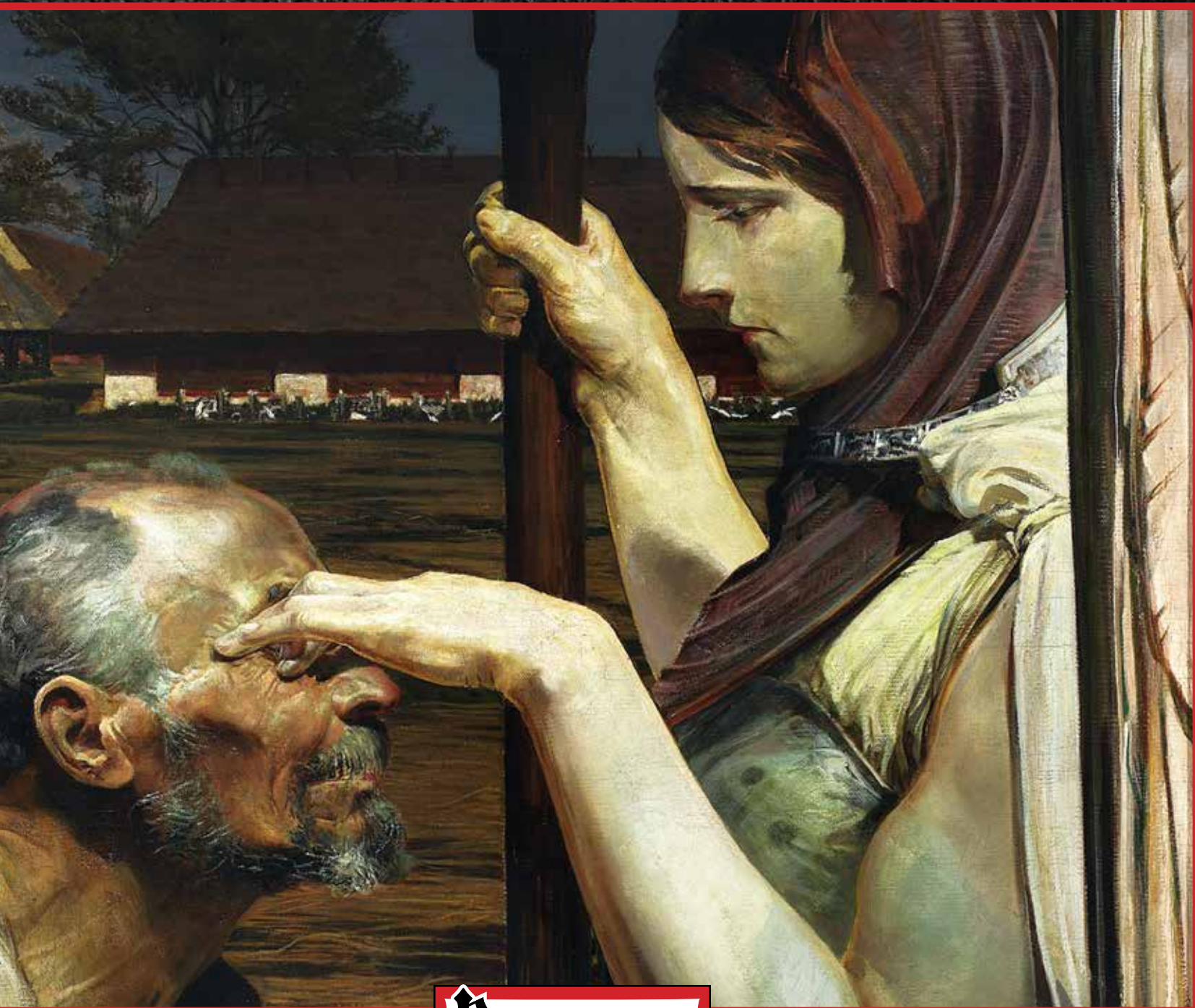


# PESTILENCE

## THE BOOK OF DISEASE

Revised Edition



**PATHFINDER**  
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE



# PESTILENCE

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## THE BOOK OF DISEASE

Revised Edition

**Written by** Justice Mora

**Layout and Design by** Rick Hershey

*Based on content originally written by Jason Stoffa*

**Fat Goblin Games Team**

Chris Bayes, Eric Hindley, John Bennett, Lucas Palosaari,

Nick Esposito, Rick Hershey, Troy Daniels, Tyler Beck

**Published by** Fat Goblin Games

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# THE BOOK OF DISEASE

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the revised edition of Pestilence: the Book of Diseases. I'm very happy to bring you this updated version of one of Fat Goblin's earliest works, and I hope you all enjoy it as much as I enjoyed making it! Contained within are a myriad of diseases designed to strike fear into the hearts of your players, as well as rules for creating virulent, hyper-contagious plagues to ravage the denizens of your world. The text of this document remains faithful to the original; only a few changes have been made to the rules, updating them and polishing them here and there. The biggest change that long-time fans will recognize is the inclusion of new rules regarding alchemically-engineered plagues; these are included at the very end of the document.

On a more personal note, I am new to Fat Goblin, and this book is the very first of what I hope will be many more products that I will have a hand in writing for them. I look forward to bringing more of the same top-quality products to the community that Fat Goblin has been known for. I've been playing roleplaying games and making personal, homebrew content for years, and I'm sure you'll all love my work as much as my friends have. Ultimately, that's what roleplaying games are about; having fun with your friends, and letting your creativity flow. If you've got an idea, or you're looking for a start, email Fat Goblin Games at [fatgoblingames@gmail.com](mailto:fatgoblingames@gmail.com); Mr. Hershey's always looking for more talent, and I'm sure there's a place for you here. And don't forget, you're beautiful. No; you, reading this sentence. I'm talking specifically to you. You're beautiful.

Enjoy the book, and as always, wash your hands thoroughly after handling it!



# PESTILENCE

## DISEASE

A disease is defined as an abnormal, pathological condition affecting a particular creature. Diseases come in many forms, defined by the way they are transmitted, the organisms and parts of those organisms that they effect, and most importantly, what they do to the victim. In this book, two types of disease are covered: Mental and Physical.

### PHYSICAL DISEASE

Physical diseases are the most simple, and the ones which players are likely already familiar with. These are afflictions of the flesh; the Flu, Tuberculosis, Hay Fever; the list goes on. Physical diseases are varied, but each shares basic components, and each is presented in a unified format, as exemplified below:

#### Disease Name – Stage Number

**Type** Disease (Transmission); **Contagious** Yes or No; **Save** DC of Fort Save; **Onset** Number of days before symptoms manifest after first failed save; **Frequency** How often a victim must save against continuing effects (Number of days before moving on to next stage); **Effect** Disease's effects; **Cure** Number of saves required to overcome the disease.

Stages are a new system meant to represent complex diseases that progressively worsen as they assail a victim, and are detailed on page 3. The other components of the disease are:

**Type:** For physical diseases, the type is simply "Disease," however there are also four modes of transmission that a disease may possess, marked in parentheses after the disease type. A disease may have more than one mode of transmission.

**Injury:** Diseases transmitted by injury can only be contracted when the source of the

illness deals at least one point of lethal damage to the potential victim; such as when a rabid wolf bites an adventurer, or a farmer steps on a rusty nail laden with tetanus.

**Ingested:** Diseases transmitted by ingestion are contracted when the victim eats contaminated food or drink, such as moldy meat or water that a corpse has fallen into.

**Inhalation:** Diseases transmitted by inhalation are contracted whenever the victim breathes in the source; such as fungal spores or the sneeze of an infected individual. All diseases that have the Inhalation transmission are Contagious.

**Contact:** Diseases transmitted by contact are contracted whenever the potential victim makes direct, physical contact (Skin to skin) with an infected creature or its bodily fluids; such as the vomit of an ill peasant.

Regardless of mode of transmission, a creature saves against contracting the disease as soon as they are exposed.

**Contagious:** some diseases spread more readily than others, jumping from one infected host to another. These diseases are said to be contagious. Whenever a creature spends at least one consecutive hour within 5 feet of a creature that is infected with a contagious disease, the non-infected creature must make a fortitude save as though they had been exposed to the disease normally. In addition, any time the infected creature makes physical contact with them, the next save the non-infected creature makes against the disease within one minute is made at a -2 penalty. The non-infected creature makes another save against the disease at the end of each round in which he ended his turn within 5 feet of the infected creature.

**Save:** Physical diseases require a Fortitude save to resist contracting the disease, as well as a Fortitude at each frequency interval to resist its lingering effects.



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**Onset:** If a player fails their initial saving throw to avoid contracting a disease, the first symptoms manifest at the end of the onset period; at that point they make their first saving throw to resist its effects.

**Frequency:** At the end of the onset period, the creature makes its first save against the disease's effects. After that point, they make another such saving throw at each frequency interval (usually once/day).

**Effect:** The effects of the disease. Whenever a creature fails a saving throw against the disease's effects, this section details what happens to them. Unless otherwise stated, penalties to dice rolls caused by a disease are non-cumulative with themselves (i.e. a disease that inflicts a -2 penalty to attack rolls does not increase to a -4 on the second failed save).

**Cure:** Most physical diseases can be overcome with time; to do this, a creature must succeed on a certain number of saving throws. These successful saves must be consecutive. Other diseases cannot be cured naturally; their means of curing is detailed in this section.

## MENTAL DISEASE

Mental diseases differ from physical diseases in that they do not affect the body, but the mind. They are presented in the same format as physical diseases, with three exceptions: 1. They have no means of transmission; they are obtained through mental trauma. 2. They require Will saves, rather than Fortitude Saves. 3. They are rarely (if ever) contagious.

**Trauma:** Whenever a creature takes any amount of Wisdom damage or drain, the GM should keep track of how much wisdom damage/drain that character has received in the last 30-day period. If at any time, this amount becomes equal or greater than half of that character's Wisdom score (Rounded

down), that character must make a Will save against a Mental Disease of the GM's choice (appropriate to the situation that led to the damage/drain). This roll should be made in secret by the GM (GM's are encouraged to present the effects of the mental disorder to the player as though their warped perceptions are true). In addition, if during this period the character has suffered any amount of Wisdom Drain, they take a -1 penalty on the saving throw.

In addition to the above, mental trauma can set in when a creature is in extreme fear. Any time a creature is panicked for 5 or more consecutive rounds, they must make a will save against an appropriate mental disease chosen by the DM. Likewise, a creature must make such a save if they are Frightened for 10 or more consecutive rounds.

Finally, the effects of certain spells or encounters can lead to mental disease. The descriptions of certain diseases describe the unique situations that can lead to contracting that Mental Disease.

Unlike physical diseases, Mental diseases cannot be cured with *Remove Disease* or similar magic; though a casting of *Restoration* or *Greater Restoration* has the same effect on mental disease that *Remove Disease* has on Physical diseases.





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## STAGES OF DISEASE

While some of the more common diseases have only a single stage and effect, others are more complex and have many stages in which the disease produces a variety of different ailments. These could be as simple as sore and aching muscles one day and as extreme as projectile vomiting the next. Multistage diseases are noted as such in their description (the number of stages is marked in parentheses beside the name of the disease). Each stage of a multistage disease is presented with its own stat block. Listed in parentheses beside the frequency of each stage is a time frame, typically a number of days. After this amount of time has passed, the victim moves into the next stage of the disease; the next time they make a saving throw it will be against the disease's next stage.

## CURING A MULTISTAGE DISEASE

When a character progresses into a later stage of a disease, the process of healing takes progressively longer, requiring more successful saving throws or applications of healing magic. Whenever a character makes the necessary number of saving throws to cure a disease, he instead moves back to the previous stage of the disease. Only when the initial stage is cured is the disease fully lifted, and a character that has moved back to the first stage can certainly progress back into a later stage again. Healing magic works in much the same way, removing a single stage of the disease with each application; for example, a character in the third stage of the disease would require three castings of *Remove Disease* to be cured.

## MOUTH ROT (3 STAGES)

Mouth Rot is typically spread from tainted food and bites from the infected. The disease is commonly found in poor villages which have infestations of mice, rats, and other disease carrying rodents. It is transmitted to the stores of grain, rice and other foods from the shed fur, saliva and dried fecal matter left as the rodents gnaw into the unprotected food. The disease has three stages. The first stage of the disease typically occurs within a day's time of consuming the tainted food and can last up to two days. During this stage the disease causes all form of problems to its host. These take the form of a high fever, vomiting, explosive diarrhea, and weakness in the muscles. The second stage, if left untreated, shows itself as unsightly, swollen red blisters and a black rash forming around the creature's lips and gums. As time passes the afflicted flesh begins blacken and rot, as necrosis sets in. The third and final stage sees the growth of a gray and black colored fungus in the gums, sprouting from the pulp of the teeth. The roots of the fungus reach into the brain, causing swelling, rage, intense fever, and eventually death. Once the fungus appears the disease can then be transferred from injury, spread from bites from the afflicted.

### MOUTH ROT – STAGE 1

**Type** disease (ingested); **Contagious** No; **Save** Fort DC 13

**Onset** 1 day; **Frequency** 1/day (2 days); **Effect** Fatigued; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves

### MOUTH ROT – STAGE 2

**Type** disease; **Contagious** No; **Save** Fort DC 15

**Frequency** 1/day (3 days); **Effect** Fatigued, - 4 on Charisma based checks; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves



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## MOUTH ROT – STAGE 3

**Type** disease (injury); **Contagious** No; **Save** Fort DC 17

**Frequency** 1/day (final stage) **Effect** 1 Con drain, Subject cannot make Charisma, Int, or Wisdom-based skill checks, if subject doesn't have a Bite attack, it gains one that deals damage appropriate to a creature one size smaller, creature attacks nearest creature with bite attack each round; **Cure** 3 consecutive saves

## WHIPWORM FEVER (2 STAGES)

Whipworm Fever is caused by infection from the whipworm parasite. Whipworms resemble long, needle-thin earthworms and can produce up to 200,000 eggs daily. Whipworms infest food that has been contaminated by fecal matter; unwashed hands and poor food storage lead to outbreaks. Once ingested, the larvae travel through the bloodstream until they reach the lungs. Once in the lungs, they latch into the flesh of the organs with microscopic hooks and begin to feed on the host's blood. In this early stage, the body responds with fever, and the worms' presence in the blood leads to fatigue and anemia. A whipworm can grow up to five feet in length, and an infection consists of anywhere from one hundred to two thousand worms. As they feed and grow, they fill the host's lungs, writhing and knotting together into thick, squirming cords (victims can often feel these creatures moving inside of their lungs. At this point, the host loses blood rapidly, and is almost incapable of breathing. Death comes quickly, as there is no way to remove the worms naturally; even if they die, their necrotizing flesh causes the lungs to deteriorate. Only magic can remove the worms safely.

## WHIPWORM FEVER – STAGE 1

**Type** disease (ingested); **Contagious** No; **Save** Fort DC 16

**Onset** 1d6 days; **Frequency** 1/day (10 days); **Effect** Fatigued for 24 hours, sickened for 8 hours, -2 penalty to Wis and Int- based skill checks for 8 hours; **Cure** 3 consecutive saves

## WHIPWORM FEVER – STAGE 2

**Type** disease; **Contagious** No; **Save** Fort DC 20

**Frequency** 1/day (final stage)

**Effect** Exhausted and sickened for 24 hours, -8 penalty to Int and Wis based skill checks for 24 hours, 2 Con drain; **Cure** *Remove Disease* or similar spell.

## DEVIL'S KISS (2 STAGES)

Devil's Kiss is a deadly two-staged disease which can spread at an alarming rate, leaving a swathe of dead in its wake. This disease is spread from the bites of an insect known as the Devil Fly. This small creature is actually a magical, extraplanar vermin from the depths of Hell. They lack any means of reaching the material plane themselves, but are often unleashed by devils or infernal cultists looking to cause mayhem. Their bite infects victims with a magical disease, as much curse as it is illness. At first, symptoms resemble a cold or flu, with aches, fever, and weakness of the limbs. However, within three days, the disease reaches its terrifying second stage, marked by the growth of hideous boils and rapid cellular generation. Victims in the second stage rapidly grow thick, calloused tumors, which necrotize and turn gray-black as they literally rot and die. At the same time, their soft tissues; the eyes, the tongue, and the internal organs, begin to manifest thousands of tiny, twitching boils. These boils are bright red and full of blood, and as they rupture, the victims rapidly hemorrhage, dying within a day. In its first stage, Devil's Kiss can be overcome naturally or cured with magic and medicine as any other disease; but once it reaches the second stage, the curse must be broken before the illness can be cured. Contact with the blood or corpses of second-stage victims can transfer the disease; in past



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outbreaks, those who showed signs of sickness were locked in their homes, which were burned to the ground.

## DEVIL'S KISS – STAGE 1

**Type** disease (injury); **Contagious** Yes; **Save** Fort DC 15

**Onset** 1d3+3 days; **Frequency** 1/day (3 days); **Effect** Fatigued and Sickened for 24 hours, -2 to Str and Dex-based skill checks for 24 hours; **Cure** 3 consecutive saves

## DEVIL'S KISS – STAGE 2

**Type** Curse, disease (contact); **Save** Fort DC 19 **Frequency** 1/day (final stage)

**Effect** Exhausted for 24, All speeds reduced by 50% (Round up; effect is permanent until disease is removed), -6 to Str and Dex based skill checks for 24 hours, Special (see below); **Cure** *Remove Curse* and *Remove Disease* cast within 1 minute of each other.

Each time the victim takes a standard action, there is a cumulative 1% chance that several of the tiny boils in his soft tissue rupture. Whenever this happens, the victim takes one point of Con drain immediately, and every minute thereafter until he receives any amount of magical healing or is the subject of a DC 24 heal check. In addition, every time a victim's boils burst, there is a 5% chance he is struck permanently blind, a 5% chance he is struck permanently mute, and a 5% chance he is permanently disfigured (-2 to Charisma based checks other than Intimidate, +4 to Intimidate checks).

## BLOOD BURN (2 STAGES)

Spread by consuming water tainted with high levels of oxidization, this disease is most often found among those who live in close proximity to steel forges and industrial zones where metal working is common. In the first stage of the disease, it causes fever and stiff, aching joints; however as time passes, the disease causes oxidization of iron in the

bloodstream, leading to severe anemia and intense pain as victims feel a sensation not unlike fire in their veins. The agonizing pain tears a victim's mind apart, and the severe trauma often leads to the development of mental sickness in survivors. While the disease is most commonly spread via ingestion, infected individuals (mostly animals) can spread the infection through a bite.

## BLOOD BURN – STAGE 1

**Type** disease (ingested/injury); **Contagious** No; **Save** Fort DC 14; **Onset** 1 day; **Frequency** 1/day (3 days); **Effect** -2 to all Wisdom, Strength, and Dexterity based checks; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves

## BLOOD BURN – STAGE 2

**Type** disease; **Contagious** No; **Save** Fort DC 16 **Frequency** 1/day (final stage) **Effect** Staggered, -2 to all Skill checks, Attack rolls, and Saving Throws, 1d2 Wisdom damage; **Cure** 2 Successful saves.

## RED SHAKES (3 STAGES)

The Red Shakes is a rare disease, practically unheard of in the civilized world; however it is distressingly common in more savage lands. Unique to humanoids, it is a form of spongiform encephalopathy, not unlike Mad Cow Disease, which leads to the deterioration of cerebral tissue and pervasive nerve damage. Like Mad Cow, it results from cannibalism; while a creature who engages in cannibalism in an extreme situation is likely safe, those who regularly partake in the flesh of other humanoids are at great risk. Every time a humanoid creature eats the flesh of another humanoid creature, there is a cumulative 2% chance that they must save against the disease. In addition, once a creature is infected with Red Shakes, every time they eat the flesh of a humanoid creature, they receive a cumulative -1 penalty on their next saving throw against the disease. In its first stage, the disease causes slight tremors and



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difficulty concentrating, but as it progresses, the tremors become worse, and the skin becomes a deep, ruddy color as it flushes with fever. In its final stages, victims are driven completely mad, their minds lost to their dark hunger.

## RED SHAKES – STAGE 1

**Type** Disease (Ingested); **Contagious** No; **Save** Fortitude DC 10; **Onset** 6d6 Days; **Frequency** 1/Week; **Effect** -1 to Wisdom and Dexterity-based checks; -1 on Attack and Damage rolls; -1 on Concentration checks; 5% chance of Arcane spell failure when casting spells with Somatic components; **Cure** 3 consecutive saves.

## RED SHAKES – STAGE 2

**Type** Disease; **Contagious** No; **Save** Fortitude DC 13; **Frequency** 1/Week; **Effect** -3 to Wisdom and Dexterity-based checks; -3 to Attack and Damage rolls; -3 on Concentration checks; 15% chance of Arcane spell failure when casting spells with Somatic components; **Cure** 3 consecutive saves

## RED SHAKES – STAGE 3

**Type** Disease; **Contagious** No; **Save** Fortitude DC 16; **Frequency** 1/Week; **Effect** -5 to Wisdom and Dexterity-based checks; -5 to Attack and Damage rolls; -5 on Concentration checks; -25% chance of Arcane spell failure when casting spells with Somatic components; Victim cannot speak coherently; Victim acts as though under the effects of the spell *Confusion*; **Cure** 3 consecutive saves

## BLACK BOIL

This disease is a byproduct from untreated wounds. Natural healing is a slow process, and without the help of a skilled healer, it may result in the wounds becoming infected. Any time in which a character that has lost more than half his total hit points and attempts recovery with natural healing, this disease can take hold. In such a situation, there is a cumulative 5% chance each day that the victim must make a saving throw to

resist contracting this disease; a Heal check made to provide long-term care or to treat deadly wounds eliminates the need to make a saving throw for that day, and resets the chance to 5% on the next day. This disease has but one stage which causes black, pus-filled boils to spread across the wounds preventing natural healing from taking place.

## BLACK BOIL

**Type** disease (injury); **Contagious** Yes (Only if uninfected creature is at <50% maximum hit points); **Save** Fortitude DC 15; **Onset** special (see text); **Frequency** special (see text) **Effect** Prevents natural healing until cured; **Cure** DC 20 Heal check

## JUNGLE'S GRASP (2 STAGES)

Found as a common affliction in deep jungles, Jungle's Grasp is acquired through contact with a patch of rare, green fungus which emits spores (in a cloud up to 30' away) that cling to damp skin (a constant in the extremely hot and humid conditions found in such climates.) The first stage of the disease occurs within six hours of contact as the microscopic spores burrow harmlessly into the pores of the victim's flesh and take root, feeding off of the bloodstream. This leads to extreme dehydration and weakness in the limbs affected. The second stage of the disease sees the rupturing of the skin and the emergence of a fungal bloom at the site of the infection. The diseased creature now becomes a mobile transport for the spores while the flesh is slowly withered and finally consumed leaving a fungus covered, desiccated corpse.

## JUNGLE'S GRASP – STAGE 1

**Type** disease (inhaled); **Contagious** Yes; **Save** Fortitude DC 16; **Onset** 1d6 hours; **Frequency** 1/day (2 days); **Effect** -4 to all Dexterity based checks; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves



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## JUNGLE'S GRASP – STAGE 2

**Type** disease (Inhaled); **Contagious** Yes; **Save** Fort DC 18; **Frequency** 1/day (final stage) **Effect** -4 to all Dexterity based checks, fatigued, 1d3 Constitution damage; **Cure** 3 consecutive saves

## SERVANT'S FOLLY (3 STAGES)

A mysterious mental disease brought on by exposure to powerful compulsion spells, Servant's Folly slowly erodes a victim's mind, mirroring the effects of the magic that brought this foulness upon them. Whenever a creature fails a saving throw against *Dominant Person* or a similar effect, there is a 2% chance they must make a save to resist contracting Servant's Folly. In addition, each consecutive day after the first that a creature remains under any such effect (whether the original effect or not), this chance increases by 2%.



## SERVANT'S FOLLY – STAGE 1

**Type** Mental Disease; **Save** Will DC 15; **Onset** 1 day; **Frequency** 1/day (3 days); **Effect** Lose ability to speak one language (chosen randomly), -4 on Charisma based Checks and on saving throws to resist Charm or Compulsion effects; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves

## SERVANT'S FOLLY – STAGE 2

**Type** Mental Disease; **Save** Will DC 17; **Frequency** 1/day (3 days); **Effect** As stage 1, Victim loses ability to speak entirely; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves

### Servant's Folly – Stage 3

**Type** Mental Disease; **Save** Will DC 19; **Frequency** 1/day (final stage); **Effect** As stage 2, Dominated\*; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves

*\*The victim is effectively unable to refuse commands; any creature may give the victim a command as a Move action on their turn, focusing their will on domineering the infected. The victim immediately obeys the command, as if commanded by Dominate Monster or a similar effect. Whenever the victim is given a new command, it immediately forgets the previous one, and acts only on the most recent. This effect has no saving throw, and cannot be resisted or suppressed as long as they suffer the disease; however, suicidal or self-destructive commands fail automatically. As the victim is obeying the commands of others, it is incapable of taking action on its own, and will perish if not commanded to eat, drink, sleep, etc.*

## LOVER'S LESIONS

This disease is spread only through sexual contact with an infected, and possibly morally questionable, individual. Commonly found in the seediest taverns, flophouses, and brothels, the affliction causes many problems for the unfortunate victim. The first sign of this infection is a curious itching of wherever initial contact was made. The distraction becomes so bad that many seek ointments created from rare plants to dull the pain. During the first stage sexual organs become engorged and extremely swollen. As the second stage progresses, the flesh begins



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to peel in thin, bloody sheets, leading to excruciating pain. Any activity more strenuous than walking can lead to ruptures and tears in the flesh, and even severe hemorrhaging.

## LOVER'S LESIONS – STAGE 1

**Type** disease (contact); **Save** Fort DC 15; **Onset** 1d6 days; **Frequency** 1/day (3 days); **Effect** -2 to all perception checks, - 5 ft. to movement; **Cure** 2 saves

## LOVER'S LESIONS – STAGE 2

**Type** disease; **Save** Fort DC 16; **Frequency** 1/day (final stage); **Effect** -15 ft. to movement, 1d3 damage\*; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves

*\*Damage occurs whenever the infected creature takes more than one action in a single round (not including swift actions; for example, a move and a standard action, or two move actions).*

## WALKING CORPSE (2 STAGES)

This mental disease takes the form of a creeping depression and tends to slowly awaken suicidal tendencies in its victims. During the disease's cycle the afflicted develops delusions that he or she has died and is a walking corpse. This delusion is expanded to the degree that the patient might claim that he can smell his own rotting flesh and feel worms crawling beneath the skin and devouring the flesh. In the early stages, these startling sensations tend to worsen at night, when the victim finds themselves unable to sleep. Indeed, victims often do not sleep for great stretches of time, until they black out from exhaustion, only to awaken later with a gap in their memory they cannot account for. As the sickness progresses, the power of suggestion becomes so great that their body begins to fight back against attempts to heal them, and positive energy causes them incredible pain. At the same time, they become inured to pain from more mundane sources, furthering their illusions that they are undead. Eventually, they begin to hear

foul whispers that call to them, beckoning them to destroy their physical shells and come home to the grave.

## WALKING CORPSE – STAGE 1

**Type** Mental Disease; **Save** Will DC 16; **Onset** 1d4 days; **Frequency** 1/day (6 days); **Effect** Fatigued, whenever the victim takes lethal damage, the first point is converted to nonlethal damage; **Cure** 3 consecutive saves

## WALKING CORPSE – STAGE 2

**Type** Mental Disease; **Save** Will DC 18; **Frequency** 1/day (final stage); **Effect** fatigued, gains Spell Resistance equal to 10+Character level against magical effects that heal through the use of positive energy, whenever the victim is the recipient of a positive energy based healing spell, whether it penetrates SR or not, the victim is wracked with pain, and is staggered for one round, Special\*; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves

*\*If a creature is afflicted by stage two of the disease for a minimum of 12 consecutive days, and during that period receives positive energy-based magical healing at least once, the urges to take their life become too great, and they make a coup de grace attempt on themselves as a full-round-action with whatever weapon is closest. If the victim survives this attempt on their own life, they may immediately make a DC 18 will save with a +4 bonus; if this save is successful, the shock snaps them back to reality, curing them from the disease.*

## BALD MAN'S BLUFF

A mostly harmless mental disease, Bald Man's Bluff tends to arise as a result of intense stress and anxiety, and spellcasters seem more prone to it than others. Whenever a 9-level spellcaster uses his last prepared spell or spell slot in combat, leaving him with only level-0 spells, He must make a will save or suffer from Bald Man's Bluff. Sufferers are paranoid and stressed, often muttering to themselves as they review and revise their plans over and over again. The name of this sickness comes from its most noticeable



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symptom; sufferers are compelled to pluck hairs from their body, face, head, and everywhere else. Sufferers pluck single strands at a time, but they are incessant, eventually driving themselves completely bald.

## BALD MAN'S BLUFF

**Type** Mental Disease; **Save** Will DC 15; **Onset** 1 day; **Frequency** 1/day; **Effect** Cumulative -1 penalty on Charisma-based checks, lasts for 30 days after disease is cured (unless cured by magic); **Cure** 3 saves

## DOPPELGANGER SYNDROME (2 STAGES)

A terrifying illness, this mental disorder afflicts its victims with the delusions that those around them have been replaced by sinister duplicates who wish harm upon the sufferer. In the beginning, the victim is suspicious and untrusting of others, even those he holds most dear; but as the disease progresses, they fall into madness, their delusions inspiring violence against the supposed impostors that have replaced their loved ones.

### DOPPELGANGER SYNDROME – STAGE 1

**Type** mental disease; **Save** Will DC 15, **Onset** 1d4 days; **Frequency** 1/day (3 days); **Effect** -4 to sense motive and diplomacy skills; **Cure** 2 saves

### DOPPELGANGER SYNDROME – STAGE 2

**Type** mental disease; **Save** Will DC 19 **Frequency** 1/day (final stage) **Effect** -4 to sense motive and diplomacy skills, 1d2 Wisdom damage, attack allies\*; **Cure** 2 consecutive Saves

*\*Each time the victim fails a save during the second stage of the disease, select one of their allies at random. The player attempts to kill that ally the next time they go to sleep, isolate themselves from the group, or otherwise lower their guard. Should the target survive the initial attack, the afflicted character initiates combat, shrieking madly about the imposter that's replaced his or her friend. She likewise reacts with hostility to anyone that attempts to protect her target.*

## FORGOTTEN PAIN

Forgotten pain is a unique disorder, as it afflicts the body, yet it is not caused by bacteria or virus. When a creature undergoes incredible pain, indescribable agony, sometimes their body reacts by shutting out the pain entirely. Sometimes, the nerves responsible for sending and receiving signals of pain overload and fail. In those cases, the afflicted lose the ability to feel pain at all. While this may seem like a blessing, it is truly a curse; afflicted souls have trouble recognizing when they are injured, and may exacerbate serious injuries by working through them (for example, a fighter who breaks his arm will continue swinging his sword and fighting with that arm, until it snaps off entirely or otherwise becomes too useless to fight with). Whenever a creature is tortured with physical (or illusionary) pain for more than one consecutive hour, they must make a DC 25 will save or else contract Forgotten Pain the next time they have at least an eight hour break from their torture.

In addition, a creature that is reduced to negative hit points one below their Constitution score must make a DC 20 will save to resist contracting the disease (For example, a Fighter with a Constitution score of 14 would make a save when reduced to negative 13 hp).

Forgotten Pain cannot be cured naturally; only a casting of *Regenerate* or a similar effect capable of restoring lost body parts can repair the extensive nerve damage that accompanies this disease; in addition, *Restoration* or a similar effect must be cast on the target within 1 minute of the *Regenerate* effect in order to break the mental blocks that compound the damage to their nervous system.

While a player character is afflicted with Forgotten Pain, that player is no longer allowed to keep track of their character's hit points, nor will they be told how much dam-



# THE BOOK OF DISEASE

age is dealt when their character is struck by an attack; keeping track of the character's health is solely the duty of the GM while they suffer from Forgotten Pain. The player or his allies may make a Heal check (DC 10+the Character's Level) to accurately determine their current physical state, being

told the character's current and maximum hit points. As a side benefit, any creature affected by Forgotten Pain cannot be knocked unconscious by nonlethal damage, and gains DR 5/- against all nonlethal damage.





# PESTILENCE

## PLAGUES

Disease is a natural force; a destructive agent of decay, bringing death to the world. Yet for all their power, diseases are rarely a threat to the public commonwealth. They are insidious, painful, and deadly, but infection is typically contained between one person and those who remain in close proximity with that individual. But not always. Some diseases spread rapidly; whether by their own power or the cramped, cluttered condition of filthy slums and impoverished peoples. Some diseases are guided; engineered and designed by cruel, depraved individuals to cause maximum pain, suffering, and death. These pathogens transcend the normal rules of disease and sickness. These are the epidemics of legend, the most horrific and potent illnesses. These are plagues.

This system details the rules for Plagues, which differ from ordinary diseases in several key ways. The Filth Fever an adventurer catches while fighting a dire rat is related to the Filth Fever plague below, but it is not the same thing. The plague form is stronger, deadlier, and spreads rapidly. Plagues have their own rules for exposure, all of which are presented below. The plagues below are presented in a unified format.

**Name:** The name of the Plague

**Type:** This section denotes the type of the Plague; Infestation, Contamination, or Corruption.

**Corruption:** Corruption plagues are usually the hardest to resist catching, but not exceptionally hard to overcome once they've been contracted, at least not compared to other diseases. They make up for this, however, by being exceptionally viral. They are easy to spread from person to person, and they are airborne, allowing them to spread through even casual contact. When engineered, they come in liquid form, and must be

released as a gas; perhaps through a smoke bomb or boiling in a stew.

**Infestation:** Combining the strengths and weaknesses of Corruption and Contamination plagues, Infestation Plagues are not too difficult to resist or to overcome, comparatively speaking. They are moderately infectious, allowing them to spread at an appreciable rate. What they lack in flair, however, they make up for in their raw tenacity. Infestation plagues are spread through pests; rats, fleas, ticks. Because of this, avoiding infection is almost impossible. In an infected area, there is a base 10% chance each day that an individual is exposed to the disease. That chance is increased to 20% in cities, slums, and other densely packed or dirty areas. In especially filthy, tightly packed places, it may be as high as 50%, subject to GM discretion. The only way to eliminate such a plague completely is to wipe out the source, which is obviously no small feat, as this would require thorough extermination of the invasive pests. They are engineered in the form of dozens of pellets, which are fed to plague animals like rats and mice.

**Contamination:** Slow and steady, Contamination plagues are the easiest to resist upon initial exposure, but they make up for this with their subtlety. Engineered in the form of powder, or of microbial parasites, Contamination plagues are waterborne. They are not particularly infectious, and are hard to spread from person to person, in addition to being easy to resist. However, their symptoms are slow and subtle, often people go for days without recognizing they are infected, in this time they have had plenty of chances to spread the disease. In addition, they lurk in the water, and all who drink from it are exposed again and again, each time increasing the DC to resist. Each time a creature drinks infected water within a 30 day period, the DC to resist infection increases by 1. It is a slow increase, but if the poisoned source is a central one, such as a town's most important or only well, it is only a matter of time until the town is infected. On top of this, they are extremely difficult to overcome once contracted, oftentimes being outright impossible without magical assistance.



# THE BOOK OF DISEASE

**Save:** This gives the type of save needed to Resist contracting the plague on initial exposure, as well as the save to Overcome the disease; it is this second DC, the Overcome DC, that is rolled at each frequency interval to resist the diseases effects and potentially cure it. Unlike normal afflictions, plagues in this system rarely have the same DC to resist as they do to overcome; the two are usually close, however.

**Onset:** Plagues have onset periods just like normal diseases. When a creature is exposed to a plague, it makes its save immediately; success means the plague is resisted and no further saves must be made. Failure means that additional saves are made at the end of the onset period.

**Minor Symptoms:** Plagues are insidious, and though it takes time for them to take full effect, they work quickly within the body. Some plagues have a minor symptom that takes place during the onset time. These minor symptoms last until the end of the onset time, at which point they are replaced by the full effects of the plague. Sometimes these symptoms can warn a character that they are sick; a character can attempt a heal check during this time to diagnose the illness. If the check is successful, then a heal check can be made to treat the disease as normal; in this case, upon a successful heal check to Treat Disease, the infected character gets an immediate saving throw, success means the disease is cured.

**Frequency:** This is how often the periodic saving throw must be attempted after the affliction has been contracted.

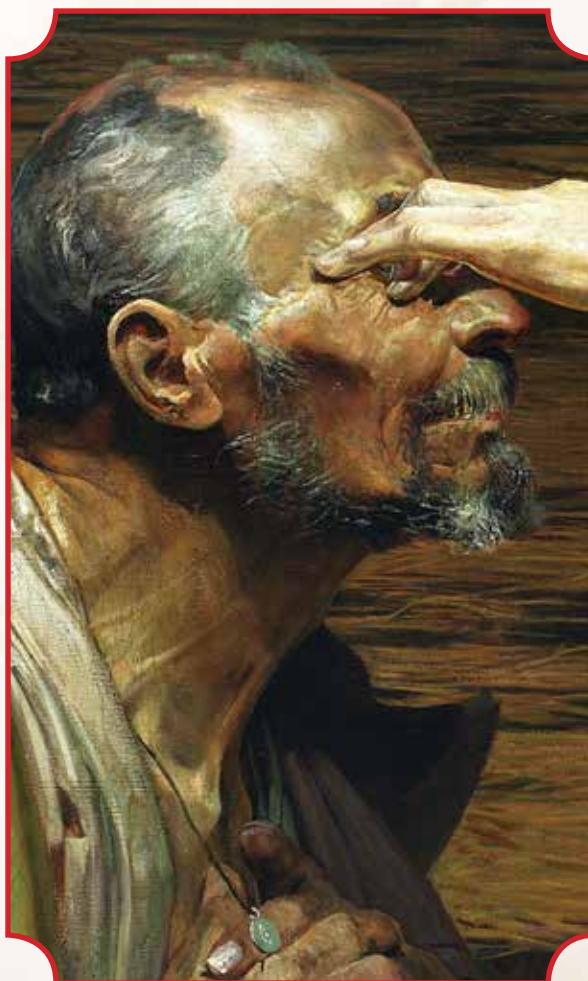
**Contagious:** This section tells you whether or not the disease is contagious. If a creature is infected with a contagious disease, close proximity to the infected creature exposes others to the disease. Creatures must make a save against contracting the disease under any of the following circumstances:

They are bitten by the infected creature

They spend at least one consecutive hour within five feet of the infected creature (such as while sleeping beside them)

They make contact with bodily fluids from the infected (sweat, blood, saliva, etc.).

Each time a creature makes such a save within a 24 hour period, the DC to resist infection increases by 2 (so sleeping for eight hours next to an infected individual leads to eight saves against the disease, with the dc rising by 2 for each after the first). Corruption plagues are exceptionally contagious, requiring a save every time a creature comes within five feet of an infected creature, as even casual conversation can spread the sickness through the air. Again, the DC to resist infection increases by 2 every time the save is attempted in a 24 hour period.





# PESTILENCE

**Effect:** This is the effect that the character suffers each time if he fails his saving throw against the plague. Most plagues do more than just dole out ability damage, and in fact, several do not do ability damage at all, instead killing through other means. The Effects of a Plague are cumulative, unless specifically stated in the plague.

**Cure:** This tells you how the plague is cured. Most plagues can be cured through consecutive, successful saves. Others can only be cured through a certain mundane mean; a specific herb or medicine. The most powerful of mundane diseases can only be cured through magic. Lastly, there are a rare few plagues that have no cure. These rare plagues are unnatural, exclusively engineered by sentient design, and always magical in nature. In these cases, the only way to cure the disease is to kill its creator, in which case all sufferers are immediately cured of the illness.

**Engineer DC:** This tells you the Craft (Alchemy) and Heal DC that you must meet in order to engineer a plague. Additional rules for engineering a plague are included below.

**Price:** The cost to purchase (or value to sell) an engineered plague on the black market. Note that in almost all nations, the selling or purchasing of plagues is extremely illegal, and often punishable by death.

## ENGINEERING A PLAGUE

### OR: MAGICAL BIOTERRORISM MADE EASY

Just as in the real world, diseases can be synthesized, strengthened, and released intentionally for various reasons. In some cases, a pest-killing disease may be released to combat another one spread through rats. Perhaps a certain disease kills a certain weed that kills a certain crop. But in almost every

case, when a disease is released intentionally, it is done so with the intention of killing intelligent life-forms and causing as much pain and panic as possible.

Engineering a plague requires three things:

300 GP per Engineering DC of the disease

Several successful skill checks in Heal and Craft (Alchemy)

Note that some magical plagues will require a specific ingredient or spell as well. In this case, the spell must be available during each day of the crafting process.

The process of engineering a plague, from the perspective of game mechanics, is very simple. It requires a number of successful skill rolls, and days of work equal to half the disease's save DC. All gold is spent at the beginning of the Engineering process. A character must spend 8 hours each day engineering a disease in a controlled environment; unlike magic items, diseases cannot be engineered while adventuring, and they cannot be engineered in more or less than eight hour blocks.

Each day the character works, he must make a Craft (Alchemy) check at the end of the day. If the character fails three checks during the course of engineering, the engineering fails. Each time the character fails a Craft (Alchemy) check, he must succeed on a Heal check. This check should be made in secret by the GM. If he fails this check by 5 *or more* he is exposed to the disease, but the onset time is tripled and he suffers no minor symptoms. His cursory exposure means the disease takes longer to germinate within him, but it does so subtly. If he fails by less than five, he is exposed to the disease normally.

At the end of the engineering period, the disease takes a form determined by its Type. From there, it is up to the engineer to release it.



# THE BOOK OF DISEASE

## THE PLAGUES

The following list of Plagues contains one example of each kind of plague; Contamination, Corruption, and Infestation. Remember that Plagues are different from ordinary diseases; they are stronger, more viral, more resilient versions of mundane sicknesses. In other words, the Filth Fever that you may contract from fighting a Dire Rat is different from the Filth Fever described here, being part of a different rules system.

### BLACK ROT

**Type** Plague, Infestation

**Save** DC 15 Resist, DC 14 Overcome

**Onset** 1d3 days; **Minor Symptoms** Aching joints and a headache impose a -1 penalty on all Dexterity and Intelligence-based skill checks during the onset period.

**Frequency** 1/Day

**Contagious** Yes

**Effect** 1 Dex damage, 1d2 Con damage. Any time a Victim suffers Con damage from this plague, roll a d20 and check the following table; roll again if the result has already been rolled (Once all results have been rolled at least once, the table has no further effect, and no more such rolls are needed). Each effect can be resisted with another DC 14 fortitude save:

Result	Effect
1-5	Victim is permanently blinded
6-10	Victim permanently loses ability to speak
11-15	Victim's Natural speeds permanently reduced to 10 feet
16-20	Victim suffers 2 points of Str drain

All of these effects can be removed (simultaneously) by Greater Restoration or Regenerate, three castings of Restoration, or six castings of Lesser Restoration. All castings must be received in rapid succession (within a minute) to have any effect.

**Cure** 2 consecutive saves; in large quantities, green tea is a powerful agent against Black Rot, and is

often drunk as the beverage of choice in infested areas. Drinking or bathing in at least eight cups of Green Tea over a 24-hour period offers a +2 circumstance bonus on the next save against the disease.

**Engineer DC 30;** Black Rot is a cruel and vile plague, causing widespread death, panic, and permanent disfigurement. It starts with a fever and inflammation of the soft tissue. Within a few days, soft tissue begins to necrotize; sinus cavities, gums, skin, cuticles, the tongue, even the eyes begin to rot while the victim is alive. As the flesh rots, it blackens in splotchy patches, literally sloughing off the muscle and bone in sheets. The Black Rot is horrific and brutal, sapping a victim's will to live even as it ravages their body; without magical healing, victims are permanently scarred, in some cases even crippled.

**Price** 10,500

### WHIPWORM FEVER

**Type** Plague, Contamination

**Save** DC 4 Resist, DC 20 overcome

**Onset** 1 day; **Minor Symptoms** Strange thoughts and sudden mood swings begin within three hours of infection. The victim suffers a -2 penalty to all wisdom and charisma based skill checks during the onset period.

**Frequency** 1/Day

**Contagious** No

**Effect** 1 Int and Wis damage (This damage cannot reduce a victim below 1 Int or Wis). Each day that a victim is suffering from Brainworms, there is a cumulative 3% chance that they go berserk. If this happens, they must make a DC 12 Will save; if they succeed, nothing happens. If they fail this will save, they become permanently enraged (As a barbarian's Rage ability) and proceed to attack every living thing in sight. They will not stop fighting until they are slain, knocked unconscious, or there are no living things in sight. Once there is nothing alive in sight, they will walk in a random direction until they find something else to attack or collapse from exhaustion. While enraged in this manner, a victim cannot sleep, eat, or drink, but still accrues penalties from exhaustion, de-



# PESTILENCE

hydration, and starvation. Each time a victim attempts to attack a creature for the first time, and every 24 hours, the victim may make another Will save to attempt to regain control of themselves. If successful, the chance to go berserk resets to 3%.

**Cure 2** Consecutive saves; Brainworms require a controlled environment, and do not respond well to competition. If a victim becomes infected with another disease while infected with Brainworms, there is a cumulative 4% chance each day for the victim to be cured of Brainworms.

**Engineer DC 35;** Brainworms are rare creatures; thin, ribbon-like parasites that infest a host's brain, multiplying rapidly and driving them to a suicidal, psychotic rage. It is extremely easy to resist initial infection at first, but while in the water, Brainworms are nearly microscopic, not reaching full length or numbers until in a host brain; thus victims will unknowingly expose themselves again and again and again. As with all Contaminations, each subsequent exposure within 30 days of the last increases the Resist DC by 2.

**Price** 12,000

rapidly in the dark, moist aperture. Symptoms include pressure behind the eyes and intense pain, like an icepick. As the fungus grows, its roots overtake the optic nerve and spread quickly through the tiny blood vessels in the eyes. Within a few days, the victim's eyes are completely destroyed, their eye sockets filled with a grotesque mass of pulsing, black fungus. Blind Man's Bane is unique in that it is not contagious in its early stages; there is no risk of exposure from contact with the infected until their eyes are destroyed. Once the fungus replaces the eyes, however, the pulsating masses constantly shake off a cloud of tiny, black spores, giving victims the appearance of weeping a thick, black fog. Any creature within five feet of an infected host in this stage of the disease must make a fortitude save against the disease each round they begin their turn within 5 feet of the creature.

**Price** 10,000

## BLIND MAN'S BANE

**Type** Plague, Corruption

**Save** DC 18 Resist, DC 12 Overcome

**Onset** 1 Day

**Frequency** 1/Day

**Contagious** Yes

**Effect** -2 to sight-based Perception checks. This penalty is cumulative, worsening each day. A victim that suffers a penalty to perception checks greater than his perception bonus is rendered permanently blinded, as the disease destroys their eyes. *Remove Blindness* will not restore the victim's sight at this point, but *Regenerate* will.

**Engineer DC 30;** Blind Man's Bane is a vicious plague, one of the cruelest that can be engineered on a large scale. It does not kill its victims, but is crueler and much more insidious than many more deadly illnesses. Blind Man's Bane is a fungus, a microscopic spore that enters the body when inhaled. From the lungs, it enters the bloodstream, where it makes its way to the ocular cavity. It takes root behind the eyes, growing



# THE BOOK OF DISEASE

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