure way to get taken into the presence of Puncheron and King Doerdon. People taken into the castle never return.

Doerdon has several court wizards near him at all times. They are ordered to protect the king if he is attacked physically and cast *dispel magic* on Doerdon when the king starts laughing at one of Puncheron's terrible jokes.

Darklord's Tactics: Puncheron doesn't engage in melee combat. He uses his Weird Staff and his death riddle ability to summon foes from a creature's past and his jokes are bad enough to literally kill an unfortunate victim. Beyond that, Puncheron avoids combat and mocks enemies from behind summoned creatures.

Borders: When the borders of Risibilos are closed, the domain is surrounded by a cacophony of spectral jesters telling awful jokes. Often the jokes don't even make sense, but any creature trying to leave Risibilos takes 2d10 psychic damage every 6 seconds. The damage ignores resistance and immunity. The damage increases by 11 (2d10) every minute until the creature turns back towards the domain.



Puncheron



Puncheron / King Doerdon

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (breastplate)

Hit Points 12 (5d8 - 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Skills Deception +4, Insight +4, Persuasion +4

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. Puncheron's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *color spray*, *disguise self*, *minor illusion*, *vicious mockery*

3/Day each: *calm emotions*, *dissonant whispers*, *magic mouth*, *Tasha's hideous laughter*

1/Day each: *enlarge/reduce*, *phantasmal force*, *phantasmal killer*

Shared Vitality. Puncheron is immune to all conditions and damages from any attack, spell or spell-like ability. There are only two ways to damage Puncheron. One is if someone strikes King Doerdon. If the King is killed, so is the Jester. The other way to defeat Puncheron is to solve his final riddle.

Restricted Movement. The speed mentioned is King Doerdon's. Puncheron cannot move further than 10ft away from him.

Weird Staff. Puncheron wields a staff that was created by a commissioned wizard of King Doerdon's court. Puncheron can use the staff to cast the *weird* spell once per day or use an action to expend 1 of its charges and target a creature up to 60 feet away from him. Roll 1d10 and consult the table listed in Appendix A Magic Items pg. 369, to discover what happens. The staff has 6 charges and regains 1d4 + 1 expended charges daily at dawn. If the staff's last charge is expended, roll a d20. On a 1, the staff crumbles into dust and is destroyed. If no target is designated, the staff automatically targets King Doerdon if no other creature is available.

Death Riddle. Puncheron says a riddle and summons a creature that his opponents have fought in the past (chosen by the DM). The creature uses its own initiative, does not have intellect or memories of the original as it is just a copy and it remains until the riddle is solved, its hit points reach 0 or until Puncheron dismisses it. Puncheron cannot have two summoned creatures at the same time since only a single riddle can be set for solving at a time.

Actions

Bad Joke. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) psychic damage and the target must make a DC 12 Intelligence saving throw or become incapacitated for 1d4 rounds, rolling a new saving throw at the end of each of its turns and ending the effect on a success.

Reactions

Guardian's Parry. A guard parries a melee weapon attack that would hit Doerdon and adds 2 to his AC. To do so, a guard must be within 5ft of Doerdon, be able to see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Legendary Actions

King Doerdon has a court of spellcasters and guards that defend him at all times. Doerdon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Doerdon regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn. If there are no allied spellcasters or guards left, Doerdon cannot take the first two legendary actions.

Defend the King! The guards approach the king to grant him protection from incoming attacks. Doerdon gains a +5 bonus to his AC.

Dispel the Magic! A spellcaster in Doerdon's court casts dispel magic.

Uncontrollable Laughter. Doerdon starts laughing uncontrollably, forcing spellcasters to take a DC 12 concentration check.

Appendix A



Appendix A. Creatures & NPCs

Vrykolakan Vampire

Vrykolakan vampires are a debased strain of vampirism rumored to originally be a punishment from Kanchelsis, the god of vampires. Vrykolakan vampires lack the sophistication and charm of other vampires, and their form is twisted and bestial. Vrykolakan vampires are completely hairless and their eyes are bloodshot, hate filled orbs. The back and limbs of a vrykolakan vampire are twisted and can contort in unnatural ways.

Unnatural Movement. A vrykolakan vampire moves with jerky movements and tremendous speed. The vampire uses all four limbs and twists its body unnaturally, making it impossible to hit. Vrykolakan vampires are fantastic climbers and love to ambush prey from great heights.

Broken Minds. A vrykolakan vampire's mind is broken by their transformation. Most are capable of speech but cannot carry on extended or complicated conversations. Despite this, they possess a low cunning, and are excellent hunters. They are smart enough to bite one or two victims, then wait for filth fever to take its toll before they attack again. Packs of vrykolakan vampires work well together, spreading out their attacks and targeting weaker prey.

Unnatural Hunger. Vrykolakan vampires are a bestial form of vampire, but still drink blood as all vampires do.

Undead Nature. A vrykolakas does not require air.

Vrykolakan Vampire

Medium undead, any evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 98 (13d8 + 39)

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +6

Skills Perception +5

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Immunities cold, poison

Condition Immunities frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Scuttle. A vrykolakan vampire does not provoke attacks of opportunity when it moves and may Dash as a bonus action.

Filth Fever. The mouth of a vrykolakas is full of cracked teeth and rife with disease. The myriad diseases and the vampire's undead nature mix to form an unnaturally virulent disease called filth fever. Victims of filth fever must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw every hour. Creatures that fail take

7 (2d6) necrotic damage. The creature's hit point maximum is reduced by the amount of damage taken. If the creature rolls a natural 1 on the saving throw they take 14 (4d6) necrotic damage and are incapacitated for 1 minute. The filth fever is cured once the victim makes three successful saving throws. Filth fever is highly resistant to magic. No spell has any effect on the disease. A creature killed by filth fever rises as a vrykolakan vampire at midnight the following night.

Vampiric Weaknesses.

Harmed by Running Water. The vrykolakas takes 20 acid damage if it ends its turn in running water.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The vrykolakas takes 20 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Burial Site Bound. The vrykolakas is bound to the place of his death. It must return to this location once per week and bury itself in the earth for 24 hours, during which time it is paralyzed and can be beheaded.

Vulnerable to Decapitation. If the killing blow resulted in a decapitation, the vrykolakas is destroyed.

Iron Spike. The vrykolakas is incapacitated (though not permanently destroyed) if an iron spike is driven to its skull.

Actions

Multiattack. The vrykolakan vampire makes two melee attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage plus 16 (3d10) necrotic damage. The vampire heals half the necrotic damage inflicted. The creature must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or contract filth fever (see above).

Claw. Melee Weapon attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage plus 21 (6d6) poison damage. The creature must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. Creatures that fail are poisoned until the start of their next turn.

Pestilent Gaze (Recharge 5–6). The vrykolakan vampire locks eyes with one creature it can see within 30 feet. That creature must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. Creatures that fail contract filth fever (see above).

Summon Vermin (1/Day). The vrykolakan vampire magically summons 1d6 giant centipedes. The giant centipedes are friendly toward the vrykolakas and follow its commands. The giant centipedes stay until for 1 hour, or until the vampire dismisses them or it dies.

Reactions

Phlegm. If a creature misses a melee attack against a vrykolakan vampire then the vampire can spit phlegm into their eyes. The creature must make a DC 14 dexterity saving throw. If they fail, they are blinded until they or an ally within 5 feet uses an action to wipe away the sticky wad of mucus and blood.



Appendix A. Creatures & NPCs



Animated Snowman

When a creature dies due to hypothermia and its soul lingers it might possess a snowman or anything resembling one. These vicious-looking snow constructs terrorize villages to the point that making snowmen is prohibited.

Animated Snowman

Medium construct, neutral evil

Armor Class 9 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)

Damage Vulnerabilities fire, radiant

Damage Resistances piercing

Damage Immunities cold, poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Slippery. All creatures within 5 feet of the snowman have disadvantage on saving throws made to avoid being knocked prone.

Slide. The snowman can take the Dash action as a bonus action.

Snow Camouflage. The snowman has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in cold terrains.

False Appearance. While the snowman remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from any other non-animated snowmen.

Actions

Ice Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning and 1d4 cold damage.

Throw Snowball. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, range 20/40 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 (1d4 - 1) bludgeoning and 1d4 cold damage.

Loup du Noir

The Loup du Noir is a skinchanger Werebeast variant of the standard Werewolf, however its morphology is more akin to that of a dire wolf. Loup du noir are unique in that they willingly transform into wolves by wearing wolf pelts. The loup du noir's condition, like conventional lycanthropy, is a curse that may be passed down the generations through bite or birth, however this lycanthrope's metamorphosis is self-inflicted. The wolf's addictive nature causes loup du noir to constantly return to their pelts and transform.

Loup du Noir

Medium humanoid (shapechanger), chaotic evil

Armor Class 11 in humanoid form, 13 (natural armor) in dire wolf or hybrid form

Hit Points 71 (11d8 + 22)

Speed 30 ft. (40 ft. in wolf form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +5

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +4

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered or blessed

Condition Immunities charmed, paralyzed

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common (can speak in dire wolf form)

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Shapechanger. The loup du noir can use its action to polymorph into a Large dire wolf, or back into its true form, which is humanoid. Its statistics may be the same (besides AC, speed, and attack options), or its statistics may change to an NPC's in its humanoid form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. The loup du noir reverts to its true form if it dies.

Keen Hearing and Smell. The loup du noir has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Magic Resistance. The loup du noir has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects. However, dousing it with holy water strips it of this trait until the start of its next turn.

Magic Wolfskin. Nonmagical weapons that are not silvered or blessed break after striking the loup du noir while it wears its magic wolfskin.

Vicious. The loup du noir deals an extra 9 (2d8) damage against a creature that is granting advantage on an attack roll.

Actions

Bite (Dire Wolf or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage and the target must succeed a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. On a natural 20, the loup du noir tears out the victim's throat, dealing 9 (2d8) bleeding damage to the target at the start of each of its turns until a creature takes an action to bind the wound or the target receives magical healing.

Longsword (humanoid form). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Appendix A. Creatures & NPCs

Addar

According to Vistani mythology, Addar gave birth to Ravenloft's shadow unicorns through a nightmare. Addar used to be an arrogant and boastful outlander unicorn. A nightmare used his arrogant disposition to entice him into the Land of Mists, promising him a woodland glade with dwellers who would love him in exchange for protection. They mated there and gave birth to the first shadow unicorns. Addar's final destiny, whether he is dead or the Darklord of his woodland dominion, is unclear.

Addar

Large monstrosity, lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 114 (12d10 + 48)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +7

Skills Animal Handling +6

Damage Resistances radiant

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Elvish, Infernal, Sylvan, telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. Addar's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). Addar can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *detect evil and good*, *druidcraft*, *pass without trace*
1/day each: *blight*, *darkness* (centered on itself as it moves), *entangle*

Magic Resistance. Addar has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Sure-Footed. Addar has advantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws made against effects that would knock it prone.

Aggressive. As a bonus action, Addar can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Shadesight: Addar can see in magical darkness

Magic Weapons. Addar's weapon attacks are magical.

Trampling Charge. If Addar moves at least 20 ft. straight toward a target and then hits it with a horn attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, Addar can make another hooves attack against it as a bonus action.

Actions

Multiattack. Addar makes two attacks: one with its hooves and one with its horn.

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Horn. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Teleport (1/Day). Addar magically teleports itself and up to three willing creatures it can see within 5 ft. of it, along with any equipment they are wearing or carrying, to a location Addar is familiar with, up to 1 mile away.

Corrupting Touch (3/Day). Addar touches another creature with its horn. That creature must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 20 (4d8 + 2) necrotic damage and be blinded for 1 minute. On a success, the creature takes half damage and is not blinded. A creature can roll at the end of their turn to end this effect on a success.

Legendary Actions

Addar can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Addar regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Hooves. Addar makes one attack with its hooves.

Heal Self (Costs 3 Actions). Addar magically regains 11 (2d8 + 2) hit points.

Fading Shield (Costs 2 Actions). Addar emits a magical field around an enemy it can see within 60 ft. of it. The target takes a -2 penalty to its AC until the end of Addar's next turn.



Appendix A. Creatures & NPCs



Infernal Warhorse

Unlike the Nightmare that is the corrupted version of a tortured unicorn, the Infernal warhorse was once a normal warhorse that was dragged to the hells and was infused with the essence of evil. It serves as a mount to any evildoer that knows how to summon one.

Infernal Warhorse

Large beast, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (half plate)

Hit Points 51 (6d10 + 18)

Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	6 (-2)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Con +5, Int +0

Skills Perception +3, Survival +3

Damage Resistances cold, fire

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Trampling Charge. If the horse moves at least 20 ft. straight toward a creature and then hits it with a hooves attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the horse can make another attack with its hooves against it as a bonus action.

Thickened Skin. When a nonmagical attack hits the fiendish warhorse, the damage is reduced by 5.

Evasion. If the warhorse is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the warhorse instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Keen Hearing and Smell. The warhorse has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Empathic Link. The warhorse knows when Elena is in need of its help and knows the general location of her at all times as long as they are on the same plane.

Blood Frenzy. The warhorse has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

Military Saddle. A military saddle braces the rider, helping them to keep their seat on an active mount in battle. It gives them advantage on any check that they make to remain mounted.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) slashing damage.

Fiery Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning + 2d6 fire damage.

Megalodon

A typical megalodon measures between 40 and 60 feet long, weighs between 10 and 50 tons and is characterized by its streamlined body and rear-facing teeth. They attack anything that enters their territory, regardless of its size, sentience, or potential deadline.

Megalodon

Gargantuan beast, unaligned

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 170 (11d20 + 55)

Speed 0 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	4 (-3)	11 (+0)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Str +10, Con +9

Skills Perception +4

Damage Resistance cold

Condition Immunities frightened

Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages —

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Blood Frenzy. The megalodon has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

Water Breather. The megalodon can breathe only underwater.

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the megalodon can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Siege Monster. The megalodon deals double damage to objects and structures.

Actions

Multiattack. The megalodon makes a swallow attack, or one with its bite and one with its tail. It can't make both attacks against the same target.

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Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature it is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the megalodon can't bite another target. The megalodon rolls 2D10 extra damage if the target is an object or construct composed of wood.

Tail. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 16 (3d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Swallow. The megalodon makes one bite attack against a Large or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is also swallowed, and the grapple ends. While swallowed, the target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the megalodon, and it takes 10 (3d6) acid damage at the start of each of the megalodon's turns. A megalodon can have only one creature swallowed at a time. If the megalodon takes 25 damage or more on a single turn from the swallowed creature, the megalodon must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate the creature, which falls prone in a space within 10 feet of the megalodon. If the megalodon dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse by using 15 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Legendary Actions

The megalodon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The megalodon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Dart. The megalodon moves up to its full swim speed.

Swoosh. The megalodon swishes its tail. Each creature in the water within 15 feet of the megalodon must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be pushed up to 20 feet away from the megalodon, landing prone. If this movement pushes the creature into a hard surface or out of the water, the creature takes 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage.

Chomp (Costs 2 Actions). The megalodon makes one bite attack or uses its Swallow.



Wereshark

For the wereshark, the whole world is prey. In humanoid form, weresharks are heavily muscled and look almost uncomfortable on land shambling more than a walk, they constantly scan the horizon like they are searching for something to sink their teeth into. Endless Feast. Consummate hunters, weresharks will gladly stalk each other just as much as they hunt other humanoids. They are loners by nature, coming together only to mate. The males leave once mating is finished and take no responsibility for any children. The mother will have the children at sea and leave them on their own after a few days. Ancestral Weapons. Once a wereshark reaches maturity at about 15 years of age, they will be driven to create an elaborate greatclub. The club will be elaborately carved and the wereshark will rip out its own teeth to embed in the wood. Not even weresharks know why they are driven to create these clubs, but they do.

Wereshark

Medium, human (humanoid, shapechanger), chaotic evil

Armor Class 10 in human form, 11 (natural armor) in shark or hybrid form

Hit Points 113 (15d8 + 45)

Speed 30 ft. (swim 50 ft. in shark or hybrid form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Perception +3

Damage Immunities cold, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing weapons not made with silvered weapons.

Senses blindsight 30 ft. (60 ft in water), passive Perception 13

Languages Common (can't speak in shark form)

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Shapechanger. The wereshark can use its action to polymorph into a shark-humanoid hybrid form or into a giant shark, or back into its true form, which is humanoid. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. The wereshark reverts to its true form if it dies.

Frenzy. Once the wereshark takes 50 or more damage, it flies into a frothing frenzy. The damage from its bite attack gains plus 2d8 slashing, and it can use the feeding frenzy reaction.

Sensory Organs. The wereshark can smell the blood of a creature or hear its heartbeat from up to 330ft away. This ability only functions if the creature is submerged in the same body of water as the wereshark. The wereshark has advantage on any Wisdom (Perception) or Wisdom (Survival) check it makes to track the creature.

Water Breathing. The wereshark can breathe underwater.

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Actions

Multiattack. The wereshark makes two attacks.

Bite (Shark or Hybrid Form Only). Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 17 (3d8 + 4) slashing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with wereshark lycanthropy.

Tooth Studded Greatclub (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 7(2d6) slashing damage. If the wereshark rolls a critical hit on the attack roll the tooth studded greatclub inflicts triple damage

Reactions

Feeding Frenzy. The wereshark makes a bite attack. The wereshark may only use this reaction when its frenzy special trait is active..



Cougher Zombie

A person that dies in a heavily contaminated area such as Nosos may be reanimated by the toxins and poisonous wastes seeping into its dead carcass, resulting in a zombie that emits poisonous clouds and coughs toxic gases.

Cougher Zombie

Medium undead (humanoid), neutral evil

Armor Class 9 (padded armor)

Hit Points 26 (4d8 + 8)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	7 (-2)	15 (+2)	4 (-3)	7 (-2)	4 (-3)

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages understands all languages it spoke in life but can't speak

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5+the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

Cough Cloud. The cougher zombie's continuous coughing, forms a cloud of coal dust around it that enters the lungs of anyone unfortunate to inhale it. All non-undead creatures within 5ft of the Cougher must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be incapacitated until it spends 1d3 rounds outside of the cougher's cloud and can breath clean air.

Actions

Slam. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Immense Cough (Recharge 6). The cougher exhales a poisonous cloud in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Creatures that do not succeed, are incapacitated for 1d3 rounds. A wet cloth covering the nose and mouth grants advantage on the saving throw.



Marikith

Hulking, hive-minded humanoids. Their bodies are covered in rubbery, glistening black hide. Their bodies have no rigid structure beyond their chitinous fangs and talons. They maintain their shape with tightly inflated interlocking bladders filled with fluids.

Marikith

Medium aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 38 (7d8 + 7)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)

Skills Stealth +4

Damage Resistances bludgeoning

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common (see voice mimicry), Hive mind telepathy

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Ambusher. The marikith has advantage on attack rolls against any creature it has surprised.

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Compression. The marikith can squeeze through spaces as narrow as 1 foot wide without squeezing. In addition, the marikith has advantage on ability checks and saving throws to escape a grapple.

Hive Mind. The marikith have a hive mind. The Hive Queen controls all her 'workers' within five miles.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the marikith has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

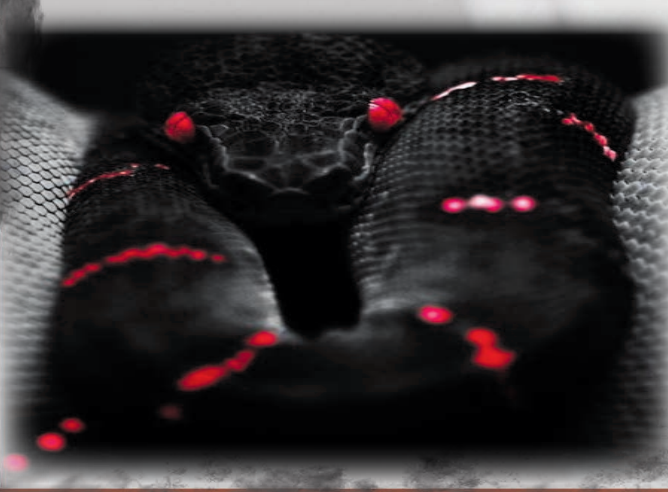
Voice Mimicry. The marikith has no voice or words of its own; rather it mimics speech that it has heard. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check.

Actions

Multiattack. The marikith makes two attacks: one with its claws and one with its bite.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) slashing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.



Vimper Snake

The vimper snake is formed either when a vampire feeds upon a viper or when necrotic energies enter the carcass of a dead viper. These animate the snake and transform it into a vimper. When the vimper is first formed, it has to find or create an underground nest which will become its main nest and resting place. The vimper gains some abilities similar to the ones of a vampire. When it wishes to use its spider-walk ability, its ribs pierce through its skin. These act as small hooks allowing travel on any wall or ceiling, until they are no longer needed, at which time, they withdraw and the pierced skin regenerates. Other living snakes perceive a vimper as their leader and usually swarm around its nest and even help it in combat. Its bite still delivers potent poison but also deals necrotic damage which heals the vimper like a vampire's bite. It is common for creatures slain by the vimper's vicious death bite to reanimate as zombies.

Vimper Snake

Medium undead (shapechanger), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 39 (6d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft., burrow 15 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Cha +5

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +5

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Condition Immunities poisoned, prone

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages —

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Misty Escape. When it drops to 0 hit points outside its resting place, the vimper transforms into a cloud of mist (as in the Shapechanger trait) instead of falling unconscious, provided that it isn't in sunlight or running water. If it can't transform, it is destroyed. While it has 0 hit points in mist form, it can't revert to its snake form, and it must reach its resting place within 2 hours or be destroyed. Once in its resting place, it reverts to its snake vimper form. It is then paralyzed until it regains at least 1 hit point. After spending 1 hour in its resting place with 0 hit points, it regains 1 hit point.

Regeneration. The vimper regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If the vimper takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of the it's next turn.

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Spider Climb. The vimper can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Vampire Weaknesses. The vimper has the following flaws:

Forbiddance. The vimper can't enter a residence without being carried in by one of the occupants.

Harmed by Running Water. The vimper takes 10 acid damage if it ends its turn in running water.

Behead. If the vimper is beheaded while it is incapacitated in its resting place, it is slain.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The vimper takes 20 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the vimper can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Restrainer. The vimper has advantage on attack rolls against any creature restrained by it.

Actions

Venomous Death Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 piercing plus 8 (2d6) necrotic and 5 (2d4) poison damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the vimper regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid or beast slain in this way, rises the following night as a zombie.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the vimper can't constrict another target.

Charm. The vimper targets one creature it can see within 30 ft. of it. If the target can see the vimper, the target must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed by the vimper. The charmed target regards the vimper as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under the vimper's control, it takes the vimper's requests or actions in the most favorable way it can, and it is a willing target for the vimper's bite attack. Each time the vimper or its allies do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 12 hours or until the vimper is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect.

Children of Slither (1/Day). The vimper magically calls 2d4 poisonous snakes. The called snakes arrive in 1d4 rounds, acting as allies of the vimper. The beasts remain for 1 hour, until the vimper dies, or until it dismisses them as a bonus action.

Infernal Soldier Template:

Infernal Soldiers are humanoid creatures under the command of a warlord such as Malbus of Al-Kathos. Vaguely resembling the form of the base creature, it was corrupted or enchanted (opinions vary) by a Greater Devil (such as Bel) to further their agenda and machinations. Plenty of the transformed creatures were once brave warriors who thought that by accepting this "gift" they would surpass their fighting capabilities. Woe to those who accepted this curse for they abandoned their ability to think for themselves. Their free will forever gone, they now stand in service. Other unlucky creatures who faced such a warlord and perished, had their bodies unwillingly trapped under infernal ties, their souls forever ablaze in their wreathing in flames, material prison. Those transformed have hot black iron armor fused to their skin forever. Their aura is set ablaze to engulf their charred flesh. Their mind is permanently hazed by the embers of hatred. The transformation takes one minute to be completed as flesh is set ablaze and black iron begins to form, agonizing pain of the infernal energies entering the body, incapacitates but stabilises (if it was dying) the creature. By the end of the one minute transformation, the infernal soldier wakes up ready to take arms and follow orders. If Holy Water is sprinkled on the body before the end of the transformation, it reverts and stops. The creature remains unconscious and incapacitated until someone takes an action to awaken it or until a minute passes.

Prerequisite

Any humanoid creature

Statistics

Type. The creature's type is changed to fiend.

Damage Vulnerabilities. The creature becomes vulnerable to acid and cold damage. If base CR is 5 or higher, the creature is no longer vulnerable to cold damage.

Damage Immunities. The creature becomes immune to fire and poison damage.

Condition Immunities. The creature becomes immune to the charmed, exhaustion and poisoned conditions.

Senses. As base creature, plus 60 ft. darkvision, unless the base creature already has equal or better darkvision.

Languages. The creature understands Abyssal, Infernal and its master's commands but cannot speak.

Alignment The creature's alignment is changed to Neutral Evil.

Hit Points. The creature's Hit Points are increased by 2d10.

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Ability Scores. The creature's Intelligence and Wisdom are reduced to 8 unless already lower and their Strength is increased by 4.

Armor Class. The creature has natural armor of 15.

Traits

All Traits. As the base creature.

Fiendish Flight. Once per day the infernal soldier can use its action to unleash the hellish energy within itself, causing its eyes to drip liquid fire as two fiery ghostly wings sprout from its back granting it a 30 ft flight speed. The transformation lasts for 1 minute or until it ends as a bonus action.

Fiery Weapons. The creature's weapon attacks are magical. When the creature hits with any weapon, the weapon deals an extra amount of fire damage based on its CR. 1d4 at CR 1/8-1/2, 1d6 at CR 1-3, 2d6 at CR 4-6, 4d6 at CR 7-9, 4d8 at CR 10-14, 5d8 at CR 15-20, 6d8 at CR 21+.

Fiery Aura: All enemy creatures within 5ft of the Infernal Soldier take 1d8 fire damage per turn they remain within range.

Innate Spellcasting (Only if the base creature had spellcasting capabilities). The creature can cast the following spells using its existing spellcasting ability, it forgets all other spells it knew in its former life. The creature requires no material components to cast the following spells:

At will (any CR): *control flames, create bonfire, fire bolt, green-flame blade, produce flame.*

1/day each (CR 6 and above): *hellish rebuke, burning hands, Aganazzar's scorcher, continual flame, flame blade, flaming sphere, scorching ray.*

Vile Blessing. The creature has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Obedient. The creature has no free will and it will never disobey its master. It will act on its best capabilities to defend its master or itself. It always follows commands and if there are no commands to be followed, it remains idle or wondering about, immediately attacking any living creature it sees.

Trapped in a Fiery Cage. The transformed creature is considered dead for all purposes. Its soul, if it had one, is trapped within its flaming body. It cannot be raised as long as its infernal body stands.

Fiery Demise. If the creature dies, its body disintegrates as its soul is released, in a flash of fire and puff of smoke, leaving behind only the equipment it was carrying or wearing.

CR Calculation

When applying this template, increase the CR of the transformed monster by 2 higher than the one it initially had.

Example Creature:

Infernal Soldier (Guard)

Medium fiend (any humanoid race), neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor, shield)

Hit Points 24 (2d8 +2d10 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +1

Damage Vulnerabilities acid, cold

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Understands abyssal, infernal and its master's commands but cannot speak.

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Fiery Aura. All enemy creatures within 5ft of the Guard take 1d8 fire damage per turn they remain within range.

Vile Blessing. The Guard has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Obedient. The Guard has no free will and it will never disobey its master. It will act on its best capabilities to defend its master or itself. It always follows commands and if there are no commands to be followed, it remains idle or wondering about, immediately attacking any living creature it sees.

Trapped in a Fiery Cage. The Guard is considered dead for all purposes. Its soul, if it had one, is trapped within its flaming body. It cannot be raised as long as its infernal body stands.

Fiery Demise. If the Guard dies, its body disintegrates as its soul is released, in a flash of fire and puff of smoke, leaving behind only the equipment it was carrying or wearing.

Fiendish Flight (1/Day). Once per day the Infernal Soldier can use its action to unleash the hellish energy within itself, causing its eyes to drip liquid fire as two fiery ghostly wings sprout from its back granting it a 30 ft. flight speed. The transformation lasts for 1 minute or until it ends as a bonus action.

Actions

Fiery Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing and 1d4 fire damage, or 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing and 1d4 fire damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack

Appendix A. Creatures & NPCs



Brain Golem

A brain golem is an eight-foot-tall humanoid-shaped creature composed solely of brain tissue and bearing the head of an elder brain sprout. Only an elder brain and its illithid community benefit from these innovations. These golems don't interact in any manner and only respond to mind flayers' telepathic directions. They are unable to fight other mind flayers.

Brain Golem

Large construct, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 152 (16d10 + 64)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	9 (-1)	18 (+4)	6 (-2)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)

Saving Throws Str +9, Int +2, Wis +4

Skills Arcana +2, Athletics +9

Damage Immunities poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from non-adamantine weapons.

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages understands Deep Speech but cannot speak, telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Immutable Form. The brain golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. The brain golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The brain golem's weapon attacks are magical.

Psychic Absorption. Whenever the brain golem is subjected to psychic damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the psychic damage dealt.

Shielded Mind. The brain golem is immune to scrying and to any effect that would sense its emotions, read its thoughts, or detect its location.

Berserk. Whenever the brain golem starts its turn with 70 hit points or fewer, roll a d6. On a 6, the brain golem goes berserk. On each of its turns while berserk, the brain golem attacks the nearest creature it can see. If no creature is near enough to move to and attack, the brain golem attacks an object, with preference for an object smaller than itself. Once the brain golem goes berserk, it continues to do so until it is destroyed or regains all its hit points.

Death Burst. When the brain golem dies, it explodes in a burst of gray matter. Each creature within 10 ft. of it must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) Psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Innate Spellcasting. The brain golem's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 10, +2 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect thoughts*, *telepathic bond*

3/Day each: *charm person*, *major image*

1/Day each: *confusion*, *dominate person*, *modify memory*

Actions

Slam. Melee Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 18 (3d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Mind Blast (Recharge 5-6). The brain golem magically emits psychic energy in a 60 foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or take 22 (4d8+4) psychic damage and be stunned for one minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.



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Coraltan

Coraltans may be mistaken for humans from a distance, but up close that mistake is impossible to make. A coraltan's skin is pale and dry like old parchment, and rips open as it moves. Within a few seconds the rends and tears that movement makes in its flesh heals. The hands of a coraltan are overlarge, yet what is more unnerving are the fanged mouths in their palms, always hissing and whispering blasphemous secrets.

Soul Trauma. Coraltan are a vile type of undead that is created when the soul of a good cleric is ripped screaming from their mortal shell. Sometimes the necrotic energy remaining from the soul draining attack and the residual trauma of the terrified soul will animate the remains of the corpse. Coraltan are rare, but the sacrifice of a cleric to a god that is an enemy of their own deity seems to create them with more frequency.

Empty Inside. The coraltan always feels a deep gnawing emptiness inside of them. They constantly try to fill the sucking void by draining the life force. They are subservient to powerful figures that they know they have no chance of defeating.. Even then the coraltan will wait and watch. Any time its erstwhile master lets their guard down, the coraltan will strike.

Undead Nature. A coraltan doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Coraltan

Medium undead, evil (any)

Armor Class 19 (natural armor, shield)

Hit Points 262 (35d8 + 105)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	19 (+4)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +9, Cha +8

Skills Perception +9, Persuasion +8

Damage Resistances necrotic, radiant

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 19

Languages Common, plus any it knew in life

Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Life Draining Aura. Any creature that casts a spell that heals hit point damage within 30 feet of a coraltan must make a

DC 17 Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails the healing spell is countered and the coraltan heals ten hit points to itself.

Dark Miracles. The coraltan may sacrifice hit points to cast a cleric spell of 6th level or less. The coraltan must inflict 1d12 force damage on itself per level of the spell slot used to cast the spell. The coraltan's spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks).

Turn Immunity. The coraltan is immune to effects that turn undead.

Magic Resistance. The coraltan has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The coraltan makes three soul sear or three cudgel attacks

Cudgel. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 18 (4d8) necrotic damage. The coraltan heals half the necrotic damage it inflicts with this attack.

Soul Sear. Ranged Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. Hit: 26 (4d10 + 4) necrotic damage. The coraltan heals half the damage inflicted by this attack. A creature that is reduced to 0 hit points by this attack is slain.

Yawning Void (recharge 5-6). The mouths in the coraltan's hands and the tears in its parchment-like skin stretch and moan. Every creature within 50 feet of the coraltan must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw. They take 55 (10d10) necrotic damage on a failed save, and half as much on a successful one. Creatures reduced to 0 hit points by this attack are slain.

Reactions

Soul Drinker. When a creature dies within 100 feet of the coraltan, it may use its reaction to drink in the creature's soul. The soul is visibly sucked into the coraltan through the monster's eyes, nose, and mouth. The coraltan heals by 1d6 hit points per hit die of the creature killed. The slain creature cannot be raised until the coraltan itself has been slain.



Appendix A. Creatures & NPCs

Alchemical Vampire

Alchemical vampires are the undead corpses of humanoids reanimated by Ilsabet Obour's twisted alchemy. They are not true vampires and lack many of a true vampire's weaknesses, but do not have their magical abilities or raw charisma either.

Wolves in Sheep's Clothing. Alchemical vampires appear as they did in life, but their skin is pale and their teeth become longer and sharper. Where a true vampire might have only a few sharp fangs, an alchemical vampire will have a mouth full of serrated fangs. The eyes of an alchemical vampire are bottomless wells of despair.

Perfect Servants. Alchemical vampires created by Ilsabet's alchemy are completely loyal to the darklord. They will slaughter friends and family at her command. The alchemical vampire will show no hesitation, even as they weep with despair at what they must do.

Alchemical Vampire

Medium undead (construct), the alignment it had in life

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 97 (13d8 + 39)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Wis +3

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances acid, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages The languages it knew in life

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Regeneration. The vampire regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If the vampire takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of the vampire's next turn.

Spider Climb. The vampire can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Acidic. A creature that touches the vampire or hits it with a melee attack takes 5 acid damage. A creature grappled by the vampire takes 5 acid damage at the beginning of its turn.

Amorphous. The vampire can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Weaknesses.

Loyal. The Vampire must always obey the commands of its creators, it can never rebel against the person that created it and it will always follow orders to the best of its capabilities even if it feels wrong for it to do so.

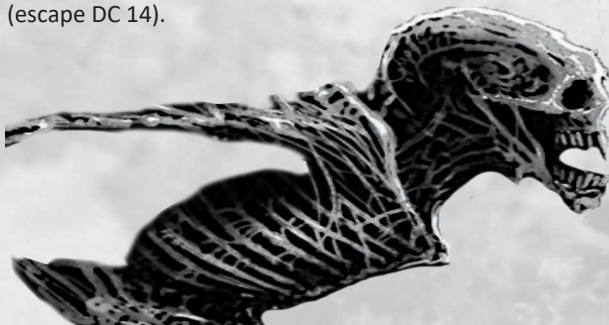
Harmed by Running Water. The vampire takes 20 water damage if it ends its turn in running water.

Actions

Multiattack. The vampire makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

Toxic Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., a creature that is grappled by the vampire, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) acid damage.

Acidic Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) slashing + 5 acid damage. Instead of dealing damage, the vampire can grapple the target (escape DC 14).



Venomweb Spider

Venomweb spiders are monstrous, even for spiders. They have bloated black bodies, and fangs that drip thick green drops of venom. Venomwebs are a new creation of alchemy, but are rapidly spreading throughout Kislova.

Humble origins. The first venomweb was created from a simple garden spider. The spider was kept in a bowl and regularly fed ants and other small insects. Slowly over a dozen years, Jorani, and later Ilsabet, began to introduce alchemical concoctions and poisons to its diet that bloated the spider to a monstrous size.

Endless Hunger. Venomweb spiders are eternally hungry, but lazy. The spiders sense their webs can kill large creatures with enough exposure, so the venomweb will weave giant webs and wait for prey to blunder into them. If a large enough creature is slain (a deer or a human), several venomwebs will feed on the carcass.

Appendix A. Creatures & NPCs

Venomweb Spider

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 7 (3d4)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	7 (-2)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws Dex +5

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +5

Damage Immunities acid, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses blindsight 20 ft., darkvision 20 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spider Climb. The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, the spider knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Alchemical Venom. The spider's venom is a morass of natural venom and constantly mutating reagents. The venomweb spider ignores resistance to poison damage and treats immunity as resistance.

Venomous Webs. The webs of a venomweb spider are nearly as toxic as its bite. A creature that comes into contact with a venomweb spider's web must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) poison damage on a failed save, and half as much on a successful one. Creatures wearing medium or heavy armor make this save with advantage.

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the spider can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 18 (4d8) poison damage.

Web Sling (Recharge 5—6). The spider shoots a line of venomous webbing at a creature it can see within 20ft. The target takes 4d8 poison damage or half on a successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw.



Carrionette

Giuseppe created Carrionettes, which are animated puppets made at Maligno's request. They can take possession of a live host by piercing them with a specially prepared needle. Carrionettes are a kind of monster that may be found in Odiare.

Carrionette

Tiny construct, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 21 (6d4 + 6)

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Immutable Form. The carrionette is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Actions

Razor. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 slashing damage.

Silver Needle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage, and the creature must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is restrained. It must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends. On a failure, the creature is paralysed for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If the creature is already restrained, it becomes paralysed right away. If the creature is already paralysed, it is not permitted a saving throw. Instead, if the creature is a humanoid, its life essence is transferred into the carrionette and vice versa. Both creatures gain control over the respective other body. They retain their Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores. A carrionette that takes over a body does not gain the ability to cast spells or any other magical abilities. The carrionette gains control over its new body at the beginning of its next turn. The humanoid gains control after 1 minute. Until then, both beings are paralysed. A creature can reverse the body swap by piercing its former body with a silver needle. Destroying the carrionette after a body swap destroys both bodies. Destroying only the humanoid's body leaves the Carrionette's body intact.



Appendix A. Creatures & NPCs

The Monster under the Bed

These anomalies resemble the things that children are most afraid of. They only travel at night or on the Ethereal Plane, slipping into bedrooms after dusk and lurking under the bed or inside closets. The monster under the bed is extremely powerful in comparison to a child. It is much stronger and more agile than even some adults, and its mind, while not fully mature, is sharper than the underdeveloped minds of children. The sheer appearance of the creature is enough to make individuals of all ages nervous. They mostly originate from the Nightmare Lands and may travel to any realm inside Ravenloft or even outside of it via the ethereal borders. The Monster under the bed

The Monster Under the Bed

Medium aberration (shapechanger), chaotic evil

Armor Class 11 (natural armor)

Hit Points 38 (7d8 + 7)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)

Skills Insight +5, Intimidation +6, Sleight of Hand +2, Stealth +4

Condition Immunities prone

Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 10 ft., passive Perception 13

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Domain Teleportation. The monster under the bed can enter the Ethereal Plane by going under the bed or entering wardrobes. In addition, it can enter a wardrobe and exit through under a bed or vice versa as if it teleported. With an action, the monster exits the ethereal to return to the Nightmare Lands. The monster under the bed can't enter antimagic fields, and it immediately disappears into thin air being teleported to a random location on the nightmare lands, if one is created around it.

Responsiveness. The monster under the bed can apply its Wisdom modifier instead of its Dexterity modifier to initiative checks.

Stray Appendage. The monster under the bed has advantage to rolls when it comes to grabbing creatures that have a leg or an arm hanging from their bed. It cannot attack a creature fully covered in a blanket or similar item, nor can it physically remove the blanket.

Minor Invisibility. The monster under the bed appears invisible to an adult creature while it remains motionless.

Fearful of the Stuffed Guardian. If the creature that the monster under the bed tries to abduct has a stuffed bear or other toys that they believe to be guarding them against night terrors

and monsters, then the monster under the bed has disadvantage on all rolls against the creature it tries to abduct.

Folding Body. The monster under the bed can move and occupy a space as narrow as 1ft without squeezing.

Light Banishment. If the monster under the bed is illuminated by bright light or begins its turn in bright light it must make a DC15 Charisma saving throw. If the bright light is sunlight, it automatically fails this save. On a failed save, the monster under the bed is banished to the Nightmare Lands and cannot attempt to abduct any creature for 24 hours.

Formless Aberration. The monster under the bed has no true form. Its appearance is ever-shifting to whatever its victim fears the most. A child seeing it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom Saving throw or become frightened by it. The frightened condition remains until an adult comes into the room. If the child has a toy guardian, it rolls with advantage. The monster can appear as one size larger than its normal size. Adults who see the monster under the bed gaze upon its true appearance, an amorphous blob of ever-shifting bubbling dark liquid..

Actions

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage.

Abduction. If the monster under the bed is within 10 feet of a creature and hidden from it under its bed or in a wardrobe, it can use this action to stretch an arm or appendage to grab the creature. The monster under the bed and the creature make a contested grapple check. If the monster rolls higher, the creature is grappled by it. The monster under the bed must concentrate on this effect as if concentrating on a spell and being seen or heard by another creature will cause this concentration to break. At the beginning of its next turn, it can decide to break concentration or to drag the victim 5ft towards the wardrobe or bed. If the victim reaches the wardrobe or is taken under the bed, they are abducted. The abducted creature is teleported to a random location within the Nightmare Lands and are transformed into a monster under the bed, controlled by the DM, within 24 hours from the moment of its abduction. The monster under the bed cannot abduct adults.



Appendix A. Creatures & NPCs

Plague Zombie

This rotting corpse shambles along, arms reaching towards its next victim. The stench of rot clings to it, as it opens its mouth wide and lets out a hollow moan. Plague zombies have been infected with a terrible disease. They spread their taint across the land as they tear through the populace, with more and more of them appearing at every turn.

Years of Infection. Plague zombies usually arise many years after their last incursion of them, with the scars and memories of the last incident long gone. The disease that they carry can lay dormant for years and decades in the body of a living creature, but once they die, if they have not been treated, they're bound to rise again and infect others with the same deadly disease.

Shambling Horde. Plague zombies are an even bigger problem than normal zombies, as they do not require any dark magic to appear, simple carelessness is often enough, if there's been a prior outbreak. However, necromancers can create them as well, in effect creating an ever-replicating army. (This requires animate dead, which must be cast at least at 4th level—it halves the number of zombies raised).

Plague Zombie

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 8 (natural armor)

Hit Points 37 (5d8 + 15)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	6 (-2)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Wis +0

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Undead Fortitude: If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

Actions

Infected Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4+1) piercing damage. If the target is a living creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution check or be infected with zombie plague. This has no effect immediately, but if the creature dies without being cured (requiring *lay on hands*, *lesser restoration*, or similar magic), it rises as a plague zombie at midnight the following day.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

Souragnien Zombie

This shambling corpse wears a soiled and tattered, but once well-tailored, uniform. Red eyes gleam in its rotting face, while a vile stench assaults the nostrils. Souragnien zombies are the creation of Anton Misroi himself, creatures that allow him a greater degree of freedom than that he could access before. He considers them to be his eyes and ears in the domain, spies that never tire, and never lie.

Silent Intelligence. Souragnien zombies are intelligent on their own, but utterly subservient to their master's will, even if they are not being controlled directly. While such a master can cause their voice to issue from the zombie, they cannot when not controlled, and are limited to a rasping, hollow gurgle.

In Death They Still Serve. Souragnien zombies are created from soldiers and nobles who sacrifice themselves for the honor of their country. Their sense of duty and their ties to the land haunt them now, as they still do their master's bidding.

Souragnien Zombie

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 112 (15d8+45)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	9 (-1)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Wis +1

Damage Immunities poison

Damage Resistances necrotic

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

Voice of the Master. If the zombie is under the direct control of a master (such as through *control undead* or a similar effect), the controller of the zombie can, as a bonus action, see and speak through the eyes and mouth of the zombie. For as long as you concentrate, you can see and hear what it hears, and you can cast spells through the zombie, as if you were at the location, though you cannot cast spells higher than 3rd level.

Actions

Multiattack. The souragnien zombie makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (4d6+2) bludgeoning damage.

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Gloom (Steed of Durven Graef)

Large beast (shadow), unaligned

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 85 (9d10 + 36)

Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	4 (-3)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +6, Wis +5

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Condition Immunities charmed

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Trampling Charge. If Gloom moves at least 20 ft. straight toward a creature and then hits it with a hooves attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, Gloom can make another attack with its hooves against it as a bonus action.

Shadow's Stealth. Gloom grants its rider concealment making them lightly obscured.

Gloaming Gallop. Gloom can enter the space of other creatures while it moves. When it does so, all creatures that shared their space with Gloom take 1d8+5 necrotic damage and must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be blinded until the end of their next turn.

Sure-Footed. Gloom has advantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws made against effects that would knock it prone.

Steadfast. Gloom can't be frightened while it can see an allied creature within 30 feet of it.

Blood Frenzy. Gloom has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

Shadow Camouflage. Gloom has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in low light terrain.

Fear Aura. Any creature hostile to Gloom that starts its turn within 15 feet of Gloom must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, unless Gloom is incapacitated. On a failed save, the creature is frightened until the start of its next turn. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to Gloom's Fear Aura for the next 24 hours.

Actions

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage

Death Giant

Death giants are corrupted giants that rarely leave the Shadowfell. With skin tones ranging from dark onyx to deep purple, most of them are bald. The few that have hair shave their platinum white locks. Generations in the Shadowfell have changed the death giants, giving them a gaunt and haggard appearance. Truly, though, they are considerably stronger than their slender frames would imply, and have obtained deathly magic through their near constant exposure to the terrible energies of the Shadowfell...

Soul Hunters. Death giants have the ability to steal the souls of surrounding mortals and utilize them to power devastating fell magics. As a result, most death giants surround themselves with weak minions that they can easily destroy. A creature whose soul has been stolen is imprisoned in an inky black abyss with the other souls the giant has gathered, either until it is returned to life or the giant expends the soul, freeing it. When a death giant dies, any imprisoned souls it has kept are released in a wave of spectral energy. A death giant can keep these souls indefinitely. Souls of special interest to the giant, such as those of despised enemies, are reserved for a special fate: their souls are imprisoned in a sphere of black crystal. This 'soul stone' is large enough to fit comfortably in a giant's palm. The giant may retain this stone for as long as it needs to, knowing that only the most powerful magic will be able to liberate its prisoner. Most death giant fortresses have at least one room filled with soul stones and guarded by tremendous magics.



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Death Giant

Huge giant, neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (splint)

Hit Points 150 (12d12 + 72)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	10 (+0)	23 (+6)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +12, Con +10, Wis +6

Skills Arcana +6, Athletics +12, Perception +6

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Giant, Primordial

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Collect Soul. As a bonus action, the giant can target one creature it can see within 5 feet of it that has 0 hit points and is still alive. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw against this magic or die. If the target dies, the giant collects its soul (see Release Soul below). If a creature whose soul is collected by the giant is restored to life, the giant loses its soul. The giant can only collect seven souls at one time.

Death's Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the giant's darkvision.

Innate Spellcasting. The giant's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15). The giant can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *darkness*, *detect magic*, *speak with dead* (the giant doesn't need a corpse to speak with a creature whose soul it has collected or trapped in a soul stone)

3/day each: *animate dead*, *blight*

Actions

Multiattack. The giant makes two attacks.

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 27 (3d12 + 8) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage..

Death Shard. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d10) necrotic damage.

Release Soul. If the giant has collected at least one soul, it can expend one soul to gain one of the following benefits.

Guide. The giant gains advantage on each attack roll it makes before the end of its next turn.

Harm. The giant makes one Death Shard attack. If the

attack hits, it deals an additional 11 (2d10) necrotic damage and if the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed until the end of its next turn.

Trap. The giant creates a soul stone. A creature whose soul is trapped in a soul stone can't be restored to life by any means short of a *wish* spell, whereupon the soul stone is destroyed. While the giant is holding a soul stone, it can use its Consume Soul without expending one of its collected souls. The soul stone is then destroyed. The giant can't create more than one soul stone at a time.

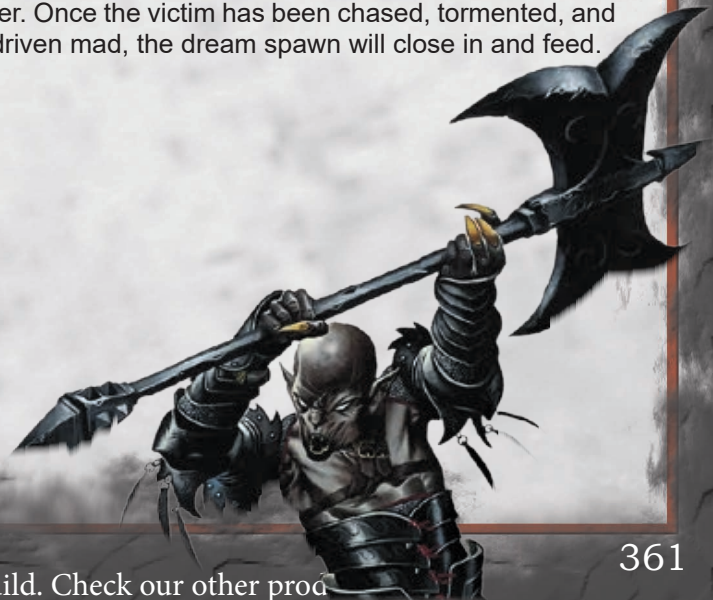
Heal. The giant regains 22 (4d10) hit points.

Dream Spawn

Dream spawn are the servants of the Nightmare Court. They appear to be humanoids wrapped in shadows, with constantly shifting features. One feature always remains the same, and each dream spawn can be recognized by this feature, whether its cracked teeth or bloodshot eyes. Dream spawn hands possess an extra knuckle, making them dextrous and agile. Each finger is tipped with long retractable claws. When in combat the dream spawn's arms lengthen with popping sounds, forming extra joints and piling on the ground like grotesque tentacles.

Servants of the Court. Every humanoid in the Nightmare Lands is either a trapped dreamer or a dream spawn. The dream spawn serve the Nightmare Court, feeding their overlords every time they slay a helpless dreamer. The dream spawn adapts to the dreamscapes it inhabits, becoming jovial shopkeepers, innocent victims and hollow eyed children.

Connoisseurs of Fear. Dream spawn revel in fear. They can feel the presence of fear miles away and the sensation draws them in like a frenzy of sharks. They feed on terror and will go to any lengths to frighten someone. The more innocent the victim, all the better. Once the victim has been chased, tormented, and driven mad, the dream spawn will close in and feed.



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Dream Spawn

Medium fiend, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 208 (32d8 + 64)

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR 15 (+2) **DEX** 18 (+4) **CON** 14 (+2) **INT** 16 (+3) **WIS** 15 (+2) **CHA** 20 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Cha +8

Skills Deception +8, Intimidation +8, Perception +5

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities psychic

Condition Immunities frightened

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Ethereal. Dream spawn are trapped in the Border Ethereal. They can see into both the material and ethereal planes, but can only affect creatures on the ethereal plane. Dream spawn may move through other creatures and objects as if they were solid terrain. The dream spawn takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object. Objects that the dream spawn moves through are covered in a fine layer of frost. Creatures that the dream spawn moves through are filled with nameless dread and nightmares they thought long forgotten.

I'm Your God Now. The dream spawn comes within 5 feet of a sleeping creature, forcing the sleeper to make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails, the dream spawn slips into the creature's dreams. While inside the dream, the dream spawn can affect the creature normally. The dream spawn can alter its appearance at will within the dreamscape and often chooses the form of a creature with special significance to the dreamer. The dream spawn will have an identifying feature, such as bloodshot eyes or cracked teeth, no matter which form they take. Once inside the dream of a creature, the dream spawn can pull in other sleeping creatures within 20 feet of a dreamer. The dream spawn may chain the sleepers together, locking whole towns into one waking nightmare with itself in the center. The Dream spawn can also summon others of its own kind into the dreamscape, but are loathe to do so. The dream spawn may leave the dreamscape at will, but has a fanatical desire to feed on living creatures and will fight to the death. Dreamers cannot wake up while a dream spawn is in their dream, even if physically attacked.

Fueled by Fear. A dream spawn has advantage on attack rolls against creatures that are frightened. The dream spawn also heals itself for half the damage it inflicts on a frightened creature with its claw and Sanity Shattering Smile attacks.

You are all my Children. A creature reduced to 0 hit points by the dream spawn in its dream is instantly slain. Recharging the dream spawn's Sanity Shattering Smile attack, and gaining advantage on all attack rolls and saving throws until the end of its next turn.

Innate Spellcasting. The dream spawn's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15). The dream spawn can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *message, infestation, cause fear, disguise self, silent image, darkness*

3/day each: *phantasmal force, fear, dream*

Actions

Multiattack. The dream spawn makes two claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage. If the dream spawn strikes a creature that is frightened it inflicts plus 22 (4d10) psychic damage.

Sanity Shattering Smile (recharge 5-6). The dream spawn smiles and laughs as it takes the form of the brutally murdered corpses of its targets' loved ones. Creatures within 60 feet of the dream spawn must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw, taking 36 (8d8) psychic damage and becoming frightened of the dream spawn on a failed saving throw. The creature takes half damage and isn't frightened on a successful saving throw.

Reactions

Teleport. The dream spawn may use its reaction to teleport up to 60 feet, but it must appear within 5 feet of a frightened creature.



Appendix A. Creatures & NPCs

Mad Folk

It is unclear exactly when the mad folk first appeared on the railroading scene. With the end of wars, many discharged veterans returning home or others looking for work began hopping freight trains and eventually ended up in Mithras. Sadly for them, Lucius has found a way to exploit them. Filling their minds with empty promises and feeling of power, they were driven mad and will follow him to their death.

Mad Folk

Medium humanoid (any race), any chaotic alignment

Armor Class 11 (Improved Armor)

Hit Points 13 (3d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)	8 (-1)	9 (-1)

Skills Intimidation +1, Survival +1

Senses passive Perception 9

Languages Common

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Madness. These beggars, thieves or workers have been under the influence of Lucius for so long that they have gone mad. Roll 2d100 to determine one long term and one indefinite madness by checking the table on DMG pg. 258. During the beginning of combat, the mad folk must succeed on DC 10 Wisdom saving. On a failure, roll once on the Short Term madness table.

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the mad folk can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Dark Devotion. Mad folk have advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Reckless. At the start of its turn, the mad folk can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls it makes during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

Actions

Improvised Weapon. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning, slashing or piercing damage.

Variant: Rusty Revolver. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, range 40/100 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d8 - 1) piercing damage.

Reactions

Self Sacrifice. The mad folk use a reaction to jump in front of an attack aimed at Lucius, trying to protect him. Roll a percentile die; on a roll of 1-30, the mad folk fails and falls prone, on a roll of 31-60, the mad folk absorbs half of the total damage, on a roll of 61-100 the mad folk sacrifices itself, taking the total of the damage and is killed.

Zac-the-Box

Appearing as a children's toy consisting of a small box, after the crank on the side is turned, a figure unexpectedly pops out. This malevolent creation though, is not for children. The evil magic infused in this vile construct animates it to surprise attack any who are unlucky enough to near it.

Zac-the-Box

Small construct, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 39 (6d6 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +2

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, prone, unconscious

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

False Appearance. While Zac-the-Box remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary object.

Fear Surprise. If Zac-the-Box surprises a creature by revealing itself emerging from its box, all hostile creatures within 10 feet of it must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of the Zac-the-Box until the end of the target's next turn.

Maker's toys. Zac-the-Box always obeys its creator's commands.

Actions

Dart. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing + 2d6 poison damage.



Appendix B



Appendix B. Items

The Cursed Wolfskin

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This wolfskin cloak functions like a cloak of protection, though when the wearer is presented with an opportunity to act in a selfish or malevolent way, it subtly heightens their urge to do so.

Curse. If you learn the Rite of the Dark Wolf, you can attune to the wolfskin. Attuning to the wolfskin curses you. Thereafter, while wearing the wolfskin you can use an action to polymorph into a dire wolf, gaining the stats of a **loup du noir**. This is unaffected by the *remove curse* spell. You develop the urge to transform every night and indulge in murder. Resisting this urge requires a DC 10 Charisma saving throw, increasing the DC by 1 for each day that has passed since your last transformation. If you fail this saving throw, you can no longer resist the urge and transform to go on a killing spree lasting 1d12 hours. If you are driven to attack those you care about, you may repeat the saving throw to resist killing them. No matter how long you resist the murderous urges, over time your alignment shifts toward chaotic evil.



Ilyana, Bastard Sword

Weapon (longsword), very rare (requires attunement)

Martial weapon, melee weapon 5 lb., 1d10 slashing

Ilyana is a blade owned by Gregor Zolnik. A bastard sword, with a blade slightly longer than a common longsword, it has an ivory hilt and guard covered with wolf fur stripes. On its pommel is a ruby crystal shaped to resemble a wolf head. Its blade has a unique pink hue due to its enchantment. You gain a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon. The creature attuned to this weapon can cast the *Heal* spell once per day.

Ring of Contingency

Ring, wondrous item, very Rare, requires attunement by a wizard

This magic ring lets a wizard cast the *contingency* spell once per 10 days without the need for material components.



Candle of Truth

Wondrous item, uncommon, (requires attunement by a paladin or cleric)

The candle of truth is a magic item used by inquisitors and crusaders to draw the truth from infidels and enemies of their faith. A creature attuned to this item can cast the *zone of truth* spell twice per long rest.

Golden Holy Symbol of Belenus:

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement by a paladin)

This holy symbol is dedicated to the faith of Belenus. It provides the wearer with a +2 bonus to all saving throws and the ability to command or destroy undead of CR 1 or lower. The controlled undead remain loyal while the wearer is within 60ft of them and immediately break free when they are not.



Caitlyn, Bastard Sword

Wondrous item, very rare

Martial weapon (longsword), melee weapon 3 lb. 1d10 slashing.

This unholy longsword has a hilt shaped to resemble a praying nun. You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon. In addition to its normal damage, it deals 2d6 necrotic damage.

Appendix B. Items

Ravana's Bane

Wondrous item, legendary, requires attunement by a good aligned creature

Martial weapon, ranged weapon
18 lb. 1d12 Radiant - (120/400 ft.), heavy, loading, two-handed

This magical heavy crossbow was once used by Arijani to kill Ravana, the Rakshasa-god. Till that moment, Ravana's essence seeped into the weapon and blessed it to be a bane against any Rakshasa. You gain a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. In addition, any Rakshasa that is hit by this weapon is instantly slain. This weapon does not need ammunition as it generates its own blessed bolts every time its string is pulled. If this weapon is destroyed, Arijani's immunities against other Rakshasa disappear.



Fang of Nosferatu

Few things are as horrible and evil as the undead. These rulers of evil prowl beneath the waning light of the moon, preying on the human race like wolves on lambs. The nosferatu fang was created in their likeness and placed in the hands of man. It's difficult to imagine a more ominous gift. Mordal the assassin once guarded this cursed blade with his life. It was a gift from the evil lord of Valachan, Baron von Kharkov. When Mordal betrayed his master, the vampire took his blade and imprisoned him. He placed the dagger just outside the assassin's cage, a finger's length out of reach. Mordal perished a bit more with each passing day as the dagger's blood was withheld. The Baron butchered animals with the knife every full moon, restoring Mordal's health. However, as the blade was never used to take intelligent life, with each passing month, he lost a little more of his dark vitality. It took nearly three years for the assassin to die. As Mordal finally met his eternal death, the dagger vanished... According to legend, the assassin's spirit took the dagger and escaped Valachan. Nobody has ever dared to question Baron von Kharkov on the subject. Someone has reported seeing a translucent, wraith-like figure clutching a knife, as if urging someone to take it.

Fang of Nosferatu

Wondrous Item, legendary (requires attunement)
Simple weapon (dagger), melee weapon, 1 lb.
1d4 piercing - finesse, light, thrown (20/60 ft.)

Description:

This dagger's blade is made of hardened steel and has weird, flowing glyphs engraved into the metal surface. The engravings have all been in-filled with ruby dust, giving the impression of letters wrought in blood on the blade. The handle has been wrapped, in an unusual, pebbled black hide that is considered to be either mind flayer or doppelganger skin. A ruby is enset on the pommel. The guard is shaped like an extended oval, with the portion facing the blade engraved in the image of a vampire with bared fangs. Like the markings engraved into the blade, the eyes are filled with ruby dust.

Powers:

When investigated with a *detect magic* spell, the fang reveals an aura of necromancy. It possesses a +3 enchantment bonus as a magical weapon. The extra three points of damage that it inflicts are thought to reflect the blade devouring its victim's blood. If it remains in the body, it drains an additional three hit points of blood every round. Each successful blood-draining assault heals the wielder by one hit point. For this power to operate, the owner must be wielding the sword. If another creature uses the blade, the dagger is satiated, but the actual owner loses no health points. It is said that there is a specific ceremony using the dagger that offers the possessor immortality. The nosferatu fang bestows additional abilities on its possessor. The owner can change form into a wolf or a bat while it is in their immediate control. They have the maximum hit points for that in these forms. If their actual form has less hit points owing to wounds, the animal form is also hurt to the same degree. Changing shape in this way does not allow any regained hit points. Except for the dagger, none of the owner's equipment is altered. If the owner already has shape-changing abilities (such as lycanthropy), the dagger offers the owner the ability to transform into any animal form from Small to Large size.

The Curse:

The blade, as the nosferatu after which it is named, craves blood. Each hit point of blood absorbed satisfies it for a day. Because the blood is being counted in hit points, it must have come from a wound inflicted by the dagger on a live creature. Animal blood will suffice, but the fang demands intelligent creature blood

Appendix B. Items

once a month. It can only be satisfied for a maximum of seven days. regardless of the amount of blood it absorbs Every day that it is not satisfied, it deducts 1 hit point from its owner's maximum hit points. This can happen even if the dagger and its owner are separated by a long distance. The effects are momentarily suspended until they are reunited if they are in different realms or planes of existence. Only the dagger or a *heal* or *wish* spell can restore hit points lost in this manner. When the dagger is used to draw blood, it becomes attached to its owner. Neither its beneficial advantages nor its curses are applicable until this moment. Once linked, the new owner is immediately aware of the blade's blood needs and the bond's permanence. The owner will be hesitant to hand over the sword. If another creature has it and does not utilize it, the actual owner will wither and die slowly, losing 1 hit point every day. Before a new owner may be chosen, the present owner must die.



Bel's Vengeance

Weapon, legendary (requires attunement by a lawful creature)

Flail, martial, melee weapon

1d8 bludgeoning / 1d8 necrotic 2 lb.

Under the devil Bel's command, this enchanted flail is infused with the power of law. It deals an extra 2d6 points of damage against all chaotic aligned creatures. When a chaotic creature tries to wield it, it gains 4 levels of exhaustion for as long as they hold it. You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. In addition, thanks to the negative energies that linger inside the weapon, it deals an extra 1d8 necrotic damage to any target it hits.



Bag of Tricks, Onyx

Wondrous item, very rare

This ordinary bag, made from black cloth, appears empty. Reaching inside the bag, however, reveals the presence of a small, skull-like object. You can use an action to pull it from the bag and throw it up to 20 feet. When the object lands, it transforms into a creature you determine by rolling a d8 and consulting the table below. The creature vanishes at the next dawn or when it is reduced to 0 hit points. The creature is friendly to you and your companions, and it acts on your turn. You can use a bonus action to command how the creature moves and what action it takes on its next turn, or to give it general orders, such as to attack your enemies. In the absence of such orders, the creature acts in a fashion appropriate to its nature. Once three objects have been pulled from the bag, the bag can't be used again until the next dawn.

d8	Creature
1	Zombie
2	Skeleton
3	Wight
4	Vampire Spawn
5	Warhorse Skeleton
6	Minotaur Skeleton
7	Ghoul
8	Beholder Zombie



Cauldron of Brewing

Wondrous item, very rare

A cauldron of brewing looks like a fine cooking pot with four stout legs. The cauldron may heat any liquid placed in it to a precise temperature (anywhere from just above room temperature to hot enough to boil salt water) and may maintain it indefinitely while still remaining only slightly warm to the touch on the outside. A cauldron of brewing provides advantage and a +5 bonus to anyone using an alchemist's kit to create poisons, potions or other alchemical creations.



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Medallion of Orcus

Wondrous item, very rare

This medallion is given to the followers of Orcus and binds them to his service, or rather, that is what it is intended to do. When a creature wears it for the first time, the medallion activates, and tries to take control over the body and mind of the wearer. The creature becomes hunched over in gruelling pain, screaming as they have never screamed before. Feeling as if their blood boils inside their veins, as though every fiber of their being was on fire, the wearer must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or become subservient to Orcus. The medallion tries to gain control of the wearer once each day at a random time and the wearer can try to regain control of their body with a successful DC 15 Charisma saving throw rolled at dusk.

Regardless of who controls the body and mind, the medallion has great influence on the wearer. The first time they start a long rest, their body starts changing and by the end of the night, they will be transformed into a vampire. There is no saving throw to this curse. The creature uses the vampire statblock* (MM, pg. 297) in addition to any class levels or racial traits they had before the transformation.

*The following traits are removed from the vampire's statblock; Forbiddance, Spider Climb, Shapechange to bat, Children of the Night.



Graefling Blade

Longsword, very rare (requires attunement)

The ancestral weapon wielded by twelve Graef lords retained none of its noble purpose when it was pulled into the Shadowfell. The blade is beautiful still, even though it acquired a great number of sinister qualities. Its smoky gray blade has black swirls in the steel, and the blade emerges through a black crossbar with embedded rubies and with each side depicting an angel wielding a sword. Dark leather, stained by sweat and blood, covers the handle down to the weapon's raven shaped pommel. Inky black tendrils spill from the blade, which promise an agonizing end for those who feel its bite.

A creature attuning to this weapon gains 30ft dark-vision, on a critical hit, 2d8 extra necrotic damage is inflicted to the target. Once per day, the wielder can use a free action when they strike an enemy to inflict 5 necrotic damage to each enemy creature adjacent to them. The affected creatures then grant advantage to attack rolls when being attacked by the wielder until the end of the wielder's next turn. When used against targets that are missing any of their hit points, the wielder may reroll any 1 damage die and must accept the result.



Appendix B. Items



Weird Staff

Wondrous item, legendary, (requires attunement)

This staff was created by a wizard in King Doerdon's court. Once per day, the wielder can cast the *weird* spell. In addition, this staff has 6 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 of its charges and target a creature up to 60 feet away from you. Roll 1d10 and consult the following table to discover what happens. The staff regains 1d4 + 1 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the staff's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the staff crumbles into dust and is destroyed. If no target is designated, the staff automatically targets the nearest available creature within 60 ft, or yourself if no other creature is available.

Curse: Anyone who attunes to this staff, other than Puncheron, gains the following flaw: *"I must make inappropriate jokes at all times. Jokes are a serious matter."*

(d10) Result

- 1 Wielder catches fire incapacitating and causing them to rotate in circles for 1d3 rounds.
- 2 You transform the target creature into a metal bucket or a chair for 1d4 rounds.
- 3 All creatures within a 100-foot radius of the target take 1 radiant damage and the target takes necrotic damage equal to the number of creatures affected.

- 4 User gains 50 temporary hit points for 1 minute.
- 5 User casts the polymorph spell, transforming the target into a rat or a chicken for 1 minute.
- 6 The target creature must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be polymorphed into a flumph for 1d4 rounds.
- 7 The targeted creature transforms into a magical +3 longsword which automatically appears into the staff's wielder hand. The wielder becomes proficient with this sword. The creature is completely aware of its surroundings and what happens while it is the sword. This effect wears off after 2d6 rounds.
- 8 The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become a pacifist, trying to stop any creature he can see from fighting. This effect lasts until the end of the target's next turn.
- 9 Targeted creature becomes invisible and the place where it stands is showered by 1d12 wheels of cheese. The invisibility effect lasts for 1 minute.
- 10 A rabbit is spawned behind the targeted creature. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom charisma saving throw or perceive the rabbit as an enemy. The target will have to focus its actions to chase the rabbit until the rabbit is killed.



Appendix C. Spells

Desecration

2nd-level Abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch (15-foot-radius circle)

Components: V, S, M (an unholy *symbol*, vial of phlegm and incense worth 20 gp, which is consumed)

Duration: 1 minute

Unholy energy spreads outwards from a point you touch on the ground to fill up to a 15-foot-radius circle for the duration.

The energy spreads around corners. For the duration, a fiend or undead creature within the circle has advantage on Wisdom saving throws and ability checks. Additionally, if they begin their turn in the circle, they gain 2d6 temporary hit points. Creatures of your choosing suffer disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws and skill checks while inside the area. When the spell ends, the area is tainted by unholy energy and becomes desecrated ground. If the area contains an altar, shrine, or other permanent fixture devoted to a deity, pantheon, or higher power with ideals vastly different from those represented by the holy symbol used in the casting, it is destroyed.

Classes: Cleric, Paladin

Ventriloquism

1st-level Illusion

Casting time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, M (A parchment rolled up into a small cone)

You can make your voice (or any sound that you can normally make vocally) seem to issue from someplace else. You can speak in any language you know. With respect to such voices and sounds, anyone who hears the sound and rolls a successful wisdom saving throw recognizes it as illusory (but still hears it).

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the sound range increases by an additional 10ft for each slot level above 2nd.

Classes: Bard, Warlock

Taunt

3rd-level Enchantment

Casting time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V

Duration: Instantaneous

Taunt a creature to attack you. If the selected creature fails its Wisdom saving throw, at the start of its turn, it must use all its actions to approach and attack you. The target's allies can attempt to calm it down by spending an action. This grants the target another chance to succeed on a saving throw to resist.

Classes: Bard, Paladin, Cleric

Faux Henchmen

2nd-level Conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 20ft

Components: V, S, M (a piece of fabric from a servant's cloth)

Duration: 1 minute

A spell used by spellcasters when they need someone to stand between themselves and their enemies. By using an action you summon 4 spectral commoners armed with improvised weapons. The spectral commoners act at the end of your turn and attack the enemy creature that is closest to them. The summoned creatures fight to death, until they are dismissed as a free action or until the end of the spells duration.

Classes: Wizard, Warlock, Sorcerer

Strahd's Suppress Lycanthropy

2nd-level Transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

This spell prevents a creature from assuming their beast form in any manner. They cannot transform and gain no benefits from their lycanthropy.

Classes: Cleric, Wizard, Druid



Appendix C. Spells

Whispered One's Lore

4th-level Divination

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: Self

Components: V, S, M (parchment of a used magic scroll or a page of a spellbook)

Duration: Instantaneous

When you prepare this spell, you draw the sign of Vecna on your spellbook or parchment so that you can perform a rite that is a secret even to you. When you cast this spell, the DM chooses and reveals the spells that were prepared for you in secret. The DM chooses three spells of any level that you are able to prepare but don't have prepared. Those spells become prepared spells for you until you finish a long rest.

Classes: Bard, Wizard

Spy-Eye

Divination Cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

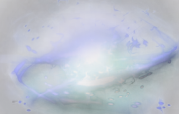
Components: V, S, M (a knife or a pen, tear drops)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

When you cast this spell, you engrave an eye on a surface of at least one square inch. The eye immediately becomes lifelike and opens when you wish it to. Until the spell ends, you can use a bonus action to see through that eye instead of your own eyes, as long as you are on the same plane. You continue to see through the eye until the spell ends or you use a bonus action to see through your own eyes again.

The eye shares your visual senses and can see in the direction that the eye is facing. If you have the blinded condition or visual impairment, the mage eye doesn't have that condition or impairment unless it gains them separately. If the eye becomes the target of an attack while you are using it, you take 1d6 psychic damage and the spell ends.

Classes: Cleric, Warlock, Wizard



Incantation of Perish

9th-level Evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 90ft

Components: V, S, M (a book filled with names of dead people)

Duration: Instantaneous

A malevolent melody that causes both the caster and all enemy creatures that are within 90ft and can hear the tune to faint in three turns. At the end of the third turn, all affected creatures immediately drop to 0 HP and fall unconscious but are stable. If the caster falls unconscious before the third turn, then the spell does not come into effect. A *remove curse* spell protects an affected creature and removes the curse from it. This spell does not affect undead creatures.

Classes: Bard

Sphere of Devastation

5th-level Evocation

Casting time: 1 action

Range: 120 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

A tiny sphere of destructive necrotic energy that changes into an enormous catastrophic bomb when the caster chooses. On the turn that this sphere is cast, it has a radius of 5 feet. For each turn the spell persists, its radius is doubled in feet, to a maximum of 40 feet. The radius of the explosion is the range of the actual sphere itself. While within the sphere's area, creatures take 1d4 necrotic and 1d4 psychic damage at the start of each of their turns (a max of 4 turns). At any point while the spell is active, you can dispel it on your turn, one action necessary. The sphere explodes as soon as it reaches its maximum size or if you use an action to explode it prematurely. All creatures within the sphere's area must make a Dexterity saving throw. A target takes damage according to the size of the spell on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. When the sphere explodes, it deals 1d10 necrotic damage per 5ft of its total radius. You may use a bonus action to move the sphere 10ft closer or further from its current position.

Classes: Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard