

# Van Richten's Guide to the Mists

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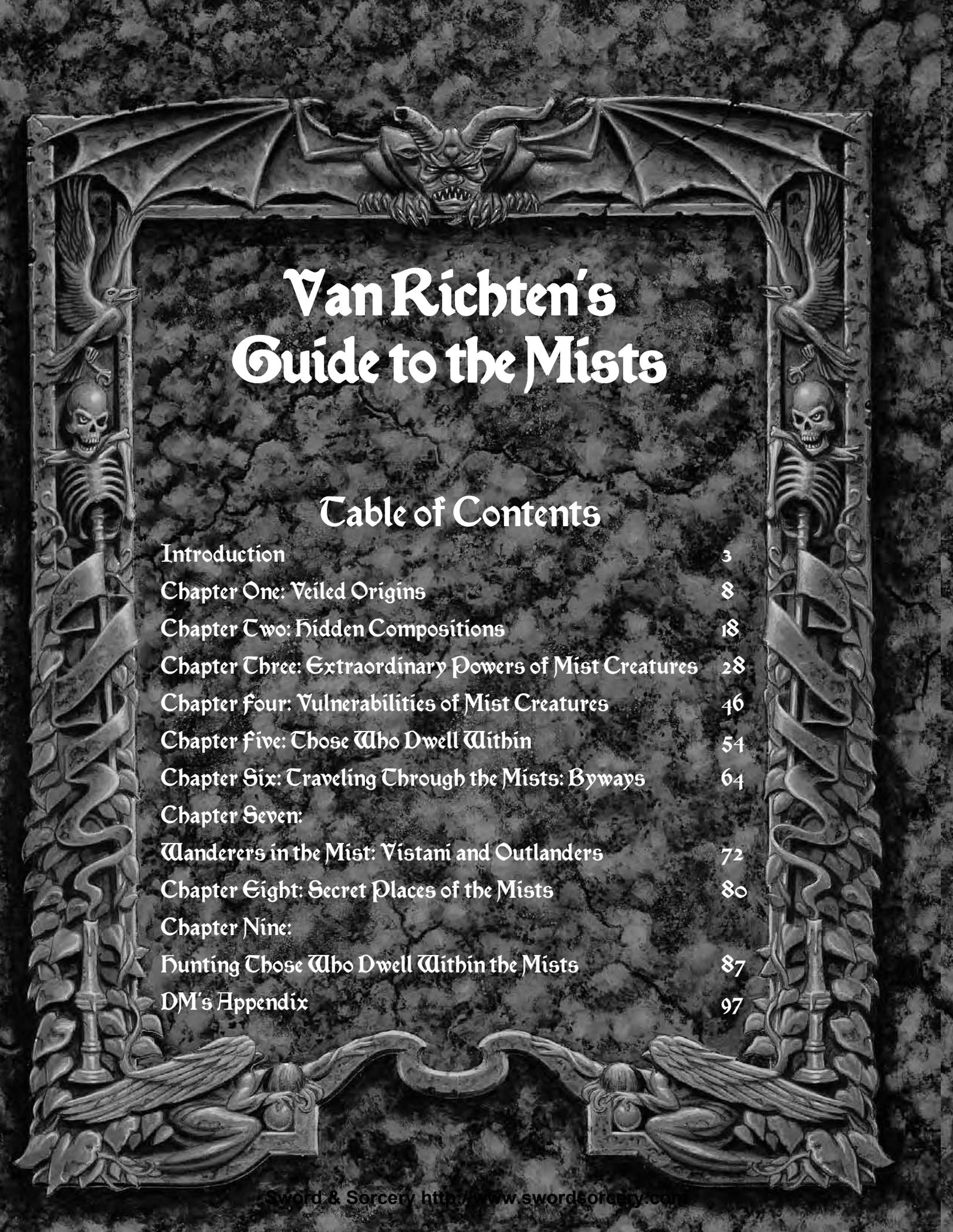
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# Van Richten's Guide to the Mists

## Table of Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Introduction  | 3  |
| Chapter One: Veiled Origins                                     | 8  |
| Chapter Two: Hidden Compositions                                | 18 |
| Chapter Three: Extraordinary Powers of Mist Creatures           | 28 |
| Chapter Four: Vulnerabilities of Mist Creatures                 | 46 |
| Chapter Five: Those Who Dwell Within                            | 54 |
| Chapter Six: Traveling Through the Mists: Byways                | 64 |
| Chapter Seven:<br>Wanderers in the Mist: Vistani and Outlanders | 72 |
| Chapter Eight: Secret Places of the Mists                       | 80 |
| Chapter Nine:<br>Hunting Those Who Dwell Within the Mists       | 87 |
| DM's Appendix   | 97 |



# Introduction

*Fear death? — to feel the fog in my throat,  
The mist in my face,  
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote  
I am nearing the place,  
The power of the night, the press of the storm,  
The post of the foe;  
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form;  
Yet the strong man must go....”*  
—Robert Browning, “Prospice”



elcome Dear Reader,

My name is Laurie Weathermay-Foxgrove.

Many of you are already familiar with the dread creatures that roam this land. The vampire, the lycanthrope, the created — most of these are known to our readers, either through the works of our mentor, Rudolph Van Richten, or through unfortunate personal experience. What many people do *not* know about are the creatures of the Mists, beings that exist within those mysterious borders that cordon off our land and, from time to time, intrude upon it.

What we propose in this book is that these beings are far more common than previously believed. Indeed, we are daring to make that claim that these creatures surround us— *all the time*. Furthermore, numerous properties of the Mists themselves have never been considered by others in the field. In this volume, we attempt to delve into the nature of these unspoken powers.

As you know, the year is 758, eight years past the date in which the acclaimed Rudolph Van Richten disappeared from the face of the land. Since that time my sister and I have carried on his work to the best of our ability, exploring the nature of the dead that walk and the mysterious inhabitants of the Shadow Rift.

This latest publication, however, takes a new turn, for not only does it branch out into new, unpenned territory, it treads through the very ground that we were warned not to explore. The Mists have ever been a source of both mystery and fear. They seem to come and go for no reason that we are aware of and only the wandering Vistani traverse them with any degree of surety or safety.

So, understand, by merely reading this book, you subject yourself to new and unheard of dangers. Therefore, be warned.

### From Small Beginnings

The creation of this manual began just a year before the disappearance of the great Dr. Van Richten, when my sister and I were at the impetuous age of seventeen. We were tending his herbalist shop in Mordent, already interested in the study of the strange and peculiar. To this end, we had begun writing our first text together. At that time, it was entitled, “Weathermay-Foxgrove’s Inclusive Guide to the Curious Properties of the Mists.”

Indeed, I showed the text to Uncle Rudolph himself, a proud seventeen-year old basking what

she believed was a true accomplishment. Van Richten carefully studied our script and gently laid it upon the herbalist counter in front of him. It was then that he turned and peered at me, cocking a brow in my direction.

“What is the meaning of this?” he asked.

“Uncle Rudolph, I present to you a publication that we...” I paused and corrected myself, “...a *proposed work* that we have been working on.”

Van Richten rubbed the bridge of his nose with a sigh. His voice dropped to a low hiss. “What you two have written, what I see here is quite brilliant,” Van Richten nodded his gray head, sighing. “Yes, what you have set before me is well researched, backed up with evidence and corroborated by witnesses. Your writing even has a certain style that appeals to me.”

For a rare moment in my life, I was without words.

“But what you are writing,” said Van Richten, “is *dangerous*. It can only lead to sorrow, not only for you and your sister, Laurie, but for everyone that you hold dear.”

I stood back for a moment and crossed my arms, beginning to feel a tingling curiosity. “How can writing a simple book be dangerous, Uncle?”

“You, of all people should know about books and the inherent danger that they — no, wait, that was Gennifer that found—”

Before the good doctor could finish his thought, a large man came bursting into the herbalist shop. Instantly, I recognized the tri-cornered hat, the iron lantern and the alert eyes that darted with caution.

“A lamplighter,” I whispered.

“Dr. Van Richten,” said the lamplighter, his voice bellowing from his bearded face. “They told me to come get you. There is need for you at the Holloway House.”

Van Richten looked back at me. We read each others’ thoughts. The Holloway House was well-known to us, for it had once belonged to one of the great ruling families of Mordent. Each of its members had been found murdered, or had disappeared without a trace over the years. Each time a family member vanished, the incident had always been accompanied with a night of thick, viscous fog. Now, the house stood completely empty, its vacant windows staring hollowly over an unoccupied town — a testament to the loneliness and sadness that consumed the Holloway family in its final years.





"Make ready, Laurie," said Dr. Van Richten.  
"We have work to do."

## A Glimpse of Darkness

We rode out from the herbalist shop as fast as our carriage horses would take us. Tamsin, the lamplighter, rode out ahead of us, illuminating the way through the moors and dense forests.

When we finally arrived at the Halloway house, we saw a small crowd of people assembled outside of that dreaded place. Tiny flickers of torchlight played upon the splintering walls of the mansion. The large porch, sagging from the weight of age, grinned at our approach, as if sardonically noting our arrival. As we drew nearer, I was startled to find the house *looming* towards me, as if trying to peer into the carriage that I was riding. It was only later that I discovered that the house was naturally tilting forward in the earth, leaning due to the weight of age. The slanted angle of the house made it look as if it were crouching like some great cat, patiently watching for its prey as it crept ever closer.

"What news?" cried Van Richten, opening the door to the carriage and hopping out even before the horses had stopped.

I saw now that a number of lamplighters stood at the scene. Beside them stood a weeping woman dressed in a plain cotton dress. A balding man with long jowls stood beside her, his head bowed. Behind them stood a number of wide-eyed children.

"Two boys," said one of the lamplighters. "A number of playmates decided to explore Steadwall. They wandered too close to Halloway House. Two of the children fell into the root cellar — there." With his hand, he indicated a direction a little distance away. "When their playmates called for them, there was no answer. We wanted to know if there was anything that could be done."

Van Richten slowly crossed over the weed-strangled hill and looked at what everyone was gathered around. Sure enough, a massive hole peered out from the now broken door to the root cellar. A cold, wet draft wafted up from the darkness within.

"Please," said Van Richten, would one of you gentlemen lower a lamp through the hole?"

It was Tamsin who obliged. He tied a rope to his own lantern and carefully slid the light down through the jagged hole. The sputtering flame illuminated a dusty atmosphere.

"I hate this," I muttered under my breath.

"I thought you wanted to accompany me on my missions," said Van Richten.

"I do," I replied, abashed at my mentor's sharp hearing. "I simply have a...trepidation where root cellars are concerned."

Soon, we could see that not only had the door to the root cellar shattered, but the stairs beneath the cellar doors had given way as well. Down below, the lantern shone upon a mass of broken boards, splinters and rusted nails. Past the scattered remains of the door and stairs, I could see a mass of footprints. Dozens of tiny prints made their marks upon the dusty floor.

"What is it?" I wondered aloud with the faintest whisper.

The lantern swung back and forth. As the light swayed through the room, the shadows reached first to the left and then to the right — and there, I saw it, that terrible detail that not only bewildered me, but left me with a cold feeling of dread.

"You see it, too?" whispered Van Richten, noting my swift intake of breath. "You note the same thing?"

I nodded in silence. Hooves. All of the small footprints were actually marks where miniature hooves had tread upon the ground as if a herd of miniature goats had tromped back and forth in that spot. Van Richten tilted the rope that dropped down into the cellar. The lantern rocked further into the empty cellar, swinging its pool of light deeper into the darkness. For a moment, I thought I saw something — a form of some sort waiting down there in the damp darkness.

The good doctor saw it as well and tilted the swaying lantern just a bit further. At first I caught only a glimpse, but then saw plainly what chilled me to the bone.

Words had been assembled out of the splinters and broken planks.

*we keep what we take*

Van Richten signaled for Tamsin to pull the lantern up from the depths. He turned and walked toward the woman, who now looked at the doctor with a mixture of terror and hope. Her face was red from crying, her eyes completely blood-shot. Everything was silent but for the ragged breath of that poor woman.

I saw the doctor lean in close and whisper to her. He took her hands and held them tightly. The





woman trembled for but a moment and then crumpled, fainting. The tall, balding man that had stood beside her all this time swiftly caught her limp body. He buried his face into her neck and began to sob.

Van Richten glanced at me over his shoulder. His eyes shimmered in the gathering lights. I knew what was on his mind, I knew exactly who he was thinking about at that moment. For the first time, I truly understood why he sought so assiduously to protect my sister and me.

## Unexpected Returnings

Greetings Gentle Reader,

My name is Gennifer Weathermay-Foxgrove.

As one might deduce, we dropped the idea of our then-titled, "Weathermay-Foxgrove's Inclusive Guide to the Curious Properties of Mists." When Laurie told me of what happened and what Dr. Van Richten had said, we both decided that it was not the time to pursue our own, independent research.

Of course, the disappearance of Van Richten reinvigorated us, but it also made us forget all about our personal work. We instead saw fit to bring to light Uncle Rudolph's unpublished work.

As you might have guessed, however, circumstances forced us to explore old territory. Something gave us cause to reexamine that ground which even Dr. Van Richten warned not to explore.

Not three months before we began work on this tome, I had reason to go back to Holloway House. The reason for my venture there was entirely different from my sister's, however. Instead of an emergency summons, I was called by Smythe, the local ferryman.

It had been nine years since the great Dr. Van Richten had been called there to investigate the disappearance of the poor Freidlin boys. Smythe had sent a message, claiming that he had seen something curious and, knowing that I was a purveyor of the unusual, requested my presence. I met my summoner by the shores of the river where he worked, not far at all from the accursed Steadwall. As always, I regarded Smythe with a bit of caution. While mostly harmless, Smythe was known to us to be a bit of a liar.

"I'm glad you could make it out this eve, ma'am," said Smythe, grinning his toothless grin. "I knew that you in particular would take an interest in what I saw up on the hill."

I bowed my head in the affirmative, "Indeed, what is it, Smythe? I do hope this is not one of your wild stories."

"No, ma'am," croaked Smythe, putting a gnarled hand upon his sunken chest. For a moment, he looked genuinely hurt. "You of all people know what an honest soul I am."

I sighed, waving away his protestations. "I have not come here to debate your 'boundless integrity.' If there is nothing further..."

"There's something further all right," said Smythe. With a speed that belied his age and decrepit form, he grabbed my arm with surprising strength. "There's something further indeed. Just look up that hill right now. You'll see what I'm talking about."

I struggled in his iron grasp for a moment, angered by his audacity. As I did, however, I noted that Smythe no longer looked at me. His eyes were cast past my shoulder, and they were full of loathing. His lips quivered with genuine fear. The face of the liar had gone.

Slowly, I turned to peer up the hill as he indicated. Holloway House stood as it always had, leaning down from the top of the hill, but around the corner of the house came a long column of mist. Pouring from that bank of mist came a gathering of small, white figures. Dozens upon dozens of tiny, naked forms sprang out, their skin white and luminous as moonlight. Their legs tapered down to end in hooves and their gaunt arms were as thin as spindles. Strangest of all, however, were their terrible faces, with wide, staring eyes and mouths caught in a perpetual "O".

The forms began running down the hill towards us. Instantly Smythe recoiled, releasing my arm and retreating back to his raft.

"I told you! They've been haunting me! Haunting me!" Without looking back, Smythe leapt onto his river ferry and pushed away from the shore.

I called out to Smythe, but he did not even slow his pace. Within the span of a heartbeat, I saw the ferry plow forward into the waters of the river.

I felt the cold, slimy hands of the creatures upon my ankles and upon my skin. I called out again to him, but the ferry kept drifting farther into the river. As I watched, the fog swallowed up both Smythe and his ferry.

I could feel the tugging of a dozen little arms upon my dress, actions accompanied by the sounds of a hundred tiny whispers. As I turned back toward





the house, I saw that the creatures had gathered all around me. I heard their chatter. Their incessant chant:

*we keep what we take*

As the creatures closed in around me, I saw what could only have been a vision. Behind the tiny beings stood what appeared to be a pair of small boys. Their hands were linked together, and they were staring straight at me with blank, shining eyes.

I felt the slippery hands of the creatures tugging at my arms. Something was crawling through my hair, tangling its fingers in my locks. Through the blanket of noise around me, through the hum and din of the collected speech that threatened to overwhelm me completely, I thought I could hear a tiny voice. "Look upon them," it said, "look upon them and know that they are the Lost."

I felt a quivering mass of hands swarm over my body. I stepped back to try to regain my balance, but in that moment, a wave of maggot-white flesh pressed against me. Little fingers clutched my face. Little arms pulled me back and I tumbled into the cold, dark river.

When I awoke, I was on Smythe's ferry. His back was to me, and I saw that he was examining my pistol.

"This all you have on you?" he muttered.

"Yes," I gasped, suddenly realizing how cold I was.

Smythe stood up and spoke gruffly, never turning around to face me. "Mm," he snorted, "always thought you carried a bit more on you."

Thus began a second time our quest to investigate the Mists. Instantly, a mystery lay before us. Who exactly were "the Lost" that the horde of creatures spoke of? Were they the missing boys that Van Richten had been called to save so long ago? How were we to find these lost beings, and where could we find them? Why had I been allowed to see them? What was the nature of the strange creatures that tried to drown me?

These are the questions that we explored in this tome. As it is in the nature of science, each

uncovered answer bred more questions. We hope that as you explore these words, you will uncover more answers than we did. But remember, dear reader, you have been warned.

## Chapter Overview

Our **Introduction** makes plain enough our desires and reason for completing this text.

**Chapter One: Veiled Origins** makes the case for Mist creatures and speculates upon their origins. It also reviews the known properties of the Mists themselves, as well as discusses properties of the Mists that have thus far been undiscovered.

**Chapter Two: Hidden Compositions** explains the physiology, psychology and common powers of the denizens of the Mists.

**Chapter Three: Extraordinary Powers** reveals the myriad salient abilities that Mist creatures might sometimes exhibit.

**Chapter Four: Those Who Dwell Within** covers the sad plight of the *mistlorn* — those hapless souls who have been captured and taken in by the Mists.

**Chapter Five: Hidden Places** discusses a new discovery — the dread oubliettes, those dark and chilling places which act as pockets of dread within the rolling Mists.

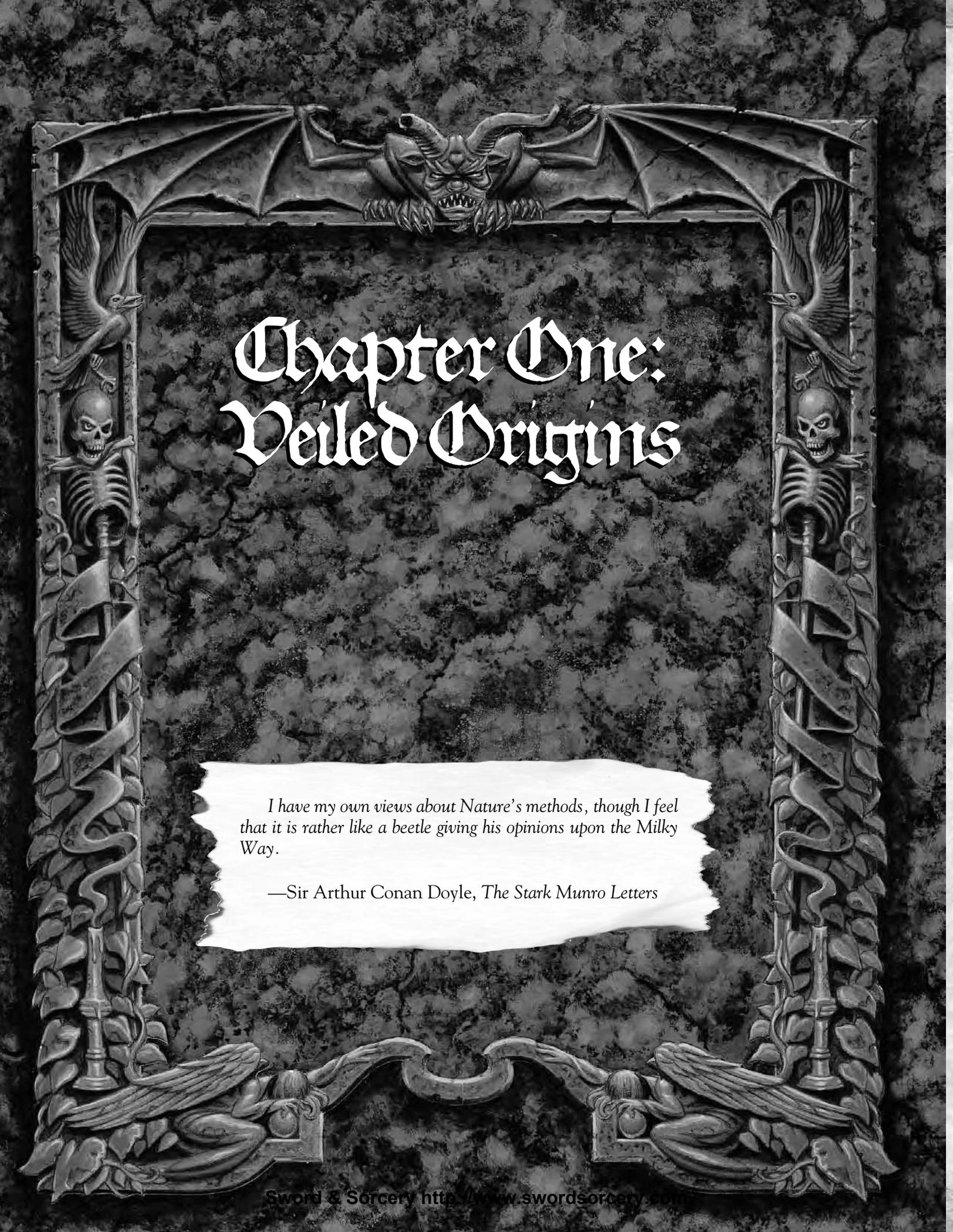
**Chapter Six: Traveling Through the Mists** reveals the properties and nature of the mysterious Mistways, paths within the Mists themselves.

**Chapter Seven: The Vistani** covers the great navigators of the Mists, the enigmatic gypsies who travel through the Mist as sailors do an ocean.

## How to Use this Book

This book is a new addition to the series of Van Richten Guides. As in the books before it, information regarding game rules and rules-related commentaries on the topics appear in sidebars. The **Appendix** at the end of the guide includes descriptions for new monsters as well as a creature creation laboratory which explains how the DM might create his own Mist terrors. Finally, the stats and backgrounds of specific characters that appear in this guide can be found in the **Appendix** as well.





# Chapter One: Veiled Origins

*I have my own views about Nature's methods, though I feel that it is rather like a beetle giving his opinions upon the Milky Way.*

—Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Stark Munro Letters*



reetings one and all,

Allow me, Laurie Weathermay-Foxgrove, to delve now into the origins of those that dwell within the Mists. Creatures such as the savage lycanthrope, the walking dead, the spectral ghost and other foul entities are all subjects of intense study around the core. These are the beings of dread that plague our land. Allow us, however, to make a supposition. Presume, for a moment, that there exists another category of creature that roams the land. These creatures are just as deadly, just as insidious and just as terrible as their better known counterparts.

The question arises: how could such a class of heretofore unknown creatures exist? Would we have not heard of such beings by now? Surely some evidence of these undiscovered creatures must exist. But then let us make another supposition—that *these creatures constantly surround us, hiding in plain sight.*

Here lies the very premise that this tome boldly states — that this unspoken class of monster has been with us for centuries, but has remain undetected by us.

Of course, with such dramatic claims as these, the burden of proof lies upon us to produce a proper case. And here is our second controversial assertion: many of the creatures of dread, many of those sinister monsters that we battle are, in fact, beings that belong to this undiscovered category. Many of these day-hating fiends are creatures of the Mists.

## The Case for Mist Creatures

Imagine the lone vampire that preys upon the small hamlet in the middle of the wilds. What if that creature was not acting of its own accord, but was instead doing so because of a curse from the Mists? Could such a thing be possible? My sister and I state emphatically that it must be so.

What led us to this outrageous idea? It was simply this: as youngsters, we could not travel throughout the core with Van Richten. We were confined to the library, where the study of other lands occurred through the pages of books. Through our constant reading, we both noticed one thing — that numerous domains claimed similar, if not identical folklore.

For example, the legendry of numerous lands claimed the tale of the Hitchhiker. This legend is known to many in the land and is especially popular among children. The legend goes thusly:

A carriage driver traveling down a road late at night happens upon a sad-looking woman while crossing a bridge.

Being kind-hearted, the carriage driver picks up the young woman and offert to carry her to the destination of her choice. With a forlorn sigh, the woman asks to be taken to her father's house, providing directions from the bridge.

Following the woman's instructions, the driver approaches a small cottage. As the driver of the carriage looks over to the woman to tell her that they have arrived, he finds that she has vanished. Perplexed, he knocks upon the door of the cottage,

## Dread Possibility: Introducing New Threats To Your Campaign

Introducing a brand new monster or villain into your **Ravenloft** campaign is sometimes difficult because of the existing power structure of the realm. If you place a dragon in the middle of a domain, that dragon would eventually contend with the Darklord for power. A coven of vampires in a major city might take it over after just a few months. While such power struggles can make for great campaigning, sometimes you may want a simpler plot where the Darklord of the domain doesn't figure into the picture. Other times, you may want to bring in a challenge to your players without shaking up the political boundaries of your campaign world with the threat that you introduce.

By making your favorite monster or villain a creature of the Mists, it can be wherever you want it to be without disrupting the structure of the setting. For instance, your vampires could show up for a short story arc, conflict with the campaign's heroes and then disappear into the Mists when the conflict was over.

This allows the DM to explore the use of more powerful creatures in **Ravenloft** if they so wish. Simply have the creature arrive via the Mists, encounter the heroes, and then leave once the clash is over.





wondering if she has already entered unseen by him.

The door opens, and out steps a wizened, old man. To the driver's surprise, the old man is not at all shocked or concerned but quietly explains that his daughter died long ago when the bridge was washed out. Even though the bridge has since been repaired, the young woman's spirit continually haunts it, trying to get home so that her dear father will not worry. Sadly, her spirit is doomed never to make it to the doorstep of her cottage.

While most in the realm have dismissed this story as a mere myth, we have spoken with numerous subjects who have all had the same experience. They each claim to have picked up a strange woman on a bridge and taken her to a cottage only to discover her missing upon arrival.

At first, this seems to be a typical haunting, with a phantom doomed to attempt to repeat an unfinished task from its life. However, we found numerous curious details concerning this tale. Each of the individuals we spoke to described the same house and the same old man, even though each person we spoke to lived in a different domain.

As we studied this case, we wondered how a phantom could travel so freely from realm to realm. It is well known that phantoms or ghosts are tied to a particular

area, that by their very nature, they do not roam. And what of the old man and the cottage? How could they be in several places at once?

The answer is deceptively simple: the woman, the old man and even the cottage are properties of the Mists. The haunting moves to where the Mists see fit.

## Concluding the Case for Mist Creatures

As a result of our exhaustive investigations, we believe that beings we now refer to as "creatures of the Mists" exist in this realm. Many of these creatures are haplessly possessed by the Mists, which keep them in a "temporal vault" until such time as they are needed. Others — fen hounds, ferryman and the like — are created by the Mists themselves. All of them, however, exist for a reason.

We cannot stress this point enough: *all creatures of the Mists serve a particular purpose*. The intent designated for the creature in question might be enigmatic, but ultimately all fulfill some larger

## Dread Possibilities – The Urban Legend

*I've heard the story a thousand times. Bloody Mary is supposed to be the ghost of a girl who died while looking into a mirror. To see her, they say you have to go into your bathroom and turn out your lights. Then, when everything is totally quiet, you spin around thirteen times. You have to chant the words, 'Bloody Mary' each time you spin. When you open your eyes, Bloody Mary will be standing there.*

*We didn't think anything was going to happen. We were just going to see if it was true, I promise. We didn't think it was actually true...*

Urban legends have existed for as long as people have gathered together in communities, whether cities, towns or villages. Urban legends began as simple ghost stories that people told around the fire to while away the long nights. Many of the old "ghost stories" known throughout the world arise from popular urban legends that have been continually updated for the current age and modified to fit their culture and locale.

Imagine that you live in a world where each and every "urban legend" is true. Visualize a land haunted by ghosts, stalked by malformed horrors and inhabited by creatures of nightmare. Welcome to **Ravenloft**.

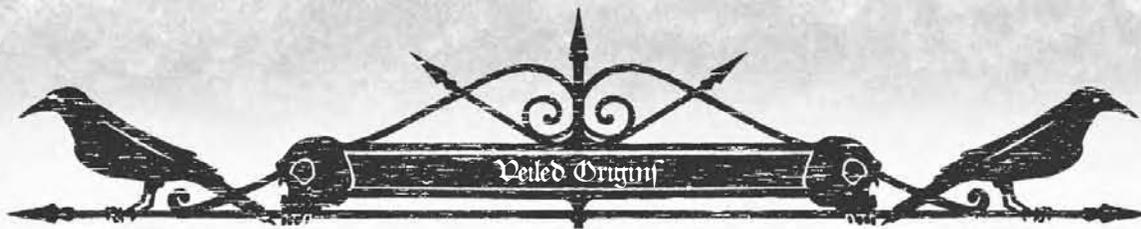
Urban legends serve as great templates of gothic horror, because they often reveal the flaws in the characters of the tale or bring to light some flaw within us.

So many of Ravenloft's themes and ideas come from the ghost stories of old. Since urban legends are merely ghost stories with a modern twist, why not de-modernize urban legends and make them something you can draw from for your **Ravenloft** campaign?

How does this book allow you recreate these ideas in a roleplaying game? Simple. Most creatures in a fantasy adventure can only be in one place at one time. But through the Mists, your Ravenloft creatures can now travel the realms at your convenience. Better yet, you'll have a context that explains why your particular creature makes its home in so many places.

**Van Richten's Guide to the Mists** provides the methods and the vehicles you can use to create the spirit of "Bloody Mary," the unfortunate creature who lives within all mirrors.





function. For instance, the Mists often make “examples” of individuals who fall into sin. In the case of Halton Becks, the Mists provide us with an example of why we should be careful not to be foolishly led into danger. In the case of Artemis Petrovich, the message for us might be to be careful what we wish for, because dark desires, even well-hidden, can surface at any time. More about these individuals appears later in this volume.

Mist creatures may also come into being for the purpose of punishing others. For example, the vile Telling Man is transported from town to town, assaulting those who are too possessed of their own vanity.

Finally, some categories of Mist creatures might bear a curse. The famed wight, Leaster Nich, roams the core perpetually, seeking as much gold as he can find. Ironically, he is cursed to only be able to keep the gold he can carry when the Mists transport him away.

## The Origins of Mists Creatures

This brings us to the origins of Mist creatures and all those who dwell within that misty curtain. Mist creatures are singularly cursed by this land. Their curse irrevocably binds them both to the Mists and to the land itself, so that their position in the world may change from one location to another, as the Mists desire. This seems to be the case both for those created within the Mists, such as Mist elementals, or creatures “adopted” by the Mists, like the unfortunate beings referred to by name in the previous passage.

Thus, Mist creatures have two origins — either they are spawned from the murky veil themselves or they are drawn in by them.

As for those who are pulled into the foggy depths, one might ask why them and not others? Are these beings so much more evil than other occupants of the land who are bound to it as well? They do not seem to be more evil or vile than any other cursed being in the land. Why are only certain beings moved around by the whims of the Mists?

The answer seems to be simply this: those who are shifted about from place to place suffer more for it since they seek nothing more than to settle in one location and put down roots. They seek a home, a symbol of permanence, but they are forever denied anything familiar. Doomed to wander

the land, they have no control over where they go next.

Can you imagine the torture of such an existence — to have no way to choose where one will be from one moment to the next? Most terrible of all, perhaps, would be the knowledge that each time you appeared in your new environment, you would know the Mists had placed you there for a reason, and that you have no choice but to fulfill your obligation.

**Editor’s Note:** *Could it not be possible that these tortured beings, who are moved about so relentlessly, fulfill their destiny through some perverse compulsion? Gennifer’s encounter with the Telling Man seems to point toward this theory.*

*The beings drawn away by the Mists are possessed by a strange Craving, one that leads them to do the Mists’s work whether they realize it or not. I fully believe that those specially cursed by the Mists to wander the realms do have a choice in what they do, but they choose to fulfill their dark desires, even though they know that these desires cursed them in the first place. It is, in fact, my belief that these beings no longer care. And that is what makes them so dangerous.*

—GWF

## Known Properties of the Mists

Before we continue with our conjectures, let us look at the properties of the Mists that we do know. Some of these observations, such as the first one, are common knowledge. Others are more obscure bits of knowledge gained from research and, where possible, experience in the field (though not within the Mists themselves).

### Fact: The Mists Border Our Lands.

Though this statement seems obvious, it needs to be declared. Most of the citizens of our land accept that a barrier of dense fog borders the Core realms on all sides. A majority of these people also believe that Mordent has always been this way.

Some learned and experienced individuals, however, know that our land was not always so. Elder Mordent history speaks of a time in which the Mists did not border the world as they do now. Indeed, many researchers have seen maps of distant lands where no misty borders exist at all, where whole continents are bordered by endless oceans instead of a veil of vapor.





This very barrier has a peculiar property in and of itself. It keeps those in this land from leaving.

*Editor's Note: I must here express my disagreement with my sister. I have come across several prophecies that talk of portals that lead to exits from this world. It has also been documented that several individuals from this land have left its confines to visit other worlds, albeit briefly. During the Grand Conjunction, for example, the wizard Hazlik was said to have left his demesne of Hazlan for a short period of time. Where he went is anyone's guess, but the journey greatly changed him, causing him to lift the ban on magic in his domain when he returned.*

—GWF

### **fact: The Mists Transport Beings or Lands from Place to Place**

Those who step within the Mists are subject to its whims. The most common effect the Mists have is to transport people or creatures from one place to another. They can, however, transport entire places, evidenced by the Grand Conjunction in 735-740 BC. The Mists have an almost unlimited capacity to change the environment. The power to rearrange whole continents overnight does not seem to be out of their scope.

Though it is quite rare for the Mists to transport its occupants, most people in our land avoid the Mists when they can due to their fear of becoming the rare person grabbed up and taken to another place entirely. Those who see a cloud of Mist along the road usually try to circumvent it. Many travelers even halt their journey and wait for a fog bank to clear rather than try to penetrate it. Of course, numerous circumstances make complete avoidance of fog in our land impossible. Because total escape from the Mists is not only unfeasible but impractical, the sale of charms and talismans designed to ward off fog and haze is popular within our realm. I daresay that I have yet to see a single one of these items truly function as their creators claim. However, superstition runs rampant through the Core, and it shall be a cold day in the abyss when no peasant carries some trinket to ward off the dreaded White Curtain.

### **fact: The Mists Capture Beings or Lands**

According to our history, Mordent was taken into the realm from a distant place. As we look

deeper, we find this historical theme repeated in other domain histories.

Falkovnians report that their land was once a part of another world. Many Barovians, too, talk of a distant past when their land was part of a greater country, though they speak of this only in hushed whispers.

The capture of solitary beings, or *outlanders*, by the Mists is well documented throughout the land. Strangely, these outlanders all hold a common trait — they possess a great capacity for either good or evil. Those who follow the “middle road” are rare.

This ability to seize individuals is yet another reason most people steer clear of the Mists. Though still a rare occurrence, many people claim to know someone who heard of a person who wandered into the Mist and “was never seen again.” In our investigations, a majority of these cases turn out to have less supernatural origins. Overwhelming evidence by numerous authorities indicates that individuals who “disappear” are usually runaways who simply relocate under another name or else they are victims of accidents or foul play.

### **fact: The Mists Distort Time.**

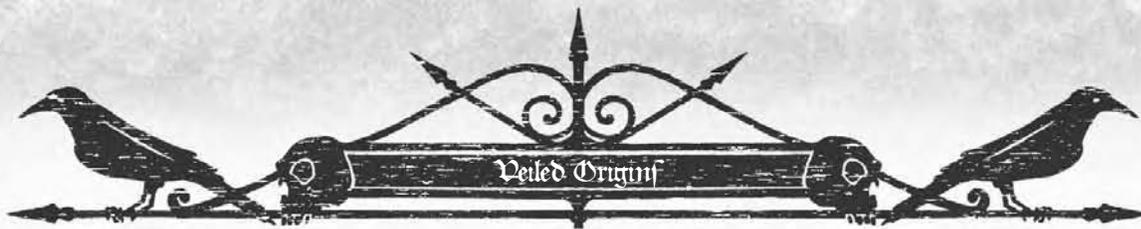
Several places in the land experience a kind of “temporal fugue.” The Shadow Rift, for example, seems to exist in a place where time is warped. Those claiming to have traveled there say that time travels faster within its depths than in the rest of the realm. Some scholars speculate that the Mists that surround that realm bring about this temporal effect.

The Shadow Rift is not the only place subject to this temporal instability. The domain of Forlorn is said to be a place where time changes like the inconstant wind. Explorers of that sad land claim that the Mists can bend time back upon itself, transporting one through the past.

Rumors abound claiming that the Mists grant longevity to those who frequently visit their wispy embrace. Indeed, the Vistani of the Zarovan tribe possess unnaturally long lives, and many tales document how they are able to manipulate time.

A few critics claim that the Mists do not bring about the effects we have mentioned here. These same scholars believe, instead, that this temporal distortion is due to a mystical property of the *land* in these areas. However, we strongly believe that the Mists *are* responsible for these curious occurrences.





## Proposed Properties of the Mists

Now, if all three of these facts hold true, could it not be possible for the Mists to capture places or beings for extended periods of time, releasing them when the time is ripe? Could the Mists, then, be a vault, storing pieces of various lands, assorted peoples, collecting them like a vast library of frozen cultures?

We would propose to our readers that this is indeed the case. In fact, we would propose that the Mists have more properties than previously imagined. Here, we make our proposal, adding to the Mists' capacities.

## The Mists Act as a Vault

In 747 BC, the strange case of Halton Becks became the raging topic of gossipers and rumormongers around the land. Halton Becks was a simple farmer who worked as a plowman for his father. His story begins with his engagement to a young woman he had courted for several years. To celebrate his forthcoming marriage, his friends took Halton to a local tavern. As the story goes, all of Halton's friends fell asleep at their seats in a drunken stupor. Halton left them to their slumbers and set off for home on his own. His path took him down a road now covered with thick fog.

As Halton wandered through the fog, he beheld a magnificent sight — a long procession of faeries, making a slow march into the nearby forest. Entranced by the beauty of the vision and emboldened by copious drafts of ale, he tried to follow the faerie procession, but no matter how fast he ran, the faerie host was always just ahead of him, fading away into the distant Mist.

Halton ran until he grew too tired to go any further. He fell asleep upon the ground, surrounded by layers of white fog. When he awoke, the fog had disappeared. He made his way back home only to find that 30 years had gone by. Believing him dead, his fiancé had married someone else. Halton's father had long since died of grief, and the farm where young Halton had worked was gone, torn down to make way for a mill.

The sad tale of Halton Becks indicates that the Mists are capable of not just capturing something and physically transporting it, but placing it *temporally*, as well.

Unfortunately, the story of Halton Becks is not an isolated tale, but we shall delve into the subject of "The Lost" later.

## The Mists Assume the Likenesses of Other People or Places

The story of the Hitchhiker lends credence to the idea that beings can be replicated by the Mists, recurring as time wears on. Other findings point to this idea as well.

Take, for instance, the case of Artemis Petrovich — a quiet moneylender who was prone to talk to himself on lonely nights. According to the tales, Artemis would occasionally whisper dark desires to himself, living out perverted fantasies in his mind.

Much to his horror, many of his twisted fantasies began to happen, as each of his sick fantasies came to horrid life after he vocalized it, as if someone were listening to him and acting upon his whispered secrets. It began with a maid who was found at the bottom of a well, her naked body strangled to death. The incidents escalated as one of Artemis's associates was boiled alive in a vat of oil. The culmination of these fantasies was the poisoning of Artemis's estranged family.

Investigators were able to find numerous witnesses that placed Artemis at the scene of each of the crimes. Artemis, of course, claimed innocence. It was only after that the crimes continued to happen while Artemis was in prison that the local constable began to believe him.

Finally, investigators documented reports that several "beings" exactly resembling Artemis were causing these crimes. In a bizarre turn of events, Artemis Petrovich escaped prison, chased into the Mists by five physical duplicates of himself.

**Editor's Note:** *For a while, we did not believe this story, since the people of our realm are not usually cursed for their dark dreamings. Even the most saintly person has an occasional menacing thought. The conscious choice not to act upon those thoughts, in fact, distinguishes the good person from the bad. Upon further investigation, however, we believe that Artemis Petrovich committed the first crime himself. This first evil deed, therefore, opened the floodgates of a curse that brought to life a host of other misdeeds that he had long been dreaming.*

— GWF





## The Mists Infuse Themselves Into Places.

All who dwell here know that the Mists infuse the land itself. Documentation of the claiming of lands by the Mists also indicates that the Mists can infuse themselves into additional lands as they wish. What people do not consider, however, is that the Mists may infuse themselves into a *particular* place, such as a house or garden.

Take for instance, the De Boistribue House of our native Mordent. The folk who live near the woods surrounding the house know that it has a habit of interposing itself in a traveler's path. Many attribute its shifting location to a terrible curse. While this may be true, we believe that the Mists are involved in the De Boistribue House's bizarre method of travel.

## The Mists Infuse themselves into Creatures.

In the most bizarre of cases, we have seen cases where particular beings can become possessed by the vaporous wardens of our land. Such is the tragic case of the Black Skald, who roams the land doomed to appear before any great tragedy strikes. The Black Skald has been seen throughout history before the White Plauge in Darkon and the October Flood that killed dozens of families in Kartakass. Each time, the Black Skald has stepped from a bank of fog, transported there by the Mists themselves. He is renowned for speaking in cryptic messages, giving hints or clues about what is to come. Sadly, the accursed man can never tell any audience exactly what is about to transpire. He can only speak of it indirectly; thus his warnings are either misconstrued or simply ignored.

## The Mists Create Both Creatures and Lands.

The wildest claim that we dare make is that the Mists can create entire realities. They need not capture places from other lands. Rather, they can produce a house or forest, placing it where they like. While many have believed this for years, many scholars refuse to give credence to this idea. Doing so, they claim, would ascribe to the Mists a power heretofore associated only with divine beings. Here we must emphasize that this assertion of

the Mists' creative powers is merely a hypothesis; we have very little evidence to support it.

Documentation, however, does uphold the existence of creatures that seem to work solely for the purposes of the Mists. Reliable witnesses have attested to the appearance of the Mist ferrymen who drift upon the night currents of lonely rivers, or the mysterious fen hounds that only approach from a bank of haze to dole out their savage justice. These creatures seem to from out of the Mists themselves, to serve their whims.

If the Mists can create whole ranges of creatures, could not they also create *entire individuals* — people with false but detailed histories and memories? Such occurrences are not outside the range of possibility for the Mists.

## On the Origins of the Mists

Mist creatures originate in one of two ways: they are either caught up by the Mists or created by them. In either case, these creatures seem to serve specific functions. A Mist creature's purpose may be good or evil in nature. We have seen or heard of instances of both.

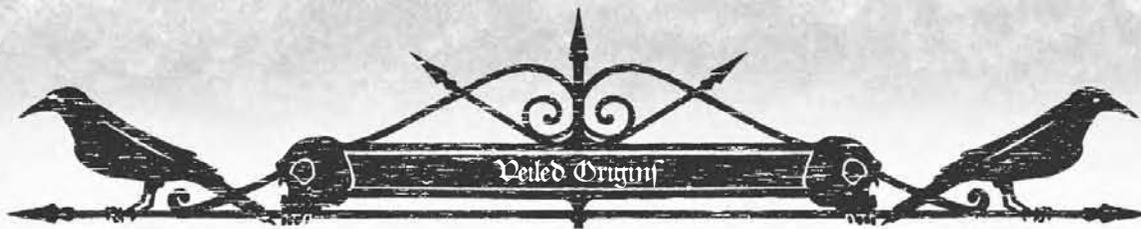
In an attempt to understand Mist creatures, we have turned our attention to the Mists themselves. Why do the Mists continually create or ensnare creatures, places and people? Why are the Mists apparent servants of both good and evil?

If the Mists acted as a force for evil, then only evil would come forth from their substance. This is clearly not the case. Mist creatures like the Black Skald try to prevent disaster, while the fen hounds punish those who commit wrongs. On the other hand, the Mists are not forces solely for good, since their machinations have brought such sorrow for countless people.

When we look to the origins of the Mists, we must pose several questions. From whence do these potent forces come? Why are they here? What is their purpose?

The answers to these questions vary widely from person to person and from domain to domain. Ask this simple question in any tavern or university room and you will receive a dozen answers. Quite simply — *no one really knows the origins of the Mists or their true purpose*. Or rather, no one has yet to form an opinion that is more popular than any other. In this text, however, we shall highlight the most popular theories of our day and discuss both their merits and flaws.





Speculation upon these matters is difficult because few records exist of the early eras of the land in which we live. Each time we have attempted to discover the ancient history of this land, we have gotten wildly differing reports. For instance, the creation mythos of the domain of Lamordia differs vastly from that of Darkon or of our own Mordent.

Looking at Mordent's history, in fact, reveals something fascinating. Documents relate how Mordent was long ago surrounded by Mists. This entrapment happened only after an incident that occurred in Gryphon Manor. Upon delving into our family records, we found that an individual known as "the Alchemist" moved into Gryphon Manor and proceeded to conduct strange experiments.

After these experiments occurred, around the time of October 579 BC, something unusual happened, marking the first time that the Mists cordoned off our land. Could it be that these horrid alchemical experiments created the Mists?

## The Alchemical Theory

At first, it was our belief that this could not be so. How could the Mists be the by-product of a single experiment gone wrong? Such a claim would attribute a power akin to godhood to happenstance.

But our opinion changed once we explored the depths of Dr. Van Richten's notes. In the following passage, he makes his own supposition about the Mist-related origins of our land.

*I have seen evidence that this land may have been created through the misuse of alchemy. While scholars and mages may believe that no single process, no matter how dark or vile, could be responsible for such a cosmic event, I assert that it is indeed possible. For nature functions upon a delicately balanced wheel, and a single event that tips that wheel can have devastating consequences. I now suspect that the lord of Darkon works in his tower for this very thing — a cataclysm of apocalyptic proportions. I greatly fear for the people in this land, for I find that I now cannot devote any time to this. My own concerns consume me in these encroaching days.*

*For those who are reading these hastily scribed notes, know this: In the depths of the Heather House, where my good friends the Weathermays make their abode, I have seen records that refer to an Alchemist.*

*These ancient accounts tell of how this Alchemist moved into the House on Gryphon Hill and conducted unnatural experiments. Not long after, the Mists descended upon Mordent and snatched up the land like a raptor with its prey. However, of these hypotheses, I will only say this — they are only suppositions at this point. Without further evidence, I cannot say more about what may or may not be.*

Not only does Dr. Van Richten make an excellent point, but his hypothesis was correct. Not long after his disappearance, the Requiem shattered the face of Darkon, turning the entire city of Il-Aluk into a seething mass of undead, and causing the disappearance of the wizard-king Azalin.

Furthermore, the text above shows that Van Richten had knowledge of the same records we had uncovered, and he too, considered the same hypothesis. However, we have found much evidence against this theory of creation.

The most compelling piece of counter-information we considered was the fact that the Mists seem to possess a natural intelligence. There seems to be motives and purpose behind their machinations. They pick and choose which beings they will ensnare. They seek out victims to deal out their ironic justice. Never have we seen documentation of any being picked up by the Mists without due cause.

Look at the sizeable population of outlanders, for instance. Most outlanders who stumble into the Mists and make their home here are adventurers of some sort. Most fight the darkness that we write about in these texts. And if these outlanders are not chosen as champions, they are chosen because of their propensity for violence and evil. It is almost as if the Mists recruit people from other lands for some inscrutable purpose.

So, how could an alchemical experiment create a sentient force or entity, purely through chance? It would be like saying that life itself evolved from a latent chemical reaction, which is, of course, preposterous.

Nor do we believe that the Mists are a natural phenomenon. Indeed, the Mists operate outside the bounds of nature, arbitrarily bending or breaking nature's laws. For example, when the nightmare land of Bluetspur existed in the center of our realm, it was said to be a barren and inhospitable landscape. Yet, it existed right beside the verdant and forested realm of Falkovnia for ages. By all accounts, this should be impossible! The greatest of





Lamordian scholars attest that two such environments should not be compatible or so close to each other geographically.

We must then suppose that the Mists to be a *supernatural* phenomenon. But if it is a supernatural phenomenon, what supernatural force begat them?

### The Dead God Theory

One theory we have heard from several outlander scholars is that this realm consists of the remnants of a dead god. These outlanders talk of how gods in their worlds have actually died, slain by other gods or powerful heroes. What, then, happens to a god when it dies? There is no ground in that otherland where gods roam. A god cannot be “buried” like a mortal. Perhaps the Mists were created by the broken essence of a fallen god?

Again, there is evidence against this theory as well. If this land was formed from the broken essence of a god, then why have not the other gods said anything about this? Clerics, priests, prophets and acolytes all speak to their various gods on a regular basis, but none of them have ever reported anything to this effect. One popular proponent of the Dead God Theory, Nathan the Atheist, make this claim in his text *The Case for Atheists in the Misty Land*:

*I propose to you that there are no gods within our foggy borders. That the edicts and visions received by clerics are not the voices of the gods, but machinations of the Mists themselves. I propose to you that it is the Mists that speak to these believers, not any sort of divine being...*

As compelling as this theory is, there is counter evidence to this claim as well. This information comes from outlander clerics, who hail from realms where the Mists do not exist. According to them, their gods speak with the same voices as they did before, albeit “fainter and more distant” as if they were separated from their divine patrons by some veil. To be fair, there are some outlander clerics who actually agree with Nathan the Atheist’s theory, saying that their gods’ voices are entirely different in our world.

However, there is one more piece of evidence that speaks against the Dead God Theory — the existence and effect of paladins. Paladins, although

rare, are a righteous sting upon the land. If there were no gods, and the Mists were merely playing that role for everyone, why would Paladins who worship righteous deities produce such anguish for the realm?

### The Prison Theory

This theory is perhaps one of the most compelling and controversial of them all. We stumbled upon this idea only after various interpretations of the prophet Hyskosas’s writings. According to this theory, our land is a prison for numerous evil and malign beings.

Yet, if this is the case, why are there so many innocents in the land? While there can be no doubt that our world is populated by iniquitous beings, there are also good people like our dear Rudolph Van Richten or our Uncle George Weathermay. According to those that follow this theory, all innocents and righteous folk are merely pawns placed in the land to torture the malevolent or to become victims to the depravities of a land’s most evil residents.

This last theory is disturbing in the extreme, claiming that the entire realm is a darkened stage where all who dwell within it enact some great drama. Most chilling of all is the observation that those who are most wicked play the central roles.

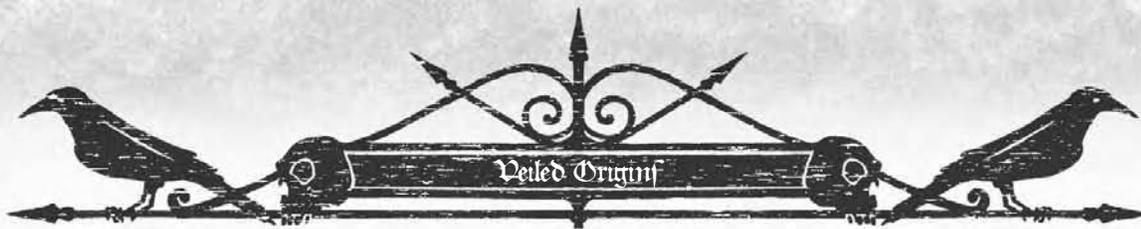
While this seems to be the most popular theory about the Mists and the land, there little evidence to back it up.

Many people point to the idea that this place must be a holding cell for the evil, yet we hear accounts from outlanders of vile entities and horrific beings that do not dwell in our land. There are stories of great tyrants who have slaughtered millions, and demons who have corrupted entire worlds. Yet none of these beings have been claimed by the Mists. If our tiny land were a prison for evil, why haven’t these creatures of vile darkness been captured by the Mists?

Others claim that the land shows signs of a design or architecture. These people state that each domain seems to be fixated upon one particular kind of fear or depravity. For example, the land of Falkovnia seems to be focused on oppression and imprisonment, while the land of Richemulot seems to be focused on back-biting and spite.

Yet, we say that this is an excuse, rather than an explanation. Falkovnia is an oppressive state because of all of the people who run that backwards

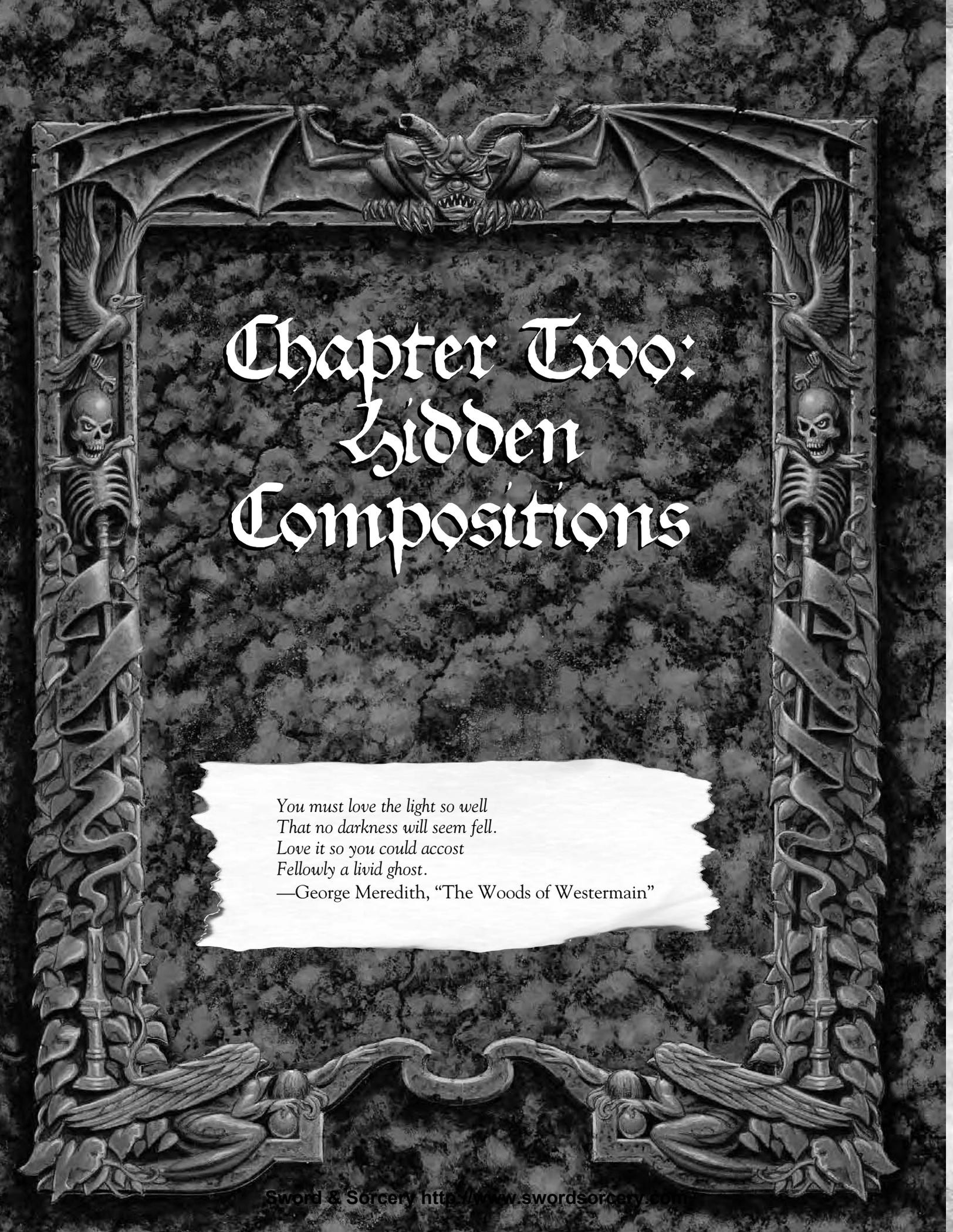




domain. If all of the military leaders were to suddenly put aside their bigoted and oppressive ways, then the land would cease to be a tyranny, despite the desires of the despot who leads that state. If all the sycophants in Richemulot were to suddenly stop clambering for the top of the social ladder, then would not the entire realm reform? People make a land evil, not some outside design.

In the end, we can only be certain about what the Mists are *not*. They are no mere accident. No mere phenomenon. They are not an unthinking force. As to their definitive nature — we fear that no one may ever know the answer to this final equation.





# Chapter Two: Hidden Compositions

*You must love the light so well  
That no darkness will seem fell.  
Love it so you could accost  
Fellowly a livid ghost.*

—George Meredith, “The Woods of Westermain”



## **T**wo Species

In this chapter, I, Laurie Weathermay-Foxgrove, will seek to unearth the physiology, psychology, and common powers of Mist creatures. Mist creatures are specially cursed by this land. This special form of curse irrevocably binds that being to the Mists and to the land itself, so that its position in the world may be shifted about to wherever the Mists desire. This seems to be the case for those who are created within the Mists, like Mist elementals, or for those who are “adopted” by the Mists, like the many cursed beings we have referred to above.

Thus, Mist creatures have two origins – either they are spawned from the murky veil themselves, or they are drawn in by them.

Hereafter, creatures that are actually spawned by the Mists will be referred to as the *Mistborn*. Those who are adopted by the Mists will be referred to as the *Fugued*.

### The Mistborn

Those beings created by the Mists come from places that we cannot understand, nor can we even speculate as to their origins. To date, no one has actually seen a Mistborn creature being “born” or spawned. Numerous legends and accounts exist of such perverted creations, but all these supposed accounts cannot be corroborated in any way. They remain stories that might be legend, truth or something in between.

One account, told in the *Journey of Phillippe the Shining*, speaks of a young squire who sees the formations of mist horrors right before his very eyes.

*As I gazed, so did I see them coming through the fog. The curling clouds gave way as if something was pushing through them; as if a great predator was parting its path through the weeds. Yet, no form marched forth from the haze. No body made itself present. It was only then that realization began to dawn upon me, that my mind began to manifest the slightest inkling of what was going on before my very eyes.*

*The creatures that were stepping through the milky haze could not be seen, because they as yet had no form. But soon, very soon did I see them donning the veil of mist like a layer of skin. I saw them pulling the vapors across their invisible bodies, giving them-*

*elves form and substance. As the process was so terrible, so maddening to see, my entire being wanted to scream out. And yet, as I could not, I bit down upon my wrist and wept silently as the strange process of birth continued...*

While the squire’s account makes for interesting storytelling around the fire, it cannot be substantiated in any way. It is widely believed that *The Journey of Phillippe the Shining* is a work of fiction. Did the lost author once see something in the Mist and decide to put it down in his great epic, or did this image of Mistborn creation come strictly from his imagination? We leave it to our devoted audience to decide.

It is rather disturbing to us that to date, there is no evidence about where Mistborn creature originate, or how it is they come into being. This is most troubling, since almost every other kind of monster in our realm has some recognizable origin. We even have solid theories on the origins of the mysterious fiends, whose very presence defies the physical and magical laws of the land.

Yet no single theory stands out as to the origin of the Mistborn. Our only observation is that creatures spawned by the Mists seem to have been created by some intelligent design for a singular purpose.

*Editor’s Note: As you may see in future notations, my sister and I staunchly disagree on the origins of the Mistborn. While Laurie sees them as the product of some sort of “intelligent design,” I see Mistborn creatures as beings who have adapted to their life in the Mists. Over the centuries their life within the Mists has made them specialize in one particular aspect of existence.*

*Why do these creatures specialize? They do so because existence in the Mists causes them to be cursed. Their long sojourn within the foggy borders has warped their bodies and minds so much as to make them suitable only for a particular goal. I would, however, argue that the goal-oriented lifestyle is a product of a random curse, not an intelligent design.*

*It is my belief that Mistborn creatures reproduce like any other being of their kind. Living Mistborn (like fen hounds) give birth; undead Mistborn (the kalij, for example) bring more into their ranks from their living victims. Elemental creatures (such as Mist elementals) are spawned from the pure essence of the realm. Just because no one has actually seen mistlings giving birth to their young does not mean that these creatures arise spontaneously. The reason no one has seen how the*





*Mistborn propagate is that no one has dared to linger long enough in the Mists to find out — and with good reason. — GWF*

creatures appear to be more “natural” or “mundane” at first appearance, though closer inspection might reveal otherwise.

## The Fugued

One might ask the simple question: why are certain creatures adopted by the Mists, while others are not? Are these beings so much more evil than other occupants bound to the land? They do not seem to be viled or more evil than any other cursed being in the land. Why are only certain beings moved around by the whim of the Mists, then?

The answer seems to be simple — those that are shifted about suffer more for it. These beings want nothing more than roots with which to settle down. They seek out a home, a place of permanence, but they are forever denied anything familiar, doomed to wander the land without any control over where they go next.

Can you imagine the torture of such an existence? Most terrible of all would be the knowledge that each time you appear in your new environment, the Mists have placed you there for a reason, and you have no choice but to fulfill your obligation.

*Editor's Note: Could it not be possible that these tortured beings, who are moved about so regularly, fulfill their destiny through some perverse compulsion? My own encounter with the Telling Man seems to point towards this theory.*

*The beings that are drawn away by the Mists are possessed by a strange craving, one that leads them to do the work of the Mists, whether they realize it or not. I fully believe that those specially cursed by the mists to wander the realms do have a choice in what they do, but they choose to fulfill their dark desires, even though they know that these desires brought a curse upon them in the first place. I believe that these beings no longer care, and that is what makes them dangerous. — GWF*

## The Body Mysterious: General Physiology

In brief, the physiology of Mist creatures might be divided into two categories: vaporous and concrete. Vaporous Mist creatures have the appearance of swirling mist or cloud, though even a vaporous being can be as solid as a stone. Concrete Mist

## Vaporous Beings

Most researchers of monsters are familiar with vaporous beings. Monsters like the Mist elemental, invisible stalker, crimson death or the kalij seem to be completely comprised of haze, able to dart in and out of the fog at will.

Before we begin to understand even the simplest physiology of those that wear the form of the Mists, however, we must understand that even these creatures, which seem so similar, are legion in their forms and compositions.

A gaseous creature, of course, is a being comprised completely of vapor and wisp. Picture this now, if you will. Such a being lives and thrives without the need of organs or humours. It perceives the world, but without the sensory organs necessary to do so. How can this be? How can such things exist in the world? Do their spirits live within the Mist, wearing the curling clouds like a second skin? Or are the vapors shaped and crafted into shape by some malign will?

Incorporeal creatures, naturally, possess no mass at all. Unlike gaseous creatures, they may pass straight through solid objects, in complete defiance of the laws of science. These beings are even more enigmatic, for it is difficult to describe their physiology and composition at all. Most of their body mass indeed exists on another plane entirely.

Keep in mind that while vaporous beings seem to have no substance, they are subject to attack, so long as it is from the correct source. Remember that any being in vaporous form is still hedged out by magical force. Even a novice mage possesses spells of this nature. Also encouraging is that a being in *mist form* can be assailed by enchanted weapons, not a hard feat for experienced clerics or wizards. Spells cast at a creature that is in *mist form* also harm the creature. Never forget this, for your spellcaster may be your best ally against an enemy that lacks a solid body.

It is important to note that there are clear differences between the gaseous and the incorporeal menace. Gaseous creatures are always vulnerable to the blows of enchanted weapons and the power of magic. Incorporeal creatures can avoid such strikes about half of the time. Furthermore, gaseous beings actually possess mass, albeit





very little. This means they can be affected by things such as strong winds, or trapped inside airtight containers.

There are some vaporous creatures that actually possess substance. Such beings, like the Mist elemental, are quite rare. These denizens of the fog possess a great deal of mass — enough mass to pound a man's bone into pulp or overturn a small cart. Thrusting a weapon into a Mist elemental is like plunging a stick into water. There is definite resistance, and the elemental is rarely pleased in this event. Magical weapons and spells always harm a solid vaporous being, but precision combatants should take note that this type of creatures never possess vital organs or systems, so that it is impossible to maximize your damage by hitting one location instead of another.

## Concrete Creatures

Creatures of the Mist that fall into the concrete category seem to be solid enough at first glance. Like the fen hound, mistling or pale rider, these beings appear to be comprised of bone and muscle. Strangely enough, when struck down, these creatures break up into fog and mist.

This same rule applies to creatures who have been adopted by the Mists. Any being that has been claimed by the foggy shepherds of our land

similarly dissolves into white vapor once they have been defeated or “killed.” This raises a serious question. How can any creature be made from flesh and ether all at once? Furthermore, how can a creature progress from being made entirely from mortal matter to being made from both Mist and bone?

## Two Most Vivid Dissections

In our pursuit of knowledge, we examined various mist creatures by means of vivisection. To our great fortune, we were able to analyze carefully the physiological differences between a *mistborn* creature and one that is *fugued*.

## Mistborn Physiology

First we examined three different bodies of mistlings, which are discussed further in the Appendix of this book. The use of *resonance fluid*, which is discussed later in this chapter, greatly aided our investigations.

Mistlings are mysterious, fey-like creatures that seem to serve the Mists directly, capturing those the Mists desire and hauling them into the folds of the fog, never to be seen again. Mistlings are the very creatures that my sister, Gennifer, faced at the edge of Halloway House on that fateful night.

## Vaporous Beings

Vaporous beings are Mist creatures that are misty or hazy in quality and form. These might include incorporeal beings like the *crimson mist* (see *Monster Manual II*), or the substantive and solid *Mist elemental* (see **Denizens of Dread**). Whether these creatures are solid in form or insubstantial, they all possess forms that mimic the appearance of mist.

Vaporous beings are naturally camouflaged for dwelling in the Mists. To discern such a creature from natural fog requires a DC 15 Spot check. Vaporous creatures can only be spotted in fog so easily when they are not actively attempting to hide.

If a vaporous being actively attempts to hide in fog, it gains a +20 bonus to its roll. These rules are covered in more detail in Chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

If the creature has the Mist subtype, these bonuses stack, giving the creature a total of +24 to Hide checks while in mist of any kind. Keep in mind that incorporeal and gaseous beings are naturally silent and not subject to Listen checks.

Vaporous beings that are not gaseous or incorporeal, like *Mist elementals* can still squeeze through small cracks or openings. They may squeeze through any crack that water could penetrate. Medium-sized or smaller creatures can squeeze their entire body through such a crack with a full-round action. Large or bigger creatures need two full rounds to squeeze through such an opening.





The mistlings we examined appeared to be just like any other being, with internal organs, veins, arteries and a nervous system. Their skin, not surprisingly, was very cold and clammy to the touch. In fact, the skin of a mistling seemed made to possess adhesive qualities, so that it could latch onto its prey better. Their fingers displayed an extra joint, allowing them to get a good grip on a victim's hair or limb. Finally, the tips of their hideous fingers had small suckers from which were delivered a potent poison. Indeed, these creatures appeared intended for a singular purpose — to spirit away the unwary into the Mists from which they, themselves, had sprung.

Think on this for a moment, if you would; mistlings are actually *designed* by some indefinite force. Is this not the sign of some terrible intelligence within the fog or part of the fog itself? Does this not suggest that the white vapors that are replete throughout the land possess a chilling consciousness and purpose? Oh, dear Uncle, I see too plainly now the meaning of your warning. I wish that I had never come to these hideous speculations, that I and all those that I love might merely be pawns of some greater scheme to which not even the gods are privy.

After long experimentation with the mistling bodies, we ascertained that they were highly resilient to different forms of energy.

While the resistances of Mist creatures seems to vary from creature to creature, no Mist creature we have investigated has been immune to fire. Thus, fire might serve as a weapon against those who populate the Mists.

Toxins or poisons are another form of defense that warrants attention. Since substantial creatures of the Mist possess vital systems like our own, those systems might be as susceptible to toxins as ours is. Solutions that render the victim paralyzed or unconscious can be a great help to the hunters who wish to capture their quarry alive.

On the subject of capture, let us utter a word to the wary; no Mist creature, whether vaporous or substantial, can be kept in captivity for long. In our experience, if one of these creatures is confined for a long period of time, it collapses into mist. The mistlings we dissected dissolved into white clouds after a while. The fen hound, of course, dissolves in the moment that it dies.

*Editor's Note: While my sister staunchly believes that these mistlings are creatures designed by the Mists of our land, I disagree. From my notes and observa-*

*tion, these creatures enjoy a symbiotic relationship with the fog in our land. They dwell with the rolling Mist, allowing it to transport them from place to place. Whenever they arrive, they attack other, larger creatures for sustenance. If pursued, they rely upon the Mists to carry them or their quarry away. I do not believe that any one power crafted these organisms. Rather, I believe these creatures have adapted themselves to dwell within the vaporous folds of the Mist in which they thrive. – GWF*

## **fugued Physiology**

In our research, we also observed the dissection of Gryshin Skullhollow, a monster which had plagued all of the Southern Core for decades. Those who have followed his exploits know that Gryshin Skullhollow was a particularly insidious creature that reportedly subsisted on the brains of his victims. The monster made it a practice to pierce his victim's eye with a long metal tube from which he carefully sucked their brains from their skulls. Most horrible was the fact that his victims often lived long enough to realize what was happening.

In any event, we believe that Gryshin was a creature that had been adopted by the Mists, rather than created by them. For all intents and purposes, Gryshin's body appeared to be that of a normal ogre. During the examination of his body, however, we saw that, even in death, his corpse displayed an unnatural resistance to certain forms of energy. Neither could his body be shaped by the forces of magic. It remained immune to attempts at magical alteration. Finally, in the brief hour in which we could observe it, Gryshin's eyes appeared to have changed in a very subtle way, perhaps revealing that his eyesight had adapted for peering through the fog.

After an hour of thorough examination, Gryshin's body began to break up into mist. The *resonance fluid* we had used had finally worn off.

The dissection of Gryshin Skullhollow proved most enlightening. First of all, it informed us that those adopted by the Mists actually go through a physical change, becoming something more they were before. Furthermore, the very chemical composition of the body changes, for anything adopted by the Mists breaks down into white wisps when it perishes. Finally, the dissection proved one very vital piece of information — that indeed there are many denizens of the land that have been adopted





by the Mists, as we proposed at the beginning of this book. We simply have not found and discovered all of them. How many more creatures out there have been subtly embraced by the Mists of the land? How many legends out there are actually truths, harbored by the mysterious fog that pervades the very air we breathe?

## Common Powers

Now that we have reviewed the physiology and composition of Mist creatures, we will discuss the powers most common to them. The powers of the Mists are myriad, as discussed earlier in this tome. However, the powers of the denizens of the Mists are even more diverse and varied, making them difficult to categorize. Herein, we shall review the extraordinary capacities that these creatures share in common.

### Exceptional Vision

All Mist creatures have the ability to peer into fog and haze. Thick vapor does not impede the sight of a Mist creature, though even the most perceptive of these creatures cannot see completely through a foggy bank. Furthermore, we have noted that many Mist creatures, such as the pale rider, have shown remarkably keen eyesight in the dark. When facing one of these beings, understand that its vision will always be clearer than yours should you be facing it in the fog or the dark.

### Energy Resistance

Mist creatures typically possess a high resistance to various forms of energy. Whether it be acid or electricity or cold, these beings seem to be able to withstand a great deal of damage from a number of sources. The exact source, however, seems to vary among the various Mist-species. The one substance that Mist creatures are not resistant to, however, is flame or heat. Fire, therefore, seems to be a universal weakness of theirs.

### Immune to the Crafting of their Shape

While Mist creatures are resistant to some forms of damage, they seem to be completely immune to any attempt to change their form. Spells that transform bodies from one thing to another always fail against a Mist creature. Why they should

be immune to form-changing magic is most curious. Because the Mists seem to own these creatures' bodies, perhaps no other force can alter their shape.

### Mental Fortitude

Those that dwell with the Mists have complete protection from magic that affects the mind. In every encounter we have researched, mental magics or effects simply fail against these creatures. My hypothesis is that Mist creatures have already submitted their minds to the will of the Mists that surround our land, and therefore cannot surrender their minds to anyone else.

*Editor's Note: Again, I submit that the Mists do not control or "own" any of creatures of the Mists, any more than the Mists control the mortal mind. Rather, I believe that Mist creatures' mental immunities are a side-effect of dwelling for long periods within the mysterious curtain that pervades our land. - GWF*

### Ageless

We have strong reason to suspect that Mist creatures are immune to aging and the march of time. The encounters we have had with the Lost indicate this. In addition, none of the reports we have collected ever discuss the existence of elder Mist creatures, implying that there is no tangible evidence of aging.

If these beings are truly immortal, however, why is not our land overpopulated by them? Why is not the land crawling with these horrific monsters? The only answer I can offer is this: the Mists themselves curb the numbers of those creatures that dwell within them.

## A Mind Most Alien: General Psychology

At last, we come to perhaps the most important part of this chapter. Here we discuss the mental processes of Mist creatures, so that our loyal readership might understand their motives and designs.

The first thing to understand about the general psychology of these beings is that each and every creature is an individual. The statements we make here are broad generalities, and the denizens of the Mists follow the tendencies that we prescribe



## Mist Subtype

Creatures with the Mist subtype are either created by the Mists (Mistborn) or creatures captured by the Mists (Fugued). Once a creature has been captured by the Mists, it belongs to the Mists forever. No magic or other process can reverse this transformation. Mist subtype creatures gain the following traits:

- Mist Peering (Ex): As the feat (see Chapter Five).
- Low-light vision.
- Resistance to any two: acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, sonic 10.
- +4 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks while in fog or mist.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charm, domination, sleep and similar powers).
- Immunity to shape altering magic such as *polymorph* or petrification.
- Immunity to aging effects. This may mean that the Mist creature has perpetual youth, or that it may grow older, staying vital, but losing its youthful appearance.

The following is a list of possible monsters that you might use in your campaign as mist creatures. If they are made into beings that are called forth by the Mists of Ravenloft themselves, simply add the Mist subtype to them. This is by no means a complete list; feel free to add other monsters as you see fit.

- Allip\*
- Belker\*
- Breathdrinker\*\*
- Crimson Death\*\*
- Djinni\*
- Invisible Stalker\*
- Phasm\*
- Will o' the Wisp\*
- \* *Monster Manual*
- \*\* *Monster Manual II*

here. Occasional creatures, however, defy the mold that we cast.

As we look deeply into the mind of a creature of the Mists, our readers must understand this — when delving into its way of thought and perception, one is delving into a mind most alien.

The denizens of the Mists do not think in the same fashion as most organisms of the natural world. The normal fauna of the land are led by baser instincts such as the need for food, safety and the procreative imperative.

Even many of the darker inhabitants of the land are still directed by these basic needs. The vampire, for instance, hunts mortal blood out of a need to feed. The werewolf congregates in a pack out of need for safety. But a creature of the Mists has no such compelling need.

A creature of the mists, rather, is directed towards a singular purpose. The kalij seeks to take the lives of babies in their cribs, nothing more, nothing less. The pale rider races across the land with a particular mission driving it forward. The best comparison we can call to mind is the Craving that we encountered in our treatise on the walking dead.

## Singular Purpose

Understanding an organism that is driven by a singular purpose is not that hard to understand at first. After all, many mundane and everyday creatures are propelled by one over-riding reason at some point in their lives. A mother who is suddenly compelled to protect her child is driven toward that one goal with nothing else upon her mind. Should that moment pass, that mother's concerns shift to other things such as feeding her child and herself, caring for other members of her family or a dozen other worries.

Imagine, then, a creature who has such a purpose and that this purpose never changes. Forever it is consumed by this one goal. In the mortal world, we have descriptions for such beings; we refer to them as obsessed or insane. Indeed, this is what you will be facing should you confront any creature of the Mists.

Most Mist creatures are tasked to a single purpose, and doggedly pursue that purpose to an extent that makes fearful even the most stalwart of souls.



## Cursed to a Task: The Mistborn

Like the Craving which we observed in the walking dead, the Mistborn are always consumed with fulfilling their one goal. Indeed, we must keep in mind that the Mistborn have been created for to accomplish a single task. Because of this, their minds are focused upon that solitary subject like a magnifying lens is fixed on its focus. Unlike the Cravings of the walking dead, however, the fixations of the creatures of the Mists are diverse and prolific.

Those who have read our previous works will recall that the walking dead are burdened with the Craving to serve, feed or take revenge, but a Mist creature's Craving might be for any number of things.

The aforementioned kalij is gripped by its need to take the lives of mortal infants. The legendary and dreadful Mist claimer, however, is infused with the singular need to destroy its worldly double. Mist weirds doggedly pursue the art of prophecy and oracle. Pale riders eternally seek to grant justice to others. These obsessions are the goal of Mistborn creatures' existence.

In some cases, these Cravings limit the thinking of Mist creatures. For instance, in a rare interview with a group of pale riders, one adventurer describes the dialogue as being decidedly one-sided. This famous interview, which has been historically substantiated, appears in the *Litany of the Ellefolk*. In the *Litany* the adventurer describes how the pale riders he speaks to can only talk about things in terms of justice or vengeance.

*So it was that I said to them, "It is true that my brother seeks fell vengeance. Yet, my heart is clean of murder's stain. I do not seek the same as he does."*

*And unto me they said, "Yea, but you shall be wanting. For all who walk this land yet grieve. Revenge and satisfaction can be their only reprieve."*

*Yet I beseeched them a third time, and plied them verily with gifts of gold and silver. But it was all for naught. The coins held no lure for them. The gold lacked all luster for their dead eyes. I dared to speak again. "Then, tell me from where you hail. Or are you spirits of fog and shadow, with no true voice?"*

*And in return, I received my cold answer. They stared at me with eyes empty. "Questions we do not answer. Coins we do not take. Your brother's vengeance do we stoke. And his justice shall give us slake."*

While much of the dialogue is buried within the prose of the text, further research corroborates this fascinating story. Numerous accounts of conversations with pale riders describe them as one-dimensional beings who only think of justice and satisfaction.

It is important to note that this type of Craving seems to be limited to the Mistborn only. Those Mist creatures who are not native to the pallid curtain are both similar yet completely different in mentality.

## Consumed by a Task

Mist creatures who become embraced by the Mists are often taken because they have a desire or thirst that borders on obsession. Take, for example, the Telling Man, who is driven by his need to claim a victim's vanity, or Gryshin Skullhollow, described above, addicted to the taste of cerebral flesh. These unfortunates were infused by the Mists because of their preoccupations. They had their Cravings long before their brush with the mysterious powers of the land.

In a way, this form of Craving makes these beings far more dangerous. Non-native Mist creatures have had to live with their own self-crafted Cravings in the midst of society. They have learned how appear "normal."

Yet beneath the façade of a Mist creature lies a fanatical being, whose singular goals dominate the being's every thought. The careful investigator must be ready to spot signs of this Craving and exploit it when need be.

During one of our investigations, we came across this very phenomenon. We were researching the supposed appearance of an alchemist in a number of Kartakass villages. This alchemist was reported to appear when the Mist rose in the morning or evening.

Each time this strange individual appeared, she would attempt to peddle her wares. Her offerings were vast and myriad, but they all had one thing in common — each of her potions and salves would lead to ruin.

Thus, a love potion brought by a hopeful romantic might work for a short time, but ultimately end in tragedy. A *potion of heroism* might protect the imbiber for a fixed period of time but would render the would-be hero weak at the most inopportune moment.





Though general warnings were given to the populace advising them to beware of this individual, those we interviewed who had survived her mercantilism reported that she had a “beguiling way” about her and that few could resist buying her insidious concoctions.

We managed to find the alchemist, and because of our thorough research, we were able to ward ourselves against her mystic charms. When we interviewed the culprit, she was at first alarmed that her influence had no apparent effect upon us.

“Lookin’ for a cure fer that lycanthropy are ye?” she grinned to Gennifer, rubbing her hands together. It was then that I noticed that she had one yellow eye that seemed to transfix itself upon us, steadily gleaming like a candle’s flame.

“Pity, I have no such need,” said my sister, cocking a brow at the alchemist. “Indeed, we have no need for any of your offerings.”

Immediately, the alchemist’s stance changed. She drew herself up and her good eye went round and wide. “Oh. Very well. Only offerin’ somethin’ fer a bit of trade. Just came across it, ye know. Not really even sure if it is a curative. Not much of an alchemist...”

“Not much of an alchemist?” I said, crossing my arms. “That’s not what the people around here say. We were hoping to find one.”

She fiddled with her fingers and glanced all around. Her eye continually wandered towards my Parthian rapier and to Gennifer’s spell pouch. “Er...don’t know where you could find one.”

“A tragedy,” said Gennifer, producing a handful of gold, “because we did have so much to spend. We were hoping to buy...just a few wares.” She stared solidly at the old alchemist and began pouring the coins from one hand to the other.

Upon seeing the coins, the alchemist’s mouth began to quiver. A small string of saliva escaped her lips and dribbled upon her knotted chin. It was then that she revealed herself, producing all manner of potions, oils and salves. Gennifer took a few of these and began to analyze them on the spot.

The moment my sister’s arcane analysis began, the alchemist immediately bolted down the street, attempting to run into the fog. Fortunately for us, our allies in the alleys around us sprang upon her in that moment, and pinned her down. Without a doubt, we had captured our villain.

Here is a classic example of how a creature’s Craving might be used against them. In this case,

the alchemist’s singular need to sell her corrupted potions for money overwhelmed her, forcing her to reveal herself in full. Remember this, intrepid investigators, should you wish to pursue a creature of the Mists.

## The Craving

Similar to the Craving possessed by the restless dead discussed in *Van Richten’s Guide to the Walking Dead*, all Mist creatures are obsessed with a particular goal.

The specific goal of a mist creature may be predetermined by the creature’s species. For example, the kalij are decidedly bent upon consuming the souls of babies, particularly those who are still in the crib. A Mist creature’s particular Craving may be determined by the DM instead. The Telling Man is an example of a mist creature with a DM-crafted craving.

When confronted with the object of their Craving, all Mist creatures are compelled to fulfill it. A Mist creature must make a Will save in order to stop itself from fulfilling its Craving. The DC is equal to 10 + + the creature’s HD — the more powerful the Mist creature, the more powerful the Craving.

A successful save for a *Mistborn* creature means that it has mastered its compulsion for one minute. Each additional minute the *Mistborn* is confronted with its Craving increases the save DC by 2.

A successful save for a *Fugued* creature means that it has mastered its compulsion for a whole hour. Each additional hour the *Fugued* is confronted with its Craving increases the save DC by 2.

Unlike the walking dead, Mist creatures do not gain any bonus to attack, damage or saves when engaging in combat in order to complete its task. Mist creatures simply are not consumed by the same undying hatred that the restless dead possess.





## A Final Note

During our research, my sister and I ran into numerous complications. For one, many of the Mist creatures we encountered on our field expeditions eluded capture. As one might suspect, a large number of them simply stepped away into the fog and vanished.

Numerous other creatures we encountered simply broke apart into vapor when they perished, making it impossible to observe any kind of body or

make a viable dissection. We were finally able to make some headway into our research, however, through the careful application of *resonance fluid*.

Before you determine to acquire some of this miraculous solution, be warned. It can be found in only two places, the Necropolis of Darkon and Marbh-Cathair, two places almost entirely populated by undead. Should you choose to make the journey to either of these places, we wish you well, and advise you that you should notify your next of kin.

## Resonance fluid

*Resonance fluid* is a substance formed from the distillation of well-water from either Necropolis or Marbh-Cathair. Well-water from either these two places must be boiled over a fire, and the resulting steam must be condensed and collected in a receptacle.

*Resonance fluid* has a nasty habit of disappearing, even when placed in a carefully sealed container. Each day after its creation, *resonance fluid* has a 5% cumulative chance of simply vanishing into thin air.

*Resonance fluid* can be used to solidify beings that are normally ethereal or incorporeal. The liquid exists both on the material and the ethereal plane, and thus can be thrown or poured upon creatures in either plane.

Any ethereal or incorporeal creature doused with the liquid must make a DC 18 Will save or become solid to the touch for one hour. The DC is fixed and not ability-based.

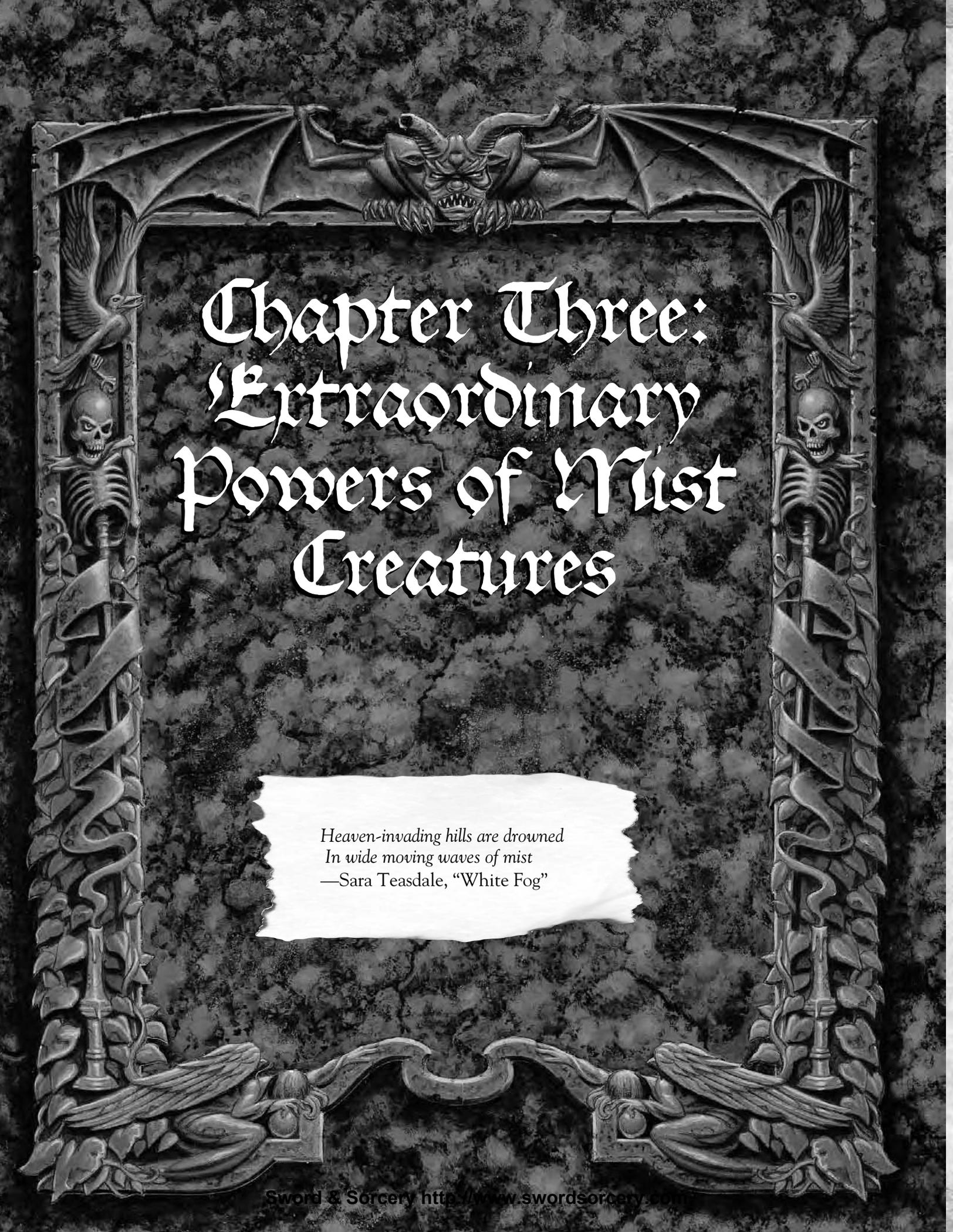
Should the save succeed, it means that creature is immune to the effects of *resonance fluid* for 24 hours. After this time period, someone may attempt to affect it again with *resonance fluid*.

Failure against the Will save means that the creature in question loses its ethereal or incorporeal qualities, as well as all benefits and hindrances associated with those qualities.

In the case of ethereal creatures, this means that they now exist on both the material and ethereal planes, can interact with objects on either plane, and can be attacked from either plane. In the case of incorporeal beings, it means they become substantial and are now able to touch and manipulate objects.

Both incorporeal and ethereal beings lose the 50% chance to avoid damage from a physical source.





# Chapter Three: Extraordinary Powers of Mist Creatures

*Heaven-invading hills are drowned  
In wide moving waves of mist  
—Sara Teasdale, "White Fog"*



While my sister has already spoken on the common powers of those who dwell within the pallid curtain, I now turn our attention to the uncommon powers of such creatures. To be clear, these powers are legion.

The myriad powers of the fugged are so diverse, so innumerable, as to make one's mind reel with the dread possibilities. What makes these powers different from the common faculties of Mist creatures is that not every Mist creature has the abilities we describe below. We can only say this: they may have these powers or they may not. It is best that you find out before pursuing any hunt.

We must also pause for a moment and explain that the extraordinary abilities listed here are not limited to Mist creatures. Indeed, the powers we describe below can be attributed to any creature — so long as it has had a meeting with the Mists.

For a long while, we believed these strange powers to be the result of aberrations or curses. However, further investigation has given us reason to believe that these powers arise when a creature or being has an encounter with the Mists of some kind. What makes us suspect such a thing? Our extensive research reveals that only creatures that dwell in the Mists, or appear when the Mists are nearby possess the powers that we speak of here.

Note that when we say this, we are speaking of a wide variety of creatures. We have seen skeletons that can collapse their bones into a vaporous form and dire wolves that can command columns of fog at their whim. Yet, neither skeletons nor dire wolves would normally be considered Mist creatures — hence, our assertion that these creatures are touched in some way by the murky borders of our land.

## Salient Abilities

Salient abilities are powers that you can add to your Ravenloft creatures at your option. The powers listed in this book are created for the express purpose of enhancing preexisting monsters or terrors of your creation.

Every ability carries its own CR Adjustment, so that you may enhance the creature as you wish and still keep it fair for the PCs in your game. Not all Mist creatures possess salient abilities.

Unlike those detailed in other **Van Richten's Guides**, the salient abilities described here can apply to *any creature*. They need not be added only to Mist creatures. A creature can gain a salient Mist ability by simply having a brush with the Mists or through the receiving of a special "gift" from the Mists.

The Mists, however, do not give out powers for free. Any creature possessing a Mist salient ability is almost always cursed in some way. Therefore, any creature possessing a Mist salient ability must *also* possess a Mist salient weakness. For more information, see Chapter Four.

When a salient ability calls for a saving throw, the DC is always equal to 10 + creature's HD + creature's Charisma bonus unless otherwise noted. The saving throw is Charisma-based.

The creature's HD is used as the caster level of a salient ability, unless otherwise noted. Salient abilities of Mist creatures are always considered as if cast by a sorcerer, cleric, or druid caster of the creature's level or HD when using their power.

## A Note on Controlling the Mists

A number of abilities contained herein allow creatures to control mists or fog. Powers like *mist calling* or *animate fog* allow creatures to call or move mists. Please note that these powers only apply to non-magical haze which abounds in the Dread Realm. In truth, with the exception of the Vistani, *no being* can exert even a modicum of control over the Mists of Ravenloft.





## Salient Abilities of Mist Creatures

Strangely, we might not have been able to gain such a comprehensive list as we have here if it were not for our investigations into a childhood myth. All too often, we find that the myths of our youth turn into the truths of our elder years.

“The Telling Man” is a creature well known in the Northern Core. According to folklore, he is supposed to visit those who are particularly vain so that he might take away those attributes in which one takes too much pride. For example, in some stories, the Telling Man takes a vain woman’s beauty by turning her into a gruesome hag. In more lurid variants of the tale, the Telling Man cuts the thing that a person prides the most from his body, so that he might collect it.

The earliest legends of the Telling Man stretch back to a man named Myrus Tell, who grew up as a hermit in the Northern Core. Myrus was known to covet “pretty things” and would often trade goods for items he found attractive. One day, he found the shining hair of a passerby to be extremely beautiful. Entranced, he offered the passing lady a bar of gold for a simple lock of her hair. However, as the story goes, the vain woman turned up her nose at Myrus’s offer, believing that a mangy hermit had no business possessing a lock of her hair.

Myrus repaid her unkindness by clubbing her to death and scalping her. He wore her hair upon his head until the authorities caught up with him. As the constabulary pursued him, he fled into the fog. The folktales say that Myrus Tell, the “Telling Man,” is doomed to roam the land forever, seeking out those who possess great vanity and removing the thing from them that makes them vain.

The fact that the Telling Man legend appears all over the land alerted me to the possibility that if this creature were indeed real, it might be a Mist creature of some kind. Its appearance in various lands and in different legends could be attributed to a roving creature imprisoned within the Mists.

I made inquiries to various sources and, after a month, I received a most curious letter in response:

*Dear Miss Weathermay-Foxgrove,*

*We have never met. Nonetheless, your letter was passed on to me. It intrigues me, for I now face*

*something that defies my reason, and your letter is the only thing that I have seen in these past weeks that puts sanity to the events I have witnessed. In the simplest terms, two people have died horribly, while one still clings to life. At each scene of the crime, a single statement is written: **I take what I keep.***

*I will not speak of the crimes here. It pains me even to think of them now. All I know is that Ludendorf needs your help.*

*Yours,*

*Marcus Ruscheider*

The first thing that intrigued me was the name upon the letter. Marcus Ruscheider was none other than the son of one of Van Richten’s contemporaries, Dr. Harmon Ruscheider. What next caught and held my interest were those fateful words, repeated by Marcus himself: *I take what I keep.*

A few days later, I met Dr. Ruscheider in Ludendorf at the Breaking Wave Inn. There, he explained to me that he had been witness to three separate, hideous crimes. In each case, a person was assaulted and mutilated in some fashion.

As we began to discuss the matter further, a messenger boy ran into the tavern. The lad told Dr. Ruscheider that several neighbors of the Widow Viller had heard screaming come from her house. We left at once.

Both of us arrived to find Ursula Viller’s house standing tall and dark, each gaping window a separate mouth crying out. The door to the manor stood wide open. From the yawning portal came a moist, oppressive smell not unlike the smell of a house when all within have caught a fever.

Dr. Ruscheider and I carefully stepped inside, holding up lanterns to light our way. A long smear stretched away from our feet and into the darkness. Something had been dragged along the floor. We followed the trail up the stairs. It was then that I realized that the dark smear was a gristly mixture of blood and dirt. As I knelt down to examine these stains, I could see palm prints ground into the dirt and grime. Someone had been trying to crawl upstairs in a hurry.

At the top of the stairs, my light shone upon a pale face. It was a portrait. The painting portrayed Mrs. Viller, the owner of the estate. The haunting image of Ursula Viller looked out upon the world





with magnificent eyes, brilliant even in the wan light of the lantern.

We progressed past the painting and down the upstairs hall. The smear of dirt and blood swerved into the bedroom. I paused, then quickly entered the room, ready with a defensive spell.

The room was cold enough that I could see my own breath, and the strange odor that we had detected at the door was more pronounced here. The pool of my lantern light fell across something that shuffled in the corner. I swept the lantern's glow toward the movement and saw what was left of Ursula Viller — shockingly, still alive.

The monster had taken her eyes. Where once demure eyes of brilliant blue had looked out upon the world, nothing more than ruined sockets remained, gaping holes as haunted as the empty windows of the now-cursed house. The widow sat hunched over in the corner, a poor creature whose sanity was completely shattered. Long streams of dried blood ran from her sockets down her cheeks. In the pale light, the trails of blood looked like muddy tears.

"I think I'll go for a walk," whispered Ursula Viller. "Yes, yes. Go for a walk. Go for a walk."

I knelt down to help her up and saw that she sat in a massive puddle of her own blood. I realized then why she had crawled the entire way to her room. The monster had taken her feet as well.

## The Power to Alter Form

It was after discovering poor Widow Viller that I began serious investigations into the legend of the Telling Man. I started with a thorough interview of every citizen or farmer who lived near her. Most of her neighbors reported seeing someone visit the widow around the time of the incident. Each person that I interviewed described a strange person stalking Mrs. Viller's house on the eve of the crime. Everyone who spoke with us, however, gave a wildly different description. Some interviewees saw an ancient man whose skin was so dry and wrinkled that it looked like the bark of a tree. Others told us of a young man with large, disturbing eyes and who walked with a limp. From these disparities, I suspected that the creature we were tracking had the power to change its appearance, if not its entire form.

These suspicions grew when a hired tracker was initially unable to find any tracks other than our own upon the grass around Mrs. Viller's house.

After much searching, he found an odd series of tracks that circled around the house, but never approached it. I asked the tracker to look for a trail of moisture, which he found. From his account, a thin path of dew led right up to her door. This indicated another property of our quarry — not only could it change forms, but it could take the form of mist as well.

My suspicions were not completely without basis. The only reason I knew to look for these things was because of previous investigations by my sister and me. Our research uncovered accounts from numerous peasants in southern Kartakass who confronted Mist creatures on a regular basis at the misty border. Their oral accounts, now recorded by scholars, tell of creatures that shift forms or become part of the fog. The most frightening accounts relay stories of beings that can alter their shape almost instantaneously, becoming incorporeal long enough to allow the passage of an arrow but immediately afterward assuming enough solidity to strike down a man.

It is our belief that these beings are infused with a piece of the Mists. The Mists themselves grant the being in question the tiniest portion of their power. This explains the ability to change shape or bodily consistency. Since the Mists seem to craft the land at will, a being infused with some of their power may, therefore, craft its own body at will. I surmise that the crafting and shaping of one's body as a Mist creature would take learning and practice, and that any such creature could gain access to new powers simply by studying.

As terrible as these salient powers may sound, there are even worse tales documented by observers. In Hazlan, a group of creatures known as the kalij, are able to turn into clouds of choking fog. The kalij are blamed for crib deaths among the Rashemani, stealing into the rooms of tiny babies at night and flowing into their nostrils while their mothers are asleep. This is why Rashemani families customarily have relatives take turns watching over a newborn for the first two weeks of its life.

Another documented power is the ability to assume "the shape terrible" as it is called in Vistani bands. It is said that if one does not keep up with a Vistani caravan while traveling with them in the Mists, one can be lost forever within their folds. These bereft souls often appear later in other lands or along the same Mist-routes. However, when they are encountered again, they are transformed by the dread barrier that surrounds them. The





Mists cause them to be able to take on a terrible form, say the Vistani — the shape of a glowing apparition that sheds an awful light that burns the image of the woeful beings into one's mind forever.

## Form Based Powers

Mist-creatures may possess any or all of the following powers. The DM may use different combinations of these powers to vary the natures and abilities of monsters that originate in or are changed by the Mists.

**Mist Form (Sp):** As a full round action, the creature may assume *gaseous form* as per the spell. While in this form, the creature has a fly speed of 20, with perfect maneuverability. The Mist creature with this ability may remain in gaseous form indefinitely.

*CR Adjustment:* +1/2

**Strangling Form (Su):** Once the creature with this salient ability assumes *mist form*, it can choke its victims by forcing its way into their lungs (provided the target has lungs and needs to breathe). The creature must make a special grapple attack against its intended target. This attack is special since a creature in *gaseous form* cannot normally attack.

The Mist creature must first move into its opponent's space since it has not equipment or appendages to reach with, evoking an attack of opportunity. To make the initial touch attack for the grapple, the Mist creature uses its base to hit bonus for its attack roll modified by its Dexterity. Feats or abilities that help the creature make grapple checks also apply here.

If the Mist creature successfully starts the grapple, then it makes a special grapple check using its base attack bonus modified by its Dexterity, not its Strength. Size modifiers do not count for the Mist creature's grapple check.

The Mist creature cannot damage its opponent while grappling unless it successfully pins its opponent. Once it pins its opponent, it begins forcing its way down the victim's throat and nose, cutting off its oxygen. The pinned victim must then make a DC 10 Constitution check, just as if it had run out of air. Each round, the DC increases by 1.

If the Constitution check is ever failed, the victim begins to suffocate. On the first round of suffocation, the victim falls to 0 hit points. On the next round, they are at -1 hit points and dying. On the third round, the victim perishes.

Other characters can assist a victim who is being grappled by a creature with the *strangling form* power. Assistance functions exactly as it is described in the PHB.

Just like *mist form*, a creature who can assume a *strangling form* can remain in this form indefinitely.

**Prerequisite:** Mist Form

*CR Adjustment:* +1/2

**Acidic Form (Su):** While in *mist form*, a creature is acidic to the touch. Anyone sharing a square with the creature takes 2d6 points of acid damage each round, no saving throw. Objects are also damaged by sharing a space with the creature. The creature need only move into others' spaces or squares to damage them. Moving into another creature's space does evoke an attack of opportunity. Feats or abilities that aid a creature against attacks of opportunity do apply here.

Just like *mist form*, a creature who can assume *acidic form* can remain in this form indefinitely.

**Prerequisite:** Mist Form

*CR Adjustment:* +1/2

**Masque of the Form (Sp):** The creature has been granted the ability to disguise itself, as per *disguise self*. It may alter its appearance as a standard action. It can maintain its guise indefinitely.

*CR Adjustment:* +1/4

**Glowing Form (Sp):** A trait possessed by many Mist creatures, this power allows a creature to assume a glowing, white form that is slightly translucent. While in this form, the creature is not incorporeal, but is immune to the following attacks:

- Immune to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion or energy drain.
- Immune to paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects and necromancy effects.
- Immune to electrical and fire attacks.





If the creature is suffering from any of the above effects when it assumes this form, the effects are suppressed until the creature returns to its natural state. For example, a creature that suffers ability damage has that ability damage removed while it assumes *glowing form* but gains the damage back as soon as it returns to normal.

While in *glowing form* this creature cannot heal damage through any means.

Finally, when assuming this form, this creature may induce Horror checks from any witnesses. The DM has the final say on whether or not a character should make a Horror check in this instance.

A creature with this power may remain in *glowing form* only for the duration of the encounter. It may assume this form only once per day.

*CR Adjustment:* +1/2

**There Not There (Su):** The creature can appear and disappear in combat by shifting into the Ethereal Plane as the *blink* spell. Doing so is a standard action, and lasts for as long as the creature wishes. Each time this power is used, however, there is a 5% chance that the creature will fade out of existence to reappear in a place of the Mists' choosing.

*CR Adjustment:* +1/2

**Vaporous Quickling (Su):** The creature can transform into vapor and resolidify in an instant. Assuming or changing back from *mist form* is a free action.

This allows the creature while in *mist form* to solidify, attack and fall back into *mist form*. Those fighting such a creature need to ready actions in order to attack it unless they can also attack in *mist form* or have the ability to attack creatures in *mist form*.

Each time the creature assumes *mist form*, however, there is a 5% chance that the creature will be stuck in *mist form* until the Mists release it. Legends speak of creatures that have tried to escape justice through this power, only to be turned into mist for decades or even centuries.

**Prerequisite:** Mist Form

*CR Adjustment:* +3/4

**Hazy Form (Su):** With this power, the creature can become vaporous and hard to distinguish. Its form turns blurry and hazy, and it appears as a creature of its size and shape but with no discernable

features. The creature is impossible to distinguish from others of its kind. Sex, identity and other specifics cannot be determined by sight, though they may be determined by signs left by the creature (such as tracks). Hazy form also provides concealment, so that all attacks against the creature suffer a 20% miss chance.

A creature with this power can remain in this form indefinitely.

*CR Adjustment:* +1/4

**Trackless Step (Su):** The creature leaves no tracks or any incidental sign of its passing. Any attempts to track it using Survival fail, as well as attempts to find clues of its passing using Search. Creatures with this ability, however, may still leave evidence through ethereal resonance. One can still follow, snoop or spy upon the creature unless it is protected through some other means. Purposeful signs made intentionally by the creature remain and may be found through normal means.

*CR Adjustment:* +0

After a week of careful investigation, neither Dr. Ruscheider nor I turned up anything. Then, Marcus received a letter from nearby Dementlieu. It appeared that a contemporary of his was reporting similar incidents of mutilation and murder. Thanks to Marcus's network of information, we had once again picked up the trail.

Our passage to Chateauxfaux was made swift with a pair of Marcus's prize horses. These purebred stallions poured on their strength as they trudged along the road leading us closer to our next destination.

Our discussion was interrupted, however, when our carriage rocked with the force of a sudden blow. We were thrown about the wide interior, landing on top of one another. Quickly, I recovered, pulling myself up to see what had hit us.

As I peered out of the window, I noted that my entire body felt strange. Everything now moved slowly, as if beneath the surface of a pond. I could hear Marcus shouting something to me, but his voice was far and distant, as if he were part of a castaway dream.

Suddenly, a savage ripping sound erupted into the air. Splinters flew by me like slow butterflies, caught in a strange effect that surrounded us. A hand burst through the carriage door opposite me.





It grabbed Marcus's shoulder and hauled him out into the fog. The hand was like a pauper's puppet, stitched together with recycled string and wire, its multicolored fingers differing lengths and arranged like a child's collage.

Without thinking, I reached down and pressed the lid of the pocketwatch given to me a scant year ago by the ellefolk. Suddenly, I could hear again. I felt the shower of splinters sting my face. Marcus was struggling outside. I heard him free himself and flee from his assailant. The strange fugue that we had been caught in was gone.

Though I got out of the carriage quickly, whatever attacked us was already fading into the haze. I could see the long figure loping away, its arms swinging as it walked. Marcus lay not too far away, collapsed upon the ground.

I rushed over to Marcus and helped him to his feet.

Though he was unharmed, Marcus would not meet my eyes. Instead, he pointed at the carriage. "Jacques," he whispered, "you always did love your horses."

We gazed upon the sight, stunned. Even now, as I write these words, I feel my heart go numb at the thought of it. Our carriage driver, Jacques, lay near his horses, where he had fought to the death to defend them. His throat was slit wide, his lifeblood still sinking into the upturned earth. The horses stood perfectly still, their sleek muscles frozen into position. The carriage lanterns swung, still rocking from the blow that had wrecked the carriage. As the dim light fell across the stallions' bodies, I saw for myself what had happened.

Something had made a long peel of the stallions' faces. All of the skin along their heads had been rolled away, revealing a shining white skull that still gleamed with moisture, catching their once proud faces in a permanent, skeletal leer. As I gazed long and hard, I knew that we had encountered our quarry once again. For their eyes had not been taken. No, their large, terrified pupils still stared from their bony sockets, caught forever in the last expression they would ever have. After all, the Telling Man already had a pair of eyes.

## The Power to Alter Time

Dr. Ruscheider and I spoke at length about our close encounter with the Telling Man, coming to the final conclusion that we had both been subjected to some sort of temporal fugue when it

attacked us. Such a phenomenon would certainly explain why the supernatural effect was dispelled by my wielding of the pocket watch given me by the fey. I always suspected that it had some kind of supernatural quality to it.

If our theory proves correct, we have stumbled across something monumental in the field of occult study, for few creatures of the realm have the power to alter time itself. This possibility, however, fits the design of the Mists, for do not the Mists alter time at their whim? Why should not creatures infused with their essence do the same?

Some evidence exists that causes me to believe this theory. As discussed later in this book, the Zarovan gypsies can command time. But from whence came this extraordinary capability? Perhaps the Zarovan people are Mist-fused in some way. Likewise, the mysterious will o' the wisps seem to move faster than whoever pursues them. Could it be that the wisps slow down time for their opponents or else speed up their own time?

This hypothesis leads to even more intriguing questions. If the Mists can infuse something with the power to alter time, how much control do the Mists have over the element of time? Could the Mists roll back the past or alter the future? The ability to control time so deftly would indeed explain the existence of the fugued and the oubliettes that exist in the Mists.

## Temporal Powers

Mist-creatures may possess any or all of the following time-based powers. The DM should feel free to mix these powers as needed to vary the natures and abilities of monsters that originate in or are changed by the Mists.

**Temporal Manipulation (Sp):** The Mists have given a creature with this ability the gift to reach into time, slowing it down or speeding it up. The creature may now use *haste* or *slow* as a spell-like ability. It may use this ability 3 times per day, so that the creature may either use *haste* three times, *slow* three times or any combination of the two that equals three.

*CR Adjustment:* +1

**Past Sight (Su):** This temporal power, bestowed by the Mists, allows a creature to look into the past up to 1 year per HD of the creature. The creature merely specifies the date it wishes to view





and sees the events as they unfold. The creature must be present at the site of the event it wishes to view. For example, if it wishes to see a bloody murder that took place years ago, it must be at the site of the murder in order to view it.

Once the creature looks into the past, it watches events unfold as if it were present during the events. The creature cannot take part in the events; he or she is simply an invisible phantom observing the goings-on. The creature cannot manipulate objects in the past either. It would not be able to read the contents of a closed book, for instance. The creature may move around for as long as the ability functions, allowing it to look in multiple rooms or follow the images of people as they move about.

The present stays real for the creature with this power. So, for example, if a creature with this power trails an ancient lord up the stairs of a tower that has now crumbled apart, it will not be able to follow the past, since in the present the tower no longer exists.

This power is extremely potent, and has the possibility of spoiling the mystery of an adventure. DMs should remember that when giving this power to a creature, since crafty adventuring parties might be able to coerce a creature to use this power on their behalf. Only creature who have some sort of madness can have this power.

The creature may view the past for a number of minutes equal to its HD. The creature may look into the past only once a day.

**Prerequisite:** A creature with this power must also have some form of madness.

*CR Adjustment:* +0

**Temporal Barrier (Sp):** By stopping time in a specific area, a creature can create a force-like wall within which time is frozen. This barrier acts as a *wall of force* except that anything touching the wall must make a DC 18 Will save or be stuck fast to the area of frozen time.

Once a creature is stuck, it can make either a DC 20 Strength check or DC 25 Escape Artist check to escape each round as a full round action.

Objects hurled, shot or touched to the temporal barrier are caught fast. Only a DC 20 Strength check can free an object from the barrier; an Escape Artist check may not be used to free an object. Anyone making a Strength check to free an object must also make a Break check against the object to

see if the object breaks while it is being pulled out of the temporal barrier. Once the temporal barrier falls, all objects are freed as well. Missiles in flight such as arrows and grenades resume their course.

Spells directed against a temporal barrier stop at the point of contact. When the temporal barrier falls, the spells resume their course, striking their intended targets if they are still within range. Spells that require a touch attack or ranged touch attack on the part of the caster, (such as ray spells) resume their course, only striking their targets if they are still in the position they were in at the time the spell was cast.

A temporal barrier lasts 1 round per creature HD.

*CR Adjustment:* +3/4

**Time Wrinkle (Su):** A creature with this ability can transport itself ahead in time. With a standard action, the creature winks out of existence, to appear later in the same spot in the same condition. The creature can disappear for 1d6 rounds, 1d6 minutes, 1d6 days, 1d6 months or even 1d6 years. The longer it disappears for, however, the greater the chance that it will become lost in time — disappearing from Ravenloft forever. If it disappears for minutes at a time there is a 5 % chance that it will vanish forever; disappearing for days carries a 10% chance; and months or years carries a 15% chance.

*CR Adjustment:* +1/4

Our next meeting would take place in Richemulot, in the town of Ste. Ronges. We had received more reports of gruesome murders, tipped off by a local swordsmith by the name of Sicart the Scratch. Dr. Ruscheider and I stopped for the night at the Inn of the Last Breath.

I do not know how, but the creature knew that we were coming. That night, after I had gone to sleep, I awoke with a start, realizing that someone or something was strangling my with the intent to kill. I scraped at my throat, gasping, but no air came to my lungs.

Through the illumination of the silver moon, I could see drifting palettes of fog all around me, floating like frozen blades through the air. With a monumental effort, I rolled out of my bed and scrambled up against a wall. At last, a burst of air filled my chest, and I found I could breathe again.





I now saw that the entire room was filling up with a flowing fog, which was pouring through the window. As the fog rose upwards, it drew the air from my lips again. I suddenly realized that as long as I was covered by the fog, I would not be able to breathe.

I grabbed my belt, from which slung my pistol and spell components, flung open my door and stumbled into the hallway. I heard a strange music filling the halls of the inn. The discordant humming drifted through the air, making me strangely drowsy through some inexplicable power.

The music came from Dr. Ruscheider's room. Not losing an instant, I ran towards the door. In one motion, I put my palm to the door handle and uttered the arcane word I knew that would set my hand alight. As my arcane fire punched a scorching hole in the door, I shouldered the door open and stepped back.

There, standing over Marcus's bed was the creature. It stood very tall, and its arms seemed over-long, like those of a beast. In the darkness, I thought at first it was wearing some sort of hood over its face. But then I realized that the sagging hood *was* its face. It was wearing the stallion's face as its own, despite its ill-fit.

It glanced at me, and for a moment, I was taken aback by its haunting, beautiful eyes that started at me through the punched holes of its flesh-mask. Its inharmonious song filled my ears. I tried to summon another spell, but I found myself in the grasp of its jigsaw tune.

"Pity," it sang, each note grating and dissonant, "not vain enough..."

Taking advantage of my momentary fascination, the creature moved with blinding speed, crashing through the window of Marcus's room and diving towards the street below. I moved to the gaping window and saw a pool of mist on the cobblestones below. Already, it pooled into the sewers. I turned to poor Marcus and hoped that the thing had not killed him for the trouble.

## Vaporous Powers

To our good fortune, Marcus was unscathed, though a moment longer and he might have suffocated as I almost did. We compared our experiences and came to the conclusion that the Telling Man

was controlling the fog in some way, compelling the vapors to draw away all breathable air from the rooms.

This theory would agree with what we have previously seen in our research. The Bannick Fog of Valachan plagued that land for over a decade by choking those within it, causing them to rise as zombies. If such a phenomenon was created by a creature, are all such choking fogs created by sentient beings? Is the choking fog that manifests in Barovia a product of some malign force?

Mist creatures are not limited to creating a strangling mist, however. If you note my account above, the Telling Man was able to control the vapors as well, causing them to pour up into our inn rooms. Indeed, the Black Skald is said to be able to call forth columns of mist when needed. This supposition also fits the accounts of the Mist ferry-men who travel in and out of foggy rivers and are said to shape the Mists as weavers fashion a tapestry.

Darker tales speak of even darker powers. The Red Bride of Nova Vaasa is said to be accompanied by a bank of bloody fog that contains the voices of all those she has claimed in vengeance. Anyone listening to the whispers for too long goes mad and flees into the red mists, never to be seen again.

While these powers are rare, it is important to note that they are on the rise. For the longest time, it was assumed that the Mists were a dangerous place to travel, because of their tendency to move those who tread within. Now, it seems that the vapors of our land are becoming even more deadly. We have heard recent tales of Mist banks that drank the life from those who touched them or drained the blood of those who drew too near. However, we were unable to find any witnesses to legitimize these tales.

On the rise, too, are the reports of creatures who can control the fog around them. According to the reports our correspondents have given us, a number of beings have reportedly been able to direct banks of fog, moving or shifting them at their will. We would actually contest these claims and speculate that perhaps the Mists move themselves in a manner that is convenient for them. Neither Laurie nor I believe that the Mists are anyone's servant. More likely, they serve the beings they court for as long as is convenient for them.





## Vapor Based Powers

Mist dwelling creatures may have some or all of the following powers. The DM may want to use these special qualities to customize monsters to suit his campaign or to create new monsters based on these powers.

**Mist Call (Su):** A creature with this power can create a patch of fog with a 20 foot radius and 20 feet high. It can summon this patch of fog up to 100 feet +10 feet per HD in distance. In all other respects, this effect resembles *fog cloud*. The patch of fog lingers for 10 minutes per HD of the creature, though the creature may dissolve the fog at will before the duration runs out.

Creatures that use this power risk the ill favor of the Mists which do not relish being summoned too often. Each time this power is used, there is a 5% cumulative chance per encounter that the fog called for does not come at all. If a "00" is ever rolled for the creature, this power completely backfires, creating a patch of mist in the worst possible area for the encounter. For example, if a creature were trying to escape a group of adventurers, a "00" on the percentile dice might create a patch of mist at the edge of a precipice, causing the creature to run into the mist and over the edge of the cliff.

*CR Adjustment:* +1/4

**Animate Fog (Su):** A creature with this power can move a 20 foot radius, 20 feet tall bank of fog in the direction it desires as a standard action. The fog bank moves at a rate of 20 feet per round. Because fog is heavy, it always flows along the ground. It cannot travel horizontally. It may flow over barriers that are shorter than the fog bank is tall. The fog bank must flow around barriers that are taller than it.

Using this power is risky since the Mists are dangerous if tampered with too often. Each time this power is used, there is a 5% cumulative chance per encounter that the fog does not move. If a "00" is ever rolled for the creature, this power backfires, moving the fog into the worst possible area for the encounter. For example, if a creature desired to obscuring itself from ranged attacks, a "00" roll might mean that the fog patch moves over the creature's opponents, obscuring them from the creatures attacks and giving them cover.

*CR Adjustment:* +1/4

**Trapping Fog (Su):** A creature with this power may cause a bank of fog to solidify, as if using *solid fog*. Note that the creature cannot summon its own cloud, it must use a bank of preexisting mist. It may solidify a patch of fog summoned through the *mist call* power, however.

This power affects a bank of fog with a 20 foot radius and 20 feet tall. This *solid fog* is so thick that any creature attempting to move through it progresses at a speed of 5 feet, regardless of its normal speed. Such beings also suffer a -2 to penalty to all melee attack and damage rolls. The viscous mist also prevents effective ranged weapon attacks, though magical rays and similar attacks still function. Any creature falling into *solid fog* is slowed, so that each 10 feet of vapor that it falls through reduces the falling damage by 1d6. A creature can't take a 5 foot step while in *trapping fog*. Unlike normal fog, only a severe wind (31 + mph) will disperse this enchanted fog, doing so in 1 round.

Note that the creature that creates *trapping fog* cannot move it or manipulate it unless it also has the *animate fog* salient ability. *Trapping fog* lingers for 1 minute per HD of the creature.

*CR Adjustment:* +1/2

**Choking Fog (Su):** The creature with this ability can create a zone of fog that is devoid of all oxygen. Note that the creature cannot summon its own cloud, it must use a bank of preexisting mist. It may affect a patch of fog summoned through the *mist call* power, however.

This power affects a bank of fog with a 20 foot radius and 20 feet tall. The choking fog is not solid and is like normal fog in every other way except that creatures that need to breathe cannot do so while standing within it. Of course, a creature can hold its breath before entering the fog. See the *Dungeon Masters Guide* for rules for holding one's breath.

The *choking fog* effect lasts for 10 minutes per HD of the creature using this power.

*CR Adjustment:* +1/4

**Maddening Fog (Su):** This horrific power allows a creature to cause a bank of preexisting fog to become alive with the sound of whispers. It may affect a patch of fog summoned through the *mist call* power.





This power affects a bank of fog 20 feet in radius and 20 feet high. The whispers originate from the vapors and emanate from there. These maddening whispers cause all who hear them to make a Madness save. Failure indicates that the hapless creature contracts a Moderate Madness from the madness table (see Chapter Three of the **Ravenloft Player's Handbook**). Follow the guidelines on Listen checks found in the *Player's Handbook* to determine whether or not people can hear the whispering.

The *maddening fog* effect lasts for 10 minutes per HD of the creature using this power.

*CR Adjustment:* +1/2

**Death Fog (Su):** This potent ability allows a creature to cause a bank of preexisting fog to become not only viscous, but acidic as well. It may affect a patch of fog summoned through the *mist call* power.

Mist affected by this ability becomes an *acid fog*, as per the spell. Just like *acid fog*, these insidious vapors do 2d6 points of acid damage to each creature or object within them, in addition to slowing creatures down.

The *death fog* effect lasts for 1 round per HD of the creature.

*CR Adjustment:* +3/4

**Mist Fading (Su):** While standing within the mist, a creature with this ability can remain totally unseen. As long as the creature has any concealment from fog or mist, it is considered to have total concealment. Thus, as long as it is in any way concealed by the mists or fog, it is essentially invisible and is able to attack other creatures with all the benefits and adjustments that invisibility bestows. Attacking does not cause the creature to appear, though stepping out the mist certainly does. Any effect that dispels the mist that the creature is standing in also dispels the invisibility.

*CR Adjustment:* +1/2

**Mist Walking (Su):** When gifted with this power, the Mist creature with this ability can travel between patches of fog as if using *dimension door*. The creature must begin and end its travel in an area occupied by mist or fog. It can travel in this fashion up to a total of 10 feet per HD per day. For instance, a 10 HD creature could transport itself up to 100 feet per day in this fashion. It may split up

the distance in any fashion that it wishes. For example, it could make two jumps of 50 feet or five jumps of 20 feet. While this amount can be split up between multiple jumps, each transport, no matter how small, counts as a 10 foot increment at least. Thus, 10 one foot jumps per day count as much as ten 10 foot jumps per day for a 10HD creature.

**CR Adjustment:** +1/2

So far, our investigations revealed nothing more than a sad litany of ghastly mutilations. Determined to track down the creature known as the Telling Man once and for all, Dr. Ruscheider and I developed a plan.

We knew that the Telling Man attacked people possessed of vanity, taking away whatever constituted the focus of the vanity. Tracking down each and every person in the Core who suffered from the sin of vanity would be folly. Instead, I devised a way to bring many of those people to us.

Drawing upon some of the family funds, I arranged to hold a large ball at Heather House, the Weathermay ancestral home. Dr. Ruscheider, my sister Laurie and I wrote numerous invitations to particular individuals. Specifically, we called upon people whose reputation for humility was submerged by their more memorable traits. I realize that this might seem callous to some of our readers, but let me be clear — we were hoping to protect these guests, not use them as bait.

The celebration we arranged would consist of a week of festivities. Security at the Heather House was stringent. During the final evening of the lengthy celebration, I finally met our quarry.

I was standing in the balcony overlooking a large ball being held for our final night of celebration. From that vantage, I hoped to get a glimpse of anything suspicious.

To my surprise, I saw a strange, patchwork doll floating through in the air, dancing in front of me. It only took me a moment to realize that the doll was suspended from a very thin string. I glanced up and saw that the near-invisible string was attached to a long, thin pole — a fishing rod — and that the person holding the rod was standing behind me.

I whirled around and found that my pistol had been liberated from me. I felt a powerful hand latch around my forearm. I was drawn close to a towering figure and looked up into a jigsaw face. The stallion's mask was gone, replaced by a collage of human skin





stretched far too tight over a large skull. Upon the thing's head was a long ream of burgundy hair. It so ill-fitted its head that I would have avowed it was a wig, but I knew all too well that it was the scalp of some poor victim. Like its body, the thing's voice was stolen. It spoke with a raw amalgam of tones, all robbed from innumerable hosts.

"Do you like it?" the thing crooned, touching its hair. "I devised a new look for you," it whispered to me with the intimacy of a paramour, murmuring in an almost song-like tone. "Now, to consider. To think. Which part of you to take, hm?"

As I recovered from my shock, I tried to summon the words of power that would throw down my enemy in a smoldering pile of ash and bone. In that instant, however, it began its insidious song again, locking my mind within the throes of its musical lure. As it sang, it clasped its piece-meal fingers around my throat. I felt the stitching of its hand scraping the veins of my neck.

"We're almost tempted to ravish you right here before the crowd," sang the Telling Man, "but you've been so good. Besides, we simply *must* know. How *ever* did you come to know so much about us?"

As its thumb pressed into my throat, I felt the enchantment of its song break. I grabbed at one of the wires that held its hand together, attempting to unloose it from the arm. It was then that my vision fogged and my heart fluttered. I felt my mind whirl and spin. The creature was sorting through my mind as I would have sorted through the pages of a book.

## Mental Powers

From my encounter with the Telling Man at our own Heather House, I made the painful discovery that the creature had some psychic ability. Fortunately, not every Mist creature has psychic capacity. These are, however, the abilities that the careful hunter must fear the most. The body can heal from wounds. But scars of the mind never fade.

To my great fortune, the Telling Man may have been able to read my mind, but it could not alter it. There is documentation of creatures that have the ability to modify the memories of others. The Quivering Watchman, for instance, was known for its ability to make people forget how to get to the foggy tower that he protected. Numerous tales of Mist ferryman tell of their ability to make their passengers forget which channels they took down dark streams and rivers.

Some creatures have the ability to add memories to one's mind. In Barovia, there exist such creatures called the shalkala. These beings are said to be fey creatures who tempt men into following them into the woods. Those that heed their summons are commanded to dance with these fey beings in a circle of mushrooms or moss. Those who do so have their memories rewritten to believe that they are the shalkala's companions. These poor souls are then doomed to be the shalkala's protectors for life.

There is also evidence that many Mist creatures possess a limited form of telepathy. Several Vistani accounts tell of facing Mist elementals that moved in unison or coordinated their attacks, though neither creature was in visual range of the other.

One of the most dreaded psychic powers that we have documented thus far is the power to cause others to lose their bearings. The will o' the wisps that live out in the Mordent moors are known to lure travelers into the hills and then cause them to lose their way entirely. Numerous accounts exist of travelers that wander in circles for days, only to fall into some miry pit, or to be assaulted at last by the will o' the wisps as their strength waned.

Finally, there are rumors that potent Mist beings can toy with a person's sanity. The Wandering Highwayman of Borca is said to cause his victims to go mad just by speaking with them. Woe to those who meet such a creature. Such people come away from their encounter forever the bearing the mark given to them by the Mist being they have crossed.

## Mental Powers

Mist creatures may possess some or all of the following powers. The DM may use these special qualities to tailor creatures suitable for their own **Ravenloft** campaigns or to add variety to existing monsters.

**Modify Memory (Sp):** This ability is similar to *modify memory*, except that the creature with this ability can modify up to an hour of memory. Just as for the spell, the creature must spend an equal time visualizing the memory to be changed. Thus, if a peasant failed his save against this power, up to an hour's worth of memory could be altered, but the





creature would have to spend an hour visualizing that memory after its target failed its saving throw.

*CR Adjustment:* +3/4

**Mental Scan (Su):** The creature is able to *detect thoughts* as per the spell. It may use this ability at will, whenever it wishes, though it is limited to the spell's restrictions as outlined in Chapter Three of the **Ravenloft Player's Handbook**.

*CR Adjustment:* +1/4

**Mindlink (Su):** A creature with this power can send telepathic messages to others of its kind. The creature's "kind" is defined when the creature first receives the ability. Thus, the creature might be able to communicate only with others of its own species or with those who have failed a powers check or with a particular group of its own choosing, such as members of a cult.

This power only enables the creature to send messages. The recipient of the communication must have some way of responding in order to reply. Often groups of Mist creatures will have this ability, creating networks of denizens that can communicate with each other in apparent silence.

*CR Adjustment:* +1/4

**Haunting Call (Su):** With this dread ability, the Mist creature creates a sonic effect that lures all who hear it towards the caller. The effect may take the form of a song, chant or howl — whatever is most appropriate to the creature. Anyone who hears the *haunting call* must make a DC 18 Will save or be compelled to approach the creature. Those so compelled must attempt to approach the creature each round, doing nothing but moving towards the caller. A compelled individual may run toward the creature if she wishes.

Creatures prevented from moving to the source of the *haunting call* still move as close as they can. They will try to overcome any obstruction by any means necessary, including attack. They will continue in this fashion until the sonic effect ceases, or until they can no longer hear it. If the lured target is completely prevented from reaching her goal, such as being put in a prison cell or being otherwise confined or restrained, she simply stands and listens to the sonic effect until it ends or can no longer be heard.

The target will always use whatever natural movement is necessary to approach a creature with

*haunting call*, though it is not compelled to use alternative forms of travel. Thus, a mage won't necessarily use a *fly* spell to approach the summoning creature, though a gargoyle certainly would.

A creature lured by the sonic effect can be compelled into traveling a route that would cause its destruction. For instance, a man could be lured off of the side of a cliff or through a fire. If the target of this power is confronted with a path that will obviously lead to its endangerment, however, it receives a new Will save. If it succeeds, the call is broken. If it fails, the creature proceeds despite the danger. This includes engaging in combat to get to the source of the *haunting call*.

If the target reaches her goal, she simply stands and listens to the sonic effect, trying to stand as close as possible to the source of the call. If the caller attacks the summoned individual, that person gets a new Will save to resist. Failure means that the poor target takes the damage and is counted as helpless.

*CR Adjustment:* +1

**Wandering Mind (Su):** Many a lonely traveler has met his doom through the use of this dread power. A creature with this ability may target any individual within its line of sight. A targeted individual must make a DC 18 Will save or become hopelessly lost. He may travel up to a mile away while under the influence of this power, but will always come back to the same point of origin. The point of origin is always the place where the target started moving after it failed its initial Will save.

A ranger might wander through a moor only to find that over the next hill, he's back at the tree where he started his journey. A merchant might walk through a city, carefully keeping track of every street that he crosses, but somehow, when he rounds the bend, he's back in the plaza where he began.

As long as the victim is under the effect of this power, there is no escaping being lost. Those who use Survival to maintain their direction end up back at square one, even if they are sure of their bearings.

Magic provides no help; any magic used to attempt to foil *wandering mind* fails. For example, someone who uses magic to *teleport* or *dimension door* out of the *wandering mind* effect ends up back at his point of origin, because his confused mind directs him back to that place. Someone who uses *fly* to gain a high vantage point so that he can find





a new direction discovers himself mysteriously back where he started, hovering over a familiar spot. Even divination magic such as *find the path* leads the victim back to his starting point because his mind cannot understand what his spells are trying to tell them. Only a successful *dispel magic* or *break enchantment* can free someone from *wandering mind*.

Any outside observer watching the hapless target sees the person wander around aimlessly, eventually ending up back where he started. Someone unaffected by the *wandering mind* ability can guide a confused victim out of the area of his confusion. As soon as the victim is more than a mile away from his point of origin, the power of the *wandering mind* breaks, and the victim is no longer lost.

*Wandering mind* is a phantasmal effect that exists within the mind of its target. Any creature immune to a phantasm is also immune to *wandering mind*.

*CR Adjustment:* +1/2

**Seductive (Ex):** The Mists may grant a creature glibness of tongue, enabling the creature to read the psychological cues of anyone or anything it talks to and

predict how that being might respond to various actions. A creature with this ability receives a +10 profane bonus to all Bluff checks. The creature gains this bonus as long as it can spend one full round observing its audience. If new people arrive on the scene, the creature still needs a full-round to get the Bluff check bonus for the newcomers. The creature may engage in other actions like talking, cooking or anything that requires only a minimal amount of attention. It cannot observe targets while doing things that require a great deal of concentration, like combat, picking a lock or casting a spell.

*CR Adjustment:* +0

**Rapid Gaslighting (Ex):** This creature has the ability to gaslight another creature within an hour of conversation. Full details for gaslighting can be found in Chapter Three of the **Ravenloft Player's Handbook**.

*CR Adjustment:* +0

After the Telling Man's assault upon me, I found myself looking up into the faces of both a

hellish hound and some great steel-plated bull. I blinked once and realized that I was upstairs in the trophy room of Heather House. Above me hung my Uncle George's numerous trophies, a menagerie of exotic and strange creatures whose heads now adorned his walls.

I discovered that I was lying upon a divan. I fought to rise to my feet, but my body would not respond. Indeed, the most I could attempt was to raise one of my arms a few inches before I had to lower it again. As I peered around, I found that my mind was clouded as well.

"She wakes, she wakes," the sing-song voice intoned, "the bratling-niece of that troublesome Rudolph fellow."

I rolled my eyes in the direction of the voice. There stood the Telling Man, leaning over a chirurgeon's kit, daintily trying to pick one of his gleaming utensils, like a child choosing the next candy from a box.

"I will be missed...at the...party," I breathed, though my tired words were futile. Both my captor and I both knew that the manor was large and vast. The trophy room lay far away from the ballroom in a secluded corner of the mansion. Even if I could scream, such a sound would be largely muffled.

"Yes, you are right," sang the Telling Man. "Missed you most certainly will be."

I tried to get up, but my limbs flailed helplessly like worms stuck fast to a needle. At least both arms were working.

"Now, now, my sweet, don't struggle. The poisons in your system are still working their way through your blood." The creature stood up straight and shuffled over to me. I could feel it looming over my body and I could sense its sad, blue eyes gazing at my flesh longingly, hungrily. Through my foggy vision, I could see that it held a long, curved blade in one hand. The strange utensil gleamed softly in the dim light of the room. I had seen such an instrument used before in Lamordia — for lobotomies.

"We know what you're looking for," whispered the creature. "We know that you're looking for the Lost. But what you don't know...is who is counted among their number."

At this point, I had punched a hole through the cobwebs that covered my mind. I began to assemble sigils in my poison-riddled brain, recalling with difficulty the ancient words of arcane power.





“Your so-called Uncle — where do you think he has been all of this time? Why do you think that your quest to find him has been so futile?” he taunted me.

My eyes blurred, as the room spun.

My heart burned in despair. “Where...is he?”

The Telling Man hummed softly as he pulled my hair upward, raising my head off the divan where I lay. The edge of the curved blade dangled in front of my face. My skin tingled with a giddy fear at its approach.

“You will never know,” the thing said with a final sigh of sadness. “You know, there is so much of you that is perfectly tasty. But your brain? That is most certainly what you covet most.”

“A pity,” I breathed, as the cold blade was placed upon my scalp. “You’ll never attain what you seek, either.”

Before he reacted, I screamed out words that had been with me since I first learn to pierce the air with eldritch power. It was a simple enough dweomer, but it took years to hone and could be deadly in its application.

Four motes of force, light and fury erupted into the air and swarmed around the Telling Man. The thing screamed as the wisps darted about it, burning into its borrowed flesh. It sprang back, swatting at the swarming missiles that assailed it from every direction.

While it was distracted, I used my remaining strength to roll off of the divan. I closed my eyes and heaved out my next enchantment, feeling a cold chill pass over my skin. With every bit of effort I could muster, I clutched at the carpet with my fingertips and pulled myself underneath the divan, blessing every time that Uncle George had ever called me “his little waif.”

The creature ran through the room, looking for me. It overturned furniture and pulled down shelves. Its feet passed once, twice, by my face as it scrambled about in a desperate search. Then, the creature stopped and knelt down beside the divan. It peered down under the couch and put its face next to mine, but its pale blue eyes did not see me, did not note my face caught in an expression of horror and fascination. Despite all of the Telling Man’s many abilities, it could not penetrate the enchantment of *invisibility* I had placed upon myself.

Within the span of a heartbeat, I could hear the thunder of footsteps storming down the hall.

Even with the remoteness of the room, the assembled guards heard the cacophony of the Telling Man’s fury. There was a crash of glass and a long wail that went high into the air as the creature leapt through the window.

I was not so easy a victim as the Telling Man had suspected. Had it fully realized my abilities, I doubt I would be writing these words now. Clearly, my opponent was superior to me in a physical sense. Surprise and quick wit were the only things that saved me.

After its failed attempt to extract my brain, the creature fled Heather House. No doubt the creature feared the combined force of the summoned household rather than one lone wizard. I wish that we could report to you that the creature has been vanquished and will plague the land no more, but that is not always the way in our line of work. Therefore, reader, beware. For if you should possess a vanity, such I as did unknowingly, it may already be stalking you, waiting to stitch your pride to its ever-changing body.

— GWF

## Other Powers

While Gennifer did most of the work on discovering the nature of Mist creatures and their salient abilities, I too, contributed to some of the research here. My name, of course, is Dr. Marcus Rushchieder. Many of you know of my father, Dr. Harmon Rushchieder, who worked with the famous Dr. Van Richten on his guide to the lich. My father was a captive of an Invidian lich for a long while, but managed to escape her grasp before relating to Dr. Van Richten vital information about lichdom. Thereafter, my father died in the arms of his good friend, a tragic end to a great man.

Since that time, I have striven to continue my father’s work. In the spirit of the research that he undertook, I will relate to you here the salient powers that I have discovered. Much of our research has been crafted to arm the capable hunter against the malign. However, there is another side to the Mists that surround our land. The Mists are not always an agent of woe, as in the case of the Telling Man. There are times in which the Mists act on the behalf of justice.

Take, for instance, the fen hounds that live within the folds of the Mists. These creatures hunt down those that have spread suffering through the





land. The furies, also, find and destroy beings of evil.

To this end, there are a number of salient powers that these spirits of vengeance and retribution possess. We have seen some of these powers at work first hand. Other powers have been documented by witnesses and correspondents. The striders of Valachan, for example, appear as emaciated horses in the Mists, standing near places where an injustice has occurred. If a soul is brave enough to mount one, it will allow someone to ride, granting the rider combat prowess and turning away any blade that tries to strike him. Striders often lead their rider towards those who are deserving of justice as well. However, it is said that if the rider perishes during his quest, he rises again on the next night as a revenant.

There are more tales of people being helped by the Mists, but in almost every case where someone has received aid from a Mist creature it has always been in the name of vengeance. There are no reported cases of Mist creatures stepping in to save someone's life, cure an individual of a curse or alleviate suffering.

Another example can be found in the Quivering Watchman that Gennifer refers to previously in this chapter. The Watchman grants those who brave its tower a weapon of great power, but that weapon's enchantment only first comes into play when used to exact retribution.

We must pause, then, to wonder at the designs of the Mists. Why would the Mists grant certain creatures the power to wreak havoc while granting others the power to exact vengeance? It is as if the Mists are trying to perpetuate a cycle of sorrow and retaliation.

Most of the salient powers that we have seen focus on granting someone else's need for justice. It is rare that the Mists themselves intercede on the behalf of the innocent. Only in the rare cases of fen hounds and the furies have we seen this happen.

## Powers of Justice

The following powers may be applied to Mist creatures or beings touched by the Mists. DMs may find these abilities useful in designing creatures for their campaigns.

**Grant Vengeance (Sp):** The creature with this ability can grant another being the power of vengeance. The creature must touch its intended

target for one full round. If the target accepts the power from the creature, she gains a +2 to hit, damage and to all saves when the target fights the object of its vengeance. This Mist-blessing lasts for 24 hours.

Note that these bonuses only last while the target is fighting the object of its vengeance. If it is fighting a minion or making a save from a spell cast by a minion, the target does not receive these bonuses.

A creature with this ability cannot use the power upon itself.

*CR Adjustment:* +1/4

**Curse Bonus (Su):** Any creature with this ability gains a bonus to all curse checks that it makes. The bonus is determined by the DM, but typically ranges from +2 to +5. It is highly recommended that the bonus never exceed +5. See information on curses in Chapter Three of the *Ravenloft Player's Handbook*.

*CR Adjustment:* +0

**Create Revenant (Sp):** As a full-round action, a creature with this Mist power can cause another to rise as a Dread Revenant (see *Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead*). The target must first be dead, obviously, but must also have a reason for revenge. This ability would fail, for instance, if granted to a farmer who died in his sleep and had no enemies. The ability always fails when used upon the body of True Innocents, even if they have just cause for revenge. Any creature who adheres to a specific faith gets a posthumous DC 18 Will save against this power. Targets who succeed in this save do not rise as revenants.

The creature that creates the revenant does *not* retain control over it. Ironically, many Mist-creatures have perished at the hands of their own creations. It takes one-full round for a creature with this ability to create a revenant.

*CR Adjustment:* +1/4

**Refuel the Fire (Sp):** A creature with this ability can assist others who have been wronged. The intended target first receives the benefits of a *heal* spell. If the target is undead, it receives the benefits of a *harm* spell instead. The target also gains the benefits of a *bless* and a *prayer* spell as well as a +4 to an ability score of its choice. Additionally, the target becomes immune to damage from a





single energy type. While under the effects of *refuel the fire*, the target creature is immune to all poisons. These benefits last for 24 hours.

In order to receive this vengeful blessing, the target must willingly sacrifice a permanent point of Charisma. This Charisma point may never be recovered, even through *restoration* or other restorative magics.

In order to use this power on another, the creature must touch its target for one full round. A creature with this ability cannot use the power upon itself.

*CR Adjustment:* +1/2

**Sign of Weakness (Su):** This power often manifests itself in beings such as fen hounds that deliver justice. This power allows the creature to drain its target of its greatest strength as a standard action. The target must be within 30 feet of the creature using this ability and there must be a line of effect between the creature possessing this power and the target. The target receives a DC 20 Will save against this power.

If the target fails, the target temporarily loses 4 points from its highest ability score. The creature using *sign of weakness* receives a +4 to the same ability score. Both bonus and lost ability score points fade at the rate of one per day.

For example, if a Mist creature targets a blood-thirsty fighter, the fighter might take 4 points of Strength damage, while the creature receives a +4 bonus to its Strength score.

If two or more of the target's ability scores qualify as the highest, then the creature using *sign of weakness* chooses which ability is drained.

*CR Adjustment:* +1/2

**Granting the Bane (Sp):** In the name of justice, a creature with this power can grant another individual a *bane* weapon (see Chapter 7 of the **Dungeon Master's Guide**). By touching the target weapon, it immediately becomes a +1 *bane weapon*. The weapon remains so enchanted for 24 hours. While the creature may touch the weapon enchanted with this power, it cannot actually wield the weapon that it enchants in combat. If it does so, the weapon immediately loses its enchantment. Only one weapon may be enchanted by the creature at a time.

*CR Adjustment:* +1/2

**Instill Aura (Sp):** By extending its blessing, a Mist creature with this power can cause another to assume an "aura of vengeance." While cloaked in this aura, the target is surrounded by a tangible sensation of wrath and violence. When the target next meets the object of its vengeance, its opponent must make a Will save or become *shaken*. The Will save is always equal to 10 + + the target's HD + the target's Charisma Modifier.

A creature with this ability cannot use the power upon itself.

*CR Adjustment:* +1/2

## Other Powers

The following powers may belong to Mist creatures or Mist-touched creatures in any combination appropriate for the creature. DM's may use these powers to create variant Mist creatures for their own campaign.

**Corruptive Presence (Su):** Because the Mists have touched this creature, it becomes a corrupting presence in the land. All powers checks made within 100 feet of its presence are at +5%. This ability may be taken twice. If it is taken again, all powers checks made within 200 feet of its presence are at +10%.

*CR Adjustment:* +0

**Haunting Sound (Su):** A creature that possesses this power causes all who hear its haunting call to become *shaken* if they fail a DC 18 Will save. Anyone who is within 100-200 feet may be affected, the exact range of the power is determined once the creature takes the power. Other creatures with the *haunting sound* salient ability are unaffected by this power. Thus, whole packs of creatures with this power may roam about, scaring those they encounter.

Anyone who succeeds in a DC 20 Will save against one creature's *haunting call* is immune to that creature's call for 24 hours. Another creature's haunting call may affect the target, however, if he fails his save versus that creature. Each new call requires a new save.

This ability may be taken twice. If it is taken twice, then targets that fail their Will save against this power become *panicked*, instead of *shaken*.

*CR Adjustment:* +1/4





**Dire Enmity (Ex):** A creature with this quality feels enmity for a particular type of person. The type may be determined by character class (i.e., aristocrats, fighters, rogues), profession (i.e. carpenters, merchants, musicians), or appearance (i.e. young, blond women, tall men). Whenever encountering a target of the designated type, the creature's enmity gives it a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls when facing that opponent and that opponent only. If the creature with this power has a specific enemy, meaning a specifically named character, the creature's bonus to attack and damage rolls rises to +3.

*CR Adjustment:* +1/4

**Unerring Hunter (Su):** A creature with this power possesses an uncanny ability to track its prey. The creature always knows the direction it must go to find its enemy, but it does not know how far it

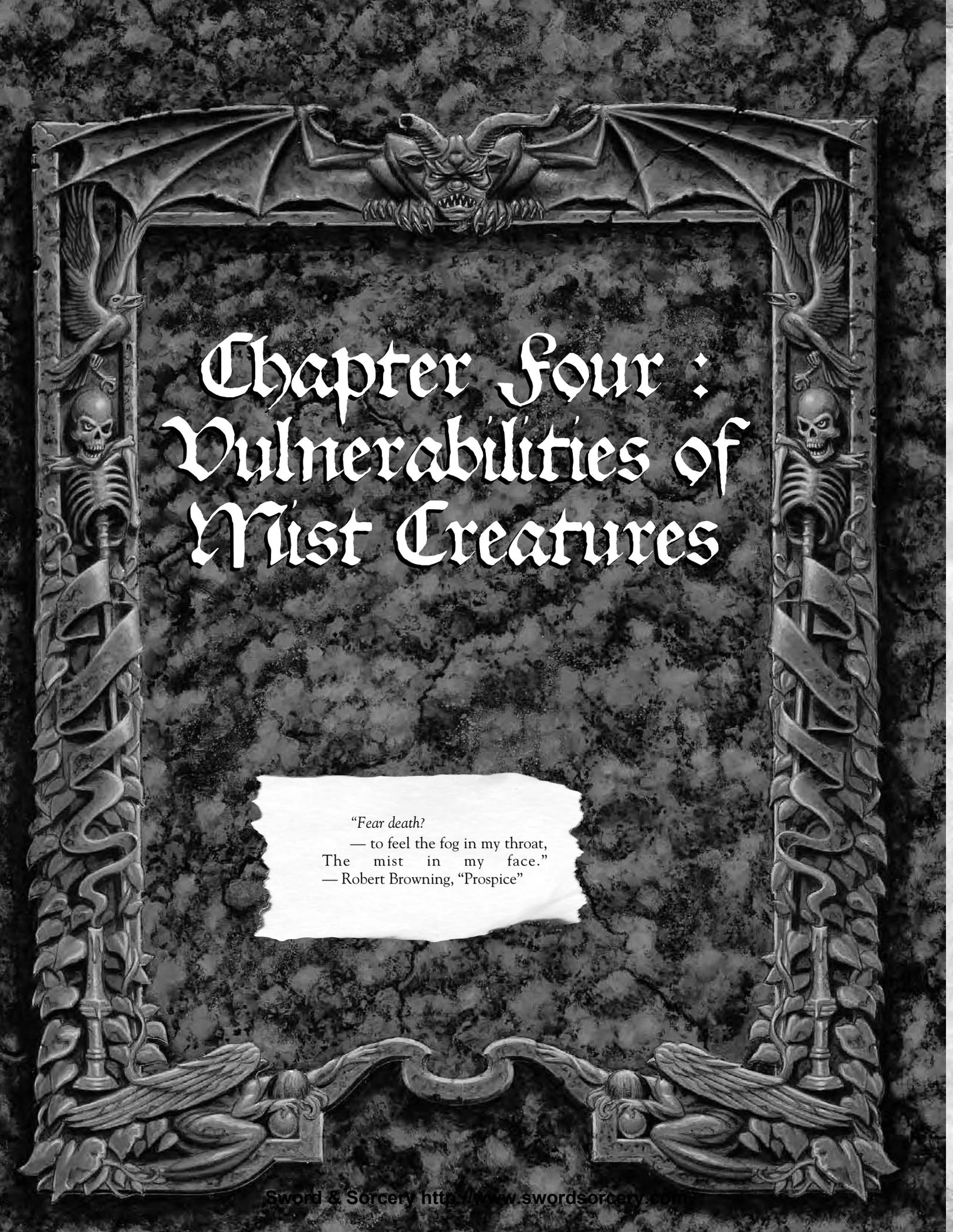
must travel. Some creatures that possess this power may switch targets at will. Other creatures have this power affixed to a single person or monster. This power does function across domain borders.

**CR Adjustment:** +0

**Undying (Su):** The Mists will not allow a creature with this power to die. If it is vanquished, it simply steps forth from the Mists again on the following night. Even if the creature's body is burned, disintegrated or hidden away, the creature eventually returns, always coming forth from the Mists. If the creature's body is watched, it eventually dissipates into harmless vapor before it reappears again. Some creatures with this ability have a specific weakness or finally rest when some specific task has been completed.

*CR Adjustment:* +1/4





# Chapter Four : Vulnerabilities of Mist Creatures

*"Fear death?  
— to feel the fog in my throat,  
The mist in my face."  
— Robert Browning, "Prospice"*



gentle Reader:

As my sister, Gennifer, spoke in the last chapter of the myriad powers of Mist creatures, with this chapter I seek to bring hope to the near-overwhelming awe and despair at the arcane abilities of these inhabitants of the Mists. Such beings, whether born of the Mists or distorted and changed by their wanderings in the Mists, are not omnipotent. Most, if not all, have weaknesses that provide any rational prey with the chance to survive and possibly defeat these terrible foes. In fact, it is my belief that for most gifts given by the Mists to those creatures within — and in this I include both the Lost and Mistlorn — there is a corresponding vulnerability.

To defeat such a horror as the Telling Man, and I still shudder at her closeness to death or mutilation, Gennifer used her keen intelligence against his greatest weaknesses — his own hubris and lack of true rationality. Other beings within the Mists exhibit more arcane vulnerabilities. Some seemed marked with evil and can thus be damaged by holy water or the prayers and chants of priests. Some show weaknesses to the most mundane objects and elements, but an intelligent hunter will find these normal items sufficiently deadly to Mist beings. Some of the more unusual creatures have weaknesses unknowable unless by chance.

One warning I must make, however; no theory is truly proven unless by its exceptions. No matter how likely it is that a Mist-touched creature has one of these weaknesses, you may find one with some arcane vulnerability unheard of by any researcher or a being who seems to have no weakness at all. The list I present in this chapter was researched through interview, journals and personal experience.

## An Early Excursion to the Edge

This leads me to an anecdote from one of my journals many years ago, which provides an example of how often such discoveries are a matter of luck and not perseverance. When I was not yet eighteen, I sometimes wished for independence from my esteemed uncle, who seemed to me at the time to look upon my sister and I as creatures to be protected and coddled. I feared that our mentor wished to keep us from all that is interesting in the world, like flowers pressed between the pages of a book to preserve them. I also struggled to keep my own sense of identity, a problem that I have since learned plagues many twins, though my sister did not seem to suffer as greatly from it.

One evening, I took it upon myself to go exploring. Gennifer had fallen asleep with her books and I was determined to have my own experience! With much struggle, I climbed down the tree outside our library window, snagging my clothes on a few branches in the process. This time, I wished to do something other than study the adventures of others. I did not even want to share this foray into the unknown with my twin. I hoped to make Uncle Rudolph proud of me so that he would notice how grown up I had become, though from my perspective now, I only proved I still lacked a great deal of maturity. Carrying along a small knife and a pistol I could not yet use effectively, I set out from our home in the growing evening chill.

Few people were out in the dank foggy twilight, but I did not feel afraid, only excited to be on my own. I had not traveled far, no more than a few miles from our dwelling place, when the fog grew thicker around me, rising to the tops of the trees and beyond. I realized I could see no more than an arm's reach in front of me. The distant sounds of carriages rumbling along the nearby road grew more muffled, then faded completely into silence, lost within the fog.

The unfamiliar weight of my knife and pistol were a great comfort to me, for as I walked through the swirling white silence I thought I heard a pit-pattering echo to my step. The soft noise stopped each time I hesitated, so I could not tell if what I heard was real or just a figment of my apprehension. I shifted to a quick walk and then to a run, but I seemed to go nowhere. I felt a cold chill as a drift of the Mists caressed my face. Beads of sweat warred with droplets of condensation on my forehead and cheeks as I frantically struggled to pull the knife from its sheath, whirling in circles to spot who or whatever was following me.

A soft child's voice whispered, "Tagged, I've got you!" then giggled with a high sweet laugh that seemed to come from every direction at once.

With a great tug I finally pulled my knife from its sheath, my heart pounding wildly, and called out to what I hoped was a child lost in the Mists.

"Come out, come out, wherever you are," I said, making it a child's game of hide and seek. There was another giggle, again echoing weirdly through the fog. I was startled to feel cold, damp little fingers grasp my unarmed hand.

"Here I am," she said, stepping toward me. She was a pale little girl with wisps of white-blond hair





and sad, world-weary blue eyes that belied her gap-toothed grin. “Do you want to play?” she asked, her voice guardedly hopeful.

“Hello little one,” I replied, feeling somewhat relieved. “Are you lost?”

Her face crumpled at my words, and she began sobbing with the singularly high-pitched wail at which little girls excel. Without thinking, I gathered her up in my arms, dropping the knife to the ground. She snuggled against my neck, her tears — oddly cold — dampening my shirt. For a moment, I held her, considering how we could both find our way back, smelling a faint scent of peppermint wafting from her clothing. Then she wrapped her arms in a stranglehold around my neck. I felt the sharp sting of her teeth and realized that the cold tears staining my blouse were dark droplets of blood. Almost reflexively, I pulled her away from my throat before her teeth could settle deeper, peeled myself out of her embrace and flung her to the ground. I stared at my knife, now lying next to her, and considered how I could grab the weapon or, failing that, pull the pistol forth, load it and shoot before the fiend was able to kill me.

A moment passed, then another and another. The pale child lay very still, her eyes focused upon my gleaming blade no more than a few inches from her nose. She did not move — in fact, I saw that she did not even breathe. There was no sign of awareness as she sprawled like a broken doll on the ground, except for the shining sadness in her eyes that gazed so intently on her reflection in the metal.

Slowly, I gathered my thoughts. Surely she was a vampire, but none I had ever read about react in such a fashion to their reflection. Still, no matter how odd she seemed, it was my duty to destroy her and end her tormented existence as one of the undead. From my readings I knew I should place a stake in her heart or remove her head with a sword. I did not have either tool and, frankly, felt more sympathy than anger at the poor lost thing. I whispered goodbye to her, hoping not to break her fascination, and headed on through the Mists, listening to every imagined echo with my loaded pistol heavy in my hand. After what seemed like hours I found the fog clearing around me as the sun rose over my home in Mordentshire. As the last of the mists faded into the trees and I ran to the back door of the house, I fancied that I heard another soft giggle.

“Tag, you’re it!”

## Weaknesses

By chance, I was able to extract myself from my “great adventure.” Knowledge of the vulnerabilities of creatures such as the one I encountered, would have led to a more sure and simple victory and muted the sadness and fright of the meeting. Such information I might have gained from more enthusiastic perusal of the tomes within our library, yet I was able to add something to the lore contained upon our shelves. I felt that Uncle Rudolph was actually proud of me, even if his manner was stern and forbidding. I remember his half-smile, quickly hidden, as he asked for a report of my experience, writing it down even as I spoke — something that made me happier than all the fine dresses or leather-bound books in all the land.

For others who might find the answer through diligent study instead of luck, I have divided the known weaknesses of Mistborn creatures and the Fugued into two main categories: common vulnerabilities and those salient weaknesses which are unusual or, in some few instances, seemingly unique.

Many of the experiences listed below have been taken from interviews with Dr. Penarrow, a gentleman of our acquaintance who you will become more familiar with in later chapters. With only minimal commentary from my sister Gennifer, Dr. Penarrow’s descriptions of vulnerabilities follow.

### Common Vulnerabilities

Common weaknesses are those which curse all Mist creatures, in one form or another. These vulnerabilities involve simple materials or effects that may be invoked through the use of low-level spells or other magics. For example, sunlight of any sort affects the shadowy undead roaming within the Mists, while fire might burn through a Mist monster’s *Trapping Fog* much as fire burns through the enveloping strands created by a *web* spell.

#### fire

Perhaps the most ubiquitous vulnerability most evil creatures have is an aversion to or sensitivity to flame. Fire is a destroyer and a purifier, sending light through the Mists and sometimes clearing a pathway or creating a homing beacon for those lost in the fog. Those who must travel for days through the Mists would be well-advised to carry enough





firewood to allow for a large bonfire to place at the center of their camp.

It seems from several reports that fire is often the first thing affected by Mist powers. Anyone who notices fire acting oddly in the Mists should ready himself for trouble; creatures with temporal powers may be ready to spring their attentions upon your party. From my experience unfortunately, flame can also draw the Mist-mad or cursed. Consider carefully your use of fire.

## Reflection

Oddly enough, creatures of the Mist, both Mistborn and Fugued, have a common weakness caused by seeing their reflection. If a Mistborn's gaze catches a glimpse of its reflected image, it will be transfixed by the sight of its form. I have seen such a creature stand perfectly still as one after another of us fled past him, leaving a shiny shield behind for his perusal. Even one of the Fugued may be enraptured by the sight of its own eyes captured in a mirror's reflection. After long discussion we are still somewhat puzzled by this reaction, but figure it is so very rare a thing for the Mistborn to see themselves that they are both puzzled and enchanted by the sight (usually one only a fond relative could love). Miss Weathermay-Foxgrove's story seems to show that even one of the powerful vampiric undead, if Fugued, is trapped by it.

## Sunlight

More certain than any element, the light of the sun is anathema to any creature born of the Mists. Even the fenhound, a being of vengeance which leaps forth from the Mists to destroy those on the path of evil, must fade away with the light of the morning sun. Sunlight is alien to the Mistborn and also turns away those cursed creatures who have been touched by the Mists. I theorize that the power of the sun has been a deterrent for many years, keeping the terrible inhabitants of the Mists from emerging to dominate the lands around them. It is ironic that the light of the sun provides a barrier for the Mistborn, much as the Mists do for us. Only at night do the Mist creatures sometimes roam. Only rarely do they find a place to hide from the sun to continue their wanderings for more than one evening. Instead they call upon the Mists to take them home when the blazing light of dawn might cause them harm. Within the Mists, undead who laugh at a cleric's turning power often cringe and run away as they burn from a well placed spell from the clerical Sun domain.

*Editor's note: Oddly enough, such spells do not affect fenhounds.*

—GWF

## Salient Vulnerabilities

While explorers in the Mists can depend upon such common weaknesses as have been described above, salient weaknesses — those peculiar to certain creatures — are in general more deadly, if near to impossible to discover except through trial and error. *Editor's note: Or through diligent study of old lore for those willing to do so*—GWF Such vulnerabilities are far rarer but quite effective if discovered. Below is a list of various salient weaknesses which are most often noted by those traveling through the Mists. Such lists can be dangerous, however, for no salient weakness is a certainty. The Mists warp those who live within them, much as the swirling patterns in a bank of fog may change.

## Magic and Turning

Both divine and arcane spells can be particularly useful against Mist-dwelling creatures. Warding spells, protections and turning are all quite useful, just as they are for undead outside the Mists, but since so many of the Mist creatures, even the non-undead are evil and incorporeal, an intelligent and experienced adventurer in the Mists quickly develops a list of spells to carry at all times when traveling the byways. Some of the Mistborn, sensitive to their common weakness to reflections, can actually be turned by clerics, as though undead, by using mirrors or other reflective surfaces.

## Elemental Weaknesses

Within the Mists, the most basic elements of our world grow dim or near non-existent. Rarely does a wanderer see a lake or mountains, feel the warmth of a fire or a breath of breeze fluttering along the edge of a cloak. Such things are alien to the Mists; hence, they seem to provide some protection and defense against Mist creatures. Spells which mimic or control an element should be effective. When working with the actual element, such as a water bottle, a flaming torch or a dirt-filled bucket) the bane must be pure and unsullied to be effective. Do not expect wine to work as well as water —although wine might be a salient weak-





## Common Vulnerabilities

Listed below are the weaknesses common to all creatures of the Mist, both Mistborn and Fugued. Remember that creatures born of the Mists may react differently from those who have had touch with the world outside the Mists. Such reactions may be more or less dramatic depending upon how Mist-tainted one of the Fugued may be.

**Fire:** Fire is both a deterrent and an attraction to Mist creatures. Non-intelligent beings (those with an intelligence rating of 4 or below) including undead are usually repelled by fire, requiring a Will save (DC 10+1 per HD of the creature) to come within the circle of light created by a large bonfire. Intelligent undead and living creatures, particularly those pitiable wanderers lost in the Mists will be attracted to large fires, increasing the chances of an encounter for any who might linger along the Mistways. There is a cumulative 5% chance per hour the bonfire is alight.

DMs who wish to give their players a chill may also wish to foreshadow an attack by a being with temporal powers by causing the movement of torches to still or bonfires to suddenly burn to ash in an instant just before the monster strikes. Allow a DC 15 Spot check to notice the change. Any character noticing the effect will not be caught flat-footed at the start of an attack.

*CR Adjustment: -1/2*

**Reflection:** Any shiny object—a pool of still clear water, a gleaming breastplate, or a simple mirror can defend against the Mistborn and Fugued. Such reflective surfaces provide these creatures the chance to gain sight of their own image, which fascinates them as though under the effect of *hypnotism*, although without the suggestibility. Remember that a creature must have the ability to see. Blind creatures are immune to this effect. Also, the fascination is destroyed if the reflecting surface is covered, their gaze is broken or they are attacked in any way. Intelligent creatures may attempt to break this fascination with a Will save at DC 10+1 per the creature's HD.

*CR Adjustment: - 1/4*

**Sunlight:** As one might guess, sunlight is a strong deterrent to Mist creatures, particularly the Mistborn, who do not know of the power of its bright rays until they wander forth from the Mists or are driven out of the Mists into daylight. Any Mistborn creature caught in true sunlight takes 1d4 points of damage per round until it can dive back into the Mists, call mist to it or find a place in complete darkness to hide until night. Mistborn undead suffer worse fates; their skin boils under the sun, and they suffer 1d6 damage per round. If these undead cannot find their way back into the Mists or call mist or fog to them, even the deepest shadows afford no protection.

Fugued do not suffer damage from sunlight. Their connection to the Mists, however, makes returning to a bright sunny world difficult and uncomfortable. Any time they are in a clear area outside the Mists, they suffer -2 to all attack rolls, saving throws and skill checks from the disorientation.

Spells which mimic the effect of sunlight, such as *searing light* and *sunbeam*, are also useful against Mistborn creatures, since all of them are particularly vulnerable to light. Such spells used against the Fugued do normal damage for their type, but may also disorient them for the length of the spell's duration (see above for effects).

*CR Adjustment: - 1/2*





ness to certain creatures — or hot coals to drive back a fen hound as a bonfire might.

**Air:** Although air seems innocuous to most of us and is, in fact, vital for our continued existence, for Mist creatures caught in gaseous or mist form, air in the form of wind is a particularly valuable weapon and ward. A steady breeze may allow enough visibility to make ranged combat possible in a confusing and Mist-filled area (although nothing can completely clear the Mists), while strong gusts can blow Mist creatures back or, if powerful enough, damage them. I have watched as maddened Mist skeletons attempted again and again to attack a group of priests of Ezra while a sorcerer sent a strong breeze to blow them back as the priests readied their holy symbols to drive back and destroy the abominations.

**Earth:** Earth does not seem, at first, to be a particularly strong defensive weapon against creatures touched by the Mists, but there are rumors and some confirmed facts to the contrary. Earth, particularly soil taken from a Mist-touched creature's original home, can be a powerful deterrent — sometimes even a bane to drive them away. The solid reality of earth, the familiar scent of rich loam, has driven many Mist creatures to flight. A fine dust or handfuls of sand can sometimes outline a near-to-invisible creature, while other Mist beings may be locked in place by a well-tossed stone.

The Phantom Highwayman, a specter only found in the Mists near Richemulot, is a deadly sight. His bloody sword has drained the spirit from more than one unlucky traveler. Thankfully, travelers armed with knowledge carry a small bag containing a few copper rumors and lined with soil from the banks of the Musarde River. When the Highwayman asks for your coin purse, this bag can, with luck, banish him back to the Mists. Legend has it that the Phantom Highwayman was tortured and drowned there many years ago; subsequently, the Mists rose to take his murderers away.

**Water:** To be truly accurate in describing the uses of water against Mist monsters involves dividing the element into three categories: pure elemental water, alchemical water or *quintessence* (see **Van Richten's Arsenal**) and holy water. Any one of the three types is useful against the vicious and terrible Mist creature known as the blood elemental, which, although itself a warped and twisted version of the water elemental, may not cross a pool of water larger than its own shape without suffering great harm.

## Keeping a Balance

Any creature who has gained a Mist ability, whether or not it is a Mistborn creature, should also acquire one of the Mist weaknesses. Such weaknesses should be appropriate for the corresponding ability and of a similar strength. For example, a creature with the ability *mist form* with a CR adjustment of +1/2 would most fittingly have the common weakness to the element of air. The *gust of wind* spell, therefore, provides an effective defense against that creature. These limitations provide balance for enhanced monsters or creatures created by the DM.

As each ability carries its own CR adjustment, the weaknesses may lower CR ratings somewhat. This allows powerful Mist creatures to possess a chink in their armor so that lower level player characters have a chance to defeat them. As is the case regarding extraordinary powers, these weaknesses apply to *any creature* that has suffered a brush with the Mists.

Salient weaknesses, however, usually allow a save versus the item, spell or element used against the Mist being. Consider the creatures' HD and typical saves, plus their enhancements, when calculating saves against their common weaknesses.

Oddly enough, creatures native to the Mists rarely see water in its natural state. As I described in my experiences above, rivulets of water running along the ground may fascinate or frighten some Mist creatures, providing you with a defensive advantage. Pure water, if clear and clean enough to leave a reflection, can frighten or fascinate them long enough for you to attack or take your leave along the nearest Mistway.

*Quintessence* was created to enhance the natural abilities of water and to work in a fashion similar to holy water, but with a lasting effect on both weapons and the foe. Although primarily useful against the undead who stalk the lands within the Mists (see **Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead** for further information), it can also be helpful against some Mist creatures, particularly





constructs and undead who were brought into being through divine or arcane magic. Golems, zombies and other corporeal undead caught in the Mists are often more damaged by weapons coated by alchemical water. Rumor tells of animated limbs, torn from the bodies of the undead, that still their attacks if stabbed with a blade anointed with *quintessence*.

Holy water, while always useful against the undead, is less so within the confines of the Mists, at least when attempting to douse a target with blessed liquid. Throwing a vial of holy water at a shambling undead in the Mists is an unsure business, since the Mists obscure sight and provide the creature with such concealment as to make the chances of hitting the target unlikely. One of the most innovative and certain ways to damage one of the Mist-roaming undead requires soaking a cloak or blanket in holy water and throwing it over the creature's head to entangle it in the folds. Experienced Mist explorers quickly learn to carry extra cloaks or blankets, for the item is rarely useable afterwards.

## Metals

Few adventurers can deny the efficacy of a keen-edge steel sword, yet in the Mists a gold coin or a sliver of iron, if aimed correctly, can sometimes do far more good than a blade. As the Mists are mutable, constantly shifting and never entirely of the earth, creatures born of the Mists are often strongly affected by the purest form of rock — metal.

**Gold:** In the language of alchemy, one object may symbolize another. So, too, in the sunless space of the Mists, gold sometimes serves as a symbolic substitute for the sun. If a gold object is infused with the brilliant light of day, it facilitates clerical turning when used by a cleric in good standing. Some Mist creatures are fascinated by gold's inner gleam and may chase a thrown coin or stop to pick up gold pieces scattered along a byway.

**Silver:** Most seekers after adventure know that those unlucky, accursed creatures known as lycanthropes have a strong aversion to silver. Few things injure them so severely that they cannot easily heal, but a silver needle will pierce their flesh more surely than the longest and sharpest blade. While in the Mists, you may find tiny pale figures with large eyes, burned by the touch of silver. These beings are particularly vulnerable to shiny,

reflective silver shields or swords. Carrying a silver mirror is of great help against intelligent undead as well as against some dangerous creatures with the ability to mask their shape. While in the Mists, it is possible to catch a creature's reflection when it is using its masking ability and see the true form hidden deep within the image. Be certain to allow the Mists to condense on the surface of your mirror first.

*Editor's note: I believe the tiny large-eyed creatures Dr. Penarrow speaks of in the preceding passage are known as mistlings.—GWF.*

**Iron:** Those who have studied our guide to the shadow fey have learned that iron is a powerful weapon against the Arak, burning them at a touch. Evil fey consider this substance anathema and cannot stand to be in its presence. Fey who find themselves in the Mist are just as affected, but iron has other properties as well in the Mists. Few but the most observant take note of the small dark metal bar carried by experienced navigators through the Mists. Although the tradition started in Mordent, it has spread through the Mists along the byways and to other lands. These iron bars make navigation through the Mists easier. Clutched tightly while searching for a byway, a small piece of iron provides an anchor to the lands beyond the Mists. If a Mist creature uses a power that would normally make tracking it more difficult, iron acts as a touchstone to clear the mind and make hunting the Mist creature easier.

## Salient Vulnerabilities

The addition of various arcane weaknesses to Mist monsters — changing as the Mists warp and alter the beings within — can provide unmatched challenges. The list below is by no means comprehensive and DM's may create other uses and effects for the various elements listed below. Remember to reward those players who have taken the time to do their research, but remind them that nothing is certain within the Mists.

**Air:** Those spells which mimic natural weather such as *gust of wind* and *lightning bolt* can change the level of concealment within the Mists in the spell's area of effect, reducing Mist creatures with full concealment to 50% concealment, and lessening by one half those with half concealment. *Nothing* can completely clear the Mists unless player characters find themselves in the small pockets called oubliettes (see Chapter XX). Treat any creature using *mist form* as though under the effects of *gaseous form*, including its vulnerability to *gust of*





wind. Air may also lessen the effects of *animate fog* or other defensive powers that attempt to control the Mists.

CR Adjustment: -1/2

**Earth:** Although soil is most efficacious against creatures not originally from the Mists, it is still useful in lessening the advantage of invisibility for any Mist creature, including Mist elementals. Scattering fine dust, much like a *glitterdust* spell, can outline beings concealed by the Mists. Other creatures consider the soil of their homeland as a bane and may be driven away by something from a home they may no longer know. Such creatures must make a DC 15 Will save or be forced back into the Mists as though turned.

CR Adjustment: -1/4

**Gold:** Undead in the Mists are sometimes sensitive to sun-infused gold. Clerics who place golden holy symbols in the sun from sunrise to sunset have an increased chance of turning these beings from the sunless Mists. Such creatures are considered 2 HD lower than their actual levels when turned by such holy symbols.

CR Adjustment: -1/2

**Iron:** The presence of iron is painful to the shadow fey. For Mist creatures, iron is generally debilitating in a different fashion — it can lessen or neutralize their powers. Such mind-affecting abilities as *wandering mind*, *haunting call* and *rapid gaslighting* must work against the victim's iron touchstone, which give a +2 to Will saves. Damage reduction can be negated for some Mist creatures, particularly those who manipulate the Mists to confuse or conceal themselves, if they are hit by iron weapons or caught in nets or snares made with iron.

CR Adjustment: -1/2

**Magic and Turning:** Spells, both divine and arcane, work as normal against the Mistborn and Fugued. Such spells that manifest a creature's elemental bane are particularly effective.

Oddly enough, some Mistborn creatures can be turned — even if not undead — by presenting a reflection of their image. Treat as normal turning, substituting the HD of the Mistborn for the HD of the undead. This can only be performed, however, by a cleric with turning abilities. Regular turning of undead works as usual, although concealment rules may effect the cleric's vision.

CR Adjustment: -1/2

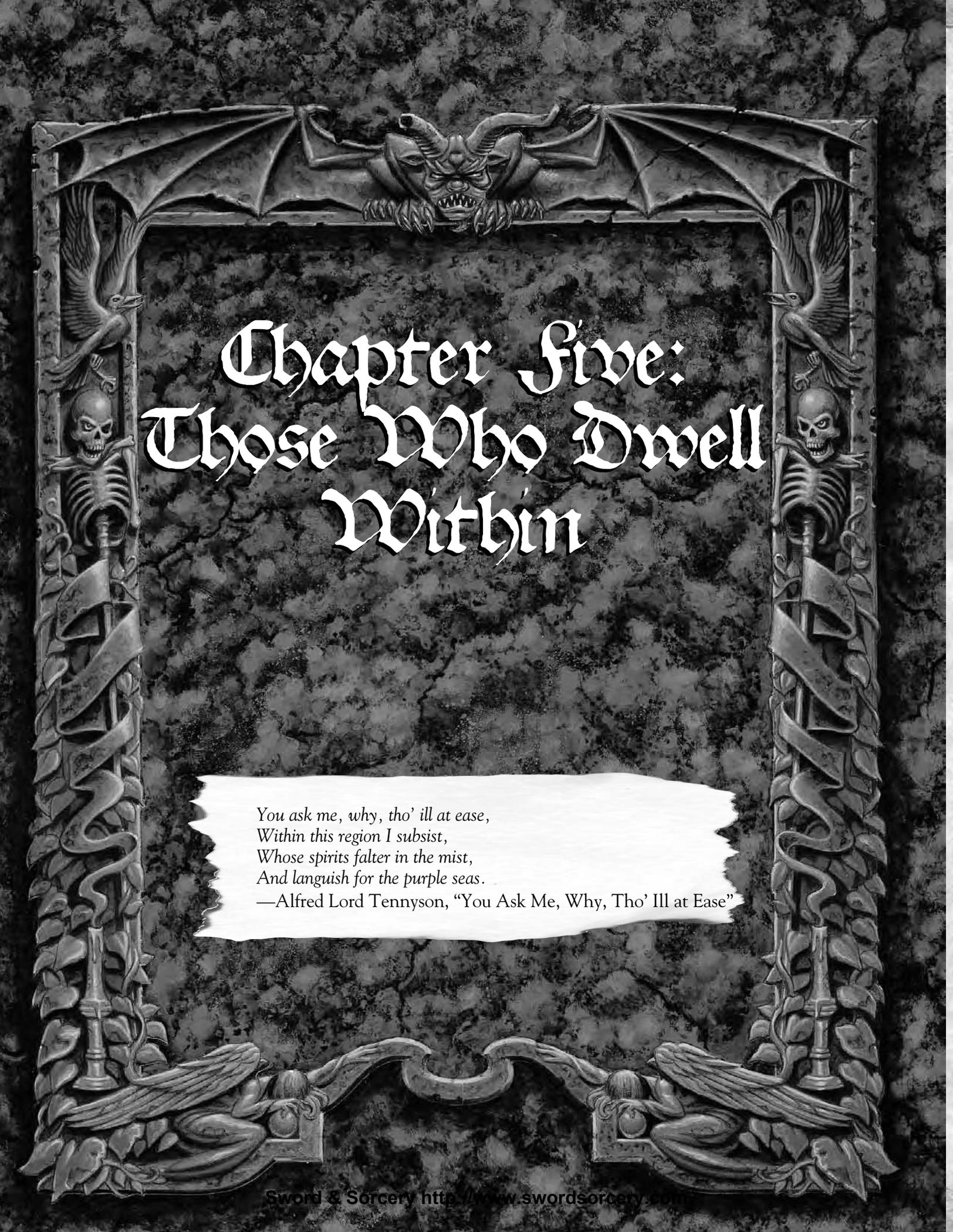
**Silver:** For Fugued creatures normally affected by the touch of silver, the presence of light reflected from a silver surface is painful, repulsing such creatures. The light must be strongly presented to have an effect. The targeted creature must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 +1 per Cha modifier of the person presenting it) to stay within 15 feet of the item reflecting the light. Creatures who have the Mist ability *masque of the form* have their true form reflected in any shiny metal that has been coated by condensation from the Mists. Player characters should make a Spot check (DC 10 +1 per HD of the creature to be unmasked) to catch sight of the creature's true image.

CR Adjustment: -1/4

**Water:** Pure plain water — something that all adventurers should carry — is a useful weapon against some Mist creatures, particularly those that rarely or never leave the Mists. These beings are fascinated by their reflections in small pools, driven back by flowing water or even damaged by the fluid itself. Both alchemical water and holy water have definite damaging effects. Holy water gives more damage to evil creatures, and alchemical water (*quintessence*) is useful against creatures harmed by edged or piercing weapons. Allow fascinated creatures a Will save (DC 10 + 1 per HD of the creature). If the creature fails its save, it is enraptured by its reflection for 1d4 rounds or until attacked or until something disrupts the reflection. If the weakness involves alchemical or holy water, use standard extra damage as listed in **Van Richten's Arsenal** or the *Player's Handbook*.

CR Adjustment: -1/-2





# Chapter Five: Those Who Dwell Within

*You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,  
Within this region I subsist,  
Whose spirits falter in the mist,  
And languish for the purple seas.*

—Alfred Lord Tennyson, "You Ask Me, Why, Tho' Ill at Ease"



Dear Readers,

As Laurie gave descriptions of the basic weaknesses of the varied creatures of the Mists, I have taken it upon myself to provide something of a menagerie, listing of those beings you might confront, along with some experiences other adventurers have had dealing with them. This list of the inhabitants of the Mist is by no means comprehensive. It is my belief that the Mists create beings as needed or perhaps for amusement.

Editor's Note: Or summon them from outside—LWF

As something of an arbitrary division we have two separate groups, the Fugued and those born of the Mists — or the Mistborn. The Fugued are those unlucky souls who have in some fashion been touched by the Mists and changed. The Mistborn are those creatures who seem to have been created by the Mists, born whole cloth from the Mists, conjured through the Mists, or cursed to wander the Mists as undead, perhaps from dying within the fog. We begin with those beings who could be any one of us, the Fugued, who by some mischance have been influenced by their time in the Mists — and in some cases have never returned to their former lives. Following these sections is our Mist menagerie with all those Mistborn creatures that we have discovered or heard of.

## Taken By The Mists: The fugued

Whether by chance or choice some people find themselves changed by their connection to the Mists. Metamorphosis is slow, in some cases undetectable by the unfortunate person involved, and usually provides them with abilities that they would otherwise never have had. These abilities make it easier to travel through the Mists or live within them. Although it is not our purpose to judge such things, the Fugued remind me in some ways of people on a path to corruption. And I wonder how many of the tormented monsters we meet in the Mists began their lives as the Fugued, Lost or Mist-cursed. Take warning from the plight of those listed below, and look hard at the terrifying creatures listed in the section beyond — for someday the unwary might find themselves on the other side of the spyglass.

## The fugued

Very little information is available about the Fugued. The term was first used, I believe, by a mesmerist from Invidia named Eligio Ruchielli — a physician of the mind who worked directly with patients whose memories had been damaged by their time in the Mists. These people, whether traumatized by the horrors met within or damaged by the Mists themselves, were often changed in other ways by their experience. Although his theories may be biased — he is from Invidia where the Mist-wandering Vistani are to be killed on sight — much of what he says bears the ring of truth. Most of the information below is taken from his experiences or the experiences of those he treated. A synopsis of his work — and it is quite extensive — cannot entirely do it justice, but I shall attempt to provide you with the most important points.

No one undeserving is ever caught by the Mists. The Mists judge those who invade our foggy borders. It may not be the first time an explorer enters the Mists. No one can understand why one person is caught by the Mists while a companion standing next to her returns safely from the journey. Much of our reading suggests that the Fugued are driven by obsession, yet stories speak of naughty children caught by the Mists while wandering when told to stay inside. Cowards who run from monstrous beings, leaving friends or family to die in terrible ways, find themselves lost in the Mists in places far worse than those they left. A vicious murderer may seek escape and find it after what seems like years, only to be ejected from the Mists in the midst of his pursuers only minutes after the Mists first took him. The Fugued may have been confused and Mist-led, drawn into the Mists and captured by some creature there, or they may have been cursed to be so connected to the Mists that they entirely free themselves from its grasp. Such beings, no matter how bad their experiences, are drawn to the Mists as though addicted to the clammy vapors. Some speak of voices calling to them or giving them orders. Others see ghosts within the Mists — phantoms of those they have lost. No matter the attraction, they live one step closer to madness. One wonders how changed the Vistani might be by their constant travels within the Mists.

## The Lost

*One of the most eerie sights I have ever witnessed occurred at the edges of a Mistway near Barovia. A*





young woman, her hair a shining curtain of black, stood looking back in mid-flight, one foot raised, a hand to her mouth as she screamed in terror. She was still, caught in a moment from which I could not break her. She did not seem to see me and I could not move her. In fact there was some sort of shield — made, I believe, of time itself — which kept me from reaching her. I finally left the lass, marking the location in my mind in the hopes of returning one day. More than a year passed before I was able to find my way back. She was still there. I believe her foot had moved an inch, but now her arm was bleeding from great scratches. No pursuer was in evidence. There was nothing I could do. Alas, I fear returning again.

—Dr. Alexander Penarrow, Mist explorer and scholar

Few beings have a more unfortunate fate than the Lost. These Fugued seem caught by the various confusions within the Mists, truly unable to return. Pale, sad, existing only through what they find along byways, steal from travelers or scavenge from oubliettes, the Lost literally *cannot* find their way out. Even those which are taken bodily from the Mists seem confused and blind to the world outside. These soon return to the Mists. Many believe the Mists take these Lost as sacrifices and do not allow them to leave until they die and their life force becomes a part of the Mists themselves.

Other Lost individuals are caught in a distortion of time. These Fugued may travel for months down a short path or find themselves grown old after a few moments journey. Although it is possible for those Lost in time to leave the Mists, they always return as if searching for their missing hours, days or years. In fact, some of them crumble into dust if they leave their fog-bound world, caught again in a world grown too fast for them. I wonder at times if there might not be some of the Lost moving so quickly that the human eye can not discern their passage. Perhaps the many whispering sounds within the Mists are nothing more or less than such lost souls attempting to make touch with us, captured by a swirling eddy of years.

## The Mist-Cursed

I would not even speak of these accursed beings except as warning to those who might come in contact with them. We believe most of the Mist-cursed are Vistani or influenced by them. All have been caught in some dreadful and disabling curse invoked through the Mists or while they were inside the Mists. None of those so afflicted may

leave the Mists for long. No one knows of a way to break such a curse, at least to my knowledge. All the Mist-cursed that I have witnessed have been horribly maimed in some fashion; some were missing mouths, others had large patches of skin peeling from their bodies. One man seemed perfectly normal until he fled; as he ran, I noticed that the top of his head was a rotting nest of maggots. As untrustworthy as the Vistani are said to be, these Mist-cursed Vistani are doubly so and should be killed on sight, as much out of pity as in caution.

*Editor's Note: As noted in other chapters, we do not feel the same hatred for the Vistani as Mr. Ruchielli. If such a curse cannot be lifted, however, and the Mist-cursed are suffering or insane, then a quick, clean death might be the only final cure for their misery — if the Mists would allow it.—LWF*

## Mist feats

The Mists play an integral part in the world of **Ravenloft**. They influence travel, serve as prisons or escape routes and surround the player characters with mystery and secrets. Sometimes, the Mists bring heroes from other worlds to a land far darker than any they have traveled before. The Mists influence the inhabitants of the Dread Realm in other ways, seeping deep into the minds and hearts of those who wander within, tainting and empowering them with its own unknowable needs. Any player character who has been touched by the Mists in some way (i.e., fought a battle against a Mist creature, had a significant encounter while wandering through the Mists, or was born in the Mists to a mother driven mad...) may choose any one of the following Mist feats. If a character takes three or more Mist-related feats, that character has become Fugued and must take one obsession. DMs should feel free to insist that Fugued player characters role play their obsession as a condition for keeping their Mist feats. DMs may also assign Mist feats to NPCs, including intelligent undead.

## Misted Ability

Your character has had all or part of her memory wiped away by the Mists. As time passes, however, more and more of your “missing” memory comes back to you, possibility aiding you in certain situations.

**Prerequisite:** This feat must be taken at 1st level.





**Benefit:** This feat has no true benefit other than as a role-playing aid. At any point during a game, however, you may choose to trade out this feat for another one which you qualify for and which is appropriate to your character's background and skills. This may be done spontaneously as a free action as your character suddenly realizes that she has a special feat-related capability.

## Mist Courting

Due to your heritage or to special training from the Vistani, you are adept at using mists and fog as hiding places. Once you learn how to court the Mists, you find that the strange vapors of the land are attracted to you.

**Prerequisite:** This feat can only be taken by a half-Vistani. It may be taught, on rare instances, to a non-Vistani character by a true Vistani.

**Benefit:** As long as you are within 30 feet of mist and fog, you have a +4 circumstance bonus to Hide and a +2 bonus to Move Silently. Once you learn this feat, the Mists feel especially attracted to you. You gain a +2% bonus to any and all powers checks that you make. Furthermore, fog within 60 feet of you is "attracted" to you, always rolling towards you like a magnet. Fog attracted in this manner approaches at the rate of 5 feet per round. If this is noticed by anyone, your Outcast Rating increases by +2.

## Mist Dowsing

The Mists do not confuse you when you search. Your character has a special ability to sense certain things within the Mist and find your way to them. Once you have discovered your method of dowsing, you are more capable than most others of hunting through the Mists to find a certain creature, being or object.

**Prerequisite:** Mist Peering, 6+ ranks in Search

**Benefit:** While within the Mists, your character may search for creatures or objects as though under the effect of *locate creature* or *locate object*. Some sort of focus must be used for the effect, either the forked twig usually used for *locate object* spell or another form of divinatory tool. Your character must concentrate for the length of the search. The spell duration is 10 minutes per level of the character — whether the character is capable of casting spells or not. This does not work against Mists actively controlled by darklords.

## Mist Peering

Your character has received the gift of mist-sight, a rare talent in the realm of Ravenloft. She is especially adept at navigating through fog or mist and facing opponents within it.

**Benefit:** Your character can see three times the normal distance in fog or mist. Creatures five feet away from you in fog or mist are considered to have no concealment. Creatures further away than five feet have concealment, and creatures fifteen feet away have total concealment.

All miss chances for concealment due to fog or mist are halved for your character. For instance, you now only have a 25% chance to miss a creature in total concealment due to fog. Keep in mind that a creature with total concealment still cannot be seen by you, and must be pinpointed first.

**Normal:** Normally, all vision, including *darkvision* is limited to 5 feet in heavy fog or mist. A creature five feet away in heavy fog or mist has concealment (20% miss chance) while creatures farther away have total concealment (50% miss chance).

## Mist Sense

Due to a close brush with the Mists, you have absorbed some of their essence. You can sense when you have been affected by the Mists. Furthermore, you can sense Mist creatures nearby. At the same time, the Mists are constantly calling you "home."

**Prerequisite:** At least 2 ranks in Listen.

**Benefit:** You immediately sense when you have been transported by the Mists. You gain no control over where you go; you simply realize instantaneously when and if you have been transported.

You can also sense the presence of Mist creatures within 60 feet. You cannot, however, pinpoint the Mist creatures. Their exact location is not revealed. You can, however, discern the number of such creatures within your area.

Your character constantly hears whispering coming from the mists — all mists and fog — whether natural or supernatural. Because of this, you suffer a -1 penalty to Fear, Horror and Madness checks when dealing with Mist creatures. Half-Vistani are particularly likely to have this feat.

**Special:** Your character must travel in the Mists regularly. Much like the wanderlust of the





Vistani you become weak if you do not make a journey of at least a day's length once a month. Take off one point of Constitution for each day that passes after a month's time has ended without a visit to the Mists. Your Constitution returns at a rate of one per day after you have entered the Mists again from one sunrise to the next.

## Mist Shaping

You have gained a kinship with the Mists. Because of your intimate relationship with them, you have the ability to twist and mould natural mist or fog into shapes of your desire.

**Prerequisite:** The ability to cast 3rd level spells. You must have previously failed a powers check.

**Benefit:** By succeeding in a DC 15 Concentration check (DC 15), you may shape a 30 X 30 bank of fog or mist into the form you desire as a full round action. You might craft it into a wall, a sphere or even the vague form of a creature. You can also move a bank of fog 30 feet per round in any direction. Moving, but not shaping, fog counts as a move action. Fog or mist that you manipulate may still be blown away by strong winds or dissolved by sunlight.

Because fog is heavy, it flows along the ground and cannot travel vertically. It may flow over barriers that are shorter than the fog bank is tall, but it must flow around any barrier that is taller than it is.

Combat Casting does not help in the use of this feat.

If two casters both have this feat and are attempting to control the same bank of mist, they must make opposed Concentration checks. The winner maintains control of the fog cloud.

Turning the mist you control into vaguely scary shapes may or may not induce a Horror check for those viewing it. The DM has the final say as to which witnesses must make a Horror check. If anyone witnesses you using this feat for the first time, it raises your Outcast Rating by +3.

You can control mist or fog that has been magically created by you or someone else. For example, this feat effects *stinking cloud*, *cloudkill*, *obscuring mist* and *mind fog*.

You cannot control mist that is being directed or created by the dark powers, a darklord, or someone who has failed more powers checks than you have. For instance, if you have only failed one

powers check, you cannot affect the *cloudkill* spell of a necromancer who has failed three.

Once you have taken this feat, you gain a +2% bonus on any and all powers checks.

## Misted Magic

You have an enhanced ability to shape mist and fog.

**Prerequisite:** The ability to cast *obscuring mist*, *fog cloud* or any other cloud-creating spell.

**Benefit:** Whenever your character casts a fog-like or cloud-creating spell, its range, area of effect and duration is doubled. It applies only when your character is casting spells such as *obscuring mist*, *fog cloud*, *stinking cloud*, *cloudkill*, *solid fog*, *acid fog*, *mind fog* or similar spells in which the creation of a cloud or vapors is the primary element in the spell effect.

If you prepare spells, you may choose to enhance an appropriate spell with this feat. Enhancing a spell with this feat does not increase the level of the spell when you prepare it.

**Special:** Whenever you do cast a spell enhanced with this feat, there is a 1% chance per level of the spell that the Mists will come and transport you to a location of their choosing.

## Misted Memory

Your character has had part of her skill-related memory wiped away by the Mists. As time passes, however, more and more of this missing information comes back to you, possibly aiding you in specific skill-related situations.

**Prerequisite:** This feat must be taken at 1st level.

**Benefit:** Your character gets 1 additional skill point at first level and an extra skill point each level thereafter. These extra skill points are not assigned to any skill but are kept in reserve, and assigned spontaneously throughout the campaign.

For example, your character may uncover an ancient text in some unknown language. At this point, you might assign a skill point to add that language to your list of known languages as you suddenly "remember" how to read the text. At another point, you might encounter a locked door and decide to assign points to Open Locks as you suddenly recall that you've had experience with locks. Each time you spontaneously assign skill points, you must justify your new skill with a





memory of some kind. In the examples above, you might suddenly recall that you were taught how to read the text by a long lost mentor, or that you learned how to pick a lock while spending time in Karg prison. The player is encouraged to work with the DM when making up newly discovered memories.

Cross-class costs for skills apply to these extra skill points. Only the extra skill points attained from this feat may be kept in reserve. Once skill points are assigned to a specific skill they are permanent and may not be reassigned.

Recalling and assigning skill points is a free action.

### Piercing Gaze

You have a greater ability to see through the Mists and fog, as well as an increased chance to capture the gaze of someone you wish to enchant.

**Prerequisite:** Wis 12+, Cha 12+. This feat must be taken at 1st level.

**Benefit:** Your gaze is both strange and intense. Often your eyes seem to glow in the dark, reflecting any ambient light. When caught in the Mists, you have a +3 bonus to Spot checks when looking for a Mistway. Your oddly piercing gaze also increases the save DC by +2 for spells that require victims to look at you.

**Special:** Because of the weirdness of your gaze, you have a +1 Outcast bonus with strangers.

### Spatial fugue

The Mists have gifted you with the ability to cross long distances with great speed. While traveling, time passes normally for you, but strangely, the trip is simply not as far as you remember.

**Prerequisite:** The character must possess the Run feat.

**Benefit:** While traveling overland on foot, your movement rate is doubled. This only applies when traveling distances of 1 mile or greater.

**Special:** By taking this feat, your character condemns himself to becoming a wanderer. If he stays within 1000 feet of any single point for longer than a week, the Mists transport him to a place of their choosing.

### Temporal fugue

Your character's contact with the Mists has affected your temporal relationship with the world. Time moves much differently for you than it does for other people. For you, the world never seems to change, while others see you rapidly aging right before their eyes.

**Prerequisite:** You must have been in contact with the Mists at some point in your past. Young characters (younger than the adult age category) cannot take this feat.

**Benefit:** You gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls, a +1 dodge bonus to your AC and a +2 bonus to your initiative. Your dodge bonus stacks with other dodge bonuses including the Dodge feat. However, if you are caught flat-footed or denied your Dexterity bonus you lose this bonus. Your Initiative bonus also stacks with other feats that enhance your Initiative rolls. These bonuses do not include the penalties incurred with aging; those must be factored in separately.

**Special:** While you gain great benefits from this gift, the Mists also exact a high price. By taking this feat, your character instantly shifts one age category older. Thus, if you are an adult, you become middle-aged; if you are middle-aged, you become old. You now age at an accelerated rate, aging ten times the normal rate. In a single year, you will age a decade. For elves and dwarves, the effect is worse. Elves and dwarves age at 100 times the normal rate, aging a century within the span of a single year. If some magic or cure is found for the rapid aging, you lose the benefit of this feat.

Finally, if the *haste* spell is ever cast upon you, you must make a saving throw against the DC of the spellcaster or instantly rot into dust.

## Monsters and Mad Things: Those Created By The Mists

Attempting to categorize creatures born of the Mists is nearly impossible. As amorphous as the Mists themselves, the Mistborn change, mutate, grow and disappear like clouds in the sky. Some few categories, however, reappear time and again in the experiences of those who travel through the Mists. Having said as much, I must modify my statement: some of these beings come *from* the





Mists into our lands and are usually seen outside of their birthplace. Within the list of creatures are those who live for a purpose, perhaps created by the Mists for one certain task. Others may be echoes of those who have been lost or who have died within the Mists and who now skulk in the billowing fog to bring misery to anyone who rouses their envy or ill-feeling — an easy task for most travelers. All Mistborn seem to have a purpose, an obsession or a need that leads them to do the mysterious work of the Mists.

## The Living

The definition “living” may be erroneous when describing any creature born from a womb of swirling fog, but the beings listed below breathe and can be harmed as normal creatures. Although odd and driven by some inner instinct, they are also sentient or at the very least guided to a task by the Mists themselves, such as undead and elemental creatures rarely are.

## Fen Hounds

*My first experience with the fen hounds involved a young man whose behavior had grown more and more erratic over the course of months. No one was certain as to the nature of his problem, but we suspected him first of stealing from his neighbors. Later, after many other petty crimes, we believed him guilty of the savage beating and rape of the loveliest girl in the village. When she awoke from healing and made our suspicions a certainty, we went to his cottage seeking to bring him to justice. Such was not to be, for we noticed his home adrift in a bank of fog. Leaping from the Mists was a pack of large brown dogs, their fur glowing in the pre-dawn shadows. First one bayed, and then another. Our quarry attempted to flee, bolting for the Mists. The hounds followed. The sound of growls and crunching bone convinced us not to enter. The golden ring he had stolen from his victim gleamed in the dewy grass as the sun rose and the Mists faded away.*

*We never found a trace of his body.*

—Taken from the journal of Lamplighter Edwin Makepeace

Little else needs to be said about these canines. Although seeming to live and breathe, they appear and disappear from the Mists, dispersing as a cloud of vapor if killed. They rarely form inside the Mists, but when they do, their hunt is relentless. Usually they appear in places of fen and swamp when evildoers attempt to escape justice. Why the fen hounds do as they do is a mystery. Could the Mists

work to punish those who stray from the side of good?

## Furies

While fen hounds strive to reform those caught in corruption's web, the Furies work to encourage their doom. More than one foolish person has listened to the advice of a wizened ancient crone and discovered to his dismay that doing so led him, tainted and falling, down the path to corruption. Those that do not heed the furies are ripped apart by a mad mixture of vulture and beautiful woman carrying a terrible scourge meant to destroy mind and body. Only three of these creatures have ever been recorded — Alecto, Tisiphone and Megarea, perhaps sisters, definitely working together. A legend from Nova Vaasa tells of three vain daughters who wandered into the Mists looking for some land where their beauty and grace would be appreciated. Each was hurt or betrayed and called upon the Mists for justice. In some twisted fashion they received it. Their humanity was warped and twisted so that now they crave such corruption and twisting for any with the slightest touch of shadow on their souls.

## Mistlings

Mistlings, although humanoid, possess few other qualities that might convince me that they are anything other than a pale imitation of sentient creatures. These pale, bizarre, whispering little things remind me of albino frogs with long sticky fingers that exude poison. As terrible as that sounds, the real problem they pose lies in their large numbers. They emerge from the Mists as though each droplet of water there has grown arms and eyes. Their stench takes the strength from your arms, while their poisonous touch brings you to your knees. If they catch you they will eat you. There is little anyone can do against them. Recently I have heard that since they have a swarm mentality, if you can convince one to flee, the rest will follow.

## The Vanished

Such weird, strange, sad beings! If the fey could be cursed I would suppose that all of one sort had been so. These creatures live only within the Mists. They have no home except for occasional oubliettes and do not stay in such places for long. Although the Vanished have graceful humanoid form, their necks serve as a gross wrist to support a grotesque human hand instead of a head. The first time I saw them, I wondered how they could see.





Upon a closer look, I was horrified to notice a face pushed up against the inside wall of the being's chest, lips moving in words of entreaty. Eyes opened through the skin, just at the creature's stomach, but its words — whatever they might have been — were distorted and muffled by the thin membrane keeping the face from pushing its way forth. I was quite grateful I could not understand it and soon put it out of its misery when it attacked me with its awkward head-hand. I believe it wanted to die, for it did not struggle long.

## Elementals

Those beings that seem to have never had another living form, yet become in some way substantial as part of the Mists have been placed together in a category I call elemental — meaning fully made from the Mists. For these creatures, I cannot imagine any sort of beginning that might have placed them outside the Mists. They are, in general, insubstantial as the Mists. They work for the Mists, as if obsessed with performing their mission. As hard to analyze as a wisp of the Mists, I have categorized them after a fashion that makes sense to me. Do not consider the entries below, however, as incontrovertible truths. In some cases, my observations may not be accurate in the slightest. The Mists keep their mysteries as they will, and so do those born from those sentient vapors.

## Changeling fog

Of all the odd things within the Mists, changeling fog is one of the strangest. It rolls in, twisting with amorphous shapes. From within it, familiar voices ring in your mind, leaving you with questions: is this the voice of someone I should know? Is it someone I have lost? Sadly, there is little way to tell the difference between these phantom temptations of the changeling fog and someone familiar to you who has been led astray and desperately seeks your aid. Choose well, and you may bring home someone you thought vanished in the Mists. Make a mistake, however, and you shall find yourself caught in acidic vapors which burn and blind, causing your flesh to rot away from your bones. An old legend tells of one of these elemental beings whose victim did not succumb. The changeling fog began following, not in pursuit, but as a protector. It subsequently engulfed a pack of Mistlings, melting them into a mass of rotting flesh before they could attack. It continued to follow its former prey until the person left the Mists at the end of the byway.

*Editor's Note: My suspicion is that somehow these creatures were once people lost in the fog, now confused and dispersed into the Mist's vapors.—GWF*

## Goblin fog

Legends speak of the Mists engulfing a pleasant grove and changing it into a nightmare forest filled with caliban and other horrific monsters. Such is the work of goblin fog. Perhaps the Mists feel the need to bring more terrors to a realm; perhaps the goblin fog works at random. Regardless, if you feel too attached to a certain area wreathed in dewy mist, consider it carefully, then run for any place a bit less alluring.

## Grim Reaper

For one to see a grim reaper is to face death and know that it comes for you. Drawn to the dying, they are invisible except to their intended prey or to those who can use arcane sight to view the unseen. If the grim reaper is slain, its energies revive the creature it came to collect, bringing that individual back from the brink of death. Some believe the reapers work for the Mists, bringing the near dying to them as sacrifices.

## Hearth fiend

The hearth fiend is considered by some to be a creature of the Mists. Fire spells, especially those cast in the Mists, can create these sentient flames which whisper and crackle out tempting invitations to draw beings to them, then tell them to perform evil acts. In Nova Vaasa, a man boasted of his fireplace; its roaring fire would never extinguish and it did not need any fuel. Many came to see this marvel and wondered at the miracle, figuring he had some trick or that it might be a magical fire. Only when he locked them all within his great room and burned them all, including himself, did someone realize what truly rested in his hearth. When the rest of the conflagration was drenched, a small twisting ember remained. Only through a cleric's touch did that small fire die...the last death among twenty that day.

## Mist Claimer

Very few people ever meet a Mist claimer. Those that encounter one rarely speak of it, since it gains its power from their darkest thoughts. Speculation exists that a Mist claimer is a Mist-spawned variant of the evil tenebris — a being that takes over the bodies of those with dark thoughts





and uses their dreaming forms to carry out their most arcane wishes. The Mist claimer reads all that is ill and twisted within those that enter the Mists and builds a double similar to a doppelganger. This Mist-engendered copy seeks first to humiliate and destroy its shadow's reputation through evil deeds, then to kill the original person. No one knows its motives, but perhaps the Mists bring out our hidden evils even as it hides its own.

*Editor's Note: Dr. Penarrow wished to add this disclaimer after seeing Ruchielli's entry on the Mist claimer: If this is true, then I am far darker in my subconscious than my conscious thoughts allow. I cannot believe this to be true. These creatures must do evil for their own sake — or perhaps for the Mists's purposes. Such acts as the Mist claimer did in my image are beyond any sadistic fantasy I would ever allow myself to have.*

—AP

## Mist Elementals

Very little information about these creatures exists. We are still not entirely certain if the stories about them are true, but we have heard tales of good people caught in banks of the Mists who suddenly show a darker side. One village in Barovia allegedly became so twisted by this terror that later travelers to the town found all the people within murdered by their own hands. Mothers had killed sons, neighbor slew neighbor, until no one was left.

## Mist Weird

The Mist weird is a being interested in justice. Those who seek the aid of this whirling storm within the Mists find help, guidance and pity. Yet do take care of voices speaking of justice within a swirling mass of the Mists. Mist weirds are not the only vaporous beings hidden with the Mists. Most of the others, however, seek your corruption or death.

## The Undead

Undead in the Mists are extremely dangerous — far more so than any normal undead — for they do not fear the sun within the Mists' coils and so may attack at any time. Incorporeal undead, such as ghosts and specters, have the advantage of concealment as they may shift and hide within the vapors, coming forth from above or quickly from the side to attack their most deadly threat, usually any cleric who might turn them or burn them with those spells that mimic the sun's rays. There are

many sorts of undead who are specially attuned to the Mists, yet others quickly learn the value of never facing the sun's wrath. This adaptation leads to such horrors as moaning masses of zombies caught by a Zombie Fog and never resting until destroyed, or a vampire who has no need to sleep in the day but uses his new found Mist powers in darkness and light.

## The Kalij

Another ancient hag, similar to a fury in disguise, this creature could confuse any scholar. She looks like an old woman wrapped in a dark shawl. She sucks the life and breath from children, much like some Mist elementals suffocate their foes, yet she is actually one of the undead. Her craving for the death of infants may have been a punishment for a terrible crime committed during her life, a sin that she must now repeat. One can only wonder if she fled into the Mists to escape her death and so found it there...forever.

*The Vistani know much lore about the kalij and sell tokens meant to ward babies in their cradles. As I well know, however, such tokens do not always work. My own baby son lost his life in the shadowy darkness of late evening soon after the Mists rose. I saw the old woman leave our house to vanish into the Mists as my wife's sobs rose behind me in the night. Remember to watch your babes when the Mists thicken in the air or be prepared to lose them.*

—Gregor Zelinski, a Barovian hunter of Mist creatures

## Mist ferrymen

Oddly enough some of the creatures born of the Mists can be helpful in dire circumstances. The Mist ferrymen and pale riders listed (see below) each have their duties for the Mists, duties that involve "helping" travelers through the Mists. But their assistance does not come without a price. The Mist ferryman appears as a fearsome, cowed figure with skeletal hands and a grin full of sharp teeth. Only those desperate to go quickly to another land will call this creature and undertake a bloody battle with it, taking a chance of dying and rising as another Mist ferryman.

*It moves quickly, sharpened fingers flashing out to slice again and again, just shallow cuts dripping blood to make you weak. You cannot kill it, for your need for its assistance is greater than your need to live. You watch your comrades dying around you as it sends out a terrifying, sobbing scream and grins with sanguine teeth. Then you lunge forward, dragging it to the*





ground and raise your mace, ready to smash in its head if it doesn't do your bidding. For a moment it looks at you, black holes glowing with an eerie green light. You seem to see resignation on its skeletal face. For a moment all goes black, and then you are in another place, still surrounded by fog. Those companions lucky enough to survive are with you. The Mist ferryman nods, its gaze locked upon your own as though to remember your face. Then dissipates with its shroud of Mists. You heal. Then you continue the chase.

—From the journal of Brother Dubois on a hunt for a werewolf killer near the time of the full moon.

## Mist Horror

Many speak of a wish never to find death while in the Mists. Such beings as the Mist Horror are a very good reason to fear dying within its murky folds. During one expedition along a Mistway our party was attacked by a savage swarm of Mistlings. We fought them off as best we could, but one of our group — a young fellow new to fighting and more than a bit cocky — was carried off into the Mists and we could not track where they had taken him. We thought he must have been eaten, but a few days later we heard him calling out to us through the fog. We saw his familiar shape moving slowly through the clouds of roiling vapor. We waited happily for him to catch up to our group. Only when he came fully into view did we realize the true horror. His face was half-eaten away, and his body was in tatters; both clothing and flesh dripped in a ragged parody of fringe. He smiled, his tongue lolling through a hole in his cheek. As we stood in stunned amazement, he suddenly gave a throaty growl and rose into the air, flying toward us, teeth bared and clawed fingers reaching for us, swirling into translucent tentacles of Mist as he came. I am not ashamed to say most of us fled at first, but our cleric stood her ground and turned our damned friend, sending his soul to the Morninglord.

## Zombie fog

No one who has ever seen a zombie fog can forget the experience. Nearly invisible except for a

faint greenish tinge melding with the Mists, when this horror drifts over a graveyard or into the midst of a battlefield, it becomes a mass of stinking lurching zombies tearing loose from the ground with only one focus, taking the life energy away from anything living and making that person one of its own. Very few things work against them; nevertheless, knowledgeable fighters, if positioned correctly, will work to shove the animated bodies out of the greenish fog, at which point the zombies will collapse back into lifeless corpses. Daylight does not harm the fog, but temporarily drains it of its harmful power. The fog floats, powerless and unguided, until dark. Some say flame burns away zombie fog, but in my experience, little damages it but magic or magical fires. Some writings point to a necromancer's experiment to collect undead for his armies as the origin of this phenomenon. If that is so, the fog has broken free of its creator, for the zombie fog does not move in any purposeful direction but searches out the closest of the dead or near dead to add to its collection.

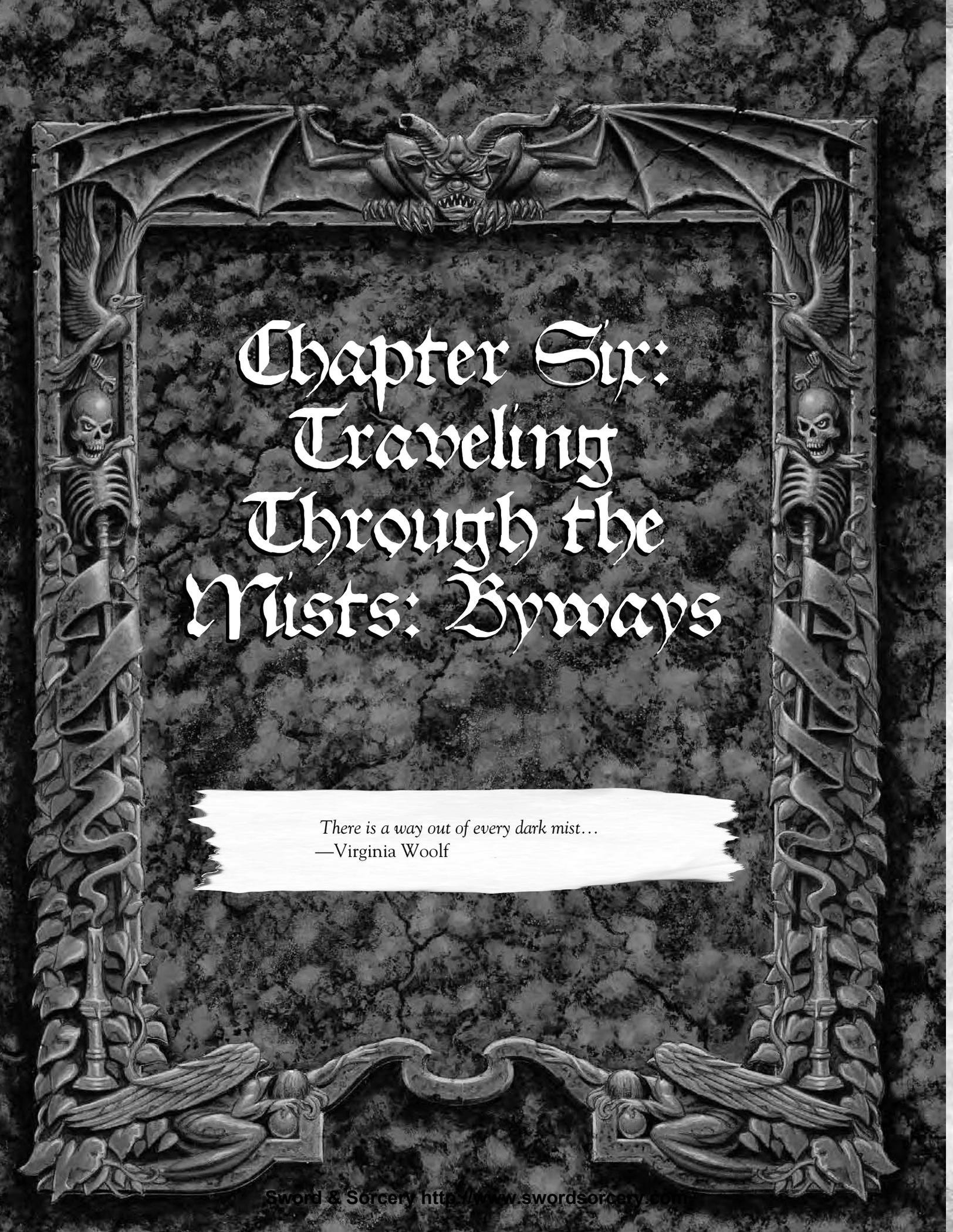
## Pale Rider

Clerics say that the temptations of evil draw us into corruption. Pale riders scent those seeking vengeance and offer them hope and damnation. Anyone who enters the Mist with revenge on his mind may encounter a pale rider. As skeletal as any Mist ferryman, these white cloaked dead ride emaciated steeds with wild eyes and flaring nostrils that drip puss and blood. Such a sight should be an immediate warning not to deal with them except with the edge of a blade, but then they speak, their cold voices echoing through the Mists, offering the power to hunt down the enemy you seek. Their assistance comes with a price: if you do not succeed in slaying your quarry between the rising of one sun and the next, you, too, join the ranks of pale riders. There are enough foolish and crazed vigilantes to ensure that the supply of pale riders need never end.

*Editor's Note: I begin to believe one must learn the wisdom to turn away from obsession or vengeance, for the price to reach one's goal is far higher than we should be willing to pay.*

—GWF





# Chapter Six: Traveling Through the Mists: Byways

*There is a way out of every dark mist...*  
—Virginia Woolf



uch speculation has occurred throughout our history and many lives have been lost while attempting to map or even understand the mysterious labyrinthine Mistways. Some, like the Vistani, have some ability to wend their way through them; they, however, never give away the secret of their success. Others, such as the priests of Ezra say they are given such understanding as a gift from their god and, as such, cannot assist others in being so blessed. Yet, Most Esteemed Reader, we all must find a way through the Mists at one time or another if we have the need — perhaps scientific curiosity is an appropriate phrase — to make our way from one far distant locale to another in our quests. Others also must travel for more “practical” purposes, perhaps to sail along to a new port where treasures await, or seeking a criminal who may have fled through the Mists to a predetermined place.

And so, we, Gennifer and Laurie Weathermay-Foxgrove, have taken it upon ourselves to attempt to identify the various sorts of Mistways that explorers of the Mists have discovered over time. We hope to provide an extensive, if not comprehensive, list. Throughout this chapter I, Gennifer will also provide some pertinent journal entries of various travelers through the Mists which should be helpful for those who wish to do their own explorations. However I must supply one caveat to any eager to find a new way — the dangers can far outweigh any benefit for those who go seeking idly. No matter the legend of wealth, of a place where monsters do not dwell, or perhaps a world where the Mists do not exist at all, lives are forfeit when you do not respect the Mists and its byways, and particularly those creatures who hunt along them.

## Gathering the Mists

From the Journal of Explorer Harrington Ferrill, Volume Twelve, (Spring, 742 BC)

The Mists are not always banks of fog. I discovered this to my peril while climbing to the peak of fabled Mount Frost in Rokushima Táíyoo along a trail my previously respected guide told me was safe and direct to the top. Perhaps I chose a time a bit late in the season? My guide did speak of snowstorms rising without warning along the mountain's windy crown — an apparent factor of the many ancient and twisted shrines dotting its sides — but I am an experienced adventurer and prepared my-

self for the possibility with heavy warm clothing and appropriate gear.

When the slowly drifting white became a blinding scream of wind and ice, I decided to plunge onward toward a small abandoned ruin I spotted before the weather hit. My journey seemed to take hours, and for a time I thought I might have wandered past the broken walls and become lost amid the snowdrifts. Then I began to grow very warm and nearly found myself in a faint. When my eyes cleared I realized my predicament. I was no longer traveling through icy mounds of snow. Instead, I was nearly up to my waist in whirling sand! I later discovered that I had somehow traveled a Mistway to the fabled ruined city of Anhalla in Sebu. I say it was a Mistway, because the feral children there were convinced to show me, through astonishing animal grunts and gestures, the belongings of what I recognized was a luckless native from Rokushima, who obviously did not make the strange journey alive. Although I was not able to follow the Mistway back to Mount Frost — leaving me with a long and difficult journey to continue my explorations — I later came to the conclusion that the way would only open at times that the Mists rose as sandstorms in Sebu at the same time snowstorms arose upon Mount Frost.

### Hidden Paths: Mistways Without Mist

Although Ravenloft is a world surrounded by the Mists, they do not always manifest as the translucent chilling billows of white we think of when we picture the misty borders of domains. Rarely would a native of a desert terrain see vast clouds of roiling fog, but shimmering heat mirages of water or strange cities might lead adventurers into danger, while blizzards or great gouts of smoke might engulf a mountain top or volcano. Any natural phenomenon that may fool the eye can be the entryway into the Mists, making more advanced explorers extremely cautious of unusual weather or clouds drifting low among the trees. Such Mistways might lead to legends of strange ruins which adventurers can only find if traveling through a sandstorm along a worn stone road or a way to an ever-distant shore by diving into a dangerous whirlpool along the edge of a reef.





## Guidance Through the Mists: Traveling on Mistways

*Dearest Diary, I must confess to feeling rather smug, for I believe I have discerned the secret of the Mists and have — three times now! — made my way successfully along a path never before traveled without the assistance of the Vistani. Please, Dear Diary, do not give up my secret. Travel along the Mistways does not require sight, but intuition, and an almost mystical sense of the path to follow. In fact, sight may be more of a hindrance than a help with roiling fog confusing the senses and clouding the mind to what is needed to find*

*one's way. For the last two trips along the Mistway near my home, I have entered the Mists and blindfolded myself as soon as the Mists engulfed me in a moist embrace.*

— From the Diary of Imara Solinista, Lady, Scholar and Bon Vivant, dated Year 750, discovered on a Mistway, marred with sanguine splashes and scored with claw marks, by another traveler in the year 753

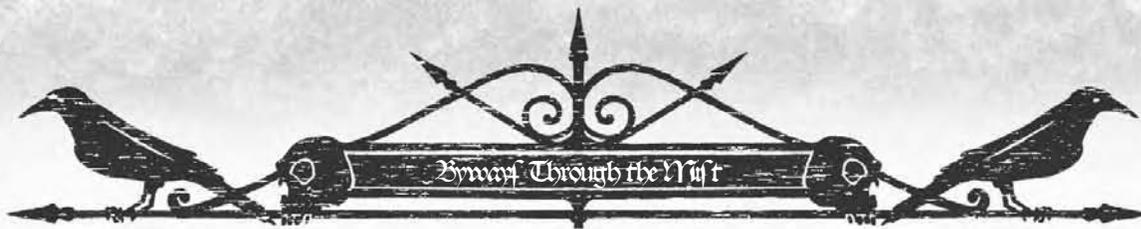
Gentle Reader, although a Mistway provides as reliable a passage through the Mists as is possible without the guidance of a Vistana, such travel is

## Shooting at Shadows: Combat and Movement in the Mists

The confusing nature of the Mists provides a challenge for those attempting to move through them or, worse yet, used ranged weapons within them. All persons moving through the Mistways should consider themselves in light concealment (10% miss chance) during combat or when performing Spot or Search checks per the rules in the *Player's Handbook*. If in the Mists outside the Mistways, the concealment rating provides a 20% miss chance. DMs who wish to emphasize the horrific uncertainty inherent in attempting to maneuver in the Mists may also apply the random modifiers listed in Table 6-1 by rolling a d20 before each round:

**Table 6-1: Random Modifiers in Mist Combat and Maneuvers**

| d20 Roll | Effect  |
|----------|---|
| 1        | PC combat initiatives at -5   |
| 2        | PC combat initiatives at +5   |
| 3        | Concealment from fog grows greater (30% miss chance)  |
| 4        | Monster/NPC combat initiatives at -5  |
| 5        | Monster/NPC combat initiatives at +5  |
| 6        | PCs effectively under a <i>silence</i> spell for next 5 rounds. DC 20 Will save negates.                                |
| 7        | PC speed slowed to one-half normal. DC 20 Fortitude save negates.   |
| 8        | PC speed increased to twice normal. DC 20 Fortitude save negates.   |
| 9        | Concealment becomes near total (40% miss chance)  |
| 10       | Voices come from random directions as though under a <i>ventriloquism</i> spell, for 5 rounds. DC 20 Will Save negates. |
| 11       | Ranged attacks (if successful) hit a random target  |
| 12       | Random PC <i>paralyzed</i> for 1d4 rounds. DC 20 Fortitude save negates.  |
| 13       | Random Monster/NPC <i>paralyzed</i> for 1d4 rounds. DC 20 Fortitude save negates.                                       |
| 14       | Random PC <i>slowed</i> for 1d4 rounds. DC 20 Fortitude save negates.   |
| 15       | Random PC <i>hasted</i> for 1d4 rounds. DC 20 Fortitude save negates.   |
| 16       | Random Monster/NPC <i>slowed</i> for 1d4 rounds. DC 20 Fortitude save negates.  |
| 17       | Random Monster/NPC <i>hasted</i> for 1d4 rounds DC 20 Fortitude save negates.   |
| 18       | Random PC moved 20' in a random direction as per <i>dimension door</i> . DC 20 Spot check to catch sight of others.     |
| 19       | Random Monster/NPC moved in 20' in a random direction as per <i>dimension door</i> . DC 20 Spot check to see others.    |
| 20       | Monster/NPC or PC leaves the Mists for a random destination predetermined by the DM, or roll again.                     |



still quite fraught with dangers. Even careful projection of one's path does not protect a traveler from various blood thirsty Mist creatures, madmen or the odd choking gas. For some reason also, all Mistways are obscured, usually by the Mists themselves, but occasionally by other weather phenomenon. If distracted or pursued by a foe it is always possible for a traveler to lose his connection to the Mistway and become Mist-led.

Battle along a Mistway is both frustrating and difficult. Creatures use the concealment of the fog to appear from nowhere, with the more intelligent ones seeming to mark certain Mistways as their preferred game trails. Attempting to shoot a pistol or use a bow in the midst of the fog is perilous to other travelers—even those seemingly outside the range or aim of the shooter. The Mists are confusing; the Mistways sometimes wind about themselves, curling like a giant snake in a twisting pathway certain only to the Vistani.

## Blood on the Moon

Perhaps one of the most elusive and dangerous types of pathways through the Mist is the situational Mistway. Some might argue that the Vistani conjure up situational Mistways through rites known only to them whenever they have need of passage through the Mists, yet other byways appear for reasons unexplainable to all, and others only at proscribed times or seasons.

Perhaps the most gruesome of these is a Mistway my sister and I discovered beneath the trees on a foggy and dew-dappled morning in Invidia. The evening before, we had been investigating a legend of demons supposedly drawn to Invidia, when an outcry led us to rush from the comfort of the local inn's hearth. Our guide there, a gentleman merchant named Lichmelor, was the unlucky soul to find what was left of a child on the ground near the edge of the woods. If it were not for the chill of the evening blocking the smell and the darkness we might have found the body sooner, for it was torn into many many pieces, the young boy's seemingly sleeping face and tousled hair hung upon a tree branch, the only recognizable part. Our first thought, after taking a moment to settle our stomachs, was that some sort of bloody wolf or lycanthrope might have been the cause. Laurie theorized that the child may have fallen victim of the demon for which we had been searching. After examination our horror grew, for we realized that

the only part of the corpse truly missing was his heart.

Gathering torches we left with our guide, following splashes of blood on the dewy ground and dripping, cobweb-bedecked bushes. Every rustle in the cold foggy air led us to shudder and wonder if we would be next, but our trail ended just at the beginning of dawn's light—at a twisted oak with a large gaping hollow in its side, much like a toothless and malformed mouth. As we watched, the last wisps of Mist rose and faded among its branches. When Lichmelor saw the tree he grabbed each of us by an arm and pulled us back, his face as white as his linen tunic. "You cannot follow now," he whispered looking up at the fading full moon low in the sky, "the Mists will take you." When the sky was fully light he finally deigned to explain. "This tree is called the Oak of Screams. For those who are willing to fill its mouth with the blood of innocence at peak of the full moon there is a pathway out of this place to wherever you wish through the Mists. This is the legend. Few are desperate enough to try it, but any that have disappear and do not return. As you can see, the oak has withstood burning and attempts to chop it down. The many scars prove that. Those that try to harm it soon come to a terrible end." We took a moment, considering that it would be safe enough in the morning sunlight, to look more closely at the warped and bloodied oak. Although a pool of blood lay still clotting within its horrid maw, the heart was gone. Perhaps it was imagination, but as the wind whispered through its branches I thought I heard the sound of children's voices whimpering from deep inside.

## A Guidebook to the Charted Mistways

*...and then it came, merely a flicker, a whisper of wind sending the Mists drifting. A mutter and rustle of air caressed my face, then suddenly screamed past me to envelop my brother in a whirling storm of scarlet death. My last contact with him was the spray of blood against my face. All was quiet for a moment, but soon I felt a moist breath of air lift the hair on the back of my neck and knew the storm had come back for me...*

—Dr. Alexander Penarrow, Mist Navigator and Explorer

There are some, Dearest Reader, who eschew the use of the Vistani altogether and make it their life's work — through dedication, happenstance or



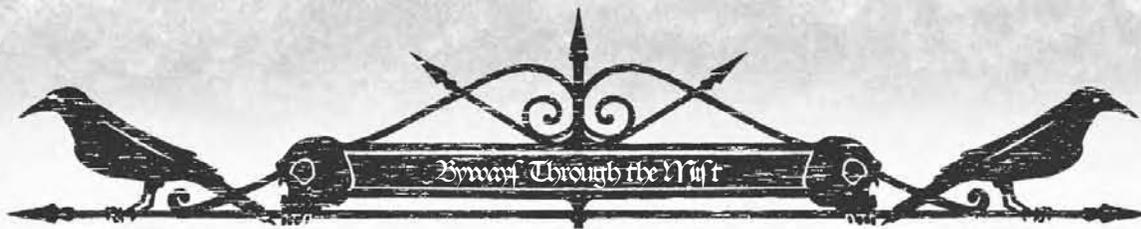
## There But a Moment: Situational Mistways

There are several types of Situational Mistways — those which only appear under the correct conditions or at certain times and in certain places, as well as those which only appear when summoned through need or ritual. In all cases these Mistways cannot be summoned to a new location. They may lead to more than one place, but the entryway is always in the same area, or appears in a certain location when all is as it needs to be for it to incorporate. Some Mistways which travelers believe to have *drifted*, or changed their destined exits, are actually temporal or conditional Mistways which, if analyzed over a period of time, may follow some discernable pattern.

**Temporal Mistways:** Openings to the Mistways can be dependent upon certain months of the year; in fact, some Mistways may lead to one place in a summer season and another place in the autumn. Other, more elusive openings have connections to lunar cycles or beams of light — moon or sun — focusing on a bank of Mists in a particular hour or minute or even second of time, making the chance to enter such places more than challenging. The DM's choice of DC should depend upon the amount of time available to cross with mere seconds requiring a DC of 25 or better. Remember that any travelers who link hands or otherwise make physical connections will travel to the same destination as long as the connection is not broken. If it is, and the time available has ended, others may end up Mist-led or at another destination domains away.

**Conditional Mistways:** While a temporal Mistway can also be called a conditional Mistway, there are many other sorts of conditional Mistways in Ravenloft. Conditions favorable to a coalescing Mistway may be as random and arbitrary as having a gray cat traveling with a group or three red-headed children singing as they enter. Most, however, are brought into being by more eerie or unusual events. Perhaps one path opens whenever a murderer with blood on her hands enters the Mists in a certain place. Another might always make way for fleeing victims of werewolves at the full moon. Such Mistways may lead to sanctuary or hell — and no one can fathom why the Mists choose either. DM's should find fitting destinations for such pathways and interesting Mist creatures to add to the torment along the road. In any case the situations which cause the Mistways to open and go to their predetermined destination are nearly impossible for most to detect and so are rarely duplicated by others, although some realms may have legends of lovers lost in the Mists on one high hill or stories of a pathway to a strange and mystical place through the Mists which may only be found by the very old or a swaddling babe dressed in a white shroud. DMs may create old stories for their players to discover containing poems with descriptions of times and rules to follow for such Mistways, although these should be much less elaborate than those used to find or call the Mistways listed below.

**Ritual Mistways:** The most insidious and terrifying of situational Mistways is one formed by ritual. Although powerful mages, clerics, sages and scholars may believe they have found ways to control the Mists, ritual Mistways only work if the Mists wish them to. Invariably, the opening rituals include some blood sacrifice. The least evil of these require the blood of the ritualist (powers check at 5%), but the most reliable involve the death of an innocent. For such Mistways, a powers check at 16% for the premeditated murder of a pure soul and for evil ritualistic magic is required. Even shedding the blood of many innocents will not increase the chance of success, but a way of sorts will open if the methods are grizzly enough, often leading to a new pocket realm prison created just for the ritualist.



need — the exploration of the Mistways of our world and the discovery of the many hidden roads to other lands. Such brave folk risk life and sanity for their cause and give the rest of us a chance to travel to exotic, far off places without fear (although Laurie would say having no fear in the Mists is foolishness, no matter how reliable the byway).

We met Dr. Penarrow during a recent journey to Tepest, where we hoped to find a certain clever device for use against evil fey. An elegant gentleman with a mane of deep red hair streaked with white, the good doctor came forth from the swirling Mists, his eyes glowing silver through the fog, soon after the Vistani brought us to our destination near Briggdarrow. Laurie drew her pistol at the sight, expecting, I believe, one of the undead. He smiled, revealing perfectly normal teeth, and asked us if we needed an escort into the village. We later discovered that he had known our Uncle and traveled with him along many Mistways when the Vistani could not be found, or chose not to be.

Laurie was the first to take note of his halting gate and the ornate silver-headed cane he leaned so heavily upon. Being the curious sort, she asked him if he had been injured, and if so, what had happened. Looking about at the thick fog still curling along the ground, he offered to buy us a meal at the inn and discuss it there, obviously uncomfortable in the evening shadows. Soon we found ourselves seated at a quiet table near the hearth. Only then did we notice the terrible scarring which distorted and scored Dr. Penarrow's face and hands — all that we could see of him, as he disdained to remove his heavy coat, even in the warm firelight.

After a lovely dinner and some good wine, the doctor became relaxed enough to begin speaking of his many adventures in the Mists. Some of them were near-unbelievable. He spoke of beginning his explorations more than one hundred years ago visiting lands long vanished from the world.

Soon his reminiscences turned toward the various Mistways he has traveled and the terrifying creatures he has seen and fought within the Mists. During his musings, we learned that his disfigurement was caused by an elusive and terrifying creature called a scarlet storm. It kills its victims by flaying flesh from their bones with corrosive sand, acid or ice depending upon its type, and nearly destroyed him after slaying his brother Nikolai and feeding upon him in a writhing mist of blood.

Such horror might have driven a lesser being from the Mists forever, but Dr. Penarrow made a vow at that time to discover all he could of the many Mistways and the creatures within the Mists.

Once he knew of our relation to his old friend, he grew more open to reminiscence and became sentimental about siblings working together to explore and examine the world. Thus, we were regaled with much useful information and a listing of some of the many Mistways he has explored over the decades.

### **Mistways: a Brief Overview**

The following Mistways were described to us by Dr. Penarrow and were accurate at the time of his exploration of them. We have, for the most part, left his comments unaltered. Where we were tempted to insert our own observations, we did so in the form of an Editor's Note.

#### **The Bleak Road: Southern Barovia — Northern Vorostokov**

*(Poor Reliability, Two-way)*

Ah yes, this is a treacherous byway. Not only will you rarely arrive where you seek to go — and few sane people *wish* to go to Vorostokov — but this is one of the places where the scarlet storm stalks its victims, in this case as a vicious blizzard at its exit near snowy Oneka.

#### **The Emerald Stream: Northern Sea of Sorrows — Eastern Sri Raji**

*(Moderate Reliability, Two-way)*

Many experienced sailors fear the Sea of Sorrows, yet this road is one of the more reliable methods of moving from our Core realms to the exotic land of Sri Raji. The Mists here are awash with ghostly ships as well as that sorrowful and terrifying phenomenon known as the "Mist Weird." My first experience with it was when I heard Nikolai's voice calling out to me from the Mists as I traveled along the Mistway and would have wandered forth off the path if my companions hadn't physically detained me. It was a terrible time, and I still occasionally wonder if I might have met my brother's spirit if I had only been given the opportunity.

#### **The Heretic's Egress: Southwestern G'Henna — North-Central Darkon**

*(Moderate Reliability, Two-way)*

Although this byway may be fairly steady, it is one of the least pleasant passages I have ever had the misfortune to travel along. Both the whirling





flux of Darkon's Mistlands and the horrific winds of G'henna provide a channel for scarlet storms to feed, and one of the Mist ferrymen has been known to wander along its length.

**The Jackal's Ruse: East-Central Nocturnal Sea — Western Har'Akir**

*(Moderate Reliability, One-way)*

Sailors curse the accidental entering of this Mistway. More than one ship has been left high and dry, caught in the drifts of sand dunes in Har'Akir. Although somewhat peaceful in relation to other byways I have traveled, the occasional drifting patch of goblin fog has led to crazed boatloads of caliban set loose upon the Amber Wastes, as time slows within its passage and few can stay out of the goblin fog's reach long enough to escape this fate.

**Leviathan's Clutches: West-Central Sea of Sorrows — Saragoss**

*(Excellent Reliability, One-Way)*

No one seeks this path unless he is desperate to find a way to Sri Raji and is willing to sacrifice a ship in the process. Saragoss is a rotting graveyard of lost ships, and the Leviathan's Clutches Mistway provides no escape. Oddly enough, travel along this Mistway goes very quickly, with most voyages taking less than a day. In fact, after studying my journals for hours, by my calculations one of these journeys brought our ship to its destination before we had left the Sea of Sorrows!

**The Outlander's Gate: "Outside" — Southern Barovia**

*(Poor Reliability, One-Way)*

One of the least understood of the Mistways, I hesitate to call it such, except for a continuing phenomenon which seems to bring outlanders to our world. The Outlander's Gate is a byway untraveled by any resident of our lands. Seemingly at random, but far too regularly to call it chance, the Mists around Barovia spring forth with strange and confused beings who believe they have come from beyond the Mists. Such people, some oddly warped, I am certain, by the various transforming creatures in the Mists, find themselves at odds with some of the most powerful people within our realms — often to their deaths, but rarely, rarely providing a true and abiding positive change.

After interviewing some of these outlanders, I have taken note of a few details that lead me to believe this to be a conditional Mistway, quite possibly also temporal, but most definitely purposeful. Most new arrivals tell a similar story of fog

rising along their paths. After some harrowing attacks from creatures in the Mists, they arrive in Barovia, disoriented and not a little dismayed. Although this is only conjecture, I believe the Mists capture them as a catalyst for change in our lands — whether for good or ill.

*Editor's Note: I was frankly unsure about including this passage in our listing, but Laurie encouraged me to add it as a Mistway virtually unknown or explored. Such musings, I believe are one of the things that our dear Uncle warned us about. Trying to "see through" the Mists can be more than perilous. Also, although he does not list them, there are other areas where outlanders seem more likely to appear although no Mistways have as yet been detected —GWF*

**The Path of Innocence: Southern Valachan—Northern Odiare**

*(Poor Reliability, One-Way)*

Such a sad and terrible road, the Path of Innocence is guarded by fenhounds — one of the few creatures in the Mists that seem to punish evil and protect the good. Unfortunately, this path is also riddled with Mist changelings and other such dark beings. Some wonder if the children in Odiare might be some of these changelings which have fully become a part of that world. I shudder at the thought.

**The Road of a Thousand Secrets: Southern Hazlan — Southeastern Pharazia**

*(Moderate Reliability, Two-Way)*

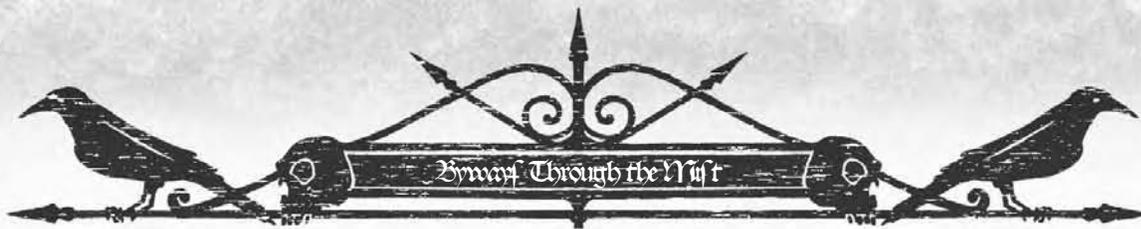
Philosophers from Hazlan sometimes travel along this byway seeking one of the most insidious monsters found in the Mists — the Mist Claimer. They believe if a shadow version of themselves is created and they can destroy it, they will have purified their souls and sent their darkness to dissipate in the Mists. Perhaps their theory is true, but such creatures can destroy a man's reputation and resolve. Rarely can one detect its existence until it has already poisoned its victim's life. I was lucky enough to catch sight of a mirror image of myself as I stepped through the Mists into Pharazia and was certain for a moment that I had lost my mind. Only after I had killed the monster did I learn that it had slaughtered several people in a nearby village, leaving me to make amends as I could.

**The Serpent's Coils: Eastern Nova Vaasa — Central Zherisia**

*(Moderate Reliability, Two-Way)*

This twisting byway should only be navigated by those experienced with travel through the Mists.





The entrances may only be found at the dark of the moon on a foggy night. Once within the Mists' embrace, travelers find themselves caught in a sensory nightmare of echoing voices and extremely thick fog which obscures all outside of arm's reach. Fenhounds bay, and amorphous undead moan along the path, as many creatures from Zherisia find themselves lost on the twisting road and have no compunction against destroying anything or anyone they find along the way. I suggest preparing a goodly supply of torches.

**The Shrouded Way: Northwestern Darkon—Southern Paridon**

*(Moderate Reliability, Two-Way)*

Perhaps the most dangerous predator along the Shrouded Way is the human one. Vicious killers such as Bloody Jack have learned to disappear from Paridon by fleeing to Darkon. I have hunted more than one of these twisted murderers through the Mistway in the hope of saving the denizens of Darkon from becoming their prey. Thankfully the fenhounds also hunt this path; I have followed their cries like hunting dogs to more than one pitiable bloodthirsty madman.

**Via Corona: Northeastern Darkon — Eastern Nidala**

*(Moderate Reliability, Two-Way)*

Much as the Shrouded Way, this byway begins in the Mistlands of Darkon; thankfully, it does not reach its end at such a cursed place as Paridon, but in the more pleasant climate of Nidala. Still, its reliability is suspect, with most people only finding it when they are desperately in need of a way out of danger. Still the byway is not without its own perils. Some say the dragon from Nidala hunts along its length on occasion, although it has never to my knowledge been seen in Darkon.

**The Wake of the Loa: Northwestern Nocturnal Sea — Northern Souragne**

*(Moderate Reliability, Two-Way)*

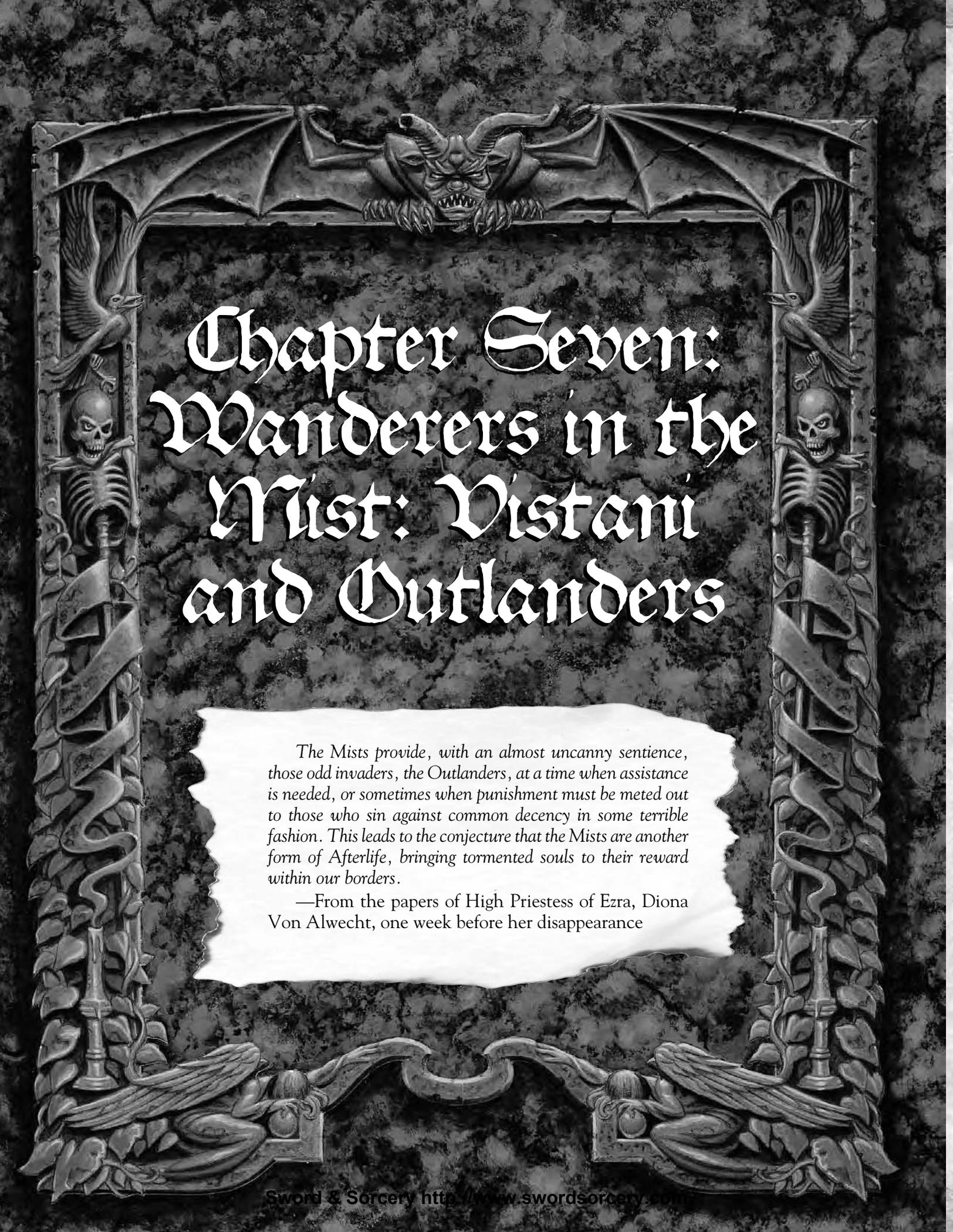
Always a tempting path for intelligent undead, this Mistway is home to more than one Mist ferryman and other horrific creatures coiled about with the shadows and ultimate gray of the Mists. Its entrance at the Nocturnal Sea is again home to scarlet storms whirling about in water spouts. Dangerous undertows work to pull ships beneath the surface. It is also difficult to gauge time along its path; depending upon the phases of the moon at either end, it may send you along your way quickly or keep you within its coils for days or weeks. I have also noted the ghostly outlines of tall mansions with white-pillared porches appearing just off the path. Such dwellings disappear as quickly as they appear when you are foolish enough to go for a closer look, leaving you Mist-led for certain.

**The Way of Venomous Tears: Southwestern Sea of Sorrows — Northeastern Rokushima Táiyo**

*(Poor Reliability, Two-Way)*

Drifting from land on one end to sea on the other, the Way of the Venomous Tears is hard to travel and misleading to many who choose its path only to be caught with their ship high and dry upon Mount Frost in Rokushima Táiyo or drowning in the waters off Ghastria. Although one of the less harrowing byways, it seems to be a path for one of the most deadly of undead, the akikage, a creature sometimes known as the "shadow assassin." Vengeance ghosts of the worst sort, these evil beings allow nothing to stand in the way of their missions — including other travelers along the Mistway. Destroying one is nigh impossible since they vanish at will and use the Mists as their hunting ground. If you notice a figure dressed in dark clothing with its face covered, its eyes the only discernable feature, turn aside and allow it to pass unless you are supremely confident in your abilities to deal with undead.





# Chapter Seven: Wanderers in the Mist: Vistani and Outlanders

*The Mists provide, with an almost uncanny sentience, those odd invaders, the Outlanders, at a time when assistance is needed, or sometimes when punishment must be meted out to those who sin against common decency in some terrible fashion. This leads to the conjecture that the Mists are another form of Afterlife, bringing tormented souls to their reward within our borders.*

—From the papers of High Priestess of Ezra, Diona Von Alwecht, one week before her disappearance



**W**ithin this chapter, Gennifer and I hope to provide some theories and conjectures about two of the greatest mysteries of our lands. Considering our Uncle Rudolph's stern warnings and our own previous experiences, it did not seem prudent to continue our young foolishness in an examination of the Mists. So many other mysteries — no less harmful or horrifying, yet still more easily identified and studied — have kept us busy in our continuing effort to build upon the great body of work that is Van Richten's. Still, there are some hidden layers of the Mist which can be explored by interview and discussion with those who have seemingly been birthed by the Mist themselves — the Outlanders — and also those who travel the Mistways with ease — the Vistani.

## The Vistani

Dearest Reader, as Gennifer and I continued to peruse the few tomes which gave us another mysterious glimpse through the Mists, we realized that to make a true study of such an amorphous subject, we must speak to the only beings who truly seem to be comfortable or, possibly, in control of that eldritch border which surrounds and invades our land. In general, our curiosity has always been great about the mysterious Vistani and their connection to the Mists, yet our attempts to convince one of them to speak of such has always been unsuccessful until now. Our dear uncle's writings about the Vistani, much of it provided by the Vistani Arturi Radanavich, lead to much speculation about their possible control over the Mists, as well as their powers, which mirror the strange effects of the Mists on wanderers within. It has been our theory for many years that the Vistani's gifts of prophecy lead them to be where they are truly needed at the right time. Perhaps this might explain the capitulation of our Vistani guide at this time when we were most needful of information. Teveye Calvinov, erstwhile captain of a Vistani caravan and one of our respected guides, was persuaded, perhaps even encouraged by Gennifer — a shocking sight — to give us more understanding of the symbiosis between the Vistani and the Mists. Sadly, he did not live long after our discussion.

Settling back on the seat of his colorful *vardo*, this gray-haired fellow with wise ebony eyes and a bushy mustache decorated at the tips with silver beads seemed more than willing to speak of the

## Mist Abilities of the Vistani

All Vistani have some control over the Mists, if only in their understanding of the Mistways. Any Vistana can enter the Mists and exit where he wishes a few moments later, no matter the distance or the obstacles in between, without limits and at will. Such impermanent Mist risings may lead to creatures from the Mists wandering in places where they have never before been seen and may also lead to more permanent intrusions from the Mists if the Mists are called to the same area more than once. When a caravan needs to travel to a new place, the tribe's *raunie* calls the Mists to rise as the captain trustingly sends the *vardos* through a blinding fog and across the world. Such *Mist navigation* does not mean that the travelers have only spent those few moments within the Mists, however. The Vistani manipulate time and may spend hours or days within and still arrive outside within a few minutes of their having entered the Mists.

Not even the Vistani, however, have perfected this ability. Anytime a Vistana enters the Mists, there is a 2% chance that his control is slightly flawed. This rises to a 3% chance if an entire caravan is traveling through the Mists, while the chance rises to 5% if a *giorgio* is traveling with a Vistana guide

Mists, a subject Vistani rarely discuss. Still, a slight twinkle in his eye led me to believe, Gentle Reader, that the validity of anything he said must be taken with some caution. No Vistani ever explains something without reason — particularly when that explanation might clear some of the mystery surrounding them. Perhaps Gennifer went too far in her encouragement? Well, no matter, I allowed him to provide what he would — it is up to all of us to ascertain the truth in his telling.

"So you would ask a Vistana to tell you all the secrets of the Mists? How much can you pay me to do such a thing? Still, it has been many moons since I have told the *doroq* to my people. Perhaps you will appreciate my tales.





The Mists exist, much like my people, surrounded by and enshrouded in mystery. You cannot define us or close us in — we will merely slip away, disappearing through cracks in the walls or among the shadows in the night. Still, I can tell you many tales of what others have said about us. Some of them may be true; others — well, we have our secrets, and many things are distorted within the Mists.

First, I will speak of the Mists as our companion or, perhaps, tool. Some say we do nothing without reason, provide no favor without benefit to ourselves, give nothing without payment. I do not say this is true, but you might ask, if the Mists are truly sentient, what do we do for it and why? Some believe the creatures in the Mists do not harm us. This I can tell you is false. We have much experience fighting such monsters and so know how to avoid many and kill or divert what we cannot avoid. Yes, we travel through the Mists as no *giorgio* can and take those we favor with us, but not all are equally gifted to the task, and the wise *raunie* will choose her captain well.

“Do not believe that you can call all Vistani the same. I am of the Boem *tasque*. We are the ones who feel the lack of home most keenly, the ones who carry the darkness of the world within our hearts. You know something of us from your uncle, do you not? We understand the tragedy of life and our fate as no others do. Each *tasque* has its strength, you must understand, yet we have no weaknesses except the shadow on our souls from sorrow.”

## Specific Powers of the Vistani *Tasques*

While all Vistani have some control, most *tasques* have a special ability connected to the Mists. These special abilities give the DM many ways to manipulate plots through time and distance, past, future and across worlds.

### The Kaldresh: Timeless Viewers

The Kaldresh, generally the least mystical of the Vistani *tasques*, have one extremely powerful ability — to see the past, present and future as one. Since all time is no time to them, they may look along the time stream and bring themselves through the Mists to any era or to whatever event they feel

the need to influence. Because they specialize in weaponsmithing and other crafts of war, they often seek places where conflict or all out war rages and profit by providing what each side needs. DMs might encourage mercenary characters to seek out the Kaldresh and follow them through the Mists to battle.

### The Manusa: Manipulators of Time and Mist

The Manusa *tasque*, and particularly the most mystical and powerful of the tribes, the Zarovan, exhibit seemingly unlimited abilities to manipulate the Mists and time. Able to bend moments and years at will, they may walk through the Mists to any time, and even take *giorgios* along with them if it suits their mysterious purposes. The Zarovan also have the ability to manipulate the Mists by opening ways to other worlds beyond Ravenloft and to see what is happening within those other realms. For a long-running campaign involving Outlanders, rumors of this ability may lead desperate player characters to seek out the Vistani and perform whatever tasks are set upon them for the opportunity to go home — or provide reasons for PCs to wish to return home when Zarovan visions tell of tragedy for those left behind. Adding to that power, the women of the Manusa *tasque* also have the ability to cast spells from the Mist Domain as clerics of their character level, regardless of whether they have the Wisdom score to cast those spells or not. These women can only cast a Mist spell if a cleric of equal level to their character level would also be able to do so.”

### The Boem: fatalists

The Vistani of the Boemian *tasque* have a different philosophy of time. They believe that fate and time is fixed, and none can escape life's course. This rigid belief may have something to do with the fact that they are the only Vistani who have no special gift — they believe that they cannot manipulate and so are denied their powers. Still, even they can travel the Mistways with ease and call upon the Mists when the road beckons. The Boem would be the most likely to help a criminal escape through the Mists, for the right price, and to then bring her pursuers along behind in exchange for some future favor.





"It is said that we sacrifice those who anger us to the Mists — that all of the Vistani do so. Would you believe it to be true? Do you think we take those seeking passage and leave them within the Mists for their blood to provide power? Such thoughts are ludicrous! Others believe there are mighty and magical beings living within the Mists, and we are but minions and pawns of those arcane creatures, traveling where we will at their bidding. Again, this is nonsense. The Vistani are free. We may not have a land that is our own, but we go where we will — it is our fate.

Maybe we were born of the Mists and are the Mists' children. Would that not explain our ease within it? Have you ever seen a caravan disappear, lost in a rising fog? It is possible we do not merely ride through, but become as ghosts, one with the vapor mixing with the Mists as part of them."

A teasing smile appeared on his face as he patted my arm indulgently. "You would not believe such silliness. You are a smart girl. It is more likely that we hold power over the Mists because we own them. Maybe we have no home here because we live within the Mists in great castles with many riches and fine horses." He sighed deeply, "Even the Vistani are not immune to the powers of the Mists. Believe me, young ones, the Mists are nothing to be taken lightly. Any of our kind can tell you tales of Mist-led travelers lost for all time. These forlorn wanderers are cursed by the Mists to live decades in a day, or an hour in ten years. My story is different, a shadowy terrible tale of a family of the Vistani turned away from their heritage, their honor and their pacts." For a moment, his eyes lost their twinkle, and I swear his face paled to ashen gray. He clutched at his heart and looked at me with a shadowed glance of pain, then waving away my attempt at succor, continued with his narrative.

"The folk of the laughing crow, called the Simiuka clan, are a handsome family, I say *are* although no one has seen them for over 40 years except in the dark line of the past. When the shadows of that tree," and here our guide pointed to a magnificent tree that towered above the hilltop on which it stood, its broad limbs cloaking the ground beneath in darkness, "were no wider than a finger — at a time when the magic of the world and all its glory in and around the Mists seemed mine — when I was still a young man, my heart was taken by one of the Simiuka, a sharp-featured, funny young woman named Annalysnya. We are of the

same *tasque*, but not clan, and I knew one day we would meet and she would become my wife.

As you should know, we Vistani wander where we will, and when our hearts melded at a gathering during the full moon, we promised that when our paths merged again I would have many creatures to use as a bride price (she is of the Naiat) and her father would allow us to wed. Many times I joked with her that I would come and carry her away if my longing for her became too much, but we believed fate would bring us together through the Mists as our paths would certainly join to become one."

Many were the months that passed as I gathered my price for her, proud horses for wealth and bright woven scarves for her hair. When a year had come and gone I believed the Fates must soon bring us together and asked for our wise woman to consult the *tarokka* and tell me when we would meet again."

Darkness crossed our guide's face, and as I watched, the gleam in his eye became a wash of tears. He lowered his head, breathing harshly, then gruffly cleared his throat. "Our *raunie*, Marta, performed the reading and cried out as cards of ill omen spread across the table. Betrayal, death and worst of all, banishment were woven through the images, as distinctively as the scent of rotting blood or the cry of an abandoned child. I did not believe — I could not believe — and fled camp on horseback seeking my Annalys in the gathering Mists."

Master Tevye gave a rough sigh, and for a moment his lips moved soundlessly. Although it may have seemed forward, Gennifer leaned forward and patted him gently on the knee — her gesture a physical sign of our concern for him. As though his mind had wandered a thousand miles away, he looked up at us and smiled, just a quirk of the lip, his dark eyes lost in distant sadness and remembered horror, tears on his cheeks.

"The Mists enfolded me, a welcoming cloak as I reached out in my mind toward my Annalysnya, knowing I could find my way through the shadows and the gray to the one I loved. In the beginning I was sure. My heart called to her and nothing would stop me. Galloping on trails known to me since I was a small boy I thundered forward for hours...and hours...and days. My horse fell and died gasping, his breath a bellow of agonized steam. He was a fine animal whose heart was broken as surely as my own. I took what I could from his back and continued onward. The Mists no longer seemed my companion but my enemy — keeping me from her. In





despair I cried out her name, and I was answered. A screaming cry, a ragged sob, and then my name in a whisper so low it, too, seemed muffled and lost in the roiling fog. I called again and again heard my name, her voice closer now; the Mists had brought her to me. A silhouette formed in the darkness, her welcome shape coming to my open arms. And then I saw her gentle funny face smiling — but it was the grimace of a mouth rotted away, her bloody teeth bared. Behind her, I saw the rest of her family. All came forward; their mouths open holes filled with blood.

I staggered back as she cried out for me. *Do not forsake me!* she gurgled as gouts of crimson poured forth from her mouth. Again, she reached for me, pleading. I could not go to her, could not stay or bring her from the Mists, for I knew that she and her family were accursed, and the Mists were witness to their shame. I fled then, but I know my fate. I will be with her again.”

### Curséd folk of the Mists

*Very little is known of these most horribly afflicted wanderers in the Mists. According to our sources — as reticent as they can be to speak of such shameful and terrible situations — the cursed are those who have betrayed the Vistani in such a fashion as to attract all the terrors the Mists conceal upon themselves. Rarely do any survive and none that we know of have ever returned, at least not sound of either mind or body.*

—Gennifer Weathermay-Foxgrove

Unfortunately, Gentle Reader, we never discovered what Tevye Calvinov’s betrothed and her

family had done. He began crying again and then, with a faraway look in his eye, told Laurie and I to get down off his *vardo* and go quickly away. Our last sight of him, illuminated by the lights on back of his wagon as he headed into a thick cloud of fog rising among the trees, has remained imprinted in my memory. We have not seen him again, but fervently hope he has found his Annalysnya and broken her curse. Most importantly, we hope he does not share in their curse for telling us about the Mists.

We have heard stories of other such luckless wanderers; they can be a danger to those within the Mists, for most of them are violently insane. For his sake I hope she and her family are not.

## Strangers from the Mists: Outlanders

*”My god’s voice is no longer strong. His gifted powers grow weak in this accursed place. Still, I must destroy these unliving, shambling horrors that surround us... Turn to dust, you abominations! In the name of Pe—”*

—Last words of Regin Shadowbane, priest of an unknown deity.

If we are to consider the Mists and the many mysteries engulfed by and surrounding these Mists, we must examine closely some of the most baffling and disturbing creatures to come from the Mists —

### Curses in the Mists

While any curse performed by a Vistani is a powerful and terrible thing, when such curses are performed while within the Mists or the Mists are invoked as part of the curse itself, the power and terror of the curse increases by one level (i.e., embarrassing becoming frustrating, etc.). While normal curses may be broken by the curse’s own escape clause or by revoking the curse (as in the case of Vistani curses), if such curses are invoked within the coils of the Mists or if the Mists are named within the wording of the curse, they become more powerful than the wording might make them seem. For instance, a Vistani curse worded: “You will find no rest under any roof until such time as you have healed the hearts of seven others,” might portend sleepless nights even under a cloudy sky or a forest’s canopy; while a simple embarrassing curse, “may your eyes cross and your tongue drip from your mouth whenever you seek to tell a lie,” would become constant double vision and the victim’s tongue would literally rot out of his mouth.

The Vistani know of this effect and rarely cast a curse upon someone while within the Mists, but may ask the Mists to call witness to such curses, particularly when the curse is invoked for revenge over the death of another Vistana.





Outlanders. Terrorized and confused by their time in the Mists, these unfortunates wander into our lands, relating wild stories, or perhaps truths, of places never seen by any inhabitant of our world. Such places tempt us with a need to explore.

Unfortunately, through all of our studies, including searching through many of our dear uncle's journals, we have found little evidence that any of these Outlanders have "returned" to their alleged homes or that any explorers of the Mists have ever found countries unknown to our experience. Nevertheless, their words carry much conviction and it is hard to disbelieve them. Outlanders invariably describe such alien places in depth, discussing powers beyond mortal ability, strange customs, even stranger deities, and other bizarre facets of their imaginary world in such great detail as to bedazzle the mind and make even the most cynical scholar doubt his understanding of the universe.

Philosophers, theologians and scholars of all degrees of learning have postulated theories as to the origins of Outlanders and their tales of changing worlds and shifting powers.

Laurie and I spent considerable time searching through various tombs and speaking to those whose lives have been spent in study of the Outlanders, as well as speaking to some who consider themselves to be Outlanders. After a lengthy and somewhat fiery "discussion," we decided to limit ourselves to a few of the most diametrically-opposed ideas in the hopes that you who read these pages may seek your own answers and conclusions from them.

## Madness and Phantoms of the Mind: the Philosophy of Denial

*Forgive those whose minds are twisted and damaged by their time in the Mists, for they have lost their way mentally and spiritually in a labyrinthine journey within their own dreams. Insanity is a sadly typical reaction to being long Mist-led. The uncertainty and fear of never returning leads poor souls to create their own realities within the Mists, such realities are nothing more than mental distortions, illusions and shadows masquerading as truth.*

—from Dr. Viktor Von Manheim, sanitarium physician, in his treatise *Manifestations of Mental Dementia, Their Causes and Treatment*

The least disturbing and, as my sister Laurie claims, least interesting of the Outlander theories denies the possibility of worlds beyond the Mists.

Outlandish (and yes, I do see the wordplay) tales of god magic turning undead to dust, of wizards able to travel beyond their own planes of existence — and back — raise eyebrows at the least, and convince the listener that an Outlander is deluded, perhaps beyond the ability of anyone to heal. Are they born insane, living in a world of their own twisted making? Or worse, have they been so shattered by horror or melancholy that they must create a new place to live, where they are powerful and truly in control of their destiny?

Asylums for the insane often have wards filled with such unlucky souls. Priests and scientists work daily to bring them back to sanity with little success, often they are forced to perform memory obliteration through magic or provide radical therapy to reverse the patient's beliefs. This is all well and good, *if* the patients are truly insane. If not, such procedures must work to create an insanity of denial so that Outlanders might live in this world peacefully, a sad, yet sometimes necessary step for their renewed mental stability.

Many good healers and priests believe such treatments to be detrimental to health, yet necessary. The methods of treatment include the relatively painless casting of a healing spell as well as such therapies as burying the patient in darkness for days with no more than enough water to keep one alive or using herbal remedies which cloud and befuddle the mind in the hopes of forcing the deluded beyond his fantasies. Some physicians prescribe a more drastic treatment for the stubborn or violently adamant — physical pain to break the patient so that he is able to deny his delusions and begin the journey toward sanity.

## A Dark Journey

Although it is perhaps cowardly of me, when my sister proposed a trip to visit one such Outlander in the depths of his madness at the Asylum of the Shadowed Heart in Barovia, I demurred and delayed for several weeks, finding other work to occupy me. Few things disturb me more than the thought of my intellect damaged or destroyed, whether by my own lack of mental stability or by hostile magic. Although I am certain many sad souls lost to despair or warped by Evil have been assisted by the attendants of the asylum, I was not eager to see one who might be truly sane, caught in such a place.

When we arrived at the grim asylum, I was not at all surprised to find it a dark rocky fortress with





miniscule cracks for windows, barred with iron as was the heavy oaken door. The attendant assigned to assist us was a delicate young woman dressed only in a white shift. Her autumn-colored hair was quite wild and uncut and we could see the scars of manacles on her slender wrists and ankles. I was about to call for a healer, assuming that she was an escaped patient, when I saw the calm serenity of her face and the intelligence in her eyes. She led us inside and I must admit I shuddered at the faint whispering moans and muted screams that echoed deep beneath our feet. She introduced herself as Lady Arieth and said that she had once believed herself to come from another world, but now worked with other such deluded souls in an attempt to save them from such treatment as was necessary to restore her own sanity.

As she led us downward, I caught glimpses of such sad and tormented folk. Children lost in misery were screaming, rocking and hugging themselves; the elderly, nails wild and sharp, clawed and raked at their own flesh or ran, near-naked, as the white-clad attendants moved about like specters attempting to keep the damned from harming themselves. Somehow the worst were the quietest — those with eyes glazed, mouths open in a terrible silent cry, scenes obviously still playing in their minds, caught in catatonia. Unable to control the cold chill that crept up my spine, I shuddered — and was a bit surprised to feel Laurie's icy hand in mine, gripping tightly as Lady Arieth took us ever deeper through the cage of tormented souls.

After what seemed like years we finally reached the hallway of delusions, in general a much less violent area than many we had traveled through to find it, yet the air of sadness mixed with anger and frustration charged the place with an intense need, at least on my part, to leave the premises. Fortunately Laurie's grip kept me from the embarrassment of flight. Stopping at a massive door, our guide took one key from a ring tied at her waist, unlocked and opened the way.

Inside I saw a large man dressed in little more than loose leggings, chest and arms heavily muscled and scarred, his dark hair streaked with white. He was manacled to his cot. Against the back wall a curious symbol was awkwardly drawn — seemingly in blood — of the sun. I thought perhaps he might be a priest or paladin of the Morninglord, and my sympathy grew as I considered the fate of such a person trapped in darkness. Lady Arieth spoke quietly.

"This is Sol. He gives no other name, but tells us he is a paladin of a god whose name is unfamiliar to us. He says that he has wandered the Mists for months or even years and now knows himself to be trapped in some place he calls the Abyss." At that the fellow raised his head, showing plainly the gleam of madness in his eyes. "Begone, you foul temptresses," he screamed, lunging at us to the limits of his chains, "you will not take me or destroy my faith or my mind!" Laurie murmured to him, attempting to calm him so that we might ask questions, but to no avail. He seemed driven to the brink of incoherence, and Lady Arieth soon left us to find a healer or assistant to administer something to bring him some peace.

While she was gone, he broke down, screaming to his god to take him away, to forgive him. Moving to his side I laid a light hand on his shoulder hoping to give him some comfort, and 'accidentally' dropped a small piece of chalk near him so that he might find succor in his drawings without the terrible need to use blood for ink. Our guide soon returned with a salve which she rubbed upon his skin, dodging his flailing limbs as she did so. Quickly a sort of sanity returned to his eyes, although their brilliance dimmed to cloudy gray. She ushered us from his cell to the sound of rough sobs and his words, I believe, to Lady Arieth. "Ari, do you not remember me? Please return my holy symbol and my weapons. Please help me!" Lady Arieth shook her head, obviously troubled by his words, then calmly led us from his prison and shut the door, solidly, firmly, as though to shut out the possibility that *she* were the one insane.

## Creations of Power: Outlanders as Experiments

*It's alive!*

—Dr. Aldous Donnengard, necromancer-scientist, upon observing the first shambling step of his flesh golem.

As terrible and horrifying as it might be to follow this branch of speculation, one possible origin for Outlanders places them as pawns or victims in someone's experiments. Brought into existence by evil magic-users and scientists, this theory postulates that the Outlander exists to serve someone's yearning for control and creation. Some texts provide information on the creation of golems and other such magical creatures whose existence mimics life itself. Perhaps some of the Outlanders might be such, built by insane experimenters seek-





ing not only to build new beings, but also to convince these poor, sad things that they belong to some completely different dimension.

## Secrets and Insanity: Outlanders as the Remade

*Seek not in the shadows, for there ye shall find secrets too terrible for mortal man to bear.*

—Mordentish proverb

According to other theorists the Outlanders may exist as the deluded victims of a spell or a curse placed upon them by an angry mage or by one of the Vistani. Perhaps these people learned a secret they were never meant to know and a powerful sorcerer “took pity” on them and sent them away, memories destroyed and remade, yet still alive. Sending such through the Mists would make it likely that they would reach journey’s end far from home — if they ever reached it at all. Madness might either be an intrinsic part of the magic, or an unusual symptom of those forced to wander in the Mists with no guarantee of return, particularly those whose minds had been torn apart and wiped clean or recreated.

## Travelers from Beyond: The Theory of Other Dimensions

*It has been forty days since we walked through that swirling bank of fog. Frederic, our guide, is just as confused as the rest of us, his ranger skills confounded by the lack of recognizable landmarks. The others of my band grow restless while my nightmares continue each evening, leaving me with little true sleep. They are angry and confused while I merely regret. Our orders were clear, destroy the rebellious village; leave none, neither the youngest babe nor the most elderly grandmother, alive. Blood ran like new wine through the streets as cries for mercy gradually fell to a bitter stinking iron silence. We left in a rising mist near dawn and have not seen sign of our barracks again. The others have yet to realize what I now know. Somehow, we are dead. As ghosts we wander in a realm of shadows. Finally the balanced tipped too far.*

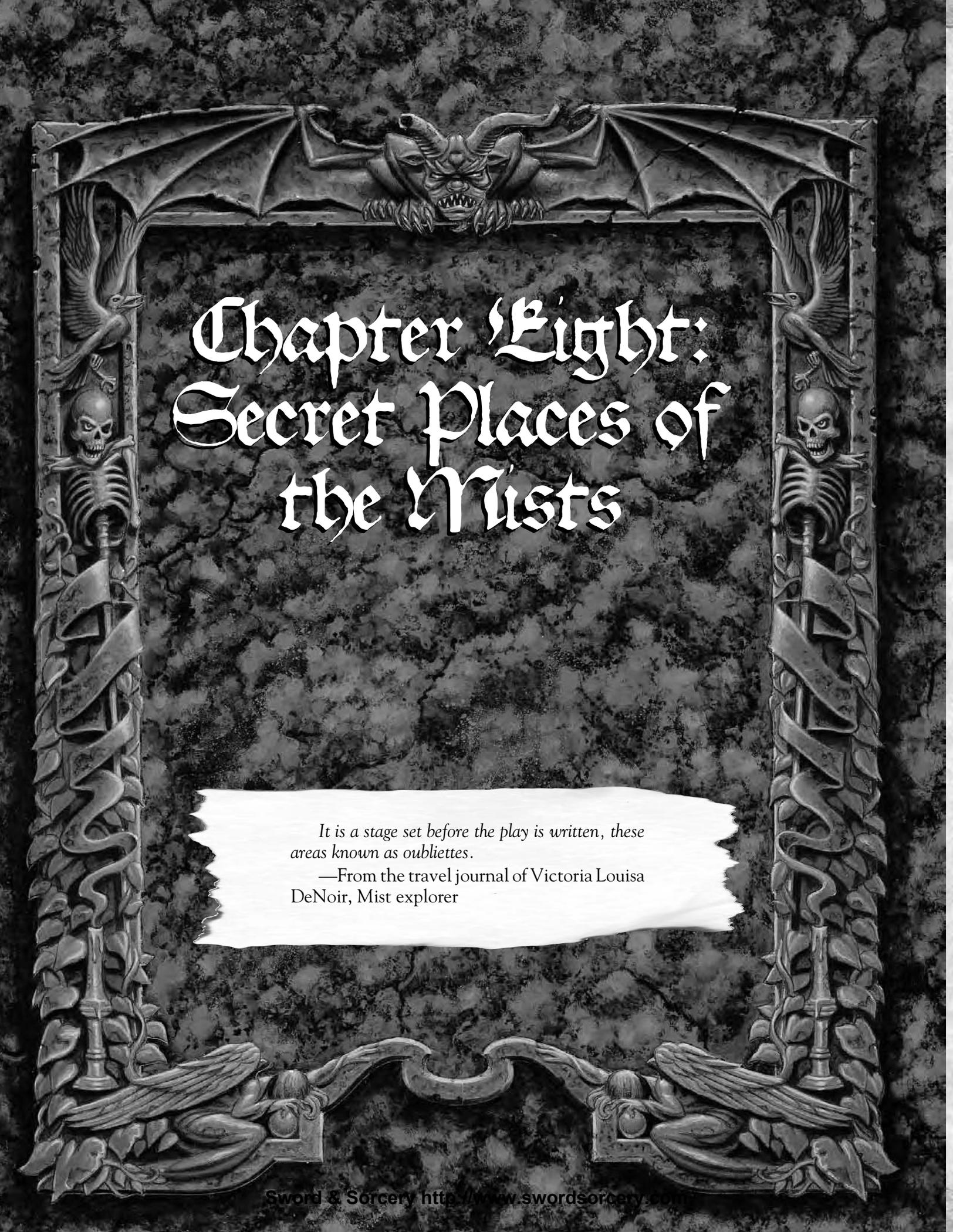
—From the campaign book of Commander Josef Vreelund, late of the King’s fifth infantry division, discovered on the ground below his hanging body, in the forests in Barovia.

There is little reason to believe that the Land of the Mists is the only place in existence. Regions have shifted and changed throughout history in our dread realm, undergoing a metamorphosis as the Mists swirl along our borders. Perhaps some lands have been so lost in the Mists that their people have been changed beyond our reckoning. Such travelers who speak of places unhampered by our ethereal boundaries may yet be surrounded by borders unseen or in such places where the Mists are so far away as to seem unreal. Even in the most isolated center of a community, the Mists may rise to take those caught within them into other realms. Some, in fact, believe the Vistani have the ability to call the Mists to themselves so that any place may be the beginning of a journey along the Mistways.

What if there were lands beyond the Mists unbound by the laws of magic, faith and the darkness that dwells within the heart of our world? Would such places create such folk as those miserable, confused and yet sometimes heroic people we call Outlanders? I remember Uncle Rudolph shaking his head and yet listening with an open and curious mind to their tales of god powers easily turning undead to dust and magic spells cast with no thought for consequences. Perhaps the gods bring them to us to show that there are other places and other ways. Perhaps their gods have sent them here to learn the same. Laurie theorizes that the gods, or perhaps the Mists themselves have brought Outlanders to this world for punishment, since many show arrogance and a disbelief in the realities of our realm.

Still others seem to be decent people, some of them even heroes that have done much to help against great evil. Not all could be here as punishment — in fact, our lands can be quite pleasant. Yet if this is not so and they *are* from other worlds, why are they here? If all is fated, as some Vistani believe, then perhaps the Outlanders are meant to come to this world, whether by the hands of the gods or not, to influence our lives in some fashion. Perhaps it is all by chance. Maybe we are all surrounded in Mists of our own making and the Outlanders find some way to break through their own boundaries and enter ours.





# Chapter Eight: Secret Places of the Mists

*It is a stage set before the play is written, these  
areas known as oubliettes.*

—From the travel journal of Victoria Louisa  
DeNoir, Mist explorer



arest Gennifer,

In answer to your inquiry I have traveled with our esteemed explorer of the Mists, Dr. Penarrow, to seek out those ephemeral and interesting, but sometimes horrifying locations within the Mists known as oubliettes. The good doctor took me along several byways during our days of travel, and I wish to chronicle for you a certain exciting, if terrifying, time in the midst of our journey, one which has delayed the itinerary of our trip.

On day five of our exploration, I had already found myself in several oddly deserted clearings within the Mists. I wished that you had been here to sketch some of the eerily beautiful flowers in one small glade, a lovely meadow surrounded by silver birch trees where everything seemed normal. Nevertheless, I could not get out of my head the thought that something was suddenly going to attack at any moment! (I have a bluebell with oddly serrated petals that I plucked for you to press in one of your books later. Although it didn't attack me, at the time I was certain that it would.)

Another oubliette was nothing more than a free-standing rock wall, its top still shrouded in the Mists. We were able to get around it easily; unfortunately, there were Mist skeletons hanging from chains on the other side above a scarlet pool of blood. I must admit that Dr. Penarrow is quite the warrior with his silver-topped cane. Still, it was more than a bit hazardous when they turned into fog and slipped out of their manacles, solidifying once more to surround us.

By day's end, we were in no convenient place to leave the Mists. Dr. Penarrow finished off the last of the skeletons with a well-placed burst of daylight, after which he suggested we might wish to spend the night in a small cabin he had noticed during another journey, when there had been no time for side expeditions. After a couple of healing potions mended our flesh, I anointed the skeletal remains with some of my alchemical fire. Finally, we started toward the cabin.

Leaving the Mistway at a point only he was able to recognize as different from any other, we trekked through the roiling fog as shadows mixed with the Mists, making our line of sight almost nonexistent. After what seemed like hours, I heard a rhythmic thunder rolling through the vapors and scented the unmistakable odor of the sea in a place where no sea should be. Soon I saw a dark shape through the fog and a glimmer of golden firelight. Just ahead of us lay a small whitewashed cabin set upon a low cliff of massive gray boulders. Although all of my senses said that we should have been below this place along the shores of

whatever hidden sea, the fog opened along an inviting path set with colored marbles and odd stones. These intermixed with what looked like crushed shell just before the cabin's dark red door.

After calling out, knocking upon the door and waiting for few minutes, we ascertained that no one was inside — not an unusual thing in an oubliette — and entered. The one room cottage was warm and inviting, with a well-stoked fire, two comfortable chairs draped with colorful woolen blankets and a soft featherbed in one corner. The scent of some sort of fish chowder wafted from a pot over the hearth, and a loaf of bread, still warm, sat waiting on a small carved table against one window. Perceiving no harm in the food or furniture, we settled in for the evening, enjoyed a long and satisfying game of chess from a clever traveling set Dr. Penarrow had in his pack before retiring for the night. Dr. Penarrow settled down in his bedroll near the fire, while I made use of the featherbed. The sound of the ocean soon sent me off to sleep. My last thought as I went under was that perhaps I was a little too comfortable in such a strange location...

A touch on my hand awakened me. I felt something cool and leathery against my skin. What was it? And what was that hissing sound? Slowly I opened my eyes and looked down. Eyes... many yellow eyes with slit pupils glittered in the slowly lowering flames of the fire. A serpent, black with patterned markings of deep red, sat coiled upon my chest. Its slowly moving tail brushed once more lightly along my upturned palm as I tried not to move or scream. I glanced over at the floor, and realized it was writhing — covered in snakes. At least fifteen of the same black vipers slithered along the natural rock floor, some basking in the heat along the hearth, others still wiggling up from cracks in the stone. Dr. Penarrow lay far too still in his bedroll, two puncture wounds oozing blood, and drops of venom marred his face.

Thinking quickly, I grabbed the edge of my coverlet and flipped it up over the snake on my chest, wrapping it in the blanket's folds. Reaching for my gun I put a shot into the squirming bundle and then grabbed my sword and boots from the side of the bed. Checking carefully to be certain there was nothing inside my shoes, I slipped them on and took another look at Dr. Penarrow. He moaned and shifted, disturbing another of those horrid creatures, this one so warmed by the heat of the stone that it did nothing more than take a desultory snap at him and then settle more firmly along the length of his leg.

A sour odor rose from their bodies, their fumes sickening me as I calculated my plan for his rescue. Finally I rolled off the featherbed and, pulling it from





its frame, dropped it on top of the vipers and landed on it near the unconscious Dr. Penarrow. Stabbing his overly-friendly bedmate with my sword and flinging its body into the fire, I rolled the good doctor over onto the feathered pad and dragged him across the room toward the front door. A keening noise rose behind me, shrill and terrible. Pulling him through the door, I slammed it shut and reached for one of the stones along the path to jam it tight. It was a moment before I realized that the oddly shaped rock was a small skull, its eye sockets and mouth packed with dirt, dried hanks of skin and hair. Those white objects decorating the path were not crushed shell at all, but fragments of bone.

Quickly I pulled Dr. Penarrow away from the cottage, trying not to think of the creatures whose remains decorated the deceptively pleasant path to this place. After I treated his wound using a salve meant to detoxify the poisonous venom, he soon awakened. We decided to wait until what passed for morning to see if the snakes slithered back into their holes beneath the house. Then, my dearest sister, the true nightmare of this oubliette began. Plumes of smoke rose, streaming forth from those formerly inviting windows. As we watched, the house itself seemed to twist and warp as more and more snakes boiled from every crevice, each of them a writhing skeletal whip, still hissing and keening as they burned.

We fled quickly, leaving most of our supplies behind. I do believe we will be cutting this portion of our expedition short to spend time recovering in some place well known to both of us as entirely snake-free. I shall most certainly contact you again as soon as we resume our travels.

With affection, your sister,  
Laurie

Have you ever traveled down a certain street, one you travel quite often while shopping or just strolling in the sunshine on your way to some other destination, when suddenly you see a door, scarred and worn with time, in a space between two buildings where nothing existed before? Dear readers, I believe we have all experienced this sense of the strange wrapped in the familiar. Yet few realize that such places may have come from the rising Mists.

In this chapter we examine those uncanny and ever-changing places called dread oubliettes. We believe these glades, towers, tiny shops and great mansions are born of or taken by the Mists, much as the creatures described in earlier chapters. They may bring forth monsters or draw folk in to trap or warp them. They may hold erstwhile travelers

imprisoned in time until the world outside has changed beyond recognition.

First we discuss what differentiates the oubliette from sinkholes of evil, or from lands brought forth through conjunctions. Next we detail the differences within oubliettes — temporal irregularities, variations in magic use and other changes that make oubliettes such terrifying places. Finally, we explore what happens when the Mists seep into our lands, leaving oubliettes on this side of the foggy barrier to warp our familiar landscape, if only for a time.

## What Is An Oubliette?

Defining a dread oubliette is quite simple. It is also terribly complex. In the plainest of terms, an oubliette is a space within the Mists with its own solid reality, but normally uninhabited except by those creatures who roam the Mists — or the occasional unfortunate Mist-led or Fugued being. Such places are not necessarily corrupted, such as those horrifying areas known as sinkholes of evil. Although surrounded by the Mists, they are neither difficult to enter, nor usually to leave. They are places of sanctuary for some, holding cells for those unfortunates caught in a time fugue within the Mists or temporary homes for others.

Our best understanding is that they exist within the Mists except at certain times and places, when they may be left by the Mists in odd locations within our lands. Much like the Mist byways, some of which only appear under special conditions, dread oubliettes appear and disappear seemingly at random — or else with a pattern known only by whatever intelligence controls the Mists.

### Oubliette Salient Conditions

Mutable conditions inside oubliettes provide extra challenges for adventurers who explore them or who must engage in combat inside them. Either claimed or created by the Mists, dread oubliettes add to the CR for most actions within depending upon the salient effects. Below is a list of salient conditions. A DM may choose at random by rolling 1d6. Each oubliette will have at least one of these effects, adding extra effects will; of course, increase the CR.





## Table 8-1: Oubliette Salient Effects

| Die Roll | Effect   |
|----------|--|
| 1        | Oubliettes have spell resistance 5 against any spell or magic item used to attempt to damage or change them. Creatures using one as a refuge for more than a week will also gain this effect until they have spent at least one consecutive week away from the oubliette, at which point the resistance fades away. This spell resistance stacks with any other natural spell resistance. CR +1/2  |
| 2.       | Oubliettes have a <i>Menacing Atmosphere (Su)</i> : Any creature entering the oubliette must make a Will save at DC 10 + 1/2 the calculated CR of the encounter. If they fail they have a -2 on all attacks, saves, ability checks and skill checks for 24 hours or until they leave the oubliette, from a sense of paranoia. If they make their save they are immune from any further effects from the dread atmosphere for the next 24 hours. If still inside the oubliette at the end of the next 24 hour period they must again attempt a Will save, this time at a +1. Paladins are not immune. CR+1/2  |
| 3        | <i>Raging Heart (Su)</i> : The oubliette has an aura of violence. Everyone is under a constant rage effect as per the spell <i>emotion</i> . This effect ends only when creatures leave the oubliette. There is no change to CR.   |
| 4        | <i>Inside a Nightmare (Su)</i> : Anyone entering an oubliette must make a Will save at DC 10 + 1/2 the calculated CR of the encounter or lose their sense of direction. Recognizing the door a PC has come through from others in the room requires an Intelligence check at DC 15. After a combat or other distraction the DC rises to 20. Those with the Tracking Feat may attempt to follow tracks with a +5 to their normal DC. PCs may attempt another Will save after resting or sleeping for at least 4 hours. PCs who have saved against the nightmarish effect may lead their confused companions. A <i>find the path</i> spell negates the effect, as well as other directional divinatory spells such as <i>locate object</i> or <i>locate creature</i> . CR +1/2 |
| 5        | Paranoia abounds. All PCs inside the oubliette should be treated as though under the fear affect "shaken," taking a -2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks and ability checks. A Will saving throw at DC 15 negates this affect. CR +1/4  |
| 6        | <i>Twisted Perceptions (Su)</i> : PCs must make a Fortitude save at DC 10 + 1/2 the calculated CR of the encounter or be dizzy and uncertain of their depth perception. This affect creates a miss chance for all attacks of 20%. Skill checks involving sight have a +5 to the DC as well. Blind creatures are immune to this effect.   |

## Oubliettes: Beginnings and Endings

Those who travel the Mists expound as many theories about oubliettes as there are ideas about the Mists themselves. Some feel that oubliettes are merely odd bits of land engulfed and kept by the Mists — perhaps an odd section left from a conjunction or a corner wiped out in another world and accidentally caught in the swirling eddy of the Mists. Others feel such places are born within the Mists and that they have a purpose in beginning and will disappear when that purpose is complete.

The most radical, to my mind, theory states that each oubliette is an open and unfinished creation of the Mists. Such ideas lead to the belief that the Mists have not only created our lands, but continue to grow and build new ones surrounded and hidden by the Mists. Such ideas, considering some of the places we discovered in our explorations, are enough to give one nightmares — which some say is another explanation for the dread oubliette. They may be nothing more or less than the stuff of dreams made real by the Mists themselves.

No matter what their beginnings, however, they seem to appear and disappear with alarming regularity within the Mists — sometimes making their way to our lands, sometimes carrying Mist creatures to harm and despoil. At other times, these places bring forth those Mist-led individuals lucky enough to find shelter within such a place before the Mists abandon it — or place it in its intended setting in another land.

## Captured Darkness

Although oubliettes are rarely inhabited, they may contain a certain atmospheric darkness disturbing to sensitive clerics or those with mental powers. Such places evoke that almost instinctive sense of danger so well known by the experienced adventurer, yet rarely is that sense of danger realized in any fashion. Unfortunately, if there is some sort of danger within, many travelers may be so distracted by their fears that they do not notice the real peril until too late.

Such was the instance in a small oubliette near the byway called the Path of Innocence. A flash of color in the midst of the Mists led us to leave the Mistway to see what might be there. Within a span of a few minutes, I discovered a lovely meadow





completely encircled and domed by the Mists although it seemed lit with a soft twilight glow.

The longer we stayed within what should have been a peaceful glade, the more uneasy we felt and the less stable our tempers. It occurred to me how unlikely this was when I spoke in anger over nothing, and Dr. Penarrow swung his cane at my head. His completely abnormal action cleared my mind for one crucial moment. I ran from the clearing back into the Mists, drawing Dr. Penarrow with me. Once outside the oubliette, we realized the danger we had so narrowly escaped. We decided to mark (as well as it is possible to do so) its presence near the byway and leave it alone.

—from the journal of Laurie Weathermay-Foxgrove, 758 BC

## Cages and Sanctuaries

Perhaps the most eerie and dangerous oubliettes are those used by Mist creatures as their sanctuaries and temporary hideaways in the Mists. Thinking creatures caught in the Mists have no permanent haven, yet they sometimes take over an oubliette for a time before their home is taken from them or, worse yet, deposited somewhere as a new dwelling in our lands — along with its inhabitant. Some of the largest oubliettes consist of entire streets or, in one instance, a small village — completely deserted and quite eerie, but a sometime home to the Mist-led or Fugued who have little or no hope of ever returning from the Mists.

Strangest of any I have seen was the odd stone room we found in an out of the way place far from any known byway. Its entrance was a tall iron door, rusted and pitted as though by acid. The doorway and walls stretched out into the Mists as far as I could see. Entering was difficult, as the atmosphere inside was icy cold and more than a bit dark and confusing. For a moment after our entrance, my head whirled and I was afraid I was going to black out from the twisting shadows along the high ceiling above us.

The room was large and smelled much of warm blood. The first thing we noticed was the strangely neat and uniform script covering a major portion of the battered rock walls. Such sayings as *Beauty is as Beauty Does* and *Once I was Vain, Now I am Sad* swirled in patterns to confuse the eye. Worst of all was the bizarre collection of mannequins, wig forms and marionettes hung about the room. Dark shadows from these things gave the illusion that a crowd was there, caught on strings, chained to walls and

hanging from silken twine attached to torches set about the room. Some few were placed in iron cages as though someone were afraid they would walk away. Shards of broken mirrors on the walls and suspended from the ceiling added to the confusing light and shadow effect.

Yet the true horror of this place was what decorated these strange forms. The first I examined was a life-sized marionette draped in a tangle on a couch near the entrance. I thought its features were carved, and then I looked closer. Its fall of rich auburn hair dragged the ground, while an incongruous yet luxurious beard of blond coiled about its neck. It was a patchwork of pieces, each obviously taken from a different person. Although the figure lay limp as death, I could see the lips move, the eyelids flutter and the hands twitch as though the creature were caught in a dream.

We looked at the others. Each was a tatterdemalion of body parts, tacked to these forms in a bizarre fashion. Each part was warm and seemingly alive. Eyes moved. One entire row of wooden heads beseeched us with living gazes in beautiful shades of amber, violet and green. Mouths framed by shapely, rosebud lips whispered words no one could hear. The occasional mask of cat skin or horse hide stretched upon a wig form moved restlessly as we came near, ears flicking and rotating to the sound of our footfalls.

Finally our sickness at the sight was enough to send us from the room. Dr. Penarrow sent a blast of fire from his fingertips in an attempt to destroy this terrible wardrobe or artwork of flesh but no flame would touch anything inside. The blaze rolled over the mannequins and lit the mirrors with flashes of amber and crimson, but nothing burned. At last we left, closing the iron door tightly behind us, hoping never to meet the twisted being who decorated his abattoir with trophies. Sadly we later realized whose hideaway it might be.

—from the journal of Laurie Weathermay-Foxgrove, 758 BC

## Strange Worlds Within

Considering that such terrifying places exist within the Mists, believing they might someday become a part of the lands outside takes on the aspects of a nightmare. Yet we have all taken note of places that later we could not find or heard legends of strange islands appearing and disappearing with the movement of the Mists. Within the pages of our many tomes are hundreds of stories of





these ephemeral locations, some caught in the throes of an ancient curse, others doomed to rise outside the Mists only when a certain condition is met. These dread oubliettes are some of the most dangerous — for they intrude upon our lands and do not always show their darkness until far, far too late.

One tale related by a bard from the Curriculo in Invidía told of a little shop found at the end of a nearly-deserted street. It would only appear when the Mists were thick, and there was never a light on inside the building, except for what looked like a candle flame far in the back. On a dark and extremely foggy night a harried and forgetful man sought a gift for his baby daughter whose first birthday had almost gone unnoticed. He saw that the shop's window held a number of toys, including a brightly painted baby doll that looked much like his beloved child. Although the shop looked closed he noticed the flickering candlelight and began banging on the door — which obligingly swung open. For a moment he hesitated, or at least that is how the story goes, but then he entered the shop. It was very cold inside, a fact that left him feeling frightened and certain that something was watching him, yet all was utterly silent and still. After calling out and receiving no answer, he quickly grabbed the doll from where it lay on a velvet cushion, threw a silver sweetpiece down and gave in to his urgent need to leave as quickly as he had come.

His daughter was asleep when he returned and he placed the sweet-faced baby doll beside her in the bed, round-cheeked face to round-cheeked face. In the morning he awoke to a wavering scream from his wife. Rolling out of bed and grabbing a sword he ran into his daughter's room where his wife stood, now crying. Where once a child and doll had lain now there were two small wooden figures, glassy painted eyes wide open, one with a rosin tear along its cheek.

The man grabbed both dolls and rushed out of the house in terrible anger — in the typical Invidían fashion — to find the owners of the mysterious little shop and force them to return to him his beautiful little girl. When he came to the end of the street where he had gone the night before, he found only an old ruin, long since burned and fallen. They say he has taken to wandering the streets on any night in which the Mists drift through the town of Curriculo, still seeking that shop, and that

he always has two baby dolls cradled in his arms. The shop has never been seen again.

## Temptations

Dread oubliettes invading our lands often seem to contain something meant to tempt or trick us. A comfortable cabin, a lush oasis in the midst of the desert or a small deserted peddler's wagon may all contain treasures or cursed items meant to attract and destroy those who give in to the temptation. Another version of the story above states that others, who did not leave some payment, found instead of a painted figure, tattered remains and his gift lying in a pool of crimson. Some have seen weapon shops or smithies with amazing swords and daggers — all of which are cursed in some fashion, such as causing their new owners to kill the first people they see after taking up the weapon. Needless to say, if one finds a treasure in a strange place and is tempted to take it, the safest thing to do is leave it be, or better yet, find some way to destroy it to save others from a similar fate!

## Adventure Vignettes Anywhere

Oubliettes are an amazingly flexible addition to a DM's creative repertoire in Ravenloft. No matter where your PCs travel or where they stay the night, a clever DM can use the dread oubliette to give them a chance at something completely unique. Oubliettes can be as small as a single tree with a hangman's noose suspended from its branches to as large as an uninhabited castle or small village.

What makes the oubliette different from any of the other dark pockets in Ravenloft? Well, first of all, these places are not regularly inhabited by intelligent beings—no villagers or no dread villain on the parapets of the castle. Yet these places have their own personalities and may be the temporary home of any Mist creature, whether born of the Mists, Lost or Mist-led and desperate to get out. Secondly the oubliettes are never permanent. For example, you can bring an ancient manor house to the empty pasture at the end of a street during a fogbound night and panic the town as they remember a vicious killer a hundred years ago coming from this same “ghost” house. Add a small shop where a trickster fey has created a business. In a week, the shop is gone, and the fey moves on, leaving sorrow and horror in her wake.

Oubliettes are different in other ways as well. Just as a Mistway may change perception, twist time or transport those caught in it to another





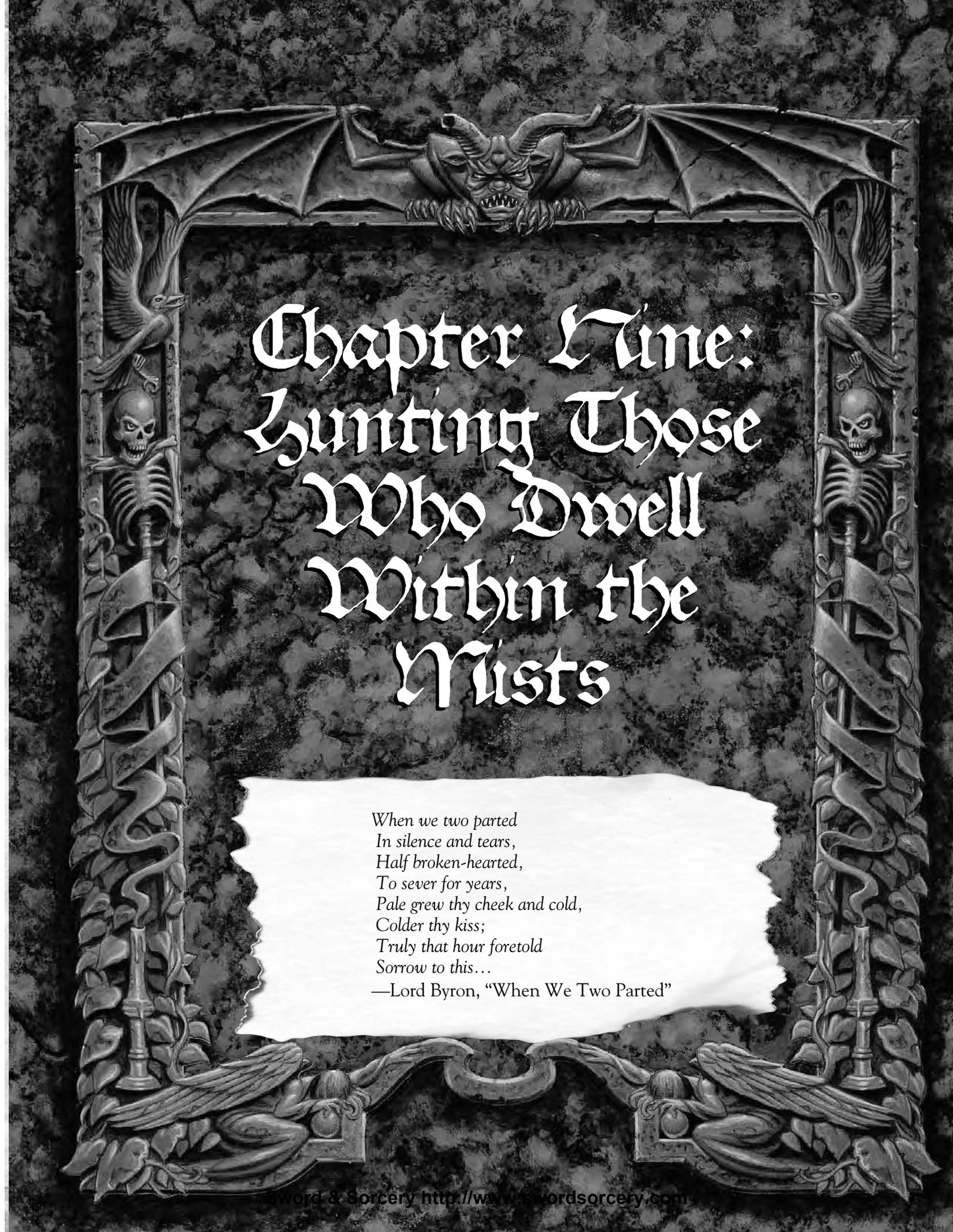
place entirely, the oubliette may have a differing magic ratings or its rating may fluctuate from room to room. Entering an oubliette may send the PCs through an adventure that lasts for a month, yet they return to the outside world only moments after they left — or even before! Consider places where no ranger can find his way, because every

move circles back to the same room. Imagine a place where intuitive PCs might realize a body lies hidden, waiting for rest or revenge. Below is a list of some of the extraordinary changes that might take place within an oubliette. DMs can certainly come up with other creative and maddening ideas. Such effects may be chosen at random by rolling 1d10.

### Table 8–2: Oubliette Extraordinary Effects

| d10 Roll | Effect  |
|----------|---|
| 1        | Magic ratings drop, roll 1d4 to see what the magic rating will be. Minimum is zero. Check the <b>Ravenloft Player's Handbook</b> for information on the how this affects spellcasting and magic items. CR +1/4  |
| 2        | Temporal fugue occurs. Time passes differently within the oubliette. An hour becomes a day or a day within the oubliette lasts only a minute outside, as the DM chooses. All beings moving inside the oubliette within one minute will find themselves in the same "temporal plane." <i>Haste</i> and <i>slow</i> spells do not change this effect. CR +1/3   |
| 3        | All sounds within distort. Speech becomes impossible to understand without a <i>comprehend language</i> or <i>tongues</i> spell, and spells with a verbal component cannot be cast unless the spellcaster succeeds at a DC 15 Concentration check to make the syllables come out correctly. CR +1/2   |
| 4        | <i>Dark Energy (Su)</i> : All undead within the oubliette add +4 to their turn resistance, or turn resistance +4 if they did already possess the quality. +1 CR to all encounters with undead.  |
| 5        | When confronted with danger, all PCs inside the oubliette should be treated as though under the Fear affect <i>panicked</i> , taking a -2 moral penalty on skill and ability checks. The characters must flee, choosing a path at random as long as it leads away from the immediate danger. They must drop what they are holding and flee any other dangers that confront them. A DC 20 Fear save negates this affect. CR +1/2 |
| 6        | All creatures inside the oubliette temporarily lose one point of Intelligence per hour down to a minimum of 1. Intelligence levels return at a rate of one point per hour once a creature leave the oubliette. <i>Restoration</i> or <i>greater restoration</i> restores the intelligence immediately. CR +1/2 to all encounters.   |
| 7        | All creatures within the oubliette are weakened, losing 4 points from their Strength score. Strength returns at a rate of one point per hour once stricken characters are outside the oubliette or may be restored immediately with <i>restoration</i> . +1/2 CR to all encounters.   |
| 8        | <i>A Shadow of Madness (Su)</i> : All creatures within the oubliette must make a DC 15 Madness saving throw for each day they spend in the oubliette. Failure to save leads to a minor Madness effect. See the section on Madness in the <b>Ravenloft Player's Handbook</b> to choose randomly the Madness effect. +1/2 CR.   |
| 9        | Anyone coming into the oubliette receives a compulsion to take at least one item from it as his own. Compelled creatures will be angered as though by a failed Diplomacy check by attempts to take the item away or by being asked to leave the item behind. A DC 20 Will save negates this compulsion. CR +1/4   |
| 10       | The dread atmosphere of the oubliette halves the effectiveness of magical healing while within its confines. +1 CR  |





# Chapter Time: Hunting Those Who Dwell Within the Mists

*When we two parted  
In silence and tears,  
Half broken-hearted,  
To sever for years,  
Pale grew thy cheek and cold,  
Colder thy kiss;  
Truly that hour foretold  
Sorrow to this...  
—Lord Byron, “When We Two Parted”*



n completing this text, I am forced to admit that my life has undergone a profound change.

Fog on the rise is a familiar sight in this land. Each evening the slow, white veil thickens upon the ground in its customary fashion. Alas, I can no longer look upon this constant guest in the same way. It is no longer familiar to me, knowing what I know now. Each night, I dread its inevitable coming.

Those of you who have read our other two volumes already know that we divide all our investigations into different segments. Each of these segments serves a different purpose.

- **Discovery**
- **Confirmation**
- **Commitment**
- **Reconnaissance**
- **The Hunt**
- **The End Game**

## Discovery

I first became aware of the case that would change my life through our long-time friend Nikolas Anthor, who has aided us so often in our investigations in the past. Our loyal compatriot sent us post asking for aid in his own adventure. According to his correspondence, the people of Valachan were besieged by a strange creature that “rose up from below.”

For two weeks, an alarming number of vanishings had taken place in the small town of Rotwald. The people were now so on edge as to be paranoid. The entire town had shut down for a week, and few dared to leave their homes.

Undaunted, Nikolas and a group of concerned citizens combed the streets at night, looking for signs of what might have happened to the missing people. Apparently, the normal law enforcement — the Black Leopards — saw the attacks as a just end to “a traitorous people.”

On the third night of his vigil, Nikolas was patrolling the main street of Rotwald with a woodcutter, one of the few citizens brave enough to venture out with him.

In the darkness, Nikolas distinctly heard the faintest breath behind him, a sudden drawing in of air.

Nikolas spun about just in time to see something both sudden and terrifying.

The attack began with a flash. From a nearby sewer sluice, an arm lashed out and grabbed his partner by the ankle. Then, the woodcutter’s whole leg was yanked into the sluice down to the thigh. His other leg was bent at a strange angle because it would not fit down the narrow gap. Finally, with a third tug, the free leg broke as the body was forced to fit through the iron opening by whatever was pulling from within the depths.

As Nikolas put it, “His body flailed like an abused doll pulled by a careless child. Throughout the entire scene, the air resounded with the crush of bone and marrow. Too small, too small, his body was too small.”

Our dear friend and compatriot asked for our aid. It appeared that we now had a case upon our hands.

## Confirmation

The first thing we did to aid our beloved associate was to delve into research. As always, research was our opening move to any investigation.

Our findings showed that Rotwald was not the only city to see such peculiar crimes. Indeed, for the past ten years, other cities had reported similar disappearances, all attributed to a being that “came from below.”

In the city of Karg in Darkon, it was widely believed that a creature called Old Scrabbling Sally was responsible for causing people to disappear. Meanwhile, in the city of Pont-a-Museau in Richemulot, claimed its culprit to be Little Hollow Ivil. Even our own Mordentshire had its version of the lurking dweller, called Cellar Bones.

Strangely, the dates of the attacks in each of these cities never coincided. Was it possible, then, that the vanishings were committed by the same being? And there was another strange phenomenon we encountered while researching these crimes: they seemed very similar to the stories of the Sewer Bogeyman of Il-Aluk, a city that had been wiped out fifteen years ago. Could the Bogeyman of Il-Aluk somehow have survived the disastrous Requiem?

What struck us as equally fascinating was the fact that all of these crimes came from below. That told us that creature we were dealing with had some sort of aversion to the light. Possibly, it was a weakness of his.





Clearly, we needed more information. For that, my sister and I would have to travel to Rotwald.

Our journey took much longer than it should have, as the local militia continually harassed us. These Black Leopards, as they were called, repeatedly stopped our progress, flaunting themselves in their black chain mail armor.

Fortunately, I was able to make a *suggestion* to one Leopard lieutenant that he take a swim in the river, after which his bemused captain told his soldiers to give us a wide berth.

We finally arrived in Rotwald on a cold autumn afternoon. The sky was clear and the land eerily quiet. As we rode up to the town, we noted that every house was darkened, every door sealed shut. The famous Black Leopards, normally so abundant in Rotwald, were conspicuously missing.

At long last, we found Nikolas at the Inn of the Singing Bone, where we were refreshingly treated like proper guests by the boisterous mayor of the town, Oleg Halffen. We learned that the disappearances had stopped recently but that the people of the town were still very much afraid. To make matters worse, numerous people remained unaccounted for.

Most of the people of the town were unwilling to talk to us. According to them, the vanishings were some new devilment created by the feared tyrant Von Kharkov and aiding our investigation might cast them in the light of treason.

Only one person dared to speak to us, a young girl of only sixteen summers. As she answered the door, I could not help but be impressed with her exotic beauty. Her dusky skin shone softly in the sun, and her dark eyes were as full and as deep as ink.

"My mother's not here," she whispered to me through the crack of the door. "I can't talk long."

I nodded quietly, sadly observing the raw fear that consumed her mahogany face. "Say what you can, child."

"A number of us have been talking. A number of us have seen it!"

I waited, not wanting to press her, yet I could feel myself leaning closer.

"It wears the form of a bent, old woman. Its hair is long and greasy. Its skin is covered with sores. Its body is like that of...a leper."

I opened my mouth to ask but a single question, but even this gesture was too much. The door slammed instantly. I cursed myself for my over-eagerness, but from these simple words we were able to gain another victory. In the tomes that we brought with us, we were able to see that Old Scrabbling Sally, Cellar Bones, and even Little Hollow Evil had similar traits. Each of these horrors was described as small and bent. All accounts told of greasy hair. But most importantly, every one of these creatures was said to be incurably diseased.

We now had reason to believe that the being we were hunting was the same creature that had plagued Darkon, Richemulot and Mordent. Each of its haunting grounds was very far apart, but we suspected the method it was using to transport itself between each of these cities. It was now our belief that the thing we were after was a creature of the Mists. Even so, we were on our own. Nikolas, Laurie and I had to track the creature by ourselves.

## Commitment

Logically, the first place we needed to start was in the sewers. There was nothing to do but roll up our sleeves, steel our senses and delve down into the depths.

The sewers below Rotwald were sewers in name only. They had been constructed by hand and had clearly stood for centuries. It was evident even in our initial explorations that these tunnels originally served some other purpose.

Crowds of man-figures carved in *bas relief* stood along the walls. Their forms were stunted and misshapen. These tiny crowds of men hunched over in the dankness, their bodies covered with lichen and moss. Their gazing eyes glared unflinchingly at us as we walked by.

As the light of our torches flickered, it seemed as if the carvings upon the damp walls were alive — crawling and writhing within the wan light.

All about us, the passages warbled and echoed with the sound of splashing water. We had no choice but to wade through the mire, which was thigh-deep.

From time to time, we found indication of our quarry — a lone footprint here, a hand print there. Judging from the size of the prints, we were looking for something that was about four feet tall. It was ironic that such a little creature could cause so much grief. After about half an hour of searching,





it was Nikolas who spotted further sign of our nemesis.

“Look there,” he whispered to us, his wooden hand gently touching Laurie’s arm.

I strained to see what our friend was indicating but I could not quite make it out. “It’s a trick of the eye,” I hissed up at him. “Our unsteady light makes this entire place look as if it’s moving.”

Nikolas looked back at me. “It’s not the light,” he replied simply.

As we crept closer, I could see it. Indeed, it was not a stone figure made to dance through an illusion of shadow and flame. It was a man. His arms and legs had been cemented to the wall, bent at such odd angles that the pose could only be accomplished by breaking the offending limbs. His glazed eyes flicked over towards us and then suddenly away. A low moan escaped his lips.

“It’s all right,” I said immediately. “We’re here to help you. Can you tell us....”

Laurie shook her head at me. “His mind, dearest, it’s gone.” She gently waved her torch in front of his face. His eyes followed the lure of the light for a while before wandering around the rest of the tunnel. No doubt his mind had broken, along with his limbs, to save itself from the horrors to which it had been subjected.

“Look at his face,” growled Laurie, her teeth clenching in outrage.

As I saw what she was pointing at, I had to immediately turn my head. The man’s face was crawling with tiny, white worms. Flies and insects had taken up residence inside his half-living body. Their offspring were now covering his diseased flesh.

Nikolas jerked his head, motioning further down the passage. There, we saw that this poor man was not the only victim of abject torture. All along the ceiling and walls were various bodies, sealed within a hive of stone and flesh, all garishly decorating the molding tunnels that we traversed.

“What madness is this?” I whispered to myself.

As if in answer to my question, a chorus of whispers sprang up. The hissing buzz of voices now filled the dim tunnel. The myriad sounds echoed off of the sewer water, warping until it was incomprehensible.

Laurie looked at me and held up two fingers. I understood her signal, and with one smooth motion, I quickly uttered a single arcane word and passed her a pen-sized arrow attached to my belt. In

the very moment that I handed it off, Laurie had the bolt loaded into a hand crossbow and fired off it down the passage. The tiny missile lit up with mystical light. I saw the orb of illumination sail along the darkened corridor and pass over something small and gnarled, hunched in the water.

I reached into my spell pouch and felt for my next components.

“Dost thou like our good works?”

“Like it? Like our work?”

“Do you like wat ye see, lass?”

Three separate voices resonated from the darkness.

“We know you’re there,” said Nikolas. He handed his torch to Laurie while switching out his wooden hand for a large, iron hook. “There’s no point in hiding.”

“Thou hast seen us, verily,” said one of the voices.

“Sure ye have seen us, aye,” said another.

“Course you’ve seen us,” said the last voice. “Wanted you to see us. Been so long since we’ve had company. Only have the Mists to talk to down here.”

Laurie stepped forward. She and Nikolas locked eyes for a moment, and then he gave her a nod. She slipped by him in the tunnel and slowly approached the trio of voices.

“Only the Mists to talk to? Poor creature. It must be terribly lonely here by yourself.”

“In days of olde we sought to squeeze the breath from those thou seekest.” Again, that strange voice with the archaic Darkonese tongue. It was definitely feminine. And it spoke with the stilt of education.

“Aye, but with the breath squeezed out ‘o their wee bodies, we ha’ nary a soul ta talk to.” Now, a distinctly male voice. It was older and clearly from Forlorn.

“Came up with this, then. Leaving some alive. Leaving some dead. Have a few to talk to. Very lonely, when it’s just us.” The last voice sounded definitely Mordentish. It was a younger voice than the other two.

I closed my eyes for a moment, focusing on the voices. I let their tongue settle in my ear. It was then that I knew. I understood exactly what we were facing.

Nikolas faded back and whispered in my ear. “Three voices. Three languages. I only saw one creature. Perhaps the other two are hiding?”





I shook my head. "No, Nikolas," I said aloud. "The others aren't hiding."

On cue, Laurie completed my thought. "Indeed, there is only one being down that passage. One being that speaks with three voices."

"So smart. Need the voices, see? Keeps us company. Keeps us thinking. Need to keep thinking. Especially with our home gone."

Laurie was continuing to make her way into the darkness, as she spoke. Her hands were raised to show that they held no weapons, though she was far from disarmed.

"Your home is gone? What happened to it?"

Then, it happened. As I heard it, my skin stood still and cold. My heart paused. For a moment, even the rippling water seemed frozen.

"Mists took it." All of the voices spoke. And as they spoke, they spoke as one.

"Gennifer," said Nikolas, "you said there was only..."

"I know, I know! There is only one."

"Laurie! Look out!"

"Nikolas! Don't!"

But it was too late. In a dark splashing of water and grime, Nikolas charged ahead. In the dark, we could hear the two clash. In the glint of the torches, Nikolas's hooked hand flashed twice. Then, we heard him cry out in pain.

I gripped onto another tiny arrow and prepared to illuminate the gloom. Before I could, there was a flash in the tunnel as Laurie's fired off the chamber of her Parthian Rapier. We heard a chorus of screams and saw something retreating into the darkness.

"Go," gasped Nikolas. "After it." And with that, he slumped over onto the wall. His chest was coated in a long, dark stain.

## Reconnaissance

Unwilling to leave our friend Nikolas behind, we hauled him up to the safety of the town.

He might have died, too, had it not been for unexpected aid from a most unlikely source. No sooner had we breathed fresh air than we found ourselves hauled up into the open. To all sides of us stood a contingent of Black Leopards, armed and at the ready. Above them all loomed a single figure, who sat atop a smoke-colored stallion. His ebony skin shone in the moonlight.

"A pity," said Baron Von Kharkov. "Your hunt has failed. I was really hoping to meet this villain, living or dead." His baritone voice resonated over the assembled crowd. His handsome face was accentuated with a collected smile that seemed surprisingly genuine for a renowned tyrant.

"It's not certain that he's gone," I breathed, still caught in the thrill of the fight we had just left.

"I am certain," said the Baron with dead seriousness. He tugged at the reins of his horse, marching it back and forth in front of us. He looked over our tiny party for a moment and then grinned again. "But it is no matter. My purpose here has been served. It will be clear to the people of Rotwald that they need me. They need my Leopards. For without them, who shall battle the things that lurk below?" He chuckled to himself and sighed, dusting off his gloved hands.

Laurie knelt down upon both knees, in complete supplication. "Your wisdom is as great as your strength, my lord. Now we humbly ask that you allow us..."

The great Baron exploded into a gust of powerful laughter. "Humbly! Humbly? I doubt that the Weathermay twins do anything humbly. But fear not. I have no interest in activities of amateurs this night. Indeed, I come for reasons that are entirely selfish."

With that, the grinning tyrant gestured. Where he pointed, we saw a pair of Black Leopards hauling a young girl from a nearby cottage. It was the girl who had given us that small bit of essential information. Her dark eyes were wide with terror and her mouth caught wide open, but no scream emerged from her lips. The quiet scuffle of her feet was the only sound in that crowded square.

"Tonight, I take my bride," said the Baron. His smiling face now grew cold and grim. He looked down upon us with a granite stare. "My men will see to your wounds. After that you may leave."

We did not argue with Von Kharkov. To do so would have been useless. All we could do was watch that rare beauty hauled away by the Black Leopards. And in all of her struggles, never once did she scream. To do so would have been useless.

## The Hunt

For a long time, the image of that poor girl being dragged up to Von Kharkov's castle did not leave me. It struck me that even as we were hunting





this creature who had tortured and killed so many, there were even greater forces of darkness in the world today. But now was not the time for self-pity. We had to act, for to linger but a moment might cost another life.

We had but one recourse. To trail something that constantly transported itself through the Mists was daunting, but in this land, there is one group of people who can accomplish this impossible task — the Vistani.

Not long after our trip to Rotwald, we traveled back north to our home in Mordentshire. From there, we made our customary inquiries, attempting to locate the vardo band of Tevye Calvinov.

When we at last found his band, we learned that our former contact was no longer with them. We met instead with the band's matriarch — their *raunie*.

"What do you seek now, you who have brought us such ill fortune?" said the *raunie*. "Since we last saw you, we lost our captain. He has suffered the White Fate and wandered into the fog, never to be seen again."

I bowed my head low, knowing full-well that the *raunie* held all the cards in this particular game. "That he stepped into the Mists was a fate of his choosing," I said quietly. "He is, in fact, fortunate. Few are able to choose their method of passing."

"Wisely spoken," said the *raunie*, with wide, taunting eyes. "Very well. We will take you on your hunt. But know this. There is a price."

Laurie frowned and sighed. She immediately stood. "Then we shall be on our way. We thank you for lending us your ear and your counsel."

I watched Laurie for a moment. Instantly, her gaze pierced my thoughts. She quickly rasped to me, "Don't even think about it. Whenever a Vistani mentions a price, it is never worth paying."

"Your sister," called the *raunie*, "is already aware of the price. Yes?" She tilted her head, gazing at me, now.

I flicked my eyes down at my watch, and read the dread inscription that trickled across it: *Borrowed Time*. I raised my head to lock eyes with the Vistani who had called me out. "You're right," I said. "We'll take the price then, I suppose."

"Gennifer," protested Laurie. "Are you mad?"

I fixed my stare upon the *raunie* for a moment. "Not at all. As I said before, few are fortunate enough to choose their method of passing." Then, I turned fully to face my beloved sister. I took her

hands into my own. "Laurie. We both knew that this day would come. Better now that we face it head on, knowing that it approaches. So many things in our life strike hard in our moments of joy. Let us dictate the time and place of our own tragedy."

In the end, Laurie knew that I was right. But that did not stop her hot tears, which dripped from both anger and sorrow.

With nothing else to do or say, Nikolas, Laurie and I followed the Vistani band into the Mists as the world around us faded. The once distinct features of the land melted into a bone-white palette. Soon, we could not see the land beneath our feet. After that, the sensation of walking upon solid ground faded as well. We might well have been treading the waters of a deep, dark lake.

Eventually, I was able to make out the features of a house. The tall rooftops peered out of the layers of fog, like the peaks of a distant mountain on the horizon. I looked about me to alert both Laurie and Nikolas to what I saw. It was then that I realized that I was totally alone. Though my companions had not been more than five paces away, they were now nowhere to be seen. Apparently, I was the only one the Mists had decided to take.

With no choice in the matter, I pressed on through the haze toward the house. Soon, I perceived a long wall that blocked my passage through the Mist. The wall was very old and covered with a great deal of lichen, moss and creepers. In some places, the brush was so thick that the ancient wall looked more like a steep hill rather than a barrier. As I walked the length of the stone partition, I came across a set of broad oaken gates.

To the right of the gates stood a tall gatehouse, built to receive guests. Sensing no immediate threat, I carefully made my way past the gate.

Just inside the entrance, I saw that the gatehouse was still very much in use. At the door to the two-story building I saw a pair of work boots, still covered with dark clods of mud.

It was now that my soul became filled with dread and foreboding. Even in the simplest arrangement of things, I found disquietude. The gates behind me seemed too neat in their construction. I found it disturbing how they had been left open just enough to allow a single person inside. The work boots, innocent enough in appearance, seemed too picturesque. They appeared to me not





as daily objects, but images peeled from a still-life painting.

Indeed, everything around me resembled a display— an erected backdrop of some lurid play upon whose stage I had somehow stumbled.

Beyond the gatehouse was a large stable and a dirt road that led further into what appeared to be the grounds of an estate. I proceeded down the path, gazing at everything around me.

Familiarity tugged at me. The cultivated trees were not unlike the groves of my own home, Heather House. The manicured lawns reminded me of the places where my sister and I played as children. For something to seem so familiar and yet so “constructed” made me ill. Had something reached inside me and assembled the fragments of my earliest memories?

The road curved around to my left, and soon the neatened trees gave way to a clearing. In the center of that clearing, located on a broad, gentle hill stood a cemetery.

Silent, round head stones stood up from the clipped grass in painful symmetry. Here and there, statues stood upon pedestals, their heads eternally frozen in uncompleted prayer. Assembled around the entire plot was a wrought iron fence, bordering the scene like the frame of a painting.

It was only then that I saw the entrance gate of the graveyard. There, plainly wrought, was the family name of the cemetery: *Van Richten*.

Revelation struck me like a thunderbolt. My knees buckled and I crumpled to the ground. As the world spun around me, I could feel hot tears flowing down my face. I was at Richten Haus, the ancestral estate of the Van Richten family. For as long as Van Richten himself had been missing, so too, had his familial home.

The floodgates of recognition opened and images began to pour in. I now remembered the gate house, the trees and the lawns. Each of these things were exactly as Rudolph Van Richten had described them to me as a youth. And though my sister and I never visited his ancestral home, we were intimately familiar with it through his stories.

Yet, as thrilled as I was that I had stumbled upon this long lost place, my very bones overflowed with unrest. For how could such a place seem so alien?

“Strange isn’t it, lass,” a voice sounded, shattering the eerie silence that had kept the place

frozen in time, “what the Mists can do with a place?”

I looked up through tears to see a small, hunched figure. It curled itself atop one of the grave stones like a gargoyle, with its long arms wrapped about its knobby legs. Wide, yellow eyes blinked at me. From behind its knees, I could see an equally yellow smile of rasping, glimmering teeth.

I slowly stood, wiping my face as I did. Drawing in a long breath, I composed myself. “So this is where you have been. Have you been here the entire time?” My voice quivered. In my heart, I knew that I was not prepared for this confrontation.

In an instant, the creature changed its voice. “Been here? The entire time? No, no. We get to visit other places. Take on different names. But here’s where we end up. In between our hunts.”

“Visiting, then?” I said, with as much bravado as I could muster. “It must be difficult in all this light. We know how much you hate it.” I could feel the creature’s eye wandering over my body. It was appraising me. Noting how I moved. Watching how I stood.

The creature slinked off of the grave upon which it sat. The thing poured itself behind one of cemetery statues, and peered around it. “We doth indeed hate this light. It doth sap our strength and gnaw at our brains. We know not why the Mists hast taken us to this place so forsaken.” It now spoke in its clipped feminine voice. “But we suspect that our meeting has been arranged. For clearly, this place has some meaning for thee. We also suspect something else. What thou seekest lies within yonder house.”

The creature’s finger slowly uncurled, pointing at the distant rooftops of Richten Haus. Its scab-riddled hand was purplish and moist. Sores covered its knuckles.

I gritted my teeth. “And why...why do you say that?”

“Someone thou seekest resides there. We cannot go into that place. That place does not like us. But thou...” It drew in a sharp breath and then cackled. “Thou might find purchase within.”

“Who...is in that house?” I said. I stepped back. I could feel my skin growing cold.

“Tis a strange place, lass,” said the first voice, rattling off in its Forlorn accent. “A place filled with living ghosts. And every time we come here, he hunts us!”





"Who is in the house?" I demanded.

"So ye see, lass," said the creature. "The Mists chose this place for us as our special torment. For in between our hunts, we become the hunted. We are stranded here in this terrible place of daylight and grass. And all the while, there's the bloke from the house. He comes. He comes to hunt us. There's never a moment to rest, never a moment to hide!"

My hands filled with mystic energy. I could feel both spell and rune rolling within my blood. With every fiber in my being I wanted to hurt this thing. The creature had dared to defile his home. It had gotten to roam the grounds, uncover its secrets. Such a beast did not deserve access to such mysteries. It did not deserve to know that I did not. "I shall ask you just once more," I said with all the calm that I could muster. "Who is in the house, Salissar...?" I let the name hang in the air.

The creature leapt out from behind the grave, its wide mouth gnashing. "Who told you that name?" the creature spat.

"Simple deduction," I said coldly. "Your work was well known in Il-Aluk. And in Karg and Mordentshire, you wrote your name upon every crime you committed. Your voice and name may change. But your work does not."

"No! No! We aren't Salissar! He died! He died!" With tremendous strength a creature perhaps half my size took up one of the granite tombstones and flung it against the wrought iron fence. The iron crumpled and snapped, further defiling this place.

My heart boiled with rage. I wanted so badly to hurt him. "I don't know how you survived the Requiem, Salissar. But I suspect that the incident has unhinged your mind. It must have been lonely in those foreign sewers, shifted about by the Mists, taken to different places all of the time."

"No! No! Not us! Not us!" A cacophony of different voices struck up from within its single throat. Salissar clutched his head and ran about madly, screaming like a wounded animal.

"And then to be here," I continued, "hunted all the time. To be stuck out in the sunlight. It must have been very lonely indeed."

It continued to scream pounding at the ground, making huge welts in the soil.

"Lonely enough to invent, Salissar, to invent people to talk to. They aren't real!"

The creature flung itself upon the ground and then began to flop over and over. Its limbs flailed

wildly, each blow strong enough to make huge welts in the ground where it struck.

I drew closer. And then, I felt it. A strange turning of the air. A subtle shift in energies stirred within the earth. The creature once known as Salissar suddenly raised his head. His yellow eyes focused upon me with abrupt clarity. Clearly, he felt the change as well.

"They call to ussss," he said in a new voice. I wondered, as I heard it, if this was his true voice all along. "Th-h-hey call to ussssss!"

Immediately, the beast spun upon all fours and bolted. My readied spell flew from my fingers. Instantly, a thunderbolt pierced his body like a pin through a moth. Yet, the thing I called Salissar loped on, slowed by my stroke but not stopped.

Before I knew it, it had leapt the fence around the graveyard. It was now fleeing into a large bank of fog. I began running after him.

And from the fog it called to me. "Follow ussss if you mussst! But you leave him behind! The housssse you leave behind!"

I glanced behind me. Already the grey rooftops of the house that I spied earlier were beginning to fade into the haze. I turned back, only to see the thing's indistinct shape fading into the endless white.

A choice lay before me. If Salissar were abandoned to the Mists, I had no doubt that he would reap havoc again. He would murder, torture and kidnap. Dozens more innocent lives would be lost in distant sewers, their last moments of life spiraling into madness as his perversions took hold of them.

And yet if I left Richten Haus, I knew in my heart that I would be abandoning it forever. I do not know how I knew this, but I was certain that it was true.

My choice was clear. I charged headlong into the Mists. Despite my passion, I could still see Salissar graying out in the fog. Without even thinking, I pulled forth my fey-crafted pocketwatch and pressed it.

The world slowed to a crawl. The wisps of fog hung still in the air. And now the land below me rushed by. Within a heartbeat, I had passed my opponent. I stopped now, letting him run to me.

The thing called Salissar stopped, churning up mud in his wake. Wide, yellow eyes blinked at me in astonishment. "How..." was its only word.





"Who was in that house?" I asked quietly, my spell already creeping up upon my palm.

"Mercccy!" It hissed. "Merccccc! I will take you back! Back to the housse! I will sssshow you!"

Despite its offers, I knew better than to trust this thing. In any case, I already knew that my own return to the house was barred. "No," I said plainly to Salissar. "You will not." And then, I unleashed my spell. Flame and sound tore through the fog, ripping it apart like crinoline.

As the wisps of white cleared, I found myself back at the Vistani camp from which I had departed. My sister and Nikolas looked about in concern.

"Smoke and mirrors aside, are we actually going to go anywhere?" remarked Nikolas.

I looked up at Laurie and she completed my own thought. "Nikolas," she said tenderly, taking his arm. "The journey has already been completed."

## End Game

My life has changed remarkably. Some days, when I awaken, I do not even recognize myself.

I have seen it. I have seen where Rudolph Van Richten might yet reside. I had my chance to go there, to unlock its mysteries. But I could have not done so and held true to the principles that the dear Doctor instilled in me.

Many readers might ask, "Why not ask the Vistani to take me back to the house that I saw?" Of course, we have attempted this very thing, but our efforts have yielded nothing. The only thing we have accomplished since my fateful encounter is aimless Mist-wandering. I strongly suspect that I am destined never to see that place again.

And why have I faced such a siege perilous? Why have I encountered so final a choice? I met Salissar in the very place that I wanted to see for so long. Why?

I can only imagine that my encounter was by design. Some great and powerful force tugged me to that inevitable encounter, forced me to make that terrible choice. This, gentle reader, is why my life has been changed so remarkably. For I now realize that my own life may not be under my control. Perhaps I am a simple pawn in some great game, whose constituent pieces I cannot yet see.

For a long while, I was tempted to quit the game. Simply refuse to play, and one cannot lose.

Yet, that would render another kind of victory to my unseen opponents.

Even now, as I write this, the fog drifts by my window, leaving the slightest film upon the glass. And within each one of those tiny droplets, I feel a separate eye gazing upon me.

No, I can no longer look upon the Mists as I once did. Things are different. Even my hand, as I now write this, is altered. My once pale fingers have grown dark. My palm, once alive and warm is as cold and as hardened as stone. Indeed, everything has changed.

## Research

Before going off into the Mists in search of a foe, wise player characters will spend time doing research in the hopes that they can learn enough about their enemy to defeat it. This section lists two methods of research.

### Using a Library

Adventurers pursuing a monster in the world of Ravenloft may seek to research their quarry, looking for the weakness, habits or capabilities of their particular foe. A character engaged in research must make a simple Knowledge skill check, using the appropriate Knowledge.

### Knowledge: Arcana

In most cases, Knowledge: Arcana is the appropriate skill to use when researching the capabilities or weaknesses of certain species of monster. For example, looking up the weaknesses of vampires or werewolves would be a

Knowledge: Arcana skill check (the DC varies according to the DM's assessment of the situation).

### Knowledge: History

Knowledge: History is more appropriate when searching for the weaknesses or capabilities of a particular creature. For example, searching for the weaknesses of the Red Bride of Nova Vaasa would call for a Knowledge: History check.





## Gather Information

A Gather Information check is most appropriate when trying to gather raw facts and data about an event or creature. Does the creature operate at night or during the day? What does it look like? What have eye witnesses seen as its capabilities? All of these questions are best answered through a Gather Information check (DC varies).

A raw Knowledge skill check simply means that the character in question is trying to recall information from her memory. If the character actually uses a library or other research facility, then there is a bonus to this check. The bonus depends upon the quality of the library.

In all cases, the DM should set the DC for the particular knowledge sought for before the roll. Occasionally the knowledge sought may simply not be available (the location of Azalin's phylactery, for example). The DM always has final say as to what information is or is not available via research.

Obviously, to get the research bonuses listed below, the researcher must be able to read the books in the library where he is studying.

## Research Time

Researching for an hour in a library grants a +2 bonus to a researcher's Knowledge skill check. Researching for three hours grants the seeker a +3 bonus to his check. Five hours grant a +4 bonus, seven hours grant a +5 bonus, and researching for a total of nine hours grants a +6 bonus to the Knowledge skill check.

Keep in mind that no matter how much someone studies, they are limited to the maximum bonus they can receive by the size of the library, which is indicated above.

## Researching Untrained

Any person seeking knowledge may use a library to make an untrained Knowledge skill check.

They are granted the bonuses listed above to their untrained check for use of a library. If researcher does use a library to make an untrained check, they must double their research time, since they are unfamiliar with the knowledge that they are researching.

## Maintaining Contacts

In some cases, PCs may retain contacts in different cities, as a sort of information gathering network. Using contacts to aid in research is easy. The character simply sends a message to the contact asking him or her about the topic at hand. Messages can be sent by letter, messenger or spell.

In Ravenloft, DMs who wish to speed up this process can simply rule that the character makes a Gather Information check. Then, each NPC the character consults performs an *aid another* action to that PC. Thus, an investigator can receive long distance aid to a Gather Information check. Keep in mind that it takes a while to get this aid.

Long distance aid can also benefit researchers. If an investigator consults an NPC through correspondence, he may also gain the benefit of the *aid another* action for a Knowledge check.

A contact should never be allowed to make a Knowledge check or Gather Information check on behalf of the party. After all, the player characters are the central characters of the campaign. It is their knowledge and learning that should take central stage.

The time it takes for a message to cross domains varies greatly. Some domains are far more dangerous than others. Also, the distance between places in Ravenloft is a matter completely up to the DM. Thus, the DM has final say as to how long it will take to get information back from a contact. However, this time should be stated before the player characters state what kind of information is sought and the DC is assigned.

**Table 9-1: Libraries and Research**

| Library Size | Maximum Bonus | Description  |
|--------------|---------------|--|
| Small        | +2            | A small, personal collection of books.   |
| Medium       | +3            | A one-room collection of texts that broadly covers a variety of topics.  |
| Large        | +4            | A larger, one-room collection that has a few specialty books that cover specific topics.   |
| Huge         | +5            | A large, multi-room collection that not only covers a number of broad topics, but has numerous specialty books on a variety of topics.           |
| Gargantuan   | +6            | A massive, multi-room collection that has numerous books on any number of topics, numerous specialty books, and includes rare, antiquated tomes. |





# DM's Appendix



## **T**echniques of Terror

The following section details how a DM can use Mist creatures in her campaign, whether a **Ravenloft** game or otherwise. While the Mists are normally something only encountered in **Ravenloft**-related games, it is still possible to use the Mist creatures described in this chapter to supplement *any* game, no matter where it is set.

### **The Bogeyman**

For as long as humans have told stories around the fireplace, there have existed bogeymen. Throughout our history, these beings have captured our imagination and sent a chill into our bones.

What is a bogeyman? Simply put, a bogeyman is a creature of myth that represents the unknown Other — that mysterious aspect about ourselves that we cannot know.

The typical person sees crime on television every day. On occasion, however, a crime occurs that is so horrific it surpasses our understanding. We pause to ask: How could someone *do* such a thing? Could *I* ever be capable of something like that?

When people commit acts that defy our understanding, our fear of the Other is triggered. We see that the heinous criminal is human, but we cannot comprehend how he has come to enact such terrible crimes. Such thoughts are totally alien to us. We *should* be able to understand their actions, but we can't. Thus, the criminal and his act become even more terrifying.

The bogeyman, then, is an embodiment of this fear of the Other. In stories and legends, the bogeyman does things that no human would ever do. The bogeyman enacts crimes of the most terrible order.

The legendary Grendel is a prime example of a bogeyman. In the song of *Beowulf*, this monster stalks brave Viking warriors and kills them while they are innocently sleeping. Another great example of a bogeyman is the faerie creature known as Rawhead and Bloodybones. This being originates in faerie lore and is known for lurking in wells or ponds. According to legend, Rawhead has a sadistic tendency to grab little children and drown them. It is said that he especially likes to drown little children who have told lies.

### **The Bogey Man and the Mists**

What, then, do bogeymen have to do with the Mists of Ravenloft? Simply put, the Mists also represent the alien Other. The Mists have some sort of motivation, but it is indiscernible. The more we try to understand them, the more elusive they become. Thus, the Mists represent our fear of the Other more than anything else in the Dread Realm. They are a symbol of that dark side of us that we can never know.

### **Creating the Threat**

Any agent of the Mists should be an extension of this alien Other. If the Mists of Ravenloft represent the ultimate mystery of the setting, then their servants should also inherit this same sense of mystery. The question is how to instill this sense of the unknown in your players?

### **A One Dimensional Evil**

Any story will usually want to feature antagonists that are three dimensional. Three dimensional characters are more believable, and for that reason, are more terrifying in a horror tale.

This is not the case, however, when dealing with a bogeyman character. Monsters or characters who represent the alien Other are *one dimensional* by definition. Much of their background or motives are covered up and obscured from us. The movie monster on the spaceship that stalks the crew has no complex motive. It has no multifaceted character development. It has nothing but a singular drive to destroy the entire crew of the ship. Such films are terrifying to us because we cannot understand why the creature is stalking everyone. The only thing to understand is the grave danger that it poses.

When creating your own Mist creatures, they should also be one dimensional in scope. There is no understanding *why* the pale riders have approached the party and offered them vengeance. There is no analysis of what the Telling Man does in his free time. These creatures are not so much characters as they are forces of nature. Their relentlessness is beyond human understanding. That's the terror inherent in the bogeyman.

### **The Iceberg Method**

Occasionally, it is interesting to have a glimpse into the third dimension of a bogeyman figure. The





typical serial killer movie is a prime example. Most serial killer movies give us a hint or a clue as to why the villain is the way he is. However, we only get a glance at the larger picture. The audience may be told that the killer has had a tortured childhood or that he has an obsession with this mother. Usually, however, we are never told exactly why he turned to ritualistic murder as a way to solve his problems. We never really find out the *entire* reason why the killer acts the way he does.

This method of character representation is called the iceberg method. In it, the audience only sees the very tip of the iceberg. They get just a small hint of what lies below the surface.

This technique is extremely chilling because it gives your players just enough of a peek into the monster's background to make them wonder. It enhances the mystery of your villain.

Imagine a hulking woodcutter that roams the fog, looking for his lost son. Every time he winds up in a new place, he looks for someone who reminds him of his son. Then, he kidnaps that person, and makes his victim dress up like his son, even talk like him. No matter how hard his victims try, though, they can never approximate the woodcutter's son closely enough. Soon, the woodcutter grows angrier and angrier with his substitute and finally slaughters the victim and begins looking for another hapless soul.

The woodcutter is a one dimensional character, with a singular, driving goal. His background gives us just enough to make us wonder. What did happen to his son? Why didn't the woodcutter grieve and move on? Why did the Mists choose to move him from place to place? These questions give a normally one dimensional character just a hint of a third dimension.

## Becoming What You Most Fear

The most terrifying aspect of a Mist creature is that, despite its alien nature, the player characters of your campaign could become creatures of the Mists at any time. The Mists often adopt beings into their fold. The Telling Man, Salissar, or the vanished are all beings that have been adopted by the Mists at some time. But what is most chilling about these creatures were that they weren't always part of the Mists. Some, like the Telling Man were once human.

This same fate awaits the player characters in your campaign if they make the wrong choices. Perhaps the only thing more frightening about the

alien Other is the fear that one might actually become that Other.

How can this happen? Perhaps the character uses the Mists as an escape route once too often. Perhaps he lingers too long within the vaporous folds, despite numerous warnings. Or maybe the character has become so single-mindedly bent on a goal that the Mists are suddenly attracted to her. Whatever the reason, a player character should never become fugued unless there is *good reason* and *good justification*. The Mists never punish someone without due cause.

## Using Mist Creatures in Your Campaign

The Mist creatures of Ravenloft function as an all purpose tool for your campaign. They fit anywhere and can be used for any situation. Need a mysterious killer to appear in town? Have the Mists import the Telling Man. Need an insidious apothecary's shop? Have an oubliette appear on the end of the street, carried there by the Mists themselves. When the player characters ask people about the shop, they simply shrug and say, "It's always been there." Mist creatures and oubliettes are great vehicles to introduce new and interesting threats to the setting. There are a number of ways the DM can incorporate these elements into his campaign.

## The Visitation

Obviously, the easiest way to introduce Mist creatures or oubliettes into a campaign is to have them appear out of the fog one night. This allows the DM to have villains make "guest appearances" in her campaign.

By using the Mists in this way, the DM may also introduce threats that wouldn't normally work in the domain or area where the adventure takes place. For example, it is difficult to conceive of a lich other than Azalin living in Darkon. Why would Azalin suffer a potential rival to exist in his domain, especially one that can learn magics that he cannot? But a DM who has a campaign set in Darkon who is just *burning* to have an adventure involving a lich (other than Azalin) may now do so.

Keep in mind that even if such threats only make temporary appearances, these threats do impact the land in which they appear. Imagine a scenario in which a lich and his tower *did* appear in





Darkon. Would Azalin sit idly by? Or would he be curious about the newcomer? Exactly how would he react to such a situation?

### Shaking Things Up

Dangers that emerge from the fog also serve another purpose in a campaign. If the DM wants to shake things up a bit, the sudden appearance of a new danger can certainly change the dynamic of the game. Imagine if the Mists transported a Fugued dragon into the midst of Borca. Would Ivan and Ivana put aside their differences long enough to deal with the threat, or would the situation escalate into a three-way war?

Imagine an oubliette in Falkovnia that is a repository of ancient weapons. As it appears and reappears, various factions try to take hold of it: the Hawks, Gondegal and the kobold bandits. Suddenly, the oubliette becomes a flashpoint for a series of adventures.

What's intriguing about this scenario is that the repercussions of the appearance of something from the Mists can have lasting effects on a campaign. After the Fugued dragon appears, who breaks the tentative alliance first? Ivan or Ivana? What happens if Gondegal finds a mystical greatsword within the vanishing armory?

### The Quest

Mist creatures and oubliettes may also provide an incentive for the player characters to travel. If the Mists shift an insidious villain around the Core, then you now have an impetus for them to journey to the various domains in pursuit of him.

This same technique would work using oubliettes. Imagine a grotto that appears in various woods all around the realm. Each time it appears, the grotto gives a clue about how to achieve a hidden treasure or how to stop an elusive and destructive monster. Perhaps different runes appear on the grotto walls each time or perhaps various stone work puzzles manifest within its depths.

### Beware of Overkill

The Mists are a great story vehicle for any game, but too much of anything is bad. If your major villain is carried away by the Mists each time he is defeated, then your players will become frustrated and lose interest in the game. Worse, you will lose the element of surprise in your campaign.

The players will come to *expect* that your villain will escape anyway, so why bother going after him?

It is also a bad idea to have the Mists keep bringing in new dangers on a continual basis. Here, your campaign runs the risk of becoming like a bad TV show, in which the characters face the "monster of the week." Again, your campaign courts predictability. In a campaign that focuses on mystery, what happens next should always be in question.

### Keeping it Real

Even though the Mists can import or export a threat to any place of their choosing, you will strain your player's sense of disbelief if you have dangers appearing in and out of the fog at random.

There should always be some set up before danger approaches in the campaign. Perhaps the Mists turns a strange color the night before your Fugued dragon appears. Maybe a number of cattle mutilations precede the full-fledged appearance of your Fugued serial killer. Remember that horror relies on the slow building of tension before the climax. Don't spring the threat from the fog suddenly. Give foreboding hints or clues as to what will happen.

### The True Threat

When using Mist creatures in your campaign, always be aware of the true menace. Terrifying villains might step forth from the fog, but there is always a greater threat behind them: the Mists of Ravenloft.

In the end, the Telling Man and Salissar are only tools. They are pawns in a great game played at the highest stakes. Remember that the next time you pull forth a creature from the Mists. Ultimately, that creature serves some sort of purpose. Consider this each time you have the Mists alter something in the campaign. What is the Mists' purpose for the moment? Is it to torture the local Darklord? To test the convictions of the player characters? Explore these questions with your party. You might be surprised at what you find out.

## Champions and Villains

The individuals described here represent some of the most prominent Mist-controlled creatures as well as a dedicated hunter of those monstrous





entities. DMs may use them as written or treat them as examples to use when creating individuals appropriate to her campaign.

## Dr. Alexander Penarrow

**Male human Sor8/Ftr5:** Medium humanoid (human) (6 feet tall); HD 8d4+8 plus 5d10+5; HP 75; Init +7; Spd; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Atk +13 melee (1d6+3, silver-headed cane) or +13 ranged (1d10+2, pistol); Full Attack: +13/+8 melee (1d6+3 silver-headed cane) +13 ranged (1d10+2, pistol); SA *spells*; SQ —; AL NG; SV Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +9; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 15, Cha 16.

**Skills and Feats:** Bluff +5, Climb +6, Concentration +9, Handle Animal +6, Hypnosis +9, Intimidate +7, Jump +6, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (geography) +9, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (Mists) +10, Listen +6, Move Silently +7, Ride +6, Search +6, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +8, Spot +6 (+9 for Mistways); Alertness, Improved Initiative, Mist Dowsing, Piercing Gaze, Point Blank Shot, Temporal Fugue, Weapon Finesse (cane), Weapon Focus (pistol), Weapon Specialization (pistol).

**Languages:** Mordentish, \* Balok, Darkonese, Draconic, Vaasi.

**Typical Sorcerer Spells Known** (6, 7, 7, 6, 3; save DC 13 + spell level) 0 — *acid splash, arcane mark, dancing lights, detect magic, disrupt undead, ghost sound, light, prestidigitation*; 1st — *charm person, detect undead, mage armor, obscuring mist, true strike*; 2nd — *detect thoughts, scorching ray, see invisibility*; 3rd — *dispel magic, haste*; 4th — *locate creature*.

**Signature Possessions:** oak cane with a silver dragon head top with amber eyes +2, 2 ivory handled pistols etched with Vistani symbols for luck and fate, kept in holsters inside his coat.

## Background

Dr. Alexander Penarrow is an aristocratic looking gentleman with a mane of dark red hair shot with silver strands. His most arresting features are his silver gray eyes that seem to glow in the moonlight. His skin is pale with a tracery of fine scars pitting his face and hands — he keeps the rest of his body covered, always dressing in high collars and long sleeved coats.

Few notice his slight limp, since he moves with singular grace otherwise. His voice is rich and cultured and he understands most all of the languages of Ravenloft with fluency. He has spent his life exploring the Mists and the creatures and oubliettes within them. The weird temporal fluxes within the Mists have extended his youth, although he looks to be a vigorous 40 years old he is actually closer to 80 and has lived through the

forming of several lands from the Mists, including the time of the Grand Conjunction.

Originally from Mordent, he and his brother Drake Penarrow decided they wished to explore the Mists and map as many of the lands as they could find, as well as trace the byways. They met Van Richten and the three spent some time together discussing the mysteries behind the Mists; Unfortunately, soon afterward, a scarlet storm took Drake's life and the life of his familiar and blinded and scarred Alexander so severely that he could not find his way out of the Mists for what seemed like years and turned out to have been more than six months.

When a cleric of Ezra restored his sight, his bright blue eyes had changed to a misty gray and glowed in the moonlight. He soon discovered that his vision in the Mists was far better than average, but he could no longer stay outside the Mists for long. The Mists had become home, calling to him if he stays outside for more than a week. His resolve grew to find out as much as he could about the Mists, although he knows now how dangerous it is for anyone to stay within the Mists for long. He still wonders if his brother is Lost in the Mists as some sort of undead, and he dreads the day he might meet him there.

## Current Sketch

Recently Dr. Penarrow met the Weathermay-Foxgrove twins and discovered their latest interests. Remembering their uncle, he feels a fatherly protectiveness toward them, although he also finds himself admiring Laurie's courage and Gennifer's analytical mind and would not dream of trying to convince them to stop their dangerous explorations. Although usually a loner since the death of his brother, Dr. Penarrow has offered to be a guide and companion to Laurie through the Mists and will work with anyone whose reasons for traveling the Mists are worthwhile.

## Combat

Alexander is an intelligent fighter. He uses spells when he can but is quite good with his silver cane if necessary. He will use ranged weapons and spells first and always attempts to finish fights quickly, since his right leg is weak and he cannot fight in melee for more than a few minutes without slowing. If he discovers any of the Lost or Fugued who he believes might be saved, he will attempt to use hypnosis to bring them back to themselves. He





is merciful to the mad and may sometimes hesitate if he meets undead, fearing to see his brother.

## The Telling Man

**Exp 1/Brd 12 /Brb 3:** CR 18; Medium humanoid (unknown type, aberration) (6' 9" tall); HD 1d6+4+13d6+52+3d12+12; hp 140; Init +6; Spd 40ft.; AC 22 touch 12, flat-footed 20; Atk: +16/+11/+6 melee (1d6+6 plus *wounding, Taker*) or +14 ranged (1d10/x3, pistol); Full Atk: +16/+11/+6 melee (1d6+6 plus *wounding, Taker*) and +16/+11/+6 melee (1d6+4 plus poison, *Keeper*); or +14 ranged (1d10/x3, pistol); AL CE; SA Animate fog, choking fog, keeping, temporal manipulation; SQ Masque of the form, mental scan, mist form; SV Fort +11, Ref +11, Will +12, Fr +12, Hor +12, Mad +12; Str 19, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 9, Wis 13, Cha 17

**Skills and Feats:** Appraise +3, Bluff +10, Concentration +9, Craft (Bodyworks) +6, Disguise +8, Hide +14, Intimidate +6, Listen +8, Move Silently +14, Perform +18, Sleight of Hand +11, Survival +7; Improved Initiative, Improved Disarm, Improved Grapple, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Quick Draw, Rapid Reload, Two-Weapon Fighting

**Languages:** Darkonese\*, Mordentish

**Typical Bard Spells Known** (3, 4, 4, 4, 2, save DC 13 + spell level) 0 — *detect magic, ghost sound, light, lullaby, mage hand, message*; 1st — *charm person, expeditious retreat, hypnotism, Tasha's hideous laughter*; 2nd — *glitterdust, mirror image, silence, sound burst*; 3rd — *blink, confusion, deep slumber, scrying*; 4th — *freedom of movement, dominate person*

**Class Abilities:** Rage 1/day, uncanny dodge, bardic knowledge, trap sense +1, countersong, fascinate, inspire courage, inspire competence, suggestion, inspire greatness, song of freedom (as described in the *Players Handbook*).

**Signature Possessions:** *Ring of armor +4, Taker and Keeper:* These Lamordian churgeon tools were normally used to lobotomize patients. They function as +2 sickles. *Taker*, the Telling Man's primary weapon, also has the power of *wounding*. *Keeper*, the Telling Man's off-hand weapon, delivers poison with a successful hit three times a day (poison save DC 16, Dex 1d6 /Dex 2d4).

This androgynous monster is a stitch-work being, patched together from dozens of other creatures—male and female, humanoid and otherwise. Its exterior changes continuously as the Telling Man constantly updates its appearance. Often, its face will be made up of various, selected parts that invariably do not match at all. Its limbs are rarely the same length, and it has a habit of having mismatched fingers.

The Telling Man does realize that its appearance is unique. Thus, it most commonly goes about disguised using its *masque of the form* power.

## Background

The Telling Man gets his name from a children's rhyme, meant to warn those who might fall prey to the sin of vanity

*Telling Man, Telling Man,*

*What do you see?*

*I see the people full of vanity.*

*Telling Man, Telling Man*

*Where do you hide?*

*In closets and wardrobes, full of pride.*

*Telling Man, Telling Man,*

*Will you come for me?*

*Look in the mirror and wait and see.*

The Telling Man began his life as a young wanderer by the name of Myrus Tell. Myrus wandered the land of the mists as a tinker, buying and selling knick-knacks wherever he could.

Most who met Myrus immediately found the young sojourner to be extremely odd. He covered bright, shiny objects, and pulled a rattling cart full of the assembled baubles that he collected. Few realized that he stole many of the objects he craved, going so far as to break into people's homes to get them.

One day, the tinker ran into a young noble on a quiet walk through the countryside. The young woman was enjoying a private stroll before her upcoming wedding. After doing a bit a trade, Myrus asked if might trade something for a lock of the young woman's hair. The young noblewoman turned her nose up at Myrus's offer, disgusted at the idea that a destitute wander would want a piece of her hair.

Myrus repaid her unkindness by beating her to death and scalping her. On dark nights, he wore her hair upon his head like a wig, touching her soft hair to his face. The kill filled Myrus with a secret thrill. Soon, he began to collect all sorts of parts from people he found beautiful. In those early days, Myrus always spoke to his victims beforehand. If he found them to be humble in spirit, he left them alone. However, if he found his victims vain or prideful, he delighted in their torture and mutilation.

In one instance, Myrus Tell had the misfortune of attacking an armed victim. His intended target sliced off his ear during the assault, sending the young, deranged tinker off into the woods, howling.

There, in the solitude of the forest, Myrus attempted to stitch one of his collected ears onto his body. It was then that the Dark Powers stepped





in, allowing the ear to fuse to his head. Myrus then began a reign of terror, attacking people, taking parts of them, and stitching them onto his own body.

Today, Myrus Tell has become the dread Telling Man, creature of legend. He no longer resembles the lonely tinker that he once was. He is completely a creature of darkness, carried from land to land by the Mists, plaguing those who are prideful or arrogant.

## Current Sketch

Myrus Tell barely remembers his original name, so long has it walked under the guise of the Telling Man. This obsessed creature now lives only for its insane collection. Each time it claims a new victim, it tries to improve itself in some way. Ironically, the Telling Man is doomed to utter disappointment. No modification, no matter how dramatic, satisfies this creature for long. It yearns for what it can never have — true beauty of the body and soul. Strangely, the Telling Man does not need to interview its potential victims, it simply goes where the Mists take it, and instinctively knows if its target is possessed of vanity.

## Combat

The Telling Man never engages in a stand-up fight. Instead, it prefers to stalk its prey, waiting for the most opportune moment before attack. With its dizzying array of powers, the Telling Man can set up most encounters to its advantage. It prefers to assume an innocuous shape through its *masque of the form* ability, in order to get close. After a few attacks, it then uses its *mist form* to escape into a bank of fog. If need be, it covers its trail with its *choking fog* power.

If force to fight a group of people, it will use its *temporal manipulation* to slow its opponents and speed itself up. Then, it picks out a single opponent, rapidly taking his victim apart with his many attacks and his magical chirgeon tools, *Taker* and *Keeper*.

**Special Attacks:** *Temporal Manipulation (Sp)*: The Telling Man may use *haste* or *slow* as a spell-like ability. It may use either ability three times per day. Use of either *haste* or *slow* counts towards the total number of uses of this ability.

*Animate Fog (Su)*: As a creature of the Mists, the Telling Man can move a 20 ft. radius, 20 ft. high bank of fog in the direction it desires. Controlling the fog is a standard action. The fog bank moves at

a rate of 20 feet. Because fog is heavy, it always flows along the ground. It cannot travel vertically. It may flow over barriers that are shorter than the fog bank is tall. The fog bank must flow around barriers that are taller than it.

Using this power is risky. Each time this power is used, there is a 5% cumulative chance per encounter that the fog does not move. If a “00” is ever rolled, this power completely backfires, moving the fog into the worst possible area for the encounter.

*Choking Fog (Su)*: The Telling Man can create a zone of fog that is devoid of all oxygen. Note that the creature cannot summon its own cloud, it must use a bank of pre-existing mist. It may, however, affect a patch of fog summoned through the *mist call* power.

This power affects a bank of fog that is 20 ft. in radius and 20 ft. high. The choking fog is not solid; it is like normal fog in every way except that creatures who need to breathe cannot do so while standing within it. Of course, a creature can hold its breath before entering the fog. See the rules for holding one’s breath in the *Dungeon Master’s Guide*.

The *choking fog* effect lasts for 10 minutes per HD of the creature using this power.

*Mental Scan (Su)*: The Telling Man is able to *detect thoughts*, as per the spell. It may use this ability at will, whenever it wishes.

**Special Qualities:** *Mist Form (Sp)*: As a full round action, the Telling Man may assume *gaseous form* as per the spell. While in this form, the creature has a fly speed of 20, with perfect maneuverability. It may remain in gaseous form indefinitely.

*Masque of the Form (Sp)*: This hideous creature may disguise itself, as per *disguise self*. It may alter its appearance as a standard action. It can maintain its guise indefinitely.

*Keeping (Ex)*: Through successive failed powers checks, the Telling Man has been granted the ability to stitch other people’s body parts to its own. The Telling Man may also suspend its own bodily functions for a day, allowing it to replace limbs, eyes, or even internal organs without bleeding to death. For example, the Telling Man might replace its own heart with heart of someone who fancies himself courageous. The Telling Man does not feel pain when it replaces parts of its body with pieces from other people.

Because its body is constantly updated, the Telling Man never ages, or suffers the effects of





aging. It can survive up to one day without the use of its vital organs. Since it can survive like this for some time, this creature also has the equivalent of moderate fortification. Any time the Telling Man suffers a critical hit or a sneak attack there is a 75% chance that it is negated and damage is instead rolled normally.

## Dread Possibilities

The Telling Man makes a chilling villain for any campaign. The heroes might battle the creature as it travels from place to place, committing its crimes. Or, the Telling Man might haunt a beloved NPC, who happens to have the slight flaw of vanity. Imagine that the party is hired to protect someone who is haunted by the Telling Man, but is vain to the point of obnoxiousness. Does the party uphold their word and protect their employer? He may be arrogant, but does he deserve torture and death?

## Salissar

**Meazel /Rog 2 /Reaping Mauler 5;** CR 11; Medium humanoid (monstrous) (4' 8" tall); HD 4d8+12 + 2d6+6 + 5d10+15, hp 85; Init +2; Spd 30ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +10; Grp +20; Atk +14 melee (1d4+4 plus disease, claw); Full Attack: +14 melee (1d4+4 plus disease, 2 claws); SA sneak attack, disease, adept wrestling, sleeper lock, devastating grapple; SQ evasion, counter grapple; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +13, Will +6, Fr +6, Hor +6, Mad +6; Str 19, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 6

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +9, Move Silently +6, Escape Artist +9, Tumble +7, Jump +7; Cleaver Wrestling, Improved Grapple\*, Improved Initiative, Mobility\*, Power Attack, Stunning Fist

*Signature Possessions:* None

\*These feats gained as special class abilities.

\*\*The Clever Wrestling gives Salissar a bonus to escape a grapple or grab from larger creatures.

Like most of his diseased kind, Salissar is a squat, wiry creature with greenish-yellow skin. The precise color of his skin is difficult to tell since it is crawling with disease. Sores swarm over his body, and his hide continually oozes various bodily fluids. His wide face sports giant, yellow eyes with ophidian slits. A wide, grinning mouth spreads across his face, in complete contradiction to his hideous countenance.

## Background

Salissar is a meazel, a creature from a distant land outside of Ravenloft. In his former homeland,

Salissar dwelled beneath the earth, like many of his kin. There, in underground grottos forgotten by time itself, he stalked through the darkness killing kobolds, dwarves or any other wanderer that crossed his path.

One day, Salissar attacked a lone adventurer who wandered into his lair. With expert precision, Salissar snuck up behind his victim and attempted to strangle him. But the would-be victim put up a terrific fight and fled into the darkness. Salissar pursued the adventurer into a misty corridor.

Soon, Salissar found himself in the sewers below the city of Il Aluk, just a few years before it was claimed by the Requiem. He made those alien sewers his home, killing off the kobold clan that lived there. In time, Salissar became known as a local bogeyman. People knew that to wander in the streets after dark meant that one might become victim to the infamous "lurker below."

When the Requiem struck, Salissar escaped the devastation by running into a corridor of mist. Salissar then found himself in a truly accursed place. He was in a land where the sun shone upon his diseased skin, where there grass grew high and tall trees swayed in the wind. While most would consider such a place a blessing, it was a bane to Salissar, who was used to dwelling in miry, underground pits.

To make matters worse, Salissar now found himself pursued by the spirits of the place where he dwelled. Night and day, he was hunted by the ghostly spirits of former heroes.

Eventually, Salissar was scooped up by the Mists again. Again, he found himself in a new locale — a maze of sewers beneath a brand new city. But his respite was not for long. After a few months, the Mists took him back to that accursed place where the sun purged all shadow, and again he was hunted.

Years of torment continued. The pattern was always the same. Salissar would be deposited in the sewers of some distant city for a time, only to be called back to dwell in the strange place of light, grass and spirits of vengeful hunters. Enraged at the curse he was under, Salissar took his frustration out upon the cities under which he was transported. Thus, numerous cities everywhere began to report disappearances. Soon, infamous bogeyman "lived" all over the Core, sucking their victims down into the sewers below.

Eventually, under this constant torture, Salissar began to go mad. To keep himself company under





his constant duress, he began talking to himself. He made up personalities that talked back to him. Soon, in the dark sewers, he had whole conversations with a myriad of individuals.

Strangely, these personalities would always match the legends that people made up about him in the cities that he visited. Thus, when the legend of Scrabbling Sally was first told, Salissar simultaneously began talking to the imagined personality of Scrabbling Sally. Such a phenomenon begs the question — was it the belief of the people in the cities that caused Salissar to go mad? Or did Salissar's madness somehow leak into the legends of the people that lived above him?

## Current Sketch

The current whereabouts of Salissar are unknown. It is possible that Salissar survived his encounter with Gennifer Weathermay-Foxgrove. After all, she did not actually *see* him die. Salissar was cursed to linger in the oubliette of *Richten Haus*, which drifts in the Mists without a Darklord to control it. Why precisely this fate was chosen for him is anyone's guess.

At the time of his last sighting, Salissar had several distinct personalities. Unlike most victims of a multiple-personality disorder, Salissar is aware of all of his personalities. Furthermore, the personalities can talk amongst themselves, which they often do.

Three of his many personalities are:

**Old Scrabbling Sally:** This personality is a former nun who is riddled with leprosy. When the other nuns of her abbey discovered her disease, she was cast out and made to live in a cave. There, she dwelt for years, scrabbling away at the walls of her prison. Now, she longs for company to quench her terrible loneliness.

**Little Hollow Ivil:** This creature is believed to be a demon summoned to plague the wererats of Pont-a-Museau. Ivil was supposedly wrought through a curse that Claude Renier put upon the city at the moment of his death. Hollow Ivil is a ravenous, violent creature, driven by an infernal desire to eat the flesh of any living victim.

**Cellar Bones:** According to Mordent legend, Maeve took the marrow from his fey's bones and hid it away within a cellar somewhere within the domain. Now, Cellar Bone's is forever cursed to roam people's cellars at night, searching for the marrow of his hollow bones. Cellar Bones is said to

be a cunning tempter, who tries to enlist others to look for his lost marrow. Should these poor victims refuse, he kills them and sucks their marrow. Yet, if they search for his lost marrow, then these poor souls are only doomed to failure. When they finally turn up nothing, Cellar Bones always mysteriously appears, ready to take his deadly price from them.

## Combat

Salissar is well-suited for unarmed combat and does not hesitate to claw or grapple his opponent. His special abilities make him a challenging opponent in a one-to-one battle.

**Special Attacks: Sneak attack (Ex):** Any time Salissar's opponent is denied its Dexterity bonus or is flanked by him, he gains an additional 4d6 damage to his attack. This ability does not function on creatures with no discernable anatomy or who do not need their vital organs to function in order to live.

**Disease (Su):** Wounds inflicted by a meazel can transmit a skin disease. A successful claw attack causes the victim to make a DC 13 Fortitude save. This save is Constitution based. Those who fail their save are infected by a putrid disease. Incubation: 1d6 days. Damage 1d2 Dex and Con. If a character takes ability damage, he must make an additional save to see whether 1 point of the affected ability was permanently drained.

**Adept Wrestling (Ex):** While wearing light or no armor, Salissar gains a +2 on all grapple checks and opposed Strength or Dexterity checks.

**Sleeper Lock (Ex):** If Salissar pins an opponent while grappling and maintains the pin for 1 full round, the opponent must make a DC 16 Fortitude save or fall unconscious for 1d3 rounds. This save is Wisdom-based. Creatures with no discernable anatomy are immune to this effect.

**Devastating Grapple (Ex):** If Salissar pins an opponent while grappling and maintains the pin for 3 consecutive rounds, the opponent must make a DC 16 Fortitude save at the end of the third round or die. This save is Wisdom-based. Creatures with no discernable anatomy are immune to this effect.

**Special Qualities: Evasion (Ex):** If Salissar makes a Reflex save against an effect that would normally deal half damage, he avoids that damage altogether.

**Counter Grapple (Ex):** When grappled or pinned, Salissar may make a grapple check or Escape Artist check as normal to avoid the grapple.





If he fails the check he has chosen, he can immediately attempt the other check as a free action.

## Dread Possibilities

Salissar's story presents a number of possibilities to the DM. He could be a recurring villain that appears to the party with a new personality each time. Used in this way, only thorough research and investigation would reveal that what appears to be a group of villains is, instead, a single malign being. Alternatively, Salissar's story could be a link for the party to get involved in the mystery of the Richten Haus and for them to discover the last known location of Rudolph Van Richten.

## Creatures of the Mists

The following creatures comprise a sampling of the inhabitants spawned by or associated with the Mists. No one has, however, made a comprehensive listing of all the beings found within the Mists. DMs may find that these monsters can suggest ideas for creating their own Mist creatures

### Mistlings (Swarm)

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
|                               | <b>Tiny Aberration (Mist)</b>  |
| <b>Hit Dice:</b>              | 9d8+9 (49 hp)  |
| <b>Initiative:</b>            | +4   |
| <b>Speed:</b>                 | 20 ft. (4 squares), climb 20 ft.   |
| <b>Armor Class:</b>           | 18 (+2 size, +4 Dex, +2 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 14   |
| <b>Base Attack / Grapple:</b> | +6/+11   |
| <b>Attack:</b>                | Swarm (2d6 plus poison)  |
| <b>Full Attack:</b>           | Swarm (2d6 plus poison)  |
| <b>Space/Reach:</b>           | 10 ft. / 0 ft.   |
| <b>Special Attacks:</b>       | Distraction, mass grapple  |
| <b>Special Qualities:</b>     | Low-light vision, Mist peering*, resistance 10/cold and electricity, immunities, swarm traits**, Mist sub type |
| <b>Saves:</b>                 | Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +8   |
| <b>Abilities:</b>             | Str 5, Dex 19, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 9  |
| <b>Skills:</b>                | Climb +8, Spot +6, Hide +10, Move Silently +10   |
| <b>Feats:</b>                 | Improved Grapple, Improved Disarm, Stealthy  |
| <b>Environment:</b>           | Any  |

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Organization:</b>     | Pack (2-4 swarms), or horde (7-12 swarms) |
| <b>Challenge Rating:</b> | 5   |
| <b>Treasure:</b>         | None                                      |
| <b>Alignment:</b>        | Always neutral evil                       |
| <b>Advancement:</b>      | None                                      |
| <b>Level Adjustment:</b> | —   |

*A group of tiny, spindly-limbed creatures spill forth from the fog. Their massive, fish-eyes glitter in the dark. Their long, long fingers reach up for you. Soon you can feel their clammy hands pulling upon your clothing, your skin, and your hair. The weight of their bodies grows heavy. And you feel yourself being pulled down. Whispers from their tiny lips caress your ears, "Go to sleep, soon we eat. Go to sleep, soon we eat..."*

Mistlings are tiny-sized creatures with pale, almost translucent skin. Their huge, lidless eyes are open and staring, like those of a fish. Each mistling has abnormally long arms and fingers which bear an extra joint, allowing them to grab onto their victims easier. Strange sucker-like openings sprout from their fingertips and are used to deliver their poison touch. Mistlings have no noses, but have wide, slit like mouths with bright, flashing teeth.

These gremlin-like creatures spend their entire lives within the Mists of Ravenloft. They live in the dark places of the world: caves, wells or even the occasional root cellar. Their presence is always accompanied by patches of Mist. As to why fog always appears around these creatures, no one knows for certain. One folktale speaks of these creatures being distantly related to the laminak fey of Barovia. When Barovia was first absorbed by the mists, a number of laminak clans fled into the Mists and dwelled there, slowly turning into mistlings.

Mistlings are often described in tales as dragging victims off into the mists, never to be seen again. Some mistling stories tell of victims dragged off into the mists and served as a live feast for these bloodthirsty menaces, who prefer to dine upon their meals while they still struggle.

Mistlings can speak the common language of any two domains and sylvan.

### Combat

Mistlings attack by overwhelming their enemy, dragging them down, and devouring them. If near by a patch of fog, they attempt to pull their victim into the fog, so as to better dispose of them. They always target the weakest looking victims first. Multiple swarms often try to overlap an oppo-





ment, so as to weaken them while one swarm engages in the grapple.

**Distraction (Ex):** Any living creature that begins its turn with a mistling swarm in its space must succeed in a DC 15 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Mass Grapple (Ex):** Unlike most swarm creatures, mistlings can grapple opponents, though they themselves cannot be grappled. For the purposes of grappling, mistling swarms are considered to be Large creatures. In order to grapple an opponent, a mistling swarm has to move into its opponent's space, which provokes an attack of opportunity. Note that this particular attack of opportunity does not prevent the swarm from proceeding with the grapple.

When grappling an opponent, whether successful or not, the mistling swarm does its swarm damage.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury, Fortitude DC 15, initial and secondary damage 1d2 Strength. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Skills:** A mistling swarm has a +4 bonus to all Climb checks and uses its Dexterity modifier instead of its Strength modifier for Climb checks. They also have a +4 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silent checks while in fog.

**Mist Subtype:** All penalties due to concealment by fog or mist reduced to half. Immune to charm, domination, sleep, and all other mind-affecting magic. Immune to magic that alters their form. Immune to the effects of aging.

\*\*See the swarm traits described in the *Monster Manual*.

## Dread Possibilities

After a number of cattle mutilations, the PCs are called to investigate. As the party tracks the attackers, villagers begin to vanish, later turning up mutilated beyond recognition. Soon, the party tracks the mutilations to a large group of mistlings. It turns out that the mistlings were dwelling within a nearby cave, but were driven out. But by what?

## Mist Claimer

*From the fog and haze you see the last thing you would ever expect — yourself. As the moonlight sweeps briefly over your double's body, you see its eyes glimmer and a silver glow escapes the gaping hole that is its mouth. In the brief glimmer of moonlight, you see*

*now that your twin is not a being of flesh and blood, but a being of the Mists itself."*

Beings born of fog and haze, these creatures are so feared that they are rarely spoken of at all in Ravenloft. Each Mist claimer is an exact duplicate of an individual within the Dread Realm. This precise copy resembles the original in every way — except that it seeks to utterly destroy the original's life and relationship with others.

These Mist-spawned beings remember the same history and background as the original. They also possess all of the same equipment as the original being as well. A Mist claimer does not seek to engage in immediate combat with its original. Instead, it tries first to humiliate and ruin its double's life. For example, it might commit crimes during the daytime, implicating its counterpart for its deeds. The Mist claimer might openly chastise the local Darklord, drawing the local Darklord's ire upon its original.

Once its counterpart is sufficiently humiliated or embarrassed, the Mist claimer uses its identity for increasingly dark purposes. It might abuse the very people who love and trust the original, isolating its double from their friends and allies. It may lead hordes of monsters towards the original's location, and then flee the scene, leaving its counterpart to deal with the situation.

Individuals who express perverse desires but do not act upon them usually create Mist claimers. In this case, the Mist claimer is brought about by their dark wishes and performs the heinous deeds that the originals could not bring themselves to do. Often, these poor victims go mad, eventually believing that they were indeed responsible for the very acts that they were trying to avoid.

Mist claimers also spring forth when someone openly challenges the dark powers. While almost no one in the Dread Realms is even aware of the dark powers, there are those fools who call out to the night itself and beg for a challenge. Such victims of hubris find that nothing comes to face them. Instead, their lives and reputations are gradually ruined. Eventually, such challengers cannot even show their faces to their friends or allies, who are convinced that their one-time friends have gone mad. Only when the challenger is completely in despair does the Mist claimer come to battle its original in final judgment.

Mist claimers only reveal their true nature under the light of a full moon. If ever under such a





light, they appear to have a glowing, silver mist swirling in their eyes and mouths. Otherwise, they seem exactly like the original being.

When a Mist claimer dies, it and all of its equipment dissipates into mist.

## Sample Mist Claimer

This example uses a 7th level human Ranger as the base creature.

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
|                             | <b>Mist Claimer 7th-Level Human Ranger</b>  |
|                             | <b>Medium Humanoid (Augmented Humanoid)(Mist)</b>   |
| <b>Hit Dice:</b>            | 7d8+7 (42 hp)   |
| <b>Initiative:</b>          | +3  |
| <b>Speed:</b>               | 30 ft. (6 squares)  |
| <b>Armor Class:</b>         | 19 (+3 Dex, +4 studded leather armor, +2 natural armor), touch 13, flat-footed 16   |
| <b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b> | +7/+9   |
| <b>Attack:</b>              | Longsword +11 melee (1d8+4/19-20), or <i>frost longbow</i> +12 ranged (1d8+1d6+1/x3)  |
| <b>Full Attack:</b>         | Longsword +11/+6 melee (1d8+4/19-20), or <i>frost longbow</i> +10/+10/+5 ranged (1d8+1d6+1/x3)                                    |
| <b>Space/Reach:</b>         | 5 ft. /5 ft.  |
| <b>Special Attacks:</b>     | Improved combat style   |
| <b>Special Qualities:</b>   | Favored enemy, track, wild empathy, animal companion, woodland stride, Mist subtype   |
| <b>Saves:</b>               | Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +4  |
| <b>Abilities:</b>           | Str 14, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8   |
| <b>Skills:</b>              | †Bluff +8, †Disguise +8, Hide +13, (Nature) +5, Listen +12, Move Silently +13, Ride +8, †Sense Motive +12, Spot +12, Survival +12 |
| <b>Feats:</b>               | Dodge, Endurance*, Many Shot*, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot*, Track*                                      |
| <b>Environment:</b>         | Any   |
| <b>Challenge Rating:</b>    | 10  |
| <b>Treasure:</b>            | Standard  |
| <b>Alignment:</b>           | Usually chaotic evil  |
| <b>Advancement:</b>         | None  |
| <b>Level Adjustment:</b>    | —   |

\*Bonus feats gained as a class benefit

\*\*This Mist claimer's favored enemies are monstrous humanoids and shapechangers, because its double has those favored enemies. Against monstrous humanoids, he gains a +4 bonus to Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, Survival checks and weapon damage rolls. Against shapechangers, his bonuses to these rolls is only +2.

\*\*\*Interestingly enough, this Mist claimer's animal companion is still a dread companion, and continues to plague its master's life, in some ways helping out the original.

†All Mist claimers gain a +10 racial bonus to Bluff, Disguise and Sense Motive checks.

*Typical Ranger spells prepared* (2 1st-level; save DC 12 + spell level) 1st — *entangle*, *longstrider*.

*Possessions*: +1 studded leather armor, +2 longsword, +1 frost longbow

## Creating a Mist Claimer

"Mist claimer" is an acquired template that can be added to any creature of any type (hereafter referred to as the base creature). However, Mist claimers usually only appear as humanoids or monstrous humanoids.

The Mist claimer retains all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**Size and Type:** The creature gains the Mist subtype, described earlier in this book. Size is unchanged.

**Armor Class:** The base creature's natural armor class increases by +2.

**Special Attacks:** The Mist claimer gains the following special attacks.

*Modify Memory (Su):* This ability works just like the *modify memory* spell, except that the Mist claimer can modify up to an hour of memory. Just like the spell, the creature must spend an equal time visualizing the memory to be changed. Thus, if a peasant failed his save against this power, up to an hour's worth of memory could be altered. However, the Mist claimer would have to spend an hour visualizing that memory after its target failed its saving throw.

*Misted Weapons (Su):* At will and as a free action, a Mist claimer can make its weapons *misted*. Such weapons pass through armor and solid protection (such as chain mail or natural armor), allowing the Mist claimer to strike its opponents with nothing more than a touch attack. When a Mist claimer attacks with a misted weapon, it does not gain any strength bonus to its damage roll. Mist claimers may make ranged weapons *misted* as well, though these weapons lose this quality once they land upon the ground or connect with their target.

**Special Qualities:** The Mist claimer gains the following special qualities.

*Mist Form (Su):* As a full round action, the creature may assume *gaseous form* as per the spell. While in this form, the Mist claimer has a fly speed of 40, with perfect maneuverability. This speed is





faster than most other Mist creatures with this ability. A Mist claimer may remain in *Mist form* indefinitely.

**Trackless Step (Su):** The creature in question leaves neither tracks nor incidental signs of its passing. Any attempts to track it using the Survival skill fail, as well as attempts to find clues of its passing through Search checks. Creatures with this ability may still leave evidence through ethereal resonance, however. One can still follow, scry or spy upon the creature unless it is protected through some other means. Purposeful signs made intentionally by the creature remain and may be found through normal means. A Mist claimer can turn this ability on or off at will, allow it to leave tracks behind if it so wishes.

**Mist Walking (Su):** The Mist claimer can travel between patches of fog as if by means of a *dimension door* spell. The creature must begin and end its travel in an area occupied by mist or fog. The creature can travel in this fashion up to a total of 10 feet per HD per day. For instance, a 10 HD creature could transport itself up to 100 feet per day in this fashion. It may split up the distance in any fashion that it wishes. For example, it could make two jumps of 50 feet, or five jumps of 20 feet. While this amount can be split up between multiple jumps, each transport, no matter how small, counts as at least a 10 foot increment. Thus, a 10HD creature could make ten 10 foot jumps per day, or just ten 1 foot jumps a day.

**Mist Subtype:** All penalties due to concealment by fog or Mist are reduced to half. Immune to charm, domination, sleep, and all other mind-affecting magic. Immune to magic that alters their form. Immune to the effects of aging.

**Abilities:** Con +2, Int +2, Wis -2, Cha -2. A Mist claimer is hardier than the original and somewhat more intelligent. Its perverse nature, however, makes it less patient and personable.

**Skills:** Mist claimers gain a +10 racial bonus to Bluff, Disguise, and Sense Motive. They also gain a +4 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks while in fog.

**Environment:** Any land or underground.

**Organization:** Same as base creature.

**Challenge Rating:** As base creature +3

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** The same as the base creature in respects to law and chaos, but always Evil.

**Advancement:** Same as base creature

## Dread Possibilities

A number of murders in a town prompt the party to act. All of the clues point to a single person, who has a perfect alibi for each crime. As the crimes continue, and the clues begin to mount, and the accused actually turns himself in to the party. The poor victim then explains that while he did not commit any of the crimes, in his heart he secretly wanted to do them. It soon becomes apparent that a Mist claimer is committing the crimes. However, even if the Mist claimer is destroyed, another one arrives for as long as the victim carries his dark thoughts. The party is thus faced with a dilemma. Do they kill the penitent victim, preventing the Mist claimers from arising? Or do they try to cleanse his thoughts, a much longer process that possibly risks the lives of more innocents? To make matters worse, a large mob begins to form, demanding the death of the victim.

## Changeling fog

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
|                             | <b>Huge Elemental (Air, Mist)</b>  |
| <b>Hit Dice:</b>            | 13d8+13 (71 hp)  |
| <b>Initiative:</b>          | +7   |
| <b>Speed:</b>               | Fly 20 ft. (perfect)   |
| <b>Armor Class:</b>         | 11 (-2 size, +3 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 8  |
| <b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b> | +9/-   |
| <b>Attack:</b>              | Incorporeal touch +10 (2d6 acid)   |
| <b>Full Attack:</b>         | 4 incorporeal touches +10 (2d6 acid)   |
| <b>Space/Reach:</b>         | 15 ft. / 10 ft.  |
| <b>Special Attacks:</b>     | Haunting call, wandering mind  |
| <b>Special Qualities:</b>   | Blindsight 120 ft., burning body, DR 10/magic, naturally gaseous, elemental traits, mist subtype |
| <b>Saves:</b>               | Fort +5, Ref +11, Will +6  |
| <b>Abilities:</b>           | Str -, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 14  |
| <b>Skills:</b>              | Hide +19*, Listen +18, Bluff +18   |
| <b>Feats:</b>               | Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Multiattack, Spring attack                                 |
| <b>Environment:</b>         | Any  |
| <b>Organization:</b>        | Solitary or pack (2-5)   |
| <b>Challenge Rating:</b>    | 6  |
| <b>Treasure:</b>            | None   |
| <b>Alignment:</b>           | Usually neutral evil   |
| <b>Advancement:</b>         | 14-20 HD (Gargantuan)  |
| <b>Level Adjustment:</b>    | —  |

*Deep within the rolling banks of fog, you can barely perceive shapes. At first, these forms are vague and indistinguishable. Soon, you realize that you recognize the silhouettes in front of you. They are*





people that you know, trapped in the fog. Their flailing arms reach out for you; you can hear their plaintive calls, begging you for aid, begging you to set them free.

Dread legends about changeling fog drift all over the land, a warning to those who would dare to travel alone. These legends always feature a traveler who suddenly sees within the fog a long lost love, being hurt or tortured. The traveler pursues his loved one, who is carried further and further into the fog by unknown forces. Too late, the traveler looks down and begins to see his own flesh rotting, his skin burning. He has been lured into a changeling fog, victim to its decomposing touch.

Those who have been able to resist the siren call of a changeling fog report that they have received unlikely aid from this strange phenomenon. Popular folklore claims that once a person is tested by the changeling fog and proven to be strong-willed, the fog follows him, protecting him from harm.

Changeling fog is a form of Mist elemental, a being shaped out of the primeval substance of the realm itself. Scholars theorize that Mist elementals of great age might *evolve* into changeling fog, becoming more powerful and mysterious with time.

Changeling fog is indistinguishable from a normal bank of mist. The one thing that makes it stand out, of course, is that within the fog bank, one can see the silhouettes of loved ones or enemies, all calling out to those who behold it.

This strange form of elemental can actually speak if it wishes, though it always uses the images of loved ones or enemies to do so. In Ravenloft, changeling fog can speak any language in the Core, as well as Auran.

## Combat

Changeling fog prefers to lure its victims into its rotting embrace, silently corroding them once they have walked right up into the fog. If more than one changeling fog is encountered, they try to lure victims in different directions, splitting up any group that their prey might be in.

If the changeling fog cannot lure its victims into its mass, or is prevented from doing so, it attempts to use its *wandering mind* ability to frustrate its targets, wearing them down psychologically. Only after its targets are weary and forlorn does it close in for the kill.

Should someone be strong-minded enough to withstand both of these psychic assaults, that per-

son finds that the changeling fog actually serves as a protector to them, watching over them for a single night before leaving forever.

Should changeling fog attack in earnest, this insidious elemental creature attacks with vaporous tentacles that lash out at its victims, burning the skin with but a touch. Changeling fogs love to attack and retreat backwards, continually keeping their opponents at a distance with their long reach.

**Burning Body (Su):** The vaporous body of changeling fog is corrosive. As a gaseous being, it can occupy the same space as other creatures. Anyone sharing mutual space with a changeling fog automatically suffers 2d6 acid damage per round.

**Haunting Call (Su):** Changeling fog lures its prey closer by imitating the calls and cries of people known to its victims. Anyone within 100 feet of changeling fog hears the calls of people from her past, possibly friends or enemies. Those who can see the fog also see faint silhouettes of their associates within the vapors. This is a phantasmal effect.

Targets who hear or see the *haunting call* must make a DC 18 Will save or be compelled to approach each round. The save DC is Charisma-based. Those who make their Will save are immune to that changeling fog's call for 24 hours.

Creatures who fail their save must move as close as they can, trying to overcome any obstruction by any means necessary, including attack. They continue in this fashion until they cannot hear or see the changeling fog.

A creature lured by the sonic effect can be compelled into traveling a route that would cause its harm. However, targets led into obvious danger receive a new Will save. Targets who reach the changeling fog may make an additional Will save. If this final save is failed, the hapless victims stands and relives an encounter with her associates, while the changeling fog slowly burns away her flesh. Many a lonely traveler has been seeing in the distance, standing in a daze as her very flesh drips from her body.

**Wandering Mind (Su):** It is well known that those who encounter changeling fog are often hopelessly lost, for the fog bends their minds in such a way that no one can correctly perceive their surroundings. Anyone within 100 feet of changeling fog must make a DC 18 Will save. This Will save is Charisma-based.

Those that fail the Will save become hopelessly lost. They may travel up to a mile away while under the influence of this power, but they always





come back to the same point of origin. The point of origin is always the place where the target started moving after it failed its initial Will save.

While the target is walking, he always mysteriously ends up back where she started. As long as the victim is under the effect of this power, there is no escaping being lost. Skill and magic do not foil this power, since the victim's is being mentally manipulated back to the point of origin.

Only a successful *dispel magic* or *break enchantment* can break someone free of *wandering mind*.

Any outside observer watching the hapless target sees the person wander around aimless for a while, eventually ending up at the original starting point. Someone unaffected by the *wandering mind* ability can guide a confused victim out of his fugue. As soon as the victim is more than a mile away from the point of origin, the power of the *wandering mind* breaks, and the victim is no longer lost.

*Wandering mind* is a phantasmal effect that exists within the mind of those it targets. Any creature immune to a phantasm is also immune to *wandering mind*.

**Gaseous:** All changeling fogs exist naturally in a gaseous state. Unlike most gaseous beings, changeling fog can physically attack other beings, since its touch is corrosive. Spells and spell-like abilities affect gaseous creatures normally. Its damage reduction protects it from physical attacks, but unlike incorporeal creatures, it *does not* ignore damage from a physical source 50% of the time.

Changeling fog cannot enter water or other liquid. Being comprised of corrosive mist, this creature is neither ethereal nor incorporeal. Changeling fog can be forcibly moved by wind and air currents, but can never be completely dispersed. Discerning changeling fog from natural mist requires a DC 15 Spot check. However, if the changeling fog actively hides in an area with mist, smoke, or other gas, it gains a +24 bonus. Changeling fog is naturally silent when it moves.

**Elemental Traits:** Immune to poison, sleep, paralysis and stunning. Not subjects to critical hits and flanking. Changeling fogs possess no soul and cannot be resurrected. As elementals, changeling fogs need not eat, sleep, or breathe.

**Mist Subtype:** All penalties due to concealment by fog or mist reduced to half. +4 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks while in fog. Immune to charm, domination, sleep, and all other mind-affecting magic. Immune to magic that alters their form. Immune to the effects of aging.

## Dread Possibilities

A little boy wanders back into town with a new "friend." A changeling fog has followed the child back to his home and continues to lurk nearby, "protecting" its new ward from harm.

## Goblyn fog

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
|                              | <b>Huge Elemental (Air, Mist)</b>   |
| <b>Hit Dice:</b>             | 21d8+13 (178 hp)  |
| <b>Initiative:</b>           | +6  |
| <b>Speed:</b>                | Fly 30 ft. (perfect)  |
| <b>Armor Class:</b>          | 20 (-2 size, +2 Dex, +20 natural), touch 20, flat-footed 18   |
| <b>Base Attack /Grapple:</b> | +15/+30   |
| <b>Attack: Slam</b>          | +22 (2d8+7)   |
| <b>Full Attack:</b>          | 2 slams +22 (2d8+7)   |
| <b>Space/Reach:</b>          | 20 ft. /15 ft.  |
| <b>Special Attacks:</b>      | Hideous transformation, alluring lair   |
| <b>Special Qualities:</b>    | Darkvision 60 ft., damage reduction 10/-, elemental traits, Mist traits   |
| <b>Saves:</b>                | Fort +10, Ref +14, Will +5  |
| <b>Abilities:</b>            | Str 25, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 16  |
| <b>Skills:</b>               | Spot +11, Listen +11  |
| <b>Feats:</b>                | Alertness, Awesome Blow, Combat Reflexes, Flyby Attack, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Power Attack |
| <b>Environment:</b>          | Any   |
| <b>Organization:</b>         | Solitary  |
| <b>Challenge Rating:</b>     | 9   |
| <b>Treasure:</b>             | Double standard   |
| <b>Alignment:</b>            | Always chaotic evil   |
| <b>Advancement:</b>          | None  |

*You notice that the Mists this night have a slightly greenish tinge to them. Past the curious vapors, you see the forest has taken on alien dimensions. The trees have turned a sickly mauve color. Their bark oozes with a yellowish substance. Strange birds now sit in the trees, their bodies large and tumorous. And beyond all of this, you see a small cottage covered in lumpy, swelling vines. In the windows, strange shapes wander back and forth, shuffling and muttering in unknown languages.*

Goblyn fog is said to be a grave curse that completely befouls the land where it touches. According to common folklore, goblyn fog completely corrupts any place it drifts, transforming plants into strange species and shaping animals into hideous, mutated forms.

No one is certain as to the origins of this strange phenomenon, however, some sages specu-





late that goblin fog was a creation by the dark priestess Radaga. According to these tales, a mist elemental that she was experimenting upon broke free in her lab one night, wreaking havoc. The priestess drove out the elemental, but not before it had been contaminated by the dark energies seething within her ruined laboratory.

This warped elemental always appears to be a low hanging cloud with a greenish tint, immediately distinguishing it from normal mist. Despite its appearance, goblin fog is actually a substantial being that takes up space, though it is vaporous. Goblin fog is not known to be able to speak, though it can understand almost any spoken language.

## Combat

Goblin fog usually lingers in an area for a while, corrupting it. Then, it moves on, seeking to corrupt other places. While it actively changes a locale, it always attempts to hide, lying low upon the ground. It tries not to engage in direct combat unless forced, preferring its mutated landscape to do the fighting for it.

**Hideous Transformation:** Any living thing within a 300 ft. radius of goblin fog is subject to its corrupting presence. After a day of the goblin fog's presence, all plants in the area grow discolored and bloated.

On the second day of a goblin fog's presence, all plants in the area move of their own accord. Animals show signs of mutation, turning different colors and growing large tumors upon their body.

Upon the third day of a goblin fog's presence, all plants attack any creature that is not corrupted, acting like an *entangle* spell in the area of effect (DC 21 Reflex save partial, save is Wisdom-based). Furthermore, all animals in the area must make a DC 21 Fortitude save or gain the fiendish template (see *Monster Manual* for details). The save is Wisdom-based. Creatures who gain the fiendish template through this process do not gain reality-wrinkles. Any sentient creature in the area must make a similar Fortitude save or become a caliban.

On the fourth and final day of transformation, any sentient creature still in the area must make another DC 21 Fortitude save or forever turn into a goblin (see *Denizens of Dread* for more information).

**Alluring Lair (Su):** Whenever goblin fog takes up residence in a specified area, all creatures within 300 ft. of its presence must make a DC 19

Will save or be compelled to linger in that area. Any food eaten in the *alluring lair* seems to be delicious to the affected creature. The air in that area carries pleasant smells and the corrupted elements of the environment appear hypnotically beautiful.

Any creature in the designated zone may exit the area freely, but after 30 minutes outside, the creature becomes agitated. After an hour, the creature must make another Will save or be compelled to return to the *alluring lair* for another 24 hours.

**Mist Subtype:** All penalties due to concealment by fog or mist reduced to half. +4 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks while in fog. Immune to charm, domination, sleep, and all other mind-affecting magic. Immune to magic that alters their form. Immune to the effects of aging.

**Elemental Traits:** Immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, and stunning. Not subjects to critical hits and flanking. Changeling fogs possess no soul and cannot be resurrected. As elementals, changeling fogs need not eat, sleep, or breathe.

## Dread Possibilities

The party is hired to investigate the "poisoning" of the town's water supply. The people of the town are convinced that tampering with the water has led to the plant life in the area growing strangely. As the party races around following the clues, the town becomes more and more corrupted. Soon, familiar friends and allies begin to turn into calibans.

## Vanished

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
|                             | <b>Medium Fey (Mist)</b>  |
| <b>Hit Dice:</b>            | 4d6+4 (18 hp)   |
| <b>Initiative:</b>          | +3  |
| <b>Speed:</b>               | 30 ft. (6 squares)  |
| <b>Armor Class:</b>         | 18 (+3 Dex, +5 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 15   |
| <b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b> | +2/+9   |
| <b>Attacks:</b>             | Slam +4 melee (1d4+2) or soul reaping +5 ranged touch attack (1d6 Con and Wis, DC 14 Fortitude save)    |
| <b>Full Attack:</b>         | 4 slams +4 melee (1d4+2) or soul reaping +5 ranged touch attack (1d6 Con and Wis, DC 14 Fortitude save) |
| <b>Space/Reach:</b>         | 5ft./5ft.   |
| <b>Special Attacks:</b>     | Sprouting arms, soul drink, soul reaping  |
| <b>Special Qualities:</b>   | There not there   |
| <b>Saves:</b>               | Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +5  |





**Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 15

**Skills:** Hide +10, Knowledge (mist lore) +3, Listen +6, Move Silently +10, Spot +8, Survival +6

**Feats:** Improved Grapple, Track

**Environment:** Any

**Organization:** Pack (6-11) or horde (50-100)

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Always chaotic evil

**Advancement:** 5-10 HD (Medium)

**Level Adjustment:** —

*In the distance, a gathering of man-shapes can be seen. As they draw closer, however, disturbing details can be made out through the fog. These beings' skin is a milky-white, the color of some putrid egg sack. And beneath their translucent covering, you can see a myriad of arms struggling to break free. Indeed, these things do not even have a face, only a wriggling mass of fingers.*

Long ago, in the early days of the Realm of Dread, a group of sylvan fey attempted to leave. They took their chances with the fog, hoping that somewhere, anywhere, would be better than where they dwelled.

To their woe, this group of fey received their wish. They were lifted from the domain in which they dwelled. Because of their nomadic life style, they were unable to gather the food necessary to survive. At the end, a small handful of them turned to cannibalism rather than face the long oblivion of starvation.

These fey became universally shunned by all of their kind. They continued to dwell in the Mists, the vapors slowly changing their bodies until they completely lost their once-noble forms.

Today, these poor beings are known as the vanished. Their bodies have become completely transformed by the Mists into a mockery of life. Each vanished is humanoid in shape, but the resemblance to anything human ends there. Beneath the sickly membrane that passes for skin struggle the arms and legs of the souls they have consumed as cannibals. These creatures do not even have faces, but instead their round heads continually sprout hands and fingers as the souls of their consumed victims yearn to break free.

The vanished can no longer speak, though they can understand sylvan and elvish. They can telepathically communicate with their own kind.

## Combat

Vanished always attack in groups. Their goal is to take as many victims as they can, so that their gathering may feast upon souls. Once a victim has been killed, the vanished descend upon the dying person, drinking up her soul upon the moment of death.

A vanished that dies explodes in a huge swarm of souls that go spiraling off in different directions.

**Sprouting arms (Su):** Anytime a vanished fails a grapple check against its opponent, it may immediately repeat the grapple attempt. It may only make one repeat of the grapple attempt per round. When it does this, the vanished sprouts another set of arms that attempt to grab its opponent.

**Soul Drink (Su):** A victim who is killed by a vanished cannot be resurrected or brought back to the living by any means, unless the specific vanished that killed that person is destroyed.

**Soul Reaping (Su):** When engaging in this attack, the vanished rips one of the boiling souls from its body and to throws it at an opponent. The soul returns to the vanished's body immediately. Treat this as a ranged touch attack with a 80 foot range and no range increment. Those hit by the attack must make a DC 14 Fortitude save or lose 1d6 points of temporary Constitution and Wisdom, as a piece of their soul is ripped away by the attack. The save is Charisma-based.

**There Not There (Su):** This creature can appear and disappear in combat, by shifting into the Ethereal Plane. It is considered to be able to *blink* as per the spell. Doing so is a standard action.

**Mist Subtype:** All penalties due to concealment by fog or mist reduced to half. +4 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks while in fog. Immune to charm, domination, sleep, and all other mind-affecting magic. Immune to magic that alters their form. Immune to the effects of aging.

## Dread Possibilities

A group of fey approach the party with an unusual request. They believe that they are part the original fey clan to which the vanished once belonged. They request that the party travel to an oubliette and capture some of the vanished there to see if they may be turned back to their former selves. This harrowing journey involves several problems: finding Vistani willing to take the PCs there, surviving the oubliette itself, and capturing a number of vanished alive. Undoubtedly, any





vanished taken must be either kept unconscious, or kept restrained with special *ghost touch* manacles, due to their *there not there* ability.

## Pale Rider

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
|                             | <b>Medium Undead (Mist, Incorporeal)</b>  |
| <b>Hit Dice:</b>            | 9d12 (58 hp)  |
| <b>Initiative:</b>          | +4  |
| <b>Speed:</b>               | Fly 30 ft. (perfect) or mounted fly 60 ft. (perfect)  |
| <b>Armor Class:</b>         | 16 (+4 Dex, +2 deflection) touch 16, flat-footed 12   |
| <b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b> | +4/+4   |
| <b>Attacks:</b>             | Incorporeal touch +8 melee (1d6 Con) or incorporeal ranged touch (longbow) +8 ranged (1d6 Dex)  |
| <b>Full Attack:</b>         | 2 incorporeal touches +8 melee (1d6 Con) or 2 incorporeal ranged touches (longbow) +8 ranged (1d6 Dex)                                    |
| <b>Space/Reach:</b>         | 5ft. /5ft.  |
| <b>Special Attacks:</b>     | Incorporeal touch, grant vengeance, instill aura, refuel the fire, price of failure   |
| <b>Special Qualities:</b>   | Incorporeal traits, undead, ghostly mount   |
| <b>Saves:</b>               | Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +8  |
| <b>Abilities:</b>           | Str —, Dex 19, Con —, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 18  |
| <b>Skills:</b>              | Hide +10(34), Knowledge (Mist lore) +14, Knowledge (any one) +14, Listen +14, Sense Motive +14, Spot +8, Ride +16, Spot +14, Survival +14 |
| <b>Feats:</b>               | Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, Track  |
| <b>Environment:</b>         | Any   |
| <b>Organization:</b>        | Chorus (3, 4, 7 or 13)  |
| <b>Challenge Rating:</b>    | 6   |
| <b>Treasure:</b>            | None  |
| <b>Alignment:</b>           | Always chaotic evil   |
| <b>Advancement:</b>         | 10-15 HD (Medium)   |
| <b>Level Adjustment:</b>    | —   |

*Out of the fog step figures robed in white. They sit astride emaciated horses, whose bulging eyes bleed red tears. The figures' faces and hands are both skeletal and ghostly, radiating an unearthly aura.*

Occasionally, a person's heart will be consumed by the desire for retribution. On some dark nights, when the fog is right, the Mists will answer those desires. Whether deserved or not, the pale riders arrive before the vengeance-seeker and strike a dark bargain. The pale riders lend the revenge-pursuer their aid. But if this person cannot vanquish

their most hated enemy within three nights, then the pale riders turn upon those who have called for them.

Pale riders never intercede directly for the person who called for them. Instead, they use their powers to bolster their summoner, after which they leave the scene and allow the enhanced individual time to act upon his desire for revenge. During the next three nights, the pale riders can occasionally be seen in the distance, watching their charge. If the person who called for revenge cannot fulfill it by the end of the third night, at dawn, the pale riders come to claim their former charge and haul him into the Mists.

Pale riders can speak any language known to mortals.

## Combat:

Pale riders appear before those who seek justice and grant them one or all of their special Mist-blessings. The amount of bolstering their ward receives varies widely and is subject to a pale rider's whim.

These chilling creatures never engage in combat unless it is to destroy those who have failed in their promise of vengeance. Should they be attacked outside of this context, they vanish using their *teleportation* ability.

When pale riders do attack, they do so with incorporeal swords and longbows. They fight their targets ruthlessly and without remorse. Anyone who aids their intended victim is also subject to attack. They never flee when they have initiated this combat, though they may use their *teleportation* ability to stay out of reach. Pale riders usually bolster each other with their own vengeance abilities before riding into conflict.

**Grant Vengeance (Sp):** A pale rider can grant another the power of vengeance. Unlike other creatures with this ability, the pale rider need not touch its target. If the target accepts the power from the creature, then he or she gains a +2 to hit, damage and saving throws when the target next fights the object of its vengeance. This mist-blessing lasts for 24 hours.

Note that these bonuses only last while the target is fighting the object of its vengeance. If it is fighting a minion, or making a save from a spell cast by a minion, the target does not receive these bonuses.

**Refuel the Fire (Sp):** By using this power, the pale rider empowers another in the name of re-





venge. Unlike other creatures with this ability, the pale rider need not touch its target. Thereafter, the recipient of this power first receives a *heal* spell. If the target is undead, it instead receives the benefits of a *harm* spell. The target also gains the benefits of *bless* and *prayer*, and a +4 to an ability score of its choice. Additionally, the target becomes immune to damage from a single energy type. While under the effects of *refuel the fire* the target creature is immune to all poisons. These benefits last for 24 hours.

In order to receive this vengeful blessing, the target must willingly sacrifice a permanent point of Charisma. This Charisma point may never be recovered, even by means of a *restoration* or other restorative magics.

**Instill Aura (Sp):** By extending its blessing, the pale rider can cause another to assume an "aura of vengeance." While cloaked in this aura of vengeance, the target is surrounded by a tangible sensation of wrath and violence. When the target next meets the object of its vengeance, its opponent must make a Will save or become *shaken*. The Will save is always equal to 10 + + the target's HD + target's Charisma modifier.

**Price of Failure (Su):** Any being who is granted one of the pale rider's vengeance abilities may have it removed from them at any time, by the whim of the rider who granted it. Furthermore, those who fail in exacting vengeance within three nights' time suffer an ignominious fate. They suffer -2 penalty to all ability scores, no saving throw. This penalty remains until the pale riders that Mist-blessed the target are destroyed. No kind of magical or natural healing will repair this ability damage. Should the pale riders be destroyed, the target immediately regains the lost ability points.

**Ghostly Mount:** As long as a pale rider sit astride its mount, it gains the following abilities: 2 /day *teleport without error, find the path*. A pale rider's mount has the same stats as a light warhorse, except that it is undead, incorporeal and has no attacks.

**Undead Traits:** Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

**Incorporeal Traits:** Only hit by +1 or better weapons, or spells. 50% chance to ignore damage from corporeal source such as a physical attack or spell. This does not apply to force-effects such as *magic missile*. Can pass through solid objects at will,

ignores natural armor, armor, and shields, but not deflection bonuses or force effects. Always moves silently.

**Mist Subtype:** All penalties due to concealment by fog or mist reduced to half. +4 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks while in fog. Immune to magic that alters their form.

## Dread Possibilities

The pale riders present a myriad of possibilities for any campaign. If a particular villain has been troubling the party, they might be plagued by pale riders who constantly tempt them with the possibility of power and retribution. Another option is to have a beloved NPC swear an oath of vengeance, and strike a dark bargain with a group of pale riders. Does the party help the revenge-sworn NPC? Yet another possibility is encountering an NPC who is constantly hunted by pale riders who seek to claim his soul after he failed a quest for justice. Only by completing the quest for justice can the NPC at last rest.

## Mist Weirð

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
|                             | <b>Large Elemental (Mist)</b>  |
| <b>Hit Dice:</b>            | 15d8+45 (112 hp)   |
| <b>Initiative:</b>          | +6   |
| <b>Speed:</b>               | 30ft. (6 squares), fly 60 ft. (perfect)  |
| <b>Armor Class:</b>         | 15 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 13   |
| <b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b> | +11/+16  |
| <b>Attacks:</b>             | Slam +15 melee (2d6+7)   |
| <b>Full Attack:</b>         | Slam +15/+10/+5 melee (2d6+7)  |
| <b>Space/Reach:</b>         | 10 ft. /10 ft.   |
| <b>Special Attacks:</b>     | Elemental command, elemental corruption, mist call, trapping fog, spells   |
| <b>Special Qualities:</b>   | Alien mind, damage reduction 15/magic, Mist mastery, Mist pool, Mist sense, elemental traits, prescience, regeneration 10, spell resistance 25 |
| <b>Saves:</b>               | Fort +8, Ref +13, Will +11   |
| <b>Abilities:</b>           | Str 21, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 20, Wis 23, Cha 22   |
| <b>Skills:</b>              | Bluff +15, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +17, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (any three) +12, Listen +6, Sense Motive +13, Spot +6                   |
| <b>Feats:</b>               | Empower Spell, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Maximize Spell, Misted Magic*, Quicken Spell   |
| <b>Environment:</b>         | Any  |





**Organization:** Solitary, pair, or charm (3-4)  
**Challenge Rating:** 12  
**Treasure:** Double standard  
**Alignment:** Always chaotic evil  
**Advancement:** 7-12 HD (Medium)  
**Level Adjustment:** —

*You see an extremely tall, beautiful creature that wears a womanly shape. Its transparent body is made up of rolling fog, which drifts in hypnotic circles over and over. Her wide-eyed gaze is full of madness, shining forth with a terrible white light. The lower half of her body dissipates into a long flowing tendril of fog that oozes back into the mist bank from which she flows.*

Elemental weirds are beings of foresight and prophecy. Adventurers and scholars who seek knowledge that can change the course of history search for these mysterious oracles.

In Ravenloft, Mist weirds are elemental oracles that serve the Mists of Ravenloft directly. They are perhaps the closest thing anyone in the Dread Realms can find to a direct line to the Mists.

To a mortal mind, a mist weird appears to be totally insane. Their service to the Mists means that they cannot conceive of things in a mortal fashion. They do not perceive time linearly, like most creatures. Every being they encounter has already come and gone in their minds. Every decision that one will make has already been made. The realm itself is being born and is dying all at the same time. They understand neither logic nor emotion. They know only one thing: the will of the Mists.

If an adventuring party discovers its lair, a mist weird is rarely surprised. Of course they discovered the lair. The Mists decreed it. If a mist weird utters some prophecy that is completely wrong, it is so because the Mists decided that the prophecy was wrong.

Seeking advice from a Mist weird is a risky proposition. Sometimes the advice is sound. Sometimes it is completely false. Nevertheless, many seek out these cryptic spirits in the hope of gaining some gem of knowledge.

Mist weirds are extremely rare in the Dread Realms. Their scarcity is increased by the fact that Darklords usually try to trap them as soon as possible. Such schemes often end in disaster. There are rumors of other Ravenloft elemental weirds such as blood weirds, grave weirds, and pyre weirds. However, these tales are largely unsubstantiated.

Mist weirds can speak any language of the Core as well as Auran.

## Combat

Facing a Mist weird is extremely difficult at best. Uninvited creatures who enter the fog that houses the weird are instantly transported away. Even if an opponent gains an invitation into the fog, a Mist weird can always use its own Mistway to escape a conflict. In times of emergency, the Mist weird uses its *trapping fog* power to slow opponents. As a last resort, it summons elementals to fight for it. A Mist weird always prefers to flee rather than fight.

**Alien Mind (Su):** A Mist weird's mind is a strange amalgam of images, prophecy and whispers. Anyone attempting to read the mind or make telepathic contact with a Mist weird must make a DC 23 Madness save or contract a moderate madness. This save is Charisma-based.

**Elemental Command (Su):** A Mist weird can attempt to control any elemental within 100 feet regardless of that elemental's type. The elemental must make a DC 23 Will save or fall under the Mist weird's control. This save is Charisma-based. An elemental that makes its Will save is immune from the Mist weird's yoke for 24 hours. Mist weirds may control as many elementals as they wish. Once an elemental falls under the influence of a Mist weird, its servitude lasts for only 24 hours. It then is allowed to make a new Will save.

**Elemental Corruption (Su):** A Mist weird can corrupt any elemental under its command. As a standard action, it may transform a standard elemental into a Ravenloft elemental. More information about Ravenloft elementals can be found in **Denizens of Dread**.

Alternatively, the Mist weird may also bestow the Mist subtype upon any elemental that serves it.

**Mist Call (Su):** A Mist weird can create a patch of fog that is 20 feet in radius and 20 feet high. It can summon this patch of fog up to 310 feet away. This patch of fog last for as long as the creature wishes. In all other respects, this effect resembles the *fog cloud* spell. The patch of fog can linger up to 150 minutes.

It is risky to use this ability, since the Mists do not like being constantly beckoned. Each time this power is used, there is a %5 cumulative chance per encounter that the fog called for does not come at all. If a "00" is ever rolled, this power completely backfires, creating a patch of mist in the worst possible area for the encounter.





**Mist Pool (Su):** All Mist weirds are trapped within a bank of fog which they may never leave. The fog bank is always at least 40 feet across. Their Mist banks always contain a Mistway that leads to a place of their choosing. While the Mist weird cannot leave its Mist bank, it may be transported by the Mists themselves. Alternatively, the weird may make use of its own Mistway.

Three times a day, the weird can summon guardians from the folds of its Mist bank. It may summon 2d4 huge elementals, 1d2 greater elementals, or 1 elder elemental. These summoned elementals may be of any type. However, they must be native Ravenloft elementals. The summoned elementals, of course, do not arrive under the control of the Mist weird. It must take control of each summoned elemental in turn.

Anyone who dares to enter the foggy pool uninvited by the inhabiting Mist weird is instantly transported by the Mists. The Mist weird has no choice as to where the offending trespasser goes.

**Prescience (Su):** At will and as a free action, the weird can duplicate the effect any of the following spells: *analyze dweomer*, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *commune with nature*, *dark sentinels\**, *detect thoughts*, *discern location*, *find the path*, *foresight*, *greater scrying*, *identify spoor\**, *immerse mind\**, *insight\**, *legend lore*, *locate creature*, *locate object*, *see ethereal resonance\**, *tongues*, *true seeing*, *vision*. Note that many of these spells function differently in Ravenloft.

\*Denotes a spell found in Van Richten's Arsenal.

**Trapping Fog (Su):** A Mist weird can make a bank of fog become solid, as per the spell *solid fog*. This power affects a bank of fog that is 20 ft. in radius and 20 ft. high. Solid fog is so thick that any creature attempting to move through it progresses at a speed of 5 feet, regardless of its normal speed. Such beings also suffer a -2 to penalty to all melee attack and damage rolls. The viscous Mist also prevents effective ranged weapon attacks. Magical rays and the like still function. Any creature falling into solid fog is slowed, so that each 10 feet of vapor that it falls through reduces the falling damage by 1d6. A creature can't take a 5 foot step while in *trapping fog*. Unlike normal fog, only a severe wind (31 + mph) will disperse this enchanted fog, doing so in 1 round.

The *trapping fog* lingers for 21 minutes.

**Spells (Su):** A Mist weird can cast arcane spells and divine spells from the Air and Mist

domains as an 18th level sorcerer (*spells known* 9/5/5/4/4/4/3/3/2/1; *spells/day* 6/8/8/7/7/7/7/6/5/3; save DC 16 + spell level).

**Mist Mastery (Ex):** A Mist weird gains a +1 bonus to damage rolls while its opponent is in fog.

**Mist Sense (Su):** A Mist weird can automatically pinpoint and sense where any creature is so long as it is both within some form of fog and within 100 feet.

## Dread Possibilities

Mist weirds present a wide variety of plot twists for a campaign. They might be the object of a quest in which the party must find the answer to a riddle. Alternately, a Mist weird might know of a way to break a specific curse on a person or land. Also consider how the local Darklord might react if he or she knows a Mist weird is nearby? What happens when the Vistani try to get rid of a nearby Mist weird, because it is muscling in on their soothsaying turf?

In a campaign setting where mystery is paramount, an oracle that might provide answers becomes an intriguing plot hook.

## Kalij

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
|                              | <b>Medium Undead (Mist, Gaseous)</b>   |
| <b>Hit Dice:</b>             | 6d12 (39 hp)   |
| <b>Initiative:</b>           | +3   |
| <b>Speed:</b>                | Fly 30 ft. (perfect)   |
| <b>Armor Class:</b>          | 13 (+3 Dex) touch 13, flat-footed 10   |
| <b>Base Attack /Grapple:</b> | +3/+10   |
| <b>Attacks:</b>              | Incorporeal touch +6 melee (1d6 Con)   |
| <b>Full Attack:</b>          | Incorporeal touch +6 melee (1d6 Con)   |
| <b>Space/Reach:</b>          | 5ft. /5ft.   |
| <b>Special Attacks:</b>      | Incorporeal touch, breath stealer  |
| <b>Special Qualities:</b>    | Gaseous traits, low-light vision, resistance to cold and electricity 10, undead traits, Mist subtype |
| <b>Saves:</b>                | Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +5   |
| <b>Abilities:</b>            | Str -, Dex 16, Con -, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 15  |
| <b>Skills:</b>               | Hide +12(36), Listen +6, Search +5, Spot +6,   |
| <b>Feats:</b>                | Dodge, Improved Grapple, Mobility  |
| <b>Environment:</b>          | Any  |
| <b>Organization:</b>         | Solitary or coven (2-4)  |
| <b>Challenge Rating:</b>     | 4  |
| <b>Treasure:</b>             | None   |
| <b>Alignment:</b>            | Always chaotic evil  |
| <b>Advancement:</b>          | 7-12 HD (Medium)   |
| <b>Level Adjustment:</b>     | —  |





*You see a slow mist pooling upon the floor. Right before your eyes, the vapors rise, taking on hideous proportions. The white wisps form into the shapes of eyes and a mouth. Soon, you see the countenance of an old crone drawn in the fog itself. Its lips move as if to speak, but no words come forth from its insubstantial mouth.*

The kalij exist for a single purpose — to draw the breath from their victims, preferably sleeping new born babes. These vaporous terrors are sometimes created when a grieving mother whispers dark prayers to the Mists. Many times, a kalij can be formed when a mother in mourning flees into the fog, never to be seen again. In Hazlan, some Rashemi mothers who have lost their children are known to commit this final act out of revenge for their murdered child or sometimes out of sheer desperation and madness.

These beings are often blamed for crib deaths all over the Core, but they exist predominantly in Hazlan, where it is a tradition for a family member to stay up with a newborn each night, to ward away these foul spirits.

The kalij always appear as wisps of fog. Occasionally, the features of an old crone can be made out in the Mist. Kalij cannot speak any language, though they can understand any language they spoke in life. They can communicate telepathically with their own kind.

## Combat

The kalij live off of the living breath of their victims. If possible, they will pick out an easy target, suck out their victim's breath and flee. If pursued or somehow cornered, a kalij fights fiercely, first weakening its victim with its incorporeal touch and then using its *breath stealer* attack to deliver the final blow.

**Breath Stealer (Su):** Once per round, a kalij can make a special touch attack. If it succeeds, the creature may attempt a special opposed grapple check against its opponent. The kalij's grapple bonus uses its Dexterity instead of its strength. If

the creature wins the grapple, it has wrestled itself into its victims nostrils or mouth and drawn out its breath.'

A victim who has had its breath drawn from it can no longer breathe, and immediately begins holding its breath. Once the poor victim has run out of breath, he begins to suffocate. Rule for holding one's breath and suffocation are found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

The only way a victim can get his breath back is by destroying the kalij that took it or by receiving a *remove curse* or *heal* spell.

**Gaseous Traits:** Can be affected by spells or spell-like effects, as well as magical attacks that overcome its damage reduction. Cannot enter water or other liquid. This creature is neither ethereal nor incorporeal. Can be forcibly moved by wind and air currents but can never be completely dispersed. Discerning a kalij from natural mist requires a DC 15 Spot check. If it is actively trying to hide in fog, it gains a +24 to its Hide check. A kalij is naturally silent when it moves.

**Mist Subtype:** Has low-light vision. All penalties due to concealment by fog or mist reduced to half. +4 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks while in fog. Immune to charm, domination, sleep, and all other mind-affecting magic. Immune to magic that alters their form. Immune to the effects of aging.

**Undead Traits:** Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

## Dread Possibilities

The party befriends a kindly woman who takes them into her home. Unfortunately, the woman's child is kidnapped by a local cult and sacrificed. In a fit of blind anguish, the woman runs off into the fog. As the party hunts down the evil cult, they have to deal with a new problem. The spirit of their former friend has become a kalij, and now seeks the lives of the other children in the village.

