

CRYPTS & THINGS THE MIDDERLANDS CONVERSION NOTES

You could easily use The Midderlands, which is based on Swords and Wizardry Complete, as is with Crypts & Things. This document gives more 'game juice' as The Midderlands' creator Glynn Seal calls it, to make running the setting with C&T more seamless.

WHAT IS THE MIDDERLANDS?

Whist 'The Midderlands' is not strictly a Swords and Sorcery setting, it is a vile, dangerous and weird land. It is similar in tone to Clark Ashton Smith's Averroigne Stories, which are tales of weird fantasy set in a fictional province of medieval France.

Not got a copy of The Midderlands?

Shame on you! Go visit monkeyblooddesign.co.uk/The-Midderlands or drivethrurpg.com/browse/pub/7771/MonkeyBlood-Design immediately to remedy this sad situation.

Not got a copy of Crypts and Things? Well you'll need one to make head or tail of this document (as us Brits say). Go pick up a copy either at D101 Games Webstore: d101games.com/store or DriveThruRpg.com: drivethrurpg.com/product/190299/Crypts-and-Things-Remastered

CONTENTS

Characters: Explanations about the origins of the characters, how the core character classes fit in The Midderlands and new life events more suited to the setting.

Encounters in the Midderlands with Fiends: A quick list of monsters from the C&T rulebook suitable for use in The Midderlands.

Threats to Sanity: This section highlights the unnatural delights of The Midderlands that might be alarming to non-residents.

Gloomium: How this ever-present corrupting green goo affects the Crypts and Things Magic system. Includes rules for ingesting gloomium, don't try this at home kids! (no really don't).

THANKS TO

Glynn Seal for putting the The Midderlands together and opening up such a bottle of gaming fun! Also for proofing this document.

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CHARACTERS

Characters can, of course, start out in the Continent of Terror and then be magically transported from there, such as the gate that is The Black Monolith in the Haunted Lands Adventure (see page 217 in the main Crypts & Things Rule Book). It may be that The Shroud, being an in-between world between Zarth and the Other Worlds, may have doors and gates that lead directly into the Middergloom, the vast underworld that lies beneath the Middelands. Or they may be from the Middelands itself or the neighbouring lands in Havenland. If using this option, the following Notes about Character Classes and New Lifepath table are there to create characters native to the setting.

Notes about Character Classes

These short write-ups place the four core classes of Crypts and Things in context of the Middelands.

Barbarian

These are the unwashed lot of the Middelands. The especially stinky and wild who live outside the towns and hamlets in the wilderness. Even Middelanders consider them a bunch of beggars who live in the ditches by the roads, or in ramshackle hovels in the woods. They are the natural enemies of both the fetid horrors of the Middelands and the civilised folk who come from outside to tame and/or exploit it.

Other Barbarians come from the Grim North, as part of raiding groups who believe that “there’s gold in that there Green Land”, and who end up alone after their party return home, repulsed by force of arms by one of the local lords, or eaten by ‘things’ in the wilderness.

Fighter

Some are out of work mercenaries from the border wars in the Grim North who have drifted to the Middelands in search of work. Then there are the ex-soldiers from the Soft South who are looking for adventure and glory, which eludes them in the more peaceful lands they come from. Native Fighters have usually worked their way up through the local militias, the townguard, and the Lord’s bodyguards and want a bit more life and coin for themselves.

Sorcerer

The earth is thin, and Gloomium seeps through the lands most readily. Sorcerers have flocked like vultures to study the effects of this offensive material. White Sorcerers seek to actively stop the significant horrors that are coming from this land. Grey Magicians from the Royal Society of Sorcerers study and catalogue the region’s unique flora and fauna; critics say that they are little more

than overpaid academics. Foul Black Sorcerers rub their hands with glee at the possibility of all the nasty, stinging, rotting, fetid creatures that ooze in less savoury parts of the Middelands, whose body parts they can use in their spells, potions, and as the base of even more foul magical constructs. These sorcerer outsiders are quite rightly feared, since many are scheming opportunists seeking to loot and harvest unnatural things from the land. Even the bearers of the Royal Seal of the Queen are seen as meddlers who bring doom by poking their noses into local mysteries and secrets best left alone.

Local Sorcerers are a mixed lot. The sons and daughters of local village Wises and Hedge magicians, returning Sorcerers who had an apprenticeship with a lone Sorcerer in the counties beyond the Middeland’s borders or with the Royal Society of Sorcerers in Great Lunden. None of these magicians receives a happy homecoming, inland where magic is blamed for all the strange and bad things that happen. A land where the stereotypical sorcerer is like Pye of Cairn Chase Forest — mad, bad and dangerous to know.

Thief

The Middelands is an exceptionally lawless part of Havenland, where Thieves can operate quite naturally without the law fingering them constantly.

As well as a load of native bad types who make their livelihood out of robbing, such as the infamous Merry Green Men living on the edge of Cairn Chase Forest, there is a whole load of bad types, mainly from the crowded slums of Great Lunden, who have come looking for the “Gold in the Green”.

The only downside of the Middelands, from the more organised rogue’s point of view, is that there isn’t any established Guild of Thieves like there is in some of the more prominent cities up North or South. Perhaps the time has come for one to be set up by some enterprising individual.

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New Lifepath Tables

These tables take the assumption that the player characters are outsiders to the Miederlands, who come either from the Grim North or the Soft South. They share a common mother tongue but a history of being invaded by neighbours across the sea (such as the Norswedanes, whose dragon boats plague the Grim North, and the Knormuns whose organised military invasions, eventually overran the South and established the current royal dynasty) has led to differing dialects, which mark them as outsiders to the Miederlanders. Similarly, they share a common culture, with a shared history and similar feudal political system, and are ruled by the same monarch, Queen Elspeth IV. There things diverge, as the North and South of Havenland are distinctly different places. The North is cold, rainy, hilly and mountainous. The South more temperate, less hilly and covered with farmland. The Miederlands themselves might as well be on another planet, with it's treacherous terrain.

Note these Havenlands are my personal creations and may be superseded by official productions by MonkeyBlood Design & Publishing should they develop the lands beyond the Miederlands further.

The Soft South

A land of abundant farmland, soft and rolling hills, pleasant Royal Forests where deer and other animals frolic until hunted to extinction by the nobility. Towns are genteel centres of arts and crafts, while large cities like Great Lunden strain with overpopulation. The Duke's castles, built in a time when war between feudal dukes and lords was commonplace, are more likely to be converted to comfortable places of leisure, designed to impress and accommodate Queen Elspeth IV on her annual procession around her realm, than the heavily-fortified bases for private armies that they were at the start of her reign. The south is, on the surface, at peace. All glory be to Queen Elspeth IV.

Roll D6	Life Event	Characteristic Bonus
1.	Southern Dandy. The character is one of the Dandies (or Poffs as the Northerners and Miederlanders call them). They are well mannered, yet outrageous in their behaviour and dress. Ruffs, lace, outrageous pieces of jewellery all are the hallmark of the Dandy's honour.	+1 Charisma.
2.	Shopkeeper. It is often said that the south is a land of shopkeepers. This paints a rather idyllic picture of steady and calm commerce. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth, the South being a hotbed of corruption and cut throat deals. The character was brought up in an environment where outwitting mercantile opponents was a way of life.	+1 Intelligence.
3.	Easex Gangster. The character was a Lundener, but moved to the country surrounding the city, to escape the grinding poverty of the capital. Instead of the rural paradise with 'work for all', they found themselves shut out by the locals. Instead, you were welcomed by a group of fellow Lundener's in the same boat and joined their criminal clan.	+1 Dexterity.
4.	Bumpkin. The character is a from the vast farmlands that cover the eastern and southern parts of the Havenlands. They are a tough people used to toiling in the fields, surviving outbreaks of plague and bandit raids.	+1 Constitution.
5.	Cosywolds Hill Dweller. The character is from one of the hill villages in Cosywolds. This is a quiet and contemplative land of kings and ancient ruins, often visited by foreigners in special organised expeditions, known as 'Stagecoach Trips'.	+1 Wisdom.
6.	Lundener. This character is a commoner from the overcrowded capital of the Havenlands. Used to grinding labour to survive.	+1 Strength.

The Grim North

A harsh landscape of hills and mountains, which has higher rainfall and is much colder than the rest of Havenland. Constant wars and raids from barbarian neighbours have also ravaged the North. Its scattered peoples are a reserved and stoic lot, who can appear to be sullen to outsiders, but once amongst their own, in the privacy of their homes and pubs, are in fact full of life and generous to a fault.

Roll D6	Life Event	Characteristic Bonus
1.	Border Reaver. The character is a member of one of the Raider Borderclans, who live in fortified manor houses either side of Hard Adrin's Wall. Quarrelsome to the extreme, they thrive in the disputed borderlands regularly swapping their allegiance between the Lords both north and south of the Wall.	+1 Strength.
2.	From Twineside. In the lands of the River Twine, just south of Hard Adrin's Wall, it's essential to know what side of the Twine you are from, since ancient ancestral feuds, known locally as Knots, exists between the North Twineside (from Nowtcastle and Shield) and South Twineside (from Gate of Head and Sunnyland). Nobody understands Twineside dialect, except perhaps when they are drunk. Despite this, Twinesiders have a natural charm and affability, which makes them misunderstand why no one else in the Haven Lands is as nice as they are.	+1 Charisma.
3.	From the Lands of the Bishop Kings, the character hails from the Haven Lands, such as Derhamshire and Yirkshire. Where Bishops instead of Dukes rule from fortified Cathedrals and dare, in defiance to the Mad Queen, to take the title 'King'. (Derham and Yirkshire). People from this region pride themselves on being especially religious and due to an excellent public-school system, provided by the monks, the only widely-literate area in Havenland.	+1 Wisdom.
4.	Savage from Beyond the Wall. In the dark distant past, they built a massive wall, Hard Adrin's Wall, to keep the Savages from the furthest reaches from despoiling Havenland. Named after King Adrin who ordered its construction and because it was meant to be hard to get over. To the people south of the wall, these people are savage tribesman, who regularly perform unspeakable acts as a matter of survival and run about screaming whilst wearing only elaborate blue woad body paint. The truth may be close or radically different.	+1 Constitution.
5.	Lindyfarner. Raised on the magical island of Lindyfarn, just off the coast of Twineside. Believe that the fog on the River Twine is all theirs, and is due to the pact between the Twinesiders and the Lindyfarmers who raise the fog as a defence, conjuring terrifying demons and monsters out of the fog. All Lindyfarmers can cast Phantasmal Force once per day. Unfortunately, this did not help the islanders ten years ago when the island was attacked by raiders from the sea, and most of the population was sold into slavery and ended up being scattered across the North because of this raid.	+1 Intelligence.
6.	Lakelander. Peaceful, contemplative, and terrified of lake monsters coming up from the depths and eating them in their boats. +3 to Skill Tests involving small boats.	+1 Dexterity.

New/amended Career Life Paths for Character Classes

Barbarian

Roll D6	Life Event	Benefit
1	The character was a “bog-fighter”, an expert in fighting in pits full of mud.	+ 2 to hit when fighting in swamps or similar muddy conditions, and to skill tests involving being waist deep in mud.
2	For most of the character’s life, they lived up in the Mountains.	+2 to climbing skill tests.
3	A wild raider, an expert in stealing sheep and cattle.	+2 to hit and run attacks.
4	A ‘reformed savage’ adopted by civilised folk.	They never suffer any negative reactions from townsfolk to their Barbarian nature. Civilised folk will be able to tell from the characters manners and dress that they have been ‘tamed’ and will look to them for protection and guidance when they are under attack by their less civilised kinfolk.
5	Corruption Fighter.	+2 to hit and damage when fighting creatures corrupted by gloomium.
6	Head Hunter. They have a previous career working for the Lords/Dukes, tracking down bandits and raiders, taking their heads as bounty.	As well as being +2 to hit and damage versus such uncivilised humans and non-humans, through conviction and training, they can always collect a bounty of at least 1d6 gold quids per head from the local noble upon presentation of the heads.

Fighter

Roll D6	Life Event	Benefit
1	The character is a career mercenary.	They can always find work in the private army of some lord or other.
2	Ex-member of a Duke’s Standing Army, now out of a job since Queen Elspeth IV banned private armies.	+2 to all skill tests regarding Ducal troops, such as to recognise the owner of a particular Heraldic emblem.
3	Town Watch.	+2 to hit any skill test regarding the capture of career criminals.
4	Treasure hunter.	+2 to any skill test to find treasure troves and safely find and disarm traps guarding them.
5	Caravan Guard.	+2 to hit and damage when protecting another character.
6	Professional Monster Hunter.	+2 to hit and damage when fighting large rampaging monsters threatening local communities.

Thief

Roll D6	Life Event	Benefit
1	A “Merry Man/Woman” from a band of forest outlaws.	+2 to all rolls when in the forest.
2	The character is a former member of a gang of smugglers.	+2 to all rolls when smuggling cargo past the authorities.
3	A footpad, who waylaid travellers on the lonely paths.	+2 to all rolls when ambushing passers-by on the byways and highways of the Haven Lands.
4	A burglar who made a living breaking and entering houses.	+2 to lock picking, forcing doors etc.
5	A turncoat who has worked for the Lords, leading the watch to former colleagues and associates	Trusted by the authorities, who always pay a bounty of at least 1d20 gold quids for information about known felon’s activities.
6	A scout, leading ‘expeditions’ of rich tourists, looking for thrills and excitement in the more out of the way places of the Midderlands.	+2 to all rolls concerned with scouting activities.

Sorcerer

Roll D6	Life Event	Benefit
1.	A paid-up member of the Royal College of Magic and carries their seal.	+2 to skill test rolls when dealing with the authorities or any social situation where social status is involved.
2	Ex-monk, who was kicked out of the monastery during the reformation at the beginning of Queen Elspeth IV’s reign.	Specialised in healing the poor, knows Protection from Evil and Cure Light Wounds as bonus spells in their spell book.
3	Court Sorcerer for a Baron.	+2 to any skill tests involving etiquette and the upper classes.
4	Hedge Wizard.	Automatically knows Animal Friend, Cure Light Wounds as bonus spells in their spell book.
5	Astrologer and Diviner, making money from telling people’s fortunes.	The character starts with the bonus spell Divination in their spellbook.
6	An Alchemist.	They know Purify Food and Drink, Make Small Items as bonus spells in their spell book.

THREATS TO SANITY

The Middelands are especially hazardous to the mental health of those who live there. It is a massive shock to outsiders, used to the blue skies and green fields of their own lands. There are random magical effects, erupting green gloom, noxious plants and foul, twisted beasts. Even more so than the Continent of Terror.

As usual Sanity Loss should be preceded by unnerving description and foul omens and the guidelines on page 235 of *Crypts & Things* should be borne in mind.

ENCOUNTERS IN THE MIDDLELANDS WITH FIENDS

Of course, you as Crypts Keeper may import any of the Fiends found in *Crypts and Things' Compendium of Fiends to The Middelands* to surprise and amuse your players, but this author feels that the following creatures fit in with the setting exceptionally well.

Also, you can use the Gloom-touched deformities table on page 11 of *The Middelands* to add a gloomium-based twist.

- Bloom of Death.
- Chreker.
- Corpse Colossus, the product of mass graves from some past plague/battle brought back to life by the grave being seeped in gloomium, which the monster drips where ever it goes.
- Crawling Corruption.
- Fungus Man.
- Hanged Man.
- Khaos Monster
- Nemons can often be found in village ponds, having crawled up from the Middelgloom. They start as a small colony and quickly infect and take over the village. Bulging eyes, webbed feet soon become prevalent amongst the villagers and a tendency for running business solely for "Local People".
- Poison Tree.
- Sick Weed.
- Spore Fiend/Spore Zombie.
- Whip Weed.

GLOOMIUM

Gloomium is everywhere in the Middelands. It seeps up from the Middelgloom, an ambiguous underworld below the Middelands. It is toxic and corrupting. It is green in colour and is the source of much strangeness, corruption and twisted magic. This section explains how gloomium works in the context of *Crypts & Things* magic system.

As a Source of Khaos

Crypt Keepers should assume that the seepage of gloomium is the source of Khaos monsters and mutations, for games set in *The Middelands*.

Corruption

Whilst in the Middelands, use the Gloom-touched rules (*Middelands* page 10 and 11), instead of the standard *Crypts and Things* Corruption table on page 64 of *Crypts & Things*.

Green is the Brightest Colour of Magic!

While in the Middelands there is only two colours of magic; Green and Colourless.

Green is the magic of gloomium; it's harmful, toxic and glows a malignant shade of luminous green when cast. It causes corruption when cast, using the rules on page 84 of *Crypts & Things*. All the spells on the Black Magic spell lists (see page 50 of *Crypts & Things*) are Green.

In addition, the following new spells from the Middelands are Green Magic spells:

Curse of Old Hobb, *Gloomium Shield*, *Middelgloom Missiles*, *Morgontula's Vomit*.

Colourless magic is everything else (i.e. Spells from the Grey and White Lists). It does not have a colour when cast and its effects are usually boringly beneficial or utilitarian in nature.

What Did That Do? (see *Middelands* page 74) is a colourless spell.

While in the Middelands ignore *The Summons of Evil* rules for casting beneficial (white) magic.

Also, ignore the rules for Blood Magic (unless you are using *The Others* from *Crypts and Things* or a similar body of Demonic beings who provide magic for blood sacrifice).

Sorcerer's Magic Sensitivity to Gloomium

Gloomium is green-hot, radioactive stuff as far as a Sorcerer's magic sensitivity ability (see page 23 of *Crypts & Things*) is concerned. It drives many Sorcerers 'up to the wall', with the constant throbbing of the temples when their magic sense is triggered by a pool of the green stuff in some swamp, or from a creeping feeling of unease because the house they are lodging in is built over a large gloomium deposit. This does have the benefit of sorcerers being great at finding gloomium.

Using Gloomium to Regain Magic

Since gloomium is nasty raw magical stuff, sorcerer's may regain magic by ingesting it. This is a particularly dangerous and insane practice which is not recommended by the Royal College.

The procedure is thus:

For each 'gulp' of gloomium, a sorcerer regains one level of cast spell and loses 1d6 hit points, from the toxic and corrosive nature of the substance, and upon a failed Sanity Roll loses 1d6 sanity points. It takes one combat round to take a gulp. They also glow bright glowing green for the number of gulps you took in days. All these effects add to each other, so for example, if you take four gulps you take 4d6 hit points of damage and potentially lose 4d6 Sanity if you fail your Sanity Test and you can remember up to a fourth Level spell or any combination of spells whose levels.

For example, Ned the Anxious, a rather foolish apprentice of the Royal College, finds himself in a spot of bother in Cairn Chase Forest. About to be skinned alive by some rather Unmerry Men, and out of spells, he decides to take two gulps of gloomium, from a readily-prepared flask of the substance. This takes him two rounds, during which time the Unmerry Men close on him and fire off bows. In round three, the gloomium kicks off. He takes 2d6 Hit Points damage, rolling a four and a five for nine points of damage, and successfully makes his sanity roll – so keeps hold of his mind. With his innards burning from the liquid, he memorizes the 2nd Level Spell Web and wastes no time in firing off a sticky web of green stuff at the Unmerry Men. If he had not been so worried, he could have taken his time firing off one Magic Missile this round, and another the round after (two first level spells equalling 2 levels of spells remembered as allowed by two gulps). If he survives, he will glow bright luminous green for the next two days, making sneaking about and hiding very difficult and becoming a magnet for any nearby witch hunter.

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