

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

Gaining a foothold south of the Eisenstrat, the soldiers of the Grigorian Grand Army have begun the push into enemy territory, intent on taking the recently lost Vathin Fields back into control of the church despite the heavy infestation of spawn emerging from the area. Lead by esteemed General Wilford Ves Haddon, a thrice awarded paladin in the service of The One True God, the grand army has taken the first steps of a long-expected advance into the regions. Under the waning warmth of the late Septembrie sun, the 2nd corps broke camp nearly an hour before dawn five days ago and have covered nearly 25 miles by foot. The Salzulfen River ford was reached, and with the help of a small platoon loaned from of the 29th Engineer's Devision of Darmsadt and commanded by Major Althson Brainard, the construction of two bridges in the course of five hours time, saw the immediately passing of our troops to the south bank of the river and into held enemy territory.

Expected to be under heavy watch, but met with surprisingly little resistance, the soldiers reached the old battle field of Chancellors Hold by noon of the following day. Evidence was visible of the great battle which occurred less then a year ago, as the open graves of our men, their rotting bodies intermixed and haphazardly strewn among the immense trenches in which they once so valiantly fought. Left open to the ravages of Vathak's harsh climate, the open graves are visible for as far as the eye can see, and in many places scores of skulls could be seen, each of them seeming to grin horribly at each of our still living soldiers.

Taking stock of dwindling supplies, the decision to salvage the weapons, armor and any unspoiled goods was soon reached despite the pending danger. Nearly an hour after the first corpse was disturbed, many of our troops reported a low rumbling, a sound described as distant thunder, heard from beneath our feet. Before the salvage and recovery could be completed, the sounds of the "thunder" became audible to us all, and within moments the ground began to shake. General Haddon gave call for formation, yet before we could properly assemble into rank and file, the land buckled and collapsed, consuming nearly

half of our unit. Described in detail by all, the emergence of the massive snake-like head of a creature began to consume our men whole. The battle stood as a true test of the mettle and level of our training and lasting the better half of an hour, the creature's assault nearly claimed our troop. Victory was only won by a final blow delivered by an ambitious cavalier belonging to the lesser vindari house of the Acienionic Order, who pierced the horror's brain with the tip of an iron lance.

As of 19th of Septembrie, our unit has returned to the eastern bank of the river and now awaits the arrival of reinforcements to deliver medical aid and to bolster our numbers to a respectful fighting force.

Barthow Birney

Former 4th commanding officer of the Headathan's 38th division.

Iron Lance Charge

Once your mount gains enough momentum, very few foes, if any will remain standing upon impact.

Prerequisites: base attack bonus +3, Ride 4 ranks, Weapon Focus (lance)

Benefit: During a charge action while mounted and wielding a lance, if the distance moved in reaching the target of the charge exceeds your mount's base speed, you gain a bonus to the damage inflicted by your lance. During this reckless charge you and your mount both suffer an additional -2 penalty to Armor Class that lasts until the beginning of your next turn.

DISTANCE MOVED	DAMAGE BONUS
60 ft	+1d8
80 ft	+2d8
100 ft or greater	+3d8

NEWS ACROSS THE LANDS

Negojulath Mountains: At least 23 tradesmen from Sileasia were killed in a freak rock slide in the early morning of the 19th of Septembrie. Caused by the collapse of an ancient statue dedicated to the Old Ones, the massive monolith toppled into cliff face and shattered. Tons of sundered stone rained down atop the terrified men, burying the group of workers under an avalanche of cold black stone. While some were pulled from the rocks, many of those rescued perished from internal injuries only hours later.

Arkos: The annual appearance of strange lights has once again come to Arkos. These bothersome lights take the form of tiny disks smaller than a copper. Travelling in groups of thirty or more, these creatures appear each night an hour after sundown and disappear before dawn. Causing injury in the form of superficial burns, the arrival of the "Arko's Wisp" has led to a seasonal decline in the local economy, and as with previous years, a strict curfew has been enforced.

Edhelion: The attendees of a public execution received a shock last Sambata as dozens died and over 15 prisoners escaped during a localized riot, a Church Official reported last week. The head of the Edhelion Guard and 5 city guardsmen have been removed from their positions and are under investigation for the events that lead up to the escape of the murderous prisoners. Authorities of the town and Church of The One True God are offering a reward of 100 Krown for any information leading to the escapees' capture. Preliminary reports have confirmed that three of the escapees are lower ranking members of a strange cult known as the *Order of the Screaming Star*.

Mad Beasts of Rotkerh

by Andrew Hellsworth

In a small village called Rotkerh, located in southwest Khrota, the native bhriota have always lived in retaliative tranquility with the wild animals of Vathak's southern lands. This peace was shattered last Marti, as an seemingly unprovoked attack resulted in the fatal mauling of a high druid during a seasonal festival. The culprit? The druid's own animal companion, a once loyal Kodak bear of massive proportions called Dor'gotruath'ia.

Once thought to be friends of the mad savages, the large breeds of Kodak and Grizzly, have been driven into shocking acts of unprovoked and unnatural violence. While the increased reports of natural animal attacks in the region have seen a dramatic spike in the last ten years, local bhriota

seemed particularly shocked that the druids own companion could be behind such an assault.

The mauled body of the slain druid, a bhriota male in his early thirties, will be on display for the next twenty four hours, the standard time before the worldly remains of the druid's body are consumed by his fellow clansmen.

"It's scary. People are afraid," said Vort'thin, an elderly vindari man residing in a small hamlet ten miles outside of Karka. "It's just something we're just going to have to adjust to, but the sense of trust with any animal is going to be different."

Mindfire

Mindfire is a strange disease spread from drinking the tainted water ebbing from cursed locations and from underground wells used as the nesting places of aberrations. Many times the foul bodily fluids of these creatures saturates the water used for livestock and farming. While the disease acts slowly, it greatly erodes the afflicted mind, as the brain of the still living creature begins to decay. In the full grip of the disease a creature will begin to make human-like screaming noises, as if it is trying to speak tortured words.

In the final days before it's death, the decomposition of the brain matter releases a constant stream of adrenalin into the failing body, making the creature extremely aggressively and causing it to blindly assault others until its death.

Type disease, ingested; **Save** Fortitude DC 17

Onset 1 day; **Frequency** 1/day

Effect 1d4 Wis damage and 1 Dex damage; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves

For some unexplained reason, the tainted water which initially causes the disease seems only to cause extreme intestinal distress to a human, but cannot manifest as MindFire unless the potential host consumes infected meat harvested from a diseased animal.

New Creature Template:

MindFire Template +0

As their brains succumb to decay, these animals become fiercer than they otherwise normally would.

Quick Rules: +2 to all attack and damage rolls; +2 hp/HD; +2 to CMB and Fort Saves; -2 to AC, Reflex and Will Saves*

Rebuild Rules: Ability Scores +4 to Strength and Constitution; -4 to Dexterity and Wisdom.

*Handle Animal and Ride skill checks suffer a negative -4 to all rolls when dealing with a creature under these effects. The animal is always considered hostile when checking for it's initial attitudes. In addition, spells like calm animals no longer have an effect when used on a creature with the Mindfire template. end the effect.

Collection of Old Scrolls Found

High in the Gray Peak Mountains, the discovery of a hidden cave has yielded an insight into what vindarian scholars are calling the first “key” in possibly unlocking an understanding of Vathak’s mysterious past. Entitled the Cogekorth Scroll, the search to find this ancient parchment began almost thirty years ago from clues gathered in an underwater cavern located along the Khrotaian coast.

The first mention of the Cogekorth scrolls came from the assembled pieces of a broken tablet and a strange metal disk covered in symbols, the two objects were unearthed from an underwater cave near the town of Gyorok. Another similar piece of antiquity was recovered eight years later, and another found in trenches near the Vathin Fields, a formal inquiry was issued by the Grand Church as to the true significance of the objects. It was only after numerous failed attempts to translate their meaning, that the persistence of famed archeologist Louis D. Gall’oly found a breakthrough. Gall’oly discovered that when combined, the two disks served as a key in unlocking and translating the previously undecipherable text, it’s message pointing to the hidden location of the Cogekorth Scrolls.

Over the last two years Gall’oly, along with his team, campaigned among Grigoria’s wealthy seeking the needed funding to mount an expedition into a secluded area of the Gray Peak Mountains, the group seeking a high summit that straddles along the border of Sileasia. Heading the expedition himself, Gall’oly’s group discovered a series of caverns along the western portion of the peaks. Inside there awaited a collection of oversized graves and statues, all of which are covered in runes that seem to predate those

found adorning the Dre’uyn Monuments. Unsealing only a single tomb, they found the mummified remains of a yet to be determined creature of impossible size along with a vast collection of badly weathered and nearly destroyed scrolls. The recovered document, along with Gall’oly and his team, have now reached the town of Seca, the first stop in returning the documents to Eisin’Dorf. The journey wasn’t without hardship however, as the team’s return trip has been sidelined for the time being, as both Gall’oly and several team members, have suddenly taken ill and are awaiting recovery before resuming their journey.

New Spell:

Lashing Sickness

School necromancy; Level cleric 3, sorcerer/wizard 3

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, DF

Range 120 ft. Area 120-ft. line

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw Reflex partial (see text);

Spell Resistance yes

As you cast this spell, a line of sickening, neon brown energy shoots from your fingertips dealing 1d4 points of negative energy damage per caster level (maximum 15d4). Creatures caught in this spell’s area of effect are allowed a Reflex save for half damage.

In addition to the full damage, a creature which fails their Reflex saving throw also becomes sickened for a number of rounds equal to the caster’s level.

Sir Timothy Charles’s Emporium

Due to the recently documented lycanthrope attacks, with almost all reports originating near the borders of the Vanturarita Forest, each recognized dealer and carrier of Sir Timothy Charles’s Emporium goods has marked down all werewolf hunting gear by 25% until the end of Septembrie! **This weeks sales are:**

SILVER SMOKE

Use of this item is considered a boon to most druids and rangers who hunt such beasts, who view the expensive ingredients and time to make such items, as well worth the cost.

Slot –; Price 50 gp ; Weight –

This powder appears to be a very fine, very light metallic dust. This finely powdered silvery substance is the bane of all lycanthropes and were-cursed creatures. A single handful is enough to create a hazy, lingering cloud of powdery vapor that fills a 10’-radius square and that remains for 1d4 rounds. Any creature that enters the area, and who has a damage reduction which can be overcome with silver weapons, immediately begins to choke and cough as they inhale the thinly ground shards of blessed metal. While simply an irritant to the eyes and lungs of others, a creature’s which meet the criteria described above, must make a DC 13 Fortitude save when first entering, and at the beginning of each of it’s rounds, or suffer 1d3 damage and become sickened until the start of it’s next turn. This powder can also be sealed in a small, brittle glass globe that can be used as a thrown splash weapon. A direct hit with a flask causes 1d6 points of damage to the target creature, and other affected creatures caught in the splash area take a single point of damage. A creature directly struck suffers a -2 to their initial Fortitude saving throw.

Bone Gorgers

BONE GORGER CR 6

2400 XP

N Huge undead

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +4

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 8, flat-footed 18 (+10 natural, -2 size)

hp 76 (9d8+36)

Fort +8, **Ref** +3, **Will** +6

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., **burrow** 20 ft.

Melée bite +12 (1d8+8/ 19-20 plus disease and paralysis), 2 claws +8 (1d8+4)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (20 ft. with bite)

Special Attack: paralysis (1d4+1 rounds, DC 18), swallow whole (2d6+8 bludgeoning damage, AC 15, 7 hp)

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 11, **Con** -, **Int** 6, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 30

Feats Awesome Blow, Critical Focus, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bite), Power Attack

Skills Perception + 12, Swim + 20, Survival + 12

ECOLOGY

Environment underground

Organization solitary, pair, or colony (3-6)

Treasure incidental

Disease (Su) Wasting Rot: Bite-injury; save Fort DC 18; 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 who dies of wasting rot and is not given a proper burial rises as a standard ghoul 24 hours after the disease consumes them. A humanoid who becomes a ghoul in this way retains none of the abilities it possessed in life, regardless of the base creature's hit dice. It is not under the control of any other ghouls, but it hungers for the flesh of the living and behaves like a normal ghoul in all respects.

These worms are the bane of both the living and undead alike, as these giant

creatures seek to fill their unending hunger with the bones of creatures still living or long since dead. Drawn to mass graves, crypts and burial sites they gorge themselves, consuming the remains along with any organic material that they encounter. When drawn into the act of feeding, the creature will set aside its preference to dead flesh and devour anything that stands between it's hunger.

It is not an uncommon tale to hear of individuals or groups of adventurers vanishing while exploring graveyards, old battle fields and other places these creatures inhabit. A ghoul worm usually claims a large underground cavern near its food source as its den, returning to rest only after gorging itself. These hibernation are lengthy, and can last for a period of weeks or months, depending solely upon the size of its consumption.

Although not mindless, a bone gorgers rarely is driven by anything except its hunger. Hard to control by even the most powerful of necromancers and undead, they make for dangerous guardians for those who are willing to suffer the risk of having such a creature possibly break from its magical bonds.

Although reports of them are rare, the existence of variants of these subterranean creatures have been encountered. Sometimes possessing two heads or more, the terrifying form of these bone gorgers are of even greater than the size of the standard version presented above (these variants are never less than Colossal in size).





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