

Zomes of Ancient Knowledge





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What You Will Find Inside Comes of Ancient Knowledge

Tomes of Ancient Knowledge introduces an entirely new flavor of magic for the 5th Edition of the world's most famous roleplaying game, especially a horrorthemed game like the official 5E Curse of the Vampire adventure saga or any campaign exploring the Loft of Ravens. This product details a simplified sanity system that enables your players to experience the slow crumbling of their grip on reality but without making their characters unplayable. It also expands the basic concepts of existing magic and how to reshape common spells into mindbending abominations that anyone foolish enough to attempt can unleash upon an unsuspecting world. Besides these broader themes, Tomes of Ancient **Knowledge** brings you a trio of eldritch books of magic, each delving into a different theme, from the deranged poetry of pain in the **Palestone Analects** to the cosmic secrets of space and time in the **Xanthuun Tablets** and the crystalline record of a blood-soaked serpent cult in the **Sarkulis Shards.** With 16 brand-new spells and a bounty of unique magical mysteries, there is knowledge here, and power, but the deeper you delve the greater the cost, but is any price too great to claim the power of the ancients?

The Legendary Games tradition is to combine rich story and background, innovative layout, beautiful aesthetics, and excellence in design that is second to none, allowing you to enliven and enrich your campaign in amazing and exciting ways. This product is the latest in that tradition, and we hope you enjoy using it as much as we enjoyed making it. Game on!

- Jason Nelson

Secrets Man Was 1201 Meant to Know

SANITY CHECKS

Horror games typically present extensive rules for becoming insane as a result of exposure to secrets too terrible to contemplate and that rend asunder the natural rationality of ordinary people. The OGL System Reference Document for 5th Edition includes Madness rules, but any number of other mechanics for dealing with insanity can also be used, even including subsystems for non-d20 games. Here we present another simple and streamlined way to implement insanity.

Sanity Checks: Fundamentally, a sanity check is a Wisdom saving throw, with failure causing a creature to gain 1 Madness point (reading a particular mythos tome for the first time adds 1d4 Madness points on a failed check, halved (minimum 1) on a successful check).

Unlike the terrified investigators in a horror-themed game, heroic PCs should have some measure of resistance to the overwhelming alien presence of eldritch mythos horrors. PCs do not have to make a Sanity check from any creature or event with a CR equal to or less than the PC's level plus Wisdom bonus. This saves Sanity checks for only the most extreme horrors relative to the character.

Sanity Score: Every PC has a Sanity score, which is equal to his or her level plus her lowest ability score among Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma.

Madness Score: A character failing a sanity check gains 1 or more Madness points. For every 2 Madness points, the PC takes a -1 penalty on any skill check based on Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma, and to saving throws against charm effects; this penalty is doubled against effects that cause confusion or insanity (including future sanity checks) and effects with the emotion descriptor, including fear effects. This penalty does not affect a creature's spellcasting ability.

Mad Certainty: Madness provides a bonus rather than a penalty to Intelligence (Arcana) skill checks made to identify or learn about creatures or spells with the mythos descriptor.

Becoming Insane: When a character's Madness score equals or exceeds her Sanity score, she automatically becomes insane. Some mythos creatures, tomes, or spells may automatically incite a particular type of insanity; if none is specified, randomly generate a type of insanity as specified in the OGL System Reference Document for 5th Edition. A creature with a Madness score gains a type of paranoia that makes them unwilling to lower their defenses. If others attempt to forcibly remove their protective items or effects, the insane person is compelled to use any available means to escape or fight against those they perceive as attacking them, up to and including lethal force.

Regaining Sanity: *Calm emotions* temporarily suppresses the effects of madness but cannot reduce the target's Madness score. *Lesser restoration* can remove 1 Madness point from a creature per casting and *heal, restoration, miracle,* and *wish* can remove all Madness points, but only if the target fails its save. A creature with a Madness score cannot voluntarily fail this save, nor can they use such effects to cure their own insanity.

DC	Triggering Event				
15	Reading a particular mythos tome for the first time				
10 + spell level	Learning a mythos spell (the spells presented in this tome)				
5 + spell level	Casting a mythos spell (The DC is reduced by 1 each time after the first time a specific spell is cast; once the DC is equal to the spell's level, the caster no longer needs to save.)				
5 + CR	Encountering a mythos creature (The DC is reduced by 1 each time after the first encounter with a particular mythos creature; only one check is rolled per encounter, regardless of how many mythos creatures are present. If more than one type of creature is present, use the highest CR to calculate the DC. Once the DC is equal to the creature's CR, a creature no longer need save when encountering that creature type.)				
Same as original DC	Rolling a natural 1 on a saving throw against a mythos spell, any effect that causes confusion or insanity, or a mind-affecting effect created by a mythos creature.				
15	Failing a concentration check while casting or concentrating to maintain a mythos spell.				

MYTHOS SPELLS

The spells in this book are all considered Mythos spells. Many spells found in the traditional spell lists can have a "mythos version," in other words an alternative version of the spell that provides the same results but that often has some different and more gruesome component or ritual requirement and also references or calls upon forces, powers or gods from beyond the stars. The use of such powers or knowledge is alien even to practiced arcane and divine casters. For instance, speak with dead is not a mythos spell and casting it does not require a Sanity check, despite its rather horrific and gruesome subject matter. However, in a mythos tome, one may find a mythos version of speak with dead, that provides the same effects but has some different requirements or components, and that version would require a Sanity check, such as having to contribute an ounce of your own flesh, or a finger, of having to swallow the entrails of a corpse, or other sanity-bending things in the mythos version that the normal version does not require.

In addition, creatures can be given the "mythos" subtype to indicate their alien origin or associations. Some creatures that should be considered the mythos subtype in the OGL System Reference Document for 5th Edition include: aboleth, chuul, gibbering mouther, grimlock and xorn. Other similarly alien creatures could also be given this descriptor.

SARKULIS SHARDS, ARCANE MYTHOS TOME

Lore: The Sarkulis shards are a set of 14 runecarved crystal shards, deep red in color and as hard as diamonds, each over a foot long and etched with tiny letters and sinuous pictograms. The shards were handed down from the witch-circles of the fallen north-kingdom of Sarkulis. Witchcraft was common in Sarkulis and often benevolent, in many places supplanting the more common druidical circles in providing spiritual and supernatural guidance and protection for the people. However, in the more remote tribes (and secretly even amongst those who called themselves civilized) secret cannibal cults arose; revering an entity they called the World Eater. This great scarlet serpent, a head at each end of its worldencircling body, twined about and devoured itself even as it crushed the world, passing through its own body to emerge and devour itself again. Likewise, these cultists sought to feed upon the world as it died. If all was ended, why should they not join in the feast ere they were consumed in turn? Who better to feed upon than the foolish deniers of their own destruction? How ironic that the weak who might compete for the world's dwindling resources should become a resource themselves to nourish the strong in the last days. Perhaps, the sibilant whispers spread among them, they could show

MYTHOS MAGIC RITUALS

Because of its alien origin and the mind-bending seductiveness of its eldritch language, mythos spells can be cast even by creatures with no ordinary magical talent, or one who has mastered a different variety of magic than that contained within the tome. Such a ritual can also be used to cast a spell of a level beyond that which the character is normally capable of casting. If a ritual is used to cast a spell that a character would normally be unable to cast, whether because of its level or because they lack the proper spellcasting ability, the spell takes effect at a caster level equal to half their character level (minimum 1st).

A mythos magic ritual can also be used by a caster who would be capable of casting the spell in order to use the spell without expending spell slots. In this case, the spell takes effect at her full spellcaster level but must fulfill the normal requirements of ritual casting described below. Performing a mythos magic ritual requires the caster to have a mythos tome containing the spell available at hand. The ritual takes 1 hour, and the DC of all applicable sanity checks is increased by 5. In addition, a failed sanity check results in gaining 1d4 Madness points, halved on a successful save (minimum 1). themselves the World Eater's true scions by devouring those who did not deserve to survive and in time become World Eaters themselves. They did not worship this thing; it was beyond petty human concerns of adulation and existed only to destroy and devour, and perhaps to propagate itself and its kind. Their rite was merely one of acknowledging its bitter, bloody truth, and choosing a ready path to sustain the faithful few long enough to see the apotheosis of annihilation at the end of all things.

It is unknown if the Sarkulis Shards were crafted by these cannibal witch-cults or discovered by them and revered as relics. Legends suggest that they are the shed blood of the World Eater itself, containing the essence of his devouring blood magic. Others whisper that they were once the serpent-familiars of the eldest witches, ritually exsanguinated and their magical secrets embalmed in eternal crystal for future generations. The major cannibal cults have long since fallen extinct, devoured in truth by the demonic apocalypse that engulfed their kindred and country, though the few wretched survivors of their kind would doubtless offer much to recover these relics of their ancient lore (and would no doubt then hunt whomever sold them to the ends of the world for profaning the sacred shards).

Reading: The Sarkulis Shards are written in the Nordic language and those not fluent must use *comprehend languages* to read them. The shards reveal some history of Sarkulis, told from the perspective of the cannibal cults, as well as the debauched and sadistic rites that characterized their celebration of the World Eater. In addition to normal sanity checks, reading the Shards results in a -2 penalty to saving throws against curses or despair effects for 1 day per Shard perused.

Spells: These Shards exist as an unliving record of the favored enchantments of the cannibal cultists. Each of the Sarkulis Shards contains a single magical spell, including several unique to the cult: blood diamonds*, call cannibals*, cannibal compulsion*, contact other plane, greator restoration, dream serpent*, false life, scintillating serpents*, serpent's servant*, vampiric touch.

BLOOD DIAMONDS

*jth-level necromancy*Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 30 feet
Components: V, S, M (the caster's blood)

Duration: Instantaneous

By shedding your own blood (deal 1d6 points of damage to yourself with a slashing or piercing weapon) you transmute drops of your own blood into jagged, diamond-hard crystal shards of deepest red called blood diamonds. You create 5 plus a number equal to your spellcasting ability modifier. You may hurl all at one creature or divide them among several targets. Each *blood diamond* requires a separate ranged attack and inflicts 1d6 points of slashing and piercing damage and an additional 1d4 damage per turn. After striking, *blood diamonds* embed themselves in their targets and create a vampiric resonance with the caster, who gains 1 temporary hit point for every imbedded blood diamond each round it remains imbedded. Removing an embedded blood diamond requires a DC 14 Wisdom (Medicine) skill check or magical healing.

CALL CANNIBALS

4th-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S, M (a piece of humanoid flesh)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

This spell summons one or more necrophagic minions to serve you. You may summon 1d4 ghouls^{MM} (if summoned in water, these are aquatic ghouls called lacedons, which can swim at a speed of 30 feet), 2 ghasts^{MM}, or 1d3 cannibals (statistics as *Tribal Warrior*^{MM}).

CANNIBAL COMPULSION

4th-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S, M (a drop of ghoul blood)

Duration: Concentration up to 1 minute

Your spell curses another with an unquenchable physical and spiritual hunger for the flesh of its own kind. This compulsion can affect even mindless creatures or undead, though constructs, plants, and amorphous or incorporeal creatures are immune. The target must succeed at a Wisdom saving throw or be compelled to attack the nearest creature of its own type with bite attacks, to the exclusion of all other forms of attack. If it lacks a bite attack, it makes this attack using only its Strength modifier and is considered proficient with the attack. A successful hit does 1 point of damage and if the target is a creature other than an undead, it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. Additionally, on a successful hit the target must attempt to initiate a grapple as a bonus action. If a victim of this attack is successfully grappled the bite damage increases to 1d4.

At the end of each of its turns, the target can make another Wisdom saving throw. On a success, the spell ends on the target. Regardless, the target is poisoned from the experience until it finishes a short or long rest.

DREAM SERPENT

1st-level illusion

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S, M (scale or feather from an extraplanar serpent or serpentine outsider)

Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

Your spell spell draws a serpentine phantasm from the subconscious of one target. This shadowy serpent of shifting colors twines around the target, who must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or become entangled. Each round the target starts its turn entangled it take 1d6 point of damage from the constriction.

SCINTILLATING SERPENTS

3rd-level illusion

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 90 feet

Components: V, S, M (a snake scale)

Duration: Concentration up to 1 minute

You call forth a swarm of iridescent serpents from the Dimension of Dreams that seethe and flit about on membranous insectile wings at a point within range and spreading out to 10 feet. Any creature within the area must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or is stunned. At the end of each of its turns, the target can make another Dexterity saving throw. On a success, the spell ends on the target.

The refracted dream-light of the serpents' wings and scales disrupts and suppresses illusion spells of 3rd level or lower as long as they remain within the area and for 1 round thereafter.

SERPENT'S SERVENT

6th-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S, M (a snake scale)

Duration: Concentration up to 1 minute

This spell summons forth a single serpentine servant of the World Eater to serve you. You may choose any one of the following creatures:

Amphisbaena Snake

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 84 (12d10 + 24)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Saving Throws: Con +4

Skills Perception +4

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages -

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Hardened corpse: When the amphisbaena snake dies, one of its heads bites the other one, and its body turns to stone.

Multiattack: The amphisbaena snake makes two attacks with its bite.

Actions

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 10ft., one target.

Hit: 13 (2d8 +4) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or take 14 (4d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Amphisbaena: This two-headed snake is a monstrosity (see sidebar).

Hebina: This variant of the succubus^{MM} has long redscaled serpents for arms granting it a reach of 10 and replacing its claw attacks with bites. Damage does not change, but each bite injects a soporific poison that dulls the target's mind.

Hebina Poison (injury). A creature subjected to hebina poison must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become stunned. At the end of each of its turns, the target can make another Constitution saving throw. On a success, the spell ends on the target. After two successful saves, the poison ends.

XANTHUUN TABLETS, DIVINE MYTHOS TOME

Lore: In ages past, when most races still wallowed in barbarism or scratched out their survival in fields and huts, the Kingdom of the Pharaohs rose in glory and wisdom. They communed with the elemental spirits and bound them to their will, mastering sand and sun, taming the mighty rivers and guiding the winds above. Arcane magic was a tool of the empire, but the worship of the divine *was* the empire. The signs, portents, and omens told the will of the gods, and as the earth below was their body the sky and stars above revealed their mind. The constellations were read as the scrivening of divine hands, and the people were content; but not all of them.

Others there were who never tired of the question "why." They probed ever to the next question behind any answer. What lay below the roots of stones or the depths of the sea? What lay beyond the source of the wind? What lay in the dark gulfs between and behind the stars? Above all, what held the universe together? So much could be seen, but their minds and their cosmic researches strove ever to pierce the veil of ignorance and draw forth that which was unseen. Never did they imagine that some things were never meant to be seen. Nevertheless, each new revelation, both the mind-rendingly beautiful and soulshatteringly awful in turn, was recorded in clay and stone, impermeable to time. The Prophets of Xanthuun, as they called themselves, found the people unreceptive to their proclamations of cosmic truth, however, and were branded apocalyptic heretics. Hunted to extinction by the hierocracy, their existence was expunged from all official records, living on only in the dim reckoning of sages and fragmentary accounts. Yet a few of their graven tablets have survived, offering insights into the fundamental construction of the world and the universe around it, for those who dare to learn these awful and unknowable truths.

Reading: The Xanthuun Tablets are written in Ancient Pharaonic, and those not fluent must use comprehend languages to read them. Each time a cleric learns one of these spells, she may become cursed (as bestow curse); a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw prevents this. An remove curse or greater restoration spell removes the curse but also wipes knowledge of the spell from the caster's mind, leaving them unable to prepare it.

Spells: Although clerics do not generally use spellbooks, the Xanthuun Tablets reveal rituals to learn reality-piercing enchantments forbidden to the servants of the gods of sanity, including *bend space**, *reality riptide**, *reality wrinkle**, *repel force**, and mythos variants of *scrying* and *true seeing*.

BEND SPACE

3rd-level transmutation Casting Time: 1 action Range: 30 feet Components: V, S, M (a lodestone)

Duration: Concentration up to 1 minute

This spell allows you to bend space around yourself to divert an attack. If the attack affects an area, you suffer only half damage. If it is targeted at you, it has a 50% miss chance (or a 50% chance to simply fail, if it does not require an attack roll), and you gain a +2 deflection bonus to your AC against it. You may instead choose to bend yourself around space. Until the end of your turn, your reach is increased by 5 feet. With either use of the spell, you must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw to enable your body to readjust to normal space; if failed, you take (2d10) damage.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, your AC bonus increases by +1, and your reach is increased by 5 feet for each level it is increased.

REALITY RIPTIDE

6th-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S, M (a lodestone)

Duration: 8 hours

This spell momentarily unravels the fibers of reality, creating a tensed rift that then snaps back into congruence with the world around it, catapulting you to a new location. A *reality riptide* acts as a *dimension door*, but your arrival creates a shockwave. Each creature in a 15-foot cube originating from you must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature is pushed back 5 feet and knocked prone. On a successful save, the creature is pushed back but not knocked prone. In addition, unsecured objects that are completely within the area of effect are automatically pushed 5 feet away from you by the spell's effect.

At the point of your departure, the implosive unraveling creates a 5-foot radius spread of *black tentacles (as per the spell)* centered on your former position.

REALITY WRINKLE

5th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration up to 1 minute

This spell warps and bends reality, deforming perception and probability. Each creature in a 15-foot cube originating from you must roll a 1d4 and subtract that number from any attack roll, saving throw and ability check, and you may roll a 1d4 and add that number to any attack roll, saving throw and ability check. The area is also considered difficult terrain for every target in the area except you.

Once the *reality wrinkle* ends (including if it is dispelled), normal reality collapses onto you and you must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be entangled (escape DC 15).

REPEL FORCE

3rd-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (a lodestone)

Duration: Concentration up to 1 minute

This spell causes force effects to slide harmlessly off of the creature you touch by manipulating imperceptible counterharmonic tendrils of anti-force that are momentarily revealed by their collision with the force effect. The creature has advantage on all saving throws against any spells delivering force damage as well as against *disintegrate, thunder wave*, or *telekinesis*.

SCRYING, MYTHOS

4th-level divination

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: Self

Components: V, S, M (a focus worth at least 1,000 gp, such as a crystal ball, a silver mirror, or a font filled with holy water)

Duration: Concentration up to 10 minutes

This spell functions as *scrying*, but while using this spell you are aware that others within the realm of meta-real consciousness are also watching you and the one you watch. Every minute or fraction thereof spent *scrying*, you must succeed at a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw; the DC increases by 1 every minute. If any Wisdom save is failed, you are subject to the nightmare version of the *dream* spell the next time you go to sleep.

TRUE SEEING, MYTHOS

6th-level divination

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (an ointment for the eyes that costs

25 gp; is made from mushroom powder, saffron, and fat;

And is consumed by the spell)

Duration: 1 hour

This spell functions as *true seeing*, but the recipient's perceptions expand beyond the material into mind-warping sub-realities. Each minute or fraction thereof using this spell, the recipient must succeed at a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or suffer 2d8 points of psychic damage; the DC increases by 1 for each minute after the first.

THE PALESTONE ANALECTS,

Arcane Mythos Tome

Lore: This strange, presumably-allegorical text takes the form of one hundred and thirty-one interlinking pagelong poems, in forms from nursery rhymes to sonnets, seeming to chronicle one man's life-long instruction in the arts of an alien geometry-magic at the feet of a mysterious shadow-shaitan who dwells in a ruined, nameless city of shattered glass towers, sparking steel cables, unceasing rain and eerily-smooth, ivory-colored stonework. According to notes within the book, it should actually contain another eight poems; those who read from the work begin to dream of the empty, endless city by night and, on occasion, to mumble snippets of off-rhyming doggerel in an attempt to "complete" the book.

Reading: Long-term deciphering & study of the text, including for use of the work as a spellbook or in study for the purposes of copying spells to the same, induces schizophrenia, as per the rules above.

Spells: The Palestone Analects contain the following spells: magic missile (but dealing acid damage), emptyheart false life*, faceless disguise*, faceless rage*, magic jar, stone shape, and a mythos variant of polymorph.

EMPTYHEART FALSE LIFE

2nd-level school

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S, M (a small amount of alcohol or distilled

spirits)

Duration: 1 hour

This spell functions as *false life*, but you can increase its effectiveness by spending 1 minute etching a pattern of jagged diagrams upon the face of a incapacitated or restrained or willing creature while casting the spell (this replaces casting it at a higher level). For each vial of acid you use to etch the victim's face (dealing 2d6 acid damage), you gain 5 additional temporary hit points.

FACELESS DISGUISE

1st-level illusion

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You make yourself and all your gear appear as a featureless, genderless humanoid statue of pale stone, smooth in appearance yet coarse to the touch, seeming to crumble slightly into drifts of dust when strongly struck. You have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) skill checks in areas of natural stone or rubble and advantage on Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) to hide small objects on your person. A creature interacting with you including attacking or being attacked by you, must succeed at a Wisdom saving throw to reveal it to be an illusion. Creatures seeing through the outer illusion instead perceive you as an emaciated, naked, genderless, hairless, eye-less, nose-less, many-toothed, slick, clay-colored humanoid of indeterminate age. The only distinguishing marks which appear upon the illusion at all are a series of shifting, jagged geometric diagrams in lieu of a face. Those perceiving this second illusion are filled with horror and revulsion, and have disadvantage on all Charisma saving throws for 1 hour. Creatures with Intelligence of 2 or less are immune. Those making their second save see through both layers of the illusion and suffer no ill effects from interacting with you.

FACELESS RAGE

6th-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 120 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

This spell functions as *dominate person* (commanded to attack a creature), but the target of the spell is also shrouded in a faceless disguise spell.

POLYMORPH, MYTHOS

4th-level transmutation

Casting Time: I action

Range: Self

Components: V, S, M (a holy symbol)

Duration: Concentration up to 10 minutes

This spell functions as *polymorph*, but you only change into a small earth or water elemental. Additionally, your form becomes partially amorphous. You have resistance to any damage from critical hits, sneak attacks, and similar precision-based damage.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, you have immunity to any damage from critical hits, sneak attacks, and similar precisionbased damage. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 6th level or higher, you have immunity to petrification or polymorph effects.









O WORLDS UNKNO



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