

DARK RACES™

VOLUME IV

Compendium





DARK RACES

VOLUME I

GDW





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Dark Races

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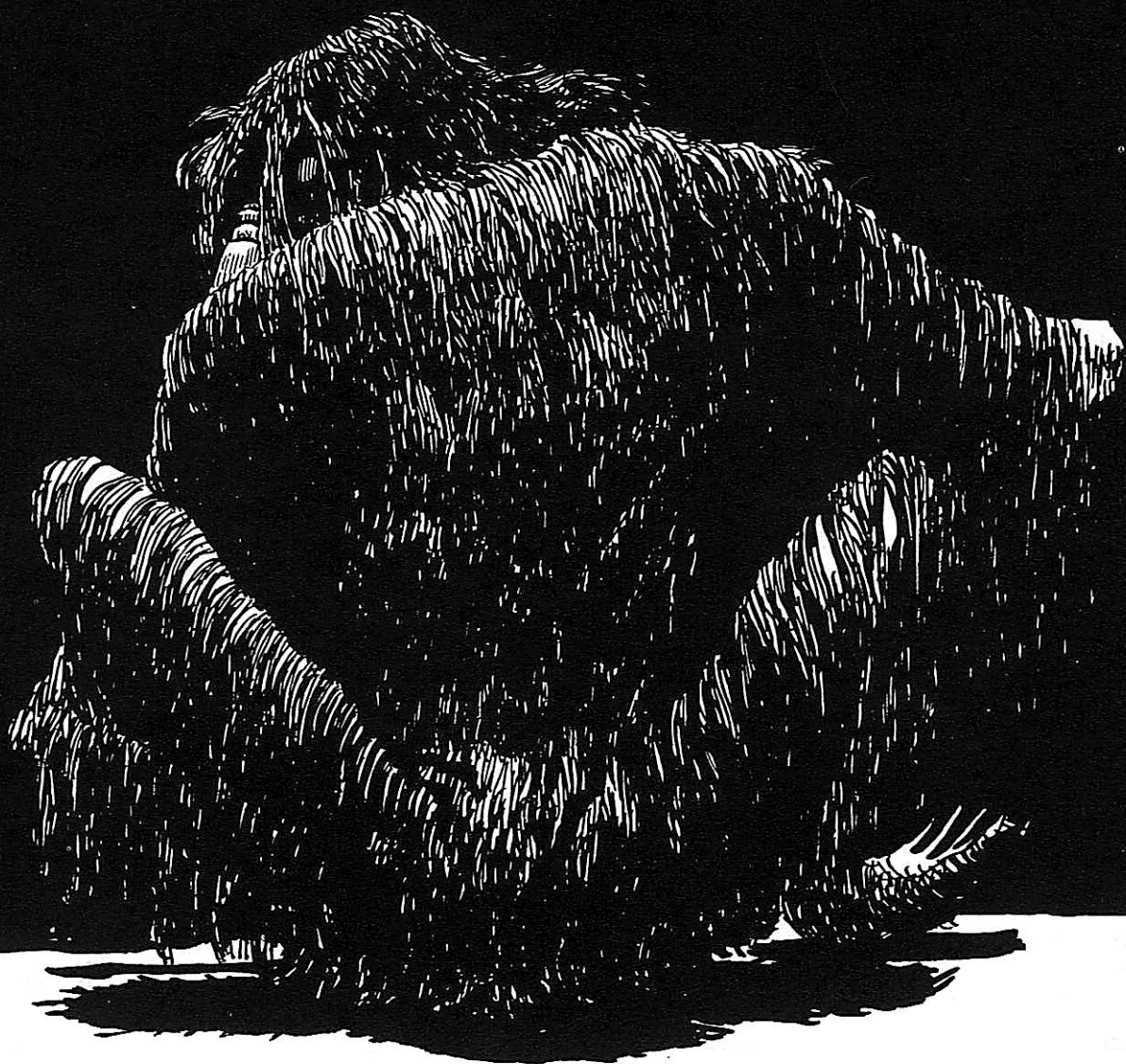
Dark Conspiracy™ is GDW's trademark for its roleplaying game of unearthly horror in a modern world.



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INTRODUCTION





It is the nature of humans to name things. We are tool users, and names are the tools by which we keep tabs (so to speak) upon the things around us. We name objects, actions, even ideas, then we classify those names into groups, and we go on to label the groups, and so on and on. We even label the overall system itself—we call it “language.”

Language is so much a part of us that to most people it seems as natural as breathing. But that’s exactly what makes it dangerous. As any foreign language student can tell you, language is arbitrary. Words are mainly just arbitrary sounds, and the arrangements we give them (our native grammar) is largely arbitrary as well. When we forget that, we start to mistake names for the objects they represent, to believe that creatures are limited to behaving as we define them.

What does this have to do with **Dark Conspiracy**, a horror game? I’m glad you asked that question.

One of the primary themes of **Dark Conspiracy** is that nothing is ever quite what you expect it to be. Horror is supposed to scare you; that’s what makes it fun. But it’s difficult to be frightened if you know beforehand what a creature’s exact abilities are and how best to defeat the thing. Mystery is a crucial element of horror.

It used to be that all horror involved mystery. Then came a period during which Hollywood began to codify exactly what it was to be a vampire, a werewolf, a mummy, or Frankenstein’s monster. A werewolf, Hollywood told us, is a human who takes on the fur and facial features of a wolf. Lycanthropy was passed on by a werewolf’s bite. And only a silver weapon could kill the creature. This is the “mythology” that most every modern American will recite if asked to describe a werewolf.

But if you could ask someone from Europe during the Middle Ages, you might have gotten a very different story. Werewolves might have been demons, or they might have been humans who turned completely to wolf form, perhaps without

a tail. Lycanthropy might be “caught” by drinking water from a wolf’s pawprint, or maybe by drinking from a stream a wolf had just drank from, but perhaps only in the light of a full moon. The abilities of these and other supernatural creatures could only be guessed at.

And when you begin to consider American Indian legends, or Oriental, the accounts become increasingly less certain of the parameters of the creatures they describe.

Currently, Hollywood is returning to that sense of mystery and open possibility. *The Howling* series of films, for instance, have even included marsupial werewolves from down under. Horror films have wandered far from the staples of Bela Lugosi’s Dracula, Lon Chaney Jr.’s werewolf, and Boris Karloff’s mummy and Frankenstein’s monster. We now are confronted with other-dimensional creatures that steal your skin, brain-hungry zombies from biologic warfare programs, and slithering, postholocaust mutants. The codification of horror is progressively being undermined to make way for new terrors of the imagination.

Dark Conspiracy is dedicated to that sense of open-endedness and mystery. And this first **Dark Races Compendium** is perfect evidence of that fact. Within these pages you will find creatures from numerous authors.

Many are creatures of legend, often with multiple explanations, always with a blurring of the forms we have come to impose upon them. Others are beasts of a particular fevered imagination.

As a referee, you are not obligated to follow even these descriptions. We have taken pains to make certain the creatures within have everything you will need for using them in your campaigns.

But you are invited to join with us in treading upon the boundaries, to adapt these visions as you see fit. Let your own imagination loose as you read the pages that follow. Scare your players—they’ll love you for it.



Amoebeons

Strength: 18	Education: 1	Move: 1/5/10/20
Constitution: 16	Charisma: 3	Skill/Dam.: 8/1D6*
Agility: 4	Empathy: 14	Hits: 30/30
Intelligence: 3	Initiative: 2	# Appear: 1D6+3

*Ratings are for "bare-handed" attacks. If an amoebion enters the same space as its target, it can grapple rather than doing actual damage. A target which becomes entirely grappled will suffocate in a number of combat phases equal to its own Constitution rating.

Special: Chameleonlike image projection and body shape control. They also have rapid regenerative powers when food is available.

THE MYTHOLOGY

Amoebeons are a relatively new phenomenon on Earth. Consequently, there are no mythologies built up around them as yet.

THE REALITY

Amoebeons are known of only because their pictures have been captured on film by remote-viewing devices and because a few have been found frozen into a state of dormancy. Also, a handful of psychics have been able to study them while in a trance state, avoiding vulnerability to the telepathic image projection amoebions use for disguise.

Physical Description

Picture an amoeba of human size and mass. Equip it with rudimentary intelligence, telepathy and telepathic image projection. Give it great powers of cellular control, such that it can shape its body into any desired form or size compatible with its mass. (When walking among humans, for instance, it actually takes on human form—two arms, two legs, head and torso, though the arms, legs, and head are pseudopods.) The result is an amoebion.

Origins

Amoebeons were discovered in another dimension and brought to Earth by tentacular aliens in the late 1990s. They serve those aliens as a slave race of great versatility. They are strong enough to perform most physical labor unassisted, smart enough to be trusted with complex tasks (although not smart enough to pose a threat to their masters), highly damage resistant, able to blend into almost any crowd, and so powerfully telepathic that they can serve as universal translators. They have also been empathically programmed to serve their alien masters without question or hesitation.

Reproduction

Although originally only a few hundred amoebions were released on Earth, there may be hundreds of thousands of them here by now, as they reproduce rapidly and almost never die.

Reproduction is by means of fission, fusion, or regeneration. When an amoebion reaches a mass of approximately 150 kilograms, it divides into two smaller amoeboids of about 75 kilograms apiece. Each unit retains all the knowledge and memories of the parent unit, but has a strong desire to get away from its opposite member.

Reproducing by regeneration is also an option. If an



amoebion is damaged and loses a part of itself, not only will the parent creature regenerate the lost mass, but the smaller piece can also regenerate the parent over time, if it absorbs enough nutrients.

The third method of reproduction is sexual in nature. When two amoebions with different genetic material meet under favorable circumstances (with a ready supply of food), they merge for an hour before separating into three amoebions, two with the genetic components of the parents and a "baby" with half its genes from each contributor.

Vulnerabilities

Amoebions do not die of old age, nor are they vulnerable to most forms of attack. Their slimy, aqueous constitution tends to quench flame, while simply parting before most other attacks. High explosives can blow an amoebion into pieces too small to regenerate, and they can be slain by strong acid, which dissolves them, or by highly toxic neuropoisons that disrupt their internal communications.

Feeding Habits

Amoebions need a lot of food or else they become very lethargic, and what they chiefly like to eat is meat, especially human meat. Even better than flesh and blood is brain tissue. Any amoebion that ingests brain marrow gains a temporary +1 to its Intelligence and a minute long-term gain which, over thousands of years, has brought their Intelligence on the whole up to its current level. Given several million years of evolution and ingestion of intelligent beings, the amoebion could become the most gifted sentient being in the galaxy.

Amoebions cannot digest bone or metal, though most softer objects can be assimilated. They feed by surging over their victims, quickly suffocating creatures that need to breathe, and dissolving the soft tissue, which is incorporated directly into their own ever-expanding bodies. Digestion takes two hours per point of the victim's Constitution.

Empathic Abilities

To gain access to food, amoebions can empathically pass themselves off as human beings. Their image projection is so powerful that it overwhelms every mind within range. Few human minds have ever been known to successfully resist their illusion-casting under normal

conditions. (A test of one-quarter Willpower skill is required to do so, and it can only be attempted once per encounter.)

The creatures are fully capable of going so far as to dress themselves in human clothing, carry human tools and identification, and take the place of individuals they have devoured, using their telepathic powers to pluck any knowledge they need about their disguise from the minds of nearby beings. They need up to six hours to digest, so they prefer to take humans when they are alone and secluded.

Their image projection powers work only against living beings. Mechanical sensors see them as they really are—oozing, polymorphic, translucent, watery-blue creatures shot through with coruscating globules of gold, silver and coppery red. They also have a faintly disgusting body odor that they cannot disguise, as they have no sense of smell. In fact, amoebions have none of the regular senses of humanity—they do not see, hear, feel, taste or smell anything through their own bodies. Instead, they have an empathic, telepathic awareness of what is in the minds of all thinking creatures within a 500-meter range, the strongest awareness from the thoughts of beings that are closest. This impressive empathic sense makes them very hard to surprise.

Dogs and other domestic animals frequently detect the "wrongness" of amoebions posing as humans and go crazy. Such animals may either attack or run away. If they get too close while attacking, the amoebion will absorb the animal, even while telepathically shielding humans in the area from noticing that the dog is being eaten (though this allows a second Willpower test to penetrate the disguise, at Easy difficulty).

Final Notes

Few amoebions are free agents. Most are encountered only in direct association with their tentacled alien masters. Amoebions are believed to range throughout the temperate and tropical zones of North America and Europe. There have been no reports of them in the southern hemisphere or in Asia. They cannot last long in frigid climates, as temperatures below 0° centigrade tend to freeze their internal fluids and reduce them to hibernation. Then they cannot maintain their image projections.



Bhuta, Devourer of the Dead

Strength: 10	Education: 14	Move: 3
Constitution: 20	Charisma: 2	Skill/Dam.: 4*/1D6
Agility: 2	Empathy: 16	Hits: 50/100
Intelligence: 9	Initiative: 6	# Appear: 1

*A bhuta gets 1D6 attacks per action in melee combat due to its multitude of biting heads, skeletal limbs and slashing pseudopods of bone-encrusted flesh.

Special: With its various appendages, a bhuta can attack at long unarmed melee range. In addition to its melee attacks, a bhuta has two special attacks—it can release a noxious cloud of gas, and can use its pseudopods to grapple opponents and draw them into itself (see below). Bhutas are also able to create a special type of animator zombie called darbas (see “Bhuta’s Children,” page 10).

THE MYTHOLOGY

In Indian mythology, bhutas are the attendants of Shiva—the Great Lord, or Lord of the Beasts—when he haunts cemeteries. Also known as the “Children of Anger,” bhutas were thought to animate corpses and eat human flesh. Sometimes it is amazing how closely ancient mythologies reflect reality.

THE REALITY

Bhutas do indeed exist, surviving as pulsating mounds of rotting flesh beneath cemeteries around the globe. Under such places can be discovered a twisting maze of dirt tunnels, ranging in size from as small as one meter in diameter to as large as four or five meters. These passages radiate from the bhuta’s lair (typically a huge chamber filled with human bones) like a bizarre spider’s web. The tunnels exit through graves and tombs on the surface above. They can even reach to nearby structures, such as a mortuary or a human domicile. Prowling these grim alleyways are the bhuta’s “children,” the darbas, fashioned by the bhuta from its own body. A typical warren contains 5D10 darbas and one bhuta.

For the player characters, information concern-

ing bhutas should be very limited, consisting mostly of myth and speculation. These creatures are so utterly deadly that incredibly few humans have ever lived to report an encounter with them.

Only one of these entities has ever been vanquished. The incident occurred several decades ago in a rural farming community in southern Indiana called Bennington. After suffering numerous disappearances and discovering a maze of tunnels beneath the local cemetery, the small community of farmers gathered en masse and assaulted the bhuta in its lair. During the initial encounter, more than half the attackers were slain. Retreating to the surface, the farmers pumped thousands of gallons of gasoline, kerosene and agricultural pesticides into the tunnels. Then this toxic mixture was ignited, resulting in a terrific conflagration which burned for three days and nights. Apparently, the bhuta was utterly destroyed, as no remains were ever found. Records of a “bizarre cemetery fire” in state archives mention reports of the “walking dead” and “a giant mound of quivering flesh.” These reports explain the incident as a prank or hallucination brought on by mass hysteria. But PCs might be able to find old-timers in Bennington who remember the truth.

Physical Description

A bhuta is a hideous thing to behold. Its outer body consists of a globular mass of “fused” corpses. It can be as large as 10 meters long and five meters in diameter. The creature is adorned with scores of heads, some on long stalks of flesh and others visible just beneath its skin. Those heads that are not merely skulls are active—gibbering, crying, screaming, singing and laughing. A bhuta can speak through any or all of its heads simultaneously, and can draw upon the memories of the people it has subsumed (thus its high Intelligence and Education).



Combat Abilities

The heads can also be used in unarmed melee combat to bite opponents for 1D6 damage. Heads on stalks can attack at long range (up to three meters distance).

Limbs of all shapes and sizes extend from the creature's body. Some appendages are completely skeletal, while others appear like normal human limbs or pseudopods of putrid flesh. Its limbs can be used in unarmed melee combat at long range and inflict 1D6 damage.

Additionally, its limbs can be used to make grappling attacks at long range. Up to four limbs can grasp a single human-sized target, meaning the creature can inflict up to 4D6 points of "control" damage per phase. Victims who do not break free (or are not freed by allies) are pulled into the bhuta's mass on the creature's next phase. Once inside, these hapless people begin to fuse with the the bhuta, suffering 2D10 points of damage to each hit location each phase of combat after the first.

Each limb is considered to have a Strength of 10. Severing a limb requires 10 hits of damage from a

single blow. Assuming that at least 10 points of damage are inflicted, even gunfire can sever a limb.

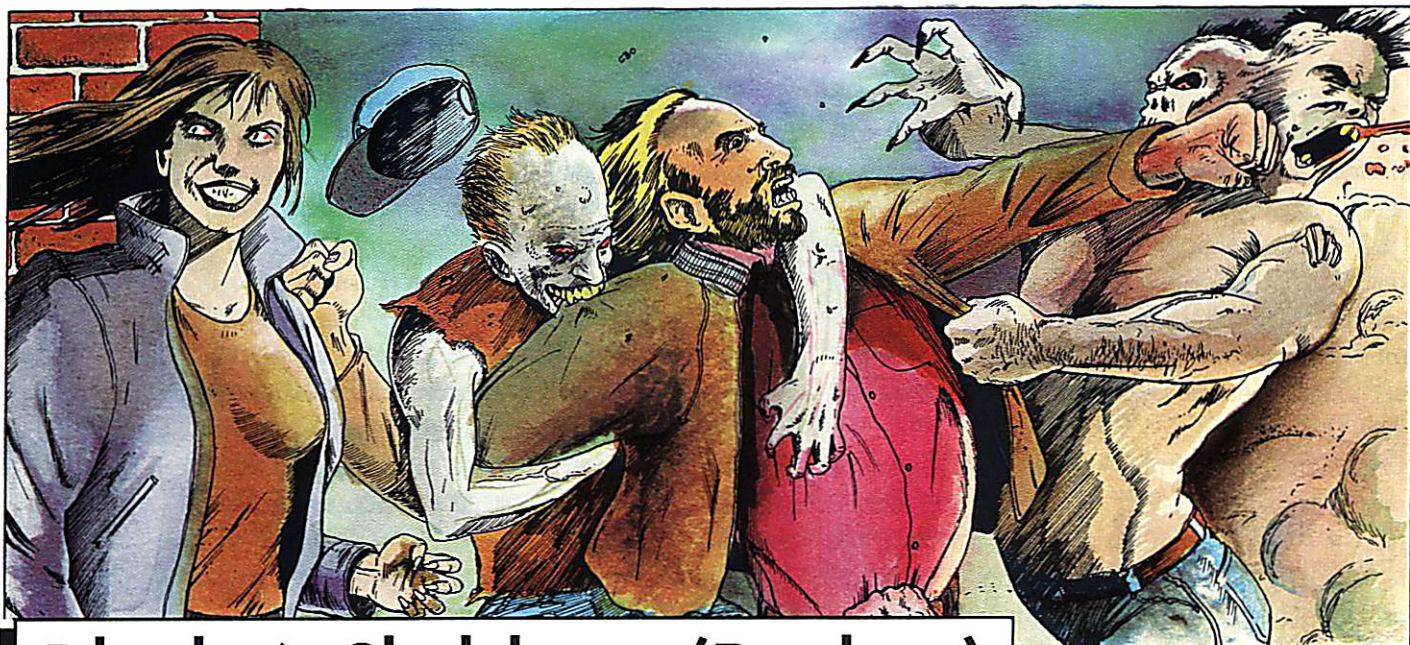
A bhuta can also expel a gas attack once per engagement (it requires at least an hour to build up another blast). By opening a large orifice in its mass, the bhuta "exhales" a roiling cloud of putrescence. The cloud has a burst radius of 20 meters, centered upon the bhuta itself. All creatures within this radius must make a panic check, except those protected by gas masks.

Those who fail must flee the cloud and spend one full combat turn recovering. In addition, at the start of each combat turn that characters are within the cloud (including the turn in which the gas is released), they must attempt an Average: Constitution test to avoid being overcome by the fumes.

Those who fail the Constitution check are incapacitated by coughing and vomiting. They are disoriented, confused and only able to move at a crawl. Such characters remain incapacitated for 2D10 turns, but are not required to make further checks for panic or incapacitation.

Characters who succeed at both the panic check and the Constitution check may function normally. The noxious cloud persists for 2D10 turns.





Bhuta's Children (Darbas)

Strength: 7 Education: * Move: 2/8/15/25
 Constitution: 7 Charisma: 1 Skill/Dam.: 6/1D6+2
 Agility: 3 Empathy: — Hits: 15/30
 Intelligence: * Initiative: 3 # Appear: 5D10**

*As per the appropriate NPC level.

**This is the average population of an entire warren. Usually no more than 2D6 darbas will be encountered outside their lair.

Special: Unlike most walking dead, darbas retain the Intelligence, Education and skills they possessed when alive, meaning they can use equipment, including weapons and vehicles. They do not retain Empathy skills, however—these are lost to them.

THE MYTHOLOGY

According to myths in India, darbas are risen dead who haunt cemeteries and eat the flesh of corpses.

An ancient legend tells that long ago, a young boy was trampled to death while at market. His family grieved so much that a curse fell upon the entire village. The rains would not come, and it was believed that the gods were

angry because the villagers had shed so many tears over the poor, trampled boy. Crops withered, and cattle perished.

One night the grieving parents were awakened by their son. He had returned from the land of the dead, and his body was whole and unbroken. The people rejoiced and sang praises to the gods. It rained that very night, confirming the people's belief that a miracle had been bestowed upon them and that the curse had been lifted.

The youth assured his village that it was indeed a miracle and that more miracles were soon to come. "But first you must gather at the cemetery and make an offering to the gods," he told them. "If this is done, the dead shall join the living, just as I have returned to my family." Overwhelmed with thoughts of dead loved ones, the villagers gathered at the cemetery the next night. They brought with them their most treasured dowries to be offered to the blessed gods.

As the boy promised, the dead arose. But they did not join the living. Instead, the living joined the dead. To this very day, that village is a cursed place. It is said that the mournful cries of the villagers can still be heard, rising from the blackened earth of the graveyard.



THE REALITY

Darbas are created by bhutas, servants of the god Shiva. Each bhuta's outer body consists of bones and rotting flesh. It is from this material that the bhuta fashions its "children," the darbas.

Physical Description

Darbas are a special type of animator zombies. A bhuta creates the animator spirit from within itself, and it can shape the body that will contain it from the remains of many different corpses. Thus, a darba may have several arms and legs, and even more than one active head. Typically, though, darbas conform to a vaguely human appearance.

The head of a darba retains much of its memories and intellect, though its personality is warped by the animator spirit given by the bhuta creator. Some darbas are fashioned to perfectly resemble a living person in order to infiltrate human society, using cosmetics and perfumes to conceal their decay. Upon close inspection, however, their true identity is apparent (a successful Average test of Intelligence is sufficient to penetrate the disguise).

Darbas can serve several different purposes for their bhutas. Typically, they act as guards to patrol the bhuta's warren of tunnels, which is almost always located beneath a cemetery. But they also serve as hunter-gatherers, collecting fresh corpses in the graveyard and taking them to be "joined" with the bhuta. On rare occasions, darbas will even leave the warren to hunt and capture living humans, who are taken back to the bhuta for consumption.

Although given a semblance of life by the bhuta, darbas continue to decay once separated from their "parent's" body. Each darba can exist for a maximum of 1D10 days before literally falling to pieces. Then, the creature is dead for good. Usually, though, the darba returns to be rejoined with its "parent" before decomposition completely claims it.

Combat Abilities

A darba can use its limbs to make unarmed melee attacks that inflict 1D6+2 points of damage. Even more

disturbing, however, is the fact that darbas are intelligent enough to employ relatively complex weapons, such as automatic rifles, if the person from whom the darba's head was "harvested" possessed the appropriate skill in life. They have also been known to drive stolen vehicles during their forays into human society. Fortunately, however, they cannot acquire new skills.

Though often unavoidable, puncturing a darba's body with missile or melee weapons can be a big mistake. The first time this occurs, a putrid cloud erupts from the darba's body, consisting primarily of gases from the organs and blood festering within it. The cloud covers a radius of two meters, centered upon the punctured darba. Any living, breathing creatures caught within the cloud must attempt a panic check (see page 77 of the rulebook), with failure meaning the character flees and must spend one full turn recovering. In addition, during each subsequent combat turn spent in the cloud, characters must attempt an Average check of their Constitution. Failure means they are overcome by the stench and are incapacitated by coughing and vomiting. Characters in this state become disoriented and confused, and are only able to move at a crawl. The condition lasts for 1D6 turns, but incapacitated characters are not required to make further checks for panic or incapacitation.

Characters who succeed at both the panic check and the Constitution check may function normally.

The noxious cloud persists for 1D6 turns. A darba can also intentionally expel the cloud from its mouth. But no matter how the gas is emitted—whether by a character's attack or the darba's choice—it takes a full 1D6 hours for the creature to build up enough fumes for another blast.

The trampled boy in the old Indian legend was almost certainly a darba. Given the clues that he was "resurrected" with no sign of the horrible injuries he sustained in life, was able to disguise the fact that he was still dead, and was intelligent enough to lure his entire village to the cemetery to be slaughtered, it is reasonable to assume this was no ordinary, mindless zombie. Perhaps a huge quivering bhuta still throbs beneath that graveyard in India, protected by the living corpses of a small Indian boy and his entire village.



Boogey Man

Strength: 11 Education: 1 Move: 3/9/18/50*
 Constitution: 10 Charisma: 3 Skill/Dam.: 4/1D6
 Agility: 12 Empathy: 12 Hits: 12/25
 Intelligence: 9 Initiative: 5 # Appear: 1

*The last number represents the movement of the boogey man in its noncorporeal state.

Special: The boogey man has Human Empathy and Telekenesis skills rated at double its Empathy rating. It has Animal Empathy equal to its Empathy.

THE MYTHOLOGY

Nearly every culture has stories of a spirit that torments and haunts children. It has become so much a part of society that it is more than common to find a night-light or religious symbol posted in a child's room as protection.

THE REALITY

In reality, the boogey man is a creature of both shadow and substance. It has the ability to change from corporeal to noncorporeal form, a transformation which takes 1D6 phases to accomplish (the randomness representing the varying resistance to change that it encounters in our world). Usually, the creature is first encountered in its noncorporeal state in our dimension, the exception being when it is going for a kill.

Boogey men live on emotional energy put out by humans, primarily fear. They have found that children are much more likely to be scared of them than older persons, although senior citizens are also a targeted group. Infants (less than 18 months old) are strangely immune to the creatures, likely because they simply have not learned to be afraid of them.

Physical Description

In its noncorporeal state, a boogey man is basically no more substantial than a shadow. Upon close examination, a viewer will see the more sinister side to this shadow, however—it will appear to glide effortlessly about from point to point and to have small, glowing, red eyes.

The corporeal version of a boogey man stands 1.25 meters tall and weighs less than 60 kilograms. It is humanoid in appearance, with two long arms reaching nearly to the ground. The arms are capped with six 15- to 25-centimeter-long claws. The entire body (except for the head) is covered with long, matted, black fur which stinks of mildew. The boogey man has a hideous face with glowing red eyes. Its horrible, 10-centimeter-long snout ends in a mouth full of razor-sharp teeth.

Light Sensitivity

Sunlight burns boogey men, so they generally only appear at night or in dark, shadowy places. Direct sunlight causes 1D6 points of burn damage per phase. Similarly, bright lights—including normal room lights—that leave few shadows will force a boogey man to flee temporarily, although causing no actual damage. Despite parents' assurances to the contrary, a small night-light in a child's room may make the child feel better, but it will not protect the child from the boogey man. The only exception is if the night-light is shining directly onto the child, in which case the creature will be unable to physically harm the child until it coaxes him out of the light. Religious symbols, despite what folklore might claim, do nothing to hinder a boogey man's actions, though they may give a boost to the confidence (Willpower) of an intended victim.

Reliance upon Trickery

Boogey men are great tricksters whose usual tactics are to dupe and then scare their victims. This behavior is continued until the victims become emotionally exhausted, after which the evil creatures finish them off in some slow manner.

With a young victim, a favorite trick of boogey men is to animate a favorite toy, especially a rag doll or stuffed animal, while establishing an empathic link with the victim by means of its Human Empathy. (When calculating a boogey man's effectiveness with its Human Empathy, double the Willpower rating of victims over 55 years old and quadruple it for victims from 15 to 55 years.) This empathic contact is to make the child feel at ease with its newly animated toy until it has been lured into some dark place, such as outdoors, in a closet, or even under the bed. The boogey man will then reveal itself in such a way as



to terrify the child and feed off of his fear energy.

With senior citizens, the tactic used is naturally somewhat different. The creature attempts to draw its victims into the dark by calling out to them and using Thought Projection to make them believe it is a friend or loved one. Once a victim is lured into the dark, the boogey man will simply stand back while the person becomes disoriented and frightened at not finding the caller waiting.

Feeding Limitations

The fear generated by a boogey man's attack is typically enough to sustain the creature's existence in our dimension for 1D6 days. A -1 die modifier is applied for each subsequent appearance to the same victim. When a boogey man reaches the point where it is receiving no further sustenance from a victim, it moves in for the kill.

Victims who have survived an attack by the boogey man are allowed a test of Intelligence during subsequent appearances to avoid succumbing to the creature's tricks. This test is Easy for victims aged 15 to 55, Average for those over 55, and Difficult for those below 15. Should a victim pass this test, the boogey man can gain no further sustenance and will attempt to kill the victim.

Combat Abilities

When a boogey man moves in for the kill, it will become corporeal and appear out of the shadows. All victims with weak Constitutions (3 or less for children and 4 or less for senior citizens) must pass an Average: Constitution check or suffer a fatal heart attack. Victims who survive this initial shock will be attacked physically. Boogey men prefer to kill by suffocation, especially with a victim's favorite toy or pillow. The killing will sustain the creature's existence on Earth for one day per point of Constitution the victim possessed. This sustenance is halved should the boogey man be forced to resort to a quick-kill method such as stabbing or bludgeoning.

Spotting the Creature

While in a corporeal state, a boogey man is immediately visible unless hiding in shadows, in which case an Easy: Observation test is required to spot it. While in a noncorporeal state, the creature is much more difficult to discover—a Difficult: Observation test is required.





Braineater

Strength: 11	Education: 3	Move: 2/8/15/30
Constitution: 7	Charisma: 5	Skill/Dam.: 9/2D6*
Agility: 11	Empathy: 3	Hits: 12/25
Intelligence: 4	Initiative: 4	# Appear: 1D6+3

*This Skill/Dam. attribute refers only to unarmed melee. As noted below, braineaters can "absorb" skills from their victims, perhaps giving them the ability to use weapons.

Special: Skill Absorption (see below) at a level equal to twice Empathy level.

THE MYTHOLOGY

Folk tales of many races tell of creatures that can steal the memories, abilities and appearance of their victims, then take the place of those victims in their day-to-day lives—doppelgangers, fetches and many

others. Although several races of Dark Minions can perfectly imitate the appearance and perhaps even the voice of their victims, so far there have been no validated reports of creatures that can completely emulate the abilities of the mythical doppelgangers—which is fortunate for humanity.

THE REALITY

It seems that myths and folk tales have merged the abilities and characteristics of several Dark Races in their descriptions of doppelgangers. There are those who believe that the Dark Minion race known as the braineaters are a key part of these combined legends.

Physical Description

Braineaters are vaguely humanoid creatures.



They stand a little more than two meters tall and are heavily muscled, with bony spines projecting from their bodies at various places. An average braineater masses about 125 kilograms. The creature's skin is pale gray and smooth, stretched tightly over its definitely nonhuman skeletal structure and musculature. Its head is overlarge, bald, with a domed forehead. Its eyes are large, yellow-white in color, with no discernible irises, and its pupils are vertical slits like those of a cat. Its nose is small, and its fairly human-looking mouth is supplemented by spiderlike exterior mandibles.

Braineaters are completely double-jointed and hideously fast. Their hands and feet have seven digits each, and each hand has two opposable thumbs. Each finger and toe is tipped with a hard and sharp bony claw. On the inside of the wrist is an eight-centimeter-long spur, sharp as a razor, supported by sufficient muscle to manipulate it like a gutting knife.

Braineaters are completely telepathic. They have no language, spoken or written, and seem not to understand the concept of normal forms of communication. This telepathy seems to be limited in range to about 100 meters; within this radius, all braineaters can coordinate their actions perfectly.

The creatures are by nature omnivores, much like humans. Their favorite diet is human brains, but they do not absolutely need them to survive. Given the opportunity, a braineater will usually eat at least one human brain per week.

Braineaters are nocturnal by choice, not through necessity. They are undisturbed by bright lights; their preference for darkness simply reflects the relative ease of hunting at night. The creatures are hermaphroditic, though an individual creature cannot impregnate itself.

Skill Absorption

Braineaters like to lurk in ambush, falling on their prey unawares, and killing the victims by tearing out their throats. Then they use their powerful clawed fingers to split open the victim's skull and extract the brain, which they devour as soon after the moment

of death as possible.

The "moment of death" is a somewhat nebulous concept. Although the victim of a braineater attack is legally dead before the creature starts to feed, most of the neurons that make up the victim's brain will continue to live for several minutes, until they expire from lack of oxygen and nutrients. If the braineater devours a brain during this four- to five-minute "window," the creature can "absorb" and integrate much of the knowledge and experience, and even many of the skills, stored within that brain.

When a braineater eats a "fresh" brain, the creature must make a Skill Absorption roll to extract information from it. The exact difficulty level of the roll depends upon how safe and undisturbed the creature is during the period of absorption. If this roll is successful, the creature temporarily gains all the victim's skills to the level possessed by the victim, with a maximum level equal to the braineater's own controlling attributes. (Thus, a braineater who has absorbed the knowledge and experience of a military officer would gain skill with small arms and other weapons, understand the intricacies of tactics, etc., making it an incredibly daunting foe.) These skills and attributes remain with the braineater for a period of four days, after which they fade at a rate of one point per day.

The absorbed skills enjoyed by a braineater can never be higher in level than the skills possessed by the creature's last successfully absorbed victim. For example, suppose a braineater devoured the brain of a nomad ganger and successfully absorbed the victim's skills. If the nomad had Small Arms 3 and Streetwise 3, the braineater would now possess these skill levels. Now suppose that two days later, the creature devoured the brain of an accountant who wandered across its path. If the accountant had Business 2, Computer Operation 2 and Small Arms 1, upon absorbing the contents of this new victim's brain, the braineater would gain Business and Computer Operation, both at level 2. Small Arms skill would drop to 1, and the creature would lose its points of Streetwise since the accountant did not possess this skill.



Charon

Strength: 6	Education: 7	Move: 2/8/15/30
Constitution: 3	Charisma: 1	Skill/Dam.: 5/2
Agility: 4	Empathy: 2	Hits: 15/30
Intelligence: 7	Initiative: 4	# Appear: 1

THE MYTHOLOGY

There have always been tales of evil priests, necromancers and arcane sorcerers serving the dark and elder gods of antiquity. While our more primitive and highly superstitious ancestors knew of these foul practitioners and feared them, the tales evaporated under the strong fluorescent lights of the modern era. Until, of course, reality changed.

THE REALITY

Recent encounters with a deadlier, more powerful type of Igor (page 176 of the rulebook) have uncovered a new kind of minion in service to the Dark Ones. These minions fit the old legends of dark mages, and their powers and lack of fear set them apart from a typical mischievous Igor. The taint of evil has so corrupted them as to make them closer to the Dark Races than to mortal humans. They are a foul crossbreed, combining the worst of humanity and Dark Minion into one terrible soul. They call themselves charon, after the legendary ferryman of the dead, and the name may signify more than just a fondness for ancient mythology.

Earth legends describe Charon as the ill-tempered ferryman who transported the dead across the dark waters of the River Styx. The human charon see themselves as a connection between Earth and the Dark Ones, bridging the dark waters of the dimensional barriers without the trappings of ferry or pole to commune with their alien masters.

Each charon serves a particular Dark One. They are the closest thing to Earthly priests of the lords of the dark dimensions, often serving as twisted druids tending the blighted Demongrounds which have sprung up across the planet. Of course, communion with the alien minds of the Dark Ones tends to destroy even the strongest

human psyche. Those who seek to join the ranks of the charon have a saying, paraphrased from Nietzsche: "What does not drive you mad makes you more powerful."

Those who have actually become charon understand the truth: "With great power comes madness, and madness can be glorious."

Physical Description

The charon look human, but certain tell-tale signs hint at their true nature. The stronger the charon, the more demented and crazed he becomes. All have wide, sparkling eyes that have gazed upon the horrific wonders of the dark dimensions. They wear black hooded robes, and ignore their own appearance, so that they have a haggard, unkempt look. The most powerful among the charon become skeletally thin, with sunken eyes, taut skin and pale complexions.

Initiates

Each charon (or dark wizard, as some call them) has one to three acolytes in his service. These human students seek to commune with the Dark Ones and to become full charon, serving the wizards faithfully until the time of testing. Testing seems to involve opening a mental connection between the acolytes and the Dark One they serve. Most die in the attempt or come away with shattered minds. Those few who survive relatively intact join the arcane ranks of the charon.

Abilities and Practices

Legends of the dark wizards have been with humanity since its beginning, and a small number of charon throughout the ages have held communion with the Dark Ones. Since the release of the Dark and the opening of the horrific dimensions, the charon have become more numerous. Most operate from within Demonground, but a few wander the world performing unfathomable tasks for their foul masters.

They are granted empathic powers normally unavailable to those of human stock, and they have power over a lesser Dark Minion race, called the spectrals (see the following entry), which have been created to serve as



familiars and guardians to the dark wizards.

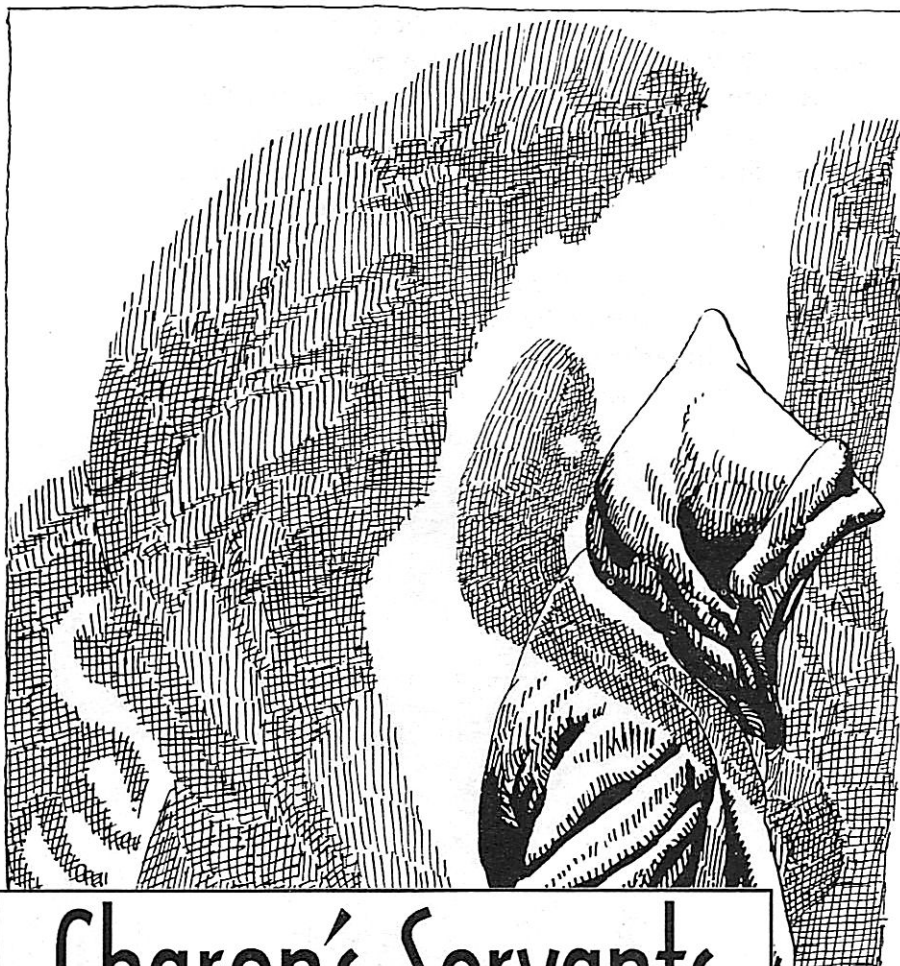
Other Dark Minions often work with the charon to accomplish specific tasks, and most pay homage to or at least tolerate the presence of the dark wizards. Many times, a charon will be orchestrating the activities of other Dark Minions, especially in situations that need an intelligent and guiding force to coordinate menace and mayhem.

Charon the Ferryman crossed the river to the Underworld on a regular basis. The charon regularly enter into a meditative state to send their minds

across the barriers and into the dark dimensions. They draw power and knowledge from these sendings, and they relish the alien touch of the Dark Ones caressing their minds. After each sending, a charon wizard returns to his body a little more powerful, a little more knowledgeable and a little more mad.

Sendings into the dark dimensions are typically accomplished on the summer and winter solstices, which the charon believe generate additional power by the balancing of sun, planets and stars.





Charon's Servants

The servants of charon, commonly called spectrals, come in a variety of shapes and sizes. All have been created by the Dark Ones to serve the charon, human priests of the Dark on Earth. They appear as iridescent shadows flowing around their charon masters or skulking in the darkness nearby. In the past, spectrals spawned the legends of familiars, demon servants and ghostly contacts to the spirit world. Now we know them for what they are—foul Dark Minions with a taste for fear, blood and forbidden knowledge.

SPECTRAL HUNTERS

Strength: 12	Education: 1	Move: 3/9/18/36
Constitution: 8	Charisma: 1	Skill/Dam.: 6/2D6+1
Agility: 5	Empathy: 1	Hits: 18/36
Intelligence: 3	Initiative: 5	# Appear: 1D6

Special: One level more difficult to be hit in combat. Observation, Stalking, Stealth and Tracking at three times the controlling attribute.

Spectral hunters appear as long, thin shadows (approximately 2.3 meters tall) which glow with otherworldly light. No features can be seen within the dark abyss of a spectral hunter's face, save for the deep glowing hollows that serve as its all-seeing eyes. Its arms and legs are elongated caricatures of their human equivalents, but each ends in a single, big-knuckled, sharp-clawed talon. Hunters move swiftly and with unnatural grace for beings so awkwardly constructed. They are experts at Observation, Stalking, Stealth and Tracking, and they delight in the hunt, using all their skills to remain unseen until the moment they decide to strike.



Spectral hunters relish the smell of fear which mixes with the sweat of their prey, and they love the taste of warm, bubbling blood.

SPECTRAL GUARDIANS

Strength: 16 Education: 2 Move: 1/5/9/15
 Constitution: 18 Charisma: 1 Skill/Dam.: 8/3D6+1
 Agility: 2 Empathy: 4 Hits: 22/44
 Intelligence: 3 Initiative: 3 # Appear: 1D6+3

Special: Foreboding and Observation at three times the controlling attribute.

Spectral guardians stand almost three meters tall, appearing as formless blobs of shadow with thick appendages and deadly claws. They are slow, plodding beings, given to long periods of total stillness as they perform the duties assigned to them. Guardians were created to watch and to protect. Skills such as Foreboding and Observation make up the bulk of a guardian's abilities, as well as the strength and skill to fight. Unlike their hunter and familiar cousins, guardians have no innate curiosity. They are content to remain where they are told, watching for signs of intrusion. When intruders appear, however, guardians become huge wrecking machines, dealing out destruction with their supernatural sinews and rending claws. They live for nothing more than this moment of combat and the inevitable kill, relishing the fear they inspire and longing to taste the blood coursing through their opponent's veins.

SPECTRAL FAMILIARS

Strength: 2 Education: 5 Move: 4/9/16/32
 Constitution: 4 Charisma: 5 Skill/Dam.: 3/1D6
 Agility: 6 Empathy: 6 Hits: 7/13
 Intelligence: 8 Initiative: 5 # Appear: 1D6

Special: One level more difficult to be hit in combat. Besides the normal mix of skills for Dark Minions, they also possess Animal Empathy, Bargain and Dimension Walk.

Spectral familiars are small, rarely growing much beyond one meter in length. They can take a humanoid shape, but most often appear as velvety shadows flowing across their master's body or

hanging upon it like dark, otherworldly adornments. They are true servants in thrall to their charon masters, using their innate curiosity and divination abilities to uncover the secret things which haunt the dark wizard's dreams. Familiars have limited combat capabilities, but that is not what they are needed for. They leave battle and the physical skills to the hunters and guardians. Instead, a familiar relies most heavily on skills such as Animal Empathy, Bargain, Chemistry, Foreboding, Human Empathy, Language, Observation, Darkling Empathy, and Dimension Walk. They are the eyes, ears and researchers of the charon, going into the Dark to bring back information pertinent to their dark wizard master's goals and ambitions.

AVERSION TO LIGHT

All spectrals have an aversion to bright light. Normal daylight does one point of damage per combat phase; black lights do two points. Ultraviolet lasers do double their listed damage against spectrals. Thermite and white-phosphorus explosions do UV damage per the concussion rules, in addition to concussion damage.

SPECTRAL FUNCTIONS

Even the weakest among the foul brood that is the charon have access to spectrals. These shadow beings were created to serve the human priests of the dark, gifts from their masters in the dark dimensions. It appears that they serve the charon fully and without question, but it is assumed that the Dark One which created them can call them back to its side at will to complete a special task, or as punishment to an undeserving charon. Until that occurs, the spectrals exist to do the bidding of the dark wizards. Hunters are used to patrol Demonground, to stalk Darkling hunters and to kill enemies of the Dark wherever they hide. Guardians protect the charon and their domains, standing as silent sentinels against the forces of light. Familiars act as oracles, advisors, information gatherers and spies for the charon, going where the wizards cannot go to retrieve knowledge.



Child Monster

Strength: 2	Education: 4	Move: 1/4/8/15
Constitution: 3	Charisma: 10	Skill/Dam.: 3/1*
Agility: 4	Empathy: 6	Hits: 8/16
Intelligence: 9	Initiative: 3	# Appear: 1

*Or by weapon.

Special: Human Empathy 7, Project Emotion 8, Willpower Drain 7.

THE MYTHOLOGY

Some kids look so sweet and innocent, it's hard not to trust them. Sometimes, though, you should look closer into their eyes, for some of them are hiding a dark secret.

Myths have been around for a long time about tiny goblins that run around sabotaging anything they can. Perhaps the truth is that the culprits aren't really ugly creatures but rather possess the aspect of children.



THE REALITY

A child monster is a malevolent spirit that inhabits the bodies of young human children. It exists to kill adults, pure and simple. These spirits enter our world from another dimension and seek children to possess. The process of taking over the children involves stripping them completely of their will and totally destroying their psyche. Once the process is complete, even the brain structure is altered, and nothing at all remains of the human child except the body.

Typical Behavior

When not in school, a child monster sneaks away from its "parents" and prowls the streets and businesses in the area of its home. The creature takes with it some favorite toy, such as a doll or ball, which it uses to conceal a weapon like a knife or gun. The creature then looks for an adult, preferably one that is alone. It tells the adult some story in order to get the victim to follow it. Once it has the adult in isolation, it will take out the weapon and kill its victim. Then the child will run to the police and blame the crime on another adult, usually planting evidence on the innocent before doing so.

The creatures also delight in using their parents' occupations as a means of murder. For instance, if a parent is a restaurant owner, the child monster may poison the food served there.

Another favorite tactic of these creatures is to run out into traffic, hoping cars will crash in an effort to avoid hitting them or someone will get hurt running out after them. Other malicious tricks include starting fires and luring firemen into deadly traps, or sabotaging automobiles, furnaces and construction equipment, etc., so that it will cause injury or death to the next user. In general, a child monster will do anything in its power to kill as often as possible before the human body it possesses grows out of childhood. Once the body has aged to about nine years old, the spirit within concocts a plot by which to kill the body in as gruesome and tragic a manner imaginable, in the sight of as many adults as it can. This is the only way in which the spirit can leave a

body it has possessed and go in search of another, younger child to take over.

Often, a child monster will possess the child of an upper-class family. After causing the deaths of what neighboring adults it can, it will murder its own parents while they sleep, making it look as if they died as the result of a break in. The creature will then wait for the authorities to place it into foster care or for someone to adopt it. Once it has found a new family, it will repeat the process, using the adoption and foster-care process to circulate around the country and relying upon the disinclination of authorities to suspect a mere child of the crimes.

Child monsters favor urban areas and heavily populated suburbs, as it is easier in such places for them to stalk about unnoticed. While at school, they do their best to corrupt young minds with dark and sinister images. They encourage as many children as possible to commit destructive acts, but they are very careful about concealing their influence from adults.

Child monsters are master actors. They can convincingly portray any emotion for whatever the desired effect. To back up their facial expressions, they rely on the use of the Project Emotion skill to instill in adults a sense of pity, sympathy, trust or whatever other emotion seems most appropriate at the moment.

Despite their diminutive size, the threat these monsters pose to humanity is very serious. They operate with extreme efficiency and have an incredible focus of will. Since they inhabit the bodies of children, they are seldom suspected of complicity in the murders they perpetrate, and even if they are suspected, they can use their small size to great advantage in escaping.

If caught, of course, they will sacrifice the body they inhabit as soon as is possible. Because they have no concern for bodily pain, the only way to prevent them from killing their host body is to keep them in some sort of restraint, such as a straight-jacket and a padded room. Even then, the child monster will attempt to use its empathic skills to convince someone to let it out of the uncomfortable jacket for a moment so it can stretch its arms just once.



Desert Ghoul

Strength: 7 Education: 2 Move: 4/15/25/40
Constitution: 4 Charisma: 3 Skill/Dam.: 5/2D6
Agility: 4 Empathy: 2 Hits: 10/20
Intelligence: 2 Initiative: 4 # Appear: 1D10

Special: Regenerate 1D6 hit points per full combat turn. Can inject paralyzing poison (see "Combat Abilities," below).

THE MYTHOLOGY

Many tales throughout the world describe ghouls. Some stories tell of mindless automatons constantly in search of human flesh, others of men transformed into unholy creatures by their cannibalistic tendencies. Most of the beings described have only the most basic intelligence and are capable of capturing prey only via brute force. One type of ghoul that differs from the archetype, however, is the Arabian "desert ghoul" of the Middle Eastern arid wastelands.

THE REALITY

Desert ghouls inhabit the deserts and barren mountains of the Saudi Arabian and Iraqi nations, although they may infest areas as far west as the Nile Valley and Sahara Desert, though no statistics are available to confirm this.

The total ghoul population of the Middle East is unknown. Experts believe that new human incursions into the desert over the last 40 years have resulted in more ghoul tombs and temples being discovered, and in the finders subsequently joining the legions of the dead. Not long ago, for instance, reports reached news agencies concerning a Saudi supply column classified as missing in action while crossing the desert on night maneuvers. A long-range patrol discovered the wrecked trucks and jeeps in a low valley in the central portion of the Sinai. The weapons belonging to the soldiers were found strewn across the ground. All had empty magazines, and the men had apparently fired into

the desert around them in all directions.

None of the soldiers' bodies were found until two weeks later, when a tank column out on its own maneuvers some 80 kilometers from the location of the trucks discovered the fate of the men. They were found in a small depression, their uniforms torn from their bodies. Most had been entirely stripped of flesh. No evidence could be found to determine the identity of their attackers.

Physical Description

From a distance, the ghoul appears to be a normal human, wrapped in the loose robes and headdress common to the desert. Upon closer examination, their true nature becomes evident.

A ghoul's skin tends to be grey and sickly looking, hanging loosely from its wiry frame. Although appearing to be quite emaciated and feeble, it possesses remarkable strength for its build. The flesh on the creature's face is drawn tight across its bare skull and often shows signs of tearing when it has been unable to feed for more than a few months.

Its frightening features are its grey eyes, which are nothing more than orbs glowing with a dull, white light. Many people have seen eyes watching them from the darkness of the desert night, but most do not realize what they belong to, thinking them to be the usual nocturnal predators in search of sustenance.

Origins

The origin of these entities is a mystery, although several obscure legends, forgotten by most people centuries ago, give mention to these creatures.

The legends tell of the hidden tombs and temples within the deserts of these areas, many of them older than the pyramids of Egypt and South America. These places of power were dedicated to humanity's earliest deities, many of them apparently the black-hearted Dark Ones themselves. Foul incantations protected these unholy places, even after the last of the worshippers had long since died. With no congregations for the temples and no mourners at the tombs, the temples lay undisturbed for centuries until other people ventured into the deserts and built their homes around them.



The new inhabitants would discover the old sites and venture inward, their minds filled with images of jewels and gold. But even though the civilization that built them had died, the magic within had not, and each tomb robber who entered joined the ranks of the dead. Few escaped with their lives, and those who did never escaped with their sanity.

The powers that inhabited these edifices corrupted the bodies and spirits of their victims, and thus the ghouls of Arabia were born in the silent halls and crypts. As they once again ventured out into the night, they began to hunt for a new prize—human flesh.

Combat Abilities

Desert ghouls often work as a pack while hunting and stalking across the night sands in search of solitary prey foolish enough to walk the desert at night. They usually

attack by surrounding their victims, keeping low to the ground to confuse their target as to their exact number.

Once within striking distance, they use their powerful arms to grapple their victims—a successful Difficult test of Strength is required to break free. Once the target is in their grasp, they use their long, prehensile tongues to stab through their prey's skin and inject their poison. If the tongue breaks the skin in the next phase, the target must pass a Difficult test of Constitution to avoid becoming too weak to struggle and incapable of moving at more than a crawl. These effects last for two hours, but the ghouls typically eat their victim (alive) long before that time runs out.

Although still vulnerable to combat damage, ghouls are resistant to it and seem to recover from it at a faster rate than human healing. Each combat turn, their systems heal 1D6 hit points.



Dread Sidhe

Strength: 8	Education: 4	Move: 3/9/16/32
Constitution: 7	Charisma: 13	Skill/Dam.: 7/1D6+2
Agility: 9	Empathy: 8	Hits: 40/80
Intelligence: 7	Initiative: 4	# Appear: 1

Special: A dread sidhe can create "groupies" (empathic slaves) with its bite. Besides normal skill levels for Dark Races, dread sidhe also have the Psychology skill at the level of their Intelligence rating.

BACKGROUND

The dread sidhe (pronounced "she") are not really sidhe (fey folk) at all—they are an entirely different type of creature. However, they have come by their name because they are so often confused with dark elves (who *are* fey folk).

Dread sidhe are native to northern Europe. They are empathic vampires, feeding off the energy of human emotions. They prefer emotions of anger and despair, and they typically pursue a human career as a musician or an artist in order to engender those emotions. Realizing that adolescents and teenagers are prime sources of these emotions—that people at this age are in nearly constant emotional turmoil and are often looking for some sort of guidance (from nonauthority figures)—the dread sidhe have long focussed their efforts on the young. When the rock 'n' roll movement started in England, they quickly recognized that involvement in the rock industry would give them easy access to kids.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The dread sidhe all appear basically human, but



each has enlarged canine teeth (typically passed off as a cosmetic affectation). They do not use these fangs for drinking blood like traditional vampires, however, but rather to inject into their victims a controlling microorganism from their own bodies, forging an empathic bond that allows them to command these unfortunates. In modern parlance, this is typically called "making groupies."

Groupies

In order to create a "groupie," a dread sidhe bites its intended victim near a blood vessel, just as in traditional vampire tales. It then secretes through its fangs and into the victim's bloodstream a microorganism produced by its own body, through which it forges a permanent empathic link. In game terms, the bite does damage as poison, with a rating of 3p2. However, not only does the poison cause physical damage, it also begins to control the victim's mind, making the victim subject to that particular dread sidhe's will. Again in game terms, this control is represented by treating the poison damage also as "controlling hits." When the controlling hits reach a level equal to the victim's Intelligence rating, the victim becomes a devoted follower of the dread sidhe that bit him—a loyal groupie. The empathic bond that is formed has virtually unlimited range; in effect, the dread sidhe projects its wishes to the microorganism, and the microorganism conveys them to the victim's brain as commands.

Each dread sidhe can control a number of groupies equal to its Charisma rating. So individuals investigating the disappearance of a few teenagers may find themselves fighting a baker's dozen of fanatical followers. It is relatively rare for a particular dread sidhe to have a full set of groupies, however, as the creatures are callous and cruel, and groupie deaths are fairly frequent.

A groupie may attempt to disobey a particular command, but can only do so by succeeding at a Difficult test of Willpower. Of course, the master will generally respond by killing the disobedient groupie at the earliest opportunity. Note that succeeding to disobey a particular order does not break the em-

pathic link. The groupie will still be under the power of future orders, and the master will remain aware of the groupie's approximate location (exact direction and rough distance). The only known way of completely breaking the empathic link is by killing the dread sidhe who forged it, after which the controlling microorganism will die.

Scams

As mentioned earlier, the dread sidhe feed on emotional energy. Therefore, most of their time and energy are devoted to generating strong emotions in a setting in which they can safely drink it in. Public events such as rock concerts, film showings, art exhibitions and occasionally even sporting events (particularly hockey or soccer matches) serve them well.

They can easily drink in enough energy to survive simply by visiting such events and mixing with the audience, but their pleasure is much more intense when they are themselves the focus of the attention. For this reason, most dread sidhe devote themselves to becoming quite adept at some type of performing art that allows them to draw their own crowds, as well as in Psychology, which helps them to manipulate those audiences.

Interestingly enough, however, the dread sidhe do not want superstar status. That would bring them unwanted attention. Instead, they like to move from place to place, staying in each location just long enough to perpetrate an elaborate "scam" on the locals. In its earliest stages, this scam is nothing more than advance publicity to gain the local population's interest. Shortly thereafter, the dread sidhe will arrive and begin performing at relatively small assemblies. As it gains growing interest from the locals, the creature will arrange larger and larger performances, culminating finally in a single, powerfully hideous conclusion to the sequence, such as prompting a mob lynching of some local figure, or a spree of looting, murder and rape.

Afterward, the dread sidhe will move on and lay low for awhile before beginning again in a new locale under a new name.



Dream Master

Strength: 5 Empathy: 12 Move: 10/20/30
Constitution: 5 Charisma: 15 Skill/Dam.: 5/2D6
Agility: 10 Education: 1 Hits: 13/25
Intelligence: 6 Initiative: 3 # Appear: 1

Special: Dream masters have the ability to Dimension Walk.

It is not altogether uncommon to hear tales of people dying or suffering serious injury while sleepwalking. There have been tales of people walking out of windows, accidentally strangling themselves in twisted sheets or smothering themselves in pillows. Then there are those who simply died in their sleep with horrible contortions of fear on their faces. Many of these unfortunates have been the victims of creatures sometimes known as dream masters.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Dream masters are tall (just over two meters), thin (under 80 kilograms) humanoids with fairly standard human features. They have a bald, human-looking head, though the skin is darker and more leathery than normal for humans. Their hands have only four fingers, each nearly twice the thickness of a human digit and ending in a short but heavy claw.

DREAM HAUNTING

A dream master haunts the dreams of sleepers, but it can only prey upon the dreams of people with at least some Empathy. Its favorite target is someone with a combination of great Empathic potential (i.e., a high Empathy attribute) but little control (i.e., low Empathic skill levels) and little resistance (i.e., low Willpower). Such people radiate their dreams strongly, like a sort of Empathic beacon, allowing dream masters to mentally bridge the gap between their dimension and our own. A dream master can do so once per day.

Once a dream master has discovered a suitable victim, it must insert itself into the person's dream. This requires a Difficult test of the dream master's Human Empathy skill, with the following modifiers added to the die roll: subtract the victim's Empathy attribute and add the victim's highest Empathy skill.

For example, a victim with Empathy 4 and Animal Empathy 3 as the highest Empathic skill level would yield a net -1 to the die roll. Note that this almost always results in a net modifier beneficial to the dream master.

If successful, the dream master will begin working to change the victim's dreams into hideous nightmares, using Project Thought.

If unsuccessful, the dream master is incapable of entering the person's dreams and will leave in search of some other victim.

Sleep Deprivation

A power level is rolled for a dream master's Project Thought skill, as usual, to determine the quality of the creature's projection. But the level generated also determines the chance that the victim suffers weariness from having had a troubled sleep. At the end of their normal sleep period, victims must roll 1D6 greater than the power level achieved or suffer a temporary -1 modifier to all attribute and skill levels. (In other words, a 2 or better is required if Basic Success was achieved, a 3 or better if Level Two was achieved, and so on.) These negative modifiers are cumulative, so a character who failed the 1D6 roll three days in a row would be suffering a -3 modifier to all attributes and skills. For each four-hour period that a character sleeps undisturbed, the modifier is reduced by 1 point. Thus, a character could nap during the day to recover from the previous night's loss, for instance.

Characters suffering from weariness will tend to act irritable, and as the size of the modifier mounts, they may act increasingly irrational and paranoid.

Dream Death

Once a dream master manages to acquire a Stage Six success on its power level when using Project Thought to haunt its victim's dreams, the creature can cause the victim's death in one of two ways: The victim can be made to suffer a heart attack while sleeping, or the victim can be forced to commit suicide while sleepwalking. Surviving the first requires an Easy test of the victim's adjusted Constitution. The second can only be avoided by the intervention of other people physically restraining the victim. However, if someone intervenes in this way, the dream master may decide to manifest itself physically by means of Dimension Walk and battle the defender.



DREAM DEFENDERS

Because of the nature of the empathic link established between a dream master and its victim, other empathic characters can enter the link as well. Anyone can “eavesdrop” on the victim’s dreams by means of a successful Human Empathy roll. Those who also succeed at a Difficult test of Project Thought can force the invading dream master to make a second Difficult test of Human Empathy (as described under “Dream Haunting,” above) to maintain dream contact, but this time substituting the eavesdropper’s highest Empathy skill for the victim’s.

If the dream master fails at this second roll, its contact is broken, and it will leave in search of easier prey.

If it succeeds at the roll, both the original victim and the eavesdropper will suffer any effects of sleep deprivation caused by the dream master’s Project Thought roll. Or worse, if the dream master manages to score a Stage Six success with its Project Thought skill, both victim and eavesdropper will be subject to the effects of dream death.

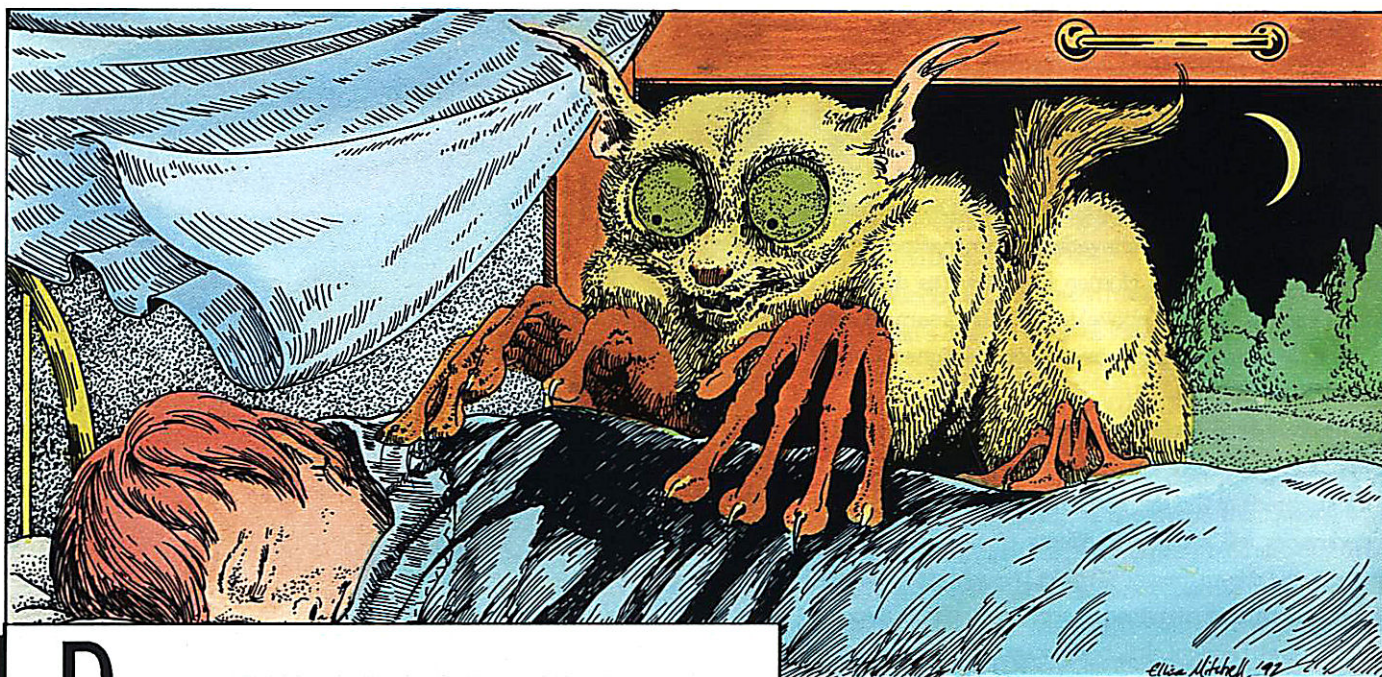
ROLEPLAYING NIGHTMARES

Referees are encouraged to roleplay with their players the nightmares caused by a dream master, rather than simply announcing what the creature rolled and having the character check for weariness. The dream settings should be based upon the affected characters’ skills and the intensity of the dream on the Power Level the dream master gained with its Project Thought roll. The dream master will tend to project images that play upon the character’s weakest skills, and the character’s subconscious will attempt to change the dream to something that allows the use of a more practiced skill.

For example, if a character is not much of a swimmer, the dream master might project images of a terrible flood sweeping over the character. A character who is good at Climbing might then choose to adjust the dream to include a tower that can be mounted. The dream master could respond by having the flood undermine the tower, causing it to fall. The character might then use a high Acrobatics skill to land safely on a spur of high ground, and so on.

If the dream master rolled well at its Project Thought attempt, the character would find his head nearly under water before being able to dream up the tower. On the other hand, if the creature rolled poorly, the character might barely suffer wet feet before climbing above the water.





Dreamweaver

Strength: 2	Education: 2	Move: 2/9/18/35
Constitution: 3	Charisma: 10	Skill/Dam.: 4/2
Agility: 8	Empathy: 16	Hits: 5/9
Intelligence: 5	Initiative: 5	# Appear: 1

A dreamweaver is one of the many Dark Minions that live for the misery they create to feed on, not for bloodletting and mayhem in themselves. The creature targets its prey when psychological defenses reach their lowest ebb—in the depths of sleep. It manipulates the very stuff of dreams, until the victim lives in a waking hell of warped desires, induced obsessions and ever-growing madness. Historically, most victims of dreamweavers have been diagnosed with a variety of mental illness and treated however their society deals with such unfortunates.

Folklore of medieval Europe came closest to identifying the causal agent, however, with its tales of incubi, succubi and personified nightmares. Because other Dark Minions follow similar modes of attack, and because a dreamweaver is rarely seen or captured unless it is careless, the creature has often been confused with other beings.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

A dreamweaver's true form is that of a small, furry humanoid, about the size of a housecat. dreamweavers have enormous eyes and thin, elongated fingers, lending it the look of an overgrown tarsier. One may enter a home in the empathic disguise of a forlorn kitten or a skinny puppy (particularly if it hopes to target a child); however, an open window is all the invitation a dreamweaver really needs. A pile of dirty clothing, a chair pulled into the corner, a box in the bedroom closet—all provide adequate hiding places for a dreamweaver while it waits for its victim to bed down for the night.

MODUS OPERANDI

The dreamweaver's mode of attack is subtle—first reading the natural dreams of its victim, then slowly warping those dreams over the course of many nights. Every case is different. A dieting (or starving) victim might dream of a holiday feast. But the dream returns the next night with shadowy intimations of poison laced into the chocolate silk pie or maggots hiding in the rice pilaf. Subconscious fears about food grow. Soon the victim stops eating



at home (but cannot explain why), then he cannot bear the idea of eating out. Only food prepared personally remains edible, and eventually not even that. All the while, the victim is dreaming of fabulous banquets, with every gustatory passion enticing, all dread forgotten—until the lobster vomits butterslime and the thousand-year eggs hatch. A dreamweaver spinning this particular scenario might permit one category of food to go untainted, allowing the dreamer to avoid starvation and prolong the agony.

Or, then again, perhaps not.

Anything a person might dream is grist for the dreamweaver's mill. Anxiety dreams slowly become petrifying insecurity; the desire to get the upper hand on one's boss becomes a Napoleonic power fantasy played out on the streets; sexual fantasies take on darker permutations; and dreams of flying rocket out of control. All the while, the dreamweaver feeds on the dreamer's confusion, fear and madness, and on the equally satisfying emotions of anxiety from those close to the dreamer.

Progressive Symptoms

A dreamweaver's victim is likely to be unaware of the progression of events, particularly in the earlier stages. A dreamer experiences a few particularly vivid dreams, with the attendant emotions spilling over into the waking day. As the dreams become more psychologically dangerous, the victim's own defense mechanisms may kick in to shield him from recalling the actual dream. By the time those barriers are broken, the victim may be suffering hallucinations and delusions brought on by sleep deprivation. With natural dreaming increasingly derailed, the psychological strains feed back into each night's subsidence into deeper madness.

At first, the dreamweaver's victim awakens a little haggard, with flashback memories of disturbing dreams. The dreamer may sleep more than usual, or awaken in the night with a sense of foreboding and oppression.

The dreamweaver must be quite close to the victim to affect the dreamweaving for which the race is named. A normally light sleeper might even sense

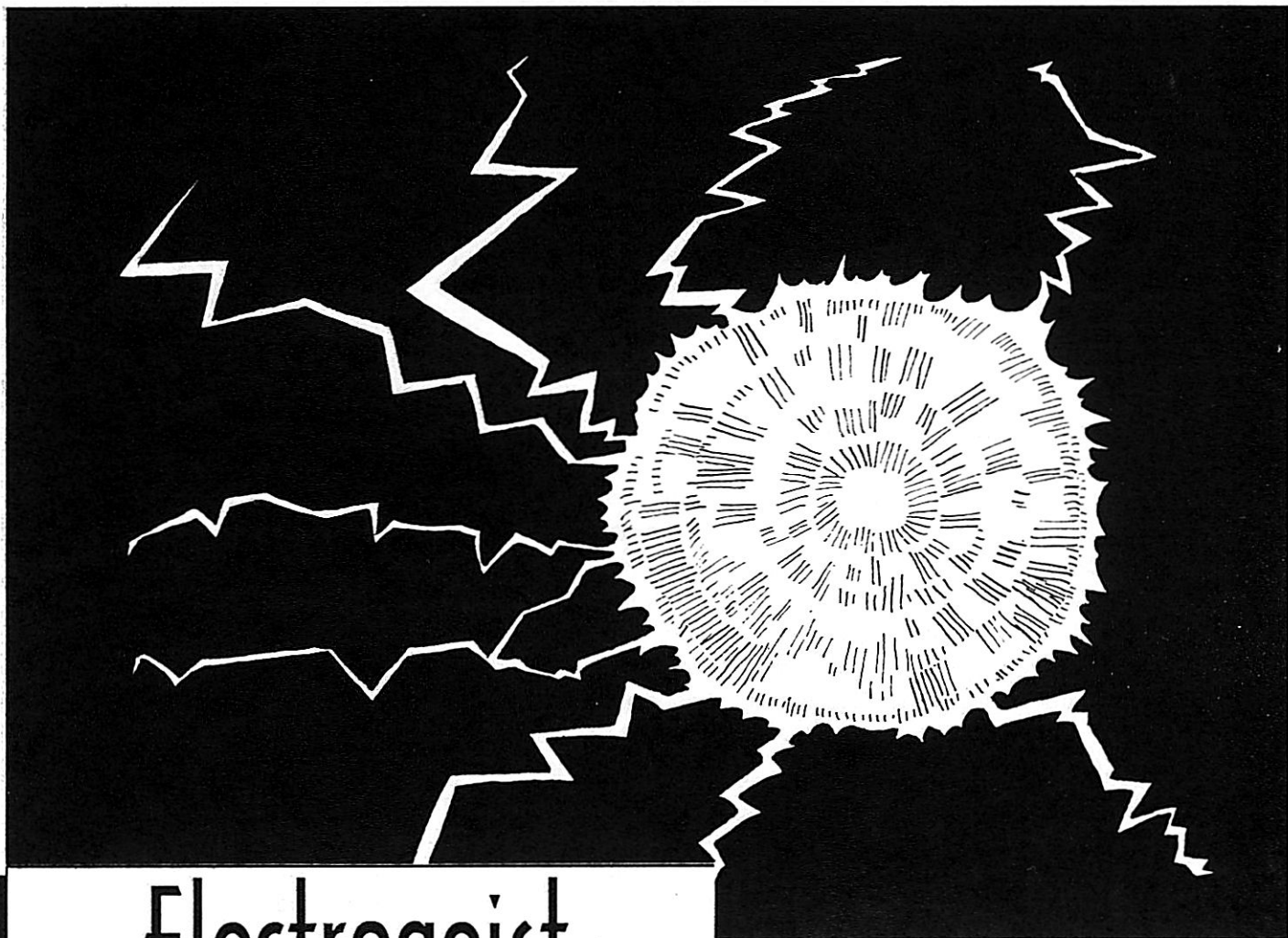
a small body resting on his chest, though the dreamweaver's exceptional stealth, agility and empathy make it very unlikely to be seen.

The length of time a dreamweaver works on its victim varies. A patient, experienced dreamweaver might be able to drag things out for a year, granting surcease for a time, then slowly building to another near-crisis before slacking back again. An impatient or particularly hungry dreamweaver can destroy a dreamer in a night or two, with the victim catapulted into waking nightmares that resonate to the darkest depths of his personality.

Breaking the Curse

Victims take numerous steps to shake the nightmares, some more effective than others. Changing where one sleeps works, but not for long, unless the victim makes a long-distance, permanent move. Watchers are often recruited from among spouses, friends or health professionals—all of whom may be boondoggled if the dreamweaver wants to finish the "meal" it has started, and all of whom also need to sleep and dream. Tranquilizer and antidepressant drugs which suppress normal dreaming also muffle the dreamweaver's activities, but they cannot halt the dreams, nor permanently shield victims from their private stock of potential madness—drugs treat the symptoms, not the "disease."

Dreamweavers are a particularly cowardly race and—as can be seen from their attributes—they are not fighters. What skills they possess are used to acquire promising victims and otherwise remain out of sight. If a dreamweaver is actually discovered, it is likely to abandon its victim and seek another. If the first victim was particularly satisfying, though, the creature may return much later (weeks, months or years) and seek a more subtle, careful approach. To escape detection, some dreamweavers make a habit of not "riding" any victim to destruction, but only "sipping" briefly for a few nights or a week, then moving on before the victim suspects anything amiss. A trail of unease, weariness, short tempers and odd impulses is all that is left to show what has passed in the depths of the night.



Electrogeist

Strength: —	Education: —	Move: 20*
Constitution: —	Charisma: —	Skill/Dam.: 4/1D10*
Agility: 5	Empathy: —	Hits: **
Intelligence: 3	Initiative: 6	# Appear: 1

*When in ball lightning form. Movement through an electrical circuit is at electronic speeds. Damage from an electrical circuit depends upon the circuit's strength (see "Combat Abilities," below).

**Can only be destroyed by grounding or electrically overpowering (see "Weaknesses," below).

Special: Ability to power and direct electrical devices. Ability to travel through electrical circuits.

With their penchant for causing mischief by

energizing electrical devices, electrogeists can be very dangerous, and very strange, opponents.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The electrogeist is a strange construct of electrical energy, a being without form. Somewhat akin to the energy ETs, it is composed of ordered current, but it lacks the nucleus of the energy ETs. The electrogeist can assume a physical form, appearing as a rolling ball of electrical force. It only does this when it wants to traverse the physical distance between unconnected circuits.

Electrogeists are quite rare, fortunately for many power grids. They live in electrical circuits, travelling via power lines. No circuit seems to be too small for an



electrogeist; they have been known to occupy laptop computers and artillery range finders as well as larger energy matrices. There does seem to be a limit imposed upon the upper size of electrogeists, however: They can't occupy more than one circuit at a time.

BEHAVIOR

The habit of taking over all the electrical appliances on a circuit is what earned the electrogeist its name. An electrogeist will move into a circuit and animate all the electronics linked to that circuit, causing them to act without external activation. The electrogeist does what it can to turn the area its circuit covers into electronic madness. The devices can't do much they normally couldn't anyway, though, but the electrogeist can cause enough of an arc to connect a circuit that wasn't previously connected. For instance, a toaster couldn't walk off, or even load itself, but an electrogeist could arc to make its elements heat. The only way to stop an appliance from being controlled is to unplug it from the circuit.

COMBAT ABILITIES

Electrogeists can travel at electronic speeds when using electrical lines. They can arc across the distance between circuits that are no more than three meters apart.

If the circuits are farther apart, the electrogeist can form a ball of power resembling ball lightning and roll at the rate listed above, passing through any thin obstacle that isn't grounded. It can also make melee attacks at long melee range by using electrical arcs while in this form.

Electrogeists seem to delight in jinxing computers, switching or deleting data, and they take perverse pleasure in attacking computer savants (people with Computer Empathy). If an electrogeist gets the drop on a person who is using Computer Empathy, it can deliver an electric charge to that person, doing 1D10 damage per phase (applied to the chest). In most devices, the current is AC (alternating current), which causes the victim's muscles to lock in place, preventing escape unless someone else

breaks the connection. If the victim is using a portable computer—one that works off internal batteries—he takes only a single burst of 1D6 damage, and the batteries are drained. (Damages are similar for characters in direct physical contact with an open electrical circuit when an electrogeist arcs it closed.)

Fortunately, computer empaths can easily detect the presence of an electrogeist in a computer system—even a Basic Success at Computer Empathy will reveal its effect on data flow—and they can use Project Emotion and Project Thought on it as on any other living creature. Furthermore, computer empaths may disconnect from the system before an electrogeist attacks if they score at least a Stage Two success with their skill.

Electrogeists love robots. A robot is a physical form, capable of great mischief, and if an electrogeist plans well, it can simply arc back to a convenient circuit when the robot gets blown to bits by its opponents.

WEAKNESSES

An electrogeist may be destroyed by overpowering it or grounding it. Overpowering an electrogeist can only be done by trapping the entity in a closed circuit and then flooding that circuit with major amounts of power (about 30 seconds of 440-volt industrial power or 60 seconds of 220-volt semi-industrial power would suffice, as would a five-second jolt of direct power plant feed).

Interestingly enough, nature seems to abhor electrogeists—their magnetic fields attract lightning. Electrogeists make themselves scarce during electrical storms, because a lightning strike hitting an electrogeist's ball form or circuit will almost always destroy the pest.

Grounding an electrogeist is easy when it's rolling lightning. Any significant disturbance of the ball will disperse it—a large explosion centered on or near the ball (an accurate grenade), dousing it with water or touching it with a grounding iron (say, a steel arrow trailing electrical wire).

Grounding a circuit-occupying electrogeist involves closing the circuit and draining the energy into the earth.



Gargoyle, Lesser

Strength: 12	Education: 4	Move: 10/20/45*
Constitution: 6	Charisma: 4	Skill/Dam.: 8/2D6
Agility: 5	Empathy: 14	Hits: 12/25**
Intelligence: 7	Initiative: 4	# Appear: 1D6+3

*This is flying speed; lesser gargoyles move at human rates when on foot.

**Lesser gargoyles have 1 point of natural armor on head and chest locations.

Special: These creatures have the Dimension Walk skill and two new Empathy skills: Empathic Screen and Sleep Projection (see below).

The lesser gargoyle may lack the strength and intimidation power of its larger cousins, but it makes up for both in cunning and deceit.

THE MYTHOLOGY

Medieval legends speak of succubi and incubi, sexual demons that visited monks and nuns in the night, tempting them to sate their lusts. According to the legends, those who succumbed to the temptation were found dead the next morning, their souls carried off to perdition by their nocturnal visitants.

THE REALITY

The legends of the succubus and incubus speak of insubstantial spirits, but in this, the legends are wrong. The lesser gargoyle is very much a creature of flesh, blood and bone. But it has used its empathic powers to confuse the minds of its viewers, intentionally perpetrating a protective falsehood.

There is no way of knowing what devious Dark Lord created the lesser gargoyles. Strong evidence exists that the creatures are not a result of natural development, but that they are humans warped into another physical form. The strongest evidence for this supposition is that they are cross-fertile with humans. In fact, lesser gargoyles cannot breed with one another to produce offspring—they must breed with a human being.

Physical Description

The lesser gargoyle is a bipedal humanoid creature that looks vaguely human, but with two large, batlike wings protruding from its back. It stands 1.5 meters tall and weighs approximately 70 kilograms. The wings are covered with criss-crossing red veins which are clearly visible through the skin. The creature has three-fingered hands and feet, each capped with a blood-red claw.

The head is bald and slightly oblong. The portion containing nose and mouth protrudes slightly and has two three-centimeter-long fangs which extend from the upper jaw. Folklore would have you believe that the lesser gargoyle uses these to suck blood from its victim's neck like a traditional vampire. Instead, the teeth are merely used for ripping open the victim's flesh.

The creature has deeply set, glowing red eyes, which see things in the red to infrared portion of the electromagnetic spectrum, rather than in the human range.

The head is surmounted by two pointed ears, very much like those of bats, and these are so sensitive that the creatures have been reported to overhear whispered conversations at distances up to 500 meters.



Empathic Screen

The lesser gargoyle has an innate ability to blend in with its surroundings. It is an excellent mimic of human behavior, but that is not, of course, the entire story. The creature also has a highly developed empathic sense that subconsciously recognizes when a human is looking its way and encourages the human mind to see a more normal figure than the gargoyle's true form. In effect, the creature will appear differently to different viewers, even if they are seeing it at exactly the same time. Those familiar with the ability call it an Empathic Screen.

Each time a lesser gargoyle is viewed by a human, a Difficult test of the viewer's Willpower must be made to determine if the viewer "sees through" the Empathic Screen. If the test is unsuccessful, the viewer sees the gargoyle as a nondescript human. If, however, the test is successful, a success level is generated for it in the way in which empathic power levels are rolled, but with the viewer's Willpower rating and the gargoyle's Empathic Screen rating exchanging places. That is, the success level consists of the viewer's Willpower plus 1D6, minus the gargoyle's Empathic Screen skill. The resulting number is compared to the Empathic Power Level Chart, with the following results:

Level	Result
Basic Success	The gargoyle appears as a human, but with a slightly projected upper and lower jaw, and with slightly pointed ears.
Stage One	As with basic success, but with a more pronounced "muzzle" and obvious fangs.
Stage Two	As with Stage One, but with a greenish cast to the skin.
Stage Three	As with Stage Two, but with obvious red eyes.
Stage Four	As with Stage Three, but with obvious bat-like ears.
Stage Five	Looks like a human with large bat-like wings, fangs, claws, glowing red eyes and a pale green tint to its leathery skin.
Stage Six	The creature appears as it really is.

Even if one viewer sees that the creature is not human, other viewers will continue to believe that it is, unless they, too, succeed at a roll to pierce the Empathic Screen.

Sleep Projection

Lesser gargoyles' usual tactics revolve around the sleeping individual. It really doesn't matter to them if the individual is alone or not. When they get into close proximity to their intended victim (within 10 meters) they use their Empathic Sleep Projection. The results of the power levels are as follows:

Level	Result
Basic Success	The victim's limbs feel heavy. -1 to Initiative.
Stage One	The victim feels drowsy. -2 to Initiative.
Stage Two	The victim is very sleepy. -2 to Initiative. Tasks are one level more difficult.
Stage Three	The victim keeps nodding off. -2 to Initiative. Tasks are two levels more difficult.
Stage Four	The victim falls asleep but can be shaken awake, in which case the effects of Stage Three apply.
Stage Five	The victim falls asleep and can only be kept awake if someone pays constant attention to doing so.
Stage Six	The victim falls asleep and cannot be wakened, even with physical pain.

Once the victim is asleep, the lesser gargoyle will use Project Emotion to bring about sexual arousal in order to breed. After breeding, female lesser gargoyles generally kill their victim immediately and feast on his heart, liver and brain. Male lesser gargoyles occasionally carry their victims off instead, keeping them captive until a child is born and weaned, then killing them. However, on very rare occasions, for reasons not understood, lesser gargoyles leave their victims alive.

The offspring of unions between lesser gargoyles and humans are apparently always lesser gargoyles.



Gargoyle, Mediterranean

Strength: 15	Education: 1	Move: 5/10/30*
Constitution: 20	Charisma: 3	Skill/Dam.: 7/3D10
Agility: 5	Empathy: 3	Hits: 50/100**
Intelligence: 3	Initiative: 3	# Appear: 1D6

*This is flying speed; Mediterranean gargoyles move at human rates when grounded.

**Mediterranean gargoyles have an armor value of 2 to head and chest, 1 to all other hit locations.

Special: Mediterranean gargoyles can Dimension Walk, and they have a special camouflage skill (see "Physical Description," below).

The earliest sculptures of gargoyles are from the Mediterranean region, such as those discovered in the ruins of Pompeii. Legends surrounding the creatures appeared in Assyrian times in conjunction with worship of Baal, a fertility god and bringer of both life and death. But during subsequent centuries, interest in those legends waned until, in the medieval period, the subject of gargoyles took on a new fascination, as evidenced in the stone carvings adorning the roofs of the most significant Gothic structures.



Even now, the creatures live among us, often perching in plain sight among their stone representations adorning our roofs.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Mediterranean gargoyle stands upright between three to four meters in height and weighs between 200 and 500 kilograms. It has very reptilian features, with a long snout and eyes set on the sides of its head. Its skin is a stony gray, and has a leathery look and feel to it. On its back are batlike wings which have a span twice as wide as the creature is tall. (Supposition is that the creatures have an innate telekinetic ability that at least partly negates their body weight; otherwise, it is impossible to understand how they could fly.) The Mediterranean gargoyle is basically bipedal. Its hands and feet feature two fingers and an opposing thumb, all very muscular and thick, and all ending in a long claw.

When standing still, the Mediterranean gargoyle has the ability to appear as if it is made of stone. It takes a Difficult test of Observation to recognize that the gargoyle is in fact not a statue.

If the creature is in its hypnotic state (see "Feeding Habits," below), there is a +2 die modification to this test.

COMBAT TACTICS

The Mediterranean gargoyle loves nothing better than the thrill of the kill, preferably done in total anonymity—i.e., without the prey even realizing what hit it.

The creatures get the greatest enjoyment out of simply swooping down on unsuspecting prey and ripping it limb from limb.

One of the Mediterranean gargoyle's favorite tactics is to swoop down from a hidden position and grab its prey by the shoulders, then fly straight up several meters before dropping the victim, or fly forward at great speed to slam the victim into a wall or cliff face.

Swooping down and grabbing the victim requires a standard unarmed melee combat roll. To attempt this feat, the gargoyle must have clear maneuvering

room to swoop down on its prey and continue its move away. Victims who are aware of the gargoyle's presence may attempt an Average test of Agility to avoid being grabbed. Victims who are grabbed suffer 1D6 damage to the hit location being held, due to the crushing power of the gargoyle's grip. Each combat phase thereafter, the gargoyle can climb upward two meters while carrying its prey. Dropped prey takes damage per the normal falling rules. Alternatively, the gargoyle can travel up to 10 meters horizontally per phase while carrying a human, then slam its prey into a vertical object, doing 1D6 damage to each hit location per meter flown in the phase just before impact.

Occasionally, a gargoyle will combine both types of impact, carrying a victim high into the air, slamming it into a wall, then letting it fall back to earth from the point of impact.

More important to the gargoyles than the actual damage done is the fact that the victim is typically stunned or incapacitated by the maneuver, allowing the gargoyle to swoop back down on the victim and rip its throat out with little or no resistance.

FEEDING HABITS

Mediterranean gargoyles find human hearts, livers and especially brains to be delicacies, but will eat anything they have time to consume. They eat their prey on the spot of the kill nearly every time. The only real exception is the occasional kill in which they may make use of an edged weapon, decapitating the victim and saving the head for later consumption on their perch.

A Mediterranean gargoyle can consume meat at the rate of one kilogram per undisturbed minute. On the average, half the body weight of a human is considered nourishment for a gargoyle. Their metabolisms are such that they can subsist on as little as 10 kilograms of food a day and can store food up to one-fourth their own total mass within their bodies at any given point. When food is scarce, they can also enter a self-hypnotic trance and subsist on as little as one-half kilogram of this stored material per day.



Gargoyle, Rock

Strength: 8	Education: 1	Move: 15/25/40*
Constitution: 7	Charisma: 3	Skill/Dam.: 7/1D6+4
Agility: 8	Empathy: 7	Hits: 14/28**
Intelligence: 4	Initiative: 4	# Appear: 2D10

*Movement given is flying rate. On foot, rock gargoyles travel at human rates.

**Rock gargoyles have 1 point of armor on all hit locations.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The inspiration for the leering stone guardians adorning many medieval churches comes from a creature generally called the rock gargoyle. Individual rock gargoyles vary in appearance, but most are greenish-grey humanoids with tough reptilian skin and yellow eyes. Rock gargoyles usually have long, sharp claws on both their hands and feet, as well as pointed teeth and one or more horns. They have no visible hair on their entire bodies. Sprouting from a rock gargoyle's back are two huge, batlike wings. Those rock gargoyles that can speak do so in a low, gravelly voice.

BROODHOME

The creatures are most often used as guards by the Dark Lords and their more powerful minions. When a spot needing live-in guards is identified, a rock gargoyle queen may be brought in to establish a brood at the location to be guarded. The rock gargoyles fiercely defend their new nesting ground, becoming unwitting but fanatical guards for whoever placed them. Well-established Demonground locations can have quite large rock gargoyle populations that have been living and growing there for many years—this is one of the reasons so few who wander into a such a place ever wander back out.

Most rock gargoyles prefer to live in caverns or abandoned buildings where a network of easily defensible chambers have to be traversed by any attacker wishing to reach the queen and her eggs. In urban areas, the creatures make use of any sewer systems or large

buildings for their lair. They are fanatically territorial and will fight to the death, even against the most overwhelming odds, in defense of their home and eggs. All rock gargoyles in a particular broodhome are related, having all hatched from the eggs of the same queen.

Rock gargoyles are nocturnal and do all their hunting at night, although they keep watch over their territory 24 hours a day.

REPRODUCTION AND EXPANSION

The queen is the only member of the community that is not asexual. A single queen lays a clutch of some 20 to 30 eggs per year in the community dung heap. These eggs then grow for a period of five years, absorbing nutrients from the decaying dung and constantly increasing the size of their shells, adding new layers on the outside as the inner layers are reabsorbed by the embryo. At the end of the gestation period, the eggs hatch into fully grown rock gargoyles which are immediately taken into the community.

At irregular intervals, one of the newly hatched rock gargoyles is a queen. When this happens, the new queen and the other rock gargoyles in that clutch form a new brood. If a Dark Lord desires to plant a new group of rock gargoyles, the brood may be transported to the new location to start a community. Or, if the local area is large enough, the new broodhome may be established in the same vicinity as the old one. If neither of these occurs, the queen and the rest of the hatchlings take flight in search of a new lair. Over time, this has produced many scattered and isolated groups of rock gargoyles which are no longer under the direct influence of a Dark Lord.

Rock gargoyles are not evil in themselves. They have no designs of conquest or desire to destroy. Like humans, rock gargoyles are chiefly interested in a secure, continued existence for themselves and the members of their community. Conflict arises when that security is threatened, rock gargoyles being savage fighters easily provoked by any intrusion. The Dark Lords prey upon these characteristics in using rock gargoyle communities to their own ends. A new queen and associated followers placed in a small rural town will cause a slaughter of the human inhabitants as the rock gargoyles establish a home for themselves. But those rock gargoyles who are free from a Dark Lord's influence can peacefully coexist



with humans, as they nest in remote areas and hunt whatever small animals are in the area.

MENTAL ABILITIES

Under most circumstances, rock gargoyles are not familiar with human culture or technology, including language. Groups existing near human communities, or individual rock gargoyles whose groups have broken up due to death of the queen or some other reason, will sometimes gradually come to understand human ways. In extremely rare instances, rock gargoyles may even be encountered making use of captured or discarded human equipment. Gargoyles of this sort have higher Intelligence and Education ratings than those listed. Queens are generally 1 to 2 points higher in all respects.

Although some rock gargoyles may eventually learn to speak human languages, all rock gargoyles communicate with each other via empathic links.

COMBAT TACTICS

Rock gargoyles are strong fighters. Their scaly hide provides them with resistance to damage, their claws and teeth strike out like daggers, and their skills are formidable. The rock gargoyle queen will enter combat only if absolutely necessary for the survival of the brood, as the loss of its queen is fatal to a community. The queen will never be encountered outside the confines of the lair. The closer a combat takes place to the rock gargoyles' lair, the more tenacious the creatures will be.

When possible, a rock gargoyle enters combat from above. It takes to the air, closes rapidly with its opponent and swoops down upon him, using the claws on both hands and feet. During the first phase in which an airborne rock gargoyle attacks, it does double damage with its attacks, representing the additional impact of the dive. A maximum of two rock gargoyles may attack a single human-sized target from the air. A favorite tactic when rock gargoyles outnumber their opponents is to double up on an enemy, with one gargoyle remaining in melee to keep him busy while the other flies away to perform successive diving attacks.

The rock gargoyles' inability to utilize their special attacks and tactics within the enclosed spaces of their lair is an additional reason that they will fight to stop any intruders from ever reaching the entrances to the caves, tunnels or buildings in which they dwell.





Gargoyle, Subterranean

Strength: 11
Constitution: 13
Agility: 5
Intelligence: 5

Education: 2
Charisma: 5
Empathy: 3
Initiative: 5

Move: 3/9/18/36
Skill/Dam.: 4/1D6+1
Hits: 20/36
Appear: 1D6

they fallen angels? Demons? Or were they something else altogether? Perhaps the collective memories of an early meeting between humanity and a Dark Minion race?

THE MYTHOLOGY

Their existence is reflected in the nightmares of the Middle Ages. From paintings to religious texts to cathedral statuary, it is evident that humanity was once haunted by images of demonic, winged creatures with leering smiles and evil, alien eyes. For some unknown reason, stone effigies of these fantastic and horrific beings were placed atop churches, cathedrals and other large structures—theories ranging from decoration to protective totems have been offered. What were these creatures, collectively known as gargoyles, supposed to represent? Were

THE REALITY

Subterranean gargoyles are a race of underground dwellers which formed the basis for many of the earliest legends of demons around the world.

Physical Description

Subterranean gargoyles are man-sized creatures of reptilian stock, with horned heads, red eyes, forked tongues, stonelike hides and bat wings. Their wings are mostly vestigial, not providing actual flight capability, but allowing the subterranean gar-



goyles to glide from high ground to low, much as flying squirrels soar through the treetops. Subterranean gargoyles can use weapons and often employ modern firearms, but they prefer to feel their claws tear through flesh rather than allow a blade or bullet to have the honor. These egg-laying beings appear as both males and females, though humans can tell no difference between the two.

Past Accounts

This Dark Race was somehow dispatched to Earth countless centuries ago to open a way for the Dark Ones themselves. Though few in number, the subterranean gargoyles were much more powerful than the weak and fledgling humans roaming the surface of the planet. They felt certain they could destroy the soft-fleshed natives and prepare the way for their foul masters. And so the subterranean gargoyles, with pride and overconfidence, swept forth to battle early humanity. However, in this great and terrible war, the subterranean gargoyles were nearly wiped out. The survivors fled into the deepest cracks and crevices to lick their wounds and await orders from their masters. There they remained, venturing onto the surface only rarely, until the barriers between Earth and the Dark dimensions were recently penetrated and more of their kind swarmed onto the planet.

Humanity suffered great losses in that ancient, nearly forgotten war as well. Vague memories of the time of battle have survived to this day as nightmares, fear-inducing superstitions, and examples of fantastic art and architecture. For countless generations, the survivors of that war kept vigil against the expected return of the subterranean gargoyles, until one day the descendents of the first warriors no longer remembered what they were guarding against. Still, the images passed down remained powerful, spawning protective statues to keep the memory of the dark times alive.

Present Situation

When the great war ended, the handful of remaining gargoyles sought refuge in the hollow places within the Earth. In these hollows, they built their

own civilization and waited for the Dark Ones to send reinforcements or to call them home. They waited, and centuries passed. The descendents of the first warriors became a forsaken lot, angry for being abandoned and jealous of the vast human cities growing on the surface. The subterranean gargoyles were never a prodigious lot, and their war-depleted numbers left them with precious few reproducing bodies. Humanity soon outdistanced them in numbers and achievements, leaving the gargoyles to remain in hiding, harboring their hatred like a fire in the endless night of the hollows.

During the intervening centuries, the creatures have watched the progress and the failures of humanity. They have vigilantly kept oral records to one day pass on to the Dark Ones, and they have tried to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their eternal enemies. Sometimes the subterranean gargoyles made small raids onto the surface, but they could never mount a full-scale war with their few numbers. So they watched, and they waited, and their hatred grew.

Future Plans

Then the Dark returned, and the subterranean gargoyles rejoiced. They knew their long vigil would be rewarded. Already, more of their kind have come across the dimensional barriers to join them in their underground hiding places. Plans are being presented, argued over, and set for the coming rematch between the subterranean gargoyles and humanity. The humans have developed many new weapons since last the subterranean gargoyles met them in battle. Even more disturbing is the huge number of them crawling over every available acre of the surface of the planet. But the subterranean gargoyles are a patient race, and plans proceed smoothly. With the added benefit of scores of other Dark Minion races to assist them, the subterranean gargoyles are sure that this next battle will be the last one humanity ever engages in. When the dust settles and the blood dries, only the Dark Races will be left standing. Then the true age of the Dark Ones can finally begin, sweeping across this pitiful globe like the curtains of an endless night.



Glimmering

Strength: 9 Education: — Move: 15/30/60
 Constitution: 9 Charisma: 8 Skill/Dam.: 8/3D6
 Agility: 8 Empathy: 4 Hits: 15/30
 Intelligence: 2 Initiative: 6 # Appear: 1

Special: Limited Dimension Walk abilities (see below).

Highly reflective—one level more difficult to observe than normal, one level more difficult than normal to hit in combat, and impervious to lasers.

Glimmerings are creatures from another dimension which were accidentally unleashed upon the world by the Dark Ones. The glimmerings inhabit an "antidimension" which exists in parallel to our own, but as a twisted reflection of it. The creatures may cross the boundary between the dimensions only when an empathic mind strays close to theirs, a phenomenon that occurs when an empath looks into a reflective surface and imagines (even if only subconsciously) that the reflection has a life and depth of its own. At that point, the empath serves as a beacon for the glimmerings to head toward, and they arrive seemingly through the mirror. Any reflective surface will serve—a store window, a pool of water, a wet street—as long as it is sufficient to give the empathic viewer an illusion of depth.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Glimmerings are about the same size and shape as a large, tailless dog, and they move on four powerful legs. That's where the similarities stop. A glimmering is almost completely reflective when in our world, like an animated, 3-D mirror, a shiny chrome animal. Only the eyes are different, appearing as black holes in the creature's head.

The front paws of a glimmering are long and slender, and can operate as hands when desired. But they are also armed with heavy claws to match the creature's wicked fangs.

It is possible that legends of the *loup-garou*, a

quadrupedal werewolf with no tail, may have been originated from early sightings of glimmerings.

ABILITIES

Glimmerings serve as servants of another entity (as explained below), and they are generally sent as assassins.

The creatures possess a rudimentary intelligence, sufficient to assure that they will always recognize their target, and able to make them fairly cunning at times. Unless there is a definite need for quick action, they are willing and able to patiently await the best opportunity to strike their prey. If there is a hurry, more than one glimmering may be assigned the same target.

While in our world, glimmerings are very difficult to watch for any length of time, due to their reflective nature. In combat, this makes them one level of difficulty harder to hit, and they reflect laser weapons away harmlessly.

If necessary, glimmerings can manipulate human tools, though it is difficult for them to aim firearms, given their quadrupedal stance.

THE BATTLE FOR THE ANTIDIMENSION

Secret teams are working, both among humans and Dark Minions, to discover a means of using the antidimension as a method of nearly instantaneous mirror-to-mirror travel. What the minions know that human researchers do not, however, is that the antidimension is inhabited, and that it also contains a Dark Lord who is actively working to thwart entry by others. The glimmerings are this being's servants, and it uses them to mercilessly slay anyone who gets too close to discovering a way to its hidden home.

No one has crossed over into the antidimension and returned. Worse yet, many researchers have unexpectedly died bloody deaths under mysterious circumstances.

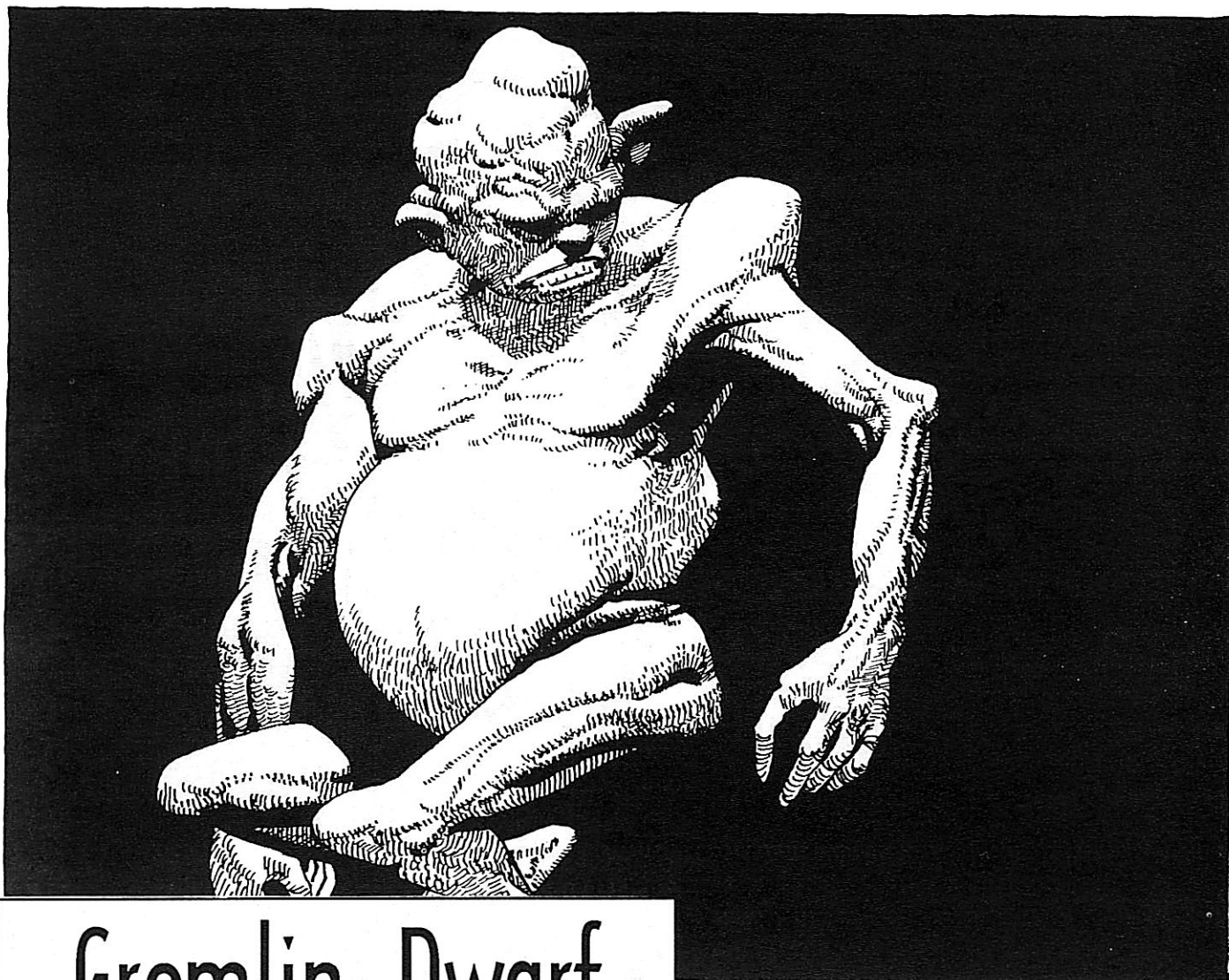
As human researchers have yet to survive to report the appearance of glimmerings, no connection has been recognized between these deaths and mirrors, not even when one researcher was found



slashed to bloody ribbons in his bathroom, right beneath the bathroom mirror.

At this time, it is uncertain whose "side" the creatures of the antimension are on with regard to the conflict on Earth.

Among those few members of the empathic underground who know of the antimension and the glimmerings, some confusion has been caused by the fact that the glimmerings have thus far been most active against the machinations of the Dark Minions.



Gremlin, Dwarf

Strength: 3	Education: 2	Move: 3/11/18/35
Constitution: 4	Charisma: 1	Skill/Dam.: 5/1D6+2
Agility: 9	Empathy: 9	Hits: 7/14
Intelligence: 5	Initiative: 4	# Appear: 2D6

Special: Computer Empathy, Demolitions, Electronics, Engineer, Lockpick, Mechanic and Telekinesis, each at the appropriate attribute level. Dwarf gremlins do not have Darkling Empathy.

Stunted, twisted and wholly malevolent relatives of the dark elves, dwarf gremlins are as adept at manipulating the workings of machines as their

larger brethren are at warping the perceptions of humans.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Dwarf gremlins are small humanoids just over one meter in height. Their bodies are often misshapen and misproportioned, with overly long arms, bloated stomachs, large feet, mismatched ears, etc. Dwarf gremlins wear no clothes, and they have mottled green and black skin covering their bodies.

MODUS OPERANDI

Like other fey folk, dwarf gremlins thrive on



human pain and misery. A dwarf gremlin's raspy laugh has been the last thing many a person has heard before meeting his doom. Dwarf gremlins achieve their ends through the devices people rely upon, rather than by directly attacking people. In the technological world of **Dark Conspiracy**, the creatures seldom lack for devices to use. They spread chaos and destruction wherever they go in the form of seemingly accidental mechanical failures, circuit overloads, power outages and structural weaknesses, among other things—usually with fatal results.

Dwarf gremlins use both physical and empathic means to sabotage vehicles, equipment and sometimes even buildings. Unless severely pressed for time, dwarf gremlins never do their damage in a careless, unthinking manner. Rather, they plan out the most efficient way of generating the most damage and horror from their attacks. When possible, they sabotage things so that human operators will not recognize that anything is wrong until it is entirely too late to stop it and so that lots of things suddenly fall apart all at once, increasing human feelings of despair at the situation. Because of the dwarf gremlins' Telekinetic abilities and high mechanical aptitude, referees are encouraged to let their imaginations run wild in determining what sorts of "mischief" the creatures are capable of accomplishing.

Due to their small size and relative weakness, dwarf gremlins use their superior speed and stealth to avoid confrontation if they can, but fight viciously if cornered. Their strong jaws (well exercised from chewing through power cables and electrical wires) and many teeth can prove dangerous, especially to unarmored characters. A dwarf gremlin's innate destructive talents are useful in combat as well, as any unfortunate attackers discover when their weapon belt clasps suddenly come undone, the safeties on their guns click on in the middle of firing, the pins on their grenades all mysteriously fall out, their pistols discharge while still holstered, etc.

A dwarf gremlin uses the confusion resulting from these telekinetic activities to escape from combat if possible.

TECHNOLOGY AND EMPATHY

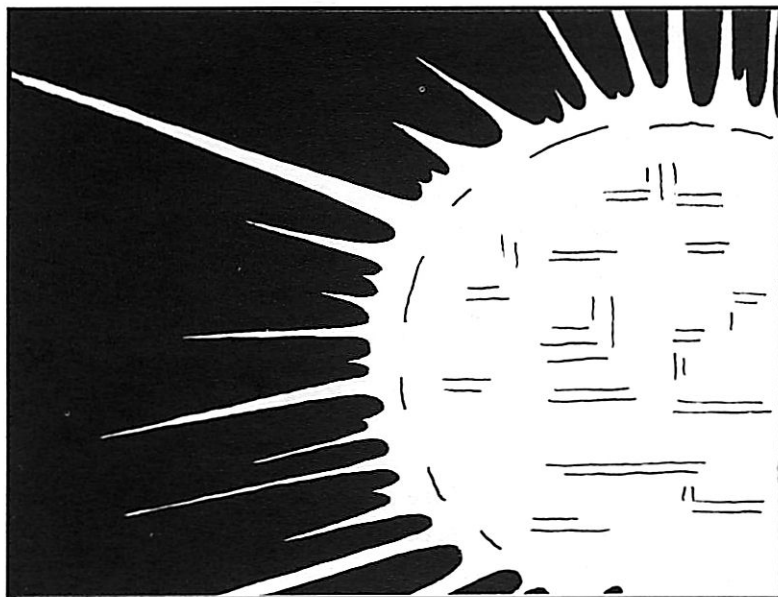
A dwarf gremlin's understanding of technology is solely for the purpose of manipulating it to destroy its users. The creatures do not construct or employ any devices of their own. The dwarf gremlin race neither possesses its own technology nor adopts that of other races. Instead, each dwarf gremlin relies entirely upon its natural abilities.

Furthermore, a dwarf gremlin's empathic power applies only to nonliving material. The creatures cannot empathically affect other living beings—they have no capacity to sense or project human emotion, project thoughts or drain willpower. They do not even possess the normal Dark Minion power of Darkling Empathy. Even without empathic assistance, however, their repulsive appearance inspires fear and loathing within most people who encounter them.

HISTORY

Although dwarf gremlin influence has been felt since World War II, it was only in the chaos of the Greater Depression that they arrived in number. Thereafter, the creatures multiplied and spread rapidly. Most urban centers across the nation are host to secret dwarf gremlin communities, contributing to ever-rising accident rates. Although the majority of rural communities are too far from the rich urban hunting grounds to attract dwarf gremlins, some of the larger towns across the countryside suffer from small, transient groups wreaking havoc when and where they can.

Larger groups of dwarf gremlins combine their Telekinesis to produce truly amazing results. They cause airplane crashes, complete power outages in medical districts, train derailments, plant and factory explosions, etc. Dwarf gremlins are able to exist in the busiest metropolitan areas, hiding in air ducts, sewer tunnels, automated industrial complexes and the like. They survive undetected on garbage, small animals and occasionally the remains of their human victims.



Gremlin, Entropic

Strength: *	Education: 3	Move: *
Constitution: *	Charisma: 1	Skill/Dam.: 6/*
Agility: *	Empathy: 5	Hits: *
Intelligence: 6	Initiative: 6	# Appear: 1

*Because the entropic gremlin has no physical form, these statistics are dependent upon the machine it possesses.

Special: Telekinesis.

One of the most alien abilities of the Dark Minions is their power to create animator spirits. Humans have been able to mimic many of the minions' empathic abilities and have a limited understanding of how some of their twisted technology works, but there is nothing known to humanity that remotely resembles the processes involved in the creation of an animator spirit. What these life forces actually are is unknown, but the entropic gremlin is almost certainly the creature that inspired their creation.

If a human's car can be thought of as the logical replacement of the horse, then an animator spirit can be thought of as the logical replacement of the

entropic gremlin. For while an animator spirit has no real intelligence, it also has no will of its own. Entropic gremlins, on the other hand, are prone to doing whatever they please, which makes them less than ideal slaves for the Dark Ones. The motives of an entropic gremlin are so alien that the creatures often appear to act entirely at random, and the damage a rogue gremlin can do is formidable.

Morlocks are one of the few Dark Minions that still use entropic gremlins instead of the more controllable animators. Many of the fey races, particularly the dark elves, plant entropic gremlins upon unlucky victims, though they do not actually use them as slaves.

BASIC NATURE

Entropic gremlins prefer to infest complex manufactured items. Automobiles and aircraft are their favored haunts, though space vehicles, with their millions of components, and old suits of armor, with thousands of hours of human effort put into careful hammering, etching and engraving, are both perfect for the entropic gremlin's use.

An entropic gremlin will not always seek to control what it has taken possession of. The creature might be content to possess a car, for instance, but let the human owner climb in and unwittingly go for a drive. Then, halfway through the trip, the gremlin might decide that it doesn't like where it is being taken and attempt to wrest control from the driver. In some cases, this becomes a contest between the human's Strength and the gremlin's Empathy, but in many devices the human is entirely unable to prevent the gremlin's takeover. This is particularly true in a "drive-by-wire" situation where there is no direct *mechanical* connection between the device and its controls. If an entropic gremlin decides to take control of an untended machine, its success is automatic.

FEEDING HABITS

An entropic gremlin receives its life energy by increasing entropy's effect on whatever device it has taken control of. A car will feed an entropic gremlin



for about a day. A more complex machine, like an aircraft or computer, will supply nutrition for as long as a week. Something as complex as a spacecraft or advanced robotic unit could feed one of the creatures for as long as a month. By the end of the feeding period, the possessed device will have been transformed into a rusted, worn-out piece of junk.

This is not to say that problems won't crop up after mere minutes of an entropic gremlin's entry into an object. If the first failure in a computer was its microprocessor, then that unit would be useless to any human operator, though the entropic gremlin would still be able to get a week's worth of energy from it. The first failure in a car could be a vital part of the engine, or it could be the radio, the cigarette lighter or the horn. No matter what problems initially crop up, the end result is always the same. If the entropic gremlin is allowed to maintain its possession of a machine, then the machine will ultimately be irreparably destroyed.

When a gremlin first invades something, the referee should decide how long that machine will feed it, based upon the information given above, the device's current condition of repair and what the referee decides is the personality of the invading gremlin. Then 1D10 should be rolled, with the result multiplied by five, to determine at what percentage of the feed time the object will suffer a critical fault and become useless to its owner.

For example, if the BMW 1700xhi that a PC purchased were to become infected, it would feed a gremlin for about 48 hours (the 1700 is more advanced than a mere car—ask any owner!). A 1D10 roll yields a seven, which is multiplied by five for a result of 35. So, in about 17 hours (35% of 48 hours) the BMW's engine will blow, its axle will break or some other serious fault will develop.

It is possible, though, that an entropic gremlin will choose to hold a broken piece of machinery together. When a breakdown occurs, the gremlin may make a Telekinesis roll in order to keep the machine running by holding the broken piece together or even telekinetically propelling moving parts. (The referee should set the difficulty level to match the

seriousness of the damage: Difficult for things such as blown or missing engines, Average for broken axles and the like, Easy for simpler things like worn-out bearings or flat tires). Because of this, it is theoretically possible to drive a gremlin-infested car even though it has a broken axle, a couple of flat tires and no engine to speak of!

Before any gremlin-infested object is completely destroyed, the entropic gremlin will seek to abandon it and move into a replacement. When this time comes, the creature will try to bring the old object into physical contact with a new host in order to transfer itself to the new item. This process takes an average of one hour. During this time, the two objects must remain undisturbed or the entropic gremlin will be unable to complete its transfer. If one of the objects is moved, the gremlin will be forced to remain in the original object and must recover its spent energy by feeding at double rate for one hour per 10 minutes spent in the exchange.

EXTERMINATION

There is no sure way to remove an entropic gremlin from a possessed machine. It might be lured out by placing another, more advanced piece of machinery near the first one, but this is a hit-or-miss tactic at best. The only way to actually destroy an entropic gremlin is to destroy the object that it is in possession of. The machine does not need to be burned into ash or ground into powder, but it must be damaged enough to be useless as a food source for the gremlin. An entropic gremlin possessing a car, for instance, would begin to suffer dissolution almost immediately if the car is crushed sufficiently to freeze up its major moving parts.

Many times the simplest way to destroy an entropic gremlin is to trap the machine it inhabits in a place with no other food source, then leave it for a period longer than the equipment can feed the gremlin. In effect, the gremlin starves to death. But this technique is risky since it is possible to overlook a prime food source in what appears to be a vacant building or empty stretch of desert, and the entropic gremlin will likely be very angry about the attempt.



Gremlin, Torgol's

Strength: 3 Education: 2 Move: 35/70
 Constitution: 4 Charisma: 1 Skill/Dam.: 3/1D6
 Agility: 15 Empathy: 8 Hits: 12/25
 Intelligence: 6* Initiative: 7 # Appear: 1D6

*Gremlins have a Willpower of 10.

Special: Gremlins have only three empathic skills: They have Dimension Walk and Computer Empathy at their attribute level, and Machine Empathy (see below) at twice that level. They are very difficult to be spotted by observers (see below). Due to the creature's high Agility, aimed shots cannot be conducted against a gremlin, unless it is unaware of the firer.

The gremlin has long been linked to tales of misfortune and tragedy. These tales seem to become more prevalent the more mechanized human society becomes.

THE MYTHOLOGY

Gremlins have been depicted as smallish creatures which revel in making mischief, especially with machines. Generally, their pranks are relatively harmless, though they can be quite irritating.

Machine Empathy Power Levels

Power Level	Result
Basic Success	The gremlin turns the object on or off, or causes it to malfunction for one combat phase.
Stage Two	The device malfunctions for 1D6 phases. On a 1D10 roll of 10, it fatally malfunctions.
Stage Three	The device malfunctions for 2D6 phases. On a 1D10 roll of 8+, it fatally malfunctions.
Stage Four	The device malfunctions for 2D6 complete turns. On a 1D10 roll of 6+, it fatally malfunctions.
Stage Five	The device malfunctions for 1D6 hours. On a 1D10 roll of a 3+, it fatally malfunctions.
Stage Six	The device fatally malfunctions.

THE REALITY

The myth of the innocuous, fun-loving gremlin could not be further from the truth. True gremlins love nothing more than inflicting pain and misery on the human race—the greater the pain, the better. They wreaked much havoc—from the Great Chicago Fire, to Three Mile Island, to the *Challenger* incident. They will not physically confront humans unless the odds really favor them. Instead, they use their Machine Empathy to cause machinery to malfunction and do their mischief for them.

Machine Empathy

The gremlins' Machine Empathy skill is apparently a very specialized version of Telekinesis. In order to best use its Machine Empathy skill, a gremlin must be stationary and undisturbed for five minutes while in close proximity to (within five meters of) the object to be affected. At the end of that time, a power level is rolled for the skill, with the following die roll modifiers:

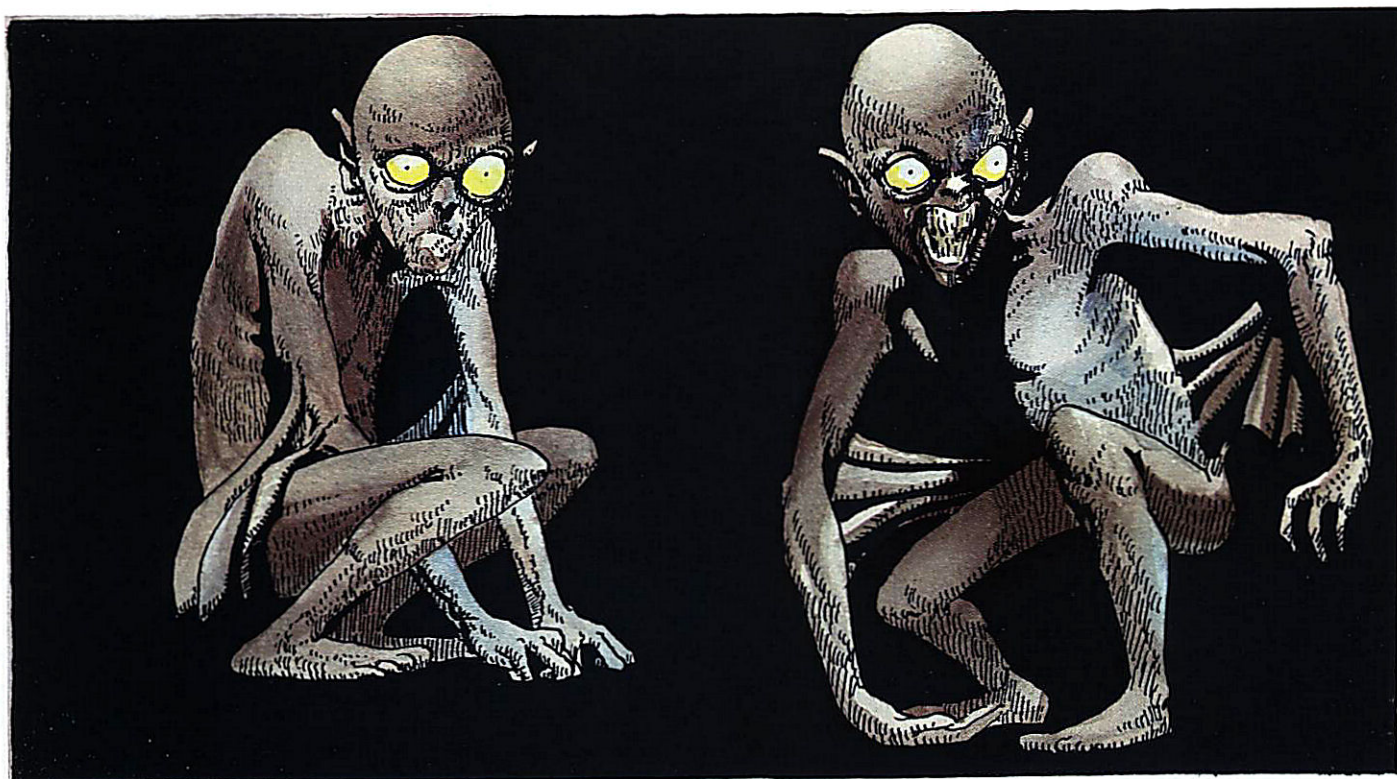
- 1 per minute less than five spent concentrating.
- 1 per meter over five away from the object to be affected.
- 5 if the object to be affected is out of the gremlin's line of sight.
- +2 per additional gremlin cooperating with the Machine Empathy attempt.
- +1 per minute beyond five spent concentrating on the object.
- +5 if in physical contact with the object to be affected.

The effects of Machine Empathy on the object are listed at left, by power level achieved. If a fatal malfunction is rolled, the object becomes totally useless until repaired and can, at the referee's option, be hazardous to those around it.

Repairing a malfunction requires a skill test of either Mechanic or Electronics (referee's option). The difficulty level is established by the power level achieved by the gremlin. Basic Success requires no roll; Stage Two or Three requires an Easy test; Stage Four or Five requires an Average test; and Stage Six requires a Difficult test.

Camouflage Ability

Torgol's gremlins are almost impossible to spot when hiding in any sort of shadow. If they are standing still, they are never spotted by casual observers. If a viewer is specifically searching the shadows and succeeds at a Difficult test of



Observation, stationary gremlins are seen dimly. If the gremlins are moving, casual observers will notice them only if successful at a Difficult test of Observation, and viewers specifically looking for them will succeed by passing an Average test of the skill. Failure at any of these tests will cause viewers to think they have merely seen some trick of the light.

Physical Description

Gremlins are roughly humanoid, standing less than a meter tall and weighing less than 10 kilograms. They have smooth, black, leathery skin covering their hairless bodies. Their arms are very long in proportion to their bodies, dragging on the ground even though gremlins walk erect. The creatures also have "wings" of a sort—a flap of leathery skin from elbow to hip, which they can use to glide through the air like flying squirrels. They can sail up to 20 meters from a single jump.

Gremlins have large, bulging eyes, which allow them to see nearly 360° in all but absolute darkness as if it were daylight. Bright lights or flashes of light cause them to suffer blindness for 1D6+1 phases after exposure and cause them to instinctively freeze in their tracks. Consequently, gremlins do not like to go out in the daylight or go into well-lit rooms, and they do most of their activity at night.

History

These gremlins are native to a proto-dimension and were "accidentally" discovered by a 12th-century alchemist named Torgol, who had been working to open a portal for the Dark One he served. Torgol found a world filled with gremlins. He also found that his very presence inflicted pain upon those creatures that were near him, pain caused, apparently, by his own empathic emissions. When he actively used any of his empathic skills, the gremlins nearest to him died. Using this ability as a threat, Torgol forced the gremlins into his personal slavery for centuries, killing thousands of them in the process. Then a mutated type of gremlin appeared who was unaffected by Torgol's empathic emissions. As their numbers mounted, they overthrew Torgol and killed him. Fortunately for other humans, the gremlins still have not recovered from Torgol's reign, and only the new mutation can safely pass through to Earth, as they are the only ones unaffected by Human Empathy.

Soon after the gremlins found the way to open the dimensional doorway to Earth, they realized they were too small in number and size to overtake the humans. But they had a great affinity for the machinery humans created. With humanity growing increasingly dependent upon machinery, the gremlins had found the perfect tool with which to strike.



Hellfire

Strength: —	Education: —	Move: 5
Constitution: —	Charisma: —	Skill/Dam.: 10/*
Agility: —	Empathy: 5	Hits: 12/24
Intelligence: 5	Initiative: 4	# Appear: 1

*Due to its incendiary nature, a hellfire causes damage as per the rules for burning gasoline (see page 97 of the rulebook). Once per combat turn, the creature may gust flame and cause double that damage for one combat phase.

Special: A hellfire has no physical body as such and thus has no physical statistics. Hellfires can only be damaged by substances capable of extinguishing flames. A fire extinguisher does 1D6 damage, a fire hose does 2D6 damage, a water cannon does

3D6 damage, and a water bomb (aircraft portable) does 5D6.

The hits listed are for the creature's core. In each of its Initiative phases, the hellfire may move at the rate listed above, leaving behind a two-meter-wide wall of fire. Each square meter of this fire is worth 1 hit point for purposes of extinguishing it.

Every day, the men and women of the world's firefighting organizations risk their lives to extinguish the blazes that occur in human habitations. The majority of these fires are caused by electrical faults, arson, human carelessness, etc. Once in a while, no reasonable cause can be found for a fire, and it is blamed on a freak of nature. And sometimes



firefighters talk of how the flames in one of these strange fires seemed "almost alive." The firefighters may not be far from the truth—they have unwittingly encountered a creature known as hellfire.

THE MYTHOLOGY

Some people claim that hellfires are spirits of the damned who somehow escape the nether regions and come back to the world above to wreak havoc upon living humans. Hellfires have no physical bodies, they explain, because they are formed from the substance of their supposed eternal prison—fire!

Other people insist that the creatures are spirits native to some dimension of elemental fire, mistakenly lost in our own dimension and striking out in a great agony of coldness.

Still others claim that hellfires are incredibly advanced animator spirits that some Dark Minion race links to flame, creating a terribly destructive (though relatively short-lived) servant.

THE REALITY

Whatever the creature's origins, when a hellfire comes into existence on Earth, it immediately begins to set ablaze anything and everything within its reach. Although it is almost totally indiscriminate as to what or who it ignites, the creature is not unintelligent. It possesses a cunning mind and enjoys mocking its victims, and if threatened it will take quick steps to neutralize its enemies.

Recognizing a Hellfire

Typically, when a hellfire is first encountered, an individual may notice that the fire does not seem quite right in its appearance and/or behavior. Observers who succeed at a Difficult test of Foreboding or Observation will recognize this wrongness. Although they will not recognize the hellfire as a living entity (unless they have encountered one before or make a outstanding success on the aforementioned skill test), they will realize that this is much more than just an out-of-control barbecue. The problem is that most such people do not realize the intelligence and purpose behind the fire until it is too late to escape.

Being Stalked by a Hellfire

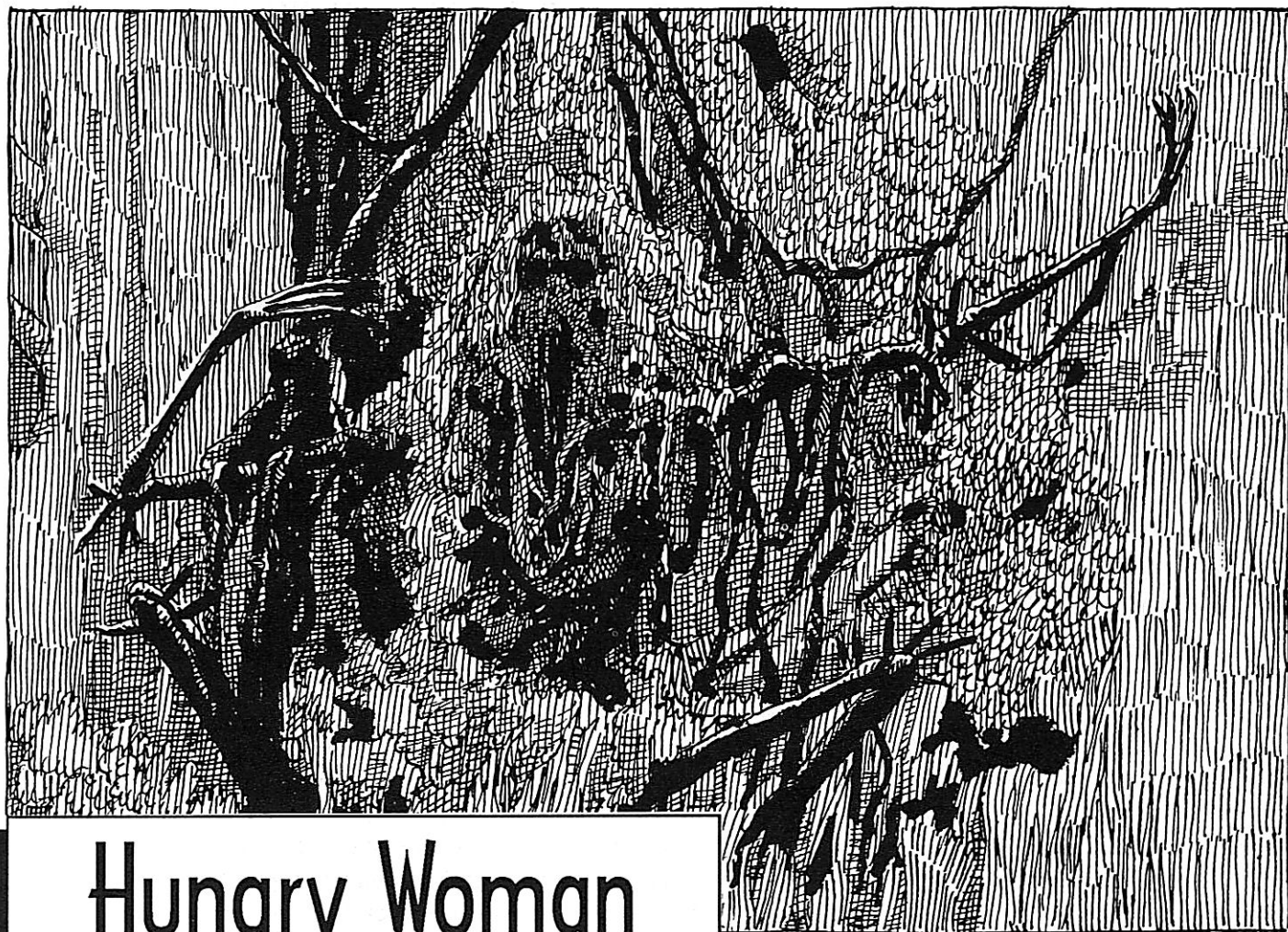
When the hellfire recognizes that someone is a threat to its existence, it will spread fire around that person in an attempt to cut off any escape route. Once this is completed, it will shrink the ring around its victim, taking great pleasure in watching the person suffer from oxygen starvation, then scream as clothes and hair ignite, to fall as a cindered husk.

Battling a Hellfire

Fortunately for humans, hellfires, once spotted, can easily be tracked, isolated, and either doused or let burn out. Hellfires have a mind of their own and are therefore slightly more difficult to track and isolate than are normal fires—they sneak through any opening left to them and leap gaps that normal fires could not. But a hellfire is an individual, and humans band together to fight fires, using their considerable technology to do so. In the end, traditional firefighting techniques always succeed in extinguishing the fire, although entire city blocks may have been destroyed in the meantime.

Also, Darkling Empathy and Project Thought can be used to freeze a hellfire in its tracks (if a Stage Six success is scored). There is evidence to suggest that Dark Minions who dwell in an area being ravaged by a hellfire sometimes secretly aid human firefighters rather than see their hunting grounds be destroyed. Certainly some members of the empathic underground have devoted themselves to tracking and battling hellfires, and often find occasion to lend firefighters a secret hand themselves.

In any case, hellfires recognize that they are doomed to live a very short life, so they devote themselves to wreaking as much damage as they possibly can, killing as many beings as possible in the process. Apparently, they do not much care whether their victims are human, animal or Dark Minion, although they do generally prefer intelligent creatures to unintelligent ones, so that they can take greater pleasure in a victim's suffering and in the horror the victim shows when it recognizes the hellfire for what it is.



Hungry Woman

Strength: 11 Education: — Move: 6/12/20/34
 Constitution: 15 Charisma: 1 Skill/Dam.: 5/2D6
 Agility: 9 Empathy: 1 Hits: 8/16*
 Intelligence: 3 Initiative: 4 # Appear: 1D6+2**

*Because of their barklike skin, hungry women are considered to have an armor value of 2 on all hit locations except their limbs, which have an armor value of 1. Any single attack that penetrates with at least 4 points to a limb is considered to sever it.

**Round up.

Special: It can make unarmed melee strikes, using the Skill/Dam. statistics listed above, but it prefers to grapple its prey to immobility (roll normal damage to determine points of control), then drain that prey's body fluids (see below).

Aztec mythology is filled with terrible spirits and frightening beings that feed on the blood and fear of humans and animals. One such creature is the hungry woman, a being so terrible that even the denizens of the Aztec spirit world shun it.

THE MYTHOLOGY

According to the mythology, before the Earth and sky were made, there lived in the spirit land an insatiably hungry woman with mouths on her wrists, elbows, ankles and knees. Because her appetite was insatiable, Quetzalcoatl (the heroic Celestial Dragon) and Tezcatlipoca (the deceitful Dark Mirror) seized the woman and cast her out of the spirit land. She landed upon water, and when the two gods tried to push her under, she broke in half. Seeing this,



the other spirits came and used her lower half to make the sky. With her upper half they made living plants of her skin, trees of her hair, pools of water from her eyes, mountains from her shoulders and valleys from her nose. Now, when it rains, she drinks. When plants wither or when living creatures die, she eats. But still she is not filled. And sometimes, at night, her cries for food can be heard on the wind.

THE REALITY

Scattered reports ranging from Arizona to Peru tell of encounters with a creature that could fit parts of this description. According to eyewitnesses, the thing is roughly humanoid—approximately 1.5 meters tall—but is apparently at least partly vegetable in nature. Its rough, dark body somewhat resembles a rotting log, and shaggy grey-green hair hangs from its lumpy head like Spanish moss, making its large, black eyes and gaping mouth nearly invisible. Stick-thin arms and legs protrude like branches from the body, with a cluster of stiff rootlets at each joint.

The creature feeds through these rootlets. Once it has immobilized its prey—typically by wrestling it to the ground—the hungry woman jams these rootlets forcefully into the victim and drains its liquids, leaving in the end a withered husk. This attack can puncture armor up to armor value 1 and does 4D6 damage per phase to the hit location punctured, plus half that amount rolled to every other hit location. (As most NPCs are considered to have only one hit location, they therefore only take the 4D6 damage.)

When the hungry woman is physically immobilizing its prey, some of its limbs are pretty much occupied just holding the creature still. Referees will have to judge just how many limbs are occupied, based upon the size of the victim and the exact situation. But in general, a human-sized victim will require three limbs to immobilize; a creature half that size will require two limbs; and a creature one-quarter human-sized or smaller will require only one. The hungry woman can then attack to drain

with each free limb—the referee should roll randomly to generate a hit location—and each limb will do damage as described above.

If necessary, the hungry woman can simply strike a target with unarmed melee attacks. Armor has its normal effect in this case. The skill and damage rating given in the statistics section above are for this type of attack.

Hungry women are perpetually hunting (even immediately after having fed) and will attack nearly anything they encounter, as long as there is at least a one-to-one ratio of hunter to prey. They will not attack if outnumbered. Frequently, they panic groups of prey into splitting up. In such cases, the hungry women remain hidden from their prey (their mossy hair and thin, dark bodies are perfect for hiding in most vegetation, making Observation tests to spot them one level more difficult than normal), and they make their hunting cry, which sounds like a woman moaning plaintively. Most creatures find the sound terribly unnerving.

If necessary, hungry women can survive on the fluids of plants, but they require the juices of animals in order to reproduce. If a hungry woman can absorb hit points equal to 10 times its own in a single 24-hour period, it can bifurcate (split in half) and become two. This reproduction process requires an additional 24 hours to complete, during which time the original creature grows an extra head and set of limbs, preparatory to the split.

Because of their partly vegetable nature, hungry women are highly sensitive to herbicides. As a consequence, they tend to avoid areas of intensive agriculture, such as corporate farms. Instead, they frequent the wilds, especially the wilds of Demonground.

As can be seen, then, these creatures fit the hungry woman mythology fairly closely—given their plaintive cries, long hair and method of feeding, as well as the fact that they reproduce by splitting in half. Interestingly, the legend attempts to render the mythic creature harmless by using it to create the sky and Earth. But the attempt is to no avail—in the end, the hungry woman still cries out to be fed.



Khar'lanki

Strength: +1* Education: +0* Move: 3/10/18/35
 Constitution: +0* Charisma: +1* Skill/Dam.: +1*/**, 1p4*
 Agility: +2* Empathy: +2* Hits: **
 Intelligence: +0* Initiative: +1* # Appear: 1

*These are bonuses applied to the original human attributes once the process of change from the original human form has been completed. The poison damage rating listed is for the khar'lanki's poison claws (see below).

**These values are figured normally from the appropriate attributes and skills.

Khar'lanki are a race of once-human people who now enjoy feeding on human cerebrospinal fluid and stealing human memories. According to ancient traditions they hold, their name means "soul drinker." One German scholar (who chose to re-

main anonymous), after learning of their tendency to live among human communities while masquerading as normal humans, was prompted to call them *Mitinwohner* ("dwellers within").

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Some Dark Races are more obviously not of our world than others. The khar'lanki are of the "not-obvious" variety. They are human-looking, highly social and conversant on a wide variety of common human topics. Although outwardly they have an entirely human appearance, khar'lanki can recognize each other instantly. Some experts believe this is a natural, subconscious empathic ability.

Each khar'lanki was once entirely human. But like the mythic vampires, a current khar'lanki creates new khar'lanki from human victims. This is the races' only means of reproduction.



Unlike the vampires of myth, khar'lanki are not immortal. Each khar'lanki lives to be up to 500 years old, if left to die of natural causes. But khar'lanki are as subject to damage from weapons and the like as any normal human, and they tend to die very violent deaths if humans discover their true nature.

FEEDING HABITS

Khar'lanki fingernails hide hollow, retractable claws that inject a powerful poison into their victims, a poison that paralyzes mammalian nervous systems. If they successfully break an opponent's skin with these claws, they inject a powerful paralyzing poison. Although damage is calculated for this poison normally, it does no true damage. Rather, once it has achieved a critical level of hits to the target's chest, it renders the victim paralyzed for a number of hours equal to 12 minus the victim's Constitution.

Once the victim has been paralyzed and the khar'lanki has no further distractions, the creature grasps the victim's head tightly and extends a long, tentaclelike second tongue into the victim's mouth. This tongue worms its way upward through the victim's nasal passages and finally burrows into the cranium. The procedure takes roughly 60 seconds to accomplish.

Once in the cranium, the tongue serves as a drainage tube for drawing off the victim's cerebrospinal fluid. Each combat phase, it will drain 10 milliliters of the fluid. Normal adults contain roughly 95 to 140 milliliters total in the cranium and spine— $(90 + \text{CON} \times 5)$. The victim suffers 3 points of damage to the head for each 10 milliliters lost.

For some reason not completely understood (most likely empathic), the khar'lanki also steals flashes of memory from the victim by means of this process. In fact, for the khar'lanki, the experience of stealing memories is as intensely pleasurable as the drinking of the cerebrospinal fluid.

When a khar'lanki feeds, it need not kill its victim; it can snack instead, drinking only a few milliliters of cerebrospinal fluid. This results in the victim suffering subsequent blank spots in his memory (particu-

larly of the feeding period), fatigue and a terribly painful headache. Because these symptoms so strongly resemble a hangover, the victims rarely suspect that they have had an encounter with a monstrous creature. And even if they did, few of their acquaintances would believe them.

REPRODUCTION

Khar'lanki reproduce by turning normal humans into new khar'lanki. These new creatures are subservient to the khar'lanki who created them, a factor of the empathic link created by the process of change. To create a new khar'lanki, the prospective "parent" must find a human of the same gender. It burrows its tongue into the victim's cranium as usual, but this time to infect the victim with a mutating virus. This virus spreads to every cell in the victim's body and joins irrevocably with the cell nucleus. Then the victim begins growing a set of retractable claws, poison glands and a tubular tongue. By the end of one month, the unfortunate human will have transformed fully into a khar'lanki.

How frequently a khar'lanki creates a new member of the race is entirely a matter of the "parent's" choice. But most tend to avoid doing so very often, as the race's existence depends upon secrecy, and an excess of khar'lanki would cause a suspicious decrease in the human population.

BEHAVIOR

The khar'lanki are unusual in that they try to pretend they are still human. They are fascinated by human thoughts and emotions. When they feed completely, draining their victim completely of cerebrospinal fluid, they receive a sufficient lump of the victim's memories to allow them a gain of 1 point in whatever was the victim's highest skill. This feeding habit causes the khar'lanki to remember bits and pieces of memory from all its victims, leaving the creature with a mild multiple personality disorder.

To most humans, this makes the khar'lanki seem pleasantly strange and very knowledgeable, adding a charming eccentricity to their mystique.



Lilitu, Stranglers of Babes

Strength: 12 Education: 4 Move: 3/10/20/35
 Constitution: 4 Charisma: 10 Skill/Dam.: 8/2D6
 Agility: 6 Empathy: 14 Hits: 12/25
 Intelligence: 8 Initiative: 3 # Appear: 1D6

Special: The Skill/Dam. statistics above are for a normal unarmed melee strike. However, a lilitu's preferred attack is to grapple its opponent, then drain the victim's blood through the orifices in its hands (see below).

All lilitu possess the ability to Dimension Walk, besides the normal Darkling Empathy skills.

THE MYTHOLOGY

References to Lilith, the "queen" of the lilitu, date back to biblical times. According to legend, she was a demon who strangled newborns and seduced men

in their sleep, draining their blood in a fit of ecstasy. The legends go so far as to claim that she was created by God out of filth and mud to be Adam's first wife. From their union sprang a host of demons—the lilitu.

The lilitu appeared in various mythologies as demons who had long, scraggly hair and no mouth. They served as a suitable explanation for the sudden deaths of infants during the night. Sadly, these quiet, midnight deaths of innocents continue to this day.

THE REALITY

Today, we categorize the deaths of healthy, slumbering newborns as SIDS—sudden infant death syndrome. But this is merely a label placed on what is still a conundrum



to medical science. Science needs to look deeper into the Darkness to uncover the horrible reality of the lilitu, who, among others, are the culprits.

Physical Description

The body of a lilitu looks very much like that of a thin, human female. It appears almost frail, with pinkish skin and long, gangly limbs. The lilitu's dark eyes are sunk deep into its skull. Hanging down well past its shoulders, a lilitu's hair is a matted tangle of mud, dried blood and grit. A lilitu has no mouth on its face, but has a small, mouthlike orifice in the palm of each hand. It is with these that a lilitu steals the "breath of life" from slumbering babes and drinks the blood of sleeping men.

Means of Reproduction

Typically, lilitu venture into our dimension for only one reason—to become impregnated. To reproduce, a lilitu must strangle a human infant, drawing the baby's last breaths through the orifices in its hands. Invigorated by this, the lilitu then uses its Project Emotion ability to seduce a sleeping male, preferably the dead child's father.

During the sexual act, the lilitu drains blood from the hapless man. This blood does not feed the lilitu (what does sustain them is unknown), but is stored in the creature's body and will be used to nourish its developing fetus. The lilitu does not drain so much blood as to kill the father, but will return to him once a month to take more blood until the child is born (approximately six months later). Because the blood of any human male will suffice, the lilitu will attempt to kill the father if its midnight feedings are somehow discovered.

Female offspring from this unholy union become lilitu themselves and venture into our world to become pregnant upon reaching the tender age of 13. Thus, in human terms, the apparent age of any lilitu encountered ranges from 13 to about 70.

It is believed that male offspring look much like their father and much less like their lilitu mother. What happens to them upon birth is unknown, but is rumored to be horrible beyond imagining.

In game terms, a lilitu can automatically score a

stranglehold on a sleeping newborn. Unless someone interrupts the strangling, the infant is doomed.

When seducing a sleeping man, the lilitu uses its Project Emotion ability to instill the victim with feelings of uncontrollable lust. The normal rules for determining the results apply, but the difficulty level for the lilitu's skill rolls is Average. The victim remains asleep during the ordeal and has only vague memories of an erotic, frightening dream upon waking (and is probably very weak due to blood loss).

In rare cases, a very desperate lilitu may attempt to seduce a conscious male. In this situation, the difficulty of its task attempts is one-quarter the skill level, due to the lilitu's horrid appearance. The man has complete recall of what has occurred, which can result in severe emotional trauma—he has been ravaged by a ghastly fiend, and remembers every moment of the ordeal. In order to avoid the tale's spread, the lilitu will typically slay conscious victims.

Combat Abilities

Though it appears quite fragile, a lilitu has a grip of steel. Once it has grappled an opponent, usually by grasping the limbs or neck, the creature begins to drain blood through the mouthlike orifices in the palms of its hands. The mouths cannot penetrate armor, but can bite through normal clothing. Each orifice inflicts 2 points of damage to the location bitten, followed by 2D6 damage per phase to the victim's chest, representing general blood loss. The lilitu stops draining blood as soon as the victim suffers a serious wound, unless it is trying to kill. Because the creature's saliva contains a local anesthetic, the victim feels very little pain while his lifeblood is drained away.

If legends of the lilitu are true, and it seems they are, these creatures have been preying upon us for thousands of years. During this time they must have produced millions of children, not solely female, but male as well. What becomes of these baby boys? Perhaps one of your male characters will receive a knock at the door one night to find a young boy standing there with a strange glint in his eye and a familiar face: "Hello, Father. I've travelled a long, long way."



Marterkind ("Torture Child")

Strength: 1	Education: 1	Move: 2
Constitution: 4	Charisma: 1	Skill/Dam.: —/—
Agility: 2	Empathy: 9	Hits: 10/20*
Intelligence: 7	Initiative: 3	# Appear: 1

*Due to the constant rapid mutation of its form, a marterkind is only affected by fire or explosive damage. Bullets and melee strikes have no effect on it.

Special: Empathic drain (see below).

HISTORY

It is a documented fact that Adolph Hitler was a great believer in the occult, but few people realize just how deep his faith in the dark forces was. During the fall of 1943, Hitler personally authorized the creation of a top-secret scientific department, specializing in the field of genetics and biochemistry, to work on a new form of weaponry that could be used against the Allied forces and eventually on civilian populations.

The purpose of this research unit was to ensure the continuation of the Third Reich by creating a genetically perfect human—based, of course, upon the Aryan ideal—a human who would then become the "super-soldier" of the German race. Hitler believed that this could be accomplished by combining the scientific expertise of his knowledgeable geneticists with the powers of his most trusted astrologers.

By impregnating 10 female test subjects with genetically altered and psychically charged embryos at an advantageous juncture of the planets, the project began.

Unfortunately, 10 of the 12 test subjects died within their first six months of pregnancy, consumed from within by a metastasizing growth that autopsy proved had begun from within the womb (interestingly enough, all signs of the fetus itself had disappeared). But two of the women involved in the experiment survived to see their "children" delivered. The first of these offspring was a faceless abomination, gaunt and sickly in appearance. Fortunately, it was stillborn.

The second child exploded into the world at 3:15 a.m. on a cold winter night in 1944. Unable to hold any particular physical form for more than a moment, it was a mutating nightmare, creating mouths and eyes in its flesh for just seconds before transforming again. Before it could be brought under control, the mother, two orderlies and three guards died horribly, their lives literally drained from their bodies, all while the monstrosity lay writhing and spasming on the birthing table.

Dr. Heinrich Muller, head of the project, informed the Fuhrer of his failure, expecting harsh retribution from his master. However, after studying his report, Hitler ordered him to commence work on another batch of the creatures.

It is unknown whether Muller ever completed this second project, as his laboratories were captured by the Allies in the summer of 1945. It is quite possible, however, that his "children" still live, as no evidence of the project was found in Hamburg. Dr. Muller is known to have died in 1978 in Brazil, but information concerning his creations is scarce.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Each marterkind appears to be a constantly mutating and undulating mass of bilious flesh. Orifices and twisted, malformed limbs constantly form on their bodies and then degenerate into other forms. They are incapable of holding a single physical form for more than two or three seconds, and are reportedly oblivious to the environment around them, as they have no way of maintaining sensory receivers for any length of time.

BEHAVIOR

According to the most detailed reports, a marterkind survives by draining the neural energy from the nervous systems of intelligent creatures.



The marterkind has no physical means of attack.

In game terms, in order to drain a target's mind, the creature must first create an empathic link by Human Empathy. The marterkind must reach beyond the target's basic emotional state and at least into its surface thoughts in order to establish a stable channel for draining the mental energy (this means a minimum Stage Two success is required, higher if the marterkind wishes to reach out to a dozen meters or more). Once this is accomplished, a successful Average test of the marterkind's Empathy attribute will begin draining first the target's Empathy, then its Intelligence. A result of Basic Success will drain 1 point per phase; a Stage Two will drain 2 points; a Stage Three, 3 points, etc. If the marterkind fails at its Empathy test, the initial link is broken. Once its intelligence reaches 0, the target dies.

(If rescued short of death, the victim regains 1 point per hour.)

CURRENT SITUATION

The locations of any existing marterkind are unknown at present, although in August of 2004 the bodies of an entire tribe of Indians were found deep in Bolivia, bearing no marks of physical assault, in keeping with the description of the five original victims back in 1944. Also, there have been whispers among the empathic underground of late to the effect that at least one marterkind has been contacted by and is receiving empathic tutoring from an unidentified source, and that it has been learning such Darkling Empathy skills as Telekinesis and Dimension Walk. If such is the case, this marterkind has taken a quantum leap forward in its deadlines.







Mechaniacals

Not long ago, the tentacular ETs began to experiment with inventing a race of robots that could be sent on independent missions to dangerous proto-dimensions, without the necessity of having a living controller to monitor their progress and update their orders. What was needed was a robot that could extrapolate beyond its basic programming and that could continually resupply itself by scavenging parts from whatever environment it was sent to. A lab was built to conduct the experiments in secrecy on a world within an easily accessible proto-dimension. The experiments were successful in that a mechanical creature was created that could go to an alien environment and make a new body for itself from found materials—including living tissue, when and if it became easier to acquire than inorganic raw materials.

The robots were tested for use and put through several “generations” of evolution to see how they would adapt. Somewhere along the way, however, the new generations lost their programming restrictions and began to scavenge the lab and its personnel for “parts” from which to make new robots. When they met with armed resistance, they moved out into the proto-dimension at large, devouring all material (whether metal or living) in their way.

For reasons known only to the tentacular ETs, rather than simply abandon the experiment and seal the proto-dimensional world off from Earth, the experimenters decided to invent another group of mechanical servants, completely metal warriors programmed specifically to hunt out and destroy the first type. These hunters thinned the scavengers—at first. But they were soon countered by the scavengers’ development of a new weapon, an electrical burst that could scramble a hunter’s programming. The hunters’ self-aware

programming soon showed a glitch that was passed on by the hunter coordination computer—their program mutated from “destroy the mechano-organic life forms” to “destroy all organic life.” The coordination computer passed that programming on to the hunter robots.

Only a few of the ET experimenters survived the slaughter. The proto-dimensional world became covered with robot wars as the two species battled for dominance, scavenging parts from one another in an endless cycle of destruction and rebirth. The few ETs that did not immediately fall victim to their runaway creations survived by fleeing the proto-dimension. The story of their failure soon spread to the rest of the ET community, and a great machine was invented for the express purpose of permanently sealing off the infected proto-dimension.

But some of the ETs’ Dark Masters find the denizens of the machine world useful on occasion. And the proto-dimension lies in such close proximity to Earth’s dimension that environmental conditions such as elevated sunspot activity sometimes breach the barrier and let something wander in or out. Some of the warring machines escape to Earth one way or another, where they run amok, killing and destroying or slaying and building. The scavengers have become known as “symbiods” and the hunters as “steriloids.” Together, they are sometimes referred to as “mechaniacals.”

SYMBIODS

Strength: +3	Education: 2	Move: +0
Constitution: +3	Charisma: 1	Skill/Dam.: +2/x2*
Agility: -1	Empathy: 0	Hits: x2
Intelligence: -2	Initiative: +1	# Appear: 1D6+2

*Besides conducting melee combat, symbiods have the ability to fire, with skill level 5, an electrical pulse that does 1D6 damage (triple damage to electrical machines, including robots) and has a short range of five meters. This pulse





ignores any armor, automatically seeking openings or metallic parts through which to flow.

Special: Symbioids are devoid of feelings, so they cannot be affected by any Empathy skills. They are also technically dead, so they do not feel pain or suffer Initiative reductions from damage.

Hits to the head do quadruple damage to a symbioid.

The statistics modifiers listed are for a symbioid with a mechano-organic body and should be applied to the statistics of whatever once-living creature the referee decides to base the symbioid upon (preferably one the size of a wolf or larger). Symbioids encountered before acquiring a body are equal to Mark I steriloids (see page 63), minus armor protection. Symbioids with purely mechanical bodies are equal to Mark II steriloids (page 63), minus armor protection. These symbioids do not have steriloid weapons, however, they merely have their own electric pulse attack. (See below.)

The symbioids are the product of a race of robots invented by the tentacular ETs. Built originally as exploratory robots for proto-dimensional missions, they resemble half-meter-long ladybug shells equipped with retractable tentacles and walker legs.

Body Building

Upon entering a new environment, a symbioid tries to find materials to build a new body more appropriate to that environment. It can use completely organic material—only largish, mobile creatures are selected—if proper metal is not available. Frequently, a symbioid's body will be a mixture of both metal and organics because they find it easier to power organic tissue with their built-in motors than to build motors for purely mechanical bodies.

Building a body takes a symbioid an hour if it has a good supply of metal and electrical parts, and organic tissue. The resulting assemblage resembles nothing so much as a disgusting cross between a robot and an animated corpse, some-

thing like a dead cyborg model of the original creature, topped by the symbioid's original body as a sort of "head." Building a body from only metal and electrical parts (they can't build from organics alone) takes three hours and makes a tall, clunking robot form. A symbioid using only metals takes 12 hours to build a more agile body.

Reproduction

This propensity to build from organics is not, in itself, what makes the symbioids so dangerous. It is the additional fact that they can reproduce at a relatively rapid rate, as long as the proper materials (refined metal or plastics, and electronic parts) are available. Given these materials, one symbioid can build another from scratch in 10 hours. Thus, the quantity of symbioids in an area can theoretically quadruple roughly every day, as long as supplies hold out.

Behavior

Symbioid psychology can be expressed in one word—multiply. Symbioids exist solely to build other symbioids and increase their numbers. If threatened, they can and will fight (preferring to use their electrical blast rather than close for melee). If outclassed or in danger of being destroyed, they will flee if possible, with the reasoning that a destroyed symbioid cannot make other symbioids.

Symbioids can't (or won't) communicate with anything but another symbioid. A captured symbioid could be wired to a computer net and probed with Computer Empathy, but its basic thought process would always be consumed with overwhelming desire—desire to build a body if it didn't have one, or to create more symbioids if it did.

Symbioids will attack humans (who are perfect for new bodies) and preserve the parts for use in future bodies.

STERILOIDS

Steriloids are killing machines, pure and simple, and they come in all sizes and shapes. For game



purposes, though, they are divided into five basic types:

Mark Is are small, meter-large machines made for stealth and assassination. Mark Is might move on multiple legs, wheels or tracks, or even hover.

Mark IIs are hardier, man-sized machines. Mark IIs might move on multiple legs, wheels or tracks, or even hover.

Mark IIIs are car-sized and move on tracks or, more rarely, legs or wheels.

Mark IVs are tank-sized and tracked.

Mark Vs are building-sized and have to move (very slowly) on titanic tracks.

The steriloids were made for one purpose—to destroy the symbiots—but that one purpose has mutated to “destroy all life.” They perform their new purpose very well. So well, in fact, that they are loathe to leave an area until they’ve seared it to slag.

The small steriloids are mostly interested in hunting mobile life forms (birds, animals, people), while the larger (Mark III-V) models devote themselves to complete life-eradication.

Steriloids hunt anything that has working organic parts, so they destroy both symbiots and walking dead. The vehicle-sized steriloids are particularly fearsome, since they can vaporize whole cities, if given the time, and they are impossible to kill without tanks or other super-heavy weapons normally reserved only for military use. They have their weak spots, though—high-precision weapons (such as rifles or stabilized tank guns) can be fired through gaps in their armor. This adds one difficulty level to the shot, but reduces the steriloid’s armor by half for purposes of the shot’s penetration. Alternatively, brave (or suicidal) individuals can scale up on the robots—braving the lethal pincers, grippers and claws that spring from the machines’ sides—and plant shaped-charges on these vulnerable areas, achieving the same armor-halving effect.

The steriloids are all self-aware and intelligent, their intellect increasing in proportion to size. The

Mark Vs are highly intelligent and learn very swiftly, striving to learn everything, while the smaller models tend to concentrate their education on learning the combat tactics of their foes.

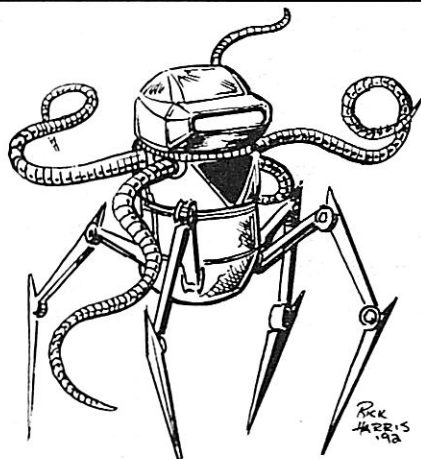
Still, the steriloids are normally used to referring any new and radical data to their master control brain, back in their machine proto-dimension. If trapped on Earth, they are cut off from their master control and forced to make decisions on new data themselves. If presented with a very confusing situation or a choice dilemma, a steriloid may hesitate.

For example, a Mark I or II pursuing two people is likely to hesitate for a phase or two if the targets split up and it can’t pursue them both. It will eventually make a decision to follow one or the other, but a crafty foe can put this hesitation to good use. The overall effect is that steriloids seem stupid, slow and hesitant when they first encounter new situations (like being stuck on Earth). However, they soon learn enough about their environment to lose this seeming stupidity and to begin acting with complete confidence.

A human could communicate with a steriloid—the machines have radios and speakers for voice communications. Some of the larger ones might even seem quite loquacious. However, they treat communication as just another form of intelligence-gathering and, in the end, cannot be swayed from their purpose of killing.

A Mark IV or V might be bargained with, perhaps to trade a small group of living beings (the PCs) for a larger group (perhaps a nest of insectoid ETs). But the bargainers should use the time gained to flee beyond the steriloid’s range, for it will surely come back to destroy them after it’s finished with the larger task. Steriloids are very thorough.

Do not inflict steriloids lightly on the average adventure group. A Mark I is an exciting and dangerous foe; a Mark II will require heavy weapons to kill; and the larger ones are projects for concerted military antitank efforts, with the expectation of high casualties.



Weapon Data

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
Energy beam	1	5	1	3	—	—	—	20

Damage Record

Head:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chest:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Abdomen:	<input type="checkbox"/>
R. Arm:	<input type="checkbox"/>	L. Arm:	<input type="checkbox"/>		
R. Leg:	<input type="checkbox"/>	L. Leg:	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Mark I (Nonvehicular Robot)

Like a small (one-meter) version of its tentacular ET creators, the Mark I steriloid tends to have eight limbs—four arms and four legs. For combat purposes, these limbs are paired together, with each pair being treated as a single hit location on the bipedal hit location chart.

Com Move: 35/25

Fuel Cap: NA

Fuel Cons: NA

Initiative: 5

Agility: 5

Strength: 5

Constitution: 10

Skills: Observation 8, Small Arms (Pistol) 8, Stealth 5, Unarmed Combat Damage 7

Wt: 60 kg

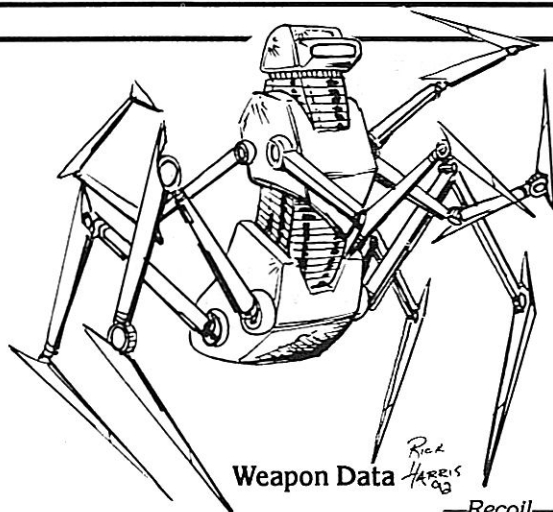
Night Vision: White light - spotlight

Armor Values

Head: 1

Chest/Abdomen: 1

Arms/Legs: 1



Weapon Data

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
Energy beam	1	10	2	8	—	—	—	15

Damage Record

Head:	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Chest:	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Abdomen:	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
R. Arm:	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	L. Arm:	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		
R. Leg:	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	L. Leg:	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		

Mark II (Nonvehicular Robot)

The Mark II steriloid is twice the size of the Mark I (roughly two meters tall). It tends to be configured the same as the Mark I, with eight limbs—four arms and four legs. For combat purposes, these limbs are paired together, with each pair treated as a single hit location on the bipedal hit location chart.

Com Move: 30/20

Fuel Cap: NA

Fuel Cons: NA

Initiative: 5

Agility: 6

Strength: 20

Constitution: 20

Skills: Observation 6, Small Arms (Rifle) 8, Stealth 3, Unarmed Combat Damage 11

Wt: 185 kg

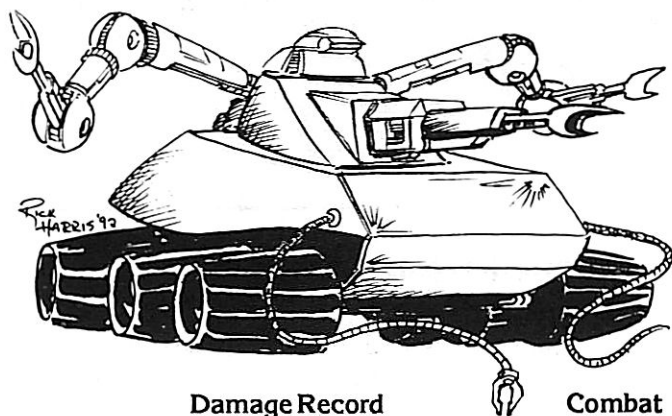
Night Vision: White light spotlight

Armor Values

Head: 3

Chest/Abdomen: 3

Arms/Legs: 2



Mark III (Vehicular Robot)

The Mark III is the size of a car and is treated as a vehicle in combat. When the "crew" servos or sensors ("sights") are destroyed, the Mark III cannot shoot. When the engine is destroyed, it cannot engage in any activity, but it can be repaired. When the brain is destroyed, the Mark III is dead and beyond repair. The Mark III has several energy beams and can use weapons it has picked up. It can use as many weapons simultaneously as it has "crew" servos, at different targets. Because the Mark III is considered a vehicular robot, it cannot be engaged in melee combat; it *can*, however, conduct melee attacks versus living creatures and nonvehicular robots.

Damage Record

"Crew" Servos: ☐☐☐
 Sensors (Sight/Vision): ☐☐
 Main Energy Gun: ☐☐
 Secondary Energy Gun 1: ☐
 Secondary Energy Gun 2: ☐
 Traverse: ☐
 Engine: ☐
 Brain (Hit on "Ammo" Hits): ☐
 Suspension: Minor damage ☐ Immobilized ☐

Combat

Statistics
 Config: Trt
 Susp: T: 3
 TF: 8
 TS: 6
 TR: 5
 HF: 8
 HS: 6
 HR: 5

Cruise Speed: 120/70

Com Move: 30/25

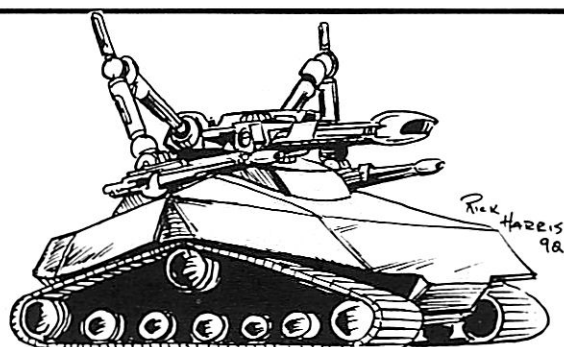
Fuel Cap: NA

Fuel Cons: NA

Skills: Heavy Weapons 6, Melee Combat (Unarmed) 8, Observation 3, Small Arms (Rifle) 10, Unarmed Combat Damage 1D6+1
 Wt: 1.5 tons
 Crew: 0 (Robot Initiative: 5)
 Night Vision: Radar, thermal imaging

Weapon Data

Weapon	Round	Rng	Damage	Pen
Main gun	—	200	20	10/5/1/0
Secondary gun	—	30	10	2/1/0



Mark IV (Vehicular Robot)

The Mark IV is the size of a tank and is treated as a vehicle in combat. When the "crew" servos or sensors ("sights") are destroyed, the Mark IV can no longer shoot. When the engine is destroyed, the Mark IV cannot engage in any activity, but it can be repaired. When the brain is destroyed, the Mark IV is dead and beyond repair. The Mark IV has several energy beams. It can also use weapons it has picked up with the same skill of 6. It can use as many weapons simultaneously as it has "crew" servos, firing each at different targets, if desired. Because the Mark IV is considered a vehicular robot, it cannot be engaged in melee combat; it *can*, however, conduct melee attacks versus living creatures and non-vehicular robots.

Damage Record

"Crew" Servos: ☐☐☐☐
 Sensors (Sight/Vision): ☐☐☐
 Main Energy Gun: ☐
 Secondary Energy Gun 1: ☐
 Secondary Energy Gun 2: ☐
 Tertiary Energy Gun 1: ☐
 Tertiary Energy Gun 2: ☐
 Traverse: ☐
 Engine: ☐
 Brain (Hit on "Ammo" Hits): ☐
 Suspension: Minor damage ☐ Immobilized ☐

Combat

Statistics
 Config: Trt
 Susp: T: 6
 TF: 55
 TS: 40
 TR: 25
 HF: 60
 HS: 40
 HR: 35

Cruise Speed: 100/60

Com Move: 25/15

Fuel Cap: NA

Fuel Cons: NA

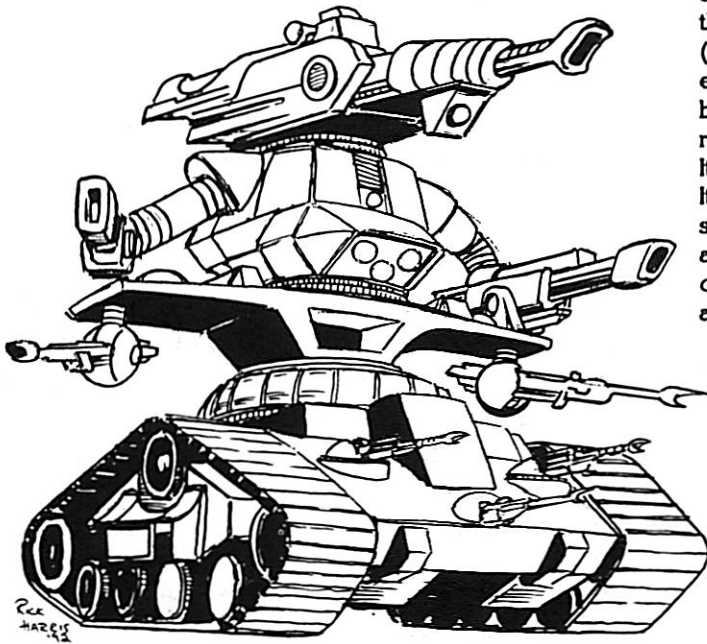
Skills: Heavy Weapons 7, Melee Combat (Unarmed) 7, Observation 5, Small Arms (Rifle) 8, Unarmed Combat Damage 1D10
 Wt: 45 tons
 Crew: 0 (Robot Initiative: 6)
 Night Vision: Radar, thermal imaging

Weapon Data

Weapon	Round	Rng	Damage	Pen
Main gun	—	350	24	40/30/20/5
Secondary gun	—	200	20	10/5/1/0
Tertiary gun	—	30	10	2/1/0

Mark V (Vehicular Robot)

The Mark V is the size of a medium building and is treated as a vehicle in combat. Firing at it is two difficulty levels easier than normal, due to its size. When the "crew" servos or sensors ("sights") are destroyed, the Mark V cannot shoot. When the engine is destroyed, it cannot engage in any activity, but it can be repaired. When the brain is destroyed, it is dead and beyond repair. The Mark V has several energy beams of varying sizes. It can also use weapons it has picked up, with the same skill. It can use as many weapons simultaneously as it has "crew" servos, at different targets. Because the Mark V is considered a vehicular robot, it cannot be engaged in melee combat; it can, however, conduct melee attacks versus living creatures and nonvehicular robots.



Cruise Speed: 40/25
Com Move: 10/5
Fuel Cap: NA
Fuel Cons: NA

Skills: Heavy Weapons 8,
 Melee Combat (Unarmed) 6,
 Observation 8, Small Arms
 (Rifle) 6, Unarmed Combat
 Damage 2D6+2
Wt: 800 tons
Crew: 0 (Robot Initiative: 6)
Night Vision: Radar, thermal imaging

Damage Record

"Crew" Servos: ☐☐☐☐☐☐
 Sensors (Sight/Vision): ☐☐☐☐
 Main Energy Gun: ☐
 Secondary Energy Gun 1: ☐
 Secondary Energy Gun 2: ☐
 Tertiary Energy Gun 1: ☐
 Tertiary Energy Gun 2: ☐
 Antipersonnel Energy Gun 1: ☐
 Antipersonnel Energy Gun 2: ☐
 Antipersonnel Energy Gun 3: ☐
 Antipersonnel Energy Gun 4: ☐
 Antipersonnel Energy Gun 5: ☐
 Traverse: ☐
 Engine: ☐
 Brain (Hit on "Ammo" Hits): ☐
 Suspension: Minor damage ☐ Immobilized ☐

Combat Statistics

Config: Trt
Susp: T: 30
TF: 180
TS: 130
TR: 95
HF: 210
HS: 150
HR: 125

Weapon Data

Weapon	Round	Rng	Damage	Pen
Main gun	—	500	40	150/130/120/100
Secondary gun	—	350	24	40/30/20/5
Tertiary gun	—	200	20	10/5/1/0

—Recoil—

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
Antipersonnel	1	10	2	—	—	—	—	30



Mesmer

Strength: 3	Education: 5	Move: 2/8/15/30
Constitution: 3	Charisma: 7	Skill/Dam.: 6/1D6
Agility: 6	Empathy: 9	Hits: 10/20
Intelligence: 9	Initiative: 3	# Appear: 1

Special: This creature is so adept at projecting terrifying visions into its victims' minds that it effectively combines the Project Thought and Project Emotion skills into one skill—Project Terror. It has Project Terror and Animal, Darkling and Human Empathy skills at a level equal to twice its Empathy attribute.

It can be as simple as walking into a store or restaurant and suddenly losing consciousness. It

can be traumatic enough to cause permanent insanity. The attack of a mesmer is incredibly difficult to resist and sometimes impossible even to detect—until it's too late.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The mesmer is a special subtype of humanoid ET. As such, it looks basically human, but with an enlarged, hairless head and large, dark, round eyes. The creatures disguise themselves in bulky, hooded robes and such when in human company, and they can project an image of normalcy into a viewer's mind if they notice someone watching them closely.

MODUS OPERANDI

Besides possessing the usual Darkling Empathy skills, mesmerers have developed such an expertise with projecting terrifying images into a victim's mind that they have effectively created a new empathic projection skill—Project Terror. As with other empathic projection skills, an empathic link must be established with Human, Animal or Darkling Empathy (whichever is appropriate) before the projection skill can be used, and the quality of the link serves as a limit to the quality of the projection.

The Project Terror skill enables the mesmer to inflict an assortment of terrible hallucinogenic experiences upon its target. The specific experience the mesmer introduces depends on what the mesmer detects when it first establishes an empathic link.

The mesmer uses its Human (or Animal or Darkling) Empathy skill to determine what the target's deeper fears might be at the moment, and if any particularly strong phobias exist. The fear it uses might be situational as well. A convenience store worker might be nervous about being robbed late at night, so a mesmer would probably project the illusion that some gang members have just broken in and are threatening anyone in the store.

The level of terror generated can be so great that the victim is immobilized from fright. In order for this to happen, the mesmer has to achieve at least a Stage Four success with Project Terror. If this occurs, the target becomes paralyzed with



fear and is not in any way aware of what is going on around him. This paralysis is in effect for as long as the mesmer maintains the projection. It can maintain the use of this skill and perform very simple actions (like opening doors or windows, walking across a room) but cannot operate any equipment or instruments.

If a target of the Project Terror skill is not paralyzed, he is still confused enough by the conflicting images of the projection and the real world that all task attempts are increased by one level of difficulty; the victim's Initiative rating is reduced by 1; and the victim cannot communicate more than three words at a time effectively.

The target does not need eye contact with the mesmer and does not even need to know of the mesmer's presense for the projection to take place.

If necessary, a mesmer will use Willpower Drain to reduce a target's resistance enough for a Stage Four success to be gained, if the target proved resistant to an earlier projection.

Empathic Slavery

Once a target has been paralyzed, the mesmer will often take advantage of the situation to begin brainwashing the target to respond to commands upon a later order.

This conditioning takes a total number of days equal to $3 + (2 \times \text{Intelligence})$. For example, a character with Intelligence 4 would take 11 days to reprogram. Each day, the mesmer must reestablish a Stage Four success at Project Terror to maintain the process. The nature of the programming involves imprinting instructions into the target's mind.

Mesmers typically use humans to undertake complex tasks—usually involving some kind of sabotage. Targets of mesmers are, therefore, people who have some kind of access to sensitive areas, such as airline mechanics, train station operators, bodyguards, air traffic controllers and the like. Victims become completely convinced that the only way of ending their waking night-

mares is by doing whatever it is that the mesmer has planted in their minds.

Once the task has been completed, the victim generally slips into catatonia and has to be revived with psychotherapy and/or empathic therapy. The duration of the catatonia is based upon the character's Intelligence rating and the skillfulness of whoever

is giving treatment. Consult the Catatonia Duration Table at right to determine how long the character remains catatonic. Catatonic characters must make an Average roll versus Intelligence to snap out of it, but they cannot attempt the roll until they are eligible according to the table. If they fail the roll, they will have to wait until the next longer period on the table to try again.

Thwarting the Plan

If the effects of a mesmer's brainwashing can be recognized early enough, they can be reversed *before* the victim completes the task assigned. To do so requires that the treater pass a Difficult test of Human Empathy, then scores at least a Stage Three success to reach the "real" person inside the shell of terror and programming left by the mesmer. For every hour the empath spends with the victim, the victim is eligible to make a Difficult roll versus Intelligence to recover. Victims who succeed at this roll have defeated their brainwashing and return to a normal state of mind. They are likely to have nightmares about the experience for quite some time, however.

Catatonia Duration

Statistic Total*	Duration of Catatonia
19+	1 hour
17-18	3 hours
15-16	9 hours
13-14	20 hours
11-12	2 days
9-10	7 days
7-8	14 days
5-6	28 days
3-4	36 days
1-2**	Permanent

*Victim's Intelligence + Therapist's Psychology or Human Empathy (whichever is higher).

**Or failed 3-4 roll.



Man in Black (MiB)

Strength: 13 Education: 4 Move: 2/8/15/30
 Constitution: 12 Charisma: 4 Skill/Dam.: 9/1D6
 Agility: 5 Empathy: 4 Hits: 14/28
 Intelligence: 5 Initiative: 6 # Appear: 1D6+2

Special: Unlike many Dark Minions, MiBs are able to use many types of human equipment, including ranged weapons. They have a skill of Small Arms (Pistol) 6. They also may have Vehicle Use (Wheeled Vehicle) 2. In addition, they have the usual Darkling Empathy skills.

THE MYTHOLOGY

The folklore that has sprung up around UFOs and many other forms of nonhuman technology is full of tales of "men in black" or "MiBs"—mysterious figures thought by many to be members of a covert government or military agency striving to prevent investigators from uncovering secrets humanity "is not meant to know." These tales tell of MiBs intimidating researchers into dropping their investigations, seizing or destroying evidence, confiscating notes and photographs, and even causing the disappearance of particularly tenacious investigators.

While most of those who believe in tales of MiBs think the mysterious figures are human employees of the government, and thus supporters of the status quo, a few suspect that the MiBs are actually aliens.

THE REALITY

This latter group is at least partly right. There is a race of Dark Minions who perform the functions of, and perfectly fit the bill as, the mythical MiBs. Among those few humans who know the truth, there is still debate as to the "direction of causality" involved. Is the race of Dark Minions behind all the stories of MiBs? Or were the folktales just that—until the Dark Minions appeared and took on the identity of MiBs, perverting the tales to their own ends?

In any case, the Dark Minion MiBs function in much the way that UFOlogists have always said MiBs act. They seem to be closely related to ETs, working subtly or not so subtly to prevent investigators from learning anything of consequence about extraterrestrial visitors or their technology. Whenever humans are close to discovering something important about DarkTek or about the nature of the invasion, MiBs frequently appear on the scene to squelch the research, destroy evidence, and occasionally abduct or kill the humans involved.



Physical Appearance

MiBs are quite human in appearance. They tend to be large, often 1.9 meters tall or more, with a very powerful build. Normally, they wear conservative dark suits, and overcoats or trenchcoats. They also wear slouch-brimmed hats, seemingly designed to shadow their faces, with mirrored sunglasses. All their clothes and their obvious equipment is human in design and origin, seemingly chosen to imply that the MiBs actually are humans, and government agents at that.

Beneath their clothes, however, MiBs are definitely nonhuman. Their skeletal structure and musculature are undeniably alien. While their broad faces appear, at first glance, to be human, on closer examination their alien nature becomes apparent. Their thin-lipped mouths have too many teeth; their incisors and canines appear roughly human, but MiBs have two rows of molars.

Their eyes are their least human feature, having no whites, just large blue irises, and their large pupils are octagonal in shape. The creatures wear sunglasses to disguise this fact and to protect them from bright lights. Without their glasses, MiBs see exceptionally well in even the dimmest lights, and they can see far into the IR end of the spectrum. In all but total darkness, MiBs suffer none of the penalties to accuracy that humans suffer. When not wearing sunglasses or other protection in illumination brighter than sunlight, however, MiBs perform all tasks at one stage of difficulty higher than normal, due to the pain and distraction bright light causes them.

MiBs have a relatively high Education attribute, particularly for Dark Minions, and they frequently have education-related skills, such as Psychology, at high levels. All MiBs—or at least those that operate among humans—are fluent in at least one human language. Their voices are well modulated, and are low and powerful as a result of the large resonant space of their chests. They never have a discernible accent, always speaking in the ideal of whatever language they are using. Few MiBs are literate, however, and those that can read do so slowly.

Combat Abilities

Except in the most unusual circumstances, MiBs

avoid combat, preferring to use intimidation and persuasion to achieve their goals. They use their Human Empathy and Project Emotion abilities to create a sense of despair and futility in whoever they deal with. If circumstances warrant it, however, they are dangerous warriors. A blow from a MiB's hand inflicts 1D6 damage. In addition, MiBs invariably carry some form of weapon, usually a human-built pistol or submachine-gun, although occasionally they are armed with hand-portable death rays or other examples of DarkTek. Fortunately for humanity, MiBs seem incapable of accepting cybernetic enhancements. Sometimes they wear human-style body armor; this is usually limited to Kevlar vests.

MiBs can be fierce fighters, willing to battle to the death if a mission requires it. MiBs can and will commit suicide at will if necessary to avoid being questioned or examined. One combat phase after death, the body of an MiB bursts into flame and is totally consumed within one combat turn. An immolating MiB burns at a high temperature, easily high enough to ignite any flammable material in contact with the body. The flames of a burning MiB inflict damage on those in contact with the body as does burning gasoline (see page 97 in the rulebook). The temperature is easily high enough to "cook off" ammunition or explosives carried by the MiB.

Other Notes of Interest

There is some debate as to whether all MiBs are "loyal" to the Dark Ones. Some humans suspect that some MiBs are working to protect the few extraterrestrials who have not been suborned by the Dark Ones. Others, however, fear that the interest some MiBs show in the "free" extraterrestrials comes from their desire to hunt down and destroy these "renegades."

MiBs appear to be sexless. Various theories exist as to their mode of reproduction, but the creatures' disconcerting habit of bursting into flame upon death has kept these speculations as just that—unproven theories. It is thought that MiBs are omnivores. Again, this is unproven, as no MiB has ever been seen to eat (despite some people's assurances that they like strawberry ice cream).



Mimic

Strength: 2	Education: 2	Move: 6/10/20*
Constitution: 5	Charisma: 1	Skill/Dam.: 4*/1D6+1
Agility: 8	Empathy: 6	Hits: 10/20
Intelligence: 3	Initiative: 3	# Appear: 1

Special: Mimics possess Darkling Empathy at skill level 10, Observation 10, Stalking 5 and Project Emotion/Thought 8.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The mimic, in its true form, is a gaseous creature, about the same consistency as tomato soup. Its color is usually a neutral grey, though it can change this at will. The mimic can, after observing an object for several minutes, change into an exact replica of that object.

For some reason not understood, however, there is always one flaw in the replica. (For example, a mimic might imitate an analog clock, with the details perfect except that the hands are rotating counterclockwise instead of clockwise.)

Mimics are usually detectable on success at a Difficult: Observation roll, but the difficulty of the test will largely depend on how obvious the referee makes the flaw and whether or not the character is looking for it.

MISSION

Mimics are employed by Dark Lords largely for surveillance purposes. They can move from room to room to follow a conversation, or even eavesdrop by remaining on a person in an inconspicuous manner (disguised as a pen, for example). Mimics are superior to other means of eavesdropping for these reasons.

ABILITIES

There are few limits to what a mimic can imitate. Size is rarely a limiting factor because mimics can change their density at will. However, the larger the object is, the less solid it will feel if touched. A mimic may have trouble imitating humans or other animate objects, depending

on the situation. Mimics only imitate outward appearances. They have no voice, communicating with their kind and others who can understand via empathy. So if a mimic were to imitate a human being, it would not be able to talk or laugh.

A mimic will also hesitate to imitate something it recognizes as having unattached parts. If a character should attempt to remove one of the parts (like taking a book from a mimic disguised as a bookshelf), the part wouldn't move, drawing unwanted attention. In all cases, the creature tries to mimic some singular item unless it has no alternative.

Unlike other Dark Races, the mimic uses its Project Emotion and Project Thought skills not to cause terror, but merely to enhance the facade it has created. Because of the way in which mimics communicate, their skill level in Project Thought/Emotion and Darkling Empathy are unusually high for their innate abilities. The mimic also utilizes its Stalking skill to keep up on those it has been assigned to monitor, should it not be able to somehow place itself on their person.

Combat

If a mimic is discovered, it will flee. If, for some reason, the mimic cannot escape (under a doorjamb, through a keyhole, etc.), it will expand its bulk so that it becomes a haze. A mimic may not expand more than this and may not contract to a size smaller than a tennis ball. It cannot attack or be attacked in this gaseous form. Blows pass through the gaseous body, and it is too insubstantial to be much more than a breeze on a character's face.

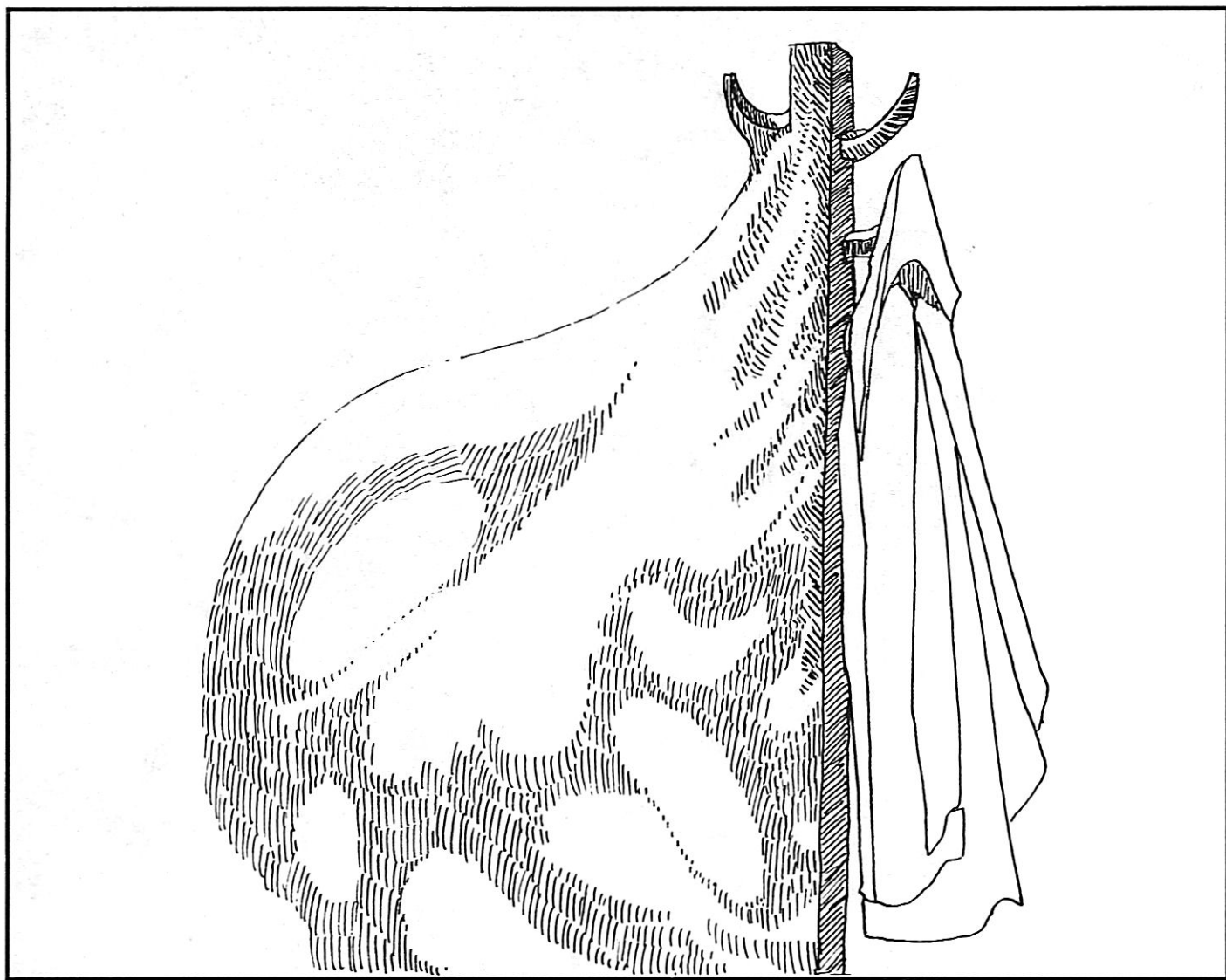
If there is absolutely no other alternative, a mimic will solidify a portion of its mass to the hardness of bone with the general shape of a large club and will then attack with a Melee Combat (Armed) skill of 4.

If a mimic is killed, its body dissipates into nothingness.

The mimic uses flying as its main mode of movement, though it can also push itself along the ground at a rate of three meters per phase.

SOCIAL HABITS

Most mimics live alone, although there are a few large groups of them (10 to 30) in most major

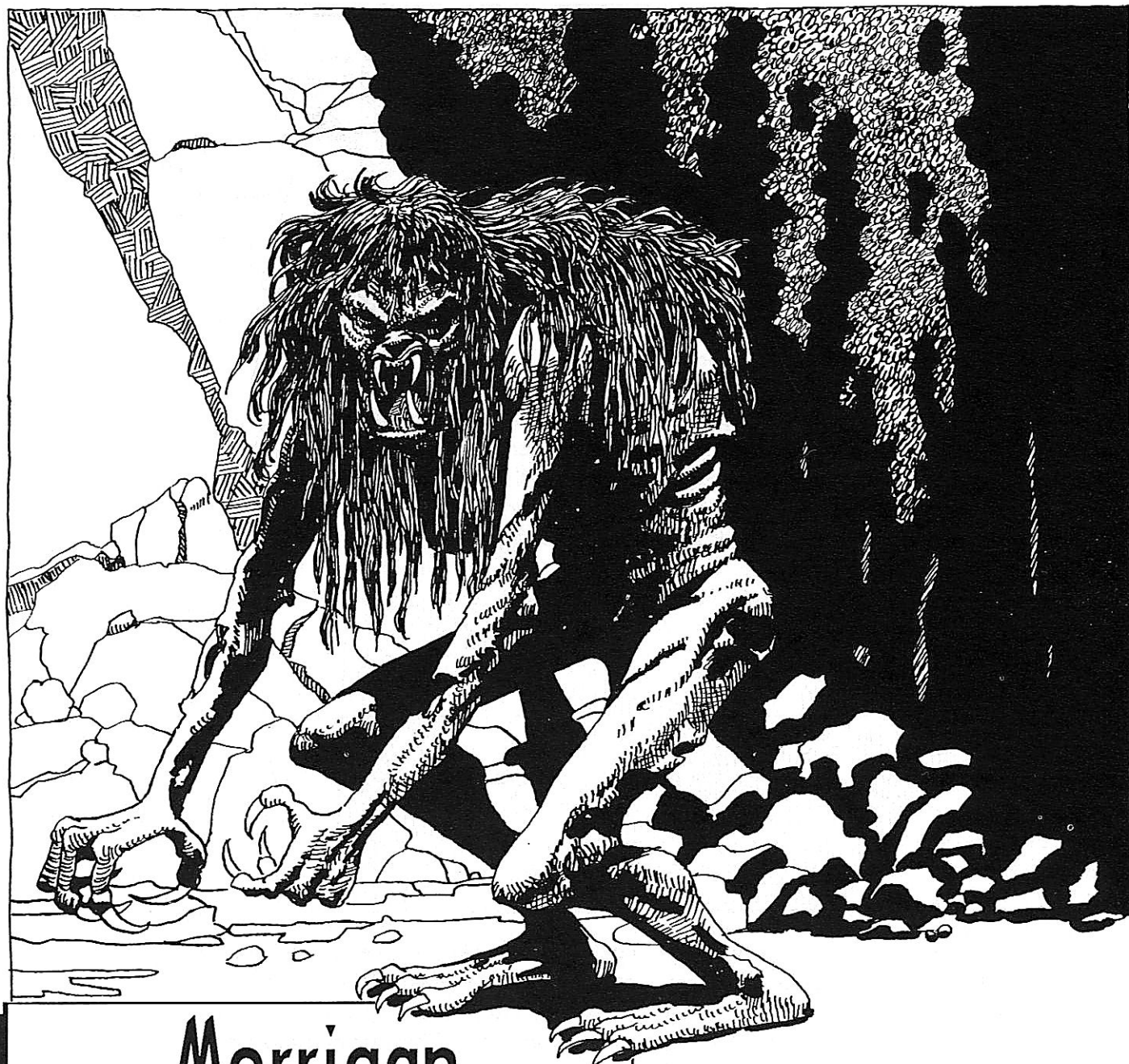


metroplexes. These larger groups are typically assembled by a Dark Lord in order to keep them close at hand and in a central location. Mimics live mostly in dark, undisturbed places such as sewer systems, underground access tunnels, corners of subways, unused basements, etc. The larger groups generally dig their own tunnels somewhere in a small, sleepy suburb from which to base their operations into the city.

Mimics are asexual, reproducing when they have reached a certain age by splitting into component mimics of varying sizes, each with their own personality and intelligence. The mimics are

continually growing, so the "parent" mimic will grow again until it is time to split once more.

All mimics are inherently mischievous, as well as rather cowardly. They are quick to run at any sign of danger, and they live to incite chaos and confusion. When mimics aren't working for a Dark Lord, they look for opportunities to cause confusion and wreak havoc on humans. Mimics sometimes take great delight in such things as dissolving into mist in front of people's eyes or forming into objects that can't be operated (e.g., forming into a book that someone tries to open, but cannot).



Morrigan

Strength: 12	Education: 6	Move: 4/10/25/50
Constitution: 8	Charisma: 9	Skill/Dam.: 6/4D6
Agility: 5	Empathy: 4	Hits: 15/30
Intelligence: 4	Initiative: 5	# Appear: 1

Special: Dimension Walk, Presence Sense (see below).

THE MYTHOLOGY

The mythology of the ancient Celtic people, who once held much of northern Europe as their own, is filled with tales of great demons and harsh, unforgiving gods. These terrible entities demanded offerings of blood and human lives to satisfy their lusts



and hungers, and it was the duty of the great and powerful druids to provide sacrifices from among the tribes.

Among these deities and demons, one of the most terrible and cruel was Morrigan, the destroyer. Little is told of her origins except that she was born of darkness and destruction during the terrible years of the Fomorian wars.

The legends tell how she was brought into being by the druids as a weapon of vengeance to use against the Fomorian hordes that had destroyed the land and enslaved the people. She fell upon the sea demons in a hail of bloodshed and destruction so great that even Balor of the evil eye, the greatest of the Fomorians, fled from the battle.

However, the Morrigan still held within her the lust for destruction and blood. Even as the last Fomorian fell to the ground, she turned upon her creators, tearing into their ranks, cutting down warriors and druids alike with her blood-stained talons. Thus began her reign of darkness in the myths of the Celtic tribes.

For seven years she roamed the lands, leaving the Earth scorched and lifeless in her wake. In desperation, the druids turned to Dagda, the God of the Earth, who—after a long and bloody battle—imprisoned the Morrigan beneath the Earth for eternity, never again to walk the realms of humanity.

THE REALITY

The Morrigan is an image from hell itself. Its reality is horrifyingly close to the reports of mythology.

Physical Description

The Morrigan stands some three meters tall when at her full height, but stoops down to just over two meters when she moves. Her skin is blistered and, in some places, rotted, revealing the twisted, tumorous bones beneath. Her huge claws are as strong as steel, yet appear cracked, having the texture and color of ancient ivory. Her eyes are dark as pools of night, absorbing light, yet she can see far better than any human. Her huge fangs and twin tusks are rotten and black

with age, yet they are as mighty as her vicious talons. She is as strong and fast as a bear, and her senses are as those of a wolf. The Morrigan is virtually a manifestation of death itself.

Ceremony of Summoning

Although she is trapped "beneath the Earth" (actually held in a proto-dimensional prison), the Morrigan can be released through the use of an ancient ceremony, supposedly lost centuries ago. If called by this ceremony, she will appear before sunrise in a shower of bloody rain, to begin her dark crusade once again. She leaves her proto-dimensional prison by means of the Dimension Walk skill, which initiators of the ceremony empower with their own Empathy (a combined Empathy rating of 50 is required). Few beings are willing to summon such a destructive creature, but bands of dark elves have been known to do so upon occasion.

Behavior

The Morrigan is untiring in the pursuit of her quarry, and even those who hide in fear of her wrath cannot long escape death.

The Morrigan does not hunt her prey using her normal senses. Instead, she uses a form of Human Empathy called Presence Sense to track her victims by the radiance of their very souls. Once the Morrigan is on your trail, she will never give up the chase.

This evil creature is also of an immortal race and thus can never be slain by mortal weapons. So great was the vengeance of the ancient druids that their creation was indestructable, yet capable of destruction far beyond the dreams of humanity. If she is "killed" while in this world, Dagda's curse transports her immediately from the land back to her eternal prison, where she licks her wounds and awaits her next call to Earth.

Few remember the Morrigan except in the legends of the Celtic race. Even fewer realize the dark truth that these legends hold. Of those cursed mortals who are unfortunate enough to meet face-to-face with this demon of vengeance, few have lived to tell the tale.



Penanggalan

Strength: 5 Education: 5 Move: 1/6/12/22
Constitution: 6 Charisma: 4* Skill/Dam.: 4*/1D10
Agility: 4* Empathy: 17 Hits: 20*
Intelligence: 9 Initiative: 3* # Appear: 1

*These attributes are doubled when the penanggalan is in its "flying head" form.

Special: Telekinesis (for flight only). Limited Dissolution (see below).

Penanggalan suffer no damage from hits to any location but the head. They do not suffer double damage from head hits, and they heal very quickly from wounds (as per the rules for bloodkin vampires). Neither penanggalan nor the bodies they inhabit suffer Initiative reductions from damage taken. The bodies become unusable after taking a total of 20 hits, however.

THE MYTHOLOGY

Over the centuries, penanggalan have appeared in numerous mythologies, most accurately represented in the Malayan version of the vampire tale.

The Malayan vampires were abominations consisting of essentially undead humanoids able to detach their head and internal organs from their body. Once free of their torso, they could fly about at will, feeding upon the blood of the living.

The Malayan tales come close to the truth, but are not completely accurate.

RECENT REPORTS

Of late, reports of modern penanggalan attacks have been radioed out of Malaysia. At first, there was only one highly questionable account, but more quickly followed. Now there have been reports from virtually every continent, including several from North America.

All the reports are essentially the same—the witnesses tell of seeing a man approaching them. Then, as he neared, his head tore free of his torso, dripping the red

and black slop of his internal organs. The head was said to fly with extraordinary agility, deftly maneuvering itself over a victim, which it throttled with its dangling organs. Some few who have reported these incidences also claim to have seen insectile protrusions dangling from the thing's neck, protrusions which were forced into the victim's eye sockets.

One strange fact keeps most folks from believing in the existence of the penanggalan: Many of the so-called "victims" of the attacks are seen in perfect health the very next day. All such "survivors" fervently deny that anything unusual has happened to them. Medical examinations have verified their good health, casting the eye of disbelief on many formerly reputable witnesses.

THE TRUTH

The true form of a penanggalan is rarely seen, as they spend most of their time in a partially dissolute state inside the heads of human hosts. If they are spotted within a few combat phases of leaving a host, they appear as a head flying through the air with lungs, heart, and stomach dangling below. A successful Difficult check of Observation when first encountering a penanggalan in its flying head form will reveal the presence of insectile limbs hanging within the mass dangling beneath the head.

Physical Description

Once they have had a chance to remove the detritus of their last host from themselves, penanggalan resemble nothing so much as a black jellyfish on roach's legs. No facial features are readily discernible in the mass, though careful examination will reveal several dark spots which contain the thing's only sensory apparatus. The creature's legs are useless for any sort of movement (they use Telekinesis to fly) and are mainly used to grasp onto a struggling new host. Then the creature uses Dissolution to pass itself through the host's scalp and skull, permeating the victim's brain, effectively becoming a new part of the host's body.

Penanggalan must have a constant supply of new hosts. As parasites, they die quite rapidly if



not encased in a human body. The creature's gelatinous composition is only truly safe within the confines of another creature's skull, most desirably a human's.

Feeding Habits

Penanggalan feed very little, requiring the equivalent of only 2 damage points a day of blood, drained from their host. While infested by a penanggalan, a host is fully aware, but unable to break free of the control imposed on its body. Penanggalan are fond of causing harm to a host's loved ones, relishing the horror it invokes. Once a host is near death, the penanggalan will use the victim's last energies to find another host.

Combat Abilities

If forced to engage in combat, a penanggalan's host is often so damaged that the penanggalan must leave rather abruptly. The penanggalan occupies the head of the host and can only be damaged by head hits. However, the host body will become nonfunctional after sustaining 20 hits, and the penanggalan will be forced to depart. To do so, it reverses its Dissolution ability,

becoming very solid, thereby causing the host's head to burst apart, upon which the penanggalan leaves the now headless body.

This trauma of being outside a protective skull causes a penanggalan 2 points of damage every combat phase (after the first) that it remains without a host.

Once a target is chosen, the penanggalan will attempt to grapple it. On a 1D10 roll of 1-4, any character attacking the penanggalan during the grappling will strike the wrong target. As the penanggalan is only large enough to grapple its foe's head, this is where any missed attacks aimed at the creature will hit.

Targets that are successfully immobilized by the penanggalan's grappling are then subject to infestation. Three phases after they have been pinned by the penanggalan, the creature will have penetrated the skull. At this point, the penanggalan is in total control of its target and cannot be removed by any means short of killing the host. Medical examinations will reveal nothing out of the ordinary, though X-rays might reveal a slight cloud within the skull (assuming that a penanggalan would submit to being photographed in this way).



Plagueling

Strength: 3 Education: 7 Move: 2/8/15/30 (20)
 Constitution: 4 Charisma: 9 (1) Skill/Dam.: 6/3p4*
 Agility: 6 Empathy: 4 Hits: 10/20
 Intelligence: 4 Initiative: 4 (3) # Appear: 1D6+3

*Plagueling poison damage works a bit differently than normal—it is not truly poison, but disease. The number before the “p” is still the immediate damage done by the method of exposure (in this case, a clawing attack), but the second number is the damage done per day

rather than per phase. As with poison, all hits are considered to be applied to the chest, though symptoms will manifest all over the body. Once sufficient points have been accrued to cause death, the victim liquifies into a puddle of rot and decay.

Special: Reverse Dissolution at skill level 8—the creatures can liquify at will, but must roll to become solid. Plaguelings prefer to move and fight in a dissolute state, which is their original form. Attributes listed within parentheses reflect their abilities in this form.



THE REPORTS

Humanity has forever been involved in an ongoing war with disease. With the coming of the Dark, new and ever more hideous diseases have arisen. Of late, some locales are reporting a particularly horrific plague which breaks down the connective tissues in a human body and, over a period of several days, reduces its victims to puddles of slime.

THE REALITY

The “disease” being reported is actually the digestive process of a creature that infects its victims with digestive organisms, then returns to soak up the resulting nutrients at a later time. Some members of the empathic underground have begun calling the creature the “plagueling.”

Physical Description

Plaguelings are liquid creatures in their natural state, able to fit through any space that is not completely airtight. In this amorphous state, they look like puddles of pink oil with clotted, dark clouds and strings of sandy matter swirling within. Their smell is atrocious, stinking of decay and rot, and is easily detectable at 20 meters or more.

Plaguelings are rarely seen in this form, however, as it immediately makes them a target. Normally, they masquerade as humans, at which they are quite adept. Though their odor is less intense in this state, they must mask it with perfumes and colognes. Animals can still easily detect the stench and will not come anywhere near a plagueling if they can help it. Humans are not nearly so perceptive and will need to make a Difficult test of Observation to notice the odor. The only other distinguishing feature of a plagueling masquerading as human is its long, black fingernails, dark with concentrated digestive viruses.

Dark Disease

Plaguelings feed on human flesh. However, they have no internal digestive tract and must rely on specially tailored viruses—the “plague” or-

ganisms—to predigest meat for them. The plagues themselves are vile things, with varying symptoms, all resulting in the breakdown of tissues into a nutrient puddle.

Plaguelings must reach their target's blood system. In human form, they do this by slashing with their black fingernails. In their natural form, they enter one of the target's body orifices to get at the more tender blood vessels inside and scour them open with their internal grit. The results are the same in either case. Over the course of a few days, victims begin to “rot.” Their hair and teeth fall out; huge, pustulent blisters form all over their bodies; and at last they die and liquify into a putrid black and yellow mess.

Normally, victims are captured by the plaguelings and taken back to their lair to allow the disease to run its course. If an infected person escapes, however, things can get a bit more interesting. The digestive viruses are highly contagious and, in their final stages, can even be air-vectorized over short distances. People who come into close contact with a person showing symptoms must make a Difficult test of Constitution to avoid contracting the virus—if they are close enough to smell the decay, they are close enough to become infected. Failure of this test indicates contagion, with the new victim beginning to show symptoms in 1D6+2 days. Obviously, then, the viruses are deadly and contagious with or without their plagueling carriers.

Infected persons can be cured by Empathic Healing any time before death and dissolution. This will kill the diseases, but an additional roll must be made to heal damage. Even if the first roll is failed, an empath can attempt to heal hit points, thereby prolonging the victim's life (at the expense of also prolonging the suffering).

Origin

Those in the know believe that plaguelings were the products of years of experimentation conducted on humans by ETs. It is thought that many of the more inexplicable plagues and mass disappearances of the time may be traced to these creatures. Whatever the case, plaguelings are one of the most hideous threats to humanity's survival.





Ptero-Raven

Strength: 2 Education: 1 Move: 20/40/80
 Constitution: 5 Charisma: 1 Skill/Dam.: 3/2
 Agility: 7 Empathy: 3 Hits: 3/6
 Intelligence: 3 Initiative: 4 # Appear: 1D6

Special: Ptero-ravens possess only three Empathy skills—Human Empathy, Animal Empathy and Thought Projection (the latter two only useable on birds).

THE MYTHOLOGY

The raven has long had a black name in many cultures' mythologies: harbinger of doom, bringer of night, mysterious bird imbued with secret knowledge.

While the legends seem to have been referring to real ravens, the "terror-raven" (derived from the name ptero-raven) seems more likely to fit the bill.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

A ptero-raven looks like a cross between a very large raven and the extinct protobird *Archaeopteryx*.

It weighs about two kilograms, is bird-shaped and is covered with glossy black feathers. Its wing joints sport small manipulative claws; its feet are taloned; and its beak is festooned with wicked teeth.

Its tail is long, like a lizard's tail turned into a bird's. Its eyes are large and reflect the light, seeming to "glow" in the dark.

The creatures come from a dimension of pure evolutionary horror, a place where survival requires cunning and guile. Ptero-ravens are scavengers, and they delight in tormenting wounded or sick creatures, tearing pieces from their victims and taunting them as they do so.

PSYCHOLOGY

Ptero-ravens are a marginally intelligent spe-

cies, having a well-defined and expressive language and giving one another a great deal of social cooperation and communication. They are frightfully curious, though inclined to sadistic morbidity. They are attracted to those in emotional pain, drawn by the feelings of anguish.

Ptero-ravens desire to know everything that happens, and they are assisted by excellent day/night vision and a keen sense of hearing. Thus, a ptero-raven learns much just by watching and listening, then flies off to tell its mates. What one ptero-raven learns, others in the area will soon know as well. (Ever notice the black birds cawing loudly to one another in the trees? Ever wonder what they're doing? They're gossiping to each other!).

Although they can chat to one another, ptero-ravens can only squawk disjointed words of human speech, barely enough to get their idea across.

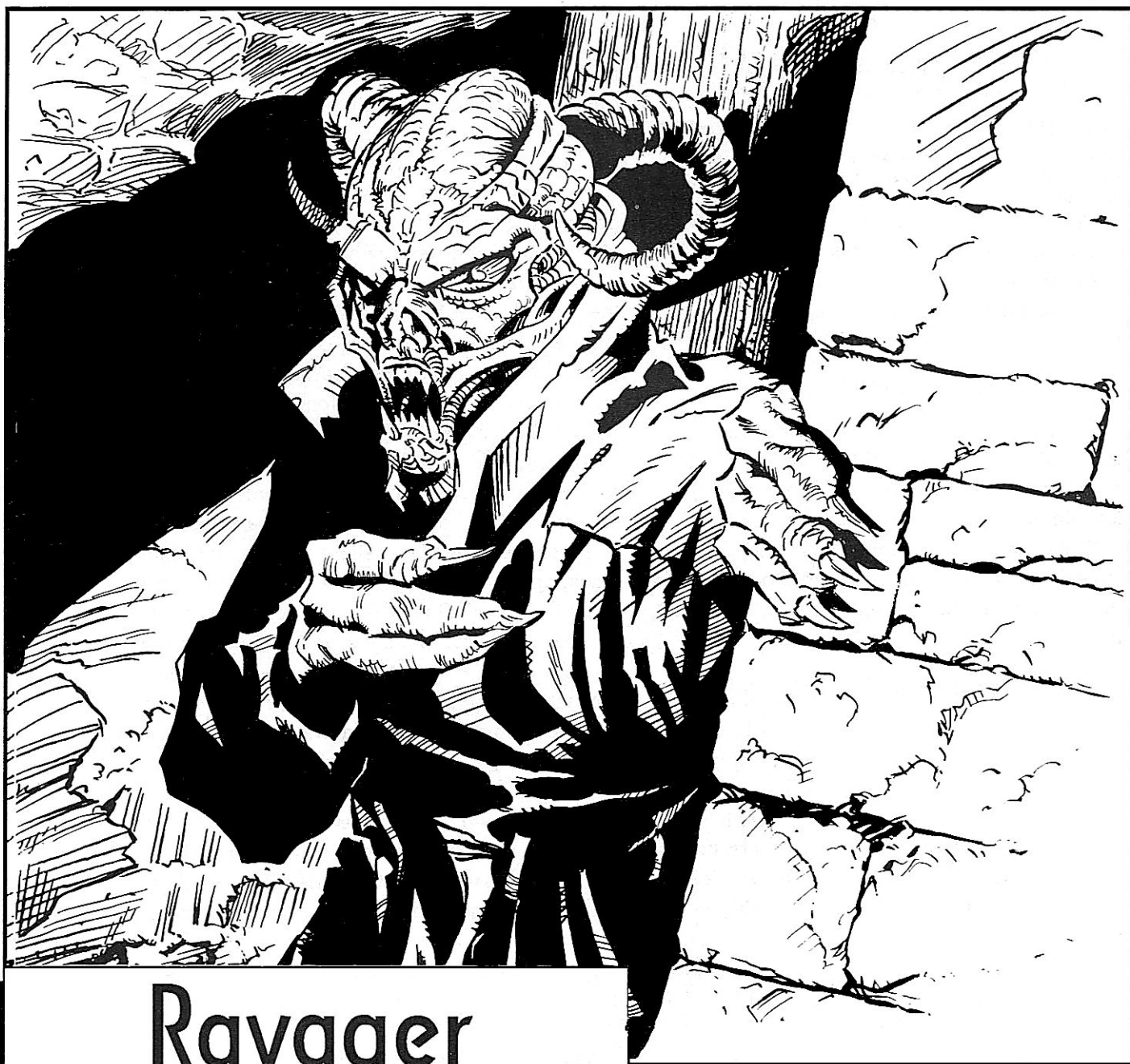
These creatures are malignant in the extreme, detesting all species but themselves. They are very useful to the Dark Ones, since they voluntarily serve as spies, snoops, watchers and thieves for the servants of darkness. Many so-called sorcerers, empathic pawns of the Dark Ones, have gained information from ptero-raven "familiar."

COMBAT ABILITIES

On their own, ptero-ravens are pretty much harmless, although they can summon up mixed flocks of birds to plague their enemies. They love to taunt the frustrated and depressed, staying just out of harm's way and tormenting their victims with utterances of doom (some researchers have suggested that Poe's poem resulted from such a "haunting").

If attacked, a ptero-raven will attempt to flee. If one ptero-raven is killed, others will flock about the killer in vengeance, hounding the person and drawing the attention of any Dark Minions in the area until the killer is dead.

For the referee, ptero-ravens are useful as Dark Minion spies, snatchers of small, shiny objects, and general background color with which to annoy player characters.



Ravager

Strength: 14	Education: 6	Move: 3/10/20/35
Constitution: 13	Charisma: 8	Skill/Dam.: 8/2D6
Agility: 10	Empathy: 7	Hits: 12/24
Intelligence: 7	Initiative: 5	# Appear: 1D6

The ravagers are a somewhat recent addition to the ever-growing legions of Dark Minions, and are the direct result of humanoid ET interference.

HISTORY

Back in 1997, the humanoid ETs began investigating what they knew to be a dimensional portal somewhere in Southeast Asia.

It was a great black pyramid within the jungles of Cambodia, a country which has almost always suffered from the brush wars forced upon it by



many nations and corporations.

With the assistance of the Rakagi Corporation, a Dark Minion-fronted multinational megacorp, the ETs began excavations. The US government somehow became aware of the project, and several special forces teams were sent into the area to investigate. None returned. With their fusion drills, the ETs quickly broke through the portal and released the ravagers into our world. Even worse, the ETs soon took the creatures under their own evil control.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The ravagers constantly project a human image to all who see them. Only a very few empathically gifted individuals can see them for what they really are—hideous demonic servants with an insatiable appetite for human flesh.

The ravagers stand two meters tall in their natural form, and blood-red skin covers their bodies. Each has a pair of curled horns rising from the sides of its head. A ravager's large claws can shred a human to ribbons in bare moments, after which it feasts upon the victim, eating roughly half the body (even the bones) in one sitting. The creatures also possess a powerful tail, which they use for balance. Ravagers are quite agile, able to scale most walls with ease.

BEHAVIOR

Ravagers directly serve the humanoid ETs. With their disguise abilities, ravagers may take over entire towns. Many are used to infiltrate suspect organizations where the humanoid ETs expect to encounter resistance to their efforts. The creatures are also used en masse as assassination squads. There is nothing quite as horrible as the scene of frenzied destruction where a dozen ravagers have been sent on a death mission.

The ETs keep these servants in line by providing them victims and, if necessary, by using neural stimulation devices which cause great pain to the ravagers. The creatures will not risk the wrath of anyone who holds one of these devices and threatens to use it.

Ravagers must feed daily or a frenzy will overcome them, and they will embark on a bloody spree of death until their appetite is sated.

Some ravagers roam free, leaving a trail of half-consumed bodies in their wake, the supposed result of what is generally believed to be a "psychopath."

ILLUSION

Ravagers can disguise themselves as humans to great effect. They could be sitting on the maglev train across from you. They might work in your office, following you home every day. Ravagers are proficient at playing at being human, holding conversations, working at minor jobs, conducting daily business and the like.

Sometimes a human will see through a ravager's disguise. Each time a ravager is viewed by a nonempathic human, a Difficult test of the viewer's Willpower is made to determine if the viewer penetrates the illusion. If the test is unsuccessful, the viewer sees the creature as human. If successful, the viewer catches a momentary glimpse of the creature as it really is. An outstanding success means that the viewer sees through the illusion permanently.

Empathic characters may also spot a ravager. This can be achieved by a successful Human Empathy task.

Basic Success merely allows the character to have a bad feeling about the creature, despite its very human appearance. Stage Two means the character feels very frightened by the person but is unsure why. Stage Three allows the character the certain knowledge that the ravager isn't human, despite appearances to the contrary. Stage Four allows the character to catch a glimpse of the ravager as it really is. Stage Five is the same as Stage Four, but for 1D10 hours. Stage Six means the character not only sees through the ravager's illusion permanently, but will never be fooled by any other ravager.

Of course, a ravager may also discard its human appearance and appear in its true form at any time of its choosing.



Reaver

Strength: 10*	Education: 1	Move: —
Constitution: —	Charisma: —	Skill/Dam.: 5/1D6*
Agility: —	Empathy: 18	Hits: —
Intelligence: 8	Initiative: 6	# Appear: 1D6+3

*When manifesting itself physically.

Special: Dimension Walk, Telekinesis.

THE MYTHOLOGY

Almost all human societies throughout history have recorded stories of the “hungry dead,” the disembodied spirits of those who have died but who “live” on to wreak havoc, despair and death among

the living. These spirits are known by many names—ghosts, haunts, wraiths and, in many places, reavers. Many tales claim that the spirits of the dead remember their identities and the events of their lives, and that their own descendants or those who loved them in life are their preferred victims.

THE REALITY

Regardless of their appearance and actions, and contrary to popular tales, reavers are not the spirits of the dead. They are, in fact, free-willed and autonomous Dark Minions, similar to haunts. Reavers are more powerful than haunts, however. They are



also more intelligent, and more skilled at empathy, which they use to instill terror, despair and suicidal depression in their chosen victims.

Appearance

Reavers are normally invisible, although they can sometimes be detected by infrared or thermographic imaging systems as amorphous areas of lowered temperature. The temperature decrease caused by the presence of a reaver is usually only a few degrees, too subtle a change for most humans to detect. Many animals seem more sensitive to the presence of a reaver. Dogs, in particular, can sense their presence, and react with general unease. This does not mean a dog can track the actual position of a reaver (and communicate it to its master), however. Instead, animals generally just react with shivering and whining, and will not voluntarily enter the area.

Reavers can become visible as shifting, translucent manifestations of a human figure. In this form, the creatures are visually indistinguishable from haunts.

Unlike a haunt, a reaver can take on the appearance of a specific individual, drawing an image from the mind of its chosen victim. This requires the creature to establish a connection with the victim through Human Empathy. The reaver will always draw from the victim's memory an image of a loved one—perhaps a relative who is dead—and will assume that appearance to strike fear into the heart of the victim.

Reavers are unable to truly speak or comprehend any human language—their mental “architecture” is too unlike that of humans. But they *are* able to repeat phrases or words the victim remembers the loved one speaking, partially imitating the voice of the loved one.

The creature's empathic connection with its victim allows it to select phrases that are highly charged emotionally. A reaver cannot truly converse with its victim, and sometimes its selection of emotionally charged phrases will be inappropriate to the situation.

Combat Abilities

A reaver can attack physically, in unarmed melee. A successful strike inflicts 1D6 damage, in the form of intense and enervating cold. A reaver can also attack telekinetically by hurling objects, as can a poltergeist.

In visible form, a reaver can manipulate physical objects directly, not only through Telekinesis, and it has great physical strength. It will frequently use this ability to enhance the fear that its appearance generates, picking up “props” around it.

Like a haunt, a reaver can use Project Emotion to drive its victim into a frenzy of fear. Each stage of power level achieved with this skill temporarily makes all skill checks by the victim one level more difficult. Project Thought is used to command victims to self-destructive acts, from throwing themselves out of upper-story windows to attacking their companions. If necessary, the creature uses Willpower Drain to “soften up” the victim.

Reavers sometimes use their empathic abilities to convince the weak-willed that they truly are the disembodied spirits of dead loved ones, being kept on Earth and tormented by the actions of the Dark Minions. Frequently a reaver will convince its victim that it should be protected or “freed from its torment.” The task that must be performed to “free” the soul is always destructive to the victim persuaded to perform it.

Reavers cannot be harmed or killed by physical attacks. They can only be destroyed by the use of Project Thought. If a character achieves at least a Stage Three power level against a reaver, the creature's life force is disrupted, and it is permanently destroyed.

Reavers are also adversely affected by fire. A reaver will not pass through a barrier of flame, and it will avoid sources of flame. If characters determinedly attack with burning weapons, the creature will use Dimension Walk to escape. Thereafter, however, it will attempt to track the movements and actions of the characters who attacked it so that it can prey upon them in a moment of weakness.



Rover

Strength: 4 Education: 1 Move: 5/15/30/60
 Constitution: 6 Charisma: 1 Skill/Dam.: 4/1D6
 Agility: 5 Empathy: 3 Hits: 8/16
 Intelligence: 4 Initiative: 4 # Appear: 1D6

Special: Dimension Walk (see "Special Abilities").

Rovers are a DarkTek byproduct of body-grafting experiments by the humanoid ETs. They have since been fashioned to serve as reconnaissance drones, messengers and spies. Their name was apparently given to them by the ETs themselves, in a grotesque pun upon the creatures' mobility and doglike faithfulness to their masters.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The ETs fashion rovers out of various body parts and have developed large, double-bed-sized construction tanks in which to make them. These clear tanks are filled with a green, viscous liquid, nearly opaque, through which the careful observer can dimly make out the dozens of operating tools moving around inside (scalpels, tongs, drills, specimen restraints, grafting scourers, nerve removers, brain vacuums, etc.).

These vaguely arachnoid creatures have eight to 12 spindly legs, each ending in a curved, bony talon which the creature walks upon. The body is a yellowed, fleshy platform composed of various human body parts stitched together in a hodgepodge of eyes, ears, mouths and hands, interrupted by spiky tufts of hair. The body is given its lumpy shape by an interior skeleton composed of various bony plates (skull parts, pelvises, shoulder blades and even knee caps) grafted together into one large disk, housing a confusing collection of internal organs and scattered lobes from various brains.

Because of their multitudinous eyes, rovers can see in all directions at once, making them extremely difficult to sneak up on.

INTELLECT

Rovers are not particularly intelligent and will not enter

combat unless they have to. They much prefer to clatter away on their sharp legs and hide. The creatures can scuttle across any terrain at incredible speed.

Due to their low intelligence, the humanoid ETs empathically program the rovers with simple instructions. These are normally orders like "Spy on X and report back when you're relieved" or "Stay here and note who comes by and what they do." Rovers are then deprogrammed by the ETs, who empathically "download" the information stored in their memory. In this way, the ETs may easily scout out their enemies and potential enemies. When humans encounter a rover, then, it is of the utmost importance that it not escape back to its masters.

COMBAT ABILITIES

If caught with no way out, a rover will fight ferociously, like a living ball of whirling blades. If killed, the biomass will disintegrate into a yellow puddle within a few hours' time. Within 10 hours, it will dry to a crusty stain.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Some rovers may be programmed with the ability to Dimension Walk. This type of programming is a long process, and the ETs only take the trouble on rare occasion. Such rovers are the sneakiest kind and are almost impossible to catch before they "blink out" of existence.

Rovers may also be programmed to perform various special functions. For example, a rover could be programmed with Project Thought if the ETs wished to drive someone mad with horrible hallucinations.

Rovers can also be used as very good messengers and couriers. Occasionally they are used as assassins, although they are not as adept at this.

Rovers are used a great deal when spying on corporations and their activities. They are just about small enough to be able to scuttle around in an air-conditioning shaft, keeping watchful eyes on board meetings and other activities. They also utilize city sewer systems, which allows them to remain unseen by most humans when going about their business of fact finding.





Stalker

Strength: 12
Constitution: 8
Agility: 10
Intelligence: 6

Education: 1
Charisma: 1
Empathy: 6
Initiative: 5

Move: 3/10/20/35
Skill/Dam.: 5*/7*
Hits: 20/30**
Appear: 1D6

Special: Dimension Walk.

*Unarmed. Stalkers typically use a darkness dagger (see below).

**Takes no damage from fire, lightning, oxygen deprivation or poison (see below). Increase difficulty to hit stalker by one level in poor light conditions.



ACTIVITIES

Dark Lords send stalkers out on assassination missions either singly or in pairs. They are also sent in small groups to promote mayhem, confusion and destruction. They are excellent agents for the Dark Lords in either case because of their extreme dedication to the tasks set before them, and because the stalkers themselves consume none of the energies that their actions release—it is all available to their master for channeling.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Stalkers appear as cloaked humanoid forms wielding large daggers. They are composed entirely of inky blackness, with no visible features. Their knives and cloaks are likewise entirely dark. A stalker's touch is slightly insubstantial and icy cold. Its voice is a low hiss, and it never displays any emotion. A stalker moves with almost unnatural grace and speed, and displays incredible physical strength. It does not use its empathic abilities to project fear or dread, preferring not to draw attention to itself.

Stalkers are shadowy creatures that subsist entirely on the energies of the proto-dimension of their origin. For that reason, no stalker makes Earth its home. The creatures exist on Earth only temporarily, and must return to their proto-dimension for sustenance and replenishment of lost energy. A stalker forced to remain on Earth continuously without a direct otherdimensional link will lose one point from all physical skills and characteristics for each 24-hour period, as well as being unable to recover from any wounds suffered. A stalker that is able to open a proto-dimensional portal may draw energy through it to itself.

Due to a stalker's otherworldly origins and makeup, it suffers no ill effects from such things as fire, electricity, asphyxiation, poison, etc. It suffers normal damage from physical attacks. When a stalker is injured, it bleeds liquid darkness of the same approximate consistency as human blood. The liquid will not stick to or stain any surface—it simply disappears back to its proto-dimension as it dries. The corpse of a slain stalker likewise disappears the turn after the stalker is slain.

A stalker never uses any missile weapons, attacking in melee combat with its dagger or going hand to hand if disarmed. Stalkers generally have no familiarity with Earth cultures or technology, although they usually have a rudimentary understanding of the language in their current location. Only after many missions to Earth does a stalker become familiar with Earth life, and on its own it will not use any human technology more complex than an elevator. Beyond this, Earth machinery is too alien to a stalker and requires specific instructions from its master. For example, if a stalker is sent to a security installation, it may be given the information to punch in a security code, but it would be completely unable to comprehend dialing a telephone.

This is not to say that stalkers are unintelligent—they are highly cunning, clever and ruthlessly single-minded in completing their tasks.

Water is an unfamiliar element to stalkers. While it does not damage them and they cannot drown, stalkers do not float and cannot swim. A stalker will not willingly enter a body of water deeper than its own height.

DARKNESS DAGGERS

Darkness daggers are constructed of an unidentifiable, slightly insubstantial, nonmetallic, nonreflective, jet-black material with special properties. Its blades radiate a localized field of intense cold which is completely insubstantial to inorganic material. The blades weigh approximately one kilogram.

A darkness dagger has a short armed melee combat range and a +2 hit modifier, and does 1D10+1/2 STR damage. In addition, armor worn by the target has no effect. The blade in its field simply passes right through it. The field extends to the hilt of the dagger as well.

If a PC should somehow acquire a stalker's weapon, the character may use it. The character would, however, be sought by other stalkers seeking to retrieve the blade and slay its possessor.

Due to the extreme cold, any character wielding a darkness dagger will take 1 point of damage per phase to the arm in which it is held. Gloves will not insulate a character against this damage.





Stick Indians

Strength: 10	Education: 2	Move: 2/7/13/25
Constitution: 12	Charisma: 4	Skill/Dam.: 7/1D6
Agility: 6	Empathy: 3	Hits: 12/24
Intelligence: 7	Initiative: 4	# Appear: 2D6

Special: Stick Indians have extremely tough skin, at least as thick and as hard as well-cured leather, which gives them 1 point of armor. They use their minimal skills at Human Empathy and Project Thought to appear to be speaking the language of their observer, although in a pidgin version with some words that do not translate.

All Stick Indians have Dimension Walk.

THE MYTHOLOGY

The Indians of the northern Rockies have long known about a race of aboriginal beings that live in the remotest parts of the forest and seldom come out. Each tribe has its own name for these small beings, but they have come to be known as Stick Indians because they appear sometimes to be almost a caricature of the tribesmen who live there.

THE REALITY

Stick Indians appear to be a very primitive people. They use no tool more complex than a stick or stone. They dress in uncured animal pelts, usually deer hide or beaver pelt. They stand no more than a meter in height and may be almost that wide.

Their bodies are square and brown, covered with a thin mat of coarse black hair through which the skin can easily be seen. Their arms and legs are grotesquely thin, with swollen joints at elbows, wrists, knees and ankles, also lending to the impression that the creatures are made of sticks.

Despite their small size and awkward appearance, Stick Indians are said to be prodigiously strong.

Their faces are squarish and covered with hundreds of wrinkles of dark brown skin. Their

eyes are small, beady, black, and set close together. Their noses are large and flat, spread over half their face, often overhanging their flabby lips and jowly chin. They have coarse black hair which hangs down behind their heads in a wild, dirty mane, and males often have a sparse mustache and beard.

Their teeth are in poor condition, often consisting of a few broken incisors and sharp yellow fangs. The ears are large, stick out like jug handles, and are distinctly pointed. The creatures have six gnarly fingers on each hand, and six splayed-out toes on each broad flat foot.

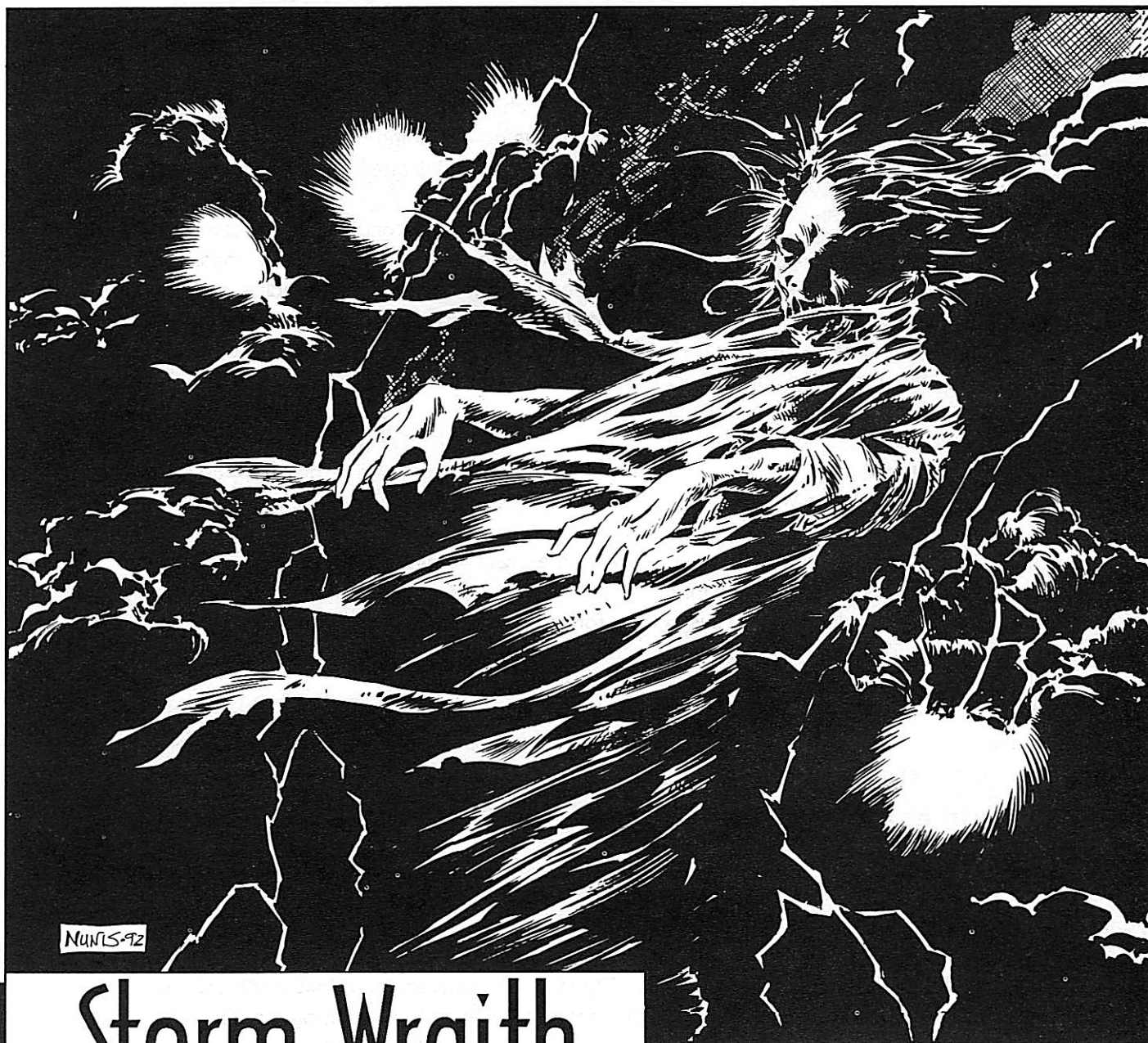
BEHAVIOR

Stick Indians roam the wilderness, apparently at will, doing whatever they wish. The native American Indians say the creatures like to cause avalanches, raid traplines and hunt. Stick Indians sometimes speak to hunters who meet them in the forest, generally to demand tobacco or some other gift. If refused, they have been known to injure or kill the human.

They have great curiosity about children, and will poke and jabber with great excitement whenever they see one. If the child begins to cry, the creatures will howl with laughter, leaping up and down in their glee. Children who disappear or are lost in the wilderness are said to have been taken by the creatures.

ORIGINS

There is no satisfactory origin myth for the Stick Indians in any tribe's cosmogony. They are definitely not part of the animal people of Indian myth who are said to have lived on Earth before humans came up out of the land below. Sometime within the last couple of hundred years, these humanoids simply appeared in the northern Rockies and took up their curious life-style. The natives of that territory prefer to propitiate the Stick Indians with small gifts and never to speak of them within the forest where they might be overheard.



Storm Wraith

Strength: 6	Education: 1	Move: 320*
Constitution: 7	Charisma: 4	Skill/Dam.: 5/1D6
Agility: 7	Empathy: 2	Hits: 15/29
Intelligence: 2	Initiative: 4	# Appear: 1D6+3

*This is flying speed. Storm wraiths do not use ground movement.

Special: Limited Dimension Walk, electrical discharge (see below).

THE MYTHOLOGY

Humanity has always held a subconscious fear of storms, thunder and lightning. Some would suggest that it isn't the storms themselves that frighten people, but the entities those storms release into the world.

THE REALITY

Storms build up an immense amount of power



within them—enough power, in fact, to temporarily weaken the fabric of reality around them. This weakening of reality may only occur for a split-second, but it is long enough for the creatures known as storm wraiths to burst forth from their elemental proto-dimension, to run screaming through Earth's heavens.

Physical Description

Storm wraiths appear as gaunt, almost skeletal humanoids draped in tattered robes. Their fingers end with vicious, curved claws, and their gaping jaws are filled with jagged, barbed fangs. Most bear wisps of snow-white hair on their elongated skulls which themselves rest upon unnaturally long necks. Sparks of electricity discharge from the wraiths as they move, crackling in their mouths and eye sockets, and flashing from their limbs and robes.

Behavior

Storm wraiths' true motives concerning our world are unknown, but the creatures seem to take pleasure in attacking aircraft with their powerful talons, and occasionally in terrorizing individuals upon the ground.

They are capable of flying at incredible speeds without tiring, though they have never been observed for more than a few minutes, and then only in glimpses.

Storm wraiths can only reach our world during the most ferocious electrical storms, when their limited Dimension Walk ability is sufficient to breach the weakened gap between their dimension and ours. Once through the gap, they normally stay within the clouds, absorbing the electrical charges that they require to survive.

Several reports mention aircraft being physically attacked by these entities. The most famous of these is British Airways flight 299, which crashed upon landing at London's Heathrow Airport in 2011, with no survivors. The black box revealed that the copilot and several passengers spotted several dark figures crawling across the fuselage just before cabin pressure was lost and the entire electrical system failed. This information was not

revealed to the general public. Although this is not concrete evidence that storm wraiths were responsible, there are very few other plausible explanations for the incident.

Combat Abilities

Due to the environment in which these creatures exist, they thrive upon electricity and are capable of storing vast amounts of it in their bodies. For this reason, anyone or anything coming into contact with a storm wraith will receive 2D6 electrical damage in addition to any damage caused by the creature's claws (unless shielded, any electrical system will burn out after this damage). This charge is direct current, so the victim will be stuck to the storm wraith unless a successful Difficult: Strength test can be passed. The damage from the charge is suffered each phase until the target can break free.

As a direct result of the electrical nature of the storm wraiths, they are immune to any effects caused by electricity, and they actually become stronger when struck by it. Each time a storm wraith is hit by any form of electricity, it immediately heals 1D6 hit points (though this cannot raise the creature's hit points beyond its original quota).

It is fortunate that very few of these creatures have ever been encountered, as the potential threat they pose far outweighs that of the storms they inhabit. The nature of their existence, combined with their sadistic racial psychology, makes them a terrifying force to reckon with.

Other Comments

One other fact worth mentioning is that some members of the empathic underground claim that the very first storm wraiths appeared during the 1980s, coinciding with the start of the NASA space shuttle program. The first unassisted launch in April 1981 by the space shuttle *Columbia* was delayed for two days by an intense storm over the Florida area which caused electrical damage to the vehicle on two separate occasions before finally dispersing.

The phrase "lightning never strikes twice" is certainly untrue in the case of storm wraiths.





Super Rats

Strength: 2 Education: 2 Move: 5/10/20/40
 Constitution: 5 Charisma: 1 Skill/Dam.: 3/2
 Agility: 7 Empathy: 3 Hits: 4/6
 Intelligence: 4 Initiative: 5 # Appear: 1D6

Special: Individual super rats may know how to use human weapons (75% chance); some have Darkling Empathy. Super rats have Small Arms (Rifle) 4 and Thrown Weapon 6.

HISTORY

Rats have been around since the dawn of mammals on this planet; it is thought that they may have a common (and very distant) ancestor with humanity. However, it seems that ever since humans learned to till the soil, rats have sought to steal the fruits of their labor.

As humans moved together to live in cities, rats followed, living off the trash and garbage thrown away by a careless humanity. And whenever new advances enabled human populations to increase, rat populations increased right along with them.

When humanity discovered biological sciences, a new use was discovered for rats. Rats are biologically quite similar to humans, and they are small enough to keep in laboratories. In addition, they behave much like people in psychological stress experiments, so they quickly became popular as subjects for cerebral studies, as well as physiological experiments. In fact, the term "lab rat" all but replaced "guinea pig" when indicating a being subjected to various experiments. People treated lab rats in much the same way the humanoid ETs came to treat their human victims.

When research was conducted on genetics and enhanced evolution, using knowledge provided by friendly humanoid ETs, lab rats were used as subjects once again, this time with human genetic material injected. The experiments were successful, but the results were never triumphantly trumpeted to the public. The rats that were produced were *too* smart, *too* well-evolved and *too* *big* (up to a meter long)—they were superrats. These superrats were destined to be a serious

threat to humanity's welfare and, consequently, were scheduled to be destroyed. Before that could be accomplished, however, these rats established an empathic contact with some of the Dark Minion ETs and arranged to be rescued—the entire research project disappeared one night, and none of the researchers were ever seen again.

The super rats began showing up time and time again, in sewers, snooping around government installations, creating nests beneath cities and towns. They seem to have become a sort of Dark Minion underground, interested in breeding (super rats can breed with normal, wild rats, producing super rat offspring) and preying on humans. Some of the super rats are content to bide their time and protect their nest communities; others actively seek unprotected humans as food. Yet others actively aid ETs as specimen procurers and lab assistants, thereby taking their revenge on their former tormentors.

Super rats weigh between 10 and 15 kilograms.

COMBAT ABILITIES

Many super rats use weapons. Most favor small crossbows (ROF: SS Dam.: -2 Pen: Nil Rld: 4 Blk: 1 Recoil: 3 Rng: 5). Some wield small (Blk: 0-1) pistols or ET weapons. They also favor hand grenades, if they can acquire them and find the right location to use them. They can use nets to entangle and enmesh victims if they wish to capture their prey alive (usually for supply to humanoid ET vivisectionists).

Following super rats to their lairs (there is almost always more than one) is dangerous. The creatures are adept at rigging traps—deadfalls, nets, crossbow traps and spike traps are favorites. Furthermore, they often coat their crossbow bolts and spikes with filth, increasing the danger of infection. Characters who are stricken by such weapons and who fail a Difficult test of Constitution will require twice the time to heal from these wounds. Treatment with antibiotics within a few hours of wounding will reduce the Constitution test to Average.

Individual super rats or small groups are a nuisance to most Dark Minion hunters. Large groups of super rats pose a serious threat by themselves, and many are allied with inimical humanoid ETs.



Toxic Mother

Strength: 3	Education: 1	Move: 3
Constitution: 5	Charisma: 4	Skill/Dam.: 3/1D10
Agility: 1	Empathy: 15	Hits: 70/100
Intelligence: 7	Initiative: 2	# Appear: 1

Special: Toxic mothers do not normally move, their bodies generally being far too bloated for normal locomotion. However, they may, in extreme duress, pull themselves along by their vines at a movement rate of 3.

BACKGROUND

For decades, humanity has been dumping all manner of toxins into the planet's oceans and rivers. Organizations have dumped heavy metals, industrial waste and other poisons until there was no way to keep track of where they had disposed of what. And now it's time to pay the piper, because the toxins are coming back.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Toxic mothers generally look like huge, bloated women, covered with slime and dripping pinkish froth from innumerable suppurating wounds. Their huge rolls of cancerous fat completely hide their now vestigial legs, making movement almost impossible. Their arms, too, have become nearly useless, shrivelling into twiglike appendages that twitch and spasm in response to the creature's agitation. Their only useful limbs are actually fleshy "vines" that radiate from their body (3D10 vines per mother). These vines are tipped with barbs that stick into the flesh creatures that they strike.

Some toxic mothers have blended into their surroundings more completely. These appear as repulsive masses of septic refuse, reeking of decay and poisons. In this form, they are virtually indistinguishable from the trash surrounding them.

HABITAT

The underground lairs of toxic mothers are only found in the most loathsome locales—landfills gone

putrid, illegal toxic waste dumps, foul sewage ponds and, of course, Demongrounds. Their lairs can normally be smelled for hundreds of yards. And the creatures' very presence further corrupts the areas so that even the air becomes somewhat corrosive. Anyone standing unprotected within 30 meters of a toxic mother's lair will suffer 1 point of damage to the chest location every 10 minutes. This represents the accumulation of airborne toxins in the character's system. **Difficult:** Constitution checks are required of all characters actually entering a toxic mother's lair. Failure indicates uncontrollable retching that incapacitates the character for 1D10 phases.

BEHAVIOR

Few people would be aware of toxic mothers if they had just stayed in their dumps. But the mothers are in constant agony from the chemical soup that rages through their bodies. The only manner in which they can ease this pain is through the act of expulsion, an act that requires human agents.

Every few months, a toxic mother disgorges a tiny seed into the air. This seed contains a minute fragment of the creature's awareness, its empathic powers. The seed is borne on the winds until it reaches human habitation. There it falls to the ground and begins emitting a psychic summons. In game terms, this is treated as a use of the Project Thought skill against everyone within a one-kilometer radius. Those who receive the summons and fail an Average test of Empathy or Willpower (whichever is higher) will be impelled to seek out the seed.

Once the seed has attracted someone to it, it opens a direct empathic link to the toxic mother, and the mother uses Project Thought to lead the victim to her lair. A Difficult test of Empathy or Willpower is required to break her control. When those summoned arrive, they are forced to nestle in close to the toxic mother. She then plugs her vines into them, pumping them full of her blood while drawing out their own. This helps the mother rid her body of toxins, and also nets her a few human slaves. Those pumped full of her blood have the same statistics as animator zombies (page 230 of the rulebook), but are fully under her control.



The mother uses her "toxikids" to send humanity's waste back to it. The zombies haul loads of waste back to the city, dumping loads of septic sludge into the water supply, spreading radioactive waste in the streets, or whatever else they can do. This usually ends up drawing attention to the toxic mother. However, by that time, much damage has already been done. Many are the abandoned villages that dot this proud country, their inhabitants fled from or slain by the toxins delivered by the toxikids.

COMBAT STATISTICS

In combat, the toxic mother is a horror. Her vines are spread throughout her lair, and with them her awareness. She cannot be surprised by any means and will always know the exact location of interlopers in her domain.

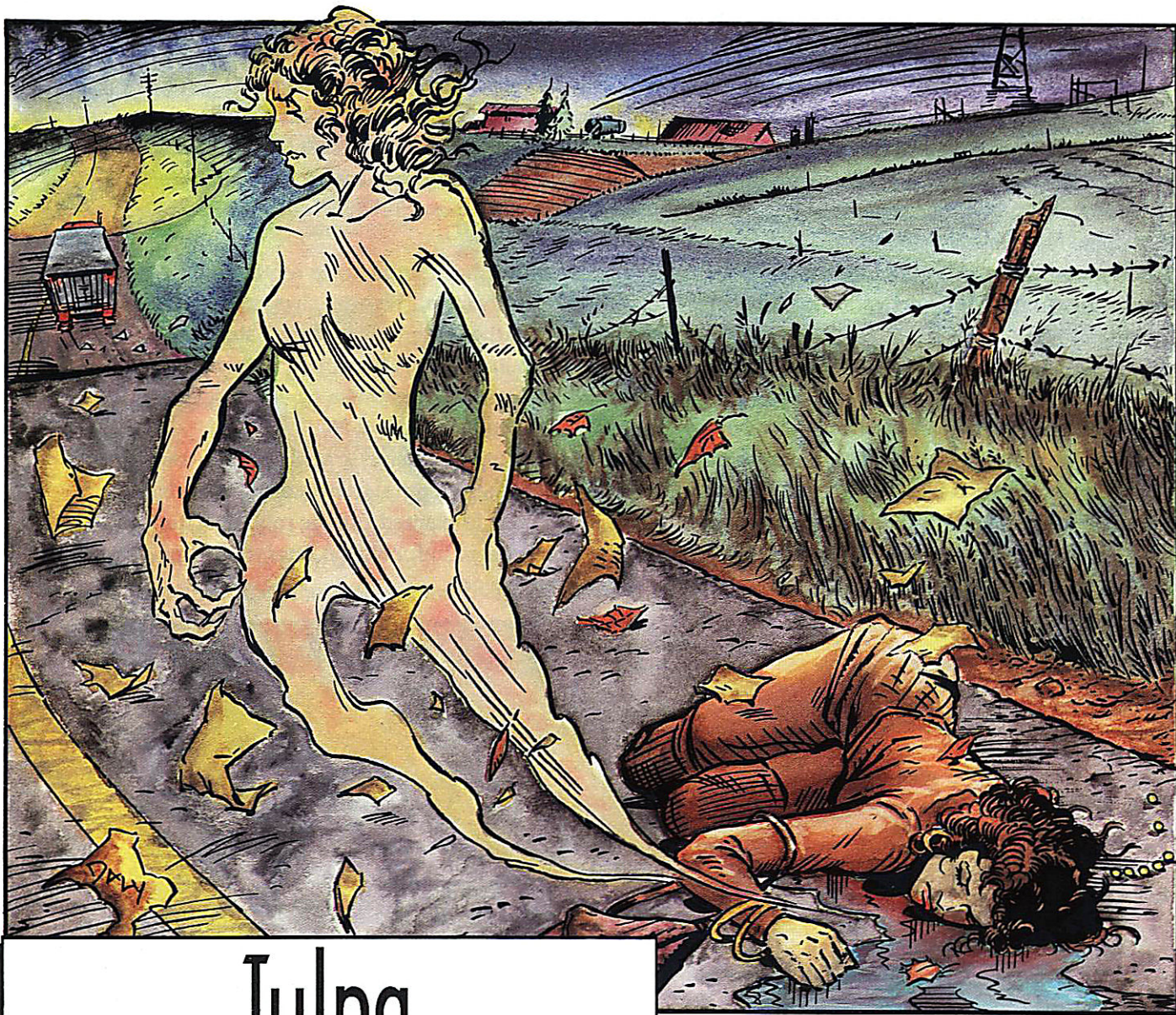
These vines are also her method of attack, lashing out at those who would do her harm. They erupt from the earth and strike with their barbs, doing the damage listed

above. Any outstanding success against an unarmored location hooks the target with a barb. While it is easy enough to rip free from the vines (requiring an Easy test of Strength), doing so causes 1D6 points of additional damage to the snagged location. Characters who do not pull free (perhaps having been snagged with multiple vines) are dragged toward the toxic mother at a rate of 30 meters per phase.

Anyone drawn back to the toxic mother will be attacked by her toxikids. There are always 1D6 with the mother, and they emerge from her bloated body in a burst of putrid fluids. Characters who witness this "birth" of toxikids must make a panic test (see page 77 of the rulebook).

Toxikids will typically try to grapple a character into immobility, then drag the victim into the mother's body. Characters implanted into the mother suffer 1D10 damage per round until slain, after which they reemerge as toxikids.





Tulpa

Strength: —	Education: —	Move: —
Constitution: —	Charisma: —	Skill/Dam.: —
Agility: —	Empathy: 2D6+1	Hits: —
Intelligence: —	Initiative: 1/2 EMP*	# Appear: 1

*Round down.

Special: Telekinesis. Tulpa have no actual physical existence, but they use Project Thought to create an illusion of existence and Telekinesis to move things about while acting as if they are physically carrying them.

A tulpa is a phantom form, indistinguishable in all respects from whatever thing it represents. The creatures are created by the power of thought and imagination alone!

Only empathic creatures may create a tulpa, but they can be brought into being either intentionally or unintentionally (see below).

Once created, a tulpa becomes a being in its own right and will. Unless destroyed, it will remain in existence forever. It has a mind of its own and may act as it wishes. Almost all tulpa feel a certain



bonding to their creators and remain loyal to them—but some do not.

Many famed “wizards” of history have created tulpa. Some created them to assist them in their work, some for pleasure, and some for darker reasons. Energy ETs often create tulpa to serve as laborers. Other Dark Races are likely to use tulpa in their plans, as are highly empathic humans who are students of “magic.”

UNINTENTIONAL CREATION

Some tulpa come into being almost instantaneously as a result of any intense emotion from a highly empathic character—including emotions resulting from suicide or violent death. A tulpa that comes to life in this way is always less than perfect in its appearance. The flaw may not be instantly apparent, but something, somehow will be very wrong with these creations.

INTENTIONAL CREATION

Most tulpa are brought into being through a deliberate act of will—a long and painstaking process, typically requiring weeks of meditation and visualization before the first manifestation of the desired being.

If the creation of a tulpa is intentional, the creator must decide exactly what type of creature is desired. This may range from an animal, to a human being, to a hideous creature of imagination. Then the creator must maintain continuous concentration until the creature becomes real. Any distraction will cause the creator to fail, requiring him to begin again.

In most cases, the process of creation takes several weeks. During that time, the creator must go without such luxuries as sleep and food, remaining instead in a semicomatose state of meditation. This ability is beyond the capacity of most beings.

Process

Intentionally creating a tulpa requires a series of successful tasks in addition to a calm environment. Prerequisite skills are Project Thought, Project Emotion and Willpower. Creators must be experi-

enced in meditative techniques and must have received instruction in the technique (perhaps by studying in India, etc.).

A creator must first decide—very specifically—what he desires in the creation. The creator must then pass a test of Empathy to enter a trance, with the difficulty being one level more strenuous than usual for the empath's environment. Next, the creator must pass a Project Thought task and achieve no lower than a Stage Five power level. He must make a successful Difficult test of Willpower each week during the process to maintain concentration.

The referee decides exactly how long concentration must be maintained, but the following guidelines will help—a tulpa dog would probably take one week to create; a human would take one month; and a huge, shape-changing demon might take years.

The creator may take no other action during the creation time and may not be distracted. If the creator is distracted, the whole process is spoiled. Finally, the creator must make a successful Project Emotion task and achieve nothing less than a Stage Five power level.

Once the process is completed, the form becomes a reality and the tulpa is real! The referee should determine the (slim) possibility of the tulpa being hostile to the creator.

Obviously, creating a tulpa is a very difficult process. Only the most dedicated characters—or the most emotionally distraught—will succeed.

DESTROYING A TULPA

Destroying (dispelling) a tulpa can only be accomplished by besting it in an empathic contest of wills. Both the tulpa and the character attempting to destroy it roll for a power level with their Empathy statistic. (Tulpa have no Willpower rating for this contest.) Whoever achieves the highest total wins the contest. If the character wins, the tulpa is destroyed. If the tulpa wins, it takes control of the character's body for a number of hours equal to the difference between the two power levels. The creature can cause the character to do anything short of committing suicide (including attacking friends).



Wailer

Strength: 6 Education: 4 Move: 2/8/16/32
 Constitution: 4 Charisma: 9 Skill/Dam.: 5/1D6+2
 Agility: 7 Empathy: 8 Hits: 8/16
 Intelligence: 5 Initiative: 5 # Appear: 1D6+2

Special: Human Empathy, Project Emotion and Willpower Drain at twice the listed Empathy rating.

Whether wailers actually exist is the subject of some debate. Opponents of the idea argue that wailers are only an artifact of the human tendency to lump together unrelated but superficially similar sets—tantamount to a claiming that orcas and penguins are related because both swim efficiently in cold seas, and both are mostly black and white.

In fact, wailers do exist. Historically, they have been universally perceived as seductive women encountered near water. They drown men, women and children under a variety of pretenses, often weeping or wailing over the deed. It is this active death-dealing role which (barely) distinguishes them from the banshee, to which they may be related. In different parts of the world, the wailers seem to have developed different tastes in victims and in kill sites, suggesting the likelihood of distinct subtypes.

LA LLORONA

In Mexico and the southwestern United States, tales of La Llorona are widespread. The story goes back to legends of the Aztec ghost known as the weeping woman (a translation of the Spanish “La Llorona”). La Llorona appears as a handsome woman wandering alone, weeping quietly, near streams, irrigation canals and creeks. Her preferred victims are good-looking young men and children. La Llorona may briefly flee from an approaching man, as if to keep her personal sorrow to herself. However, if the man follows, she will eventually lead him to a place that looks like an inviting place for a tryst and that is very close to water deep enough for him to drown in when she attempts to wrestle him underwater. Children are not usually led on such a chase. A child foolish enough to try to comfort this weeping woman will be quickly thrust under water, and the body will drift until found.

The explanation of La Llorona’s behavior is found in her purported history. A lonely widow with two young children, the woman who became La Llorona was seduced by a handsome rogue. He would not marry her and claimed the children as his reason.



The widow drowned her children, only to find that he still spurned her—this time for being so heartless. She threw herself into the river to drown, but returned as a ghost, replaying her ghastly deed against children and revenging herself against a cruel lover.

RUSALKA

From Slavic countries come tales of the rusalka (plural is rusalki). These wailers appear as young women alone or in groups of three or four. The first sign of their presence is often laughter or enchanting, unearthly singing. If a traveller follows the sound, the wailers are found swimming in forest pools and small bodies of still water—in spite of the fact they are most likely to be seen in winter!

Mist off the water can convince an unwary traveller that the water is heated by underground springs. Misty tendrils offer lip service to the women's alleged modesty, since they appear to wear nothing but their long hair. Hot water can warm chilled bones, and the women's sparkling eyes and free manner hint at other ways to chase off winter's cold. But the mist is under wailer control, and the water only seems warm for a short time. Once the victim enters the water, there is little chance of getting back out. Should the person be reluctant to enter, the rusalki are not opposed to simply grabbing an ankle and dragging him in kicking and screaming. A chase overland is not out of the question either, and a rusalka is unnaturally adept at moving through the forest swiftly and silently.

Rusalki are less particular than their Mexican cousins about who and what their victims are. They prefer young men, but any human will do.

LORELEI

Myths claim that wailers also infest the Rhine River in Germany. A solitary woman, or several women, sings a ghostly echoing call that travellers on the river find nearly irresistible. Boatmen fail to navigate the treacherous waters. Their crafts capsize or break up on the rocks, and the people drown, their bodies smashed by the rampaging water. The high cliffs overlooking the swiftest, most dangerous stretch of the Rhine lent its name to the

inhabitants who became known as the Lorelei or the Rhinemaidens.

Like the rusalki, the Lorelei work alone or in small groups. They hunt along swift-flowing rivers with dangerous white-water narrows, and have the same catholic tastes as their Slavic counterparts. They engender less emotion, with destruction more on their minds than seduction. In the end, the result is the same—watery death.

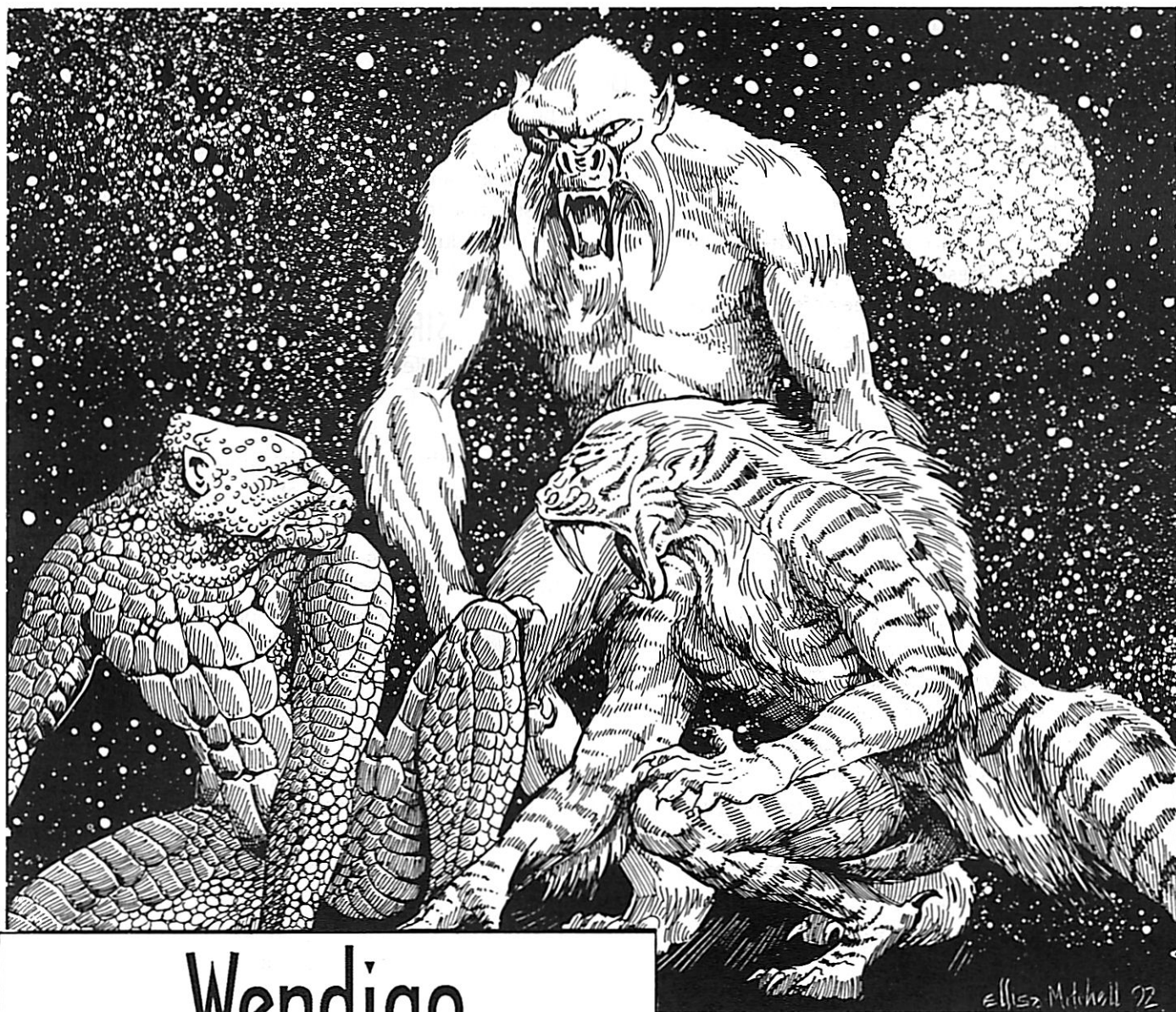
SIRENS

The best-known wailers of myth are the sirens who sang ocean-sailing Greeks to their destruction, and who Odysseus heard, yet survived to tell the tale. Reports place their cousins throughout the Mediterranean and off the east coast of Africa. Sirens may be seen as the ocean-going variety of wailers. Undoubtedly the most powerfully empathic of the wailers, the sirens sing a song that is irresistible. Navigators steer the ships toward the sound, which carries easily across the water. Sailors and passengers alike crowd the railing for the first glimpse of the glorious singers. The most impressionable throw themselves overboard to swim ahead of the ship. The sirens choose rocky shoals that can easily rip out a ship's hull, however, with swift riptides to drag victims under the surging waters. These wailers rarely need to dirty their dainty hands to drown their victims personally—although if a strong swimmer struggles to their rocky perch, they will not demur.

Sirens may also account for legends of beautiful singing mermaids far out to sea. There, they sing only the most susceptible into the water for a playful, deadly dip. Evidently, the effort sirens spend in swimming reduces the extreme allure of their song to an intriguing but resistible echo of itself.

OTHERS

The wailers described here are not the only ones possible. Consider, for example, an anguished young environmentalist encountered on the beach, weeping for an oil-slicked seabird and pleading persuasively for the PCs to help rescue some of the others, out at that rock outcrop just offshore...



Wendigo

Strength: 19	Education: 3	Move: 3/9/15/30
Constitution: 16	Charisma: 4	Skill/Dam.: 8/2D10
Agility: 7	Empathy: 7	Hits: 16/32
Intelligence: 4	Initiative: 6	# Appear: 1D6

Special: Animal Empathy and Dimension Walk.

THE MYTHOLOGY

The spirit of the north in Canadian legends, the wendigo has been described as a fierce wind, a human-devouring yeti, and even a stalking spirit

that stays just out of sight to plague travellers and inspire fear. It is the spirit of the lonely places in the world's mythology, a cunning, fast-moving being that follows solitary wanderers and torments them with sighing whispers and half-glimpsed shadows. When the desperate wanderer finally collapses from exhaustion and loneliness, the wendigo moves in to feast.

THE REALITY

Since the aliens "opened the wrong door" and



released the Dark upon our world, the Dark Races of legend have come out of hiding and have even increased their numbers to levels unheard of since the earliest days of our planet. Among these Dark Minions are the wendigo, the spirits of the lonely places.

Physical Description

The wendigo appear as huge, white-furred creatures with small, black eyes, rows of sharp teeth and long claws. They stand on two legs, but often walk hunched over so that their clawed hands swing just above the ground. As tall as three meters and weighing approximately 200 kilograms, it's surprising the wendigo is as fast and agile as it is. The creature is like the wind, fast and untouchable, nearly silent and mostly unseen.

The spirits of the lonely places often take on appearances that fit the environs they have claimed as their own. In northern climes, the wendigo appears as a great white-furred beast. In hot deserts, it stalks prey in the guise of a scaly, reptilian monster. In tropical jungles, it prowls as a humanoid cat with sabretooth fangs and thick, dark hair.

To tell if the monster hunting you is a wendigo, no matter what form it may take, you only have to examine the signs of its pursuit. The wendigo makes stalking a game, seeking to drive its prey mad with terror and exhaustion. It rarely allows itself to be seen before the game ends and it moves in for the kill. Wait. Listen closely. Is that the wind blowing through the tall grass? It may be nothing more than your imagination—but it may be the wendigo.

Behavior

With the depopulation of rural areas, the wendigo and its brethren have moved in to fill the vacuum. As more and more "lonely places" spread across the continents, more and more wendigo appear to claim them as their own. While not all take the appearance of the wendigo of the northern reaches, all behave in a similar fashion. They turn their territories into vast hunting grounds, lying in wait for travellers trying to pass through their lands. Then

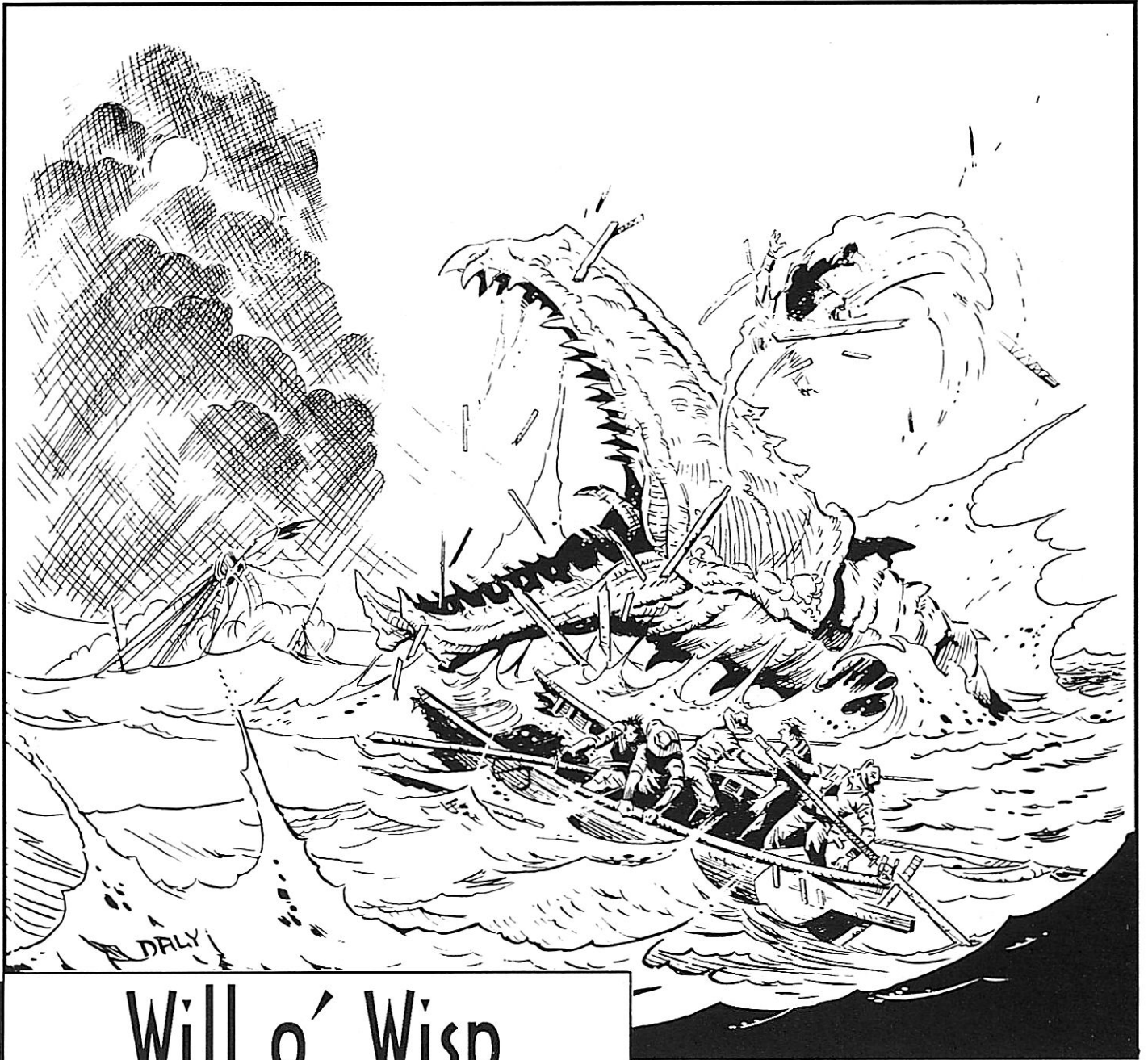
the thrill of the hunt begins. These hunting grounds serve as playgrounds for the wendigo, private reserves where they can stalk prey, torment it with unbridled glee, then pounce upon it in a bloody whirlwind of tearing claws and ripping teeth.

As intelligent and as savage as the untamed wilderness it calls home, the wendigo revels in tormenting and stalking travellers it sees as prey. It uses Animal Empathy to send the creatures of the wilderness against its prey, Human Empathy to soak in the fear its prey experiences, and Project Emotion to promote paranoia and turn travellers against each other. It likes nothing better than to corrupt its prey into feasting on the flesh of its fellows, turning rational, honorable humans into cannibalistic horrors through cunning and terror. When the prey finally succumbs to despair and terror, the wendigo moves in for the kill. After the long and desperate chase, the wendigo's prey often welcomes the release the spirit of the lonely places finally provides. Like complacent deer before the jaws of a wolves, broken and weary travellers offer their throats to the wendigo's daggerlike teeth in final acceptance of their fate.

For the wendigo, the hunt never ends. Its appetite is never sated, and when the feeding of one meal has ended, it must seek out new sources of food for the next. It can survive on animal flesh for a time, but it also needs the emissions of fear and terror that only human prey can project. For this reason, no matter what creature it might be in the middle of stalking, a wendigo will drop everything if it senses human prey in its territory.

Empathic Abilities

Wendigo make use of Dimension Walk to cover vast distances within their hunting territories quickly, and to appear and disappear from sight when stalking and terrorizing prey. Other Dark Minions are tolerated in the hunting grounds as long as other prey is available. If not, the wendigo will just as quickly turn on a Dark Minion as it will a human, seeking the rich emotions and the warm, blood-filled flesh of intelligent life to ease its constant pangs of hunger.



Will o' Wisp

Strength: 7	Education: 5	Move: 2/8/15/30*
Constitution: 7	Charisma: 2	Skill/Dam.: 7/2D6
Agility: 7	Empathy: 10	Hits: 25/50
Intelligence: 8	Initiative: 4	# Appear: 1

*These scores are for swimming. A will o' wisp's movement on land is at half these rates.

Special: Telekinesis.

THE MYTHOLOGY

Many times, beauty is merely a cover for something ugly. This is certainly the case with the legend of the will o' wisp. Individuals or small groups of people occasionally see small motes of lights dancing about playfully in the middle of a swamp. Or they see lights moving about below the surface of the



water just over the edge of a boat or along some deserted stretch of beach. These lights are so beautiful and entrancing that individuals are drawn to them, following them until becoming lost in the swamp or drowning in deep water.

THE REALITY

Individuals lured by these faerie lights soon meet the true will o' wisp, which is by no means a beautiful creature of light.

The dancing lights are nothing more than a simple but effective lure to draw prey.

Physical Description

In their natural state, will o' wisps are hideous creatures to behold. They have very long, limbless, serpentine bodies. Their eyeless heads display tri-lateral symmetry—their mouths have three jaws. The teeth at the end of their jaws hook backward so that when they bite, they latch firmly onto their prey. The creatures also have a set of secondary jaws inside the first. Each secondary jaw ends in a single tooth which is actually more like a razor-sharp claw. They have a long, hollow "tongue," itself tipped with nasty barbs.

Combat Abilities

When they attack, will o' wisps latch on to their victim's torso with their outer jaws. The inner teeth then tear through muscle and bone so that the tongue can find its way into the victim's internal organs and consume them.

A will o' wisp prefers to have its tail anchored to some submerged object when it attacks, so that it can pull the prey below the surface to finish it off.

On the first attack, the damage is used primarily to figure "controlling hits," but half is also considered actual damage. After successfully latching onto their prey, the creatures cause an automatic 2D6 damage each subsequent phase to the hit location grabbed until the victim is dead. They may try to pull their prey below the water surface on the same round as they achieve sufficient controlling hits with their outer set of jaws. The victim then

suffers the effects of drowning in addition to those of combat.

Psychology

Despite the fact that will o' wisps have no manipulative limbs, the creatures are actually quite intelligent, using Telekinesis to manipulate objects when desired, and using Project Thought and Project Emotion to create the illusion of "faerie lights" by which they lure their prey. The creatures are very evil and cruel, enjoying toying with unsuspecting individuals and then devouring them.

Telekinesis

Not only can will o' wisps use their Telekinesis for fine manipulation of tools and objects, they can also use it to defend themselves in combat or even to conduct an attack.

When used defensively, each power level achieved gives the creatures 1 point of armor, a sort of telekinetic force field that helps them to feed undisturbed. But this field is only effective against melee and gas attacks—it provides no defense against firearms or beam weapons.

Offensively, the creatures use Telekinesis to make ranged attacks, causing oars to attack their users, stones to leap from under the water and attack, and so on. The creatures much prefer to attack physically and will only resort to telekinetic attacks as a last resort.

Note that they can only use Telekinesis for one thing at a time—it can't be used both defensively and offensively at once.

Dwellings

This marine race has numerous cities in the oceans of the world and some in larger lakes. Will o' wisps have a tightly structured and ordered society based upon rule by the largest and most deadly.

The largest, deep-sea dwellers are big enough to consume whales or wreck sailing ships (and are likely a source of sea serpent legends). Those encountered in swamps are the outcasts of their society.

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It's quite another to encounter an unknown horror.

Legends warn us of evil things stalking our world, but they are contradictory and confused, often giving more misguidance than aid. Still, a vague warning is better than no warning at all. While only a fool trusts the legendary accounts entirely, only a greater fool faces the Dark completely unprepared.

This is the quandary for heroes who oppose the Dark Races. How much can legendary accounts be trusted? An unheeded warning can be fatal—or worse. But a false one is just as dangerous. The only surety is that nothing is sure.

This first Dark Races Compendium is designed to maintain that sense of horrifying mystery central to Dark Conspiracy adventures. Within the pages of this volume, referees will find more than 50 Dark Minions from the feverish visions of a dozen and a half different authors. Many of the creatures herein are the stuff of often-repeated legends of darkness. Others spring from more private nightmares. Together, they will take your campaign to realms of horror your players could never expect.

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