

Tainted Lands



Player's Compendium

TAINTED LANDS: PLAYERS COMPENDIUM

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NOTES FROM THE PUBLISHER

Tainted Lands marks a new direction for Troll Lord Games™ in general and Castles & Crusades® in particular. It is a continuation of the Siege Engine Games, but for the first time it brings to us all a new game using the Siege Mechanic as designed for C&C. Star Siege, released last year, brought the first of the Siege Engine Games, but it was a platform that demonstrated the versatility of the mechanic, rather than one that built upon it. Tainted Lands uses the mechanic as it was originally designed, and as such it is no real departure from the game we all love, but it is a wholly new look at that most useful of game mechanics. Here, for the first time, the Siege Engine flexes its muscles and demonstrates its power beyond versatility.

We tapped the goodly Mr. James M. Ward for this project. He snapped it up with relish as he has long wanted to visit his vision upon the landscape of fantasy horror. In reading the Tainted Lands, playing it and watching it played I believe he has done an amazing job. He's created a game that brings the terror of the dark to your table. Mr. Ward taps into that primeval fear we all possess of chaos, of creatures that crawl from the morass of our nightmares, of the dead, and the dark. Further he creates a setting that molds us through its very essence, changing what we desire, into what we fear. In the Tainted Lands our sense of equilibrium is unbalanced and that need for control is left unsated.

We also tapped the powerful and emotive art of Jason Walton and Mark Allen for this project. You'll see it throughout.

A brief note on the setting might be in order. The Tainted Lands lie in the world of Aihrde, a setting we have explored in numerous publications in the past. This world is TLG's official fantasy game world setting, but you do not need that material to play in the Tainted Lands, but of course there is plenty of it if you wish to explore that world a little further.

We hope you enjoy this latest offering from TLG and look to the future for more Tainted Lands material.

As always, Thank You for Playing.
Stephen Chenault
July 2009

INTRODUCTION

This book is created for the player going into the Tainted Lands. Horror is the emphasis of this campaign land. There is a great deal of danger throughout the Tainted Lands so the player characters are encouraged to be very careful. Added to that, there are unusual numbers of undead roaming the lands and attacks of that type will come far more often than in lands that are more normal. These concepts for the Tainted Lands are intent on filling you, the player, with feelings of horror and terror. The American Heritage Dictionary defines horror as, 1. An intense and painful feeling of repugnance and fear. The dictionary goes on to define terror as, 2. Anything that instills such fear, a terrifying object, or occurrence.

Also, no one wants a cookie-cutter character who is like a hundred other characters around them. Its great fun to be a paladin, but it's even more fun being a white-haired, black-eyed paladin with two new attributes that no one else has; who can brag of escaping the Tainted Lands.

So, now that you know you are going to play in a game that wants to fill you with dread and terror, "How is that is going to be done?" you might ask. There are many elements of horror, but for sure, you can count on the following: You will be exploring the unknown.

You will feel helpless upon occasion. You will face the unstoppable force and if you stay and fight it, your character will die. It also might interest you to know you have the potential to gain fabulous treasures and a great deal of experience; all you have to do is survive.

As a role-playing character, you are not used to facing a hopeless situation. You are usually the hero who overcomes everything you face. That's not going to be true in every event in the Tainted Lands. In your role-playing experience, ghosts, skeletons, and zombies are known creatures and don't seem so unbelievable or unexpected to you. All of that is going to change in the Tainted Lands. The undead are rarely unintelligent and moving at you slowly. Instead of finding two or three of them, you often find large numbers coming at you from all sides. So you have to ask yourself, how many unusually powerful skeletons can I or my player group defeat at once? Is the number five? Is the number ten? Could the number be twenty? Don't cry fowl if you encounter fifty super strong undead skeletons. Run!

Running is a good idea in the Tainted Lands. Until you get things figured out, don't be quick to do battle. Finally, be warned that things are going to be tough. You have only yourself to blame as first you begin to feel helpless; then the intensity of the attacks on you increases to a point that you begin to think its unfair; finally you are overwhelmed with dread and your character either dies, or copes and stops recoiling and shuddering and starts kicking skeleton butt! The choice is always up to you.

James M. Ward

Spring of 2009

CREATING TAINTED LAND CHARACTERS

TWO NEW ATTRIBUTES

The instant an established character comes into the Tainted Lands, they gain two new attributes. The power of the Tainted Lands and the nature of the attributes gives a character a complete understanding of what these attributes are and how to use them. At the choice of the player, one of them is designated primary and the other is secondary. If the character is created from the choice of the four player characters living in the Tainted Lands, they already have these attributes added to the others.

The Tainted Lands change the rules a bit allowing for human characters to have two primary attributes (forcing one to be the supernatural or psychic, but never both as primary attributes) and a total of three secondary attributes, with supernatural or psychic for one of them, but never both. Demi-humans can then have two primary attributes, with supernatural or psychic for one of them, but never both of them, and two secondary attributes, again with supernatural and psychic for one of those, but not both.

GENERATING TAINTED LANDS ATTRIBUTE SCORES

These two attribute scores are generated by rolling 4d6. The player adds the results and applies one score to the supernatural Attribute and the other score to the psychic attribute. These attribute scores will remain as long as the character is in the Tainted Lands. Changes happen to those scores as one succeeds or fails in certain areas of the Tainted Lands. Your Castle Keeper will tell you when these conditions are happening. When the player character leaves the Tainted Lands, they retain their two new attributes and the abilities those attributes give them.

The supernatural and psychic numbers should never be equal to start with in the game. Reroll the dice for the second total in the result of a tie. During the course of the game when the supernatural and psychic numbers change through game play to equal each other, they lock and can never be changed again. For example, if the supernatural attribute score was 17 and the psychic score was 18 and magic changed them both to 18, those numbers could never be changed again through any magic or higher power.

ATTRIBUTE MODIFIERS

Attribute Number	1	2-3	4-5	6-8	9-12	13-15	16-17	18-19	20-21	22-23	24-25
Plus or Minus Modifier	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6

SUPERNATURAL ATTRIBUTE BENEFITS

Numbers	Benefits
20-21	+1 on wis and int
22-23	+1 on wisdom
24-25	+1 on intelligence

PSYCHIC ATTRIBUTE BENEFITS

Numbers	Benefits
20-21	+1 on magic checks
22-23	+1 to the damage score on spells with damage
24-25	+1 on dexterity

DEALING WITH UNDEAD

Those with the supernatural attribute have the ability to empathize with undead and gain the potential for a certain amount of control. The controlling of undead requires a successful supernatural check. The challenge level for the check is equal to the undead creature's hit dice. A successful check results in the undead not attacking the character with the supernatural attribute, no matter what that character does to the undead creature for the first 1d6 rounds in the encounter.

A check with a +3 over what is needed allows the player character to control the undead creature(s) for 1 turn. The undead won't kill itself when under orders, but will obey mental commands to attack others in the area. The maximum range for influencing the undead is 60 feet and the creature must be visible.

If the check results in the exact number needed, the undead can't see the character with the supernatural attribute unless that character attacks. The character can't control the creature with an exact number check.

If the check fails, the character with the supernatural ability may try again as many times as they wish in the following rounds, once each round.

NUMBER OF UNDEAD CONTROLLED

The number of undead monsters that are influenced is determined by special rules. Common undead are non-sentient, automaton-like creatures such as skeletons and zombies. Extraordinary undead are semi-sentient undead of greater power that usually have special abilities, such as wraiths and ghosts. Unique undead are those rare and powerful creatures of strong will and intelligence, like vampires and liches. The control undead ability influences 1d12 common undead, 1d6 extraordinary undead, or 1 unique undead. For each type, the number influenced is increased or decreased by the character's charisma modifier.

SMITING THE UNDEAD

If the character is five experience levels higher than the hit dice of the type of undead faced, the character with a successful check can cause the undead to turn to dust or be totally controlled by the player character for 24 hours.

SUPERNATURAL ATTRIBUTE

This attribute reflects the character's ability to sense unlife. Characters with this ability can sense undead in a 120-foot radius around them. They can also sense what type of undead are in the area, and the number. The attribute is given to a character because the Tainted Lands teem with the undead and the negative plain energy of the land makes those undead much more powerful. That same power fills the player character and begins to change them as well.

In the hands of a character with a supernatural attribute, any weapon is magical and strikes at a +1 toward the undead if supernatural is secondary and +3 if supernatural is a primary attribute. If it takes a magical weapon to strike the undead, the powers of the character with the supernatural attribute allow for that and turn a natural weapon into a magical one for the battle.

SUPERNATURAL AS PRIMARY ATTRIBUTE

The following happens at the various experience levels if a character has supernatural as his primary attribute:

Character Level	Unique Power
1-2	Strike undead with a +2
3-4	*Never affectedby undead <i>fear</i> effect
5-6	Immune to undead <i>paralysis</i>
7-8	*Takes 1/2 damage from undead physical strikes
9-10	Does +5 to strike undead, cumulative
11-12	*Constantly invisible to undead unless attacking
13-14	Skeletons turned to dust at 60 feet or less
15-16	*Zombies turned to dust at 60 feet or less
17-18	Wraiths turned to dust at 60 feet or less
19-20	*Wights turned to dust at 60 feet or less

If the attribute is a secondary one, only the powers without a “*” can be used by the character.

CHANGING ATTRIBUTE SCORES

There are “pools of negative energy” to be found in the Tainted Lands. Success in these areas often adds 1 to the attribute score. Failure in these areas usually subtracts one on the attribute score. There are more rules for this in the Castle Keeper’s Tainted Lands booklet.

PSYCHIC ATTRIBUTE

The psychic attribute is the ability to sense magic – and especially, control magic – and to resist those influences. With the psychic attribute, a character can sense a magical beast or spell caster within 120 feet and know the type of creature and what level of spell caster they could be.

Certain spells come to the budding character with this attribute as well as certain resistances to control magics.

PSYCHIC AS PRIMARY ATTRIBUTE

The following happens at the various experience levels if a character has psychic as his primary attribute:

Character Level	Unique Power
1-2	Sense beings with spell ability at 120 feet
3-4	*Immune to <i>suggestion</i>
5-6	Immune to magical paralyze effects
7-8	*Immune to all <i>charm</i> effects
9-10	Has +3 on all chances to resist spells
11-12	*Immune to all <i>hold</i> effects
13-14	Traps glow in your presence (30 feet radius)
15-16	*Immune to all <i>illusion</i> effects
17-18	Invisible and hidden objects glow in your presence (30 ft.)
19-20	*Immune to all <i>curse</i> effects

If the attribute is a secondary one, only the powers without a “*” can be used by the character.

MAGIC GIVEN WITH PSYCHIC ATTRIBUTE

Character Level	Once per Day Spell use%
1	<i>suggestion</i>
2	* <i>charm person</i>
3	<i>hold person</i>
4	* <i>charm monster</i>
5	<i>dimension door</i>
6	* <i>minor globe of invulnerability</i>
7	<i>hold monster</i>
8	* <i>passwall</i>
9	<i>teleport</i>
10	* <i>globe of invulnerability</i>
11	<i>phase door</i>
12	* <i>maze</i>
13	<i>mind blank</i>
14	* <i>gate</i>
15	<i>shadow walk</i>
16	* <i>energy drain</i>
17	<i>discern location</i>
18	* <i>holy aura</i>
19	<i>greater restoration</i>
20	* <i>true seeing</i>

* If the attribute is a secondary one, only the spells without a “*” can be used by the character.

% All of these spell effects are as a 10th level spell caster.



FOUR NEW CHARACTER CLASSES

The nature of the Tainted Lands fills those born there with an unusual energy that changes characters. With so much negative energy flowing through the land, it's natural for a balance to be struck. Characters are created who can shield the helpless from the dangers of the Tainted Lands. Powers are granted to these special characters that happen in no other land. When these characters find their way out of the Tainted Lands, they are marked as unusual and their ways are clearly different from others.

CLASS REFERENCE TABLE: ARMOR, SHIELDS, HELMS			
CLASS	ARMOR	SHIELDS	HELMS
Witch hunter	Furs Only	Fur/Wood	Fur/Leather Coif
Metals master	None	None	Any
Portal keeper	None	None	None
Vampire	Special	Special	Special

CHARACTER & RACE				
RACE	Witch hunter	Metals master	Portal keeper	Vampire
Human	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dwarf	Yes	Yes	No	No
Elf	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Gnome	Yes	No	Yes	No
Half-Orc	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Half-Elf	Yes	Yes	No	No
Halfling	Yes	No	Yes	No
Vampire	Yes	Yes	No	n/a

STARTING GOLD		
CLASS	STARTING GOLD	*SPECIAL EQUIPMENT
Witch hunter	6d4 x 10 (60-240gp)	Silver coated weapons
Metals master	7d4 x 10 (70-280gp)	+3 blade & +4 blade
Portal keeper	8d4 x 10 (80-320gp)	Silver Keeper Staff
Vampire	&	+4 spiked negative gauntlets

& The vampire has the starting gold of the character he replaced.
* These items are available free to the character as they form.

WITCH HUNTER'S SILVER COATED WEAPONS: When purchasing weapons for this character the price of silver coating has already been paid for each weapon.

METALS MASTER +3 AND +4 BLADE: There is a guild of metals masters that provides these blades to any newly-formed character. The guild will also replace these weapons if they are lost or stolen. To use a weapon of the metals masters and not be of that guild is a death sentence.

PORTAL KEEPER'S SILVER KEEPER STAFF: There is a guild of portal keepers providing the staff for new keepers. The staff is given special magical marks and others trying to sell such a staff or use such staffs, who are not portal keepers, have a death sentence on their heads.

VAMPIRE'S +4 SPIKED NEGATIVE GAUNTLETS: These are easily created by the growing powers of the vampire from any pair of metal gauntlets. Only the most chaotic of characters would dare to take up a pair of these gauntlets and use them. Other vampire characters would not appreciate non-vampires using such gauntlets.

6 CASTLES & CRUSADES: TAINTED LANDS

WITCH HUNTER (PSYCHIC)

A witch hunter is a force of nature gathering information about the creatures created by the negative material plane of existence. They walk the Tainted Lands finding and killing the undead and evil spell casters who prey on the weak and mortals who try to establish communities in the Tainted Lands.

Loners, these characters wrap themselves in the ways of nature and disdain the use of heavy armor or heavy weapons. They are fighters relying on speed and surprise to win the day. Many of their foes create lairs in the trackless wastes and deep forest. Witch hunters seek out such places and clear the land of the evil spawning in isolation.

In the Tainted Lands, the witch hunter is welcomed in every community as a hero who fights for the commoner. He focuses on the weaknesses of his mortal enemies, making him powerful and deadly.

In lands where the undead require magical weapons to strike them, the witch hunter's experience and knowledge of all undead allow him to use his nonmagical weapons to strike and do damage to the undead he hunts. The witch hunter can't teach this ability to others as it comes as an instinct.

ABILITIES

MIND OVER BODY: The witch hunter has a mental mastery over his body imparting a +1 bonus to all saving throws versus paralysis, polymorph, petrification, and death attacks. The bonus increases by +1 per additional level.

FAST MOVEMENT: Witch hunters move faster than normal members of their race. At every three levels, starting at 1, they gain an extra 10 feet per round until they reach the 15th level.

PRIMAL MIGHT: At 1st level, a witch hunter's endurance, stamina, and persistence allow them to fight beyond the 0 hit point level. For each level they attain, they can fight into the negatives, i.e. 1st level -2 hit points, 2nd level -4, 3rd level -6 and so on. Upon reaching one more negative point than they can withstand, they suffer 1d10 in shock damage. If the witch hunter's wounds are immediately treated, they go to 0, but suffer -1 a round until they reach -10 and die, or they are healed to 1 hp by another character.

IMMUNITY TO LEVEL DRAIN (Psychic): The witch hunter has an innate inner strength that allows them a psychic check versus any undead in draining a level from an attack.

LIMITED TRACK (Psychic): The witch hunter can track any creature in any type of setting that leaves a trace. With a successful psychic check, a witch hunter can find and follow a creature's tracks for 5 hours. When tracking undead, a witch hunter receives a +2 bonus to the check. The difficulty level is the creature's hit dice.

FAVORED ENEMY: Starting with the first level, the witch hunter chooses a specific type of creature as a favored enemy. At every three levels gained, they add a new enemy that they have faced in the past.

When combating a favored enemy, the witch hunter gains a +2 to hit the favored enemy. The witch hunter's armor class increases by a +2 only when fighting a favored enemy and only from the attacks of the favored enemy. When tracking the favored enemy, they receive a +2 on their check. When favored enemies use poison attacks, the witch hunter can neutralize that poison in himself and others.

WEAPON SPECIALIZATION: This works like the fighter character's ability from among the witch hunter's weapons of choice.

PRIME ATTRIBUTE: Psychic

HIT DIE: d10

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

WEAPONS: Aclis, blowpipe, bola, short bow, brass knuckles, cat-o-nine-tails, cestus, club, cudgel, dagger, dart, dirk, hand axe, hatchet, javelin, light flail, mace, sickle, scythe, shillelagh, sling, boar spear, spiked gauntlet, stiff whip

ARMOR: Furs

ABILITIES: mind over body, fast movement, primal might, immunity to level drain, limited track, favored enemy, weapon specialization

Level	HD	BtH	*EPP
1	d10	+2	0
2	d10	+3	3,001
3	d10	+4	6,001
4	d10	+5	9,001
5	d10	+6	12,001
6	d10	+7	15,001
7	d10	+8	18,001
8	d10	+9	36,001
9	d10	+10	72,001
10	d10	+12	144,001
11	+1 HP	+14	288,001
12	+1 HP	+16	500,001
13 and up	+1 HP	+18	500,001

*If characters are in the Tainted Lands, use the EPP chart provided. If they leave the Tainted Lands, double the experience points to rise to another level.

LEAVING THE TAINTED LANDS

When this character leaves the Tainted Lands, he takes double the experience points to rise in levels. Also, they cannot make a creature from outside the Tainted Lands a "favored enemy." The character is still able to use all of his other abilities.

METALS MASTER (SUPERNATURAL)

The metals master has the innate skill of creating unusually effective weapons. They are attracted to edged weapons and revel in owning many different kinds. They are able to take the negative death force of a killed undead foe and merge that force with the weapons they own. This imparts special abilities to those weapons that no other being can duplicate. Those weapons can be given to others and still keep their effectiveness.

Metals masters roam the Tainted Lands looking for new types of undead to kill. Once killed, the master makes several weapons that will be even more effective against the type of undead recently destroyed. The master's powers don't work unless the weapons they are using have cut into the bodies of the undead to help end its unlife.

The metals master doesn't use armor, because he wants to be as fast as possible, counting on his speed to dodge attacks.

Born to fight with bladed weapons, he picks up these skills lightning fast.

ABILITIES

EXTRA ATTACK: At 5th level, the metals master gains one additional attack each combat round with any weapon. The extra attack is useable with ranged or melee weapons.

SCALE (Dexterity): this ability allows a metals master to climb up, down, or across a dangerous natural slope, a climb others would find impossible. It is as the ranger ability.

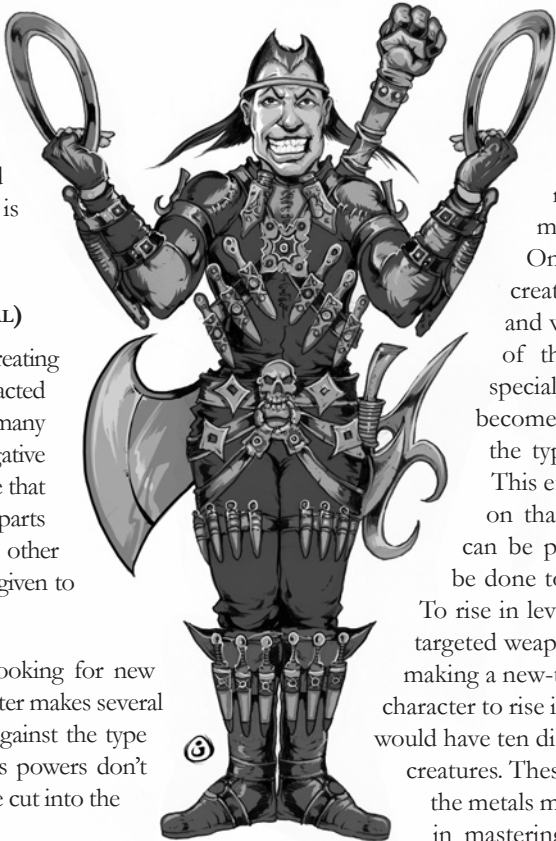
SNEAK ATTACK: At 4th level, a Metals Master has learned to adapt their attack skills to more general situations. When an opponent or victim is aware of the Metals Master, but unsuspecting of an attack, a Metals Master can use the sneak attack ability. For example, a Metals Master could be having a conversation with a potential victim while hiding a poisoned stiletto up his sleeve, intending to strike once a piece of vital information is learned. Or, a Metals Master could be perched in the shadows of a tree, waiting for the perfect opportunity to fire a crossbow.

A Metals Master making a sneak attack gains a +2 bonus to hit and a +4 bonus to damage. Ranged weapons can be used for sneak attacks if the target is within 30 feet. A Metals Master cannot aim with deadly accuracy from beyond that range.

DETECT EVIL: As the paladin's ability at a range of up to 75 yards.

SMITE EVIL: Twice a day, a metals master may attempt to smite evil with a melee attack. The attack uses the supernatural modifier added to the attack roll. It deals +1 per level of the metals master in damage. The ability can only be used against beings of evil alignment.

WEAPON TARGETING: The metals master is able to change a weapon to do more damage against a specific type of being. Once a metals master has fought and killed a creature, they can take parts of that creature and work those parts into the pommel and blade of the weapon used to kill the creature. With special rites done under the full moon, the weapon becomes a +1 to strike and a +3 to do damage to the type of creature killed by the metals master. This effect is not cumulative if another rite is done on that weapon. Only one essence of a creature can be placed in a bladed weapon. This effect can be done to multiple weapons like a quiver of arrows. To rise in levels, the metals master must have a different targeted weapon for every level of experience. The act of making a new-targeted weapon is what is needed to allow a character to rise in their level of mastery. A tenth-level master would have ten different weapons made to target ten different creatures. These weapons must be carried on the person of the metals master allowing them to gain more experience in mastering weapons. The weapons can be used on



other creatures, but with normal weapon effects. Magical weapons can be used in this process and the bonus is cumulative.

WEAPON MAINTENANCE: The metals master can sharpen and care for his weapons so that on the first strike in a melee, his weapons strike at a cumulative +1 and do +2 in damage. After that first strike, the weapon reverts to its normal striking and damaging ability.

SPECIAL RANGED ATTACKS: The metals master, in one melee round, can hurl 4 darts, or 4 shuriken, or 3 daggers, or 2 hatchets or 2 throwing dirks, or 2 javelins. They can't mix and match throwing weapons. They suffer no penalty to hit when throwing. This power combined with other abilities cannot increase the number of weapons thrown.

PRIME ATTRIBUTE: Supernatural

HIT DIE: d10

ALIGNMENT: Any chaotic

WEAPONS: All edged weapons

ARMOR: None

ABILITIES: Extra attack, scale, sneak attack, detect evil, smite evil, weapon targeting, weapon maintenance, special ranged attacks

Level	HD	BtH	*EPP
1	d10	+2	0
2	d10	+3	5,001
3	d10	+5	10,001
4	d10	+6	15,001
5	d10	+8	20,001
6	d10	+9	50,001
7	d10	+11	100,001
8	d10	+12	150,001
9	d10	+14	200,001
10	d10	+15	250,001
11	+2 HP	+18	300,001
12	+2 HP	+19	500,001
13 and up	+2 HP	+22	500,001

*If characters are in the Tainted Lands, use the EPP chart provided. If they leave the Tainted Lands, double the experience points to rise to another level.

LEAVING THE TAINTED LANDS

When this character leaves the Tainted Lands, he takes double the experience points to rise in levels. The character is still able to use all of his abilities.

PORTAL KEEPER (PSYCHIC)

A strange combination of wizard and rogue, the portal keeper was born to close the portals the Tainted Lands create to trap innocents in the bounds of the Tainted Lands. In the process, this character gives up vast riches, but he knows it's for a good cause.

Portal keepers know locks the way a man knows his own hand. Gateways of all types are pleasant things to the keeper and he gains strength and power from every doorway and every arch.

With unusually keen senses attuned to magic and negative material energy, the keeper can feel every Tainted Lands portal, even the ones

thousands and thousands of miles away. Those portals call to the keeper and he must move to close them.

Whatever power was moved to create this character class also motivates them with extra benefits as they guard any type of portal or



arch. Cave openings, doorways, narrow arches in tunnels, either end of any type of bridge, and even narrow arching passages in valley rifts all give unusual arcane strength to the portal keeper. This ability draws on the negative energy of the Tainted Lands and does not work in other lands unless undead are within a 100-foot radius of the portal keeper, or there is a Tainted Lands portal within a mile of the keeper. When battling in one of the mentioned areas, the following happens to the portal keeper: They are +2 in their armor class. They are +2 to strike with their favorite weapon only. They take 2 less points of damage from every successful physical strike made against them.

ABILITIES

CLIMB (Dexterity): This extraordinary ability allows a Portal Keeper to climb up, down, or across a slope, wall, steep incline (even a ceiling with handholds), or unusually angled natural or man made slope or incline that others would find impossible to climb. When doing so, the Portal Keeper moves at one-half the character's normal speed. A failed climb check means that the character makes no progress. A check that fails by 5 or more means that the character falls from the currently attained height, and must suffer falling damage. Portal Keepers can not carry anything in their hands while climbing. When climbing typical natural slopes and man made inclines, such as a cliff faces or steep steps, a Portal Keeper does not need to make an attribute check to climb the surface.

DECIPHER SCRIPT (Intelligence): This ability allows a Portal Keeper to decipher writing in an unfamiliar language, a message written in an incomplete or archaic form or a message written in code. If the check succeeds, the character understands the general content of a piece of writing. It takes 2d8 turns to decipher each page of a script. The attempt may be made only once per writing.

A Portal Keeper may use this ability to decipher arcane script if a successful check is made at a penalty of -10. Divine scrolls can also be translated.

OPEN LOCK (Dexterity): A Portal Keeper can use this ability to open any sort of mechanical lock that would normally require a key to open. A successful check indicates the lock has been opened. This ability requires the use of a set of tool, including picks, blank keys, wires or other appropriate tools. A Portal Keeper may only make one attempt per lock. If that attempt fails, the Portal Keeper cannot try to open the same lock again until gaining one more level as it is beyond the current ability of the character to pick it.

TRAPS (Intelligence): A Portal Keeper may use this ability in three manners: finding, disabling or setting traps. Each use requires a separate attribute check and each check may be made only once in a given circumstance. The player must also describe how the actions are being performed to use this ability.

To find a trap, a Portal Keeper spends time intently studying and searching an area to deduce possible trap locations. It takes one round to locate a trap in a specific area such as a lock or a doorknob, and one turn to locate a trap in a 10 by 10 foot area. A successful check indicates the Portal Keeper finds one trap, if any are present. The trap discovered is the simplest or most obvious trap in the area. If multiple traps are in an area, multiple successful checks are required to find them all. A Portal Keeper can find magical traps with this ability,

although it may be much more difficult than finding mundane traps. The Castle Keeper determines any penalties to the check basing those penalties on the level or hit dice of those who set them.

To disable a trap, a rogue must first know its location. Once a trap is located, a successful check means the Portal Keeper has disarmed the trap. The attempt can only be made once and failure indicates that the Portal Keeper set off the trap. A Portal Keeper can disarm a magic trap, although it may be much more difficult than disarming a mundane trap. In most cases, rogue's tools are needed to disarm a trap. Generally, it takes 1d4 rounds to disarm a trap, depending on its complexity.

To set a trap, or to reset a previously disabled trap, a Portal Keeper must make a successful traps check. If a Portal Keeper is resetting a trap that was previously disabled, the Portal Keeper gains a +5 bonus to the check. The amount of time required to set or reset a trap depends on the complexity of the trap, typically taking 1d4 rounds.

The Portal Keeper uses this ability at a +2 in all attempts to disarm.

SPELLS: As a wizard, save at each level they are granted a spell that can be used once a day over and above their normal range of spells. These spells come as divine spells and don't need to be memorized by the portal keeper.

SPELL BOOK: As the wizard ability.

SPECIAL SPELLS: The portal keeper has a set of special spells that accumulate as he gains levels.

PRIME ATTRIBUTE: Psychic

HIT DIE: d10

ALIGNMENT: Any lawful

WEAPONS: Cestus, dagger, dart, dirk, javelin, sickle, staff

ARMOR: None

ABILITIES: Climb, decipher script, open locks, traps, spells, spell book, special spells

Level	HD	BtH	*EPP
1	d10	+1	0
2	d10	+1	2,001
3	d10	+2	4,001
4	d10	+2	8,001
5	d10	+3	12,001
6	d10	+3	24,001
7	d10	+4	48,001
8	d10	+5	86,001
9	d10	+6	144,001
10	d10	+7	288,001
11	+1 HP	+8	288,001
12	+1 HP	+9	576,001
13 and up	+1 HP	+10	576,001

*If characters are in the Tainted Lands use the EPP chart provided. If they leave the Tainted Lands, double the experience points to rise to another level.

Experience Level	Spell
1	open/close
2	hold portal/open portal
3	erase/write
4	knock/wizard lock
5	identify
6	locate object
7	see invisibility
8	detect magic
9	magic circle
10	disjunction
11	telekinesis
12	secret chest
13	guards and wards
14	phase door
15	true seeing (illusion spell)
16	gate
17	earthquake (clerical spell)
18	discern location
19	greater restoration (clerical spell)
20	banishment (clerical spell)

SPECIAL SPELLS

DOOR, Level 0 Wizard

CT 1 **R 10 ft. D 1 tn./lvl.**
SV none **SR none** **Comp V, M**

Using a piece of oak wood, the spell creates an oak door up to seven feet tall and four feet wide. The door has 10 structure points and locks and unlocks at the command of the caster. The hinges of the door are embedded in whatever walls frame the door.

DOOR, Level 1 Wizard

CT 3 **R 10 ft. D permanent**
SV none **SR none** **Comp V, M**

Using a piece of iron, the spell creates a metal door up to seven feet tall and four feet wide and increasing a foot in each direction for every level of the portal keeper. The door has 10 structure points and increases by 10 structure points for every level of the spell caster and locks and unlocks at the command of the caster. The hinges of the door are embedded in whatever walls frame the door. The door uses *wizard lock* at the level of the portal keeper.

The creation of this door permanently takes away one hit point of the caster.

SECRET DOOR, Level 2 Wizard

CT 6 **R 10 ft. D permanent**
SV none **SR none** **Comp V, M**

Using a 1,000 gp bar of gold, the spell creates an almost invisible door up to seven feet tall and four feet wide, and can be expanded a foot in each direction for every level of the portal keeper. The door blends perfectly into its surroundings and appears as a dead end or part of the surrounding walls. The door has 40 structure points and increases by 10 structure points for every level of the spell caster and locks and unlocks at the command of the caster. The hinges of the door are embedded in whatever walls frame the door. The door uses *wizard lock* at the level of the portal keeper.

The creation of this door permanently takes away one hit point of the caster.

GLASSEE SECRET DOOR, Level 3 Wizard

CT 8 **R 10 ft. D permanent**
SV none **SR none** **Comp V, M**

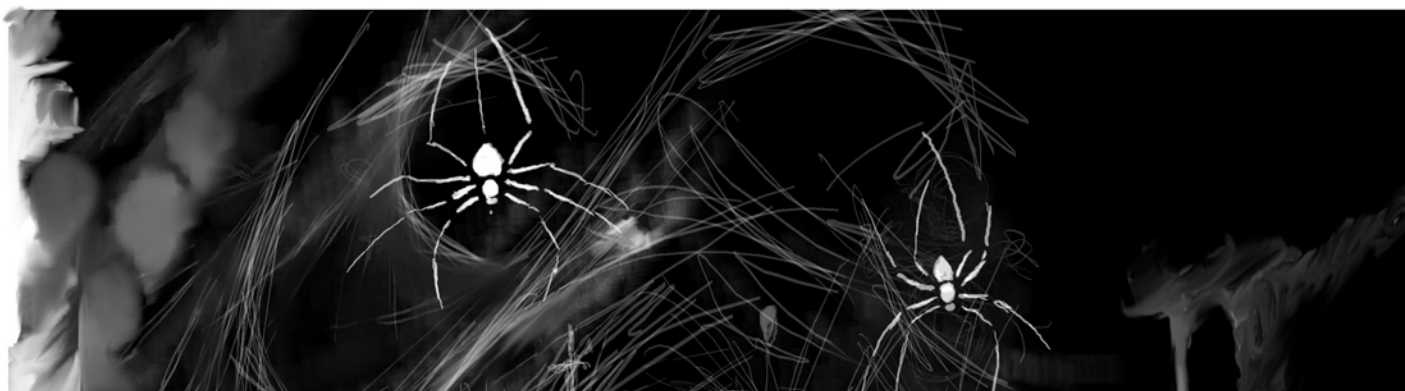
Using a 5,000 gp blue-diamond, the spell creates an almost invisible door up to seven feet tall and four feet wide and increasing a foot in each direction for every level of the portal keeper. The door blends perfectly into its surroundings and appears as a dead end, or part of the surrounding walls. The door has 70 structure points and increases by 10 structure points for every level of the spell caster and locks and unlocks at the command of the caster. The hinges of the door are embedded in whatever walls frame the door. The door uses *wizard lock* at the level of the portal keeper. On whatever side the portal keeper stands, he can see through his creation as if it was made of glass.

The creation of this door permanently takes away one hit point of the caster.

DESTROY TAINTED LANDS PORTAL, Level 4 Wizard

CT 8 **R 10 ft. D permanent**
SV none **SR none** **Comp V, M**

Using the skull of an intelligent creature killed in the Tainted Lands, the spell destroys the Tainted Lands portal and makes it so that another portal cannot be formed within fifty miles of that destroyed portal. The portal must have its list of gems in the gem pockets of the portal. If some of the gems have been taken away, replacements must be put in the gem pockets or the spell won't work to close the gate. When the spell is done correctly, the portal melts into a three-ton slag of metal and all the gems of the portal are destroyed.



LEAVING THE TAINTED LANDS

When this character leaves the Tainted Lands, he takes double the experience points to rise in levels. The character is still able to use all of his abilities.

TAINTED LANDS PORTAL

Castle Keepers might not want their players to read this. However, portal keepers would know this information in order to destroy portals.

TAINTED LANDS PORTAL

NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1

SIZE: Large

HD: 10 (d10)

MOVE: 0 ft.

AC: 25

ATTACKS: Nil

SPECIAL: Teleportation, Regeneration 9

INT: None

ALIGNMENT: Lawful Evil

TYPE: Undead (Extraordinary)

TREASURE: Gems

XP: 10,000

Sent out by the powers of the Tainted Lands, this portal is a living thing even though it appears made out of stone, metal, and gems. It stands 30 feet tall on a raised circular set of three terraced steps, leading to the portal on the top terrace. The portal itself seems to be carved out of black stone and represents bunches of coiled tentacles. This look changes from portal to portal and no one knows why. The only spot of color on the portal are five gems; two on the left side, two on the right side, and one at the top of the portal. Each of these gems is a fist-sized glowing gem: gold star sapphire, purple star sapphire, star ruby, white diamond, and a blue diamond.

The center of the portal is a large oval 20 feet tall and 16 feet wide. There is a swirl of dark gray fog constantly moving in the oval and often pushing out into the area around the portal. Anything touching the portal, teleports to the center of the Tainted Lands. This transportation especially includes characters holding on to something and touching it into the portal. If a character held a rope and threw part of it in, they would be instantly transported. If they held a short rod and pushed it into the portal, they would be transported. If, however, they threw a dart in, they would not be transported. All silver items on any character or beast fall to the floor in front of the portal and cannot go through the oval. Even if the silver item were in a portable hole, it would come out of the hole and fall to the floor while everything else was transported. It's very common to see silver of all types on the edges of the room, as angry undead coming out of the portal from the other side kick it away from the portal's opening as the silver stings and damages them.

The portal appears during the light of a full moon, somewhere, usually in the open. There is a massive earthquake in the area and the ground erupts all around the rising of the portal. There is a thin wisp of fog twisting and turning from the edge of the portal to the far off Tainted Lands.

There are several terrible secrets twisting around any Tainted Lands portal. Anyone or anything that touches any part of the portal opening instantly transports to the center of the Tainted Lands. There is no save; there is no check; and after being transported, there is little hope. Taking one of the gems from the portal is easy. However, taking one of those gems firmly plants the portal in the area and makes that portal almost indestructible. The portal itself grows in power and eventually the fog of the far off Tainted Lands flows toward the portal, making those clean lands into Tainted Lands. The gems from the portal help the power of the portal to grow when they are away from their portal. They sap one hit point from the nearest character, every day, and give it to the portal. The fogs of the area become more frequent and thicker until the Tainted Lands come to the portal. Even if the portal were battered to destruction, it would regenerate slowly. Only a special spell will wither and destroy the portal.

VAMPIRE (SUPERNATURAL)

DESCRIPTION: Tainted Lands vampires are often created when a character lies dead under the night sky of the Tainted Lands for more than an hour. The powerful negative material plain forces fill the body with negative energy and that often creates a special vampire. The vampire rises having all the memories and abilities of his former life. If he was a seventh-level wizard he has the saving throws and spell abilities of that class. This vampire never rises higher in those character abilities, but he does gain vampire abilities as he gains experience. If he was a cleric, his deity has left him, but there are forces in the Tainted Lands that continue to give the character divine power. The heal spells are denied the character, but their damaging opposites can be selected.

This Tainted Lands vampire is not the wildly chaotic creature of the night. He retains the alignment he had in his former life. He's able to gain sustenance from the blood of animals as well as humans and demi-humans.

He uses the weapons and armor for his former character, but as he gains experience as a vampire he wears less and less armor and often sheds his weapons in favor of a slam attack (as vampire).

These vampires are different from the normal vampire and do not have the create spawn ability. These vampires wish to continue the lives they had before they were transformed into vampires. Many of them leave the Tainted Lands and try to pick up where they left off. In the Tainted Lands, the sun never shines through the clouds and vampires and others who fear the sun can walk out of doors during the day.

There are those players who will want to start out as a vampire. In this case, they roll up a first level character and equip him with all the things he needs in his profile. If he is a fighter, he needs armor, weapons, and the like. If he is a wizard, he needs robes and the like. Then the character will become a vampire through a story of the Castle Keeper's and the player starts out as a first level vampire.



ABILITIES

HIDE TRUE NATURE: This creature, from its creation can hide its alignment and the fact that it is undead from all forms of detection.

BLOOD DRAIN: As the vampire.

ENERGY DRAIN: As the vampire.

CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT: As the vampire.

DOMINATE: As the vampire.

ALTERNATE FORM: As the vampire.

GASEOUS FORM: As the vampire.

SPIDER CLIMB: As the vampire.

VAMPIRE VULNERABILITIES: Sunlight stops the vampire from using all of his powers, but the vampire can move and battle while it is smoldering and burning. Running water and immersion in water does nothing to this form of vampire. Garlic, reflective surfaces, and holy symbols of good deities cause a 1-round recoil. Wooden stakes do 10 hit points of damage and one in the heart destroys the vampire. Undead of all types focus on this character and attack no one else until this character is dead again.

ENTOURAGE: These characters attract attention and people and magical beasts naturally want to follow them. Up to six creatures and characters will ally as time goes on. Other undead will never follow this character.

SPECIAL: This character at the very least strikes as a fighter of the same hit die or at their former character level, whichever is better.

PRIME ATTRIBUTE: Supernatural

HIT DIE: See chart

ALIGNMENT: Special

WEAPONS: Special

ARMOR: Special

ABILITIES: Hide true nature, blood drain, children of the night, dominate, energy drain, alternate form, gaseous form, entourage, electrical resistance (half), spider climb, vampire vulnerabilities, special

Level	HD	BtH	*EPP	POWER
1	@Special	+1	@Special	Hide true nature
2	d4	+2	3,001	Spider climb
3	d4	+3	6,001	Entourage
4	d6	+4	9,001	Gaseous form
5	d6	+5	12,001	Dominate
6	d8	+6	15,001	Children of the night
7	d8	+7	18,001	Electrical resistance
8	d10	+8	36,001	Alternate form
9	d10	+9	72,001	
10	d12	+10	144,001	Blood drain
11	0	+12	288,001	
12	0	+14	500,001	Energy drain
13 and up	0	+16	500,001	

* If characters are in the Tainted Lands use the EPP chart provided. If they leave the Tainted Lands, double the experience points to rise to another level.

@ A first level, a vampire begins unlife with the hit points and BtH they had when they were alive.

VAMPIRE LEVEL	ARMOR CLASS	MOVE	ADDITIONAL POWERS
1	*Special	%Special	—
2	11	10 (climb)	—
3	12	20 (fly)	—
4	13	40 ft.	—
5	14	20 (climb)	Slam (1d6)
6	15	40 (fly)	—
7	16	—	—
8	17	—	—
9	18	60 (fly)	—
10	19	—	Slam (2d6)
11	20	—	—
12	21	—	—

*The first level vampire begins with the armor class of their former character. As they gain experience, their flesh toughens to that of a true vampire.

% The movement ability of the vampire changes as it grows in experience.

LEAVING THE TAINTED LANDS

When this character leaves the Tainted Lands, he takes double the experience points to rise in levels. The character is still able to use all of his abilities and he rises in levels and learns new things about himself.

INFLUENCES ON PLAYER CHARACTERS IN THE TAINTED LANDS

The negative energy of the Tainted Lands begins immediately influencing characters as they walk in the Tainted Lands. The longer the characters are in these lands the stronger the effect takes hold of their body and souls. Some of the effects will be permanent and some will change back within weeks of leaving the Tainted Lands if the characters can find the paths out of those deadly lands.

DAY ONE: Hair and nails grow at an alarming rate so that the nails on the fingers and toes become thicker and longer every other day. The hair all over the character’s body grows quickly so that full beards form in 3 days. Every character gains five hit points to their original total for as long as they are in the Tainted Lands.

The characters acquire the Supernatural and Psychic attributes and these never leave the character.

Normal character Attribute scores begin changing according to the chart. The scores change back to normal when the Tainted Lands are left. The change in scores does not take away character abilities if they fall below the norms for that character type.

ATTRIBUTE CHANGING CHART

Time in Tainted Lands	Int	Dex	Str	Con	Wis	Cha
1 Week	-1	-1	+1	+1	+1	-1
3 Weeks	-1	—	—	+1	—	—
2 Months	—	-1	—	—	—	—
6 Months	—	—	+1	—	+1	—
1 Year	—	—	—	—	—	-1
2 or more Years	—	—	+1	+1	+1	-1

Note on Attribute Chart: Those characters born in the Tainted Lands do not have their attributes change or suffer the loss of hit points as time goes by. However, they are born with their hair turned white and their pupils are totally black.

APPEARANCE

1 Week – The body becomes more muscular, while the hands become somewhat claw-like and the fingernails and toenails gain sharp edges. There is a spring to the step and the characters are able to move 5 feet more in a round. These changes revert to norm as soon as a character leaves the Tainted Lands.

3 Weeks – All hair on the character's body gradually turns bright white. The eyes of the character turn pitch black. These changes are permanent and forever mark a character as having gone into the Tainted Lands.

2 Months – The character permanently gains Twilight Vision and Scent.

6 Months – All characters become totally resistant to *suggestion* and *charm* spells for as long as they are in the Tainted Lands. If they leave the Tainted Lands they lose this ability, however if they return, they instantly have these powers again.

1 Year – All characters earn 15% more experience as long as they are in the Tainted Lands. If they leave and return, they instantly have the percentage benefit again.

2 or more Years – Characters begin permanently losing 1 hit point every 45 days that they remain in the Tainted Lands. This power starts over again if the character leaves and returns.

CHARACTER CLASS CHANGES

Generally, the changes in the Tainted Lands do not carry over when player characters leave those lands unless otherwise noted.

FIGHTER CLASS: The fighter class gains 1d4 points of damage with every successful strike. They also feel an energy that allows them to be faster and harder. They generally move first in any combat round.

RANGER CLASS: Nothing changes with the ranger class as they enter the Tainted Lands.

ROGUE CLASS: The rogue gains 1d6 in their back attacks and sneak attacks. A rogue's listening ability has a +3 bonus and increases to 60 feet.

ASSASSIN CLASS: The assassin finds creating long-lasting and powerful poisons amazingly easy in the Tainted Lands. They are also

able to make many different types of poison antidotes, so much so, that they are +4 on their poison saves after 1 week in the Tainted Lands, and this effect is permanent. Their sneak attacks do an extra 1d6 when successful.

BARBARIAN CLASS: Barbarians thrive like no other class in the Tainted Lands. After one week there, they gain an extra 10 hit points over the five that everyone received at first. All of the bonuses given them in their primal states go up +2. Their armor class increases by +2 as their flesh and entire body becomes innately harder.

MONK CLASS: Monks lose the ki strike and the purity of body abilities after a week in the Tainted Lands. Their unarmored armor class goes up by +1 at every level. Their fast movement ability gains 10 feet at every level.

WIZARD CLASS: Wizards lose all of their charm and hold spells in the Tainted Lands. Those spells refuse to be memorized and if the wizard had them as they enter the Tainted Lands, they lose those spells. If they had scrolls or magic items with those spells, those things do not release those spells until the item is out of the lands. Summoned monsters that survive the battle race away and within six months could come back and attack the caster.

ILLUSIONIST CLASS: Illusionist magic suffers greatly in the Tainted Lands. There is a 25% chance with every spell that it doesn't work when cast. All illusionary creatures made through the use of spells do 1d6 more points of damage than usual. However, illusion creatures do not go away. They leave the area and there is a chance in the next six months those creatures will attack the caster.

CLERIC CLASS: Evil and neutral clerics have their spell levels doubled. Lawful clerics suffer a loss of one spell per level i.e. at fifth level their list of spells becomes: 0-3, 1st-2, 2nd-1 and no third level spell. All clerical spells that do damage have a 1d6 added to every successful strike. Spells that confer a plus to the cleric or other characters confer a +3 instead.

DRUID CLASS: The druid loses his resist elements ability in the Tainted Lands. As with a lawful cleric, druids also suffer a loss of one spell per level. The druid spells that do damage have a 1d4 added to every successful strike. Spells that confer a plus to the druid or other characters confer a +3 instead.

KNIGHT CLASS: Knights are always attacked first by the inhabitants of the Tainted Lands. The demoralize knight ability is lost in the Tainted Lands. The call-to-arms ability does not work in the Tainted Lands.

PALADIN CLASS: Paladins glow with faerie fire the entire time they are in the Tainted Lands. They lose the lay on hands ability and their cure disease ability (but they still can't be given a disease). They can use their smite evil ability at the first level and at the 9th level and can do it four times a day.

BARD CLASS: A bard's exalt ability gains a +2 in the Tainted Lands. They cannot use their legend lore ability in those lands. The fascinate ability works at the first level and at all levels this ability works with a bonus of +2 for the bard.

14 CASTLES & CRUSADES: TAINTED LANDS

RACES

There are no specific changes to each race as they enter the Tainted Lands.

TAINTED LANDS SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

COIN OF THE REALM

Most types of coins are accepted in the Tainted Lands. Those outsiders offering silver coin are treated harshly as that metal attracts the deadly attention of the many powerful undead roaming the lands.

SILVERING OF WEAPONS

In the castles of the land, weapons can be silvered for a fee of 10 gold. The silvering uses special etching that causes the weapons to do 1d6 more damage to undead. This effect is also magically masked so that undead can't sense the silver. The silvering must be touched up every six months of hard weapon use, especially against the undead. Only castles can do the silvering process as undead will blindly attack, sensing the act being done behind the castle walls.

Silver has very odd properties in the Tainted Lands. All monsters, from undead to dragons hate the touch of silver and work hard to hoard it so that others can't use it against them. Silver in mines is very hard to gather as hordes of creatures come to attack the mine and make it their lair. A single bar of silver can attract hundreds of zombies and skeletons as they rise from the earth. Only special icons that every craftsmen knows and applies to the bars of silver and silvered things, keep the creatures of the Tainted Lands from attacking. A very common form of revenge is to hide a bar of silver at an enemy's house and watch as monsters come looking for the silver.

BLACKTHORN WOOD

Normally, a difficult-to-find wood in the normal realms, this wood grows thick and tall in the Tainted Lands. Undead tend to stay away from these vines and limbs and never make lairs in the blackthorn. Mallets, hammers, cudgels, shillelaghs, and any other weapons that can be made out of blackthorn do an extra +2 to undead everywhere. Often, cities and towns have walls of living blackthorn wood surrounding their cities. The richest houses are made of blackthorn wood.

Equipment Note: The equipment of the C&C Player's Handbook is available in the Tainted Lands; however, this equipment isn't available in large numbers. Add on 25% more cost to each of those items. Also, consider having towns specialize in equipment so that one town will have many clothing merchants and few weapon smiths and other towns will have large numbers of armories and few mount trainers.



TAINTED LANDS WEAPONS

Nonmagical Weapons	Cost	DMG.	RNG.	WGT.	EV
Cudgel	1 sp	1d8	5 ft.	3 lbs.	2
Dirk, balanced	1 gp	1d4 +1	10 ft.	1 lb.	2
Mantrap loop	5 sp	—	20 ft.	8 lb.	2
Mattock	5 gp	1d10*	10 ft.	5 lb.	3
Shillelagh	7 gp	1d6 +1	10 ft.	4 lb.	2
Shuriken	4 sp	1d4	30 ft.	1 lb.	3
Silver knuckles	1 gp	1d6	10 ft.	1 lb.	2
Spiked sling stone	2 sp	1d6	60 ft.		1
Throwing stick	2 sp	1d4 +1	50 ft.	2 lb.	1
War dart, heavy	3 sp	1d6	40 ft.	1 lb.	2
Wooden idol club	2 gp	1d8 +1*	10 ft.	3 lb.	4

* Two-handed weapon

Cudgel, Tainted Lands version: The cudgel is a short, one-hand weapon designed to deliver a strong blow to a victim. The Tainted Lands version is soaked in holy water and blessed. It has several icons to do increased damage to the undead. The cudgel does +1 in damage to undead of all types. Many fighters use a cudgel in both hands.

Dirk, Tainted Lands Version: The dirk's metal has been continually blessed in holy water and tempered in that type of water as well. It's balanced for throwing and does an additional +1 in damage against undead. This version has a leaf-shaped blade and a heavy pommel that does as much damage as the slim blade when thrown.

Mantrap Loop, Tainted Lands Version: The loop is designed to capture ethereal creatures like ghosts and phase spiders. On an eight-foot pole of blackthorn wood, a special, blessed, silver-charged, wire loop is attached. The loop falls around the body of a creature and the weight of the pole keeps the creature helpless and pinned down. A pulley system allows the wire to tighten one way and not become lose.

Mattock, Tainted Lands Version: The mattock is a heavy wooden mallet with a thick, four-foot-long handle. There are special etchings all over the weapon. On both business ends are ovals of silver that have been dug into the centers of the mattock heads. While it isn't a magical weapon, the special design allows the piece to strike at undead normally requiring magical weapons to strike them.

Shillelagh, Tainted Lands Version: The shillelagh is a special club designed from a rarely-appearing burl of blackthorn. Although its hardness is amazing, the burl also confers an amazing strike potential to the weapon. While there is no magic to the device, it strikes for a +2.

Shuriken, Tainted Lands Version: It's a hand-sized, circular blade with razor-sharp edges. The metal is heavy enough to deeply penetrate a target. This version is treated with special icons and silvering that makes each one unusually effective against the undead, striking for +1 and doing +1 in extra damage. The weapon is very common in the Tainted Lands and contests in throwing this weapon happen every night at the inns and castles.

Silver Knuckles, Tainted Lands Version: The knuckles are etched in special icons that allow the weapon to do damage to undead; even

undead that require magical weapons to hit. Normally, when the weapons are used, they are worn on both fists. The silvering does an extra +2 in striking potential to undead hit with the device.

Spiked Sling Stone, Tainted Lands Version: These special sling stones are oval shaped with razor-sharp ends. The special etching on both the top and bottom causes them to do +3 damage against undead foes, even though the sling stones don't give off magic.

Throwing Stick, Tainted Lands Version: These throwing sticks are heavy things and the best ones are made out of blackthorn wood. Balanced for throwing, once again, special etching of certain symbols causes them to be highly effective versus undead. Often, witch hunters who don't like having much metal on their bodies will use these as their primary weapons.

War Dart, Tainted Lands Version: The war dart is heavy and perfectly balanced for throwing. Cavalry use them when charging the enemy. This version has a set of fins and several razor fins along the sides making it difficult to remove the dart from flesh.

Wooden Idol Club, Tainted Lands Version: Most of these are carved into the shape of some god/goddess the carver favors. The two-handed weapon is heavy and four-to-five feet long. It's designed to deliver a stunning blow with the idea that a second attack shouldn't be necessary, because the first was so forceful. Its design allows it to do an extra three points of damage to any type of skeleton.

TAINTED LANDS ARMOR

Nonmagical Armor	Cost	AC	Weight	EV
Ensemble, Ghost	100 gp	+ 5 / +8*	30 lbs.	7
Ensemble, Lich	150 gp	+5/+8	35 lbs.	8
Ensemble, Skeleton	100 gp	+4/+8	30 lbs.	8
Ensemble, Vampire	200 gp	+3/+8	35 lbs.	9
Ensemble, Witch	100 gp	+4/+8	25 lbs.	7
Ensemble, Zombie	100 gp	+4/+8	30 lbs.	8
Fur Armor	200 gp	+4/+6	15 lbs.	4
Ivory Breastplate	150 gp	+ 4 / +8*	15 lbs	6

*The second plus is a special design against a particular type of undead.

Ensemble, Ghost Armor: The armor is made of several large silver ovals so that foes see themselves in the shiny metal. There are oval plates on the arms and legs, large ovals on the chest and back, and there are ovals on the front and back of the helm.

Ensemble, Lich Armor: The armor is made of bands of blackthorn wood in strips across the arms, chest, and legs. The helm is made of shaped blackthorn wood in a special basket grown that way for ten years under magical conditions. Very often, the armor has to have sections replaced after every battle. The energy of the blackthorn wood prevents a lich from touching and paralyzing the armor wearer.

Ensemble, Skeleton Armor: This armor is made from the hardened bones of monsters. A special process hardens the bones to be stronger than granite while still almost weightless. The arms are protected by bundled bones, while the chest and back are covered in the larger hip and skull bones of the monster. The helm

varies, but is usually a single, monster skull with the fangs showing from the skull. Skeletons often ignore the wearer of this armor until the wearer attacks them.

Ensemble, Vampire Armor: As the nightmare horse is common in the Tainted Lands, its hide is used to create form-fitting, leather armor. With gauntlets and a leather hood of the same hide, the armor totally resists the effects of the touch of a vampire. The same armor is also equal to the task of resisting the bite of the cockatrice or the paralyzing touch of a gelatinous cube.

Ensemble, Witch Armor: It requires the efforts of clerics and wizards as well as the actions of a leather worker to make this armor. There are etched icons on the inside and out of the armor. There are special amulets affixed to certain parts of the outside of the armor. In the end, the suit provides a +5 versus spell attacks. The symbols and amulets the clerics provide give the armor a resistance to undead strikes. This armor can be worn by wizards and other spell casters including druids.

Ensemble, Zombie Armor: This armor is made from the flesh of large water creatures. Zombies are unable to tell that the wearer is not a zombie, and they won't attack unless the wearer of this armor attacks first. A special chemical treatment every month keeps the armor from smelling.

Tainted Lands Fur Armor: It turns out the giant badger has unusual fur, unusually resistant against the physical attacks of the undead. The only problem is that trying to kill a giant badger is unusually dangerous.

Ivory Breastplate: These breastplates are made from the breastbone of a large, house-sized reptile. Each breastplate is carved with the head of the type of undead it works best against. The armor is made light and etched with several types of icons that resist the influence of the undead. When within sixty yards of any undead, the armor begins to glow with enough light to brighten twenty feet all around the armor. This light cannot be dimmed by the powers of the Tainted Lands.

TAINTED LANDS MOUNTS

Transport & Tack	Cost	WGT.	EV
Eagle, giant	750 gp	—	—
Moving tree	1,000 gp	—	—
Hound, chariot	500 gp	400 lbs	9
Nightmare	2,000 gp	600 lbs	—

GIANT EAGLE MOUNT (*neutral good*), HD 4 (10), HP 40, AC 16, MV 20 ft., 100 ft. (fly), *primary attribute: physical. Attacks 2 talons (1d8/1d8), beak (2d6). These creatures enjoy being mounts and being taken care of by stable hands. Special amulets control the eagle and the bird will only fly with one controller until that person dies. There are always high cliffs where the towns are that sell these mounts. There is a day's training before stable hands allow the character to take control of the eagle. The bird eats meat and must feed at least twice a day.*

MOVING TREE MOUNT (*neutral*), HD 5 (d6), HP 30, AC 20, MV 40 ft., *primary attribute: physical. This creature isn't intelligent, eats wet earth, and does a single slam attack (2d8). It is controlled by a set of specially-made pokers that can be ordered to beat up. The mount can carry up to three human-sized characters. The tree must be able to take in water and wet earth every day, or it can't move.*

16 CASTLES & CRUSADES: TAINTED LANDS

HOUND, CHARIOT (*neutral*), HD 4 (d8), HP 32, AC 14, MV 50 ft., *primary attribute: physical*. These shadow mastiffs are calmer and more intelligent than the ones outside of the Tainted Lands. Usually, two of them are hitched to a light chariot. The hounds dodge attacks as long as they are hitched to the chariot. They require meat and water twice a day.

NIGHTMARE MOUNT (*neutral*), HD 7 (d8), HP 56, AC 24, MV 50 ft., *this version does not fly, primary attribute: physical*. This version of the creature is calmer and gentler than the version outside of the Tainted Lands. The nightmare likes to be tamed and ridden, as it is often difficult to find food by itself. Using special amulets, the beast can only be ridden by one owner.

TAINTED LANDS NONMAGICAL ITEMS

EQUIPMENT	COST	WGT.	EV	CAP.
Bedroll, silvered	9 sp	1 lbs.	2	6
Caltrops, silvered	11 sp	1 lbs.	4	10
Candles, garlic	1 gp	1 lbs.	1	20
Cloak, haunt	30 gp	2 lbs.	6	3
Casket, supernatural	25 gp	8 lbs.	5	3
Horns of Theon	100 gp	7 lbs.	9	2
Manacles, silvered	10 gp	5 lbs.	5	5

Bedroll, silvered: There are many nasty things burrowing just under the surface of the Tainted Lands. This specially prepared bedroll stops those creepy-crawlies from burrowing into the sleeping character.

Caltrops, silvered: These are special, triangle-shaped spikes that most undead will go out of their way to avoid. They are thrown on the ground in a wide area in front of the character. Silver-tinged, they begin to glow in the presence of undead and generate enough light to fight by.

Candles, garlic: Vampires hate these burning candles and often attack and smash the candles before they attack the characters. Naturally, the player character vampire can't stand these lights.

Cloak, haunt: The haunt cloak isn't magical, but is specially made from the hide of several different creatures and is inked with special icons only a few men know. It allows the wearer to be unnoticed by all types of undead. Wearers can't attack and be unnoticed and there is a chance, especially with the more powerful undead, to be noticed. Usually, if the wearer holds still and the undead didn't see them before, the creatures of the night will ignore the cloak wearer. In darkness, the cloak provides good masking so that even other creatures cannot see the wearer. However, there is a strong scent to the cloak that cannot be masked and a creature relying on scent can easily spot the wearer.

Casket, supernatural: The undead are thieves and especially with magical items that hurt the undead or stop the undead. This locked box has special properties that prevent the undead from touching it or moving their spirit in and out of it.

Horns of Theon: These horns are very common and while they don't look alike, they all produce the exact same note. Made from the root of a blackthorn, the note it sounds carries for many miles in all directions. Those who own the horns are very careful when they blow them. The call of the horn will bring creatures and characters of a like mind as the blower if they are in range of the call. Those that come expect a fight and move as quickly as they can. To blow the horn when there is no danger, or little danger, is a death sentence

for the horn wielder. Ignoring the horns call is never done, no matter what the answering character is doing at the time.

Manacles, silvered: The manacles are made to hold any creature with a strength of 19 or less. Those with greater strength can easily twist the metal open. The manacles can even hold incorporeal creatures like ghosts.

TAINTED LANDS MAGICAL ITEMS

%	Item	GP Value	EXP
1-29	+4 Bane Weapon	15,000	5,000
30-34	Undead +1 Dart	1,000	500
35-39	Undead Sensing Weapon	1,500	2,000
40-44	Undead +1 Shield	2,000	2,000
45-49	Wand of Undead	20,000	3,000
50-54	Undead cloak	6,500	2,500
55-58	Drums of Skeleton Summoning	10,000	3,000
59	Gauntlets of Theon	15,000	4,000
60-64	Skeletal Chariot Figurine	19,000	5,000
65-69	Tainted Lands Ioun Stones	12,000	4,000
70-74	Necklace of the Fairies	9,000	3,500
75-80	Potion of Restoration	3,500	1,000
81	Stone of skeleton repulsion	2,500	900
82-84	Ring of Undead Protection	1,500	900
85-87	Ring of Missing	2,500	1,200
88	Rod of the Vampire	3,500	1,500
89-91	Blackthorn Staff of the Magi	2,900	2,000
92-94	Blackthorn Staff of the Cleric	3,200	2,500
95-97	Blackthorn Staff of the Druid	3,600	3,000
98	Artifact Tainted Sphere	25,000	9,000
99	Artifact Tainted Flail	25,000	9,000
100	Artifact Tainted Crown	25,000	9,000

Undead +4 Bane Weapons, roll 1d12 to determine the type of undead the weapon is set for. Then roll to see what the weapon is. This is a +2 weapon and +4 against a specific type of undead.

1d12	Extra Damage	Weapon Type
1) Vampire	1d12	1) Short sword
2) Ghost	1d10	2) Throwing hammer
3) Zombie	1d8	3) Throwing Axe
4) Wight	1d8	4) Long Sword
5) Wraith	1d10	5) Bastard Sword
6) Skeleton	1d6 (edge does normal dmg.)	6) Maul
7) Mummy	1d8	7) Morning Star
8) Banshee	1d10	8) Two-Handed Long Sword
9) Bodak	1d20	9) Great Spear
10) Ghast	1d12	10) Punch Dagger
11) Lich	1d20	11) Two-Handed Battle Axe
12) Shadow	1d8	12) Heavy Mace

UNDEAD SENSING WEAPON

These are various types of magical weapons with a +1 that can sense undead within 160 feet of the weapon wielder. The weapon glows with a bright radiance and gets brighter the closer one gets to the undead.

UNDEAD +1 DARTS

When these weapons strike the undead, they stick and begin to burrow into the body doing an additional +2 a round until the weapon kills the creature or is pulled out. They are destroyed in the process.

UNDEAD +1 SHIELD

The shield glows in the presence of undead and forces them to have a -1 to strike the shield wielder.

WAND OF COMMANDING THE UNDEAD

This magic overcomes the undead's natural resistance to control. The control lasts for five rounds and although the undead won't kill itself, it can be ordered to flee at maximum speed or attack others if it fails its magic check.

UNDEAD CLOAK

This illusionary cloak makes the undead see one of their own kind if they fail to see through the illusion.

DRUMS OF SKELETON SUMMONING

Two rounds of beating on the drums by a bard or 6 rounds from other characters brings 1d6 skeletons for any other type of character and 2d6 skeletons for a bard. The skeletons are well armed and ready to fight any foe the drummer points toward. The summoning can be done twice between the times of the full moon.

GAUNTLETS OF THEON

These gloves are sensitive to undead when such creatures come within 50 yards of the gauntlet wielder. They glow brightly in the presence of undead filling the area with light to help the gauntlet wielder fight their foes. All magical effects that limit light have no effect on the glow of these gauntlets.

FIGURINE OF WONDROUS POWER – SKELETAL CHARIOT

The chariot can be used twice in seven days and acts like a chariot pulled by two fast horses. It conveys a +2 to the armor class of up to five riders in the chariot cart. The entire item itself has an AC of 19 and 100 hit points. These hit points are restored to full every time the figurine is summoned up. The device cannot be turned like the undead and is immune to any type of control or hold spell and is in other ways like a skeleton.

IOUN STONES FOUND IN THE TAINTED LANDS

COLOR	SHAPE	EFFECT	PRICE
Black	Triangle	+2 on checks to resist undead magic	18,000 gp
White	Oval	dead resurrect with 10 points, once	20,000 gp
Sun Yellow	Sphere	Undead strike at -1 in 10 ft. radius	30,000 gp
Crimson	Tear Drop	+1 to intelligence and wisdom	40,000 gp
Emerald	Tear Drop	+1 to dexterity and constitution	40,000 gp
Azure	Tear Drop	+1 to strength and charisma	40,000 gp

NECKLACE OF THE FAIRIES

There is a one-time use on each of the stones in the necklace. Each stone can be recharged, but only by helping fairies in some of their goals.

Emerald stone: Gnoll comes to fight for necklace wearer.

Ruby stone: Fire giant comes to fight for necklace wearer.

Diamond stone: Dead necklace wearer is resurrected.

Black sapphire stone: In a 40-foot radius, the undead take 30 points of damage.

White quartz stone: In a 40-foot radius, all mortals are healed 15 hit points.

5 small white pearls: A touch restores 5 hit points.

POTION OF RESTORATION

This drink restores one lost energy level as long as it is taken less than five hours from the time of loss.

STONE OF SKELETON REPULSION

This fist-sized stone repels 20 skeletons before recharging is needed. Those skeletons flee the area and cannot strike at the stone owner.

RING OF UNDEAD PROTECTION

The ring is made to work versus a specific type of undead. When in the presence of the proper type, the ring glows brightly and causes the undead of that type to strike at the wearer for a -2. The wearer makes all checks versus that type of undead at a +4. One tells the type of ring by the gemstone of the ring.

1d12

- 1) Vampire
- 2) Ghost
- 3) Zombie
- 4) Wight
- 5) Wraith
- 6) Skeleton
- 7) Mummy
- 8) Banshee
- 9) Bodak
- 10) Ghast
- 11) Lich
- 12) Shadow

Gem Stone

- Black peridot
White quartz
Yellow apatite
Yellow-white moonstone
Black pearl
Yellow-orange sunstone
Pink sapphire
White topaz
Blue diamond
Blue-white diamond
Star ruby
Purple star sapphire

RING OF MISSING

The first strike at the ring wielder misses. From then on, the attacker has a -1 to strike the ring wielder with a physical weapon.

ROD OF THE VAMPIRE

A touch of one end of the rod drains two energy levels from the victim. A touch of the other end restores one level to a victim. The rod has the capacity to have six levels stolen from characters and three levels restored to characters.

BLACKTHORN STAFF OF THE MAGI

In the hands of a wizard, the staff does 1d6 in damage. It does 1d8 to undead and forces the faerie fire spell on the undead for 10 rounds with each successful strike.

The staff shows no magic when detection spells are used.

BLACKTHORN STAFF OF THE CLERIC

In the hands of a cleric, the staff does 1d6 in damage. It does 1d10 to undead and forces the undead to save as if a tenth level cleric were trying to turn it, no matter what the level of the wielder may be, with each successful strike.

The staff shows no magic when detection spells are used.

BLACKTHORN STAFF OF THE DRUID

In the hands of a druid, the staff does 1d8 in damage. It does 1d12 to undead and forces the undead to check versus a magical bolt of 1d12 lightning with each successful strike.

The staff shows no magic when detection spells are used.

ARTIFACT TAINTED SPHERE

The sphere has a nine-inch radius. There is a purple star sapphire embedded in the sphere. During the action of the sphere, it generates a purple light that covers the sphere wielder. The metal of

the sphere is a mixture of silver and adamantine, making the object nearly indestructible.

The sphere gives the wielder a successful first check against the magic or physical attack of any foe. The wielder has a +2 to physically strike at any foe with a ranged or melee weapon.

ARTIFACT TAINTED FLAIL

The flail is made of two heavy rods of metal with a three-link chain of mithral holding them together. The rods are completely etched in arcane runes glowing white with the action of the flail. The rods are adamantine.

The flail gives the wielder a +3 to their armor class. The +3 flail strikes for 2d12 against normal foes or targets, and does 25 hit points versus undead.

Holding the flail and the sphere: The wielder of both, successfully strikes with their first strike at a foe. The flail also does maximum damage in any melee combat.

ARTIFACT TAINTED CROWN

The crown is nine inches tall at its highest point and there are five high points on the surface of the crown. Each of the high points has a rare gem charged with magic: blue-white diamond, star ruby, black star sapphire, gold star sapphire, and a purple star sapphire. The metal of the crown is red gold mixed with mithral.



Wearing the crown allows the wielder to see traps as glowing objects. The wearer also sees through any illusion. The crown wearer cannot be controlled by spells of any kind. The wearer always makes their saving throw versus any type of magic. Finally, the wearer cannot be turned to stone by any force.

Holding the crown and the flail: The wielder of both is filled with energy during combat and foes successfully physically striking the wielder take 9 hit points of energy damage.

Holding the crown and the sphere: The wielder of both has an armor class of 25, without wearing armor.

Holding all three artifacts: The wielder of all three regenerates four hit points a round. They cannot be imprisoned in ropes, chains, or anything else. The next three times they die, they are resurrected with all of their hit points intact.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF THE TAINTED LANDS ARTIFACTS

- 1: Taking any of the artifacts out of the Tainted Lands has Tainted Land Portals appearing close to the artifact owner at every full moon. A stream of powerful undead use the portal, to try and reach the location of the artifact holder to take the artifact.
- 2: Even in the best of adventure friends, there is a jealousy factor that grows with all of the allies of the artifact holder. Allies will offer large sums to buy the artifacts. Eventually they will hesitate in battles so that the artifact holder takes the brunt of the attacks.
- 3: The largest of creatures in any given battle focuses on the artifact holder, attacking them during a melee.

DEITIES OF THE TAINTED LANDS

There are no good deities of the Tainted Lands.

CHOOSING A DEITY

If you are playing one of the four character types found in the Tainted Lands, you must pick one of the three deities. Each of the three will present the worshipers with some new powers and also add a depth to the character as the characters follow the teachings of that sect. Ignore the alignment of the deity's avatar as player characters can be whatever alignment they wish and still be a follower.

Picking one of the deities gives the characters temples to go to for help. The temples and clerics will give the player characters quests helping the temple and the character. The taboos of the gods can generate interesting role-playing scenes.

DIVINE MAGIC

Clerics and druids coming from outside the tainted lands are cut off from their normal gods. As they seek guidance, they will feel a mystical presence and that presence gives them spells, but it won't be the god they are familiar with from before they enter the Tainted Lands. Augury spells and any spells granting knowledge will not be given to them to use in the Tainted Lands. Spells that heal are also not given to outside spell casters.

KARTOUR -DARK GOD, DARKNESS LORD, MARSH LORD

GOD SYMBOLS: Crescent moon on a black field

DEITY PROVINCE: Command, evil, law, war, iron, swamps

CEREMONY: Calling upon Kartour in the swamps at night can often summon a creature to follow the summoner and give them aid all through the night.

TABOO: worshipers must attempt to capture rather than kill undead if possible. The captured undead are taken to the altars of Kartour.

GRANTED ABILITIES: 3rd level worshipers all gain darkvision, 5th level worshipers all gain +1 to strike and hit with iron-only weapons.

Kartour appears as a huge vampire. Evil beings of all races come to kneel at his image in hidden temples underground everywhere in the Tainted Lands. The temples are large mazes with many killing holes for worshipers to fire ranged weapons at invaders. There are several large weapon fabrication areas in every Kartour temple. The weapons of Kartour's clerics are all expert quality.

Worshipers of Kartour gain great respect by bringing the heads of their foes to the altars of Kartour.

ARTIFACT: SWORD OF RULERSHIP

When Kartour's avatar doesn't walk on the planet, the sword is given to the most powerful fighter in the cult. The sword is an adamantite weapon (2d8 +4 + 2d8 vs. lawful good characters). The weapon's purpose is to slay good and it has the following extra powers: teleport 1/day, death ray 1/day, protection from good all the time, and protection from normal missiles all the time.



ARTIFACT: GREAT HELM OF THE DARK GOD

The armor is a gift to the barbarian who proves himself a great slayer of the enemies of Kartour. The Helm gives the wearer two skill levels; and a +5 protection vs. all beings of chaos and good. It turns to dust when the wearer is killed.

KARTOUR AVATAR

Kartour appears often in avatar form. Revenge brings him the most as his temples are robbed in the full light of day.

KARTOUR AVATAR: *(lawful evil)* 20th-level barbarian, HP 170, AC 25, MV 50 ft., primary attributes: constitution 25, strength 20, dexterity 20. Kartour has all the powers of a barbarian at the 20th level: combat sense, primal force, primal fury, primal might, and primal will. The Barbarian Kartour uses his sword and helm and helps his followers gain experience levels as he leads them into battle.

GODDESS TWINS – SENDA & BALLA

GOD SYMBOLS: White and black pearls, black sword, white mattock

DEITY PROVINCE: Protection

CEREMONY: A spring and fall ceremony is done by giving pearls to the temple. All worshipers must come to give sacrifice. If forgotten, the character takes a -1 in all of their attribute scores until the next half year.

TABOO: No worshiper of the goddesses can foul the waters of rivers or lakes.

GRANTED ABILITIES: Worshipers generate a field of good luck and undead are -2 to strike them. On the fifth day of every week, all of their worshipers gain a +1 to all of their game rolls.

The goddesses serve many functions as the protectors of life and homes. One calls on the white goddess for protection against the living. Calling on the black goddess is for protection versus undead.

The temples are found on the lakes and streams of the area. Undead cannot come within a mile of their temples. Each temple is a huge dome and the clerics are urged to help wanderers in the Tainted Lands.

ARTIFACT: WHITE PEARL TIARA OF THE WHITE TWIN

The artifact is always found in a hoard of treasure from an undead creature. It's given to a hero who is about to fight a powerful foe attacking the twin's worshipers. The artifact gives a +1 to everything: to hit, damage, all attribute scores, level, and all saving throws. Its beauty is lusted after and evil characters will often attack the wielder to seize the tiara. Worshipers are given this artifact for large sacrifices of white pearls.

ARTIFACT: BLACK PEARL CROWN OF THE BLACK TWIN

The crown summons up 1d6 5th level fighters with +1 swords to help the wearer. This summoning happens twice between the times of the full moon. Worshipers are given this artifact for large sacrifices of black pearls.

THE TWIN'S AVATARS

The twins appear at least once a year when large hoards of undead sweep over the Tainted Lands.

SEDA AND BALLA AVATARS: *(neutral)* 20th-level Druids, HP 110 x2, AC 19, MV 40 ft., 60 ft. (swim), primary attributes: wisdom 25, dexterity 20, charisma 20. Their weapons each do 35 points of damage at a successful strike. They have all the powers of druids at the 20th level: nature lore, resist elements, woodland stride, and a totem shape of a giant water dragon. Spells: 0-9, 1st-8, 2nd-8, 3rd-8, 4th-7, 5th-7, 6th-6, 7th-6, 8th-5, 9th-5.

MICT, GOD OF THE DEAD

GOD SYMBOLS: Human skull, bone spear

DEITY PROVINCE: Guardian of the path to the realm of the dead

CEREMONY: Fall dance of the dead puts all spirits to rest, another dance for an hour gives a +2 to all rolls versus undead for 24-hours.

TABOO: Worshipers of Mict are the only clerics with the power to use heal spells and the wizards can use charm and hold spells.

GRANTED ABILITIES: At 3rd level, worshipers can sense undead up to 500 yards away. At 8th level, worshipers have a permanent *protection from evil* spell on their bodies.

Mict is a fierce warrior deity protecting those who die and move on to the next plane of existence. In this capacity, his worshipers become the bitter and relentless foes of the undead who capture and enslave souls.

The god is filled with evil; however, he is revered because he insists that the dead do not walk the land. The temples of Mict are always guarding large cemeteries and the clerics work the land to make sure anything rising from the coffins is quickly turned to dust. These temples are filled with weapons useful to fighting undead. The clerics will happily sell the weapons to those who would help them at night for a week.

ARTIFACT: MICT SKULL HELM

The skull acts as a *charm person* spell and turns the enemies of the deity into supporters when they fail to make their saving throw. The eye sockets of the skull glow a bright red and beams shoot out and





send the *charm person* spell to where the skull is aimed. The skull can attack one foe a round up to fifty yards away from the wielder.

When sixth-level clerics or higher appeal to the deity for help, the skull appears as the first sign the deity is paying attention and wishes to give aid.

ARTIFACT: WAR BONE SPEAR

The white bone spear normally does (1d10 +5) against foes. When used against undead of all types it does triple damage and makes the wielder impervious versus any spell attacks of the undead.

When tenth-level clerics or higher appeal to the deity for help, the spear appears as the second sign that the deity is concerned for his people and wishes to help.

MICT AVATAR

The only time Mict appears on the earth is when there are undead creatures in an army that are attacking his worshippers. Then the deity appears in the opposite army and brings 1,000 spirit warriors to add to the ranks fighting the evil army.

MICT AVATAR: (*chaotic evil*), 20th-level knight, HP 140, AC 29, MV 40 ft., primary attributes: charisma 25, strength 20, dexterity 20. The deity has all the powers of a 20th level knight: His birthright mount is an adult black dragon. The avatar has horsemanship, inspire, embolden, demoralize, battlefield dominance, and call-to-arms. The deity carries his two artifacts with him into the combat. After the battle is over, Mict continues moving through the land clearing it of all undead.

GODDESS DAFINEY

GOD SYMBOLS: Large wagon, full moon, shillelagh

DEITY PROVINCE: Protection, luck

CEREMONY: A full moon ceremony is done every month, blackthorn is burned, and the ashes are saved for special magics.

TABOO: Undead must be killed on sight or terrible curses will follow the ruse.

GRANTED ABILITIES: The ruse turn to dust when they die, a gift of the goddess.

The goddess allows the spell casters of the ruse (see below) an extra spell level per experience level. She is worshiped with every planting of a blackthorn vine and the ruse plant a lot of them.

The temples are large cook wagons in each ruse clan. This wagon hides the clan's treasures and supplies weapons during attacks. Undead cannot come within fifty feet of the wagon.

ARTIFACT: WHITE PEARL DAGGER

The dagger slays skeletons and zombies at a touch. It does 20 points to all other types of undead. Otherwise, the weapon does 2d8 in combat. The weapon is often loaned to a young ruse starting out to be a fighter. All ruse wear white, pearl-handled daggers and often have several more in boot sheaths.

ARTIFACT: BLACK CLOAK OF THE LADY

The cloak prevents the touch of undead on the wearer. It's a displacer cloak and has a backpack sized pocket dimension in its folds to hold equipment. It is often loaned to a young ruse working up in levels as a rogue. All ruse wear black cloaks in her honor and these also help in their efforts to hide in the dark.

DAFINEY AVATAR

She appears whenever a new village is being started. She summons other ruse to her and they plant a blackthorn hedge around the area.

DAFINEY AVATAR: (*neutral*) 20th-level rogue, HP 80, AC 19, MV 40 ft., 60 ft. (*swim*), primary attributes: wisdom 20, dexterity 25, charisma 20. She uses her cloak and dagger and also has the use of any 1st -3rd-level clerical or wizard spell. She also hides a brace of eight +3 daggers, balanced for throwing.

RUSE - PEOPLE OF THE MISTS

NO. ENCOUNTERED: 5-50

SIZE: Medium

HD: 1 (d8)

MOVE: 40 ft.

AC: 11

ATTACKS: Weapon plus Special

SPECIAL: Class Traits, Transformation

SAVES: M, P

INT: High

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic (Any)

TYPE: Humanoid

TREASURE: 2 plus 10 for magic items

XP: 10 +1

Think gypsy when you first encounter the ruse, but they are much more than that. In a time and place where there is little color and joy, the ruse are filled with more than their fair share of joy and color. Their colorful wagons move from town to village to castles and they bring their songs and smiles and share them with the people they find. "As curious as a ruse," the saying goes and ruse will look at anything and love a good puzzle.

The adult males are always over six feet in height and the women rarely grow over five. Their heads are long and narrow and they have very pointed chins. Their ears are longer than an elf's and naturally, they have unusually good hearing. Their fingers are supple and long as well as their toes. Men's hair color is mainly very dark with some red heads who are always leaders. Women's hair is usually red with some blond and these blond women are always wise women. The hair is always curly and worn very long. They are all on the thin side and unusually strong. They are a long-lived race with children considered adults at 30, adults considered mature at 100, and the elderly considered old at 300. Ruse living until 500 years of age is not unknown.

The ruse live in small clans with a leader and wise woman agreeing on rules and life style. The clan groups are around 15-50. The women fight alongside their males. Travel is by large painted wagons or horseback in some fashion. The ruse are traders, fixers, and move from town to village trading and fixing things.

They tame wolves and mountain lions and these creatures are the most traded things of the ruse. The race shows a great skill with animals and magical beasts of all types. It is not unusual for large magical beasts to travel with clans as curiosities to be seen, for a fee. Individual ruse will usually have some type of large pet from an eagle or hawk to a wolf or great cat. Clans often take on the responsibility of breeding a particular type of creature and then raise them for sale. Woe be it to a villager who buys one of these animals and doesn't take care of it as the ruse instructed.

Ruse clans specialize in a character class. Almost the entire clan will be of one class and they freely teach other use how to be of that class. The ruse have a special ability to change their attribute scores to suit the character class they are becoming. The ruse can study or physically train for five-to-six months and change an attribute score. In the process when they increase one attribute score, they decrease another. Ruse never go over fourth level in any given character class. When they achieve the fourth level, they begin looking for another character class to become. For example if a highly intelligent ruse was a fourth-level magic user, he could consider being an illusionist by joining that type of ruse clan or he could become a fighter by joining a fighting clan and taking on their training. In the process of six months of extremely difficult training, the attribute scores of the trainee shift so that they can be the fighter they want to be. If a ruse doesn't wish to leave a clan, they stop training, and stay at fourth level just to stay with a clan they have come to love. There are hundreds of clans of ruse moving through the Tainted Lands and it's easy to find the character class a ruse needs among the clans.

The ruse love nature and disdain life in villages or towns. They feel the urge to move about and never stay in a place longer than

a full moon to the next full moon in time. Yet there is a strong urge to help mortals live and grow. This drives the ruse to fight the wild evils that might come into a village or town. Ruse are fanatic horse breeders and they own some of the fastest and strongest horses anyone has ever seen.

Ruse wise women are very powerful spell casters able to use clerical spells of healing where no one else can in the Tainted Lands. Those ruse women wishing to follow the path of the wise woman are allowed by their deity to go up in clerical levels and not take on other character classes like the other ruse do in their lifetimes. All ruse women will become clerics first and then may look to attain skills in other classes. The ruse wise woman at 7th level or higher has the ability to instantly know what a magic item or potion can do with just a touch.

Ruse receive a +1 bonus in making checks against poison, magical spells, and the charms of a vampire. They never lose a level to the draining ability of undead. They are never paralyzed by the touch of a lich and feel only disdain for the threat of a lich.

Combat: Ruse always use throwing daggers for their initial attack. They are a chaotic group when a clan fights and the strongest and best armed of the group leads the way. The entire clan will take up weapons and fight. The cook wagon is the best-defended piece of property the ruse own. Very often, the wagons have trip wire traps around them and are further guarded by trained and powerful beasts from cave bears to winter wolves to even lions.

Curses and Blessings: It is widely known that anyone killing a ruse will have a -2 to their striking of foes for the next three full moons. Also saving the life of a ruse confers a blessing of +2 to the savior for three full moons. Saved ruse will note the jewelry on their savior and give them a different piece. Ruse of both sexes love jewelry with turquoise inset in metal. Other clans of ruse will note the ruse jewelry on a stranger and treat them better or worse after they discover where the jewelry came from.

Ruse clans come together four times a year at the solstices and the equinoxes, meet with other clans to trade, and perform weddings. Several ceremonies are held at these times to send their clan members to other clans for new training.

Players who wish to become ruse can do so, but can never rise above 4th level in any character class.

The ruse worship Dafiney, the Goddess of Luck and Good Health.





PETS IN THE TAINTED LANDS

Some unique feature of the land has caused the animals and magical beasts to seek out partners. This feature gives almost everyone in the Tainted Lands a sort of familiar, but without the magical essence that comes with that bond. The creature finds a person, and becomes attached to that character. It acts to protect them in times of trouble and expects the same when it gets in trouble. The creature constantly follows the character around and doesn't take no for an answer when the character doesn't want to see them for whatever reason. The creature can be trained to follow orders, but doesn't become a pet. Life with the creature is much more of a mutual help

situation. If the player character does things like feed his creature and take care of it when it is hurt, the creature will try to do things to help the player character. Castle Keepers should ask the player what their eye color is and then roll the die on the proper chart.

When the creature appears, there is an innate sense that the creature wants to help the character. If the creature is killed, another creature of the same type appears in a few weeks and usually at the most inconvenient moment. Attacking the creature has more of them come and attack back in larger and larger numbers as fate determines an ungrateful character should be an eaten character.

	BLUE-EYED MALE	BLUE-EYED FEMALE
1.	Dog, small	Cat, small
2.	Squirrel	Chipmunk
3.	Pig	Wolf
4.	Chimp, small	Baboon
5.	Mink	Skunk
6.	Hawk	Eagle
7.	Bull	Cow
8.	Bird, small	Bird, small
9.	Air elemental, sm.	Earth elemental, sm.
10.	Boar	Elephant
11.	Cloud giant	Fire giant
12.	Jackal	Cheetah
13.	Lizard, small	Lizard, giant
14.	Red pseudodragon	Green pseudodragon
15.	Raven, large	Crow, large
16.	Constrictor, snake	Venomous, snake
17.	Grig	Pixie
18.	Tiger	Toad, giant
19.	Billy goat, lg	Female goat
20.	Fire beetle	Acid beetle

	BROWN-EYED MALE	BROWN-EYED FEMALE
1.	Dog, large	Cat, large
2.	Coyote	Mountain lion
3.	Fox	Ocelot
4.	Mountain gorilla	Horse
5.	Dinosaur, small	Raptor
6.	Giant hawk	Giant eagle
7.	Ram	Sheep
8.	Bird, large	Bird, large
9.	Fire elemental, sm.	Water elemental, sm.
10.	Python, large	Unicorn
11.	Stone giant	Storm giant
12.	Lion, male	Lion, female
13.	Pegasus, male	Pegasus, female
14.	Blue pseudodragon	Gold pseudodragon

15.	Owl, large	Condor, large
16.	Sphinx	Androsphinx
17.	Nixie	Dryad
18.	Frog, giant	Otter, giant
19.	Bobcat	Dinosaur, large
20.	Spider, large	Spider, phase

Characters from the Tainted Lands roll on the Other chart

OTHER EYE COLOR		
	OTHER-EYED MALE	OTHER-EYED FEMALE
1.	Dinosaur, small	Dinosaur, large
2.	Rat, large	Rat, norway
3.	Leprechaun	Female goblin
4.	Nightmare	Winter wolf
5.	Giant python	Giant rattler
6.	Panther	Leopard
7.	Donkey	Mule
8.	Beaver, giant	Otter, giant
9.	Robin, giant	Sea Gull, giant
10.	Albino lynx	Treant
11.	Female ogre	Male orc
12.	War Stallion	Imp
13.	Achaierai	Albino condor
14.	Hill giant, female	Hill giant, male
15.	Wizard gnome	Ranger gnome
16.	Wasp, giant	Bee, giant
17.	Rogue halfling	Cleric halfling
18.	Barbarian Dwarf	Fighter Dwarf
19.	War hound, giant	Jeweler gnome
20.	Arrowhawk	Cave bear



RUMORS OF THE TAINTED LANDS

In the three game years since news of the sudden appearance of the Tainted Lands, there have been thousands of major rumors about the land, and what it does to characters. There are now also humans and other creatures that have walked out of the mists and started making lives for themselves out of the influence of the Tainted Lands. The tales these beings tell of life beyond the mists are almost too crazy to be believed. Through all of this, there are ten rumors that everyone has heard and most believe.

1) VAST TREASURE IN THE TAINTED LANDS

There are many stories of the fantastic treasures to be found in the Tainted Lands. Some of the tales speak of huge mounds of silver left untouched for some reason, but well-guarded by skeletons and zombies. They say that silver isn't even used for coins, but is only used by smiths to cover weapons to make them look better. Other stories deal with mounds of uncut gems worked into the walls of abandoned castles. Several stories tell of magic weapons and armor—as easy to buy as plate mail—and cheaper than normal armor of the same type. Other stories tell of ioun stones so plentiful that children have them to play with as the stones float around their heads. The best stories tell of altars made of solid gold in ruined temples in forgotten towns.

2) THE MISTS DON'T LET PEOPLE ESCAPE

There is no fog quite like the mists surrounding the Tainted Lands. Many have called these mists a living thing. All of the stories are the same when talking about the Tainted Lands. If a person goes into the mists, no matter how they mark the land, no matter what magic items they might have to help them on their way, the mists take them back into the Tainted Lands and never, ever out to the surrounding lands. Once in the Tainted Lands, if one enters the mists, they face many trials as undead attack and unnaturally large beasts of the forest attack and circle the characters trying to escape. There is no fear greater than hearing the deep howl of the creatures of the mists.

3) THERE ARE SILVER SPIRES CONSIDERED THE ULTIMATE IN TRAINING AREAS FOR CHARACTER CLASSES

It is said that creatures of death are attracted to any concentration of silver. There are many tales of whole towers covered in silver. These towers face hordes of the creatures of the night and they do this on purpose. It seems the towers are training areas for the different character classes. There, you will find the best and most gifted of wizards, clerics, rogues, and the like. They live there for the joy of battle. Great magical treasures are said to lay unused all around these towers in great piles of bones and rotting flesh. Each of these towers is the gateway into large valleys in the high mountains. Some have said these valleys hold the secret of escaping the Tainted Lands.

4) UNDEAD ARE POWERFUL IN THE TAINTED LANDS AND EVEN SKELETONS AND ZOMBIES TALK

Hundreds of stories deal with the powerful undead creatures of the Tainted Lands. Something gives them extraordinary power. Even the skeletons and zombies have far more intelligence than is usual for their kind. Common knowledge tells that even the lesser undead are heavily armored and have heightened strength and dexterity allowing them to move faster and attack harder than what is normal outside the Tainted Lands. Where one might find one lich in an entire lifetime, there are over a hundred named and known liches in

the Tainted Lands; who are paid tribute by those living around them. It's a land where ghosts and banshees travel in packs where in other lands they are a rare occurrence.

5) PEOPLE DIE AND RISE AN HOUR LATER, HUNGRY TO FEED OFF THE LIVING

Any newcomers instantly sense the negative energy of the Tainted Lands. As people from outside the lands die, if their bodies are left alone, they rise. The type of undead they become is based on their alignment in life. Those who were lawful always turn into vampires, gaining a neutral alignment. Those who were chaotic or neutral become random undead and lose their memories and character skills. Dead are usually burnt to ash or torn apart and fed to the pigs in the villages and towns.

6) THERE ARE MAGIC ITEMS IN PLenty JUST LYING AROUND THE RUINS OF THE TAINTED LANDS

There are a large number of wandering monsters roaming in the Tainted Lands. These creatures get caught like player characters in the fog surrounding the Tainted Lands and most of them are not intelligent enough to figure their way out of the mists. The more intelligent of these creatures are often carrying powerful magic items. As all of these creatures are overwhelmed by large numbers of undead, those treasures find their way into treasure hoards. Since few things leave the Tainted Lands, the treasure hoards are larger on average than in other lands. These treasures are more often than not well guarded by undead creatures that don't require feeding or tending.

7) CREATURES OF THE TAINTED LANDS ARE SO FRIGHTENED THEY HUDDLE BY HUMANS FOR PROTECTION

No living person or thing is alone in the Tainted Lands. Even newcomers through the portals hook up with some creature or friend as they try and travel out of the Tainted Lands. The creature that comes to join you reveals a little bit about your true nature.

8) THE RULERS OF ALL SKELETONS IS MASSING A HUGE ARMY TO ERUPT FROM THE TAINTED LANDS

More and more powerful skeletons are appearing in the dungeons and ruins of the world. These skeletons show an intelligence and are able to generate other skeletons from the dead that they create. It is said the undead are growing all over the world because of the power of the Tainted Lands as forces from the mists reach out and give magical power to the undead.

9) TAINTED LANDS PORTALS APPEAR NEAR LARGE TREASURES

Stories tell of Tainted Lands portals appearing more and more all around the mists of the Tainted Lands. Often, these portals appear in large ruins in the out-of-the-way spots of the world. Those who find the portals and live to tell the tale speak of large treasures spilling out around the dais of the portal. The sky over every portal clouds up and lighting strikes through the clouds the entire time the portal is there.

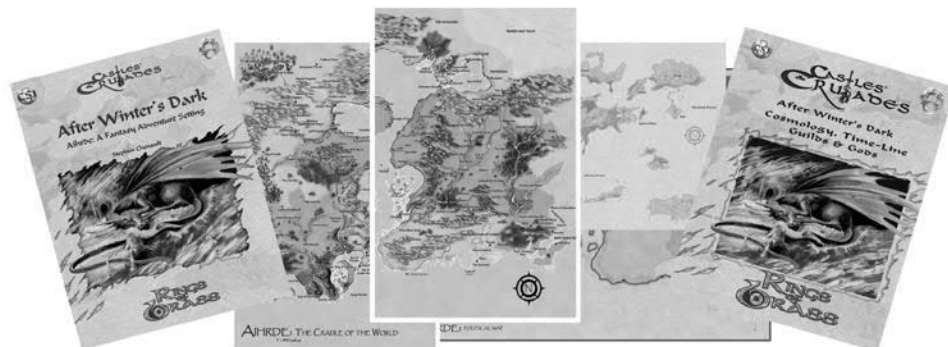
10) THE RUINS OF THE RUSE CITY IS SAID TO BE FILLED WITH MAGIC ITEMS AND GOLDEN TREASURES

There is a set of ruins made out of huge, red, granite stones somewhere in the Tainted Lands. These ruins were once a city of powerful magic users and clerics who worked to destroy the dark evils of the world. They were too successful and evil gods and powerful magical beasts invaded and destroyed the city and most of its people. Those who survived are cursed to remain in the Tainted Lands for as long as the mists surround the land.

RINGS of ORASS

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