

## Vathak Weather

*This week expect a cold chill in the air with a high chance of rain. Harvest season is coming to an end, looks to be a hard winter around the corner.*

# VATHAK TIMES

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## FROM THE FRONT LINES

My name is Wilfred Vartusia, 1st Lieutenant of the Dorna'groth Seven, elite unit of Filth Reaches Scouts.

This is our third month in the underground with no contact to the surface world behind the occasional messenger or supply wagon. The men are tired and sometimes the darkness can drive them a little mad. . . but the snap out of it when it's time to work.

We've been mapping several large caverns and the many tunnels that intersect the area when we can across a strange plant. We first noticed it growing in small stagnant pools that had collected on the cave floors, but didn't really begin to study them until the flowers blossomed on this small, thinly branched weed with blue-greenish twigs.

A sparse cover of elliptical, green-white leaves that alternate along the stem grows along with small furry buds that glow with an inner phosphorescence.

Each bud and flower gives off faint light, with the flowers being slightly brighter. The phosphorescence provides no practical light, but it is easily noticeable in the dark up to a distance of 30 feet for a single bud or flower. The most common color of the phosphorescence is green, but blue and violet also occur.

Not only has the soft light brought comfort to my scouts and reminded them of the lands above, often we use these buds to mark locations, or provide them to merchants and other topside visitors to wear them on their clothes when traveling in a large groups at night.

We have named the flowers Heaven's Rose, as they truly are the light of the One True God and have brought hope to this small band of scout's serving Vathak.

Samples of the flower have been packaged and sent topside with this field report, along with extensive notes taken of the exact environment they grow. We hope the Ministry of Alchemical Study find them useful.

*1st Lieutenant, Wilfred Vartusia*

## DEMONSTRATION AT DRAGOMIR FACTORY AND ACADEMY

The one and only "Cannon King" had an assortment of nobles on hand at a recent tour and demonstration event in EisenStrat. These monthly tours are typical for recruiting new patrons and securing cadets for the elite rifleer units.

The highlight of this months event was the marksmanship of young rifleer, Hirst Velgerstein. During a routine target shooting demonstration, cadet Hirst wowed guests by shooting out the eye of a raven flying overhead. Being called out as just "luck" and not an actual talent, Hirst raised his rifle and performed the trick a second time. Dragomir Delthsmith announced that Hirst was the top of his class, and upon finishing his mandatory enlisted time in the vindari military, he'd been offered a teaching position at the academy.

### *New Trick Shot*

## EYE SHOT

If this attack hits, the struck foe must succeed on a Reflex save to avoid permanent eye loss. On a successful save, the opponent suffers as per the Blinding Shot Trick Shot. A failed Reflex save and the opponent permanently loses the use of a single eye. Losing an eye inflicts a -4 penalty on all Perception checks and Ranged Attacks. A rifleer must be at least 8th level before selecting this ability.

**Activation Time:** 1 standard action

## NEWS ACROSS THE LANDS

**Gyorok:** Local merchants have reported a large murder of crows that seems to target their merchant wagons, attacking and killing everyone in the caravan. No other travelers have reported similar encounters with the birds, giving rise to the belief that the crows are under the control of outside forces.

**Valencourt:** A recent storm has revealed a previously unknown temple off the coast. Although initial exploration has been minimum, it looks as though the passage leading down into the temple is dry (even though the structure has barely broken the ocean surface).

**Zanderhorn:** A group of vindari scientists are securing cambion slaves to partake in an experiment involving the Zavor River. It is unknown the exact details of the experiment, but the group heads to the region early next month.

**Delfshaven:** A group of engineers have partitioned the Church of the One True God for financial backing in the construction of a "railroad system" based on design plans claiming origins from the old country. If the Church proves unfruitful, the group will proceed in trying to secure private investors.

**Mavska:** Reports from the region indicate that recent mining discoveries have garnered a lot of attention of late, and might turn around the cities ailing economy. Although this area has been successful in mining for generations, recent years have seen a decline in production.

**Forest of Alder:** Local officials have reported the grizzly murders of 45-75 known romni travelers in the region. Originally believed to be the work of bhriota tribesman, and then (after eye-witness accounts) a family of cambion, it has now been reported the family is actually of vindari blood. Scholars and law officials have discovered the residence of cannibalistic vindari living in the woods, inbreeding, and apparently holding strong to the belief of racial purity. Several members of the family were killed in an altercation, and it is unknown how many members are still alive and in the vast Forest of Alder.

**Baruza:** Officials have reported at least three recent cases of citizens spontaneously erupting in flames and perishing. The first two victims died in the privacy of their homes, and foul play was suspected. The third victim died in front of a dozen witnesses in a public market. It is unknown what is causing these reactions.

## Kirschner Theatre Company Play going to Auction

*by High Librarian Uther Vanderhaus*

The original play and notes of Reginald Kirschner are being auctioned off by Sir Demyan at the Theater of Night in Delhain.

Reginald Kirschner was an up and coming romni playwright on the cusp of stardom. This all ceased when his fiancé was raped and murdered by bhriota tribesman while travel to their next performance. Reginald fell into the depths of despair and was basically unheard of for nearly 10 years. News travelled fast when notice was given that he had a new play. With a packed house, the play was elaborate with a complex script of despair and loathing that kept the audience engaged to its melancholy beauty. It wasn't until the final act, where Reginald committed suicide in front of the audience, that panic struck the theatre. This book is his original hand written notes on the play.

The leather-bound book is decorated with a series of dancing skeletons, flying skulls, and a crescent moon symbol all on the front cover. The spine bears a second crescent moon symbol and 8 stars, while the back cover is completely blank. The pages inside are of varying degrees of quality, ranging from poor paper to expensive vellum. The higher quality pages have been bound into the book after its initial construction and the spine shows where it was cut and widened with a piece of calf skin.

**Protection:** none

**Examination Period** 1 week; **Knowledge (Arcana)**  
DC 15; **Sanity Loss** 1d4

**Value** 597 gp

### Spells

*2nd—calm emotions, enthrall, sound burst, tongues*

*1st—charm person, cure light wounds, expeditious retreat, grease*

*0—ghost sound, light, lullaby, mage hand, resistance, summon instrument*

**Preparation Ritual:** none



## Dhampir Character Feats

Often persecuted for their strange appearance and unnatural mannerisms, most dhampir disguise their nature or are forced to live on the fringes or underbelly of civilized society. Although a few dhampir manage to overcome their ancestry and remain good and trustworthy individuals, many follow the dark urges which pull at them.

### Shadow Stalker [Combat, Dhampir]

*Your pale skin and hair blend with the shadows, making you difficult to spot within the sheltering darkness.*

**Prerequisites:** Dhampir, base attack bonus +1, Stealth 1 rank.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 bonus on stealth checks made in dim illumination and a +5 bonus to Stealth checks made to snipe from within dim illumination. Creatures that might see you using darkvision ignore these bonuses.

**Special:** A dhampir fighter may select this feat as one of his bonus fighter feats.

### Dark Talents: Dhampir Feats on sale now!

This supplement provides new feats specifically designed for such dhampir characters; for those who desire to dwell between light and dark, take and shape the shadows around them, and master the powers of both creation and destruction.

<http://www.rpgnow.com/product/105820/Dark-Talents%3A-Dhampir-Feats-for-Shadows-over-Vathak>

## Tattoos Amongst the Romni

*by Vathos Darwinious*

Tattoos are common among the romni, though not all tattoos are created equal. Abstract tattoos, formed of patterns, stylized images, script, runes, or geometric figures, are cheaper as they are easier to make. The DC for an abstract tattoo is equal to 10 + size modifier. Masterwork tattoos and multiple colors increase the DC by +5 each.

Tattoos featuring actual images of people, creatures, places or things increase the DC of the tattoo by another +5. Romni take pride in showing off their tattoos and the higher the quality the better. Several tattoo shops have been established in Vathak, but most tattooists travel across the lands in romni caravans.

### Tattoo Cost and DC Modifiers By Size

Tattoo Size	Tattoo Size	Cost (x DC)	DC Modifier
Fine	0.5" by 0.5"	7 sp	+4
Diminutive	0.75" by 0.75"	13 sp	+3
Tiny	1.5" by 1.5"	25 sp	+2
Small	3" by 3"	5 gp	+1
Medium	6" by 6"	10 gp	—
Large	12" by 12"	20 gp	—
Huge	24" by 24"	40 gp	—

**Tattoo Kit:** This kit contains steel needles and ink for the purpose of making tattoos. Without such a kit, the tattoo artist must use improvised tools (-2 penalty to Craft checks). A kit contains enough ink for 2 medium tattoos. **Cost 25 gp. Ink refill 5 gp.**

## Sir Timothy Charles's Emporium

Sir Timothy Charles has just arrived to the shores of Vathak from distant lands, the No.1 importer and exporter of exotic goods, premium artifacts, and amazing wares is now located in the city of Hunstanvania, the Colonies!!! Stop by for all the latest fashion, arms, periodicals, and curiosities from lands afar! **This weeks sales are:**

### Bhriota Razor Whip

This martial weapon is a variation of the standard whip utilized by the bhriota.

Unlike a standard whip, the razor whip does normal damage instead of subdual damage. The corded braid of the whip has sharps pieces of bones and stones weaved within it, as well as a bone spike at the whips end.

**Type:** Martial One Handed Melee Weapon

**Cost 5 gp; DMG 1d6/2d4; Crit x2; Range -; Weight 5 lbs.; Type S or P; Special trip, disarm, reach**



## Masked Ghoul

*The beautiful romni girl you've been drinking and talking with all night suddenly begins to age, her skin decaying before your very eyes.*

MASKED GHOUL	CR 3
<b>XP 800</b>	
NE Medium Undead	
<b>Init +6; Senses</b> darkvision 60 ft.; <b>Perception +11</b>	
DEFENSE	
AC 16; touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +4 natural)	
hp 30 (4d8+12)	
Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +8	
Defensive Abilities channel resist +3, undead traits	
OFFENSE	
Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.	
Melee bite +5 (1d4+2 plus disease and paralysis), 2 claws +5 (1d6+2 plus paralysis)	
Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.	
Special Attacks laugh, paralysis (1d6+3 rounds, DC 15)	
STATISTICS	
Str 15, Dex 15, Con -, Int 16, Wis 18, Cha 16	
Base Atk +3; CMB +5; CMD 17	
Feats Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Bluff)	
Skills Acrobatics +9, Bluff +10, Climb +14, Knowledge (nobility) +7, Perception +11, Stealth +9, Swim +6	
Languages Aklo, Common, Draconic, Elven	
SQ change shape	
ECOLOGY	
Environment any	
Organization solitary pair, or court (4-8)	
Treasure standard	

**Change Shape (Su)** A masked ghoul takes on the appearance it had in life during daylight hours. Once darkness falls, it reverts into its true form. It may resist the change by making a DC 20 Will save, with a cumulative +1 to the DC for each hour the masked ghoul remains in its mortal form. A masked ghoul in humanoid form retains all its abilities and traits, and may make a Will save to resist any means of being detected as undead as a free action, even if they are unaware of the effect.

**Disease (Su)** *Ghoul Fever*: **Bite**-injury; **save** Fort DC 15; **onset** 1 day; **frequency** 1 day; **effect** 1d4 Con and 1d4 Dex damage; **cure** 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Charisma-based. A humanoid that dies of ghoul fever rises as a masked ghoul at the next midnight.

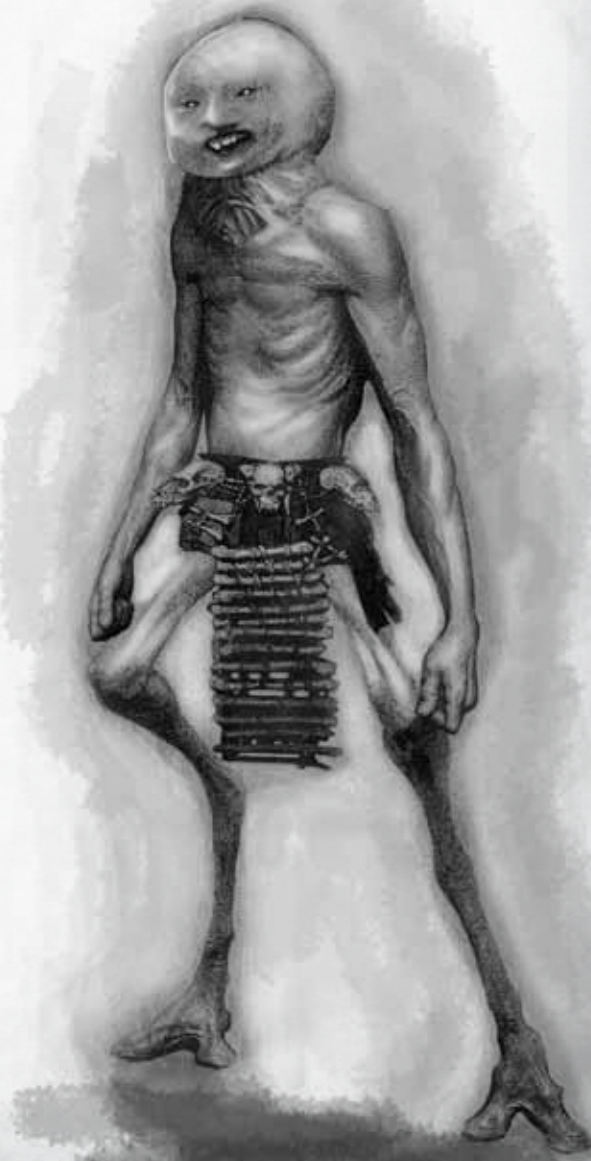
**Laugh (Su)** When a masque ghoul attacks living prey, it lets out a hyena-like cackle. All living creatures that hear the laugh must make a DC 15 Will save or be shaken for 1d4 rounds.

Masked ghouls infiltrate the world of the living, the better to feed upon them. While the sun shines they appear and act as they did in life, and are often respected members of the community in which they have inserted themselves.

Masked ghouls are lazy creatures, frequently impersonating nobles, even if they were simple farmers in life. They live posh lives during the day, and slip away into the dark, to raid graveyards or hunt the living.

Masked ghouls use more tactics than their feral kin, and try to hunt in ways that do not threaten their daily lives. They often restrict their feeding to robbing fresh graves, although they crave feasting on the still living. Some masked ghouls have hunting parties of typical ghouls, kept on leashes or in feeding pits.

Liches, vampires, and other powerful undead often employ masked ghouls to infiltrate important positions in cities that they are manipulating. These pawns play politics and promote their masters' agendas.





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