

HORROR GM'S TOOLKIT



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INTRODUCTION

Virtually every Savage Setting has some element of horror in it.

Okay, we've given you enough horror to make your hair go gray, but what if you want to create your own setting? What steps do you need to take to make your world setting come to life? What gear should you use, and are the existing spells dark enough?

Created with this in mind, the *Horror GM's Toolkit* is a handy resource for cutting corners. It contains advice, example rules, and gear both magical and mundane, suitable for any style of horror game.

We begin our walk down the path of darkness with a look at some styles of horror. This is primarily intended for those of you who wish to create your own setting, and it explains what decisions you need to make to lay the foundation. Then we take a brief look at creating atmosphere at the table.

The next chapter introduces new equipment suitable for a range of horror settings, including weapons and ghost hunting equipment. Whether you want to kill vampires or just bust ghosts, there's something here for you.

Then we enter the darker realms, taking a look at sanity, insanity, and fear, and how you can use them in your game. Following that we present a quick way to create grimoires (magic tomes), including books that supply the Power Points and arcane skill.

Next we present a look at dark magic, including a system for summoning, binding, and banishing demons and other extradimensional entities, and some new powers suitable for the vilest of villains. Related to this are sections on curses and demonic pacts.

There's also a sample of magic items suitable for horror games, ranging from anti-demon swords to vampire's coffins. Finally, we end up presenting a system on how you can introduce fortune telling into your horror setting.

None of the new rules are written in stone. Instead, think of them as guidelines and examples to help you design the setting you've always wanted. If you want to use the material as it stands, then that's going to save you some time. However, if you want to use it as a model for your own rules and creations, then that's just as cool.



Boo!

Did I scare you, cowards? No, well, we'll see if we can't change that attitude once you start reading.

What you have in your sweaty hands, in case you missed it on the cover, is a toolkit designed to help the GM create a cool horror setting.

What's a toolkit do? Let me tell you what it doesn't do—it doesn't give you another rulebook.

Sure, it's got rules in, but they're optional with a capital "O." The aim of these toolkits is to make your life easier as a GM by giving you tools—remember that word, kiddies—to making your own setting as unique and exciting as anything my deformed minions produce.

They explore every aspect of a setting, and I mean every aspect. From designing a cool world to populating it with interesting cultures; from designing new weapons to cool artifacts, like magic and starships.

A lot of what's in these toolkits is advice rather than gospel. You get to pick and choose the bits you want for your setting and discard the rest.

And if you don't like what Jack has to say, change it!

We're giving you the tools to make kick-ass settings—if your game falls flat after reading this, then it's your own fault for not following my advice.

Now, get reading and go make Jack proud!

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DRAWING BOARD

Horror stories are as old as humanity. Most people fear something, and for our ancestors there was much to be afraid of. Check out any culture on Earth and you'll find stories of ghosts, werereatures, vampires, and other horrors.

But times have changed, and horror has evolved to find a place among other genres. In the past we had ghost stories, but now we have stories of aliens that grow inside human hosts, and spaceships which have traveled to alternate dimensions and come back with an evil presence aboard.

Horror games can be set anywhere from the days of cavemen through to the glory of Rome, and onto the modern era and far beyond.

The first thing you need to decide is what type of horror game you're running. We don't mean the obvious choices, like fantasy or sci-fi, although we'll mention those as well, but the actual flavor of the game. Take a look below and you'll see what we mean.

STYLE OF HORROR

Horror isn't just about scaring people. Sure, that's important, otherwise it wouldn't be horror, but there are several styles of horror, each with its own scare factor. The first step you need to take is to decide which style fits the tone of your setting.

Of course, by combining various elements, you can create a more unique feel to your world.

ACTION

Action horror combines the usual horror monsters and elements with fast paced action and two-fisted combat. It's cinematic horror where the monsters get their butts kicked more often than not.

Action horror doesn't have to be stuck in either the pulp or modern settings, as it often is on TV or in the movies. A cowboy setting with gunslinging heroes can be action horror, as can a Roman game, where the characters are legionnaires pitting Roman steel against the horrors of the barbarian lands.

In an action game, monsters still have cool powers, but they aren't usually so tricky to kill. For instance, a standard vampire has to be staked through the heart, which incurs a huge penalty to attack rolls. Sure, this suits certain styles of horror, but not this one.

Wouldn't your game run faster if vampires took hits as normal? The blow that actually kills the creature could be considered to have been a stake to the heart or decapitation without needing to worry about dice mechanics.

Action horror heroes aren't innocent victims waiting to be butchered by evil fiends, either. No, these guys are more akin to

your typical fantasy or pulp heroes, and can hold their own in a fight against all but the toughest foes.

And there should be some tough foes. Sure, there are vampires and zombies that you can bitch slap into submission, but there should also be powerful entities the group can't just walk up to and beat senseless.

An action game is likely to make use of "magic items," and characters are probably going to have access to them. Swords enchanted to slay vampires, occult books, cloaks of demonhide, and such like are tools rather than treasures.

Likewise, the heroes may have access to magic or miracles, depending on how far you want to take the action. Unlike some other types of horror, this magic doesn't corrupt the user, or require messy sacrifices. No, this magic is designed for the good guys to wield in their war on evil.

GREATER EVIL

Mankind is pretty proud of his achievements since he climbed down from the trees. He's created cities, laws, religion, vehicles that allow him to travel across the world in hours, and has even made his first steps to the stars.

That's all well and good, but what if there is an evil in the universe against which all our technology is next to useless? What if mankind's destiny isn't to make some galactic empire, but to be subjected to the whims of powerful beings akin to gods?

In the greater evil style of horror, mankind is nothing, a race of mindless insects running around one small rock in an otherwise hostile universe. Aliens aren't little green men who come in peace to trade cultural and technological ideals, either. No, what lives beyond our world is too alien for humans to understand and knows nothing of mercy or compassion.

In this style of game, the heroes aren't usually heroes from the outset, they're normal people. They have jobs, they have families, they pay their bills, and they know that unless they can stop it, some truly terrible fate awaits humanity.

While the heroes have knowledge of Things Man Should Not Know, the world at large is ignorant, and it's for their own good. The horrors that dwell in dark places aren't vampires and walking mummies. They are far older, far more powerful, and far more evil.

A greater horror game pits humans against these gods and their servants. Modern weapons do little to stop these nightmares, and Fear checks are made often, and usually with huge penalties. Insanity or heart failure are just as likely to kill a hero as some huge fanged beast from beyond mortal comprehension.

In fact, in a greater evil game, character survivability is not guaranteed. After all, these are average Joes thrust into a fight against a foe they have little chance of ultimately destroying.

Magic and miracles should be extremely rare, and what powers can be invoked come at a price. Magic in this world isn't a toy, but a powerful force that few humans have ever mastered (at least while retaining their sanity).

Likewise, magic items should be extremely rare, and rarely

possessed of any world shattering power. A blade that allows you to inflict damage on a creature modern guns can't hurt becomes very useful, if somewhat limited in its application.

The three "Fs" for a greater evil game, by far the darkest style, are Fear! Futility! Flee!

DARK

Dark horror falls somewhere between action and greater evil, and has several shades. While the characters can beat up zombies with some ease, more powerful fiends, such as vampires, are still far tougher than the average mortal. They're not indestructible, but they take some killing.

A modern era game where vampires are real and the characters are average Joes would fall under dark heading, as would a standard zombie apocalypse game. The characters don't have access to any crazy gear, but neither are the monsters walking gods.

Fear in dark horror games is also more common, though not as terrifying as in a greater evil game. Characters may spend a great deal of time running away in terror while screaming, "It's alive!" at the top of their lungs, but they're less likely to die of heart failure or end up drooling for the rest of their lives.

SETTING

Now you've thought about the style of horror, you need to think about the setting. Are you going to run a fantasy game? Or maybe sci-fi? You might also go for a historical or modern setting.

FANTASY

The vast majority of fantasy games and setting already contain horror elements. What fantasy setting hasn't got skeletons, zombies, or demons? Okay, some exist, but they're in the minority. Heck, Tolkien used wights, wraiths, and ghosts in *The Lord of the Rings* to great effect.

Fantasy games make cool horror settings because of the wealth of material already associated with the genre. Dusty tombs lost for millennia, evil gods, foul cults, and demonic realms are all part and parcel of fantasy.

All you need to do is to decide how much horror you want and how it affects the setting. In an action horror game, for instance, you might stick to zombies, skeletons, mummies, and vampires, the main staples of the genre. The characters are hardy heroes who defeat such foes with regularity and are armed with a variety of magic items and spells.

Then again, you could also have a near-unstoppable army of darkness swarming across the land. The main antagonist might be a powerful liche, a demon lord, or even a dark god returned to the mortal realm. The characters are drawn into a titanic battle to save their world from becoming a huge necropolis.

BENNIES & HORROR

Bennies are a way of rewarding players for heroic actions, witty dialogue, and whatever else the GM deems adds to the roleplaying experience. In most settings, they can also be used to trade in for experience points. But horror is a special case where you may want to tweak the rules.

In an action game, bennies should probably still apply. After all, it's about heroes kicking butt, so back-flipping over a vampire, staking him, and delivering a quip deserves a reward. Since the characters are true heroes, they should also be able to progress faster through bennies.

However, in a grittier game, you may want to change these rules. Instead of rewarding heroes for cool tricks and stuff, reward them for solving clues or defeating monsters without resorting to violence—after all, no gun is going to truly kill *Todoto!* Bennies are also more important for Soaking wounds and rerolls in these settings, and by removing the experience trade, players don't have to worry about whether to take the hit or save the benny in the hope of scraping another XP at the end of the game.

Whatever you chose to do, just make sure everyone is aware of the changes before the game begins.

SCI-FI

Horror in a sci-fi game is less common than in a fantasy setting, but it still has a place. What you need to be careful of is turning your sci-fi game into a sci-fantasy game.

Rather than using supernatural foes, think instead about using aliens to generate the horror. Sure, a zombie in a futuristic setting is scary, but an alien that actively hunts humans to use as living incubators or a rogue artificial intelligence in charge of a space station on which the characters are trapped can be just as scary. Remember, horror isn't about game mechanics or monsters—it's about the tone you set. Just searching for a serial killer on a derelict spaceship or in the mines of an asteroid can be downright terrifying if you can set the right mood.

You also need to decide what type of sci-fi setting you're aiming for. Is your setting cyberpunk, space opera, hard sci-fi, or B-movie? Knowing this might alter the way you incorporate horror into your game. For instance, maybe zombies in your cyberpunk game are actually techno-zombies, corpses brought to life by nanites.

If you're going down the sci-fi horror route, there's already a *Savage Setting* out there. *Necropolis* pits holy knights against an undead invasion of mankind's last refuge.

MODERN

Not a lot needs to be said about a modern setting. You live in a modern world, you know about the cultures, technology, and



no doubt many of the myths associated with various peoples. All you need to do is decide how the horror aspect fits into this world. Are all the character federal agents charged with investigating so-called supernatural occurrences, or are they part of a secret Vatican hit squad who have been holding back the tide of demons for centuries?

HISTORICAL

Historical settings can range from the earliest days of civilization (or earlier if you prefer) to the jungles of Vietnam (or slightly later if you can find a good hook).

There's no fixed way of creating a historical fantasy setting, but one piece of advice we can offer is to use material from the time.

Let's take a look at ancient Greece as an example. Now, the Greeks had legends about centaurs, minotaurs, harpies, and all manner of beasts we today treat as mythical. However, if you set your game back in the glory days of the Greek city states, these creatures can quickly become the source of your horror. Maybe the myths we know were written down only because brave heroes talked about the creatures they encountered. Perhaps they were written as a warning to later generations that evil exists.

Remember, horror doesn't have to have zombies, ghosts, and vampires. That's a modern perspective on the genre. A Colonial American during the Salem witch hunts will be more afraid of devils and witches than he would a vampire, talk of which he'd likely treat with some skepticism.

If you take the historical route, remember that time is your friend. Use historical events and work them into your game. Say you're running a Roman horror game. Everyone knows that Nero burnt Rome during one of his funny turns, but what if the burning was actually caused to create a huge number of sacrifices, or maybe it started when a band of heroes stormed through the temple of a demonic cult, scattering braziers as they went.

Don't worry either if the characters somehow alter history. In the game, it isn't history, it's the present, and everything beyond the setting is irrelevant. So the characters fail to stop the revolt of Bouddica and her army of zombie Celts. Now you get to re-invade Britain all over again. Look upon such things as opportunities, not problems.

As GM, you'll need to decide whether or not your historical horror setting is going to be pure historical or tinted with fantastical elements from a magic point of view. Are you going to allow priests and mages to cast spells, or are they merely devoted men of faith and tricksters respectively?

The same goes for magic items as well. A little fantasy can work wonders, especially if you remain true to the source material, but if you go too far, you'll end up playing a fantasy game without elves and dwarves under a thin veneer of historical backdrop. Of course, this depends on your setting. A Viking horror game would likely involve elves and dwarves, since the Vikings believed in them, but these wouldn't be your typical fantasy types. To the Vikings, elves and dwarves were mysterious otherworldly folk whose motives are unfathomable by humans.

FANTASY & SCI-FI HORROR

We've mentioned that horror can be combined with fantasy and sci-fi to make a cool setting, but we haven't given you much in the way of fantasy and sci-fi notes.

Well, there's good reason for that. You see, unlike horror, fantasy and sci-fi are much wider genres.

If we were to put in all the notes you'd need to create a complete fantasy or sci-fi horror game, including things like gear and bestiaries, this book would be really huge.

However, help is available. If you want to create your own horror fantasy, you'll find everything you need in the *Fantasy Toolkit* series. Likewise, all your sci-fi needs are in the *Sci-Fi Toolkit* series.

By combining the material from those books with what we have given you here, you'll be able to create a fantastic setting, full of all the fantasy and sci-fi goodies players expect, but with a horror twist.

OPEN OR SECRET KNOWLEDGE

Think about the general populace in your game world. Not the heroes, but the regular Joes and Janes. Do these people know that the supernatural exists? It's an obvious question, but that doesn't mean it should be left to answer itself. Decide whether the horror elements in your game are open knowledge or kept secret from the masses. Let's look at each in turn.

OPEN

In an open game, the supernatural makes the news. It may be sensationalized, reported accurately, or maybe the darker facts are kept hidden while allowing some public knowledge to leak out.

Let's take the example of a world in which the dead are returning as brain eating zombies. Okay, it's a cliché, but it's an easy one to use.

Sensationalized news has up to the minute media coverage of zombies rising from the grave, those who have fought zombies become media stars overnight, and every man and his dog has a theory about why the zombies are here. Worse still, the networks let these people go on air to discuss their theories.

Accurate reporting is likely to lead to mass panic. Heck, if someone told me the dead were coming back to life, eating people, and growing in numbers faster than we could stop them, I'd soil my best writing pants.

Concealing the true facts gives you a perfect blend of openness and secrecy, with several layers of truth to be uncovered. So the people know that zombies exist, but they're told the situation is well in hand and there's no need to panic. And guess what? The public

buy the story. However, the heroes, through several adventures, learn that the situation is actually much worse. The zombies are spreading rapidly, every country in the world is affected, law and order is breaking down in smaller towns and cities, and, the deepest secret of all, the zombie-virus is man-made.

An existing setting that uses open secrecy is *Necropolis*. The people know that the undead are real, but they believe the Church is winning the war. Of course, the heroes know better.

CLOSED

A closed setting is one in which information is either a closely guarded secret or simply not believed.

In the case of the former, the characters may be behind the conspiracy of silence trying to keep knowledge of the supernatural from reaching the general populace, or be involved in uncovering the dark secrets that haunt our world.

With the latter, the knowledge is out there, but people refuse to take it seriously. Our modern viewpoint on the past tells us our ancestors didn't necessarily believe in dragons or trolls, despite the myths surrounding these creatures. But what if, without newspapers and TV, these stories were the only way of spreading the word of the dark monsters lurking in the woods.

Imagine in our world of steel and neon if a news story reported a spate of vampires. Would you really believe the culprits were supernatural entities, or would you blame misguided Goths, Satanic cultists, heavy metal freaks, nutters, or just a false media report? Sure, a few newspapers might follow it up, but these aren't your mainstream media outlets.

Humans are also remarkably resilient. A host of zombies could invade New York and the general populace would happily put it down to hallucinations, riots, some bizarre pranks, or even a government conspiracy using hallucinogenic gas, but most won't look for the truth.

So, the characters uncover the existence of dark gods, but where do they go with the news? Who'd believe them other than cranks and end-of-the-world-is-nigh types?

LOCATION

Every horror setting needs a location. The obvious choice for a horror game is Earth. Not only are the majority of horror stories written and set on Earth, you also don't need to do any work to create the world.

Of course, a horror fantasy or sci-fi game usually needs a different stage. For fantasy, the obvious choices are to take an existing world from literature or a games company, and throw in some horror or to build your own world from scratch, shaping it from the beginning into a horror realm.

If you want sci-fi horror, decide whether you're setting it in a future where mankind has only explored our solar system, whether he has colonized other worlds close to Earth, or if

the entire universe is his plaything. One key horror element is isolation, and long duration space travel can be a great way of handling this. Maybe being on a four year mission without any hope of support isn't so bad, but it gets downright terrifying when something starts killing the crew.

For a space horror game, you should check out the *Sci-Fi World Builder Toolkit* for advice on world building. For fantasy horror, read the *Fantasy World Builder Toolkit*.

HOOK

When you walk into a game store in search of a new setting, what makes up your mind when it comes to pulling out your wallet? Is it the cool cover, the name of the author, or the fact that it was published by Company X? Maybe, but there's also a pretty good chance that what you read on the back cover played a big part.

Some people call that the sales pitch, but we prefer to call it the hook. Your setting needs a cool hook to make it attractive to your players. A hook differs from a Plot Point, which is the campaign itself, but one can lead to the other.

A modern horror game where the characters are trying to stop a secret cabal from releasing a demon lord is a Plot Point. Telling the players they are part of a secret Vatican group dedicated to overthrowing evil and keeping it quiet is a hook.

Already the hook presents you with a series of questions you need to answer, such as how does the group work, what equipment do they get, what magic resources are at their disposal, and such like.

Hooks don't have to be tied into the Plot Point. The Vatican hit squad setting is a hook in itself but doesn't limit you to a particular Plot Point.

PLOT POINT

Plot Points are the *Savage Worlds* way of scripting a campaign. They have a beginning, a middle, and an end. They turn the actual facts about the setting into the backdrop for an epic story.

Of course, you don't need a Plot Point. Most older settings were open ended, allowing the players to do what they wanted, when they wanted. Having a Plot Point doesn't make the campaign linear nor does it railroad players, but it does make your life very easy.

Rather than creating a tangled web of interconnected hooks designed to keep the heroes on track as they travel the world looking for fame and glory, the Plot Point allows you to nudge them along and yet still give them room to roam.

Let's take our Vatican example. The characters investigate and stop a Satanic cult in the first adventure. There they learn about some big astronomical event taking place soon. It's all very woolly and vague, but they know something is going on. Then nothing important to the plot happens for a few weeks. They get to stake some vampires and stuff, but they can basically do whatever they want. Then you drop in an adventure about an

astronomer disappearing shortly after making an announcement that he was calling a press conference. How are the two tied together? Well, that's up to the players to find out.

Remember, at this stage all you need is a basic idea—expanding the idea into a background story comes next. You should also remember that completing a Plot Point doesn't mean the game is over. Completing one may lead to another.

Maybe the characters stop the demon lord from being released, only to discover that a cardinal was behind the plot. Does the cardinal have other allies in the Church? How far does the corruption go? Cue the next Plot Point.

Here's a few basic ideas to get you started.

PLOT POINT IDEAS

- The dead are rising from their graves and begin taking over the world. This could be caused by a meteor carrying spores, a secret government project gone wrong, a mutated disease, nanites gone awry, or just good old fashioned necromancy on a global scale.
- A demon lord has been trapped for centuries, but now an evil cult is seeking to release him.
- Vampires are working on a way to blot out the sun. This could range from a powerful magic item (fantasy) to a series of orbital umbrellas (sci-fi).
- Important people are being replaced with doppelgangers or are somehow changed. These could be aliens or clones, or maybe they're just vampiric thralls. This plays on the horror classic of paranoia.
- The ancient gods of Egypt have been reawoken, and they begin animating mummified servants to rebuild the glory of ancient Egypt, with a distinctly necromantic twist. This works with any ancient culture, really.
- A powerful relic which has kept evil at bay for millennia is failing. As the energy weakens, more and more horrors are released into the world.
- The evil has always been there, hidden in myths and legends, but now they have formed a coalition, and seek to conquer the world.
- The characters are slayers, born to combat evil whether they want to or not. You might also go for the one slayer and lots of helpers approach as well.
- The ancient gods worshipped by humans were in fact extremely powerful alien/extra-dimensional beings. These gods crave nothing but sacrifices and the spreading of madness. Worse still, they're worshipped to this day.
- The characters are actually vampires, mummies, werewolves, or ghosts (or some other monster) caught up in a war between various factions.
- The characters are all Frankenstein monsters (but better looking), but don't realize it until later in the campaign. Who made them and for what purpose?
- The characters are all soldiers, whether Roman legionaries, American G.I.'s, or futuristic space troops, fighting in a war in which supernatural creatures are involved in some way.
- Lucifer wants to make his peace with God and he's chosen the characters as his agents. Of course, his fellow devils aren't so keen on surrendering.
- The war between Heaven and Hell has spilled onto Earth. Regardless of their religious beliefs, the characters are drawn into the conflict and are expected to pick a side.

BACKGROUND

Okay, so you know the type of horror you want to use, you have an idea of the scope of the setting, and you have an interesting hook and Plot Point idea. Now it's time to turn the idea into a background story—the reason why the Plot Point exists in the first place.

The background story is the first part of your campaign map. Not in the physical sense of a map of the world, but as in a map of the story arc, the overall goal of the characters.

The background fills in the whos, whys, and hows of the story. You don't need to know all the details at once, but you should have a good feel for how things got to their present state. How much detail you want at this stage is up to you, but the more you know, the easier it is to work through other parts of this book.

You can use parts of the background to give to your players. If you want, you can create a handout for the players with all the pertinent information their characters would know.

If the Vatican really did have a hit squad trained to wipe out supernatural evil, they'd have some idea of their history and their mandate. It may not be important to the game, but flavor text helps players get into character (and, of course, that flavor text may be seeded with adventure ideas).

If the modern world is overrun by zombies, give a timeline as to what happened before the apocalypse and what sorts of zombies have been reported. You could add some flavor by typing it up as a series of news reports or newspaper clippings.

Feel free to add some historical flavor or foreshadow events to come as well. Maybe the Vatican background mentions how the order of slayers was founded after a group of warrior monks fighting in the Crusades stopped a demon. Guess what, the same horned beast is coming back!

What the player's background shouldn't do is give away any of the back story or secrets. Where did the zombies come from? What is their goal? Is there a leadership? How can they be defeated? All these questions should be known by the GM, and discovered slowly by the players as the campaign unravels.

FORWARD PLANNING

Now you need to start building your world, fleshing out everything of relevance. This doesn't just relate to the history or major players, but also to what rules you want to include, what

types of magic exist, whether magic items exist, and, of course, the types of monsters the characters will encounter.

If zombies are running rampant, think about where the problem started, what types of zombies exist, whether they can mutate into new breeds, and so on. The more work you do before you start putting pen to paper, the better the final result will be.

If your horror game involves evil beings from alternate dimensions, think about how they can be summoned. In a sci-fi game, you'll need to think about the types of weaponry available. Will there be laser guns, conventional ballistic weapons, or plasma weapons capable of frying small cities? The more powerful the weaponry, the greater chance the characters will simply try to vaporize any horrors you confront them with.

CREATING ATMOSPHERE

Regardless of how cool your setting is, you can't expect to create atmosphere at the game table by using game mechanics. Using Fear might scare the characters, but your players might be sharing a joke at the same time your ultimate evil turns up. What was meant to have the players checking the shadows as they walk home after the game instead becomes part of the joke, and all the impact is lost.

This chapter takes a look at how you can use various tricks to keep the atmosphere of your game at the right level, and without a single game mechanic or die roll in sight.

SET THE INITIAL MOOD

Gamers are people. They have jobs, families, and other activities outside of gaming (in most cases, anyway). When they meet up to game, it's only natural they want to spend some time catching up with current events. This is especially true if they only meet up occasionally.

Ideally, you should ask (don't tell, as that can set up unwanted antagonism in the game) the players to do their catching up during the preparation period. If it's the first session of your new campaign, fill them in on the general tone of the campaign. Most gamers are at the table to have fun, and that usually means they'll go with the flow once the dice start rolling.

Horror has its own set of "rules," and one of these is light. A scary movie is better watched with the lights off, for instance. Of course, we don't recommend you play in the dark wearing nightvision goggles (though that might be cool), but you should adjust the lighting accordingly.

However, make sure the players can see their character sheets and dice. There's nothing worse than building up to a tense moment, only for a player to ask for the lights to be turned up because he can't see his skill list. Make sure everyone is happy

with the lighting level before you begin.

Dim the lights, draw the curtains (especially true if you're playing a horror game during the day), and maybe light a few candles to help create flickering shadows. (Make sure candles are not near anything flammable.) It'll all help, but it won't remove the crunch of snacks, the rattle of dice, bodily noises, in game jokes, and the occasional out of game chatter.

How can you remove these elements? Well, you can't. We said gamers were people, remember? It's all part of the gaming experience and you just have to learn to ignore it or work around it. Ideally, put candy in a bowl to stop bags rustling, and make sure players have all their dice and minis to hand before the game begins.

Now imagine two of your players start talking about the football game last night. Suddenly the real world has infringed on the gaming world. Any atmosphere you had has disappeared. So how do you recover the situation?

Whatever you do, don't try to break up the chatter with a rod of iron. Ordering your players (and friends) to shut up and continue gaming will likely damage the atmosphere beyond repair for the rest of the session.

Instead, add an element to the game that draws them back. Start talking in a whisper, dim the lights even lower, make tapping sounds as if some unseen lurker is knocking at the door of the cabin they're hiding in, or howl like a wolf.

Alternately, just stop the game for a rest break and let the conversation die a natural death. When everyone is ready, start again.

TRAPPINGS & TOOLS

We've talked briefly about using lighting to create atmosphere, but there are plenty of other tools you can use to set the mood.

A sound track, either of horror sound effects or suitable music, can do wonders to aid your game, so long as technology doesn't hamper the flow of the game. Pausing to find the right music track or having an unearthly howl erupt from the speakers when you wanted a knocking at the door will break the atmosphere you've been trying to create. Any music should also be kept low, barely audible if possible.

Why? Because you don't want your players humming along to the tune or shouting to make themselves heard over the din.

Props are also handy, whether used in or out of game. If the characters discover a magic book, hand them an old leather bound journal with a glyph you've drawn and taped on the front. If they find a statue of some dark god, hand them a suitable ornament. Many ceramic shops, not to mention stores catering to Goths and heavy metal fans, carry such objects at reasonable prices. Artwork, whether from books or the Internet, can greatly enhance a game—there's plenty of weird monster artwork out there for free.

Drinks and drinking vessels can also be handy. If the characters are invited to a mysterious castle by a man introducing himself only as "the Count," hand them glasses filled with tomato juice when he serves drinks. If you have fancy goblets (again, check out Goth stores), use these to help create the mood.

These are all minor things compared to the adventure you're lovingly crafted, but if it helps get the players into the right frame of mind, then go for it.

Out of game, you can have a few ornaments placed on the gaming table. An ashtray made to look like a skull or evil font can be handy to store snacks, as well as looking cool. It's eye candy in more ways than one.

If you get hold of one, place an animal skull on the table. We don't recommend you start making your own collection from neighborhood pets, but they're not impossible to find, especially if you live in the country. They look creepy and they make great candle holders as well.

Simple things like using a black cloth on the table can also add to the flavor of the game, as well as muffling dice rolls.

Ask the players to switch off their mobile phones unless they're expecting an urgent call. It's okay if the player's wife is expecting their first baby any minute, but not if his buddy wants to call to arrange Friday's poker game. Ask him to do that either before or after the game.

SHOW, DON'T TELL

Okay, so the game has begun and the players are into the mood. Everything is going swell, until the characters enter a graveyard and you tell them, "You see a zombie shuffling toward you." Bang goes the atmosphere.

Horror relies on atmosphere and a sense of the unknown. By breaking the latter, you've destroyed the former. This where the "Show, Don't Tell" part comes in.

Which of these is cooler for a horror game? "You see a zombie shuffling toward you," or, "A figure emerges from the mist, its arms outstretched, clawing at the air in front of it as it moves closer in shuffling steps. Its flesh hangs in tatters from its bones, and the smell of the grave assaults your nostrils."

The former gives the players the bare facts in a rather clinical, perfunctory way. They also know exactly what they're facing and, having read the rules, they immediately start making Called Shots to the head.

The latter description gives the players exactly the same information, but rather than being told it's a zombie, they're shown a zombie. The creature has all the hallmarks of the walking dead, but they're revealed based on what the characters can see, smell, and hear, rather than what they actually know.

Of course, while the heroes may still go for head shots, the figure could also be a wight or some homebrew grave monster (neither of which have that Weakness in the brainpan).

ISOLATION

Isolation is a powerful tool in your armory of atmosphere. While the obvious thought is to separate the characters from one another, forcing them to face the darkness alone, consider group isolation as well.

How can you do this? Imagine the group is in a foreign country and doesn't speak the language. Now they have only themselves to rely on. When some vile beast starts chasing them through unfamiliar streets, they have no one to turn to for help.

Characters can also be socially isolated. A group of characters of low social rank might be attacked by a werewolf in a fog shrouded street, but the middle class inhabitants think it is just the local thugs mugging some helpless beggars and refuse to get involved.

In both cases, the party is surrounded by fellow humans, but at the same time they're isolated from the source of help.

One standard method of isolation is to have a tomb door close behind them. Only when the evil is defeated can the door be opened. The weather is another common tool for isolation. Exploring an old house is fine when you know you can flee, but it becomes scarier when the sudden blizzard closes all the roads or a storm takes out the only bridge into town.

THE SENSE OF THE UNKNOWN

The sense of the unknown is your friend, so use it. Never reveal facts unless you absolutely have to.

Imagine the group is exploring an old house. In one of the rooms they see a long curtain gently moving. One of the characters asks, "Can we see what's behind it?" Rather than just saying, "No," which might be factual, add another layer to your answer by adding, "Would you like to pull it aside?" Now the player begins to wonder whether he should pull it aside or not. Maybe there's something nasty lurking there.

When a player says he'll open the door encrusted with mysterious slime, ask him which hand the character is using. It's not important to the game, but the player won't know that.

If you're describing a room or situation, focus on the unknown, rather than the known. Bring their attention to the cupboard with its door slightly ajar, the deep shadows of the forest, and the thick mist swirling through the graveyard at night. Let them create their own fears based on what they think may exist.

SUBTLETY VS GORE

Lastly, good horror uses implications of violence rather than visual violence. If the characters hear a scream from an alley, let them find blood splatters and drag marks rather than a corpse torn limb from limb.

Show them a clawed body, and they have information about the assailant. It becomes a creature of flesh and blood, not a creature of nightmares. By having them find only the blood, they have no idea who the victim was, or what sort of wounds he suffered. Let their ignorance breed fear.



Of course, none of these tips are any use if the adventure sucks, but that's something we leave in your hands. Even a simple chase through a town or haunted house investigation can take on a new level of fear with the right atmosphere.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Whether you're running a fantasy, historical, contemporary, or futuristic horror game, monster hunters need specialist tools. Sure, the main rules have crossbows, guns, melee weapons, armor, and basic mundane items, but there's no specialist gear designed purely for monster hunting. This chapter puts that straight by introducing a new kit.

Not every piece of gear is going to be useful in your setting. It's very unlikely a dwarf exploring a liche's tomb is going to have access to Kirlian goggles, and a starmarine is very unlikely to reach for his repeating crossbow just because an alien is stalking him.

MELEE WEAPONS

Few monster hunters relish going toe-to-toe with a hulking werewolf or a rancid zombie, but sometimes there's no other choice. That's where melee weapons come in.

CORPSE CATCHER

Corpse catchers are based on a martial arts weapon called the man catcher. Comprised of a long metal shaft with a set of "pincers" at one end, they are designed for catching monsters with minimal damage and are a favorite tool of mad scientists. A switch near the butt activates the pincers.

A success on a Touch Attack (+2 to Fighting) means the target has been caught around his waist but his hands remain free—with a raise the arms are pinned as well.

Pinned victims may attempt to break free. An opposed Strength roll is required if pinned around the waist and an opposed Strength -2 roll if the arms are pinned. The corpse catcher has an effective Strength of $d12+1$ for resisting escape attempts.

STAKE

Even when surrounded by high tech gadgets, the trusty pointy stick is still one of the most effective ways of dispatching a vampire. A silver-tipped stake (good against lycanthropes and some vampires) costs an extra \$20, but is otherwise the same as a conventional wooden one.

RANGED WEAPONS

Often the safest way to defeat a monster is from a distance. This section presents a sample of new gear designed for just that purpose.

ATOMIC GHOST HUNTING PACK

Atomic ghost hunting packs are large backpack weapons, similar in appearance to a flamethrower. Unlike a flamethrower they do not discharge fire, but a stream of atomic particles capable of ensnaring or injuring ghosts and other ethereal creatures.

As such, the weapon has two settings—ensnare and destroy. Set to destroy, an atomic ghost hunting pack causes 2d8 damage to ethereal creatures.

Ensnare mode causes no damage, but does bind the spirit in a web of crackling energy. On a successful Shooting roll, the spirit is partially bound, and suffers a -2 penalty to Pace and skills linked to Agility and Strength. A raise restrains the target fully. He cannot move or use any skills linked to Agility or Strength. Each following round, the spirit may make a Strength or Agility roll to break free. On a success he breaks free, but doing so consumes his turn. With a raise, he escapes and may act this round as normal. Other spirits may also attempt to free the ensnared ghost by making a Strength roll at -2.

An ethereal entity may be safely moved 3" per round while trapped in the field. Any faster, and the entity gets a +1 bonus to its next escape roll per additional inch of movement. Why move the ghost around? Check out the ghost trap on page 16.

Each round the ensnarement is maintained, another charge is used from the magazine. If the weapon runs out of power, the ensnarement field disperses and the spirit is automatically free.

Atomic packs can be recharged from any standard power outlet at no cost (unless characters have to pay utility bills in your setting, in which case they're in for a shock).

FLARE PISTOL

Flare pistols are, of course, used for signaling. Monster slayers, however, have learned that certain monsters, notably

PURITY OF SUBSTANCES

Lycanthropes are vulnerable to silver, and demons detest cold iron, but what does this mean when you're after a weapon made of the substance?

SILVER

In most horror settings, a silver item has to be made of pure silver to be effective. Coating a sword blade with a veneer of silver just doesn't work. A pure silver melee weapon should cost at least five times as much as normal and inflicts normal damage.

COLD IRON

Cold iron is iron that has not been heated in a forge before it is worked. As such, it contains no carbon and is therefore pure, but also brittle. Cold iron melee weapons should cost twice as much as normal. They shatter if the wielder gets a critical failure on a Fighting roll.

mummies, are quite flammable.

A flare pistol striking a mummy causes +4 damage and has a chance of catching it on fire as a flammable object. Against other targets, the damage is as listed, but there is a lesser chance of igniting the target's clothing.

HOLY WATER GRENADE

Holy water grenades aren't explosive, but they do cover a Small Burst Template on impact. Basically, it's just a glass container containing holy water. The price covers a single container pre-filled with holy water. Of course, it's unlikely in a modern or futuristic game that you can find these in the mall.

So what damage does the weapon do? Well, that depends on how holy water works in your game. Check out the section on Holy Water for guidelines (see page 15).

HOLY WATER PISTOL

First used by a group of teenagers fighting vampires in California during the 1980s, the holy water pistol has come a long way since those days. Modern water pistols have greater range, enhanced storage tanks, and, more importantly, a pump action mechanism.

The weapon itself has a base range of 1/2/4. However, if the firer spends an action pumping up the pressure before firing, the range increases to 2/4/8. Reloading can be a bind, as the firer needs a source of holy water. Assuming he can find a suitable amount,

replenishing the tank to maximum takes 2 actions. A character can opt to half fill the reservoir by spending just one action reloading.

The price covers just the gun—finding a source of holy water is up to the characters.

So what damage does the weapon do? Well, that depends on how holy water works in your game. Check out the section on Holy Water for guidelines (see below).

REPEATING CROSSBOW

The repeating crossbow has a 36-round drum magazine and is reloaded by a small gas cylinder mounted on the stock. Aside from its obvious use against living targets, it is an effective weapon against vampires. Reloading a new magazine takes one action.

If you're running a game where staking through the heart isn't considered a requirement for slaying an undead, crossbows with wooden quarrels inflict their full piercing damage against vampires.

WINCH CROSSBOW

The winch crossbow is a specialist weapon, primarily employed against vampires. The steel shaft has a barbed head for digging into flesh, and the quarrel is attached via a thin steel wire to a winch mounted on top of the crossbow. The wire measures 40" (the maximum range of the weapon).

If the firer scores a wound, the bolt has dug into the victim's flesh. On his next action, the firer may activate the winch, drawing the vampire closer to him. This requires an opposed Strength roll of the winch's Strength of d12 against that of the target. A victim who can grab onto something solid, like a supporting beam or a door jamb, gains +2 to his roll. On a success, the victim is pulled 3" per success and raise.

Why would anyone use this to draw a vampire to them? Simple. The firer can skewer the bloodsucker indoors, run outside into the sunlight, and then drag the vampire to a burning death without having to get up close and personal.

ULTRAVIOLET GRENADE

A state-of-the-art anti-vampire device, the UV grenade contains a powerful UV light encased in a steel container. When thrown, side panels blow away and the powerful UV light fills a Medium Burst Template in a blinding flash. Although powerful enough to burn vampires, the grenade is good for one use only.

A vampire caught in the blast suffers 2d10 damage and has a chance of catching fire.

Although not designed for use against mortals, or indeed other undead, the powerful light can blind targets. Non-vampiric targets within the template must make an Agility roll at -2 or be Shaken.

AMMUNITION

Aside from the repeating crossbow magazine and winch crossbow quarrel, a variety of ammunition exists for use in conventional firearms.

The Ammunition Table (page 17) lists the weight and price of bullets as a modifier. These are added to the regular weight and price found in the *Savage Worlds* rules. For instance, UV bullets for a 9mm pistol would weigh a total of 6/50 (5/50 for the regular bullets plus 1/50 for the UV modification) with a cost of \$125/50.

GARLIC BULLETS

Garlic bullets are hollow point bullets filled with a garlic and holy water puree. They allow the weapon to inflict its full piercing damage against a vampire (and other undead you deem are susceptible to garlic or holy water).

SILVER BULLETS

Aside from being made of silver rather than lead, these are regular bullets. They are effective against lycanthropes and other creatures susceptible to silver, but are not as damaging as silver nitrate rounds.

SILVER NITRATE BULLETS

Silver nitrate bullets are hollow point bullets filled with silver nitrate. Unlike regular silver, the nitrate form is a liquid, which gets into the bloodstream. These rounds cause +4 damage to lycanthropes and other monsters susceptible to silver.

ULTRAVIOLET BULLETS

Designed for use against vampires, UV bullets are tipped with a glass capsule filled with a chemical that emits ultraviolet light. On impact, the capsule shatters, exposing the vampire's innards to the scorching light.

These rounds cause full piercing damage against vampires.

HOLY WATER

So you've loaded up with holy water grenades and filled your water pistol reservoir, and now you want to know what holy water does in the game, right?

Well, it does two things. Firstly, it harms vampires with the Weakness (Holy Water). A vampire caught in the template of a holy water grenade or who is hit with a successful Shooting roll from a water pistol firing holy water counts as if splashed. That is, he is Fatigued.

A direct hit from a grenade or a raise on a Shooting roll with a pistol drenches the vampire, and causes him to combust as if he was hit by sunlight.

Okay, so that's vampires covered, but what about other undead? Whether or not holy water has any affect against undead other than vampires depends on your setting. Here are some suggestions of possible effects. You can replace the vampire/holy water relationship with one of these if you prefer to keep everything the same. Note that demons can be equally affected by holy water if that suits your setting.

- Holy water affects all undead as it does vampires, either Fatiguing them or causing them to combust.
- Holy water causes 2d6 damage to all undead struck by it. Raises on a Shooting or Throwing roll increase damage by 1d6 as normal.
- Holy water automatically Shakes undead, but causes no actual damage.
- Holy water slows undead, but causes no actual damage. An undead struck by holy water has to redraw all action cards of Jack or higher, with the exception of Jokers, for the remainder of the combat.
- Holy water is simply a trapping of certain Miraculous powers, such as *blast*, *bolt*, or *stun*, and exists in no other form. All effects are as per the power. If you use this method, you might allow offensive spells to cause +2 damage to vampires and have them make rolls to resist powers (such as the Vigor roll to resist *stun*) at -2.

MAKING HOLY WATER

Holy water is just normal water blessed by an ordained member of an organized religion. Usually this is the Christian faith, simply because water plays a fundamental part in that faith, but there's no reason why other religions can't have holy water.

In a fantasy game, most "good" deities should allow their priests to bless water. There may be some exceptions, of course. The god of fire, while probably a benevolent deity, is very unlikely to have water used in religious ceremonies honoring him.

As to the exact mechanics of how water is made holy, here are some suggestions. You're free to use any of them, or make up your own. Of course, there's nothing stopping the characters from going into a church and raiding the font if they can't manufacture the stuff themselves.

- An ordained character need simply say a prayer over the water to make it holy. This takes an action. At your discretion, it may also require a Faith roll.
- A character must have the Holy Warrior Edge to make holy water. This takes an action. At your discretion, it may also requires a Faith roll.
- A character must have the Arcane Background (Miracles) power. Blessing a pint of water (a grenade) or the contents of a holy water pistol requires a Faith roll and uses 1 Power Point. The water remains blessed until used or actively despoiled.

MUNDANE GEAR

Type	Weight	Cost
Crucifix/religious symbol	1/5	\$20
Ghost trap	5	\$200
Kirlian camera, still	3	\$260
Film, 24-exposure	—	\$10
Kirlian camera, video	6	\$600
Video tape, 4-hours	—	\$20
Kirlian goggles	2	\$1400
Mirror	2	\$25
Motion tracker	4	\$650
Neck protector, leather	1	\$30
Neck protector, metal	3	\$120
UV flashlight	4	\$65
Battery	1	\$10
Warding material	1	\$5

- Holy water is simply a trapping of certain Miraculous powers, such as *blast*, *bolt*, or *stun*. If the priesthood in question is "good," the priest can switch between a holy water trapping and his regular trapping as he needs.

In the battle against supernatural creatures the ability to detect and contain undead is as important as the ability to destroy them. Here are some sample gear an intrepid monster hunter might find useful.

CRUCIFIX

In "traditional" horror games, crosses and crucifixes have power over vampires. Usually they are held at arm's length to keep the bloodsucker at bay, but they can cause severe burns when touched against a vampire's flesh.

Of course, whether or not they have this secondary effect depends on the needs of your setting. In a pulpy game, this might be a foregone conclusion, but in a dark game of vile horrors, it may be a red herring.

Whether a cross has this power over other supernatural evil creatures, such as demons, is again your choice. For instance, a silver crucifix might work against lycanthropes.

Assuming the vampire isn't wearing armor, a successful Touch Attack with a crucifix inflicts 2d6 damage. Crosses do not work through armor. The attacker must make a Called Shot to bypass armor.

If you're allowing crosses, you might wish to think about allowing the Star of David, Yin-Yang, and other religious/spiritual symbols to have the same affect.

GHOST TRAP

Ghost traps are designed to work in conjunction with atomic ghost hunter packs. Indeed, unless a ghost is maneuvered over a ghost trap by an atomic pack's ensnarement field, the ghost hunter has to

MELEE WEAPONS

Type	Damage	Weight	Min Str.	Cost	Notes
Corpse Catcher	None	4	d6	\$300	Reach 1; see notes
Stake	Str+1	2	—	\$10	

RANGED WEAPONS

Type	Range	Damage	ROF	Cost	Weight	Shots	Min Str	Notes*
Atomic ghost pack	5/10/20	Special	1	\$3000	15	15	d6	
Flare pistol	3/6/12	2d6+1	1	\$100	4	1	—	1 action to reload
Holy water grenade	5/10/20**	Special	—	\$30	2	—	—	Small Burst Template
Holy water pistol	1/2/3	Special	1	\$50	4	10	—	
Repeating crossbow	15/30/60	2d6	3	\$800	12	36	d6	AP 2, Autofire
Stake	2/4/8**	Str+1	—	\$10	2	—	—	
Winch crossbow	10/20/40	2d6	1	\$650	15	1	d6	AP 2; 1 action to
UV Grenade	5/10/20**	Special	—	\$100	2	—	—	Medium Burst Template

* See Notes in all cases ** Thrown range

AMMUNITION

Ammo	Weight	Cost	Notes
Crossbow, repeating	6	\$75	AP 2; holds 36 quarrels
Crossbow, winch	1	\$10	AP 2
Garlic bullets*	+0/50	+\$5/50	Cause normal damage against vampires
Silver bullets*	+1/50	+\$10/50	Cause normal damage against lycanthropes
Silver nitrate bullets*	+1/50	+\$20/50	+4 damage against werewolves
UV bullets*	+1/50	+\$100/50	+4 damage against vampires; negates halving of damage

* Weight and cost are in addition to regular ammunition of the same caliber.

hope the spirit accidentally blunders onto his trap for it to work.

A ghost trap is basically a rectangular box, about 12" x 6" x 3", with a double lid. It can be activated by hand, or via remote control by way of a handset attached to the trap with a 2 yard cable. Both activation methods count as an action.

Ghost traps work by generating a powerful energy field capable of sucking ethereal creatures into the trap. Once a ghost is over the trap and the device activated, the ghost must make an opposed Strength roll against the trap's Strength of d12. On a failure, the spirit is sucked into the box, from which it cannot escape. An entity trapped in a ghost trap cannot use any powers to affect the outside world, either.

It is important to note that the ghost trap only works on ethereal entities. It has no effect on corporeal beings, including ethereal beings possessing a physical body.

photographic plate that receives an electrical charge generates an image of electrical fields in the part touching the plate. The aura it produces is said to be the "life force" of the object.

Let's get one thing straight, though. Kirlian photography isn't much use in hunting ghosts or other ethereal monsters in the real world. Why? Because to generate an image, the target must be touching the recording equipment.

However, in a horror game, Kirlian photography works slightly differently. In a horror setting, Kirlian photography can be used to detect ethereal entities by catching snapshots of their energy aura without requiring the ghost to touch the photographic plate.

Although it isn't much use in a fire fight, the Kirlian still camera can aid investigations. A typical Kirlian camera holds a 24-exposure film with a special coating and doesn't need a flash. It captures ethereal beings even in total darkness.

KIRLIAN CAMERA, STILL

Kirlian photography was invented in 1939 by a scientist named Semyon Kirlian. He discovered that an object touching a

KIRLIAN CAMERA, VIDEO

The next step up from the still camera is the Kirlian video camera. The tape, again it's a special tape, has a 4-hour play time.



The film cannot be watched while it is recording, however, but it can be played back after the event through the viewfinder.

KIRLIAN GOGGLES

These are state-of-the-art ghost hunting goggles. They look exactly like standard image intensifier or night vision goggles, but the lenses are coated in a special film that allows the user to see the aura generated by ethereal entities. When worn, the user can see invisible and/or ethereal entities and suffers no penalty to attack them.

However, since everything generates a faint Kirlian aura, it makes interaction with the normal world difficult. The wearer suffers a -1 penalty to all actions not directly involving an ethereal entity.

MIRROR

Mirrors have no special powers against supernatural monsters (except medusae), but they do let characters peek around corners without having to expose their head to any critter waiting for them.

MOTION TRACKER

Handheld motion trackers are designed to pick up movement of any sort, and that extends to ethereal entities as well as corporeal ones. Remember though, they detect movement, but have no special ability to detect life or unlife. An object blowing in the wind registers as well as an invisible monster advancing toward you. For this reason, they are best used indoors.

Motion trackers have an effective range of 20 yards (10"), though signals can be detected up to 40 yards (20") away with a successful Smarts roll.

Motion trackers do not work through walls, but so long as there is some opening between the target and the sensor, they function. A sealed room may be full of targets, but the sensor cannot register them. Open a door, and it works fine.

The tracker comes with a readout screen marked with numbered range bands and several controls to adjust the sensitivity to filter out small creatures, such as rats, and to account for atmospheric distortion. Moving objects appear as blips on the screen, which gives range and direction, accompanied by a pinging sound which gets louder as the sensor nears the target.

The tracker only work in the user's front arc, however—which leaves him open to surprise attack from the flank or rear.

NECK PROTECTOR

Neck protectors are used to stop vampires sinking their fangs into a person's neck. They are just a simple, wide band of

leather or metal (usually leather backed for comfort) that covers the entire neck. They provide either +1 Armor, for leather, or +3 for metal.

They provide no protection against Called Shots to the head, unless the attacker states he's aiming for the neck (such as in a decapitation attack).

UV FLASHLIGHT

Unlike regular flashlights, ultraviolet flashlights do not give off visible light, and thus are no use for illuminating an area unless the user is wearing nightvision goggles. However, they are an effective weapon against vampires.

As with a regular flashlight, they project a beam 10" long. Aiming them requires a Shooting roll, but because pinpoint accuracy is not required, the attacker receives a +2 bonus. This is effectively a Touch Attack with a ranged weapon. Vampires completely covered by clothing, including sunglasses, are not affected by UV flashlights.

Any vampire struck by the beam suffers 2d10 damage and has a chance of catching fire. Treat the flashlight as being good for 30 "shots" before the battery is drained. The weight and cost of the flashlight includes a battery.

WARDING MATERIAL

Warding material covers garlic (for vampires), wolfsbane (for lycanthropes), and cold iron (for demons). Other materials exist, of course, but exactly what they are depends on your setting and the weaknesses of any monsters therein.

Shaped into necklaces or bracelets, warding material gives creatures the material is designed to thwart a -2 penalty to Fighting rolls against the wearer. It has no affect on other creatures. Wearing multiple charms of the same material does not grant a cumulative penalty.

SANITY & FEAR

This section takes a look at introducing rules for sanity, which are perfectly suited to any style of horror, and also provides some expanded notes on what can cause characters to make a Guts roll.

SANITY

For those of you looking to expand Fear into something far more traumatic, here's some guidelines on using a new derived stat called Sanity. These are based on rules

presented in *Tour of Darkness*, with something similar appearing in *Rippers*.

STARTING SANITY

If you're going to use Sanity in your horror game, you need to create a new derived statistic called Sanity. Characters begin the game with Sanity equal to 2 plus half their Spirit. Ideally, you should also create some Edges and Hindrances to modify this. More on that later.

Once Sanity has been determined, it can only be altered by a permanent gain or reduction to Spirit. Each die step grants a +1 or -1 penalty respectively to the character's permanent Sanity score. For instance, a character who increases his Spirit die by one step through advancement also gains +1 permanent Sanity. If he had his Spirit lowered by a *lower trait* spell, his Sanity would be unaffected.

A positive Sanity number means a character is well grounded and stable, while a negative number means that he's starting to get that weird light in his eye that says, "Wow, this axe would look good in your head."

Anything from grisly horrors of war, to supernatural creatures, to certain items (books, strange idols, and other esoteric things) can cause a fluctuation in Sanity.

LOSING SANITY

As a character continues his journey against the forces of darkness, he is often forced to endure and witness things that push him to his limits. Couple with this the dark secrets found in musty tomes, and you have a mind numbing cocktail capable of pushing even the most down-to-earth to the brink of madness.

Anytime a character fails a Guts check he loses one point of Sanity. A character who rolls a 1 on his Guts die, regardless of Wild Die, loses two points of Sanity. Should he roll a critical failure, he loses three points of Sanity and must roll on the Sanity Table, regardless of his current Sanity total.

Irrespective of to what degree the roll was failed, all characters also suffer the effects of Fear as normal.

RECOVERING SANITY

In general, it's far easier to go mad than become sane. The mind can be a fragile thing and, as with the body, it's easier to cause harm than it is to heal. However, recovering Sanity is possible, if a little slow. By far the easiest method is to stay away from scary things.

The Sanity Recovery Table below lists a few ways in which he can try to repair the damage. As GM, feel free to add additional items to the list as they arise in your campaign. A character's Sanity can never exceed his normal maximum.

SANITY RECOVERY TABLE

Condition	Recovery
Successful adventure	+1
Two "sane" months	+1

Successful Adventure: The character recovers one Sanity point if he participated in a successful adventure in which a horror was defeated. You may wish to place further guidelines on this, such as the character actively being involved in the final battle, or only adventures where the characters earn 3 Experience Points count.

Sane Months: A character who goes two months without losing any Sanity recovers one point.

TREATMENT

Another way of restoring Sanity is to undergo some sort of psychiatric treatment, whether that be seeing a shrink or booking oneself in at a lunatic asylum.

Any treatment center should be given a die type based on how good its care is. You can also adjust this for the type of setting you're running. A lunatic asylum in the modern age might have a d10 rating, for instance, but a backwater asylum in Egypt during the 1890's might warrant only a d4.

Once per game month, the GM rolls the center's die, which is modified by the hero's Sanity. Each success and raise allows the character to gain +1 Sanity. With a failure, the month is spent recuperating with no gain. Should the die roll be a natural 1, the character gets worse and loses another point of Sanity.

Whatever the result, the hero cannot take part in any adventures, research, or anything else of this nature. For all intents and purposes, he is out of the game.

Alternately, you might allow a fellow character to help the patient. The "doctor" must have a Healing skill of d4+ and have a positive Sanity score himself (otherwise you get the mad curing the mad).

Each month, the doctor rolls his Healing skill, modified by the patient's current Sanity score. Success and failure are as above. Obviously with this method both the doctor and patient are out of the game for at least one month.

Whatever the method, treatment can never raise a hero's Sanity above 0.

How much does all this cost? As a guideline, an asylum or shrink charges 1d6 x \$200 per month, though you can alter this depending on the setting.

LOSING IT

If a hero's Sanity slips too far he becomes twitchy, nervous and a little peculiar. If he isn't treated, he can become dangerously unhinged.

Anytime a Sanity loss takes a character to -1 or lower, he must make a Spirit roll. Those who fail develop a quirk or personality

disorder. This acts as an additional Hindrance for the hero (who does not get any points for this Hindrance—it's simply the price he pays for the descent into madness).

Roll on the table on page 22 to determine the disorders afflicting the character. The character rolls a d20 and adds the Fear modifier of the encounter as a positive number.

Some results have definite game effects while others manifest themselves only in the way the player roleplays them. Prolonged therapy may correct or permanently remove these disorders in time (at your discretion).

If duplicate results are rolled on the Psychosis Table, the problem becomes worse. Maybe a character's superstition goes from carrying a rabbit's foot to having to kill a fresh rabbit before each adventure to bathe in its blood. The details are left to the imagination of the individual GM.

EDGES & HINDRANCES

As we mentioned earlier, if you're going to introduce rules for Sanity, you might want to consider inventing some new Edges and Hindrances that allow a character to modify his Sanity total. There's also nothing to stop you modifying existing Edges or Hindrances related to scary situations either.

Here are some examples.

DOUBTING THOMAS (MAJOR HINDRANCE)

Besides the description presented in *Savage Worlds*, Doubting Thomases are just not prepared to deal with the mind-twisting realization that these horrors could actually be real. Characters with this Hindrance suffer double Sanity loss. On the plus side, they start with a Sanity of +2.

HARDENED (WEIRD EDGE)

Requirements: Seasoned, Guts d8+

This hero has seen things that would make most men lose their mind. Somehow he's hardened himself to it and can live with it. The hero gains one extra point of Sanity during "down time." This is usually between adventures, and is entirely at the GM's discretion (a character who spends his time researching monsters shouldn't get the bonus, for example) and is in addition to any he might gain for other reasons.

SOUND MIND (SOCIAL EDGE)

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d6+

Your hero is of sound mind and not prone to flights of fancy. Although the supernatural is still frightening, he or she has the good sense to remain rooted in reality. A character with this Edge

is more likely to be able to deal with the many horrors he will encounter. Modify this hero's Sanity by +2.

MAGIC

If your horror setting makes use of magic the characters can wield, you might also want to think about allowing magic to restore Sanity, and maybe even cure insanity.

Maybe a *healing* spell can be used to regain a point of Sanity (two on a raise), so long as it is cast within an hour of the points being lost, as with physical wounds. Or maybe *greater healing* can remove psychoses from the victim's mind, returning him to his normal self and removing effects gained on the Insanity Table.

Conversely, the *fear* spell becomes more powerful, as it can lead to Sanity loss, especially if a villain uses it with great frequency.

FEAR

Whether or not you plan on using sanity in your game, there's a very strong chance you'll be using the Fear rules. After all, what's the point of playing a horror game without any chance of getting scared?

Here are some tips on using Fear. These guidelines supplement the notes on giving monsters a Fear rating from the *Horror Bestiary Toolkit*.

KNOW THE RULES

Okay, it's an obvious one, but chances are you'll be using the Fear rules a lot, so make sure you're fully conversant with them. Keep the Fright Table handy to save flicking through the book every time a Guts roll is made.

FREQUENCY OF CHECKS

Don't go overboard on forcing Guts rolls on the characters, especially for Fear checks.

Making the players roll dice every time a door creaks or there's a scratch at the window will destroy any atmosphere you've built up at the table. By all means use these sorts of tension creating events, but treat them as a tool.

Here's a quick tip for cutting down on Fear rolls—if a player roleplays his character being afraid of a mysterious scratching sound, or whatever, then don't make him roll his Guts. Simply give the character a -1 penalty for the scene, as if he failed a Fear roll. Of course, if he starts running round screaming (the character, that is), make him roll on the Fright table without a Guts check.

Likewise, if a player voluntarily makes his character run

from a monster, treat it as if he failed his Guts check and rolled Panicked on the Fright Table.

Be careful not to let the players use this as a trick to avoid the Fright Table. Acting terrified is fine once in a while, but most players aren't voluntarily going to give their characters heart attacks or phobias.

Try to find a balance between roleplaying (which is the nature of the game) and die rolling.

MODIFIERS

Be very wary of high Fear modifiers, especially when using Terror. Use scary monsters, those with a Fear rating of -1 or lower, as Big Bads rather than as thugs.

Rolling on the Fright Table with a positive modifier (remember, that means there's a negative modifier on the Guts roll) grants a cumulative 5% chance of the victim suffering a heart attack for each +1 modifier.

If you force characters to make Guts (-2) checks on a regular basis, you'll end up playing Cardiac Ward the RPG.

ADDITIONAL FEAR MODIFIERS

The Fear rules make mention of grisly discoveries and dark secrets, but they don't give any guidelines on what these mean in terms of game mechanics. How scary should a grimoire be? Here are a few examples of things that can lead to the characters making Fear rolls. Truly grisly discoveries might even cause Terror, but that's up to you.

The modifier is applied to the Guts roll and as a positive modifier when rolling on the Fright Table.

Modifier	Cause
+1/-1	Read occult grimoire touching on/detailing vile subjects
+0/-1	Discover corpse/mutilated corpse
+0	Ghostly activity
+0	Mundane shock

Corpses: Discovering the corpse of a friend or loved one makes the modifier one step worse.

Ghostly Activity: This includes poltergeist activity, as well as seeing writing in blood materialize on a wall. Depending on the severity of the phenomena, there may be a higher penalty.

Mundane Shock: A mundane shock is the classic cat leaping out from a cupboard. A roll for this should only be made if the tension surrounding the incident has been built up through roleplaying.

Occult Grimoire: Most occult books are harmless texts, and require no roll. However, certain tomes, especially those dealing with demons or necromancy, may contain passages of text or images of a disturbing nature.

INSANITY TABLE

Roll Result

- 1-2 **Superstitious:** Whether it be religion or a lucky rabbit's foot, the hero has found something that helps him deal with the terrors he faces. Pick a simple routine or object to be the focus of this disorder. As long as the focus is undisturbed, this character is fine. If the focus is lost or disturbed all Spirit rolls are made at -2 for the duration of the mission.
- 3-4 **Don't Shoot!:** This hero has seen many he perceived as innocent die in the conflicts. Because of this, he won't act in violence toward non-monsters without first being attacked himself. He always gives the benefit of the doubt to those "innocents caught in the crossfire of war." He receives the Pacifist (Minor) Hindrance.
- 5-6 **Vacant Stare:** The distant look in this character's eyes speaks volumes about the horrors he's seen. This hero makes all his Notice rolls at -2.
- 7-8 **Flashbacks:** When it really hits the fan this hero is overwhelmed by images of past encounters and dead comrades. In a combat situation, images flash through his mind, confusing the past with reality. He draws two cards per action, and acts on the worst of the two.
- 9-10 **Eternal Pessimist:** This hero has seen too many friends and innocents get killed. He finds it difficult to form relationships—why bother when they're bound to be just more meat for the grinder? Viewed as a bit of a wet blanket in the best situations, this character suffers a -4 to his Charisma. Should he have any Leadership Edges, his Command Radius is halved.
- 11-12 **Night Terrors:** Horrors affect every person differently. Your hero is plagued by the visions of things he or she has seen. Whatever the cause, this character is traumatized by past events and cannot sleep properly without drink or drugs. As a result the individual is permanently tired or intoxicated. When it is important to sleep, a failed Vigor roll (-2) means this character cannot. When it is important to stay awake, a failed Vigor roll (-2) means the tired hero falls asleep.
- 13-14 **Addiction:** This hero has seen too much and has turned to drugs as a way of coping. While they have eased the horrors locked within his mind, they have also created powerful cravings for more to keep the demons at bay. The hero has a Major Habit Hindrance.
- 15-16 **The Shakes:** When the adrenaline starts pumping, this hero starts to shake like a leaf. During combat or anytime the character is under stress, his hands start shaking, reducing all Agility and Agility related skill rolls by -1.

- 17-18 **Paranoia:** The character has seen things in his life that he simply cannot explain. He feels that every mystery has a deeper meaning and goes to great lengths to fit them into his skewed perception of the world around him. He gets the Delusional Hindrance (Major), as well as a -2 to his Charisma.
- 19-20 **Blood Lust:** The hero has seen his fair share of killing and the experience has awakened a strange lust within. He gains the Bloodthirsty Hindrance.
- 21 **Unnatural Appetite:** This character begins to believe he can survive only through eating strange and disgusting things. It starts simply enough, with bugs or paper or cigarette butts. This gives a -2 to Charisma when dealing with those who know of these weird habits. If the character rolls this result again, it begins to progress in loathsomeness. Eventually, people around the neighborhood may notice their pets have disappeared as they go to fill his appetite for blood or other entrees.
- 22 **Marked for Death:** The character has looked into the pits of Hell and seen his place setting at the table. He knows it's just a matter of time before he dies, no matter what he does. This character receives one less benny at the start of each adventure session for each time he rolls this result.
- 23+ **Permanent Psychosis:** The character has suffered a shock from which he will never recover. He spends his days drooling and drawing pictures of strange creatures, when he isn't strapped into a straightjacket and screaming at the top of his lungs—about monsters, that is.

TOMES OF POWER

One staple of horror games, whether they be camp, Gothic, or involving Things Man Was Not Meant To Know, is the tome of power.

Tomes of power come in three types, each of which is described in more detail below. Which types exist in your game should be decided while you are designing the setting. In a sci-fi setting, tomes may be fragmentary texts from a lost civilization which can manipulate energy or open portals to other realms, data files, or even instruction manuals on how to use nanites.

MUNDANE TOMES

Mundane tomes are mundane because they do not contain any magical powers. They are actually reference books of the occult, usually with a narrow focus. These aren't the sorts of occult reference books you find in the library either—these books detail things the

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

To keep it simple, it's advised that you keep the number of Knowledge skills related to the supernatural needed in your setting to a minimum. We recommend just using three.

KNOWLEDGE (ARCANA)

Covers magic topics, from determining the qualities of magic items to deciphering spells, to understanding what type of creature was summoned with the strange chalk marks on the ground.

KNOWLEDGE (OCCULT)

Covers all topics relating to supernatural creatures, including known weaknesses, strengths, and so on.

KNOWLEDGE (RELIGION)

Covers not just accepted religions, but also cults, ancient religions, sacrificial paraphernalia, and such like.

general public could not hope (or wish) to comprehend.

When the characters discover one, or you wish to plant one in an adventure, roll on each of the tables below. The first table covers the subject of the book (in terms of a Knowledge skill), and the second determines the benefit.

Of course, you can just as easily pick an entry and skill bonus to suit the adventure.

TABLE 1A: SUBJECT TABLE

The subject of a book is presented only in broad terms. We don't recommend that every topic be a separate Knowledge skill. See the sidebar on page 23 for some advice on using Knowledge skills in a horror game.

You'll notice that the list is far from exhaustive. This is a sample list to get you started. If you're planning on using mundane tomes, create a list specific to your setting. If you only have demons in your game, for instance, you could have one book per type of demon.

d20	Topic
1	Special (See below).
2-3	Astronomical Events
4-5	Demons & Devils
6-7	Ghosts
8	Mummies

9-10	Occult Magic Items
11-12	Occult Paraphernalia
13-14	Occult Places
15	Spells & Rituals
16-17	Vampires
18-19	Werewolves
20	Combination. Roll twice. Add more subjects on further results of 20.

Special: Roll again to determine the base focus of the book, rerolling further results of 1. The book also has a specific reference related to the topic, as determined by the GM.

For instance, a book on vampires might have a special section on Count Dracula, ways of curing vampirism, or the powers of vampiric brides. When used to research this specific material, the bonus increase by +1 (to a maximum of +4) and the unskilled die increases by one step (to a maximum of d6).

TABLE 1B: SKILL BONUS

Mundane tomes provide a skill bonus from +1 to +3, or give an unskilled character a base skill, depending on the level of detail of the text and pictures within.

d20	Skill bonus	No Skill
1-12	+1 bonus	d4-2
13-17	+2 bonus	d4-1
18-20	+3 bonus	d4

TABLE 1C: LANGUAGE

Occult books are seldom written in modern English. Many are centuries old, written in archaic languages, and veiled with double-meanings, ciphers, and seemingly nonsensical grammar.

If you intend on making languages a key part of your game, roll on the table below to see what language the book is written in. If you're using a real world setting, modern, futuristic, or historical use the Real World column. For fantasy games, use the Fantasy column.

d20	Real World	Fantasy
1	Sumerian	Half-Folk
2-3	Aramaic	Ancient Elven
4-8	Latin	Elven
9-11	Greek	Dwarven
12-13	Hebrew	Ancient Human
14-15	Hieroglyphs	Orcish
16	English	Giantish
17-18	Arabic	Demonic
19	French	Goblin
20	German	Dragonspeak

MUNDANE BOOK OPTIONS

NO BENNIES

It doesn't take a genius to work out that once the group has a +3 book in their hands they'll have little use for their lowly +1 volumes ever again. Here's a way to make sure all books are useful.

If a character uses a mundane tome and fails his roll, he cannot spend a benny. The book simply does not contain the references he seeks. He can, however, use another book to make the roll again, even if that book grants a lower bonus.

INVESTIGATION

Why don't mundane tomes provide a bonus to Investigation? Well, as stated before, most of them aren't written in modern languages. The authors used ciphers and codes to conceal the information so only those "in the know" could make use of the book, and because the subject material is usually esoteric and not understood by the casual reader.

In general, if you think the information would be commonly available in a modern reference book or on the web, a character can use Investigation to find it.

FLAT SKILL

Rather than granting a bonus to a skill, you might just as easily decide that books contain a fixed skill die on the specific subject. Anyone who can read the book can use the skill.

If you want to use this method, treat each book as having a specific Knowledge skill about its subject.

Rather than using the listed No Skill entry, replace that with a d4, d6, and d8. This also cuts down the need for Knowledge skills as any character can now use a book as reference.

NAMING BOOKS

Horror games require atmosphere to work well. All mundane tomes should be given a unique and flavorsome name somehow related to the topic.

For instance, if you roll a book on vampires, don't call it a Book of Vampires. Instead, why not call it the Codex of Night Fiends, the Study of Those Creatures Which Devour Blood, or the Dictionary of Vampiric Matters?



DESCRIPTION

As well as giving the tome a name, you can also give it a write up. Decide when it was written, what type of paper it is written on, whether the ink is special, whether the book has a known history, and such like.

Take a look at the example books later for some ideas on what you should do to make your mundane books stand out as important parts of your game.

USING A MUNDANE TOME

In order to use a mundane tome, a character simply has to reference it when he wishes to study the subject in question. Mundane books can be used in one of two ways.

PASSIVE

If the reader is researching the same topic as the book, he gains the relevant bonus to a Knowledge skill.

There is some leeway here, of course. A book on vampires might allow the character a bonus to his Knowledge (Religion) roll if he is researching ancient blood cults and a bonus to his Knowledge (Occult) if he is looking for advice on defeating a specific type of vampire.

A character with no Knowledge skill can still use the book, but only with regard to its specific topic. If the character finds a name written in blood at the scene of a murder that you know belongs to a demon, reading a book on vampires isn't going to provide any benefit.

Most books, as can be seen from the chart, give the character the same skill die as if he were making the roll unskilled. The advantage of using the book is that the character can actually make the roll. Most Knowledge skills, especially when referring to supernatural topics, should not be allowed to be attempted unskilled.

How long does it take to research something from a book? A quick guide is to have a default time of one hour plus one hour per +1 bonus of the book. Remember, occult tomes rarely have indexes or glossaries, and the language is likely to be an older form either handwritten or printed with a hard-to-read typeface.

ACTIVE

A reader can use an appropriate book to gain a bonus to non-Knowledge skills. For instance, a character trying to summon a demon can use a book on summoning to gain a bonus to his Spellcasting roll. The book doesn't contain any spells, but it does provide guidelines on suitable warding and incantations.

A doctor with access to a book on demons who suspects the heart attack victim he is treating may have been kissed by a

succubus can use the bonus on his Healing roll.

Exactly what skills your players can claim bonuses for is left to you to decide. Just remember though, that in a modern setting, it is likely to raise a few eyebrows if a doctor starts reading from an ancient Latin text on demons while resuscitating a patient.

SAMPLE MUNDANE BOOKS

Here's a selection of mundane books you can use straight off the page. Each book is listed by title, author's name, year of publication, the language it is written in, and then any notes, including bonuses.

THE LAND OF ATLANTIS

Walter Johnson, 1903, English

Written in Maine at the turn of the last century, this work draws on both Plato and the work of Ignatius Donnelly. Although written as a work of fiction describing a mariner's accidental discovery of the island, Atlantis-hunters have long insisted that Johnson, a mariner by profession, actually visited the island.

It grants a +3 bonus (or d4 skill) but only when specifically used to research Atlantis.

ECLIPSES, ALIGNMENTS, AND OTHER CELESTIAL EVENTS

Richard Blake, 1854, English

Blake was a noted occultist during the Victorian era. He and his works would likely have faded into obscurity had he not mysteriously vanished during a planetary alignment in 1856.

The book covers all manner of celestial activity for occult purposes, but is very wordy and makes use of complex diagrams. It grants a +1 bonus (or d4-2 skill) when dealing with astronomical alignments.

EGYPTIAN BOOK OF THE DEAD

Unknown, c.2713 BC, Egyptian hieroglyphs

Many copies of the Egyptian Book of the Dead are available in print from bookstores, but this particular version, said by Egyptologists to be a myth, goes into greater detail about the rituals and charms used in mummification.

It grants a +1 bonus (or d4-2 skill) when dealing with mummies. A small chapter covers Egyptian talismans in great detail. This section gives a +2 (d4-1 skill) bonus when used to research ancient Egyptian magic items.

LEYLINES OF WESTERN EUROPE

Cecilia Hapgood-Warren, 1899, French

Published in Paris in 1899, this tome uses spurious logic and happenstance to link all the major prehistoric sites of Western Europe together through leylines. The illustrations of the sites are accurate and the descriptions show the author had likely visited them all.

It grants a +2 bonus (or d4-1 skill) when dealing with places situated on leylines.

THE SEALING OF JARS

Mustafah ibn-Iblis, 716, Arabic

The author makes no claims that this is an original work, instead alluding to an earlier scroll written around the time of King Solomon. The work describes the rituals used by King Solomon to bind rebellious genies into copper jars, which were then deposited in the sea.

The author's name is likely fictitious, as the word Iblis refers to the Islamic version of Satan.

It grants a +2 bonus (or d4-1 skill) when dealing with binding rituals (see page 35) and a +3 bonus (d4 skill) when referencing Arabic demons (also called djinn, efrin, and ghuls) with any Knowledge roll.

SPELL TOMES

Spell tomes are a special form of book. They bestow no skill bonuses, but are instead learning tools for those able to work occult powers.

Each tome contains a single spell. So long as he has the same Arcane Background as the writer, a character with an Arcane Background can try to use a tome to increase his power.

To study from the book, the character must spend 1d6 hours per Rank of the spell in quiet study. At the end of this time he makes a Smarts roll. If the character's Rank is below that of the spell, the roll has a -1 penalty per step difference (for instance, a Novice trying to learn *greater healing*, a Heroic spell, would suffer a -3 penalty). Conversely, if the character's Rank exceeds that of the spell, he gains a +1 bonus per step.

If the roll is successful, the reader may add the spell to his repertoire and begin using it, even if he doesn't meet the Rank requirement.

With a failure, the character must begin the study process from scratch. His Smarts roll to learn the spell suffers a cumulative -1 penalty for each failed attempt. When the penalty reaches -4, the character has one final attempt to learn the spell. Should he fail, he may never try to learn from this book again.

Should the character roll a 1 on his Smarts die, regardless of his Wild Die, he has completely failed to grasp the spell. He may never learn the spell from this book, no matter how hard he studies.

Tomes are valuable in game mechanic terms because they allow a spellcaster to learn a new power without taking the New Power Edge.

To create a random spell tome, roll for the Arcane Background type, and then for the spell.

TABLE 2A: ARCANE BACKGROUND

1d20	Type
1-13	Arcane Background (Magic)
14-20	Arcane Background (Miracles)

TABLE 2B: RANDOM SPELL

3d20	Type
3-6	Armor
7	Barrier
8	Beast Friend
9-10	Blast
11-13	Bolt
14-15	Boost/Lower Trait
16	Burrow
17-18	Burst
19-20	Deflection
21-23	Detect/Conceal Arcana
24-25	Dispel
26	Elemental Manipulation
27-28	Entangle
29-31	Environmental Protection
32	Fear
33	Fly
34	Greater Healing
35-37	Healing
38	Invisibility
39-41	Light
42-43	Obscure
44	Puppet
45-46	Quickness
47	Shape Change
48-49	Smite
50-51	Speak Language
52-53	Speed
54-55	Stun
56-57	Telekinesis
58-59	Teleport
60	Zombie

GRIMOIRES

A grimoire is related to a spell tome in that it contains a spell, but unlike the spell tome, a grimoire is not a learning aid. Instead,

a grimoire contains a single spell that can be used straight off the page, even if the reader doesn't have an arcane background.

CREATING A GRIMOIRE

Creating a grimoire requires a few simple die rolls. Roll on each table below as instructed and record the results. After you've finished rolling the dice, use the guidelines earlier in the chapter to give the book some flavor.

TABLE 3A: ARCANE BACKGROUND

Roll a d20 to determine if the grimoire has a Faith or Spellcasting arcane skill die.

1d20	Type
1-16	Arcane Background (Magic)
17-20	Arcane Background (Miracles)

TABLE 3B: SPELL

Use Table 2B on page 27 to determine the spell.

TABLE 3C: ARCANE SKILL & POWER POINTS

To determine the grimoire's arcane skill and power points, roll twice on the table below (once for each column).

A grimoire always contains enough Power Points to cast its spell at least once. If the spell requires more Power Points than were rolled on this table, move up the column until you reach a number equal to or higher than the required Power Points.

For example: *quickness requires 4 Power Points to cast. If you only rolled 3 Power Points for the grimoire, you move up the column to the first entry that has 4 or more Power Points. In this case, the tome would have 5 Power Points.*

1d20	Arcane Skill	Power Points
1-3	d4	1
4-6	d6	3
7-13	d8	5
14-16	d10	10
17-18	d12	15
19	d12+1	20
20	d12+2	30

TABLE 3D: NUMBER OF SPECIAL ABILITIES

Roll a d20 to determine if the grimoire has any special powers. If it does, roll on Table 3E to determine what they are.

1d20	Number
1-14	None
15-17	One
18-19	Two
20	Three

TABLE 3E: SPECIAL ABILITIES

Roll a d20 for each special ability indicated above. Unless an entry says otherwise, reroll duplicate results.

1d20	Type
1-10	New Power. Roll for another spell. The grimoire uses the one set of Power Points to power all its spells.
11-13	Power Points. Increase the grimoire's Power Points by 5.
14-16	Rapid Recharge Edge. If you roll this twice, treat it as Improved Rapid Recharge. Reroll a third result.
17-18	Mastery. Increase the grimoire's Wild Die one step (max d12).
19-20	Wizard Edge. Use for both types of Arcane Background.

USING A GRIMOIRE

A grimoire can be used one of two ways, depending on whether or not the reader has an Arcane Background. However the power is invoked, any backlash as a result of a poor arcane skill roll affects the reader, not the grimoire.

NO ARCANE BACKGROUND

A character without an Arcane Background must use the grimoire's arcane skill die and its Power Points. The grimoire always rolls a Wild Die.

Any variable linked to a trait uses the reader's trait. Thus, *puppet*, for instance, has a Range of the reader's Smarts.

The character must have the grimoire open in front of him, be able to speak, and have some way of turning the pages. For a variable spell, such as *bolt*, the caster must declare how many Power Points he is investing before he rolls the arcane skill die.

There is no need to state in advance how long the spell is being maintained. The grimoire automatically pays the maintenance cost until it runs out of Power Points or the caster closes the book (which cancels the spell). Power Points in a grimoire recharge as normal (usually one per hour).



ARCANE BACKGROUND

A character with the same Arcane Background as the grimoire can invoke the spell using his own arcane skill die if he prefers. There is no bonus or penalty to do this—it's simply a choice he has.

Likewise, the character may elect to use his own Power Points to cast or maintain the spell, treating the spell as if it were one he had cast from his collection.

Otherwise, he may treat the grimoire as if he had no Arcane Background as above.

EXAMPLE GRIMOIRES

Here's some sample grimoires ready to use. Each has a name, its arcane type and skill, Power Points, spell, any special abilities, and some flavor text.

BOOK OF EARTHLY RESURRECTION

Arcane Skill: Spellcasting d10

Power Points: 10

Spell: *Zombie*

Special Abilities: Rapid Recharge, Wizard

Created by a necromancer, this book appears at first glance to restore life. Only with closer examination does the reader realize that the grimoire only returns the physical form to life—as a mindless slave. Any non-evil character invoking the spell must make a Guts roll.

BOOK OF THE WRITHING ONE

Arcane Skill: Spellcasting d12

Power Points: 3

Spell: *Blast* and *entangle*

Special Abilities: Mastery (d8), New Power

Written in honor of Vralkresh, a dark god, this tome deals with the conjuration of black, slimy tentacles tipped with biting mouths. The tentacles are capable not just of holding a foe tight, but also of stripping away his flesh.

The book is actually unfinished. Not only does it end halfway through a paragraph, leaving almost 20 pages blank, but the low Power Points do not fit well with its high arcane skill and mastery ability.

A complete copy, if such exists, will have many more Power Points (use 20 if you create a full copy).

THE DARK SCRIPTURE

Arcane Skill: Faith d6

Power Points: 8

Spell: *Puppet*

Special Abilities: Power Points

Although the original is said to date from Sumerian times, this Latin version of the Dark Scripture was written around 1640. According to a passage near the front of the book, it was originally written to ensure a steady supply of “willing” brides available for the demon the writer served.

THE FLETCHER'S GUIDE

Arcane Skill: Spellcasting d8

Power Points: 5

Spell: *Bolt*

Special Abilities: None

This slim volume was crafted by a dark wizard to allow his minions to protect him while he was engaged in performing summoning rituals.

LIBER TIMOR

Arcane Skill: Faith d8

Power Points: 20

Spell: *Fear* and *stun*

Special Abilities: New Power

Known in English as the Book of Fear, this Latin tome originally dates from Roman times, though it has been rewritten many times throughout the ages. Supposedly written by priests of Pluto, the Roman god of the underworld, it contains numerous incantations for evoking fear.

The first half of the book deals with invoking fear, terrorizing victims with vivid hallucinations, and even stopping their hearts with fright. The second half is concerned with driving victims into a temporary stupor by invoking terrible images in their minds.

DARK MAGICKS

The magic in a horror game often comes in two forms—the type used by the good guys (the characters), and that used by the bad guys. As you might have guessed by the title, this chapter deals with the latter.

In a sci-fi game, dark magic might be a mathematical rote or complex equation which if repeated or solved manipulates the barrier between dimensions. For most other settings, dark magic is simply another form of magic.

Whether or not you allow the characters to dabble in the black arts is up to you. It's your game.

SUMMONING RITUALS

For the most part, the summoning of demons, ghosts, dark gods and other supernatural entities can be handled by the needs of the story. If the evil cultist priest has to summon forth a dark god to progress the story, then no game mechanics are required.

However, for those GMs that want to let fate decide, and for players who wish to make contact with otherworldly creatures, here are some guidelines on using summoning magic.

WHAT CAN BE SUMMONED?

Not every creature can be summoned through magic. The first thing you need to decide are exactly which entities can be summoned, and which can't.

There are no right or wrong choices here. Whatever you want to be summonable can be summoned. However, as a rough guideline, noncorporeal creatures, such as ghosts, should be considered summonable, as should as all demons. Other creatures depend on the needs of your setting.

Using the creatures from the *Horror Bestiary Toolkit*, we suggest that only animators, the Black Judge, dark gods, demonic steeds, demons, devilkin, emotion spirits, ghosts, gladiators, helldrakes, hellhounds, living gods, and terrorizers be allowed. If you have the *Fantasy Bestiary Toolkit*, you can add creatures like elementals and jinn to the list (there's also another batch of demons you can lift straight off the page).

SUMMONING SPELLS

In order to summon an entity, one needs to know the correct ritual. While you could simply create a single Summon Entity spell, we suggest you give thought to creating one spell for each being. Using this method, you can control what the players can summon (by handing out the spell), and more importantly, you can craft each spell around the specific nature of the creature being called forth.

We'll look at each aspect of a summoning spell individually, to give you an idea of how to go about crafting specific spells. At the end of this section, we present some example summoning spells.

As always, these are merely suggestions and guidelines for you to play with as you see fit.

RANK

Summonings are not without risk (often mortal danger is involved) and the magic used to call forth extradimensional beings are beyond the ken of amateurs and dabblers. As such, summoning spells should require a minimum of Seasoned rank, and these are for the weaker creatures.

As one rises through the ranks, so one learns the techniques

needed to summon more powerful entities. Creatures such as gladiators and helldrakes should require Veteran or Heroic status, whereas dark gods should need Heroic or Legendary level summoners.

COST

Opening gateways to other realms is tiring, physically and mentally. The boundaries between our world and the next are deliberately hard to breach, primarily in order to stop these beings from simply blundering into our world en masse.

At a guideline, a summoning spell should require a number of Power Points equal to $10 + (\text{the creature's Size} \times 10)$. Treat creatures with a negative Size as Size +0 for these purposes.

You may wish to lower this for "common" creatures, such as hellhounds or demonic steeds. In these cases, using a cost of just 5 or 10 Power Points, or maybe 5 plus 5 per point of Size over zero can be used.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to work out that no mage can hope to summon a dark god, or even a large demon, not by himself anyway. Cultist priests have cultist followers for more reasons than the love of being exalted by fellow madmen. One reason is to aid in summoning rituals.

The character performing the rite is called the summoner, and he may use as many or as few of his Power Points as he desires. Clever summoners try to use as few as possible, just in case the summoning goes wrong and magic is required to save one's own life.

Every other person involved in the ceremony, known as participants, may give a number of Power Points equal to half their Spirit die, regardless of whether he has an Arcane Background or not. Of course, these participants aren't actually focusing true Power Points, but rather fill a supporting role, lending power in the form of chants and ritual dances.

Participants with an Arcane Background may spend up to their maximum Power Points, so long as their Background is the same type as that of the summoner. So a wizard can help another wizard, but a dark priest could not help the mage.

RANGE

Range is less important for summoning spells than for those that affect a target. Summoning spells open gateways that only certain creatures can cross, but they do not impel the creature to step through. However, the caster should be fairly close to the summoned creature. Typically the summoned creature must appear within the viewer's sight to a range of Smarts $\times 2$ yards.

DURATION

Summoning spells typically come in one of two durations—temporary and indefinite.

Temporary summonings can last for hours, days, weeks,

even years, or until the summoned creature has performed one task set by the summoner. In most cases, the latter has a time limit of a year and a day to stop the summoned creature from accomplishing their goal and being returned to their own realm.

In all temporary summonings, when the duration expires, the creature simply vanishes.

Most summonings should be of temporary duration, but the exact length is up to you. One way to handle this is simply to list a fixed duration for the spell. Another is to have a base duration, and then an extra cost if the summoner wishes to extend the period. Unlike regular spells, these extra points are spent at the time of casting, and not treated in the same as maintaining powers.

For instance, a *summon devilkin* spell might have a duration of just one night. However, for an extra 5 Power Points, this can be extended to three days, for 10 Power Points it becomes a week, and for 15 Power Points the creature can stay in our realm for a month.

With indefinite duration summoning, the creature is free to remain until it is destroyed or gets bored and goes home of its own volition. Few choose the latter option voluntarily.

Ideally, very few spells of this sort should exist, especially with regard to higher level beasts. Aside from mad cultists, who really wants to have a dark god running around terrorizing the planet for eternity?

TRAPPINGS

All summoning spells require trappings. Every spell requires candles or braziers, chanting, and gestures as a minimum, but they should also have unique trappings dependent on the type of creature being summoned. This is purely for flavor.

For instance, the dark god Crazalphasalius (the fire god) can only be summoned if there is a conflagration at least the size of a burning house as a trapping. Summoning a demon of gluttony might require \$500 of food to be used as a trapping.

Trappings can also be tied to celestial events, such as phases of the moon, or planetary alignments, although the latter should be reserved for truly powerful creatures and acts as a natural limitation of how often these monstrosities can be summoned.

TIMING

Most spells in *Savage Worlds* require only a single action to invoke. However, summoning spells are long, elaborate rituals, requiring a great deal of time. The casting time for a ritual is one minute per Power Point.

Although Power Points are allocated at the start of the ritual, they aren't actually spent until the die roll is made. During the ritual, the loss of any participant means a reduction in Power Points, which might make the spell uncastable.



For this reason, and for other reasons we'll look at in just a minute, cultist priests often have more cultists than they need at the ritual to ensure a healthy supply of power.

ARCANE SKILL ROLL

Aside from the high Power Point cost, summoning powerful entities is extremely difficult. Every syllable and inflection of the complex ritual must be chanted correctly, and even if that is done, there is no guarantee a creature of the appropriate type senses the open gateway.

As such, every summoning spell has a penalty to the arcane skill roll. This is basically an artificial way of preventing characters from summoning dark gods every week. Although you're free to create your own modifiers, we have supplied some examples based on the monsters in the *Horror Bestiary Toolkit*.

There's no equation used to calculate these values—they're simply based on the overall power of the creature being summoned.

Creature	Modifier
Animators	+0
Black Judge	+0
Dark Gods	-12
Demonic Steed	+0
Demons	-2 to -4
Devilkin	-1
Emotion Spirits	-1
Ghosts	+0
Gladiators	-4
Helldrakes	-8
Hellhounds	+0
Living Gods	-2
Terrorizers	-1

Yep, some of these penalties are quite high, but don't worry, there are ways of reducing them. Remember those extra cultists we spoke about earlier? Well, they come in handy right now.

For every sentient life sacrificed, the summoner gets a +1 bonus to his arcane skill roll. Well, this section isn't called dark magicks for nothing, you know.

Sometimes things go wrong with summonings, and it's at this time that the summoner should be grateful he (hopefully) kept some Power Points back.

If the roll is merely failed, the spell simply fails to yield results and all the Power Points are lost. If the summoner rolls a 1 on his arcane skill die (regardless of Wild Die), the creature is summoned as normal but is not bound to listen to the summoner's bargain (see below). It may act freely for 2d6 rounds before it is forced back to its own realm.

Should the roll be a critical failure, the summoner has somehow managed to call forth a different type of entity (GM's choice), which again is not forced to listen to any bargain and may act freely for 2d6 rounds.

BARGAINING

Okay, so now you've summoned a demon, you need to make a deal with it. That's right, foolish mortal, summoned creatures aren't bound to obey the summoner's every whim.

Just a quick note before we go into the details, though—no mortal can ever strike a bargain with a Dark God, no matter what he has to offer. Most of these entities are completely insane, and look upon their followers as they would a speck of crap on the bottom of their foot (or whatever they use to get around on). Summoned dark gods usually go on an immediate killing spree, starting with the cultists who foolishly summoned them.

If you're using the Dark Judge from the *Horror Bestiary Toolkit* in your game, you can't bargain with him either. He judges the summoner, then he decides if he wants to help or not. Summoners can't compel him to assist them, no matter how worthy their cause might be. The Dark Judge answers to no mortal.

Until a bargain is attempted the summoned creature (barring failed rolls and the exceptions above) cannot try to kill the summoner. The summoning magic automatically gives the summoner a fighting chance before the creature is released fully into the world. However, if you want to add an extra stage in here, check out Warding on page 34.

The summoner must state the exact bargain he is striking (the player must speak it aloud). He doesn't have to offer the creature anything in return, but it is often wise to offer it at least a token.

The bargain must be of 20 words or less and cannot contain more than two clauses (they usually follow words like "but," "if," "however," and "and"). If the character breaks these simple rules, the bargain is instantly declared null and void, and the creature may act as if the summoner had scored a critical failure on his bargaining roll (see below).

In order to strike a bargain with the creature, the summoner must succeed in a Persuasion roll at -2 opposed by the creature's Smarts. The summoner can try to Intimidate the creature, but the roll is made at -6 (some creatures are immune to Intimidation) and opposed by the creature's Spirit. Let's face it, when you live in a Hell realm, some mortal threatening to whup your butt is rather laughable. There are modifiers to either roll, however, as shown on the table below.

With success, the creature is bound by magic to carry out the bargain to the best of its abilities. On a failure, the creature is automatically forced to return to its own realm of existence. On a roll of 1 on the skill die, regardless of the Wild Die, the creature is freed for 2d6 rounds before it is forced to go home. During this time, it usually attacks the summoner for his impudence. Should the roll be a critical failure, the creature manages to find a loophole in the bargain. It is not bound, nor forced to go home. Instead, it usually attacks the summoner before going off to do what it does best.

BARGAINING MODIFIERS

Event	Modifier
Appropriate cause	+2
Inappropriate cause	-4
Offering (per \$1000)	+1
True Name	+4
Weapon of weakness	+2

Appropriate Cause: Most summoned creatures have a purpose, and summoning them to perform a duty related to that cause pleases them. A terrorizer, for instance, often gladly works for a summoner who lets it cause terror.

Inappropriate Cause: An inappropriate cause is one related to the creature's reason for existence. A plague demon asked to retrieve a relic isn't going to be a happy demon, for instance.

Offerings: Extradimensional creatures don't want money or

mobile phones, but they are partial to gemstones (purely because they cost the mortal a lot), rare spices (for the same reason), and magic items (which they keep).

True Name: Names have power, and a summoner knowing the individual creature's True Name has greater bargaining potential. Remember, even demons of the same type have unique names. Discovering a creature's True Name might involve an adventure, or just an Investigation roll (typically with a -4 modifier).

Weapon of Weakness: Certain entities suffer from a weakness to specific materials, such as demons and cold iron. Having a weapon capable of harming the creature is a powerful bargaining tool, though if the bargain fails the creature will no doubt look unkindly at attempts to threaten it into submission.

SAMPLE SUMMONING SPELLS

As promised, here are some sample summoning spells to get your brain ticking over. None of the spells have effects listed, as they all perform the same function of calling forth a beast from another realm.

All trappings, unless otherwise stated, are in addition to candles or braziers, chants, and gestures.

Of course, creatures should arrive in a suitable manner. A plague demon's arrival may be heralded by a swarm of flies hovering over the place it will appear, for instance, whereas Crazalphasalius appears in a shimmering heat haze (shortly before he incinerates everything in sight on a whim).

SUMMON BLACK JUDGE

Rank: Seasoned
Power Points: 10
Range: Smarts x 2
Duration: Five minutes
Trappings: The problem the Black Judge is to solve must be written on a piece of paper and then burnt.

SUMMON GLUTTONY DEMON

Rank: Veteran
Power Points: 40
Range: Smarts x 2
Duration: One day (can be extended by one day per 5 additional Power Points)
Trappings: Food with a minimum value of \$500.

SUMMON JJRIKILLIMSG

Rank: Heroic
Power Points: 90

Range: Smarts
Duration: One hour
Trappings: Must be cast on a full moon when the star Sirius is in the sky.

SUMMON LIBRARIAN DEMON

Rank: Seasoned
Power Points: 20
Range: Smarts x 2
Duration: One hour (extended to 6 hours for +5 Power Points one day for +10 Power Points, and a week for +20 Power Points)
Trappings: An item of knowledge, (In a modern game, Librarians might accept CD or USB storage devices as well as ancient tomes.)

SUMMON LIVING GOD

Rank: Veteran
Power Points: 30
Range: Smarts x 2
Duration: One day (can be extended to three days for +5 Power Points, a week for +10, and a further +10 for each subsequent week)
Trappings: An item appropriate to the faith of the living god (a cat for a living god of the Egyptian goddess Bast, or a large hammer for one of Thor, for example).

SUMMON TERRORIZER

Rank: Veteran
Power Points: 20
Range: Smarts x 2
Duration: One day (can be extended by one day for each +5 Power Points).
Trappings: A quart of fresh blood.

WARDING

The system presented above is Fast, Furious, and Fun! It does the job perfectly well, but for those of you who want some extra flavor, here's an additional stage to add to the summoning ritual.

When an entity is summoned, it is not bound from tearing the summoner limb from limb. In order to get to the bargaining stage, the summoner must summon the beast inside a warding, be that a pentacle drawn in chalk, a circle of iron rods, or Star of David made from salt or holy water. Again, note that no warding can hold a dark god, no matter how powerful it is.

CREATING A WARDING

A warding is not a spell, but a physical object. Although the object may seem flimsy compared to the might of a demon lord, it is the magic inherent in the warding that keeps the entity at bay.

In order to create a suitable warding, the summoner must first know what warding works against a specific creature. Locating this knowledge requires an Investigation or Knowledge (Arcana or Occult) roll, usually with at least a -2 penalty. Ideally, the GM should make this roll, for reasons which will become obvious below.

Of course, the summoner needs appropriate reference material. This may be an old tome located in a library's restricted section or a browse on the web, depending on your game setting. Note as well that the same warding applies to every entity of the same type. That is, every gluttony demon, for instance, is bound by the same warding.

With success, the summoner finds what he is looking for. Raises on this roll give bonuses, as detailed below. Note that once the summoner knows a specific warding, he does not have to research it again. He should note any raises he scores on his character sheet for future reference.

On a failure, the summoner merely wastes his time, but he may try again. Should he roll a 1 on his skill die, regardless of Wild Die, he has found erroneous information but believes it to be correct. On a critical failure, the data is for the wrong type of entity and the warding has no chance of working, but the summoner remains ignorant of this.

Once he has the knowledge to hand, the summoner must then create the warding. This requires a steady hand as well as knowledge, as the slightest error can spell disaster. The summoner creates the ward before the ritual begins, but he doesn't get to see whether he has done it right until the entity arrives.

Note that if the summoning goes awry and the wrong creature is summoned, the warding is automatically useless.

TESTING THE WARD

So, summoning ritual complete, and you now have a rather uppity entity contained inside the warding. Now it's time to see if it works.

The summoner must now make an Agility or Smarts roll (use the lowest) opposed by the creature's Spirit. Each raise on the Investigation roll above grants a +1 bonus to the summoner's roll. If the Investigation roll was a 1, however, the demon gets a +4 bonus to its roll instead.

On a success, the summoner has held the fiend in place and he can go into bargaining with it, as detailed above. On a failure, the creature escapes and may do as it wishes for the duration of the summoning spell. Critical failures have no additional effect. The summoner may still try to make a bargain with the summoned creature, but he must do so as an action (and running away is usually the best action the summoner could take at this point in time).

BINDING & BANISHING

Summoning and bargaining is certainly one way to get service from an entity, but it isn't the only way.

You might allow magicians to bind extradimensional entities to their will through base magic, such as a binding spell. Likewise, a magician may know rituals to banish these entities if summoning goes awry, or if a magician finds himself the target of an attack by such a fiend. The easiest way to handle both these situations is through the creation of new spells. Whether or not you require a unique spell for each entity is up to you. Our examples assume that a single spell covers all entities.

BIND ENTITY

Rank: Veteran

Power Points: Special

Range: Smarts

Duration: 24 hours (5/24 hours)

Trappings: Chanting, wardings, special substances

A *bind entity* spell allows a spellcaster to force an entity into servitude. Any entity that can be summoned, with the noted exception of dark gods and the Black Judge, can be bound (see the list on page 33). The creature may be summoned and then bound, or it might already be on Earth.

The cost to invoke this spell is equal to twice the entity's Spirit die type. A pazuzu, for instance, has a Spirit die of d8, and therefore requires 16 Power Points to cast *bind entity* on it.

In either case, the caster must make an arcane skill roll opposed by the entity's Spirit roll. If the entity has been summoned and bargained with by another caster, it receives a +2 bonus to its roll. A creature already subject to a *bind entity* spell receives a +1 bonus for each die step in the binder's arcane skill (so a d4 equals +1, a d6 gives +2, and so on).

On a success, the caster has bound the creature to his will for the duration of the spell. The creature must obey commands given to it, both to the letter and spirit, though orders that obviously endanger the entity's existence allow it another roll to break free.

Should the spell fail, however, the creature is free to attack the caster. If he summoned the fiend, it has 2d6 rounds to act before it is forced back to its own realm.

The caster may not try to bind the same entity more than once in any 24 hour period. Any entity bound by the caster cannot be subjected to further *bind entity* spells from the same caster until the duration of the previous spell has passed and a period of 24 hours has passed.

BANISH ENTITY

Rank: Seasoned

Power Points: Special

Range: Smarts

Duration: Instant

Trappings: Runes, chants, gestures, prayers, special substances

A *banish entity* spell forces extradimensional entities back to their own realm. Any entity that can be summoned, excluding dark gods and the Black Judge, can be banished (see the list on page 33).

The cost to invoke this spell is equal to the entity's Spirit die type. A revealer demon, for instance, has a Spirit die of d10, and therefore requires 10 Power Points to *banish entity*. It's far easier to banish these entities than it is to summon them, as they do not belong to this world.

The spellcaster must make an arcane skill roll opposed by the entity's Spirit. With a success, the entity is instantly driven back to its own realm, though it is not destroyed. On a failure, the entity is free to continue its business and suffers no ill effects.

NEW POWERS

You might be tempted to create some new spells for your horror setting. That's cool, but think carefully about why you want the spell first—horror doesn't normally need as many spells as a typical fantasy setting.

By far the easiest way to create a new spell is simply to tinker with an existing one. For instance, say you wanted a spell that drains the lifeforce from a victim, leaving him a withered husk. Well, why don't you just use *bolt* with the trapping of withering the victim's flesh? You don't have to change anything then.

Of course, you can also easily modify *bolt* to have a range of Touch and reduce the number of *bolts* to just one. Yes, it's slightly weaker than the original version, but you can counter this by having it cause extra damage, or by tweaking the trapping so that every wound the victim loses heals one wound on the caster.

To help add flavor, consider changing nothing but the spell's name. While *entangle* neatly sums up what the spell can do, calling it "Tentacles of Vralkresh" is much cooler.

In a setting where characters can only learn magic from tomes, consider giving spells names that don't immediately give away what the spell does. Magic is not a science taught in schools, and magicians rarely give their spells boring names. Why not rename *bolt* to be "Angel's Spear"? In game terms, this could be *bolt*, but can the player be sure it doesn't relate to *smite* or *stun*?

Completely new spells should be built with the horror aspect in mind. Sure, a fantasy game might need a *bolt* spell with a lightning trapping, but it isn't really a cool horror spell.

DESIGNING FROM SCRATCH

The first step when creating a new power is to think about the effect. Until you've done this, you can't assign it a Rank,

Power Points, Range, or Duration. Remember though, if you're creating a new combat spell the basic power and a new trapping cover most bases.

Effects can be whatever you want. Really. However, the more powerful the effect, the higher the Rank of the caster, and possibly the Power Points. Instantly destroying a target, especially a Wild Card, should be Legendary and cost at least 20 Power Points.

Most standard powers have a duration of 3 (1/round). This should suffice for most new powers, though it depends on the effect. A power that opens a gate to another dimension might well have this short a duration, but one that allows communication with creatures from other worlds should have a duration of minutes rather than seconds.

Non-offensive powers that work at distance should be based on the Smarts or Spirit of the caster, depending on the Arcane Background type. At most, a spell should have a range of Smarts x 2, and usually only when it has a Burst Template effect. Offensive spells, especially those which inflict damage, should use the standard 12/24/48 brackets.

No amount of tables can help you balance a spell. You can use the existing powers as guidelines, but you can also apply some forethought. Think about the cost of the spell and the effect in relation to how many Power Points characters can have at each rank. Work out how many times it can be cast before the character runs out of Power Points.

At the end of the day, common sense should prevail. If you allow arcane spellcasters to have an Instant Death spell at Novice with a cost of just 2 Power Points, don't be surprised when your lovingly crafted dark gods drop dead like flies.

INTRODUCING NEW SPELLS

If you're already running a game and use this section to add some new powers, think about how you're going to introduce them.

If you just turn round and say, "Here's a load of new powers you can take," your players might be a little upset. After all, their characters might have taken different powers from day one.

The use of spellbooks and ancient grimoires gives you a perfect tool for slowly introducing new spells without opening the floodgates. This way, you can drip feed new spells into the game in order to test them.

If the players think they suck, you can tinker with them or simply pass them off as "the creations of a deranged cultist."

EXAMPLE NEW POWERS

Okay, enough chat. Here's a selection of powers designed with a horror game in mind. Some of them appeared in the *Fantasy World Builder Toolkit*, but if you don't have (or don't need) that book, we've duplicated them here.



CONSECRATE GROUND

Rank: Seasoned

Power Points: 3

Range: Medium Burst Template

Duration: 1 minute (1/minute)

Trappings: Circle of holy water or salt, energy barrier, pentagram

Consecrated ground is an anathema to evil creatures. Through the use of this power, an area of holy ground is created, filling a Medium Burst Template centered on the caster.

Any supernatural evil creature entering the area must make a Spirit roll or suffer a -2 penalty to all trait rolls while within the effects of the spell, -4 on a raise on the casting roll.

Permanently consecrating an area, like a church or temple, is possible, but not usually within the confines of an adventure. High ranking priests, valuable oils and unguents, and saintly or other holy relics may be required, as is some sort of altar or other focus of worship. At the end of the day, only a deity can permanently consecrate an area—everything else is just to get the god's attention—so the GM has some flexibility.

CORPSE SENSES

Rank: Seasoned

Power Points: 2

Range: Smarts x 100 yards

Duration: 3 (1/round)

Trappings: Chanting, staring into a mirror

Necromancers often guard their tombs with undead, and this spell allows them to use their minions as a set of roving senses. The power only works on corpses the caster has animated himself.

For the duration of the spell, the caster uses the senses of the target as if they were his own. He sees what the undead sees, hears what it hears, and so on. The caster has no control over the corpse, and cannot make it change direction or speak through it. Should the target wander out of range, the connection is instantly severed.

DRAIN LIFE

Rank: Heroic

Power Points: 20

Range: Smarts

Duration: Permanent

Trappings: Chanting, spoken curse

This vile spell causes one target to wither and age many years in an instant.

The caster makes an arcane skill roll opposed by the victim's Vigor. On a success, the victim ages rapidly, and loses a permanent die of Strength and Vigor, two die steps on a raise (both to a minimum of a d4). The character is treated as having the Elderly Hindrance, and so no neither attribute can be increased with advancements.

If cast on an Elderly character, the victim dies of old age if he fails his Vigor roll.

ENCHANT WEAPON

Rank: Seasoned

Power Points: 1

Range: Touch

Duration: 3 (1/round)

Trappings: Weapon glows, changes to a specific substance, or becomes covered in runes

Some monsters are more susceptible to weapons made of specific substances, such as demons and their weakness of cold iron, or are immune to normal weapons, such as ghosts. This power enchants an existing weapon into one of two types, determined by the caster at the time of casting.

The first physically changes the weapon into a material harmful to a creature. In the case of demons, the blade would become cold iron, whereas to harm the dark god Crazalphasalius, the weapon would be made of "solid" water, allowing the wielder to cause normal damage to the deity.

However, the caster must state what substance the weapon is to become, which means having an understanding of the creature in question. The spell does not know a monster's weakness. In a horror game, characters often encounter fiends they have never seen before, which makes deducing its weakness (if any) very hard. They usually have to discover a monster has some sort of invulnerability the hard way. They then retreat and research the creature's weakness, ready to face it again on more even terms.

The second version simply makes the blade magical. This does not affect its damage, nor give the wielder a bonus to hit his foes, but it does allow him to damage creatures immune to nonmagical weapons.

ENHANCE UNDEAD

Rank: Seasoned

Power Points: 3/undead

Range: Smarts

Duration: Special

Trappings: Runes engraved on undead, chanting

This unusual spell allows a necromancer to enhance the abilities of an undead of any sort (and yes, undead casters can augment themselves).

Each casting allows the necromancer to give an undead an advancement as if it were a character. So, the undead can have an increased attribute or extra skills, or even gain a new Edge. The target does not have to meet the requirements for an Edge, but the caster must meet the Rank requirement.

The caster can affect more than one undead at a time, determined by the amount of Power Points he spends during casting, but all undead must receive the same enhancement.

With a success, the dead remain enhanced for 1 hour. With a raise, they remain enhanced for 1d6 hours. With two raises, they remain enhanced for an entire day.

Certain powerful necromancers may have improved versions of this power that are cheaper to cast and create permanent enhancements.

GRAVE SHROUD

Rank: Seasoned

Power Points: 2

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 minute (1/minute)

Trappings: Victims gains the appearance of an undead

Grave shroud transforms the target's appearance to that of a zombie. Unwilling victims receive a Spirit roll to resist, opposed by the caster's arcane skill.

The target does not gain any special abilities (including Undead), as the spell is illusory, and he keeps his own traits. However, he looks and smells like a walking corpse.

Near-mindless undead (such as zombies and skeletons) treat the target as one of their own and do not attack him, and intelligent undead (such as vampires) are likely to think of the character as just a mindless minion, and typically ignore them. If the character attacks an undead, it will defend itself, however.

Any intelligent undead closely examining the character may make a Notice roll at -2 to spot the deception, or -4 if the caster scored a raise.

A character subjected to this spell who sees his reflection must make a Guts check.

GRAVE SPEAK

Rank: Seasoned

Power Points: 4

Range: Touch

Duration: 3 (1/round)

Trappings: Runes carved on bodily remains, black candles, "leather" books, Ouija boards.

It is said the dead know many secrets, and through the black arts a mage can reach beyond death to contact departed souls. Though not evil, many good spellcasters avoid using this power as there are risks involved.

In order for this spell to work, it must be directed toward a particular soul. The caster must either know the name of the deceased or possess a personal item, which includes their corpse, or any part of it at least, as well as treasured items.

If the spell succeeds, a ghostly voice makes itself known and may be questioned. One question may be asked for each round the spell is active.

The spirit contacted is not necessarily friendly and can lie, but it may not refuse to answer or make guesses. The GM

must adjudicate what information the entity knows—the spirit is not omnipotent and knows only what it knew in life up to the moment of its death.

A roll of a 1 on the caster's arcane skill, regardless of Wild Die, may summon up a demon or other hostile entity. While it cannot directly affect the caster, it will try to convince him it is the person he sought, then feed him inaccurate or dangerous information, perhaps seeking to lead the character to his death.

NIGHTMARES

Rank: Veteran

Power Points: 4

Range: Smarts x 1 mile

Duration: Special

This insidious spell causes the victim to suffer terrible *nightmares*, preventing him from sleeping. The caster must know the name of the victim and possess something which belonged to him (a lock of hair, item of clothing, and such like), but need not know his exact location.

When the victim next goes to sleep, he must make a Spirit roll, -2 if the caster scored a raise. On a success, he tosses and turns, but otherwise sleeps through the nightmare with no lasting effect. Should the Spirit roll fail, the character receives no sleep. On a roll of 1 on the Spirit die, regardless of the Wild Die, the character has terrifying *nightmares* and must make a roll on the Fright Table. With a critical failure, he rolls on the Fright Table at +2.

In all cases of failure, the character gets no benefit from sleeping. Check out the Sleep rules in *Savage Worlds* for details.

SACRIFICE

Rank: Veteran

Power Points: 2

Range: Self

Duration: Special

Trappings: Any form of quick death

Sacrifice is a power purely for the "dark side." It allows a necromancer to sacrifice a sentient being in return for Power Points. Such an act is inherently evil, and the mark of a true villain.

Upon casting the spell, the spellcaster kills his sacrifice (assume this works instantly when dealing with Extras incidental to the plot), gaining its Vigor die in Power Points. These last for just ten rounds, after which any unused points are lost. The spellcaster must have the Power Points to cast this spell in his own reserve.

The necromancer may use his own Power Points to maintain spells cast with or maintained by these extra Power Points.

Power Points gained this way are commonly used to save the sorcerer's own Power Points, at the expense of a living being's life.

For example: *An evil cultist priest is desperately short of Power Points after summoning a demon but failing to bargain with it. He grabs a nearby cultist and plunges his knife through his chest, whilst invoking the*



sacrifice power with his last 2 Power Points.

He changes the cultist's d6 Vigor into six Power Points. For the next ten rounds, he may use these Power Points freely.

If at the end of ten rounds he has only used 2 of them, for instance, the remaining 4 points disappear.

SPIRIT SHIELD

Rank: Seasoned

Power Points: 3

Range: Smarts

Duration: 3 (1/round)

Trappings: Ring of holy water or salt, wall of energy, sigils inscribed in the air

This spell creates a barrier that can keep out ghosts, poltergeists, and other ethereal entities—it has no effect against demons or undead in physical form. The caster makes his arcane skill roll and then places a Medium Burst Template centered on himself.

Spirits wishing to enter the Template must make an opposed

Spirit check (no pun intended) against the caster's arcane skill. If they fail, they cannot pass the barrier while the spell remains active.

Spirit shield stops the entity from passing through, but does not prevent it from using monstrous abilities such as Fear or throwing physical objects. The spell is negated if any living creature of rat-size or larger crosses the circle.

STRENGTH OF THE UNDEAD

Rank: Veteran

Power Points: 6

Range: Touch

Duration: 3 (1/round)

Trappings: Pallid skin, claws, fangs

This unusual power allows the caster to mimic a trait or Special Ability of an undead he is touching when he invokes the spell.

The caster gains one trait or Special Ability possessed by the undead for the duration of the power. In the case of traits, the mimicked trait replaces the caster's. For instance, a cultist who mimics a vampire's Strength has a Strength of d12+1 for the duration. The undead does not lose the affected trait or ability.

SUPPRESS LYCANTHROPY

Rank: Veteran

Power Points: 6

Range: Touch

Duration: One night

Trappings: Potion, runes drawn on body, circle of wolfsbane, silver coins over eyes

Few curses are as terrible as that of lycanthropy, but for those afflicted, there is hope. This rare spell (which should be found only at the end of a lengthy and dangerous quest) gives lycanthropes a chance to avoid their involuntary changes on nights of the full moon.

The lycanthrope may make a Vigor roll, +2 if the caster scored a raise, to resist the change for one night of the full moon. With any failure, the lycanthrope assumes his animal form.

Naturally, the spell is only useful when cast on nights of the full moon. It has no effect on non-lycanthropes.

CURSES

No, we don't mean swearing when we say curses. We're talking about the kind of curse commonly uttered by evil villains with their dying breath, promising revenge upon their killer, or invoked by black-hearted mages.

This chapter looks at mundane and magical curses. There's

a sample system for mundane curses, and a list of example spells for magical curses. As always, use what you want. While good aligned characters can utter curses and instill them with the power to come true, we recommend you keep such power in the hands of NPCs to stop the system being abused.

Mundane curses can be hard to work into a sci-fi game, especially one involving space grunts versus hyper-dimensional alien fiends. Magical curses are slightly easier, as these could be alien powers or perhaps even short-lived nanites which produce weird effects. For instance, *curse of the babbling fool* may simply be nanites which affect the speech center of the brain, while with *curse of the empty stomach* the nanites prevent the victim from gaining any nutritional benefits from food.

MUNDANE CURSES

Mundane curses are called that simply because they require no Arcane Background to invoke. Anyone, given the right circumstances, can invoke a mundane curse.

FUNDAMENTALS

Let's make this clear from the start, a mundane curse shouldn't be thrown around like a *bolt* spell or treated like a regular Test of Wills.

To be truly effective in a game, mundane curses should be used very sparingly and only when they are justified. Treat them as something to use when the heroes have killed your Big Bad and he tries for one final act of revenge.

TYPES OF CURSES

There are basically two types of mundane curses you as GM need be concerned with—self-induced and vengeance.

SELF-INDUCED

Self-induced curses are, as the name implies, curses cast on oneself. Why would anyone do this? Take the following situation as an example.

A character gets involved in a fight with a monster. Although he wins, he's unable to stop the beast from killing a close friend or loved one. The character vows that he shall never rest until every monster is dead.

Although it sounds like a vow, the character has left himself wide open for whatever dark powers grant curses to interfere in his life. Why? Because the character has said he would "never rest until every monster". Killing every monster is a tall order, especially in one lifetime, so he might well return as some form of undead with a fixation on slaying monsters.

Of course, you should treat such comments with extreme caution. We really don't suggest you start enforcing rules on self-induced curses every time your players say something like this. Far from it, in fact. Unless the player is bringing a lot of emotion to his roleplaying, ask him if he wants to give his character a Vow to represent his comments.

Only if the player gives an Oscar-winning performance should you invoke a self-induced curse, and then only after much careful thought. Good roleplaying shouldn't be punished with curses.

Ideally, self-induced curses are for villains. A villain who will stop at nothing to get eternal power might eventually self curse himself into vampirism, or even return as a ghost. Self cursed individuals should be pitied as much as reviled, for it was human weakness that led them down their path in the first place.

Oh, and just in case your players read this, you cannot curse yourself to be better off. Curses cause misery and heartache, and never grant bonuses.

VENGEANCE

Vengeance curses, on the other hand, are curses made against someone else who has wronged you.

Vengeance curses rarely work for minor matters, such as someone stealing your parking space, or given you a kicking. You might wish the perpetrator harm or ill-luck, but it's very, very unlikely to manifest as a true curse. True vengeance is something very few humans ever feel, and without that feeling the curse is impotent.

It's important to note that vengeance curses don't have to be uttered by those who have actually been wronged. A perceived wrong works just as powerful to fuel a curse, so long as the desire for vengeance is strong enough.

Other forms of vengeance can be uttered by good men. An unjustly accused man facing death for his "crimes" has the emotional state necessary to curse his accusers. Here's an example from history.

The last Templar Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, was burned at the stake in Paris in 1314 after being falsely accused of heresy (among other things). With his dying breath, he cursed both Phillip IV, King of France, and Pope Clement V, his main accusers, to die within a year. Guess what? Both died within three months of the curse being uttered.

WORDING A CURSE

In order to be effective, curses must be worded—thinking them or writing them down is no good. As GM, you have the privilege of allowing supposedly dead characters to utter a curse with their dying breath. We don't recommend you do this for every villain, by the way—keep curses for the real bad guys.

So, how do you go about wording a curse? Well, first and foremost the curser should never, ever mention game mechanics. Players understand game mechanics but characters

in the game do not. Thus, while you might curse a swordsman with the words, "No skill with the blade shall you have from this day forth," you shouldn't say, "Hey, reduce your Fighting skill by two die types."

Try to use flowery, obscure language where ever possible. This hides a multitude of sins, and allows you to define the game mechanics better later on. You don't have to use rhyming couplets, unless you're good at that sort of thing.

Every curse must have a punishment, a trigger, a strength, and ideally a loophole. Let's look at each of these in turn.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

Let the punishment fit the crime, so the old saying goes, and with curses that's doubly true.

Let's imagine that Joe Average is driving his car and talking to his wife at the same time. He knocks down an old gypsy lady, who curses him. What do you reckon a suitable curse will be?

Make him lose his driving skills? Annoying, yes, but not really worthy of a dying curse. How about never talk to his wife again? Sounds pretty dull as well, doesn't it? That's because you're not thinking like a GM.

For a start, not being able to talk to his wife doesn't make him mute. What it could mean, on the other hand, is that he can only argue with her. Give it a few weeks and she'll move out to her mother's house. There goes the marriage.

TRIGGERS

Decide whether the curse is triggered by an event or is constant. Usually you can determine this by the punishment meted out. The type of curse should be worked into the wording.

A triggered curse has no effect until certain conditions are met, sort of like lycanthropy. For most of the time, the victim may live a normal life, but when he breaks the curse's prohibition, it affects him.

So, a character cursed "To have no skill with a blade," doesn't suffer any ill effects until he picks up a bladed weapon. A more extreme case is a character with a curse to "never walk under the light of the sun." At night, or away from the sun, he remains unaffected.

Triggered curses can also be tied into times of the day, such as, "Never shall you see the sun again." During the day, the character likely goes blind, falls into a deep sleep, or the sun burns him like it would a vampire.

A constant curse is, logically, one that affects the victim day in and day out without requiring any form of trigger. The curse is always present, and always active. Cursing someone to be weak willed (a reduction in Spirit) is a constant effect, for example. A common curse in fairy tales is turning someone into a frog. You can't get much more constant than that.

STRENGTH

Curses come in a variety of strengths. A curse should never simply blurt out, "You shall suffer a debilitating curse!" Instead, the curse should be worded in such a way that you, as GM, can base the strength of the curse on what the curser says.

For instance, saying, "May you never be healed of your wounds" is clearly a nasty curse. It will lead to death pretty quickly. A curse that goes, "When words you seek to those in power, jumbled words are all you'll stammer," on the other hand, is just annoying.

Here are the four categories of curse strengths.

DEADLY

While curses should never lead to instant death, they can prove fatal. A character who "finds no sustenance from food" will starve to death, for instance. Being the most powerful curses, they are also the hardest to pull off.

DANGEROUS

Dangerous curses are ones that can lead to death over prolonged periods or serious change of life-style. A character with the Arcane Background (Miracles) Edge cursed to lose his power if he commits even the smallest sin must forever walk a very thin tightrope, or lose his greatest asset. Being turned into a frog is definitely a dangerous curse (especially if you consider that frogs have natural predators).

DEBILITATING

Debilitating curses cause the victim to suffer weakness, either mental or physical. Loss of attributes, penalties to skills, removal of Edges, or even gaining Hindrances are all debilitating.

The actual strength of the curse is up to you, but ideally the victim should suffer no more than a two die reduction to traits or no higher than a -4 penalty to one skill or -2 to several skills.

ANNOYING OR EMBARRASSING

These curses rarely result in reductions to traits, but they can be linked to them. A character cursed to be clumsy, for instance, might critically fail any roll linked to Agility which comes up a 1, regardless of his Wild Die.

Other annoying or embarrassing curses may cause a character to break out in boils (loss of Charisma), to stutter uncontrollably when something important needs to be said (Persuasion or Intimidation penalty), or to suffer a bad case of diarrhea.

LOOPHOLES

Every curse should ideally have a loophole. A loophole is simply a way of avoiding the curse. Loopholes come in two types—those which allow a curse to be avoided, and those that break a curse.

Again, the wording of a curse should contain the loophole, but it needn't be immediately obvious to the victim. Let the victim discover the loophole himself.

Avoidance

Avoidance loopholes allow the victim to circumvent the curse, but usually by placing him at some disadvantage. A hero cursed “never to strike the first blow” can still fight, but he always has to wait until he is struck first. A character cursed never to use guns can simply pick up a bow and arrow or throw rocks, but when the enemy start filling the air with lead, a pointy stick isn't much of a comeback.

Break

Curse breaking loopholes might be based on a physical action the victim must perform, an action that must be performed toward him, the passing of a single lunar cycle or other calendrical event, or a more abstract condition (such as a woman becoming Pope).

Let's look at the hapless prince turned into a frog as a well-known example. The prince gets to spend his days eating flies and wallowing in pools, but the curse can be broken if he finds a princess willing to kiss him of her own volition and without knowing anything about his true nature. In short, it requires an act of human kindness to break the curse.

GAME MECHANICS

Curses are most effective when they come from the heart, the passion of the moment, not when you've learned something from a musty old book or been taught by a gypsy. As such, the game mechanics for a curse don't require anything other than a set of game mechanics that can be used at (almost) any time.

To invoke a curse, the curser must have a Spirit roll at -6. The big penalty is primarily there to stop this being abused. There are bonuses to the roll, and further penalties, as shown on the Curse Modifier Table below.

CURSE MODIFIER TABLE

Event	Modifier
Circumstances	
Curse uttered for petty reason	-6
Dying breath	+2

Self-induced	+2
Victim perceives true injustice	+2

Crime & Punishment

Punishment fits the crime	+2
Punishment doesn't fit the crime	-2

Triggers

Constant	+0
Triggered	+2

Strength

Deadly	-2
Dangerous	+0
Debilitating	+1
Annoying/Embarrassing	+2

Loophole

Avoidance loophole	+2
Break loophole	+1
No loophole	-2

Circumstances: A curse uttered with a dying breath is more powerful. It doesn't matter if the victim has really suffered an injustice, so long as he feels he has. A lycanthrope killed by a werewolf hunter feels he has suffered injustice because the curse was not his fault and his killer choose to end his life rather than try to find a cure.

Crime & Punishment: A curse where the punishment fits the crime (as determined by the GM) has a better chance of being heard by whatever powers grant curses and acted upon. Likewise, a curse without a just punishment stands more chance of failure.

Triggers: A triggered curse is easier to pull off than a constant curse as it is less punishing. Not putting in a loophole makes the curse far more difficult to empower, however.

Strength: Generally, the more debilitating a curse is, the harder it is to empower.

EFFECTS

Okay, now it really is crunch time. What punishment do you give a curse in terms of game mechanics?

Well, that's really up to you. We could give you a big list of sample curses and punishments, but that's not the idea of this book. We give you the tools, but we don't make the finished product. Game mechanics should depend on the strength of the curse, the trigger, and the punishment, as well as your generosity.

For instance, a character cursed, “Though thoughts of bravery fill your heart, no strength of courage will it impart” should suffer some penalty to Guts rolls, but how much?

One way is to base the result on how well the curser invokes the curse. This works very well with trait reductions. With a successful Spirit roll from the curser, the victim suffers a one die penalty to a single attribute, or -1 penalty to one or more skills. A raise increases this to a two dice reduction or a -2 penalty. No trait can be reduced below a d4 with a curse, no matter how it is worded.

Curses without mechanics, such as, “Never again shall friends hear your voice,” boil down to good roleplaying. In this case, the victim’s voice can never be heard by his friends. He doesn’t have to be talking to them for the curse to be effective. As far as his voice is concerned, his comrades are stone deaf.

EXAMPLE CURSES

Let’s look at a few examples you can use as guidelines. Every curse has the wording of the curse, the punishment, trigger, strength, and loophole, as well as the game mechanics.

TYPICAL FANTASY CURSE

- Curse:** When blade you hold your strength shall fail.
- Punishment:** Quite obviously, the character loses Strength whenever he holds a blade. Any yes, this includes magic items or cutlery as well.
- Trigger:** The curse is Triggered only by the character holding a bladed weapon.
- Strength:** This is a Debilitating curse. While it can lead to death in combat, that is not guaranteed.
- Loophole:** The character can avoid this curse simply by using a non-bladed weapon.
- Game Mechanics:** The victim suffers a one die step reduction in Strength if the curser scores a success, and two steps on a raise.

LIMITED EFFECT CURSE

- Curse:** Though cold your bones and flesh might be, no warmth from fire is there for ye.
- Punishment:** The character never receives any benefits from fire. While this may not sound too bad, we’ll look at how this can work in terms of game mechanics later. It’s worse than you might think.
- Trigger:** Since this doesn’t affect every aspect of the character’s life, it is a Triggered curse.
- Strength:** At first this might seem only annoying, but under the right circumstances it can be Dangerous. If in doubt, use the more powerful strength.
- Loophole:** No loophole is provided.
- Game Mechanics:** The curse has only a single effect, though in game terms it is quite narrow. Without being able to feel warmth, the character cannot recover Fatigue lost to cold temperatures.

POWERFUL CURSE

- Curse:** On rise of moon full and bright, the beast within shall haunt your nights, until a woman pure of heart, does know your curse and love impart.

- Punishment:** The victim is cursed with lycanthropy.
- Trigger:** Again, this is a Triggered curse, which comes into effect only on the full moon.
- Strength:** Becoming a werewolf is a Dangerous curse as it affects the character in a very serious way.
- Loophole:** The wording clearly implies that the curse can be broken by the love of a pure woman who knows of the character’s curse and accepts it.
- Game Mechanics:** Every night of the full moon, the character becomes a psychopathic killing machine.

MAGICAL CURSES

Now we turn our attention to magical curses. Unlike mundane curses, these can be cast without good reason and rely on magic rather than emotion as fuel.

EXISTING SPELL

Savage Worlds already contains a curse spell, though it isn’t listed by that name. The *lower trait* spell is perfect for simulating debilitating curses, albeit with a rather short duration.

However, you can easily get around this by creating an Extended Duration Table, such as the one shown below. The longer the duration, the more Power Points are required to cast the spell, and the higher Rank the caster must be. So, if you wanted to cast *lower trait* to last a week, you’d have to be Veteran and pay 8 Power Points.

Because these spells have greatly increased durations, maintaining them is handled differently. By spending additional Power Points *during the casting of the spell*, the caster can extend the base duration. This is shown on the table below as well. You cannot maintain an extended duration curse spell once it has been cast.

It doesn’t take a genius to work out that a powerful spellcaster can lob a few curses, wait a day to get his Power Points back, and then cast some more curses. If you don’t like the idea of this, here’s a solution—the caster only recovers Power Points expended on a curse spell when the curse ends (which includes the death of the victim) or is *dispelled*.

Whereas the victim of a mundane curse is stuck with it for life (hence the reason loopholes are used), magical curses can be negated with a successful *dispel* spell. Just use the normal rules.

EXTENDED DURATION TABLE

Duration	Power Points	Rank
One Day	4 (+2/day)	Seasoned
One Week	8 (+4/week)	Veteran
One Month	12 (+6/month)	Heroic
One Year	16 (+8/year)	Legendary

NEW SPELLS

Another way of creating curses is to create a batch of new spells. While *lower trait* may weaken traits, it isn't much good for cursing a character with blindness, or having him become a werewolf.

New curse spells should have a minimum Rank of Seasoned, and then only if they are relatively weak or have a short duration. The more potent the curse, the higher the Rank and the more Power Points it requires.

We recommend that maintenance costs be paid up front and that casters do not recover Power Points until the spell expires or is *dispelled*, as above.

EXAMPLE CURSE SPELLS

Here are a few examples of new curses. These spells assume that maintenance costs are paid when casting, forcing the caster to set a defined limit for the duration of the curse. Ideally, the caster should work this into his spell casting. So a character invoking a *curse of lost sight* might say, "No sight shall you have for one month."

CURSE OF THE BABBLING FOOL

Rank: Veteran

Power Points: 6

Range: Smarts x 2

Duration: One day (+2/day)

Trappings: Gestures, speaking a stream of gibberish, voodoo dolls

Not all spells need physically harm a foe to be effective. Sometimes just removing an opponent's ability to converse can be an effective weapon. A guard who cannot shout for help or an officer who cannot give orders is just as helpless as if he were slain.

The caster must succeed at an opposed roll of his arcane skill against the target's Spirit. With success, the victim loses all ability to speak coherently, being able to produce only inane babbling and random noises. On a raise, the victim is mute.

This is especially useful against verbal spellcasters, as it removes their ability to work magic.

CURSE OF THE EMPTY STOMACH

Rank: Heroic

Power Points: 12

Range: Touch

Duration: One week

Trappings: Rune inscribed pill, potion

This powerful curse is designed to kill the victim over a number of days, though strong victims can survive the magic.

The caster makes an arcane skill roll opposed by his victim's

Spirit. With success, the victim cannot digest food in any form (though he can drink water). The victim suffers from the Hunger rules in *Savage Worlds*. A victim who can last the week without food (good luck) is free of the curse.

CURSE OF LOST SIGHT

Rank: Heroic

Power Points: 10

Range: Smarts

Duration: One week (+3/week)

Trappings: Evil eye, words, voodoo dolls

Removing a person's sight is among one the vilest, and most powerful, curses.

This curse is an opposed roll of the caster's arcane skill versus a single target's Spirit. If the caster is successful, the victim is completely blind and suffers a -6 penalty to all trait rolls. Because the victim cannot see incoming attacks, his Parry drops to 2.

Other versions of this curse exist, each affecting one of the other senses. These require a caster Rank of Seasoned and have a Cost of 6 (+2/week).

CURSE OF MISFORTUNE

Rank: Seasoned

Power Points: 8

Range: Smarts x 2

Duration: One day (+2/day)

Trappings: Evil eye, words, voodoo dolls, victim becomes clumsy

This curse is designed to hamper yet not cause direct harm.

The caster picks a single target within range and makes an arcane skill roll opposed by the victim's Spirit. On a success, the victim suffers *misfortune* if his trait die rolls a natural 1, regardless of Wild Die. With a raise, the victim suffers *misfortune* on a 1 or 2.

The exact nature of the *misfortune* is left to the GM's imagination, but it should cost the victim his entire turn at the very least. Examples are dropping a weapon, slipping, striking an adjacent ally, or maybe suffering a pulled muscle (Fatigue level).

CURSE OF LUNA'S CALLING

Rank: Legendary

Power Points: 20

Range: Touch

Duration: Permanent

Trappings: Light of the full moon, blood of a werewolf

This is perhaps the most powerful, and evil, curse in existence. The victim is transformed into a werewolf, permanently and with



no chance of cure, for this curse cannot be *dispelled*. Such powerful magic comes at a price, and the caster permanently loses 10 Power Points, whether the spell works or not.

The caster rolls his arcane skill versus the victim's Spirit, -2 with a raise. With success, the victim will transform into a werewolf at the next full moon.

CURSE OF THE SNAIL'S PACE

Rank: Seasoned

Power Points: 3

Range: Smarts

Duration: One hour (+1/hour)

Trappings: Evil eye, words, voodoo dolls, victim's legs become palsied.

Pursuers or escaping foes are usually the recipients of this curse.

The curse requires an opposed roll of the caster's arcane skill versus the target's Spirit. With a success, the recipient's base Pace is halved. With a raise, movement becomes an action as well, giving the target a multi-action penalty if he wants to move and act in the same round.

DEMONIC PACTS

Let's be totally clear here—this isn't some Satanic manual on selling your soul. It's fiction, a game, make believe. Right, now we've kept the lawyers happy, we'll continue.

This chapter deals with one of the other horror staples, the bargain with the Devil.

NOT FOR PLAYERS

Despite this section containing game mechanics, it is not designed for players to use. There's several reason behind this reasoning.

First, most players understand that they're playing a game. While this means that they personally are not making a pact with demonic forces, it also means that the full force of selling one's soul is lost to them. Who cares if their character is facing an eternity of damnation and torture? Once the character is dead, they get to make a new one and leave the damned soul consigned to the Hell of dead characters. Thus, the impact of damnation is immediately lost.

Second, the forces of darkness don't hand out gifts like candy. They expect favors in return, the sort of favors that heroes don't even think about in their worst nightmares. Any character who walks down this road is well on the path to becoming a villain, and when that happens, he stops being a player character and becomes a non player character.

Third, we prefer that the characters are the good guys, the heroes who put their lives on the line to make the world a better place. While heroes often have to make grim choices, they don't rejoice in walking the path of the damned.

A good example of this is *Rippers*. The characters in that setting can rip out organs from supernatural beasts and graft them to their own flesh, but they do so because it gives them a weapon with which to fight evil. There's also a price to pay.

FINDING A PATRON

The first thing the villain seeking a demonic pact needs to do is find a patron, and that requires a demon. We're not talking about your petty demons, such as those listed in the *Horror Bestiary Toolkit*. They're mere pawns in the armies of darkness, and while tougher than humans, they can't go around granting real power. Sure, the seducer demon comes close, but he's really a middle man for the bigger bads in Hell.

A patron must be a demon lord, a prince of Hell, one of Satan's trusted lieutenants. These guys never come to Earth in person, they can't be summoned with petty summoning spells, and their power (in game terms) puts those of the supposed dark gods, like Todoto, to shame.

Finding a patron may be as simple as verbally offering your soul in return for power, or as complex as finding an ancient tome containing a dark ritual, which requires months of preparation and huge expense.

Either way, once the villain offers his soul, he gets a visit from a seducer demon acting on behalf of the patron. Note that seducers usually take the role of the patron, claiming to be the demon lord. The villain gets to feel important, and more importantly can be intimidated into selling his soul more easily.

THE PACT

A demon lord will happily grant power to anyone who asks, so long as he makes a pact. The strength of a pact determines how much power the petitioner receives, but it also details what he must do to fulfill the pact. Pacts are rated between 1 (a petty sin) to 10 (wanton debauchery that corrupts thousands, public sacrifice of a senior figure on the side of good).

We've left all the grisly details to you, but since this is a system for villains, we strongly recommend you gloss over the details and simply refer to them as "despicable and inhuman" acts. If you're the sort of GM who wants to detail these things in minute details, you might want to get professional help.

Whether the petitioner must fulfill his end of the pact or not to gain the boons is up to you. At the end of the day, the demon lord doesn't care. Why? Because in all cases, the petitioner forfeits his eternal soul to his patron, whether he has carried out the details of the pact or not.

Each step on the ladder grants the petitioner one boon,

or point of boon. Exactly what this equates to depends on the system you pick for adjudicating rewards.

A character must always move up the ladder when making new pacts. A character who picks a level 2 pact to start but later wants to acquire another 2 points of boons can't invoke another level 2 pact—he must make a level 4 pact. Once on the slippery slope, the only way is down. Literally.

No villain may have pacts exceeding 10 points. It's just a game mechanic limit.

REWARDS

Pacts are made to reap temporal rewards. Demons can grant wealth, long life (but never immortality), physical prowess, and even magical powers, but they cannot grant salvation or happiness. A deal with the Devil may bring power, but it is always fleeting. Sure, a hundred years of robust health and unlimited wealth sounds cool, but compared to eternity in the pits of fire, it's a blink of an eye.

Depending on how much effort you want to put into portraying damned souls and the sorts of rewards petitioners can gain, we've given you three example systems for gaining rewards.

BASIC SYSTEM

With this version, the petitioner gains one advancement for each step on the pact ladder. These advancements are treated as regular advancements, with two noted exception.

First, the petitioner can buy Background Edges. Second, the petitioner cannot purchase the Arcane Background (Miracles) Edge. Demon lords can grant magic, even psionics and weird science, but they can't form any link to the gods. Other than that, all the usual rules for advancements apply.

Note that the character doesn't receive any Experience Points, just the benefits of an advancement.

INTERMEDIATE SYSTEM

This system works pretty much as above, but with a small added degree of complexity. It also grants more powerful boons, but at greater cost.

The petitioner can buy Edges, including Background ones, without meeting any of the requirements except that he must purchase lower levels of "improved" Edges first. So, a character who wants to gain the Improved Level Headed character has to buy Level Headed first.

The level of pact for an Edge becomes equal to the number of steps the character is below the Rank requirement + 1. If the character is of equal or higher rank, it simply costs one level.

For example: *If a Novice villain with First Strike wants to buy Improved First Strike, he must make a level four pact (one for the three Ranks above Novice he needs to reach Heroic, plus one extra for good measure).*

ITEM DESCRIPTIONS

Many of the relics use standard powers from the *Savage Worlds* rulebook, and some use spells from the Dark Magic chapter of this book. In both cases they have their description reprinted, at least in summarized form, as part of the item description.

This duplication is to make your life easier. Rather than just say, "This item functions as per the *invisibility* power," and let you go flicking through the main rules, the description details everything you, and your players, need to know.

If you are writing your own adventures, print the item out a sheet of paper and stick it on an index card. When the characters discover the relic's function, hand them the card. Now they can see exactly what the relic does.

Spells not covered in this book or the main rules are most likely taken from the *Fantasy World Builder Toolkit*. However, everything you need to know in order to use the item is included in its description.

DETAILED SYSTEM

With the detailed system, the villain can purchase a range of abilities not available in the other systems. As well as the usual traits and Edges (treat these as per the Simple System above), he can buy things like Invulnerability and Poison, if he's prepared to commit to a hefty pact, that is.

In all cases, these abilities work as per the Monstrous Abilities of the same name from the main rules. In the case of infection and poison, the GM should determine the potency and adjust the cost accordingly.

In many cases, the victim will undergo a physical change. An Aquatic villain should have gills, for instance, whereas a character with Armor may have scaly skin, and one with Poison may have blackened hands.

As GM, you have the final say on what physical changes occur, but you should not let villains off lightly. In the rare chance you let players go down this route, make sure the changes are obvious.

Benefit	Cost
Aquatic	1
Armor (per 2 points of Armor)	2
Burrowing	1
Fear	2
Fearless	2
Hardy	3
Infection (GM to determine potency)	2-4
Infravision	2
Immunity (to one form of damage)	4
Invulnerability (must take a Weakness)	6

Low Light Vision	1
Paralysis	2
Poison (GM to decide potency)	3-5
Regeneration, Fast	7
Regeneration, Slow	3
Stun	2
Undead	4
Wall Walker	1

THE COST

Fulfilling the pact and losing his soul isn't the only price a petitioner must pay. Far from it, in fact. Deals with the Devil bring other consequences to the damned soul who struck the bargain.

First, any character with the Arcane Background (Miracles) Edge loses it, as well as his Faith die and any Edges with the Arcane Background as a requirement. Unlike Magic or Psionics, which may be inherent or learned ability, the Miracles Edge represents a link between the character and his god. By making a deal with demonic forces, the character has foresworn his deity.

Yes, some evil gods do exist, and in this instance you might allow a villain to keep his Arcane Background. However, fallen heroes make better villains than willing devil worshippers. A hero gone bad or driven to make a pact with the legions of Hell has indeed fallen far from the path of righteousness.

Second, if you're using the Champion and Holy Warrior Edges in your game, the petitioner now counts as a supernatural evil creature. Yep, his tainted soul registers him on the list of bad guys.

Third, his tainted soul becomes noticeable, especially to animals. Regardless of how he has changed physically, there is an aura about the character, something different, unnatural even, that others can sense, if only subconsciously. The character suffers -2 Charisma and a similar penalty to any roll involving animals.

Fourth (yep, it's a long list), the character registers on *detect arcana* spells as having supernatural powers. Hey, he didn't get his gifts at a convenience store, you know.

Fifth, and last, the villain might receive some sort of Hindrance tied into his boon. Demons are tricky buggers at the best of times. A character who petitioned for Very Rich might gain the Greedy (major) Hindrance as well. Yep, he's got his sacks of gold, but he wants more, and he'll go to any lengths to get richer.

SALVATION

Ah, optimism. You think you can sell your soul and then try to trade it back, like some dime store knickknack? Well, that depends on how generous a GM you are. Since you should be using this system purely for villains, ideally you should let them get their just rewards.

When the vile villain gets defeated by the heroes, don't have him just drop dead like some meaningless Extra. You're running

a horror game, and the poor mortal has sold his soul. Time for someone to collect.

How you want to handle this is up to you, but you could have a fiery crack open beneath the villain's body, a host of small winged demons or shadows could rise up from the ground and drag the villain's soul (which looks like a ghostly version of the villain) down to Hell shackled in chains, or a powerful demon might turn up to lay claim to the soul.

Remember though, any demons are only there for the villain's soul. If the heroes don't interfere, the demon won't bother with them. Don't use a cool ending to start another fight.

Now, let's assume for a moment that for reasons known only to you you've decided to let player characters walk this dark path. They revel in getting some powers for a bit, and then decide it's time to put the darkness aside and step back onto the path of light.

Well, the path of darkness is surrounded by, well, darkness really. Seeing the path of light isn't that easy. However, there's one possible way a truly repentant (and those words must be totally heartfelt) character can save his soul.

First, as stated above, the character must be truly repentant. Repenting because it seems like the right thing to do, or because you're bored with evil isn't good enough. The character must fear for his eternal soul and beg absolute forgiveness from some greater force for good (such as God), being prepared to suffer whatever torment God (or whoever) decides to vent upon him as part of the cleansing process.

Second, the character must not use his dark gift for a year and a day. During this time, you shouldn't remind the character about not using his gifts. He chose to walk the path of damnation, and he must find his own way out. A character gets just one chance to keep to this—if he uses a dark gift for any reason, even to save an innocent soul, he falls forever from the grace of God and is beyond redemption. The road to Hell is paved with good intentions.

If the character has gained extra dice to his traits, he may voluntarily use his original trait value instead of the full dice type. In the unlikely event that a character used a pact to learn an Edge and then used Experience Points to learn an "improved" version of that Edge, the character cannot use either version.

Third, the character must strive to live a good life for a year and a day. We're not talking sainthood here, but theft, murder, blasphemy, and pretty much any other crime or sin are out the window. Again, one transgression means it's game over.

Finally, if the GM believes the player has roleplayed the repentance to the best of his abilities, the character's soul is saved. All demonic gifts are immediately lost, as are any Edges that required them.

Of course, the forces of Hell don't take kindly to this sort of betrayal, and they'll come looking for the character. Some demon lords will strive to lure the character back to their side, whereas others prefer to teach the character a lesson in pain. What they won't do, however, is kill the character. After all, his soul is no longer theirs.

FINAL WORD

This system deliberately glosses over despicable acts committed by the misguided fools who trade their soul for temporal power. It doesn't go into specifics about what a pact entails, nor what the petitioner must do to fulfill his agreement.

This is a very simple game system to allow you to create evil villains, not an attempt to create Satanist: The Roleplaying Game.

MAGIC ITEMS

Magic items, whether beneficial or cursed, play a part in some styles of horror setting. In general, horror games are not about making such items, only finding and using or destroying them. If you want some guidelines on how to make magic items, check out the *Fantasy Gear Toolkit*.

A few of the items here are duplicated from the *Fantasy Gear Toolkit*, but only the ones that are perfectly suited for a horror game. Everything else you find in this chapter is brand new.

Most, but not all, items have a line or two of text in parentheses at the end of the description. These are included for a fantasy horror game, where characters might reasonably be able to create the items. All reference to Edges you can't find in the main rules, such as Artificer and Enchant, come from the *Fantasy Gear Toolkit*, and unknown spells come from the *Fantasy World Builder Toolkit*. All the items detailed here contain all the game mechanics you need to use them without either of these books, however.

The cost is the price to manufacture the item, not to purchase it. Even the simplest item here would likely cost many times its cost price, if it could be purchased at all.

Don't forget that magic tomes can be found in the section on grimoires (page 28).

If you want to make your own items, don't feel constrained by the rules for using powers. Simply give the item whatever powers you need to make it work. At the end of the day, your players will appreciate a cool story with a great item without giving a damn about whether it was made to the rules or not.

BANDAGES OF ANUBIS

First created millennia ago in Egypt by priests of Anubis, these seemingly innocent rolls of bandages are actually a powerful necromantic tool. The magic within them can return a person to life as a mummy, but they must be applied while the person is alive.

Once completely wrapped in the bandages, the victim must make a Spirit roll against the bandages' arcane skill of d10. With a failure, the victim's skin and muscles desiccate, and the bandages bond themselves to the withered flesh, turning the victim into a guardian mummy. The magic is irreversible, and extremely painful.

In olden days, priests and magicians received this as a blessing, a

way of granting them eternal life. They were not subservient creatures, but free willed undead. In modern times, necromancers have altered the magic to create mindless guardian mummies, and use the bandages to punish wayward disciples and create an army of undead.

(Alchemy, *zombie* with two raises; Cost \$2150)

BLOOD MONEY

Two millennia ago, a follower of a well-known religious figure handed him over to the authorities for 30 pieces of silver. The coins, also known as Judas coins, have survived to this day and still carry with them the taint of that betrayal.

A character who acquires one or more of these coins is tainted by a terrible curse. At some point at a crucial juncture in an adventure the GM should arrange for the character to somehow betray his friends. He might run away, give away a secret to an enemy, or just refuse to lend support to a beleaguered colleague in a fight.

Note that the character needn't be carrying any of these coins to be cursed—he merely needs to own a single coin. He could stick it in a bank vault and he'd still suffer the curse.

If you think the player will handle the situation well, you might allow him to pick the moment of betrayal. Good roleplaying should be rewarded with a benny. Of course, you always retain the right to overrule a player who fails to enact a good betrayal.

(Cannot be manufactured)

BRAZIER OF CONJURATION

Standing three feet high on a tripod base, the inner surface of this black, iron brazier is engraved with runes of opening. When used as part of a summoning ritual, the brazier grants a bonus to the summoner's arcane skill, but only for the purposes of summoning extradimensional beings.

Three versions of this relic exist, granting a bonus of +1, +2, or +3 respectively. The higher the bonus the brazier grants, the more runes of opening are inscribed in the bowl. The braziers require no special fuel source.

(Artificer, +1, +2, or +3 arcane skill with limitation; Cost \$600, \$1100, or \$1600)

CANNIBAL MASK

The cannibal mask is a painted, wooden face mask, similar to those found in tourist shops in many parts of Central Africa. Unfortunately for anyone who wears it, this particular type is cursed.

As soon as the mask is placed on his face, the wearer must make a Spirit roll against the mask's Spirit of d10. On a failure, the mask melds into the victim's flesh and becomes part of his body.

From this moment on, the wearer develops a craving for human flesh. It doesn't matter if the flesh is rotten or still on the bone, so to speak, the victim will eat any human tissue. No other



food, including other forms of meat, satisfies the victim's hunger. In addition, the wearer's teeth sharpen, giving him a Bite attack that inflicts Str+1 damage.

Removing the mask, once its existence is suspected, requires a successful Disarm maneuver, but it obviously must be made against the victim's head.

The victim is allowed another attempt to break free of the mask's influence on the first night of each full moon. With success, the victim can pull the mask from his face. Unfortunately, he is left with very vivid memories of the terrible acts he committed while under its influence. With a failure, the victim remains a cannibal for another lunar cycle.

Exactly how these masks are created is a mystery, but many who have studied them believe that a demon or cannibal spirit is bound into the mask through arcane rituals.

(Cannot be manufactured)

CERAMIC MASKS

Made of white porcelain and painted in the style of Japanese kabuki masks, these foul items are found worn on the faces of skeletons or zombies.

When donned, the undead gains the Invulnerability Special Ability. No damage of any type, magical or mundane, can affect the undead so long as it wears the mask. Removing the mask requires a successful Disarm attack made against the head.

As soon as the mask is removed, the undead crumbles to dust immediately.

(Improved Enchant, *enhance undead* with limitation; Cost \$4,000)

COLD IRON CHAINMAIL

Forged to protect warriors against demons, cold iron chain mail covers the torso, arms, and legs of the wearer. The armor grants them +2 protection, or +4 against attacks made by demons, whether mundane (such as claws) or magical in origin.

(Improved Enchant, *armor* with raise and limitation; Cost \$1800)

CORPSE DUST

Made from the ground bones of the dead and enchanted with necromantic energy, corpse dust returns the dead to life—as undead. Each pinch animates a corpse, either as a zombie or skeleton, depending on how much flesh remains.

When the dust is sprinkled, the user must call upon the dead to rise and make a Spirit roll. With a success, the undead serve for just 1 hour. With a raise, they serve for 1d6 hours. With two raises, they serve for a day.

The dust is usually found in skin bags containing 1d6 doses. Listed prices are per dose.

(Alchemy, *zombie* with raise; Cost \$150)

DIARY OF A MADMAN

This unique item has been attributed to many madmen throughout the ages, though in reality it is not the work of a single person, but a collection of writings from numerous authors, all totally insane.

Contained within the pages of gibberish and mad ramblings are many secrets. A reader can use the diary to get a bonus to any Investigation or Knowledge roll, but he risks losing his mind.

The reader simply states what bonus he wants, from +1 to +6. However, after making his Investigation or Knowledge roll, he must make a Spirit roll with a penalty equal to the bonus he gained.

On a failure, the reader goes slightly insane, and gains a Minor Delusion. Should the Spirit roll be a critical failure, the reader gains a Major Delusion. The exact nature of these delusions are left to the warped mind of the GM.

(Cannot be manufactured)

FLAIL OF UNHEALING FLESH

This magical, and cursed, weapon is a cat-o-nine-tails tipped with metal barbs. In combat, it acts as a flail, and leaves deep, weeping wounds. These wounds cannot be healed with first aid or magic, but must heal naturally.

Victims get no bonuses to their natural Healing roll for medical attention, nor does a character with Healer grant any bonus. Fast Healer works as normal, however, as this is a bonus to the character's natural healing power.

Characters who suffer a Bleeding Out or Mortal Wound result on the Knockout Blow Table from the flail cannot be stabilized with a Healing roll.

(Cannot be manufactured)

FRANKENSTEIN'S LABORATORY

This isn't the actual laboratory of Doctor Frankenstein (that was destroyed in a fire), but a recreation based on his journals. As you might expect, it's good for just one thing—making monsters.

Creating a monster, known as a corpse golem, takes time and money. The doctor (if one can call him that) must spend \$56,000 and spend 9 months on making his monster. He then makes a Knowledge (Medicine) roll.

With a success, he creates a monster as below. The creature is free-willed, but has an almost animal level of intelligence. For each raise on the roll, the creature gains one die in Smarts (max d12). This isn't necessarily a god thing, by the way. Once it realizes what it is, it's likely to be a little upset.

On a roll of 1 on the Knowledge die, regardless of Wild Die, the creature is brought to life but is constantly berserk and suffers from acute psychopathic tendencies.

(Cannot be manufactured)



CORPSE GOLEM

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

Treasure: None

Gear: Typically a long sword (Str+3)

Special Abilities:

- **Arcane Resistance:** +2 Armor against damage-causing arcane powers and +2 on trait rolls to resist opposed powers.
- **Armor +1:** Hard skin and muscle.
- **Berserk:** Corpse golems have the Berserk Edge.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; No additional damage from called shots; Piercing attacks do half-damage; Immune to poison and disease.
- **Fear:** Characters seeing a corpse golem must make a Guts check.
- **Fearless:** Golems are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Slow:** Corpse golems have a Pace of 4 and roll a d4 for their running die.

GRAVE DUST

This dark, gritty dust is made from the burnt bones of skeletons. Despite its name, it is used to communicate with the dead, not animate them.

The dust must be sprinkled on the remains of the deceased, a personal item, or his grave marker, and the user make a Spirit roll. With a success, a ghostly voice makes itself known and may be questioned. Up to three questions may be asked of the dead.

The spirit contacted is not necessarily friendly and can lie, but it may not refuse to answer or make guesses. The GM must adjudicate what information the entity knows—the spirit is not omnipotent and knows only what it knew in life up to the moment of its death.

A roll of a 1, regardless of Wild Die, means the caster has accidentally contacted a malevolent spirit. While it cannot directly affect the caster, it will try to convince him it is the person he sought, and feed him inaccurate or dangerous information.

Grave dust is found in batches of 1d4 doses. Listed prices are per dose.

(Alchemy, *grave speak*; Cost \$200)

HELLFIRE BLADE

Crafted from black metal not found on Earth, quenched in the blood of virginal sacrifices, and inscribed with runes of fire,

hate, and pain, the hellfire blade is, quite literally, a weapon from the depths of Hell.

When drawn, green hellfire erupts along the blade, crackling with demonic fury. Any victim struck by the blade has a chance of catching fire (see *Savage Worlds*). The blade is magical, gives the user +1 to Fighting rolls, and inflicts Str+6 damage.

(Artificer; Improved Enchant, +1 Fighting, +2 damage, *smite* with fire trapping; Cost \$8400)

HOCKEY MASK OF TERROR

Beloved by chainsaw-wielding serial killers, this relic is a hockey mask stained with the blood of countless victims. When activated, the mask causes those who see it to make a Guts roll, or Guts -2 if the user scored a raise. Wild Cards who fail roll on the Fright Table. Extras are Panicked instead.

The mask has an arcane skill of d8, contains 10 Power Points, and each use costs 2 Power Points. The effect is instant.

(Enchant, *fear*; Cost \$4500)

JACK'S SCALPEL

Whether or not this scalpel really did belong to Jack the Ripper is questionable, but it certainly has all the hallmarks of either once being his, or being the item which caused his murder spree in 1888.

Once grasped, the holder must make a Spirit roll or fall under the scalpel's insidious spell. On a failure, the victim develops a minor loathing of women. He shuns their company and subtracts 2 from his Charisma when dealing with them.

On a roll of 1 on the Spirit die, regardless of the Wild Die, he develops a hatred of women. The Charisma penalty increases to -4. Worse, he must kill a woman every month using the scalpel or suffer a level of Fatigue. Characters can become Exhausted by this, but never Incapacitated. Fatigue can only be restored by killing a woman, and then at the rate of one level per kill.

Should the victim roll a critical failure, he becomes a woman hating psychopath, and must kill one woman a week or suffer Fatigue as above. His Charisma drops by -6 with regard women.

The scalpel is razor sharp and inflicts Str+1 against all targets except women, on whom it inflicts Str+3.

(Cannot be manufactured)

JADE MIRROR

Supposedly created by priests of the Aztec god Tezcatlipoca, whose name means "Smoking Mirror," these jade mirrors come in a variety of sizes. The smallest measures only six inches across, whereas the largest stands over six feet tall with a width of half that.

When smeared with the blood of a sentient sacrifice and lit by the light of the full moon, the owner can ask the mirror



questions related to occult matters. Answers appear on the surface of the mirror, either in writing or in the form of pictures.

In game terms, the mirror grants a +1, +2, or +3 bonus to Knowledge (Occult) rolls, the bonus being dependent on the size of the mirror.

(Artificer, +1, +2, or +3 to Knowledge (Occult); Cost \$2000, \$4000, or \$6000)

MARK OF THE DEMON

The Mark of the Demon is a powerful item of great evil, and yet appears as nothing more than a slip of paper. The paper appears blank unless read by the light of the moon, at which time silvery writings in an unknown language appear.

At the stroke of the next midnight, the magic contained in the paper conjures forth a terrible demonic entity known as a collector (stats are included below). This beast of Hell has only one purpose—to find and slay the last possessor of the Mark of the Demon.

That's right, the *last* possessor. And there's worse. The magic can only be transferred to another person if the paper is passed to them without their knowledge. Obviously, villains take great care to first ensure that their victim is slipped the paper unawares, such as in a coat pocket, and then take almost ludicrous measures to ensure that the victim does not return the paper to them somehow.

Destroying the paper does not prevent the magic from working, either. Burn it, shred it, eat it, and the magic will still be invoked at midnight.

The demon appears within 4d6 yards of its victim, whom it can sense through its Unnatural Senses. It remains on Earth until its victim is killed, it is banished with magic, or it is destroyed in the course of its duties.

(Cannot be manufactured)



COLLECTOR DEMON

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d12, Strength d12, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d12, Notice d8, Stealth d12, Tracking d12+2

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9

Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str+2. The claws of a collector ignore all mundane and magical Armor.
- **Demon:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; Immune to poison and disease; Half-damage from nonmagical attacks except for cold iron.
- **Fear (-2):** Collectors exude an aura of terror. Anyone seeing one must make a Guts roll at -2.
- **Improved Arcane Resistance:** +4 Armor against damage-causing powers and +4 on trait rolls to resist opposed powers.
- **Single Minded:** Collectors are not easily swayed from their goal.

GOLEM CREATION

Chances are you aren't going to let characters build golems in your game, but here's a suitable Edge if you are. A version of this first appeared in the *Fantasy Bestiary Toolkit*.

Requirements: Heroic, Smarts d12+, Knowledge (Medicine) d12+

The character has learned the secrets of golem creation. Crafting a golem takes time and money.

Each trait die (or point after d12) costs \$1000 and takes one week to enchant. Special Abilities with a variable, such as Armor and Size, cost \$1000 and take a week per point. The maximum bonus they can bestow is +3 on top of any existing modifiers.

For example: a golem with metal skin would have +3 Armor (plate). It could have another +3 extra protection, for a total of +6.

Other Special Abilities, including Edges, take a month each and cost a flat \$4000. Hindrances reduce the cost and time by \$4000 and one month respectively.

They receive a +2 bonus to resist Tests of Will and Smarts Tricks.

- **Size +1:** These cowed demons stand over 7' tall.
- **Soul Drain:** The uncowed stare of a collector can literally rip the soul from a living being. Fortunately, they usually reserve this fate for their quarry. To use this Ability, the collector must grapple its foe, at which point it removes its cowl and forces its prey to stare into its demonic eyes. The victim must make an opposed Spirit roll or die instantly.
- **Unnatural Senses:** A collector can *detect arcana* as if it were part of its normal vision. It also ignores all penalties for bad lighting, including complete darkness.
- **Weakness (Cold Iron):** Demons take normal damage from cold iron weapons.

MOONBLADE

These foul blades are not truly magical, but they are definitely cursed. Formed from the canine of a werewolf, the tooth ripped out under a full moon while the werewolf still lived, moonblades are deceptively named. They do not grant the user any power to defeat lycanthropes, but they do allow him to infect victims with the curse of the werewolf.

A victim reduced to Incapacitated by a moonblade (even if it deals the final wound that sends him to Incapacitated) must make a Vigor roll. On a failure, the victim is infected with lycanthropy and will transform into a werewolf on the night of the next full moon.

The victim learns to control his changes, but only after 1d6 years as a werewolf.

(Improved Enchant, *shapechange*; Cost \$8000)

MUSIC INFERNALIS

Said to have been penned by Lucifer himself, the “Music Infernalis” is a musical score with a poor reputation. Said by many classical musicians to be unplayable, any character trying to play the whole thing must make a Common Knowledge (assuming he has a musical background) roll at –6. Unfortunately, it’s not the sort of music one wants to play correctly.

With success, the musician completes the piece, and in doing so has a sudden and total understanding of what it means to be condemned to Hell for eternity. He must make a Spirit roll at –4.

On a success the character is reduced to tears for several hours, but is otherwise unharmed. With a failure, the character must roll on the Fright Table at +2. With a roll on 1 on the Spirit die, regardless of Wild Die, the character rolls on the Fright Table at +4. A critical failure increases the modifier to +6.

(Cannot be manufactured)

NIGHTMARE STONE

Nightmare stones are cursed items, often slipped into the pockets of victims by nefarious sorcerers.

Despite their name, nightmare stones don’t have to be stones. Most are innocuous items that a victim would ignore, such as a paperclip or small pebble. However, the name of the victim must be written on the object somewhere, though it can be microscopic.

Note that the object must be on or within 8 yards of the named person for it to function.

These cursed items activate every night when the “owner” goes to sleep, and cause him to suffer terrible nightmares. When the victim goes to sleep, he must make a Spirit roll opposed by the arcane skill of the stone.

On a success, he tosses and turns, but otherwise sleeps through the nightmare with no lasting effect. Should the Spirit roll fail, the character receives no sleep. On a roll of 1 on the Spirit die, regardless of the Wild Die, the character has terrifying nightmares and must make a roll on the Fright Table. With a critical failure, he rolls on the Fright Table at +2.

In all cases of failure, the character gets no benefit from sleeping. Check out the Sleep rules in *Savage Worlds* for details.

Nightmare stones contain 4 Power Points, which recharge normally, and have an arcane skill of d10.

(Enchant, *nightmare*; Cost \$4800)

PORTRAIT OF IMMORTALITY

A portrait of immortality is a painting, imbued with unholy power. Many necromancers have claimed knowledge of how to create these dark items, but none has ever revealed the secret.

When newly created, the portrait appears to be nothing more than a simple painting of the person who will benefit from its power. It should be noted that the portrait cannot contain

images of any other object, be it inanimate (such as a chair) or living (including plants and animals).

The power of the painting is to grant the owner a limited form of immortality. Disease, poison, wounds, and even aging cause no harm to the owner. Instead, all the effects are transferred to the painting, which steadily changes to represent the terrible injuries inflicted on the owner’s body.

In game terms, the owner becomes immune to poison and disease, does not require air to breathe, needs no food or drink to survive (though most do still partake), suffers no ill effects from aging, and has invulnerability to all forms of damage, be they mundane or arcane. In short, nothing can harm the owner.

Well, that isn’t true. The character is forever tied to the well-being of his portrait. Damage caused to the painting is likewise reflected on the character. If it is slashed, a wound appears in the same location on the owner’s flesh, if the painting is destroyed, so is the character.

In game terms, damage is compared to the portrait’s Toughness of 6, not to the owner’s Toughness. The character may spend bennies to Soak the damage as normal. When the character reaches Incapacitated, the painting is destroyed, and with it the owner. Don’t roll on the Knockout Blow or Injury Tables.

(Improved Enchant, *greater healing* with raise, *intangibility*; Cost \$79,000)

PUZZLE BOX

Based on Chinese puzzle boxes, these wooden or metal cubes are actually keys to Hell. A character wishing to solve the puzzle box must make a Smarts roll at –6. Sadly, success may not bring the rewards the character was anticipating.

With success, the puzzle box opens to form a pentagram, and also summons a demon. Chain or spined demons are suitable demons, but you might prefer something a bit tougher.

The demon is not under the puzzle solver’s control, nor can it be bargained with or bound. All it wants to do is kill the mortal who released it and claim his soul.

King Solomon, who in Islamic legend was a powerful magician, bound jinn who would not swear an oath to follow Allah into copper jars and sealed them. A puzzle box might just as easily be one of these fabled copper jars. Jinn and demons are one and the same.

(Improved Enchant, *summoning*; Cost \$40,000+)

RING OF MAGICAL WARDING

These silver bands contain a single topaz, a stone renowned for its properties in warding off magic.

Some wearers are defenders of good, and use the power to resist hostile necromancers, as well supernatural creatures. Others are said necromancers, seeking ways of protecting themselves from angry demons who object to being summoned

from their fiery homes.

The wearer gains 2 points of Armor against damage-causing arcane powers, and adds +2 to his trait rolls when resisting opposed powers. Even friendly arcane powers are affected. These bonuses stack with the Arcane Resistance and Improved Arcane Resistance Edges.

(Improved Artificer, Arcane Resistance Edge; Cost \$2000)

SACRIFICIAL KNIFE

Favored by cultist priests and servants of dark gods, the blade of a sacrificial knife is usually made from some hell beast and is engraved with runes of death and magic.

As a weapon, the blade counts as being magical, and can therefore harm ethereal beings and other monsters otherwise immune to nonmagical damage. It also grants a +1 bonus to damage (thus causing Str+2 damage).

It has, however, a more insidious power. For each wound the blade inflicts, one Power Point is stored in the runes on the blade. As the number of Power Points increases, the runes glow red, starting off with a barely noticeable sheen and rising to a blazing hellfire when full. The blade can store a total of 15 Power Points, which can be used by the wielder to power his spells. Excess points are simply lost.

Drained Power Points can only be recharged by inflicting more wounds.

(Artificer, Improved Enchant, +1 damage, *sacrifice* with raise; Cost \$10,000)

SOUL CANDLES

Soul candles must be tied to a specific individual during creation. This is usually achieved by adding a lock of hair or a few drops of blood to the hot wax.

Once lit, the candle burns for 2d4 hours, during which time the benefactor (the one for whom the candle was made) gains the Hard to Kill and Improved Nerves of Steel Edges, as well as the Hardy Monstrous Ability.

Should the benefactor be killed while the candle is lit, he dissolves into a puddle of molten wax, only to reform an hour later, completely healed. Of course, if the candle has burnt out, he stays dead.

Although lighting extra candles doesn't increase the potency of the magic, it does allow an ally to extend the duration of the power by lighting a new candle as one burns down.

(Improved Artificer, Hard to Kill, Harder to Kill, Hardy, Nerves of Steel, Improved Nerves of Steel, all with limitation; Cost \$5000)

STAFF OF THE NECROMANCER

This feared relic is carved from gnarled, black wood with a withered human hand at the "working end." The hand clutches a

clear orb, in which floats a myriad of trapped souls, each howling silently in eternal torment.

The staff has two powers. When a command word is uttered (no arcane skill roll) and the wielder points to a spot within his Smarts x 2, the spirits in the orb swarm forth to fill an area the size of a Large Burst Template centered on the chosen spot and begin howling in anguish.

Any creature within the Template must make a Guts check. Wild Cards roll on the Fear Table (see *Savage Worlds*). Extras are Panicked instead. The spirits remain out as long as the user desires—he can even redirect them to a new area simply by gesturing with the staff.

The staff also grants the holder the power to animate corpses under his control. To do so, the orb must be touched to a corpse and the wielder make a Spirit roll. On a success, a spirit from the orb then enters the corpse, bringing it to "life" as a skeleton or zombie, depending on how much flesh remains, for one day. The undead is under the staff wielder's command.

More powerful versions of this staff—capable of raising the dead permanently—are rumored to exist.

(Improved Enchant, *fear* with raise, *zombie* with two raises; Cost \$18,000)

TEMPLAR BLADE

Although accused of heresy and devil worship by the Church, the Knights Templar had secretly dedicated themselves to fighting a secret war against the forces of Hell. While priests performed Masses warning of the power of Satan, the Templars were actively engaged in the destruction of Satanic cults across Europe and the Holy Land.

One key weapon in their war against evil were swords of cold iron emblazoned with holy runes dating back to Old Testament times. It is said that the Templars discovered the secrets to forging these blades in the catacombs beneath the Temple of Solomon, though no record of any such discovery exists today.

These long swords grant the user +2 to Fighting and cause Str+5 damage against demons, but function as normal blades against all other creatures.

In addition, the blades can be used to detect demons. Each blade has an arcane skill of d6 and 10 Power Points, which recharge normally, and holds the *detect arcana* spell. However, the spell only detects demons and magic associated with demons (GM's call).

(Artificer, Enchant, +2 Fighting and +2 damage with limitation, *detect arcana* with limitation; Cost \$6250)

VOODOO DOLLS

Voodoo dolls are wax, mud, or straw effigies of someone a spellcaster wishes to harm at a distance. Although called voodoo dolls, similar items can be found in several other beliefs.

When the doll is made, the maker must have a token of his victim, which must be incorporated into the doll. A lock of hair

could be stuck to the doll's head, whereas a fragment of clothing or a piece of jewelry could be worn by the doll.

Armed with a voodoo doll, the mage may cast certain spells against his victim at a range of Smarts in miles. Only the following spells may be cast through a voodoo doll, however—*boost/lower trait* (usually only the latter), *entangle* (victim is paralyzed), *fear*, *puppet*, *stun*, and *telekinesis* (only to throw the victim around).

You might allow the mage to cast *bolt* through the doll to harm his victim, but this is rather powerful. The GM should decide if any spells from other books can be worked through a voodoo doll.

Ideally, voodoo dolls should remain firmly in the hands of villains. Giving them to players is a license for them to ruin your adventure.

(Cannot be manufactured)

WARDING CHALK

Warding chalk was first created by Babylonian mages millennia before Christ. Although it appears to be a normal stick of chalk, warding chalk is made of rare ingredients and manufactured over a period of several lunar cycles, and requires constant attention to ensure ingredients are added at the correct time.

When used to draw a warding (see page 34), the chalk grants the user a bonus to his Agility or Smarts roll. Each stick is good for just one warding.

(Artificer, +1, +2, or +3 to Agility or Smarts with limitation; Cost is \$250 per bonus)

WAX MESSENGERS

Wax messengers are small candles, often carved into unusual shapes.

Originally, wax messengers were used by wizards during the height of the Spanish Inquisition to pass secret messages without resorting to human agents, carrier pigeons, or incriminating writings.

To make this version of a wax messenger, the mage must cast the *speak language* spell into the mixture as he shapes the candle and speaks a message of no more than 20 words. When the wick is lit, a ghostly voice repeats them, but only once. As the message is spoken, the candle burns, dissolving into a pool of molten wax when the message is finished.

There is a more sinister use for wax messengers, however. During the manufacturing process, the mage casts one spell into the wax, which is then held in stasis. When the candle is lit, the spell is cast and affects the nearest person.

In all cases, the spell is cast with an arcane skill equal to the caster's. If you need something quick, assume a d8.

Although any spell can be formed into a wax messenger, most mages stick to spells such as *blast* or *puppet* (often used to make the victim commit suicide). The candle turns to molten wax when the spell duration ends (so it might melt extremely

quickly in some cases).

(Alchemy, one spell; Cost is \$50 per Power Point of the spell)

WITCHES' CAULDRON

Witches are renowned for their love of potions, almost all of which require obnoxious ingredients. Depending on whether you're using any magic item creation rules in your setting, you can use a cauldron in one of two ways.

If you are, then the cauldron adds a +1, +2, or +3 bonus to arcane skill or Knowledge (Alchemy) rolls when brewing potions. Otherwise, the cauldron holds 15 Power Points, which any witch within 2 yards (1") of the cauldron can use to power her spells. These recharge at the rate of one per hour.

(Artificer, +1, +2, or +3 to either arcane skill or Knowledge (Alchemy) with limitations; Cost is \$500 per bonus point granted) or (Improved Artificer, Power Points (x3); Cost \$6000)

VAMPIRE'S COFFIN

Standard vampires in *Savage Worlds* don't have any form of Regeneration ability, so if they get wounded, it takes a while for them to heal. Likewise, they don't have to sleep in coffins. Gothic tradition especially has the last one as a core part of vampiric folklore.

Here's one way of making sleeping in coffins attractive to vampires, and it allows them to Regenerate damage.

Vampire coffins grant the vampire the Regeneration (Slow) ability, but only if it spends the day sleeping in the casket. When the sun sets, the vampire makes a natural Healing roll. These coffins aren't created using magic—it's an inherent power.

Depending on what myths you use in your game, having earth from the vampire's homeland lining the bottom of the coffin might be essential for the coffin to work, or grant a +2 bonus to the roll.

Since coffins are relatively flimsy (Toughness 4), and can be made unusable by placing holy water or a cross inside, most vampires keep several spare coffins to ensure their continued existence.

(Cannot be manufactured)

FORTUNE TELLING

Fortune tellers and horror settings seem made for each other. In what other genre do heroes go to strange gypsy mystics to learn what dark fate awaits them if they go into the vampire's lair?

This chapter takes a look at how you can use fortune telling or soothsaying to spice up your horror adventure. Several systems are presented, and you can pick whichever suits your needs, or use these as a basis for determining your own system.

Just so you're aware, we doubt very much that any of the systems presented here can actually give you any foresight into the future.

LIMITING READINGS

All of these systems give some sort of benefit (or bane) and are therefore open to abuse, with characters potentially queuing up to have their fortunes told in the hope of getting good results and possible bonuses. You should restrict fortune telling to one character per session, and only if it fits into your plot.

Characters who actively seek out fortune tellers every session should be charged a nominal fee to have their fortune told, and then informed the reading is ambiguous. Very few fortune tellers have the true gift of foresight.

BASIC CARD SYSTEM

When a character asks for a reading, simply draw one card from the action deck. A red card means the reading is fortuitous and the questioner earns a benny. A black card means the reading is bad, and he loses one. You can make this slightly more in-depth, and heighten the tension a little, by drawing three, five, or even seven cards and basing the reading on whether the majority of cards are red or black.

Alternately, if you think we're being too generous or tight-fisted, allow only a heart to grant an actual bonus (with diamonds still being a positive outcome), and spades to lose a benny (with clubs still being a bad omen).

What about jokers you ask? Well, jokers are the wild cards of the deck and should confer an extra boon. You might want to give the character another benny, or perhaps grant him another Adventure Deck card (if you're using them). Heck, you could even be really kind and let him change one of his initiative cards to a joker once during the evening.

To answer a yes/no type question, a red card means yes and a black means no. You'll obviously have to do some winging to make sure the result fits your adventure. We aren't fortune tellers, you know.

BASIC DICE SYSTEM

This system can be used to simulate the throwing of runes or I Ching sticks.

Roll 3d6. If the majority are even, the reading is good. Otherwise the reading is bad. Use the same bonuses for the card system above. For yes/no questions, odd is no and even is yes.

IN-DEPTH CARD SYSTEM

This system is slightly more in-depth than the basic card system, but is still quick and easy to use. It works best when the characters seek knowledge regarding the outcome of a battle with a foe, but it could easily be tinkered to produce results for other situations.

Draw three cards, one at a time, and place them face up on the table. As you turn each card, make up some nonsense about the fates based on the color of the card, with red being positive

and black negative. We'll give you an example in a moment.

Then turn a fourth card. This is the only one we're interested in—the rest are just window dressing. Depending on the suit, make up some suitable flavor text and secretly record the following bonuses or penalties. The characters should only ever get the flavor text—keep the game mechanics secret. Fate doesn't understand game speak.

Clubs: The characters weapons will strike true, but the fates offer no protection. They get +1 to attack rolls, but are -1 Toughness.

Diamonds: The characters are protected by good fortune, but their blades will be weak. They get +1 Toughness, but suffer -1 to attack rolls.

Hearts: A very fortunate card. The characters receive +1 to attack rolls and Toughness against the main villain they seek to destroy.

Spades: The fates are against the characters in their endeavor. In the climatic battle, they suffer a -1 penalty to attack rolls and Toughness.

Joker: The omens are exceptionally strong. Look at the previous card, and double any modifiers.

Okay, here's a quick example using flavor text for the first three cards.

The characters approach a gypsy seer to find out whether the omens are good for storming a vampire's castle.

The GM draws the first card and gets a club. He tells the players that the enemy they seek is shrouded in darkness (he lives in a crypt).

The second card is a spade, so the GM says that the enemy is strong (he's a vampire, after all).

The third card is a diamond, to which the GM says the enemy does not know they are coming (which is true).

The final card is also a diamond. Checking the notes above, the GM says that they are protected by the powers of good, but their weapons will not bite as true.

THE STORY METHOD

This method requires the GM to plan the fortune telling in advance, and also leaves the outcome of his adventure open to fate. If you're not prepared to wing the finale of the adventure, or indeed any other phase, then this method probably isn't for you.

There's no one way to use the story method, but ideally the GM should determine at least one important aspect of the adventure and leave it to fate. For instance, if the characters are stalking a werewolf, they might wish to know where his lair is located. Cue the fortune teller.

The GM must determine in advance several locations where the lair could be located and assign them to a suit. Here's an example.

Clubs: The deserted castle.

Diamonds: A glade in the forest.

Hearts: The graveyard.

Spades: The manor house.

Joker: He's right outside.

Then, draw a couple of cards before you get to the crunch and make up some flavor text based on the color. When you get to the important card, make up a suitable cryptic answer based on the beast's location.

Here's an example.

TYPES OF FORTUNE TELLING

Most people have heard of astrology, tarot cards, palmistry, Ouija boards, and crystal balls, but there are many more ways of divining the future. Here are just a few ways you can use in your game to avoid it becoming stereotypical.

Alectromancy: Placing a cockerel inside a circle of grain around which are placed letters of the alphabet. The letters closest to where the bird pecks are collected to answer questions.

Alomancy: Reading patterns using salt.

Arithmancy: Divination by numbers. Also called numerology.

Belomancy: Tying possible answers to a question to arrows. Whichever one travels the furthest when fired reveals the future.

Cleromancy: Using dice.

Extispicy: Reading animal entrails.

Gyromancy: Walking around a circle of letters until giddy. Whichever letters the reader stumbles against spell a message.

Hydromancy: Reading reflections in water or dropping objects into water and observing the ripples are two common methods.

Oneiromancy: Interpretation of dreams.

The werewolf hunters approach another gypsy to get some insight on the werewolf.

The GM draws the first card and gets a heart. He tells that the one they seek is weakest at dawn. It's a truth, of sorts, but it's really just flavor text.

The next card is a spade, to which the GM says the creature's hatred for life knows no bounds. Again, it's just flavor text.

The third card is another spade, and the GM tells the characters that each night he grows more powerful. This is a lie, but it might serve to motivate them.

Finally he draws a heart. He informs the characters that the beast lairs among those who sleep but do not dream.

Now all they have to do is work out the location and go kick some hairy butt.

PROFESSIONAL EDGES

As the rulebook says, Professional Edges are more than just bonuses. Each one represents a vocation gained after years of training. Those presented in the rulebook are, out of necessity, generalized—they have to cover a wide range of genres. When focusing on one particular genre, however, we can also focus the Professional Edges.

If a player wants to build an occult investigator, you can let him take the Investigator Edge and he's done. How about playing

a slayer? Just use Champion Edge.

But what if these jobs are more than just a set of bonuses. What if they represent an organization with a defined purpose? Maybe there's an order of slayers dedicated to overthrowing demons and another to killing vampires? What if occult investigators start with grimoires of power?

Professional Edges can also be the only way of getting other Edges. For instance, you have to become a member of the Order of the Golden Dawn in your setting before you can take the Arcane Background (Magic).

Of course, there's no reason why villains can't also have Professional Edges. Maybe a High Priest of Crazalphasalius receives a bonus to his arcane skill when using fire trappings, or perhaps any cultist of Arachnos who is chosen (i.e. buys the Edge) can walk on walls like a spider.

New Professional Edges allow you to show the players what archetypes are common in your world, and encourages them to get into the flavor of the game by playing these archetypes. Professional Edges designed solely for your game also allow you to add interesting social and political elements to your setting, helping to expand the background without requiring pages of notes. More importantly, they're also ripe for using to generate adventures.

DESIGNING NEW EDGES

If you've decided to create a batch of new Professional Edges, you need to decide what they're going to do. New Professional Edges don't have to be reinventions of the wheel. A few simple tweaks here and there, the addition of some background, and maybe an extra bonus, or drawback, can turn even the most generic Edge into something new.

NAME

Every Edge needs a name. In general, it should sum up exactly what the Edge does. The Thief Edge, just by the name, gives the player a good idea of what he'll get from taking the Edge without having to read it.

You can still be descriptive, however. A Slayer of the Order of the Silver Crescent is evocative and promises more than just simple combat bonuses and gymnastic skills. Just make sure the name has some link to the bonuses the Edge grants. Maybe the slayer has a bonus when fighting lycanthropes, or they receive special weapons allowing them to harm werewolves.

REQUIREMENTS

Professional Edges require higher trait requirements than most other Edges, but should always have a Rank requirement of Novice. Of course, there's nothing stopping you from having an "improved" Professional Edge.



THE CHOSEN ONE

Okay, how do you go about creating a slayer and making her better than her normal friends? Here are a few suggestions for you to think on.

THE PROFESSIONAL EDGE METHOD

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Spirit d6+, Strength d6+, Vigor d6+, Fighting d6+, Guts d6+

The character is the “chosen slayer,” a person dedicated to the destruction of all supernatural evil. Obviously, being a slayer means there’s some perks.

Once you’ve created your character, give her advancements and increase their Rank to Seasoned. The character does not have to pay back these free Experience Points—she’s just better than everyone else she hangs out with.

THE SLIGHTLY TOUGHER APPROACH

The character is a Novice, but during character generation, the chosen slayer may take Combat Edges without meeting the Rank requirement. She must still meet any other requirements. Alternately, the character might not have to meet any requirements and may not be limited just to Combat Edges.

THE CHAMPION APPROACH

The character builds a Novice character, but may take the Champion Edge without meeting the Arcane Background, Spirit, or Faith requirements.

THE FIXED PACKAGE

A chosen slayer starts as a Novice character, but receives a set package of bonuses. This might include free Edges (such as Acrobat and Champion) or free skills (d6 Fighting and Guts, for example). How many bonuses you grant depends on the power level of your game.

When assigning requirements, remember that taking a Professional Edge is a result of dedication and training. If you set the requirements too low, especially if the rewards are high, then don’t be surprised if all your characters take the Edge. Likewise, if the requirements are high and the payback low, no one will take it. There is no magic formula to balancing requirements, but a few traits at d8+ is a good start.

BONUS

Let’s be honest, players take Edges to get bonuses for their characters. Typically a Professional Edge grants bonuses to skills associated with the profession. You wouldn’t expect a slayer to get a bonus to Healing or Repair, but he could reasonably expect to get one to Guts or Stealth.

Typically, a Professional Edge should grant a +2 bonus to no more than three skills. Try to avoid giving blanket bonuses to combat skills, however. An Edge bestowing a +2 to Fighting is effectively giving the character a bonus when using all types of weapons.

If you’re handing out combat bonuses, restrict them to certain types of weapons. A werewolf hunter may get +1 to Fighting against werewolves to reflect his knowledge of how these beasts fight, whereas a vampire hunter might get +1 Fighting, and even Throwing, with stakes but not with other weapons.

An alternative is to allow the character to ignore penalties instead or grant a bonus in another way. Our vampire hunter may get a reduction in penalties to called shots to stake his foes, whereas the werewolf hunter might get +1 Parry to +1 to perform Tricks when fighting these hairy killers from his understanding of their fighting style.

Professional Edges can also be used to hand out free equipment. A werewolf hunter may get a silver blade, for instance. An occult researcher might be allowed to start with an occult library, which grants him bonuses to Knowledge (Occult) rolls, but only when he has his library to hand.

DRAWBACKS

Professional Edges can have drawbacks, but these should not outweigh the bonuses. The Noble Edge gives lots of bonuses, but also demands the character spend time governing his lands. You just need to ensure the drawbacks are not oppressive.

Drawbacks can include being tied to a particular region or duty, but again care must be taken. Designing a group of slayers sworn protect a specific town gives the character a purpose and is full of adventure possibilities, but what if the character then decides to go wandering and neglects his duties?

If the Edge forces the character to stay around the city, then make sure the majority of adventures are set there. If he wants to go wandering, have him seek permission from his superiors. There’s an adventure hook right there—the character can go after he’s completed a minor task.

ACQUISITION

Decide if there are any restrictions on how a character can take the Edge after character generation. Becoming a vampire or werewolf hunter might only require the character to have slain an appropriate beast (and meet the requirements), whereas becoming an occult researcher requires the character to spend several months

EXAMPLE CULTIST EDGES

These Edges are suitable for cultist villains.

DEVOTED SERVANT OF CRAZALPHASALIUS

Requirements: Novice, Arcane Background (Magic), Vigor d8+, Knowledge (Arcana) d8+

The character's worship of Crazalphasalius has given the priest a strong affinity with fire and heat, and he can draw power from available sources. For every d10 damage rating of a fire within his Spirit (in game inches), he reduces the cost of powers by 1 Power Point (minimum of 1).

CULTIST OF JJRIKILLIMSG

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d6+, Intimidation d8+, Taunt d8+, must have a Major Delusion Hindrance

Cultists of Jjrikillimsg are completely and utterly insane. Their insanity means they are not subject to Tests of Will, nor do they suffer Fear. They gain a +2 bonus to Intimidation and Taunt rolls.

CHOSEN OF ARACHNOS

Requirements: Novice, Agility d6+, Strength d6+

Arachnos grants a few of her most devoted followers special powers. The character is one such devotee, and has the Wall Walker Monstrous Ability (see *Savage Worlds*).

MOUTH OF VRALKRESH

Requirements: Novice, Agility d6+, Fighting d8+

Mouths are Vralkresh's priests, whom he has blessed with a special ability. The character develops sharp teeth and may project his jaw. The character has a bite attack with causes Str+2 damage at +1 Reach.

tracking down rare books and spending a fortune buying them.

Of course, a character can call himself a werewolf hunter or occult researcher without fulfilling any requirements at all, but he wouldn't get the bonuses.

BACKGROUND

Professional Edges unique to your setting, specifically those based around an organization, should have some

background text associated with them, if only to let the player know more about the organization. You don't need to write a complete history, but there should be enough detail so the player knows what is expected of him and how the organization functions.

ARCANE PROFESSIONAL EDGES

Whether or not you make new arcane Professional Edges—any Professional Edge aimed at characters with an Arcane Background—depends, of course, on whether or not characters can play wizards, priests, or psionicists.

As with other Professional Edges, those designed for spellcasters should have requirements, one of which must be an appropriate Arcane Background. They can be used by mages or priests with little modification.

Each Edge should grant one or two bonuses with no drawbacks. Having limitations on its use is fine, so long as they do not render the Edge unusable.

EXAMPLE PROFESSIONAL EDGES

Here are some examples of Professional Edges suitable for the horror genre. Use them as templates for creating similar Edges for your own setting. There's also one Leadership Edge which suits a horror setting.

EXORCIST

Requirements: Novice, Arcane Background (Miracles), Spirit d8+, Faith d10+, Guts d6+

The character is an exorcist, a member of the clergy trained at driving out demons from human bodies. The exorcism ritual takes 1d6 hours, at the end of which the character makes a Faith roll versus the Spirit of the demon. With success, the demon is driven out and returns to Hell. On a failure, the demon stays in its host and may not be exorcised for 1d6 weeks.

FANATICISM (LEADERSHIP EDGE)

Requirements: Seasoned, Command, Persuasion d8+

Some leaders can inspire their men to follow them into the very depths of the Desert of Bones. Troops under command of a character with this Edge add +2 to their Guts rolls.

FORTUNE TELLER

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d8+, Knowledge (Arcana) d6+, Notice d8+, Persuasion d6+

Fortune tellers are experts at reading the omens. The character has the ability to read the future in some form, whether through palmistry, runes, or watching for shapes in the clouds.

Once per session, a character may ask the fortune teller for a reading (fortune tellers can't read their own fortune). You can use whatever method you want to handle this, but we recommend using the quick card method on page 59.

NECROMANCER

Requirements: Novice, Arcane Background (Magic or Miracles), Spirit d8+, arcane skill d8+, must know the *zombie* power

Tammuz, lord of the dead, was once the guardian of the afterlife. However, he has fallen from grace, and now seeks to supplant the world of the living with a necropolis of his undead minions.

He adds +2 to his arcane skill rolls when using the *zombie* power. When the character is in a graveyard, tomb, necropolis, or other area commonly associated with death, he gains the benefits of the Wizard Edge.

IMPROVED NECROMANCER

Requirements: Veteran, Necromancer

Undead created by the *zombie* power cast by this character are permanent, until destroyed.

OCCULT RESEARCHER

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d8+, Investigation d8+, Knowledge (Occult) d8+, must speak at least two ancient languages, one of which must be Latin or Greek.

Knowledge is power. The character has a small, private occult library. This may be an actual collection of books, or scanned images on a laptop computer. The character begins the game with three mundane occult tomes (see p. 24).

In addition, the character has a +2 bonus to Investigation rolls when researching occult matters.

TALISMAN CREATOR

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d8+, Spirit d8+, Arcane Background (Magic or Miracles), Knowledge (Occult) d8+, arcane skill d8+

This is a horror version of the Gadgeteer Edge.

Once per game session, a talisman creator can create a magic

PLAYING MONSTERS

Horror games are almost always centered around the characters being the protagonists. You know, all the good winning over evil stuff. But what if you, or your players, want to play the other side of the coin?

Well, there's nothing to stop you, but it's probably best if you avoid playing truly evil characters. Compare it to playing supervillains in *Necessary Evil*. The characters are bank robbers and weirdos intent on building doomsday devices, but they aren't child molesters and rapists.

As for monsters, well, in horror, it's cool to play the vampire or Frankenstein or the Wolfman. They're monsters, and they're "evil" in a classic sense, but not in a "real world" sense. PC "monsters" might even be noble in some way, but they don't wander into an orphanage and start snacking down. Playing true evil (eating orphans) is just despicable and you won't enjoy yourself, and we're sure as hell not going to encourage it.

talisman and imbue it with arcane energy. The device uses any power available to a magician or miracle worker in that setting (though this is still subject to Rank restrictions). It has half the creator's Power points and once these are used up they do not recharge.

The ritual to imbue the object takes d20 minutes. Activating the device requires a Smarts (magic) or Spirit (miracles) roll.

VAMPIRE SLAYER

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Fighting d8+, Guts d8+

Vampire hunters know a vampire's weak spot is the heart, and they spend long hours practising heart strikes with melee, thrown, and missile weapons.

The character halves penalties for making Called Shots to the heart due to his experience at slaying vampires. In addition, the character never has to make a Guts roll when dealing with vampires.

WEREWOLF HUNTER

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Fighting d6+, Guts d6+, Notice d6+, Stealth d6+, Tracking d6+

Werewolf hunters are specialist slayers, focusing their attention on removing the threat of werewolves from the world.

Characters never have to make Guts rolls when dealing with werewolves (and other lycanthropes, at your discretion). In addition, long hours spent studying werewolves has taught him how to best attack his foes, so each weapon has an additional +1 to Damage against lycanthropes.

The hunter also gains a +1 bonus to Notice, Stealth, and Tracking when hunting werewolves.