

Shadowglade

Game Masters's Guide

By Nate Petersen

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Shadowglade: Game Master's Guide

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Welcome To Shadowglade

Welcome to the Game Master's Guide to Shadowglade. As much as any setting has its secrets and hidden gems that players are left to discover, you will find that Shadowglade has many, many more.

To get things out of the way early and help you decide if this is something for your party or not, here's the meat of what's going on:

- The world was destroyed five-hundred years ago, and has finally, in recent years, been able to return to some semblance of normalcy.
- On the fringes of this world the supernatural is very real...
- ...And the world at large knows nothing about it, including the player characters...
- ...Because a number of secret societies work hard to keep it secret for the safety of that world at large or their own twisted agenda.
- Players can expect to fight ghosts, ghouls, golems, necromancers, vampires, werewolves, zombies, and other various supernatural elements...
- ...and perhaps even join their number!
- And finally, not everything they know and learn, nor everything you know and learn, will be true and accurate.

Still sound interesting? Excellent! Then keep reading and we'll break down the remainder of the setting and how to use it to your party's surprise, horror, and enjoyment!

A World Within A World

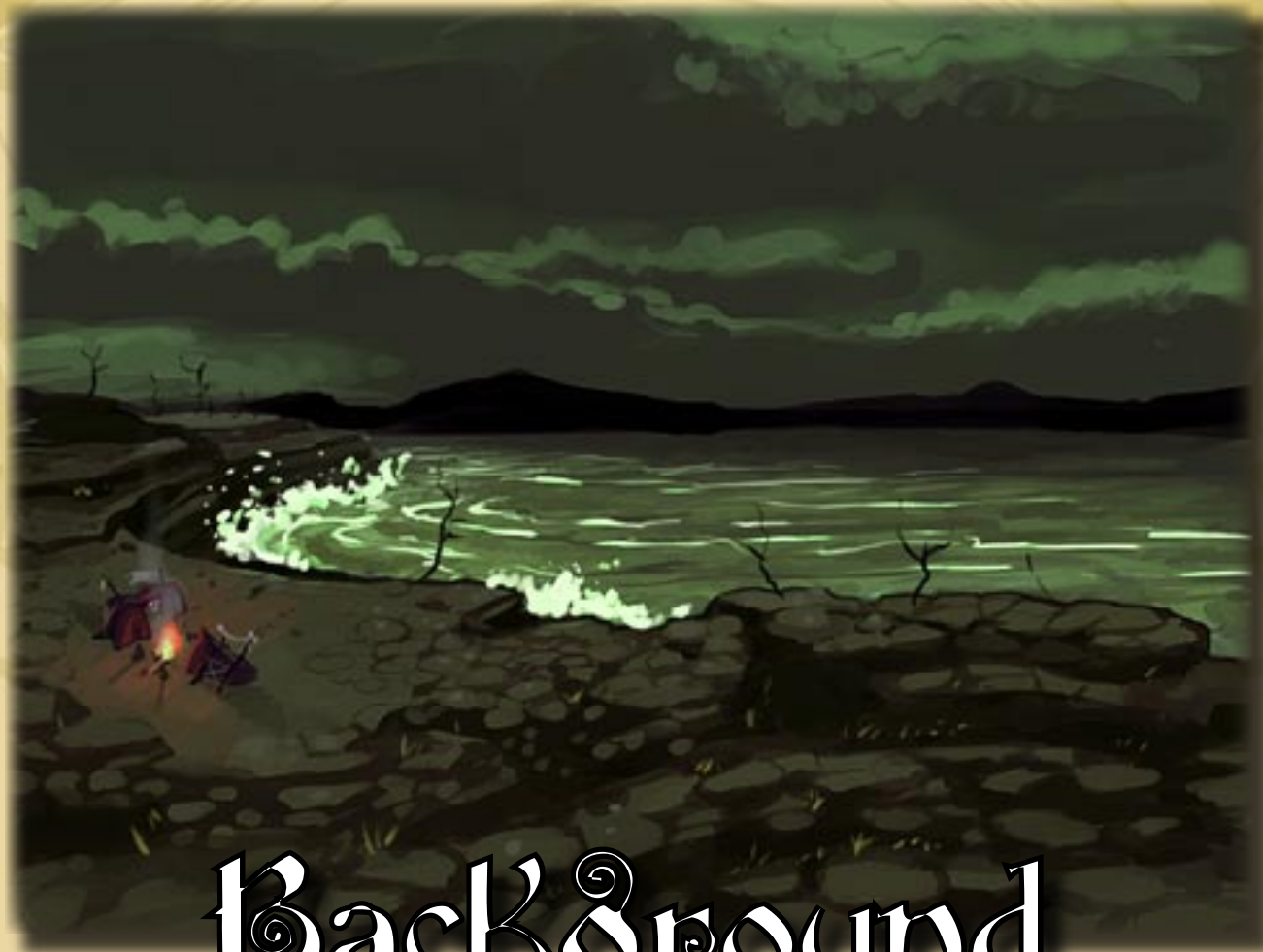
The world of Shadowglade is effectively split in two; on the surface, you have the everyday world that the vast majority of the population experiences. This is a rather common and mundane existence, very little of excitement or interest. Days go by, children are born, fields are worked, and the vast majority of the population lives a peaceful life and die a quiet death late into life.

Beneath that quiet, placid surface, however, lies a darker, more sinister world. Supernatural forces and unnatural extensions of the land exist that threaten to tear it apart if left unchecked. Within this world, little is certain and there is no peace, no rest, no reprieve for those engulfed in the shadow.

Word of caution: nothing in the realm of Shadowglade is exactly as it would seem. The mundane jobs taken to ensure a full meal and warm bed may drag your party into the cold shadows forever; under the tutelage of the Torchbearers, your comrades could have the veil of mystery lifted and see the monsters amongst the men for the first time. While in the employ of the Order of the Ebon Throne, you may come to realize those "monsters" simply want their own place in the world, while a mission from the Guild may ultimately reveal the true monsters aren't those who skulk in shadow but those who walk proudly in the sun whilst seeking to stab their brother in the back.

And all along the way, friends will be made, comrades lost, old mysteries solved with new ones discovered, great evil forever vanquished, and maybe, just maybe, your party will earn the right to rest in world finally freed of horror, chaos, and secrecy...

This guide serves as an introduction to the "other side" of the realm of Shadowglade. The mundane world as it is known by the players and the common folk of the realm is discussed in the Player's Guide to Shadowglade. The Game Master's Guide you are reading now is for your eyes only; it contains background information about things that may or may not exist as far as the players know, contradicts some beliefs held by the rest of the world, etc. As game master, you are entitled to the truth, or most of it at least, and can share this knowledge with your players through adventures undertaken in this realm!



Background

Shadowglade is a world with a very thick background despite its shattered memory. Though not often recommended, it does pull a bait & switch at times with players; much of what is presented in the **Player's Guide** and even the **Introduction to Shadowglade** isn't exactly false, but its not exactly true either.

Much of this has to do with the history of the realm and the Upheaval; because complete knowledge of the world's history before the event was scoured, survivors were only left with scraps of memory and a few records on which to base their understanding of their world and the history they lost. As with a game of "telephone", snippets taken out of context, historical revision, gaps in knowledge, and occasional wild assumptions led to a vastly different world view than what actually occurred.

This portion of the Game Master's Guide is intended to fill in a lot of those blanks for you as the game master so that you can better fill your role and provide a more entertaining experience for your players. Really, very little of this will come to light at your table. Most of the players will latch on to their expectations of the setting, what they have learned through the introductory player materials, and be perfectly

content with that. Sometimes however, they will encounter something... unusual. Or start asking questions about the past and go digging for themselves. This material will help you deal with those situations and hopefully deliver a rich and satisfying exploration of the world's history.

While at the outset much if not all of this remains hidden from the characters in the world, we have a number of projects on the bench to explore more of these. The necromancer city of Soularus, as you will read about, features prominently in several potential campaigns and will receive a full treatment. Prisse's Folly, the archeological disaster, will be more fully explored on paper so that your own group can fully explore it in play. These and many other treatments are due out as quickly as we can record their histories and provide an exciting experience.

We do have to ask one thing; please keep the knowledge on these pages to yourself. Share when the time is right, when your players delve deeply into the world, but allow them to discover it for themselves. Life is rarely about the destination and the journey is always more important, entertaining, and satisfying.

Pre Upheaval

The Beginning

All stories begin at, well, the beginning. The realm that is now known as Shadowglade began as a formless void, a black, blank slate. Into this realm came the twin siblings, Asurik and Rheana, the son and daughter of greater powers. They were given this niche of Creation to do as they saw fit.

The natural laws were already in place and the brother and sister were tasked with crafting a new world based on those. They had seen the realms created by their other siblings and the greater powers and sought something different. In their world, there was to be no fear, no anguish, it was to be a world in balance.

To that end, the two split the duties of the realm but ensured that each depended on the other. Rheana, the sister, was given a suite of responsibilities that matched her; her smile would bring the new day and brighten the heavens, her warmth would cloak the ground of the new world and coax life from the bare soils. Asurik, the brother, would act as guardian and defend the world when his sister would rest. In the dark of the night while she rested, his ever vigilant eye would fall upon the world, and his cloak would cover the land in comfort and peace.

To help fill the world and paint the canvas, Asurik and Rheana convinced several dragons to join their world. A great white dragon brought the strength of the four winds, while a regal blue dragon brought the deep seas and waters. A powerful red dragon breathed fire into the heart of the world, warming it and so that its green brethren could help bring forth wondrous life. Their task complete, the already ancient dragons were allowed to dwell within the world, free of the persecution they had faced in other lands.

The great white dragon made a home in the north, causing the lands around him to chill and freeze over. From here, the world's winters would come and coat the world in pristine white. The majestic blue dragon settled in the tropical southern seas to bask in the glory of the sun and gentle surf. The red dragon found a home in the east, nesting deep within the earth. The green dragon likewise found a home to the west, where the rich seas met the cool earth and great groves sprang forth.

Other creatures were brought into the world, some from realms beyond imagining, some born of the twin creators. All manner of flower and beast roamed the open lands and life flourished. Proud of their budding world, Asurik and Rheana sought stewards to help them govern the lands. In that they found two creatures across the other worlds who proved to be strong choices for overseeing the newly crafted world. These were humans, who at their best

represented great ingenuity and talent, and the Wyre, beast men of incredible strength and loyalty. Those who sought peace and tranquility from the other lands were brought to their new realm to help it begin to fully blossom.

As the supreme powers of their world, it fell to the twins to ensure that all aspects of the natural order were preserved, including the inevitability of death. Not wanting to burden his sister with the terrible task, Asurik assumed the mantle himself but not as a grim specter as other worlds possessed. Asurik sought to help bring the children of his world to a peaceful end and ensure that they reached their just rewards in the afterlife. Death would be painless in their world, the soul free to seek lasting rest in the realms beyond. Thus, Asurik became the protector of the dead, while his sister Rheana guided and nurtured those who remained and ensured theirs were long, happy, and fulfilled lives.

The Emissaries

The world flourished, but after many years it began to overwhelm the new gods. Those from the other worlds had little idea what to do with the pristine paradise offered to them by the new gods, knowing only warfare and strife, and constantly sought guidance from them. Rheana especially was beseeched, for it was she who shone down upon them when awake, and she who gave life whereas her brother, they believed, took it.

Among their number arose a dashing young man who came to the world as a child. With knowledge of the world his family left he fell in love with the paradise they were given and indeed in love with Rheana. Seeing his countrymen lost, he began to speak up, to assume some of the burden Rheana bore for the world. He spoke wisdom and common sense born of understanding, and the people listened. He regularly consulted Rheana in matters, but helped his people take the reins as well. "We must do as we can, and when we can do no more Rheana will help us finish our task" was a common saying he offered.

The years wore on and the young man turned grey and his pace slowed. He still spoke with Rheana, who saw only the young vibrant soul of her champion. In his twilight years, Rheana approached her brother to see what might be done for a life so well lived in their service. Asurik himself had been meaning to speak with his sister for similar reasons regarding another of their flock...

In the early years of the realm, while death was inevitable it was not prevalent. Wildlife passed on, though rarely human or Wyre, and Asurik ensured that all creatures great and small found their way into the afterlife. Despite his unique approach to death, he sadly found he was still feared by those new to their world. It was to be expected he knew, and the very same reason he assumed the mantle in place of his radiant sister. One among them, however, saw his

true heart. A young human girl from a small village had encountered him in the woods as one of his aspects came to guide a young deer, slain by a bear for food, into the afterlife; the spirit creature knew no fear at his presence and the girl knew she shouldn't either. Over time she had come to understand his position: death was inevitable, but it need not be feared by those who lead a true and just life. While Asurik avoided many of the living because of their concerns, he found this girl to be intriguing and met with her regularly, becoming quite close.

In a tragic turn of events, while she was out harvesting herbs and roots for her family she was caught in a rock slide; a goat, also foraging, set loose a wave of rocks from a cliff, crushing the young girl beneath them. Asurik reached her shortly before her family and was reviled by them for it; they blamed him for her death, as though he had allowed it to happen. "Surely you could have saved her!" They cried over her broken body. And for all of his desire to, Asurik knew the balance had to be maintained.

In his sadness at her loss and the grief expressed by her family, Asurik began to contemplate a way to correct the situation, to preserve the girl and perhaps help people see him as less of a monster while still keeping the balance. When Rheana approached him, an idea occurred. All worlds had an internal balance, but the one constructed by them would never allow blatant exceptions to the rules, pardoning the death of either the man or the girl, to exist and leave the world untouched. The twins agreed that their lot was better served by having someone among the people who could speak for them, on terms their mortal guests could understand. So it was they agreed to grant their respective friends a new office in the world, that of emissary.

Asurik chose the young girl, Neressa, as his. In doing so he could not return her to full life; she would indeed remain dead. But, her spirit would remain with the world, with Asurik. She would bring the souls of the departed, her friends and family and eventually the whole of the world, to Asurik for their final rest. In being greeted by a familiar, welcoming, soul Asurik hoped the mortals would feel more at peace. With this Neressa would be dead and yet living, able to see those she loved and help bring them lasting peace.

Rheana, with the blessing of the man Tal Rhas'ne, gifted him with a unique form of life. His body would die but remain in the world, fueled by a spirit linked directly to the afterlife. His domain would be the world around him and he would be a part of the earth, a part of Rheana. Tal Rhas'ne became a druidic lich, living but not dead, and helped guide those who still sought his wisdom well beyond his given years.

Beginning of the End

The end would come faster for the young gods' realm than most realms, though they were not to know that, at least not at first.

The Wyre were a noble race, grateful for the world given to them by the young deities. They were among the most ardent supporters of the twins and respectful of Asurik as well as Rheana. Their ranks gave rise to the first orders dedicated to maintaining sacred groves and sites in the world, the first temples to their honor, and more.

Humans, on the other hand, were a mixed lot. Many among them relished the beautiful world before them and joined with the Wyre in admiration of its splendor. Others appeared to care less; they were grateful to be free of the worlds they described as "hell holes" and other colorful terms, but took many of their gifts for granted. And others still held darker intentions in their hearts.

It took many years for their respective numbers to grow, but eventually humans outnumbered the Wyre. Despite everything, the humans were still fearful creatures and feared those different from them, namely the Wyre. Several settlements were at peace with the others, but few integrated communities existed and at times even those were strained. As such, the Wyre retreated to safer territories where they could remain in peace while their human cousins went their own way and settled other cities on the distant shores.

Fear breeds anger, hatred, and resentment, however, and the stories began to spin as they were handed down through the intervening generations. Before too long, humans across the realm were convinced they were driven from their lands by the fearsome beast men and that it was their right to eventually reclaim the lands they had lost. The further the humans traveled from the heart of the land and from the truth, they further they drifted from Rheana to the point that many also ignored her, believing she had abandoned them in addition to their other fabricated beliefs.

From here, the world moved on. Empires rose and fell, rivalries were born, deepened, and forgotten. Despite their best intentions, the world Asurik and Rheana had created had fallen victim to the same faults of the others they had seen. It was all they could to keep the peoples together and the situation from spinning out of control. It was a tedious balancing act, but for a time it was well executed and the world fell into a simple rhythm. The best they could hope for, Asurik and Rheana let it ride, working to change it back to its early days one soul at a time.

Birth of Magic

The world was woven with primal powers and while many could feel it surging through the new world, none dared touch the energy, not wanting to upset the delicate balance. Humans, however, could never resist temptation, even

for the best of reasons. "Magic" as an art was discovered quite accidentally, when a mortal realized they could tap into these veins of creation. From there, knowledge of this spread like wildfire and shortly many humans were exploring the depths of this newfound power with reckless abandon.

Unbeknownst to these mortals, these veins were conduits to the power of Rheana, the earth of the world literally fueled by her. Tapping directly into this power weakened her, and in doing so undermined the strength of the balance. With each spell cast and miracle wrought, Rheana, and by extension the world, suffered for it. Storms broke out across the land, seemingly out of nowhere at times, seas rose and fell, and the land fell away. Rhas'ne pleaded with the populace to stop, but only after the loss of several coastal cities did those educated in the art heed his call.

The damage was significant, but not irreparable. Rhas'ne worked with those skilled who honestly sought to help others to tap into the world's powers gently, and to do so in such a way that it nurtured the land instead of destroying it. With these instructions, the first clerics and druids came into the realm. Sorcerers, those who learned to access the powers of the world themselves, remained but in far fewer numbers, their work relegated to obscurity and the harm they inflicted healed through the widening spread of clerical and druidic practitioners.

Of the insults slung at the gods in their time, Asurik considered this the greatest. Not only were mortals ungrateful for the tranquil world they were given, they sought to bleed the life of his sister for their own petty needs. With this, Asurik turned his back on the living world, wanting nothing to do with those who would simply take. It is unfortunate that he did, for were he more vigilant he may have seen what was transpiring...

The Dark Arts

Select sorcerers sought only the power of magic and its ability to dominate others, relatively heedless of the costs. They only ceased much of their work due to the instability it caused in the world around them; these cruel men wanted to rule a world, not rule a barren wasteland. They were patient, however, and began to seek other methods of managing their end goals.

Knowledge of the dual nature of the world lead several to conclude that while tapping directly into the power of Rheana was detrimental to the world in which they lived, it may not be so with Asurik. As the deity tied to the afterlife, not the mortal plane, they might be able to safely syphon power from him for their own uses without disrupting the world around them. If all went according to plan, this would not only grant them the power of the god, but power also over death, allowing them to rule their empire for all time.

On the western coast, the city of Westmin, a group of such scholars and sorcerers had delved deeply into these primal magics of the world, the very foundation upon which it was built and the well from which Rheana and Asurik drew their own powers. They dabbled in magics mortals were never meant to access, bending and eventually breaking the rules that governed the living, the dead, and the natural order of all. Doing so, they drove deeply into the heart of Asurik's realm and profile of powers, seeking to steal from the god of the dead.

This had an unforeseen effect that the sorcerers and even Asurik never dreamed. It was not known to the rest of the world, and even his sister barely suspected, but Asurik had long ago felt anger enter his mind. There was to be a perfect world, free of the plague of so many other realms and yet, despite their best efforts, it still reared its ugly head in their lands. This anger festered in Asurik's heart slowly over the years. While he maintained his duties as shepherd of the dead, there were a number of times he felt the rising urge to strike down all of the insolent souls of the land and begin anew.

In their otherworldly raid, the sorcerer collective touched the mind of Asurik, accidentally opening the door to all of his pent up anger and aggression. This set off a dark chain reaction. The sorcerers were possessed of ultimately petty intentions but dark designs and self-aggrandizing "great plans". They were drunk with the power they were consuming.

Asurik, a god and a judge of the dead hardly used to such intimate interactions with mortals recoiled from the shock, the brush with the petty cruelty the sorcerers represented. Feeding directly upon the god's power, their petty nature and dread wishes were amplified, infecting the mind of Asurik and driving him insane, in turn driving the sorcerers the same. From here, the Asurik of legend and current lore was born, patron god of death, destruction, and corruption.

The sorcerers became the first necromancers in the realm, able to raise the corpses of the once dead to do their bidding, able to syphon the life from others, and capable of immense cruelty and destruction. Asurik, as a result of this encounter, became a twisted personification of everything he hated and in the end the epitome of the necromancers desires and designs. Asurik raged at the world of the living for all of its faults and sought to tear it down, to begin anew, and the necromancers followed right behind, believing they held the reins...

The Beginnings of War

Consumed with their newfound power and backed by a god of unimaginable might, the necromancers began a campaign of terror across the lands. Fueled by Asurik and his insanity the necromancers came to believe it was possible now for them to tap into both the powers of the dead and the living. They couldn't simply tap into the veins

of power, however; doing so would only destabilize their world. No, like their encounter with Asurik, they would have to make direct contact with Rheana to assume her mantle as well. From their ocean palace they swept eastward, consuming all that lay before them.

The Wyre were among Rheana's most ardent defenders and manned the grasslands the humans had long ago abandoned. They fought valiantly to defend their own lands, but at Rheana's behest did not raise a hand to Asurik himself. She reached out to her brother to try to calm his madness... and found to her dismay that he was lost in his insanity. He could not be reasoned with and he could not be stopped.

Unwilling to harm him, Rheana turned to the four dragons, their friends who slumbered within the world since its creation, to form a defense. The dragons, each a representative of a cardinal direction and primal element, provided the primal defenses of the world and would prove critical to defending it from the corruption of the necromancers.

To seal the defenses, however, the root cause of Asurik's rage needed to be addressed. Mortals, whom he despised as uncaring for the world they had given them and disrespectful of his beloved sister, needed to stand up for the creation and Rheana, to be willing to lay their life on the line as the twins had given theirs to the birth of the world. From their number, each guardian dragon chose a Champion to represent the mortals; the names of two of the Champions were lost to the tide of history, while it is known that Rhas'ne was selected as one Champion by the Green Dragon of the West and the Earth, and a paladin of pure heart and great renown known as Erislan was named by the wise White Dragon of the North and the Winds. The goal of these defenders was to halt the march of the dead army and restore the balance; no small task, though one Rheana hoped could be accomplished. They were aided by Neressa, guide of the dead, who sought to help restore the natural balance and Asurik's sanity; without him, the souls of the departed were trapped in the mortal plane and what was quickly becoming a living hell.

A Hundred Years of Turmoil

The battle was fought for years across the wide continent. The necromancers overtook much of the southern continent and proceeded north, with the intent of taking a mountain called the "Seat of the Stars", the surface access point to the heart of the world and the domain of Rheana. To help combat the rising darkness in the land, Erislan founded several orders of paladins dedicated to the defense of Rheana, the most enduring of which was the Order of the Sacred Torch which specialized in eliminating the undead and armies risen by necromancers.

The necromancers were not without their own devices, however. Initially they sought to corrupt the living population of these lands and turned them into mockeries of life, the first vampyres. The hope was for the feral hunger to overtake the newly transformed, who would sweep out from the conquered lands and into the pristine lands, turning them for the necromancers. In the end, however, their servants rebelled and many were put down; only a few escaped destruction.

A second attempt was made with a race of creatures crafted from bodies of fallen defenders; dubbed the Golem, these creatures were suspected failures and, after a time, abandoned and assumed destroyed on the field of battle. Little did they know the creatures were an astounding success, but not in the way they had anticipated. The Golem disappeared from the view of their commanders but were not destroyed; they were never seen again for the duration of the war.

After their attempts to engineer a race were halted, the necromancers began to experiment with modifying living creatures. Deadly beings, such as insects and snakes, were manipulated, mutilated, and transformed into hideous versions of their former selves. Many were also enhanced in size so that spiders the size of dogs and humans swarmed across the lands, while snakes the size of city streets slithered through the underbelly of the cities. While they succeeded in sowing chaos, the creatures proved uncontrollable. Rather than end the experiment, however, the necromancers allowed their new creations to run amok and eventually disappear into the dark, thick, woodlands.

Terranos, one of the necromantic lords, turned his attentions to even more depraved, sinister, designs. Combining the arts of dark magic and necromancy with the burgeoning forms of technology in the world, he constructed a fortress city over his ancestral estate driven by metal and death. A grand, unifying, engine was to power this city, but thankfully for the rest of the world just as it was to come online his calculations proved incorrect and negative energy flooded the structure, destroying much of it and the surrounding lands. The necromancers abandoned Terranos and his research and pressed on with the war...

The horrors of the war were unbearable to be sure. Cities fell before the onslaught of the necromancers, though many more would have were it not for the efforts of the Champions. With the necromancers intent on clearing a swath of destruction to the Seat of the Stars, Erislan and the Champions worked with populations to move those most vulnerable out of the way of the army. Doing so saved lives and deprived the necromancers of the raw materials they needed to further enhance their army. Populations settled along the shores of the southern bay and eventually shipped out to the islands of Ire and Iber.

The gleaming city of Silverglade, under which the Red Dragon had slept in the time before the war, became the base of operations for the Guardians and Champions. From here, they would chart the progress of the war, train new paladins and clerics in the arts necessary to defend their world. Regardless of their work, however, the necromancers relentlessly gained ground. They were slowed at times to be sure, but never stopped and never forced back. Their armies, like the inevitability of death, marched on...

The End of the War

City after city, land after land, fell before the unrelenting onslaught of the dead army and forced the defenders back and eventually into a corner; the fortress erected upon the Seat of the Stars. Aided by the survivors of the undead assault and remaining armies, the Champions and guardian dragons put up a valiant last defense of the mountain stronghold.

Neither humility nor restraint were among the necromancers' virtues, however. After a century of warfare and months of siege, they grew impatient for their victory. Reckless and drunk with power, the necromancers sought to end the conflict in one fell swoop. Using their considerable power and direct connection to the god, they summoned Asurik to the mortal plane and bound him to a mortal form. Their grand plan was to have the god assail the mountain himself and do away with its defenders; after all, there was no way mortals could stand before the might of a god. In this they were correct; no mere mortal could stand against the god, and for all of their power the necromancers were still mortal.

Asurik would not be controlled and he broke free of the restraints put in place, turning on his "worshippers." He shredded the necromancer's camp and armies in a blind fury shortly after his summoning. His insanity and rage would still accomplish the necromancer's goal, however; seeking his sister in blind agony, Asurik tore through the army of the living and the dead alike, and stormed the mountain stronghold.

Knowing the final battle was at hand, the Champions prepared for one last struggle against the dark forces. Understanding their allies were damned if they remained and just as likely slain if they somehow survived the encounter with the dark god, the Champions arranged with the dragons to have the rank and file soldiers spirited away to spend their last moments with their loved ones. Should the defending Champions succeed in their gambit, they could spare many lives. Should they fail, at least their allies would spend their last few minutes of life with those they loved. The battle field cleared of all other concerns, Asurik was unchallenged as he made his way to the peak, searching out his twin in his madness.

With Asurik upon them, the Champions battled heroically, only to be overwhelmed. Asurik turned aside many of the blows from the Champions and shrugged off the assaults of the guardian dragons. The clash was titanic, Asurik even bound to mortal form much more than even the considerable, combined might of the world's strongest warriors and its elemental protectors. After hours, or days, the defenders wavered and it would appear Asurik would overcome them.

At last, the wisest of the dragons, the White Dragon of the Northern Winds, knew the only way to overcome Asurik was not through force of arms. Compassion, hope, however, bolstered by the primal power of the dragons just might burn through the insanity and touch that bit of soul and heart left in Asurik. To make it happen, however, would require a vast investment of power the mortals sorely lacked. Encouraging his brothers, the dragons funneled their spirits into their mortal champions, who in turn were encouraged to open their hearts, remember Asurik before the insanity, and to "see the light".

The resulting wave of energy overwhelmed the Champions and lit the skies with a massive beacon of pure, honest power. The light burned away much of the evil of the necromancers and their corruption of Asurik. It would have been a happy ending, except that the power was too much for Asurik, weakened by the influence of the necromancers and his imprisonment in the mortal realm.

His avatar burned away, the pure power of the god was unleashed upon the world in a cataclysmic explosion, destroying the Seat of the Stars. The power resonated across the world causing seismic ripples that toppled cities, woodlands, and more. The force of the divine explosion fractured the world, forcing painful changes upon the geography as the lower continent split, the peaks of the central mountain range shot higher and wider. Lands fell into the sea, and the aftershock laid low many of the land's shining cities.

The shock wave of the god's death throes also wreaked havoc on the population; waves of panic, fear, and insanity spread in the few short minutes before the cities crumbled, but worse occurred as well as their minds were scoured of much of their history, identity and knowledge. In one very short night the world ended, and even those who lived through it would never remember life before then.

Aftermath of the Upheaval

The aftermath of the Upheaval turned the natural, and unnatural, world on its head.

Geography

The geography of the world was radically altered in the aftermath of the Upheaval.

The northern stretch of the primary continent was obliterated, the full shock wave stopped by the peaks of the Centerspine. This is the region which would come to be known as the "Northern Wastes" in the current era. It is completely devoid of life, the surface scoured and blackened by the force of the explosion. In some areas, the superheated air of the actual explosion caused the lands to glass over, the sands and soil melting into glass.

The Centerspine itself rocketed skyward, new peaks closing old gaps in the range. The old peaks were shot higher to the point that they were impassable, while the smaller mountains made any type of transportation through the peaks impossible. Some spaces remained hollowed out; here, some survivors managed to carve out meager lives. This includes the stretch of lands that would become home to the reclusive Baronies.

The western shore was likewise thrust skyward from the Centerspine down to the southern edge of the major landmass. This created a basin wherein the blast of supernatural power was held, reflected, and enhanced. The scorching, divine blast irradiated the darkest lands of the necromancer empire, its impact amplified by the newly formed western edge of the Centerspine.

The continental shelf itself was broken, resulting in a massive fault line running through the southern reaches. The once-great city of Silverglade was shattered in the split, its shimmering walls splintered and cast aside. Eventually, descendants of its people would return to find a hollowed cavern and obsidian spire, all that remained of the gleaming metropolis the city once was.

Southern portions of the landmass disintegrated in the shock wave, falling into the ocean. A once grand bay opened to the southern seas, low-land portions of territory driven underwater with salt water seeping into mainland ecosystems. The once lush southern peninsula became a salt marsh horn, thick with life that would survive nowhere else. To this day, tidal floods wash in and out of the land.

Natural weather patterns were warped by the forces, creating hellacious storms and tidal waves that drove outlying islands underwater. Some eventually surfaced, though washed clean of inhabitants while others had enough high ground that some residents were able to reach safety shortly after the event. Quakes, shock waves, and windstorms toppled and buried many of the largest cities, leaving only ruins of the old world.

Memory

The mystical and divine nature of the shock wave was also felt across the hearts and minds of the population, wiping much from the consciousness of the population. Widespread amnesia followed, with only vague recollections of history, science, and other disciplines retained. Basic skills survived, and contributed heavily to the success of the survivors to reestablish some level of society immediately following the event.

For many, personal identity remained in one form or another, from which survivors were able to rebuild a crude understanding. Clerics and those in service to the cause pieced together recollections of Erislan, Asurik, the war, and other sparse details. Who these people were, what these details meant, were all reinterpreted through the lens the survivors now possessed. Likewise, much of myth and lore were woven with history and even truths were unwittingly separated and relegated to fiction as the people sought to rediscover themselves.

Asurik

The Upheaval severely damaged the gods' connections to the world, very nearly severing them completely.

Asurik's energies were dispersed across the planet. A primary repository of this energy was the very council of necromancers that corrupted him in the first place. These individuals became liches of frightful power who have a driving need to reassemble Asurik's power. Today, they exist as a hive mind bound by the fragments of Asurik's consciousness each carries, not knowing they will eventually become Asurik once enough of his awareness is reassembled.

Asurik's power pooled in the dark corners of the shattered world and, after nearly five hundred years, have had a profound impact on the surrounding spaces. Darkwood is prevalent in areas that are, or once were, infused with the even the slight essence of the god. The warped and twisted creatures of the realm, monstrous insects and the like, were born and sustained thanks to his lingering power, a living legacy of the war the world forgot.

Neressa

As the final battle and final spell dispersed the essence of Asurik, Neressa herself was dispersed. Recently, however, Neressa has been able to manifest herself in the realm.

Thanks to the corruption by the necromancers, however, Neressa is corrupted much like Asurik, hers manifesting itself as a poison leaving her in excruciating pain. At times this subsides, especially as the powers of the necromancers weakens, or at least as long as local negative energy is at a low ebb. During these brief breaks, she seeks warriors and heroes like those of the guardian dragons and champions, though her ability to communicate is quite weak.

For the most part, she has continued to perform her original duties, answering the prayers of the dying and guiding, or attempting to guide, the newly dead into the afterlife. Shortly after the Upheaval she was only a voice, a mild comfort to those who accepted impending death or a ghastly call to the grave to those fearful of eternal repose. As she has strengthened, she has gained the ability to appear to the soon-to-die or those on the verge of death. As this is her duty, she is pulled to and compelled to interact with these confused souls, which she cannot deny. This has lead to her appearing at time she was under great duress, during which living mortals say they hear a screaming ghost; in several areas, this has come to herald death in the community and is a source of great fear. Sometimes, the despair is powerful enough she is able to appear to the living closest to the one she is present to meet; this has earned her the names of Angel of Death or Mercy, mortals who view her realizing she is present to take their loved one to the afterlife. Again, some blame the death on her appearance, not realizing she is appearing because their loved one is about to die regardless.

Normally, she can only appear to the dying or soon to die. Those destined to die soon may hear her speaking to them, attempting to calm them and prepare them for the afterlife. When she is near someone who is incredibly close to the dying soul, they may see her with their loved one though she is unable to speak to them.

Only on dire occasions, such as a great number of deaths, especially unnatural or untimely deaths, is she able to break that barrier and speak to mortals. This is often only through finding a mortal host whom to speak through, though the more dire the occasion the more likely she is able to manifest herself and interact with her chosen agents.

The Champions

Rhas'ne, Rheana's druid-lich emissary, disappeared in the cataclysmic explosion at the peak of the Seat of the Stars. It is believed he *could* survive, though he has yet to resurface in the current era.

The three mortal Champions were slain in the blast that shook the mountain. While the other two were forgotten to history, Erislan, the leading champion and rallying point of the populace, has attained deific worship in the current era. Snippets of memory, trace records, and lasting impressions

led early survivors to assume Erislan was the god protecting the folk instead of the champion of Rheana that he in reality was.

The Guardian Dragons

The White Dragon of the North and the Winds was forced from the mortal plane of existence. He now exists wholly on the Ethereal Plane, a "ghost". He was the originator of the Order of the Ebon Throne and has, for nearly five hundred years, served as the mysterious "Grandmaster" of the organization. The founding of Shadowglade beneath the obsidian spire is no coincidence; that structure exists in both realms and acts as a focal point for the dragon to interact with the living world. Over the last several centuries, however, the dragon has become more senile, partly due to fading consciousness and the amount of power he must expend to maintain a connection to the mortal realm. Today, the Order does all they can to maintain their link with the Grandmaster but that connection is slowly fading and the pronouncements and information from the great dragon are becoming more cryptic and unintelligible with each passing day.

The Blue Dragon of the South and the Seas lives in exile, his flesh warped and twisted by the dark powers of the mad Asurik and the necromancers. From the blue dragon sprang the ghouls of the realm, undead beasts and shells of former humans who crave the flesh of their own kind. The dragon sleeps in the deep swamps of the Marshlands, his own hunger for the flesh of his brethren unsated and unbearable.

The Red Dragon of the East and Flame is mostly lost to the modern era. Should legend and lore be believed, every seven years a pillar of flame heralds the awakening of a "demon", who could easily be the Red Dragon; he was known to live among the mortals of the land, polymorphed into a human form. Were he so affected in the Upheaval as the mortals were, he could believe himself to this day human, and occasionally lose control of the fiery draconic blood that sets him apart from the humans around him.

The Green Dragon of the Western Grove is a far different creature today; corrupted by death and decay, he has been transformed into a Black Dragon, a dracolich and harbinger of destruction. He is under the control of the necromancers of Soularus and serves them as the White Dragon guides the Order of the Ebon Throne.

The Necromancers

The necromancers of Westmin survived to found the city of Soularus and live in the current era under a tightly kept veil of secrecy and lore. Many tricks are used to conceal their presence from the rest of the world to the point that almost no one knows they even exist; they have been successful in keeping all but a handful unawares. Among their enemies are the various vampire lords in the Centerspine

rebelling against and repelling their former masters, and the Order of the Ebon Throne, who were prepared by the White Dragon for the powers and savagery the necromancers hold. Their city of Soularus remains concealed in the depths of the Great Salt Desert of the west, which was formed as a result of the Upheaval; they blame Rheana for its creation, her attempt to do away with the dark forces. From there, they plot the rebirth of Asurik and the downfall of the eastern nations and the mortals who inhabit them. The lich council who rules the city is also responsible for the birth of the “husks”, a new mortal race of clones, servitors lacking self-awareness or a “soul” and predisposed to magical power. The liches harvest this power to fuel their dark designs. In the current era, a unique husk appeared who apparently possessed a soul, or at least independent thought, and fled their clutches. It is believed this husk has found refuge with the Order of the Ebon Throne.

Terranos, the mechanically minded necromancer, was not present at the final battle. Whatever happened in his city fortress either destroyed or imprisoned him and his fellow necromancers cared little for him to begin with.

His ancestral home has become the epicenter of the Ghost Lands, a barren stretch of territory devoid of all life. Greywood is harvested at the edges of the land by the brave, but the intense negative energy in the area attracts all manner of restless spirits. Lore has come to believe the site is a gateway to the underworld, which is why there is so much supernatural activity around the lands.

Rheana

The ultimate fate of Rheana is unknown as anyone who would know of her has forgotten and is now long dead. It can be assumed that Rheana lives, as the world is maintained to this day. The natural order is confused, however (see ahead), which could mean that she was injured in some fashion thanks to the war.

Worship of Rheana has been increasing for the last hundred plus years as remnants of the old world are rediscovered. Those of the Frontier, especially the wyre, have maintained her worship down through the ages but only now are the followers understanding the rites and rituals that had been so ingrained in their forefathers that they could not completely forget them.

The Others

Vampyres, whose ancestors were the living slaves of the necromancers, are now lords in their own right. Many rule over pockets of isolated villages in the Centerspine mountain range. Their arrangements with the local populace keeps them well fed while they provide protection from the dark reach of Soularus, or at least that is the deal the vampire lords pay lip service to; some uphold their end of the bargain nobly, while others use the threat of darker forces than they to keep their population in line.

The Wyre exist now only as scattered tribes in the current era, living mostly in the Frontier. They too were affected by the Upheaval and the Great Loss and recall little to nothing of the world before, as do the other races. Unlike other races, however, they found themselves warped, transformed; they exist as a hybrid, part “human” and part “wolf.” With the changing of the moon they wax and wane between humanity and ferocity. They feel a primal pull toward Rheana, however, and worship various nature spirits, incarnations of natural deities, and aspects of Rheana herself. Many of their traditions likewise harken back to the pre-Upheaval eras, the wyre packs unknowingly keeping memories alive. They are insular and want little to do with the rest of the realm, however.

The Goylem disappeared during the war and no one even then had any idea of their numbers or intentions. Sightings of strange creatures began about 100 years after the cataclysm however that match the features of the Goylem. Due to their unnatural state of being it is entirely possible they survived and simply awoke well after the rest of the world. Today, small enclaves of reclusive people reside within each of the major cities; they are heavily scarred and often speak in unusual dialects though they refuse to interact with others, content to keep to themselves. It is very possible that these same enclaves are survivors of the war...

The Natural Order

The natural cycle of life and death has been disrupted as a result of the “death” of the god of the dead, the loss of Neressa as shepherd of the dead, and the apparent disconnect of the goddess of life from her world. Because of this, the anxious dead do not rest easy, while the content wait peacefully for the restoration of the natural order. This has lead to a significant number of hauntings and paranormal phenomena throughout the world.

None are a greater focal point than the Ghost Lands, a piece of territory nestled into the Centerspine mountains and the North Barrier Peaks. Here, unusual and spectral sightings have even the most ardent modern skeptics doubting their “science” and accepting the possibility that there is indeed life after death. This also means that instances of reincarnation, possession, and the awakening of ancestral memories is more prevalent than in other worlds.

In addition to a weak curtain between the living and the dead, the “veilmist” of lore is a very real, dangerous phenomena. What it is and what it wants is an unknown and it represents a break between the natural and unnatural. Exactly what it is none can say, but how it operates is clear to those who have studied it extensively. The veilmist is drawn to particular places or people, general sites of significant suffering, misery, danger, and dark powers; basically, true evil. The veilmist then simply extracts it from the living world, putting it into an imaginary pocket. What it does from there varies by the case. Some individuals with a hope at redemption may breach the barrier between worlds and return to the normal flow of life after confronting their own darkness and choosing another path. Others are held captive, instruments of the veilmist to draw in or eliminate other forces of evil, a sort of “it takes one to know one” philosophy. Finally, those beyond redemption and use are held until such time a champion arises who can eliminate the entity; the downside to this situation is that the champions are recognized by their potential, not always their ability. This has resulted in some entities creating a rein of terror even within the veil. Items, structures, and non-sentient forms of raw evil are likewise held until such time they could be destroyed; like the irredeemable, however, these items have the potential to claim more lives, souls, and others even as they are held prisoner.

Fractured Histories...

“History is written by the victor, studied by the loser, and forgotten by the young.” - Proverb

Much of the previous text contradicts material found in the **Introduction to Shadowglade** and **Player’s Guide to Shadowglade**. This is an intentional situation from an editorial stand point; within the setting however, this most certainly is not.

The world as it is understood by the characters inhabiting it is one borne of a fractured understanding of their history. It is assembled from what bits and pieces have been gleaned from the precious few memories their ancestors kept and shared and from the few hints of the past they have been able to determine.

This is much like our own world; we are guided by histories and texts we are never fully certain are accurate. We have the gist of the story, yes, but the specifics and details are something else. Once in a while they are wrong, through and through, but more often than not the seed of truth is there, but buried beneath layers of mis-translation, bends and twists of minor facts, etc. Much like how a game of telephone often results in an entirely different phrase at the end of the sequence than at the beginning, history is likewise altered ever so slightly with each retelling.

This can be a powerful tool in adventure writing and storytelling. Taking a mundane fact and twisting it ever so slightly, then doing so again and again, results in a “fact” that bares no resemblance to its original truth. A prominent example of this is seen in Erislan; a warrior and supporter of Rheana, those who survived the war and served alongside Erislan relayed their vague impressions after the Upheaval and describing Erislan as a fighter for the people, a hero and a savior, which eventually translated into a “god”.

Expanded Lore

As has been covered, the materials provided to players aren't wholly accurate. Some feature outright falsehoods, some feature slightly twisted truths. And some simply lack full disclosure. Ahead, we look a little further at some elements of the setting that players and characters are aware of but not fully informed of.

The Architects

The Architects received a lot of attention at the dawn of the new world, blamed for everything that happened and everything that was wrong with the reconstruction. Seekers of Memory were adamant that the Architects were responsible for holding everyone back and that the only way to prosper was to root them out and wipe them out.

Fortunately, or unfortunately as the case may be, the Seekers were wrong. Quite wrong, in fact. The Architects never existed. At the dawn of the reconstruction, survivors were desperate to believe in something, anything. Rallying against something, such as the Architects, gave the people that scapegoat to focus on. This sadly was to the detriment of the reconstruction effort.

It was because the Architects were built as an enemy that worship of Erislan caught on so well in the early years. Rather than prey upon people's fears as the Seekers did, early clerics of Erislan showed the survivors that they indeed had much to be grateful for. Tired of the fear and the hatemongering, public sentiment turned against the Seekers who disappeared for quite some time.

An important fact to know, however, is that the deception was not deliberate. The early Seekers genuinely believed they had been duped, and in many cases possessed "evidence" of the accused's actions. Much of this was borne of misunderstanding and enormous leaps in logic, but to each of the early seekers it was truth. From them, new followers simply carried on the crusade.

The Baronies, Baronic Wars

In 224 AE, the world rejoiced in the discovery of more cousins, survivors of the Upheaval nestled in the peaks of the Centerspine mountain range. While slow to open up, they did eventually share some of their history with the outside world. Eleven years later, the nation of Ire, and by extension the Church to the Lord of the Stars, declared the baronies a nest of evil and launched a bloody and destructive campaign against them. At the same time, civil war erupted in several of the small territories, leading to a number of deaths of noble lords and barons before the war ended. What sparked the war was never discussed and if the barons knew the reason for Ire's sudden aggression they have never shared.

While the world at large was left to wonder why the nation and church of Ire would take such drastic action, to the leaders of the Iren church it was a simple, black and white, matter: they discovered the secret of the baronies, that the lords of the land were vampyres, undead creatures they knew from their hidden lore to be evil, destructive, and the bane of humanity.

What the Iren clerics did not know was the story of these creatures. Refugees from the war between the necromancers and Rheana's followers, they and their ancestors fled to the baronies to escape the eradication pogroms the necromancers began after the vampyre rebellion. Many were simply unfortunate souls transformed by the plague the necromancers unleashed and, while blood-thirsty animals in the early stages of their infection, wanted justice for the crimes committed upon them and their families.

These exiled vampyres quickly rose to power in the backwater baronies. Cut off from much of the world even before the Upheaval, they felt safe in the mountainous region even as tales filtered through the trade routes about the war raging outside the borders. Many vampyres offered to help defend their new homes against the oncoming invasion, sharing their curse with volunteer forces to create an army of vampiric warriors capable of turning aside the armies that may find their way into the secluded region.

The armies never did arrive, however, their goal lying far beyond the Centerspine pass the vampyres called home. It was many years after that the Upheaval occurred, devastating the mountain range as much as the rest of the lands. Trapped in relatively impenetrable mountain passages, survivors were resigned to toughing it out in a very inhospitable climate. The vampyre survivors retained more of their memories than others, knowing enough about their nature, their enemies, and the need to defend the region at all costs. With this knowledge and power they took swift control of the region and quickly rebuilt the cities and villages, instructing heavier fortifications and draconian policies, cowing the populace with tales of horror and impending warfare. The end result was a highly suspicious population constantly on edge against impending invasion.

Down through the years, the vampyres created as warriors for the cause rebelled against their supposed masters, installing themselves as new lords. Several such provinces went through bloody periods as succession rapidly turned over newer and younger vampyre lords. The older vampyres, survivors of the war and the Upheaval, were slain at the hands of those they trusted or disappeared into the mountains to evade such treasonous actions. By the time the mainland made contact with the Baronies a little over two-hundred years after the Upheaval, only a few of the older lords remained. The younger lords were far too careless with their reign and powers, accidentally exposing themselves to visiting diplomats who were then slain,

reported as “accidents” to their home cities. It was Iren spies who made the discovery of such a young, careless lord and wasn’t silenced quickly enough.

Northport’s involvement in the war came about as a quest for knowledge and resources. Their own spies learned of Ire’s discovery and, in exchange for the ability to interrogate captured vampyres before their death and the rights to resources contained in the Baronies, agreed to outfit Ire’s soldiers against the vampyres and to help lead incursions to the settlements through the mountain range. Northport hoped to capture an elder vampyre with recollections of the world before and, hopefully, knowledge about the technology that was possessed by the forefathers of the land.

Eye of Erislan

The spell “eye of Erislan” doesn’t seem to be too much on the surface, an inferior version of “daylight” really. In actuality, the spell would be more accurately named “moonlight” and it has a longer history than any alive understand.

The spell is a hold over from pre-Upheaval eras, tied to clerics of Asurik. Effectively, the spell alerts the user to spirits of the departed within its sphere of illumination; in this, it can be used to reveal undead. Though it doesn’t detect undead in the way that the spell of the same name does, the caster becomes aware of any undead entity that enters the light. This was primarily used by clerics of Asurik to identify spirits of the departed that could not or would not proceed to the afterlife; after the breakdown of the processes of life and death during the war it became useful in defending locations against undead incursions, alerting the caster to undead within its light, and for making casters aware of creatures such as vampyres in their midst.

After the war and the Upheaval, the spell became associated with Erislan just as the symbology of the moon, watching over the population, had become so associated. It also gained a power over the wyre, who were normally bound to a human form but for the three nights of each full moon. As the light of the spell was effectively moonlight, a wyre within its most intense step, the first 30 feet, is forced to make a saving throw to resist or change form just as though they were exposed to the light of the full moon.

Some clerics today are aware of the unique properties of the spell. Ire clerics in particular were fond of the spell for quite some time and it was the casual use of the spell that revealed the lords of the Baronies to be vampiric creatures. Today, few outside of Ire are privileged enough to know the full story behind the spell and the beginnings of the war, though Iren clerics abroad are encouraged to use the spell frequently, especially in certain territories.

This encouragement has a lot to do with why the wyre of

the Frontier villages avoid clerics of Erislan; knowing they alone have the power to expose them, they want nothing to do with such clergy who could expose their hidden enclaves, subjecting them to the same assault the Barony vampyres endured.

Greywood

Greywood is a rather rare and expensive material in the realm of Shadowglade, valued because it is as light as wood and nearly as strong as stone thanks to a unique petrification. What the people of Shadowglade do not know, however, is the origin behind this material.

Greywood is created through significant infusions of negative energy into the earth, which is then absorbed by living, otherwise healthy, plant life. This poison slowly kills the plant, petrifying it from the inside out. This infusion occurs typically through the death of a strong negative energy charged creature, such as a necromancer, vampyre, or golem. The last vestiges of their unnatural energy permeate the ground creating the stands of greywood. Many stands of this undead wood were born over sites of horrific pre-Upheaval battles, though many of those today are either buried beneath hundreds of years of overgrowth and debris or were already scoured for their wares by early settlers.

The green marbling in the wood itself are traces of necromantic energy, the same energy which killed the tree. Characters who use greywood regularly, either as craftsmen or continuously as tools or weapons, run the risk of tainting themselves as well. As they become tainted, they suffer various maladies which should be disclosed upon attaining new levels, but the source should remain concealed; in nearly five hundred years the source of “mysterious illnesses” stemming from greywood use has yet to be discovered and will likely take a lot longer before it becomes commonly known that the material is responsible for its effects.

A character who has regularly been exposed to greywood for a fair amount of time (one level for player characters) acquires *greywood poisoning*, a slow wasting disease that eats away at a person. The worst part of the disease is how slowly affects the afflicted; it is barely noticeable at first until it has slowly consumed the individual, by which time even divine, magical intervention has little hope of help.

Greywood Poisoning

Type disease, contact; **Save** Fortitude DC 14

Onset 1/month; **Frequency** 1/month

Effect 1d2 Con damage; **Cure** 3 consecutive saves

Because its creation was sparked by the expenditure of negative energy, a greywood item gives off a faint necromancy aura. This has a variety of effects.

- The items have an aura of faint necromancy, but frequently read as “no aura” if a detection spell is used on a greywood item. It has a 50% chance each time an aura is detected as reading no aura.
- Mindless undead will not attack a character with a greywood item, as they can sense the necromantic energy and assume the wielder to be one of their kind.
- Items with a particularly strong vein of necromantic energy can be used to manipulate mindless undead; once per day, these items can be used to Command or Turn Undead. The Will save DC for this effect is 13. Characters who can already Command or Turn Undead receive a +2 circumstance bonus to their Will save's DC. Sentient undead can tell that the character is not like the living, while the oldest may have made the association between that feeling and the greywood.
- Characters using a greywood item as a divine focus receive a +2 circumstance bonus to their Channel Energy rolls if they are channeling negative energy or a -2 penalty if they are channeling positive energy. A few trinkets made with the material exist, constructed by petty practitioners using available resources, though none have fully made the connection. The particular items are known among practitioners of the dark arts to enhance their power, but the assumption is that it is the item itself, not the raw material, enhancing the abilities.

Northport Technology

Northport is a quiet, closed city that still manages status as one of the four major powers on the mainland of the world. This they have achieved through the use of technology, advanced sciences no one the world over has ever seen...

The key to Northport technology is that much of it is, or is derived from, pre-Upheaval discoveries. While stable magic had made many technological advancements unnecessary, the war with the necromancers had called into question the reliability and usefulness of magic. Thus, men of the day turned to their own ingenuity and quickly began building on the discoveries made up to that point.

By the end of the war advancements in the fields of metallurgy, firearms and black powder, and early steam engines had been produced. The idea was to construct larger siege weapons and devices capable of allowing mortals to wade unchallenged through the ranks of the dead. Some of the technology came from the necromancers themselves; the mad sorcerer Terranos had many of the same ideas and, prior to the war, had been the father of many of the root technologies the humans experimented with.

It turns out that while the technology developed was powerful, it was no where near reliable nor was it easily deployed. Only a handful of engines were ever built, which were used to ferry weapons forged at the same facilities to the front lines quickly. Firearms were quickly discarded for their lack of impact in fighting the armies of the dead, of which each individual could stand far more punishment than a mortal. Black powder, however, had received a lot of attention because of the wide variety of uses it held. Explosives, land mines, and propellents for larger devices such as early cannons proved valuable in turning the tide in a few battles, though the discoveries came too late to turn the tide of the war.

As that technology was rarely deployed, little of it exists in the ruins of the old world. These rare sites are of particular interest to Northport and the main reason for their Redguard officers to scour the lands. They are regularly in competition with the Order of the Ebon Throne to obtain these rare items while a handful manage to find their way into the collections of wealthy, and unwitting, collectors in Iber and Mir.

The Redguard keeps an especially close eye on Prisse's Folly; it is suspected that the explosion that sank the ruins and killed Prisse may have stemmed from underground caches of black powder or other technological wonders enacted as a security system. They have teams leading expeditions through the ruins each year and while they find some trinkets, no major breakthroughs have been made.

The Veilmist

The Veilmist is a natural, or unnatural, phenomena, discussed in the **Introduction to Shadowglade**.

The phenomenon is not-so-casually discussed among the townsfolk of the lowlands and known as the “veilmist”. It is believed that this particular type of fog isn’t really fog or mist at all, but a curtain between this world and another. Those who have encountered it, or believe they have encountered it, report an almost physical oppression within the mists, as well as overwhelming feelings of dread or strangeness.

Many reports of the phenomena come second-hand, often a tragic event being linked to an immediately prior storm or a foggy evening. Many are just as easily coincidence; a brutal murder that happens to occur on the eve of a fog, a tragic accident on a misty country road. According to the bards and sages wise in the lore of this strange occurrence, some are not; some events bear unmistakable marks of prior instances creating a chain of commonality that couldn’t possibly exist. Most of these are strings of murders decades apart yet bearing the exact same evidence, “accidents” that occur with alarming regularity on the anniversary of a similar tragic event.

It can be argued that the event occurs, or should occur, elsewhere in the realm, but the southern fishing cities and outlying islands claim a certain monopoly on these legends. It is just as well, for if they are to be believed, none would willingly encounter such a dark and forboding thing.

The Veilmist is something of an ethereal prison. Unlike its counterpart in other lore, the veilmist is more selective of who and what it takes from the world. Only the unjust, wicked, and truly dark and depraved are drawn into it, where they remain for centuries at a time. Innocents are rarely drawn into the confines of darkness, and no one is made to suffer within. Those taken are simply, and without malice, extracted from the world.

As a natural or semi-natural phenomena, it is not a perfect prison however. During certain events or when specific conditions are met, the veil can part and release such souls back into the world, even if only for a short time. Specific dates or anniversaries, moments in time that mirror prior events, and other truly dark souls can open this door. Within the Veilmist, there are no “other lands”. Those trapped within simply wander. For some, time has stood still; from the point that they are taken by the mists to the point that they reenter the world centuries may have passed, but they remain the same as the day they disappeared.

The time away for all souls departed does little for their disposition. Their crimes are dark and heinous enough to have the very natural forces of the world remove them, and almost none are repentant. Those aware of their

imprisonment relish the opportunity to escape, if only for hours or days at a time, while those caught unawares simply go about their daily, sometimes grisly, routines.

The veilmist is not always understood. At times, it appears random in when and where it deposits released denizens, while at others it has all too clear of a plan.

Confluences will sometimes bring those who tread a dark path to the veilmist and an encounter with one of its prisoners. Much like the tale of the miser visited by spirits of the departed, denizens of the veilmist will appear to those with a sliver of goodness left in them to dissuade them from the path they are on. They are presented with prisoners whose lives mirror those of their own, who could be them but for subtle differences or singular choices. Sometimes this works, and with the rising sun and retreating mists the individual has sworn a new life. Other times, there is no change and the veilmist will claim a new soul.

Many times, however, vicious souls are unceremoniously deposited upon the mortal realm in the dead of night. Some believe the veil parts when a worthy and virtuous soul is found, that a champion of good and light may be able to destroy a significant evil from within its confines. Others believe some forces are simply so strong that the veil cannot always hold them. While they are reclaimed eventually, the veil may have to simply release the “pressure” from time to time, venting souls as it mends its wounds.

Using the Veilmist

Because of its nature, it is incredibly easy to use, and abuse, the veilmist.

At its heart is its simplicity. Want an encounter? The mists roll in, the bad guy walks out, everyone fights. Want a location, a dark temple to appear out of nowhere? On the eve of the full moon, the mists part and suddenly there is a temple. The downside to this is players will come to expect things. As is the problem with all tricks, use of a technique too often can lead to a lack of surprise from players, and ultimately we want to keep the players guessing. Ahead are some common types of encounters with the veilmist, as well as some sample encounters to regale your party with.

• Malicious Figures

Malicious figures feature prominently in the array of menaces kept at bay by the veilmist. Mass murderers, serial killers, brutal bandits, and the like are often extricated by the mists and held, offering a sort of cosmic justice.

These figures are kept under supernatural lock and key by the forces responsible for the abduction and used to its benefit. Frequently the same figure is used to punish those who follow in their footsteps or offer a glimpse of redemption for such a person who can renounce their ways. Other times, however, these figures break free of

the cosmic cuffs and return to wreak havoc on a world that has likely forgotten them.

The first instance linking the veilmist and dark intentions came with the rise of piracy on the open waters. The early villages sought to protect themselves from the forces of nature only and worked to ally themselves with others who shared their plight; enterprising, and ill intentioned, sailors quickly learned to prey upon this weakness. Among the early pirates, the man known only as Captain "Gully" Culver was the most widely feared. Unlike other pirates who raided other villages' vessels for supplies and food stores they couldn't obtain on their own, Culver seemed to hunt for the sheer thrill of it. Upon overtaking a vessel, Culver would loot the hold of whatever property the vessel carried, than have every man tied to the deck, after which the vessel was set alight. Culver's ship would pull away far enough so that the mad captain could watch from the bow of his own vessel as his victims were burned alive aboard the failing, burning vessel. Rarely someone would survive the initial assault to be found among the debris by other, passing ships. Their last words were often warnings of Culver's ship and colors, hoping to spare their rescuers the fate of their original ship. Often, the demonic laughter of the mad captain was the last sound those poor souls heard, a sound that maddened survivors in their final agonizing hours.

After several years of his high seas reign of terror, Culver and his vessel are said to have disappeared from the face of the world. His last sighting was just before a storm rolled in over the seas; Culver had set his sights on a fishing ship who had found substantial schools and fishing grounds some great distance from shore. The captain of the vessel was well aware of the impending storm and of Culver's blood lust and, at the first signs of a second ship, began a swift retreat to shore. Culver whipped his men into action, attempting to outrun the storm and the small fishing ship. Though the storm had slowly made its way inland up to this point in the day, the black clouds seemed to join the race and with them a thick, rolling, roiling bank of fog, rising as a curtain just above the water. Though the crew of the small vessel was panicked, they kept a close eye on the vessel in pursuit as the winds rose and the fog engulfed the vessel. By the time the rain began and lightning lit the sky, Culver's ship was no longer visible in the thick fog that seemed to lap at the aft of the ship. Deckhands say that in the first couple of strikes of lightning, the silhouette of the Captain's ship could be seen, but after that there was nothing.

Back ashore, tales spread of the small fishing boat's near escape, and the deckhands repeated their own stories over many pints at local pubs. Thanks to these tales, many believed Culver's vessel struck by lightning, ironically suffering the same fate he had forced upon so many other innocent seafarers. No debris washed ashore following the storm, however, and boats out on the waters

in the following days made no reports of floating wrecks, debris, or any other sign of Culver's ship.

More than a year later, however, it was feared Culver had returned. Scorched debris had washed ashore, a thing that often happened as Culver prowled the open lanes. It was realized, however, a storm had passed the night before; a small one, but a storm none the less. As more debris washed up, the populace was further relieved to find the markings and signs of the vessel apparently destroyed belonged to a petty pirate and thief, not a hardworking fisherman or trader. Little more thought was given on the matter, until over the next couple of years similar wrecks were discovered, all appearing in the wake of short lived storms, and all belonging to notorious, if petty, pirates and oceangoing criminals.

The portion of the lore that cemented the correlation of crime and punishment came after the destruction of a particularly evil ship known as the Iron Fin, a slave trading vessel. Though much of society found the practice abhorrent and outlawed it, those with money could purchase nearly anything they desired. In this particular case, the fledging trade city of Mir was under construction and a number of Iberian lords who were investing in the territory required a "cheap, hardworking labor force, of whom no questions would be asked", whose acquisition they contracted out. The Fin carried a dozen crew and nearly a hundred men and women, all taken from island settlements and coastal towns along the Midlands. While considered sketchy and unreliable, the following was learned through the testimony of survivors, all would-be slaves: a day out from Mir, a freak storm struck and enveloped the vessel in a now legendary bank of thick, roiling fog. From out of the mists came the shadowy form of another vessel and without warning the Iron Fin was boarded. Its crew were quickly and easily overtaken and lashed to the ship's deck, while the cargo, the slaves, were hastily brought aboard the assaulting ship. Those with enough wits about them tried to catch glimpses of their rescuers, but no features could be seen in the dark and fog. They were rushed into the cargo hold like so much product, leading many to fear they had traded one slaver for another. Through cracks in the aged wood, some tried to see more of the Iron Fin; as their new vessel pulled away the Fin was last seen burning, the screams of its crew interwoven with the most hideous laughter anyone had heard in their life. This was the last clear recollection any of them had.

Later, the would-be slaves were found with the dawning sun and the retreating mists. They had been marooned along a trade route with nothing but scorched timbers to keep them afloat. They shared their tale with the rescuing crew. The superstitious among the ship believed the tale, while many others wrote off the amazing claims, citing the wreckage and storm as proof of the Iron Fin's destruction, with extreme dehydration and malnourishment accounting

for delusions and the survivors' claims. None could fully account for the only survivors being captured folk however; it was argued the crew must have been washed overboard during the storm while they were top deck, the captives in the hold protected from the worst ravages of the storm.

Recorders of lore who tracked such tales found it all quite interesting, however, and eagerly added the yarn to their growing collection concerning this enigma, now commonly called the "veilmist". From here, several so-called experts on the phenomena extrapolated from this and other lore; some believed the veilmists played some part in turning the darkest of hearts into a force of justice, poetic as it might be. They cite the slaying of only the wicked and the (usual) sparing of the innocent. Others called it a cruel imprisonment for the cruelest of souls, forever bound to carry out their despicable lives over and over again, doomed to fade with the rising sun, able only to strike when the mercurial whims of whatever force that imprisons them allows it. Still others call it an act of cosmic balance, removing singularly evil souls from the world, with the possibility that others following down the same path might learn from their predecessor's mistakes or suffer for them. No consensus was reached then, and none certainly exists now, especially in light of later encounters.

• Benign Figures

Benign figures appear through the veilmist as well. Unlike the malicious figures discussed above, why these folks appear, and by extension why they would have been taken, is unknown.

A tale exists of a being known only as the Wanderer who appears with the veilmists inland during late Sommerfall evenings. This wanderer is a young woman, not more than twenty years of age, who is encountered alone along the side of the road, injured; she walks with a limp, a twisted ankle. Her first recorded appearance was in 382 AE. Locals in the area claim earlier sightings, but these predate the recorded event by only a couple of years.

All tales describe this poor woman's predicament as she relays it to other travelers; she was to meet her love in a nearby meadow that afternoon for a romantic dinner. Upon arriving, her love was nowhere to be found, though she worried only slightly at first. As the sun began to set, however, dread had taken hold and she mounted her horse and set off back towards the nearby town. In the dark her horse was spooked and threw her; her ankle twisted as she fell from the saddle. The animal bolted into the dark, leaving her near the road, which is where she is often found walking by other travelers.

She often approaches road-side camps as well, asking to join the campfire and sharing the same tale. She goes

on to explain that she lives with her father, whose cabin is near by, not too far away, and would dearly appreciate any aid she could get in returning home for the evening so her father doesn't worry.

Conditions and agreeability of those she encounters colors further interactions, though she behaves as a young woman in such a situation would; those who agree to help her cause her to be greatly elated, while those who insist on waiting until the morning or until conditions improve are appreciated though the young woman is obviously distressed. Indifferent travelers are met with similar indifference and the young woman will politely excuse herself and vanish into the mists. Points of difference exist for two sorts, those who are rude or violent, but that will be discussed shortly. Those who offer to help though not immediately, such as the following morning or after the conditions have improved, will find the young woman has eventually disappeared with the fog. Many unaware of the situation assume she left in the night, while those who lose sight of her as the mists relent in the evening are left uncertain. Those who offer to take her straight away will find that, upon approaching the crest of a nearby hill, just over which her father purportedly lives, she has disappeared.

When reports of this young woman first began to surface, her father was indeed alive and lived just over the hill; a hundred plus years later, however, the young woman still appears while her father is long since dead and their home barely a foundation among woodland debris if anything even remains.

It was mentioned above that a special treatment of those who were rude or imposed violence is reported. For those simply rude, they often find their way on the trail maligned, often in proportion to their insult. Mildly rude folk report a wide variety of discomforts, such a pebble in their shoe they cannot get rid of, leaks in canteens or holes in pouches through which food or minor valuables become lost. Those who invoke violence, however, have that violence revisited upon them tenfold it is said; reports of berserk animals, even tame animals such as horses, assaulting these travelers have been recorded. Freak fires, accidental stabbings or fatal injuries, and any number of similarly violent reactions are not unheard of. This traveler is one of the veilmist manifestations that puzzles those who record its lore. By the time these bards learned of the tale of the traveler, the girl's father had already passed, leaving seekers of lore and knowledge only the nearby townsfolk to interview. It was learned from these folk that the young woman was not in life wicked or evil, nor was her father. The history of her lover is unknown, save that in the aftermath of her disappearance he was unseen as well. Some speculate that the young girl is trapped, seeking some kind of closure; what that is, none are certain. Still, several hold to their initial

impressions of the veilmist and insist that somewhere in the lost annals of history there is some dark fate or deed tied to the soul of that young girl, some bit of history that brings the whole story together. What that is, however, none today have the slightest idea.

• Life Altering Encounters

Entities referred to as the “Shadows” are another, unique, manifestation of the veilmists. How often they occur none can say with any reliability, especially considering only a handful of tales about it exists. Many don’t even believe these “Shadows” to be related to the veilmist, and even some ardent lore keepers of the ‘mists discount these tales as drunken delusions.

Quite simply, “The Shadows” appear to be an alternate realm, very much like our own but with unsettling differences. It is only ever encountered in isolated pockets no larger than a small village, more likely single estates or isolated city blocks. It appears drab and muted in color, both indoors and out, and a mist pervades all corners and structures in this other-realm.

The people of this realm are likewise different; equally drab, muted and colorless, with pale skin and a cold touch. Their eyes seem especially unsettling to those who have witnessed them, cold and lifeless, more dark and black than white.

While in the realm, the few visitors who have encountered it reported nearly complete acceptance of everything they saw and felt, much like a dream. It is only after leaving the state that the feelings of dread, terror, and unevenness dawn upon them. Those who have encountered these Shadows are very few; why this is, none can say though a possibility may be gleaned from the folks who have had the experiences and lived to tell the tale.

Those interviewed by researchers, bards, and sages in the aftermath of their experiences are changed men and women. Before their experience, they were often cruel, petty, hardened, and generally unpleasant people who had a reasonable sphere of influence on the world around them. After their experiences, they were described by others in nearly opposite terms: kind, generous, caring, and a joy of the community. Their tales have much to do with their change of heart.

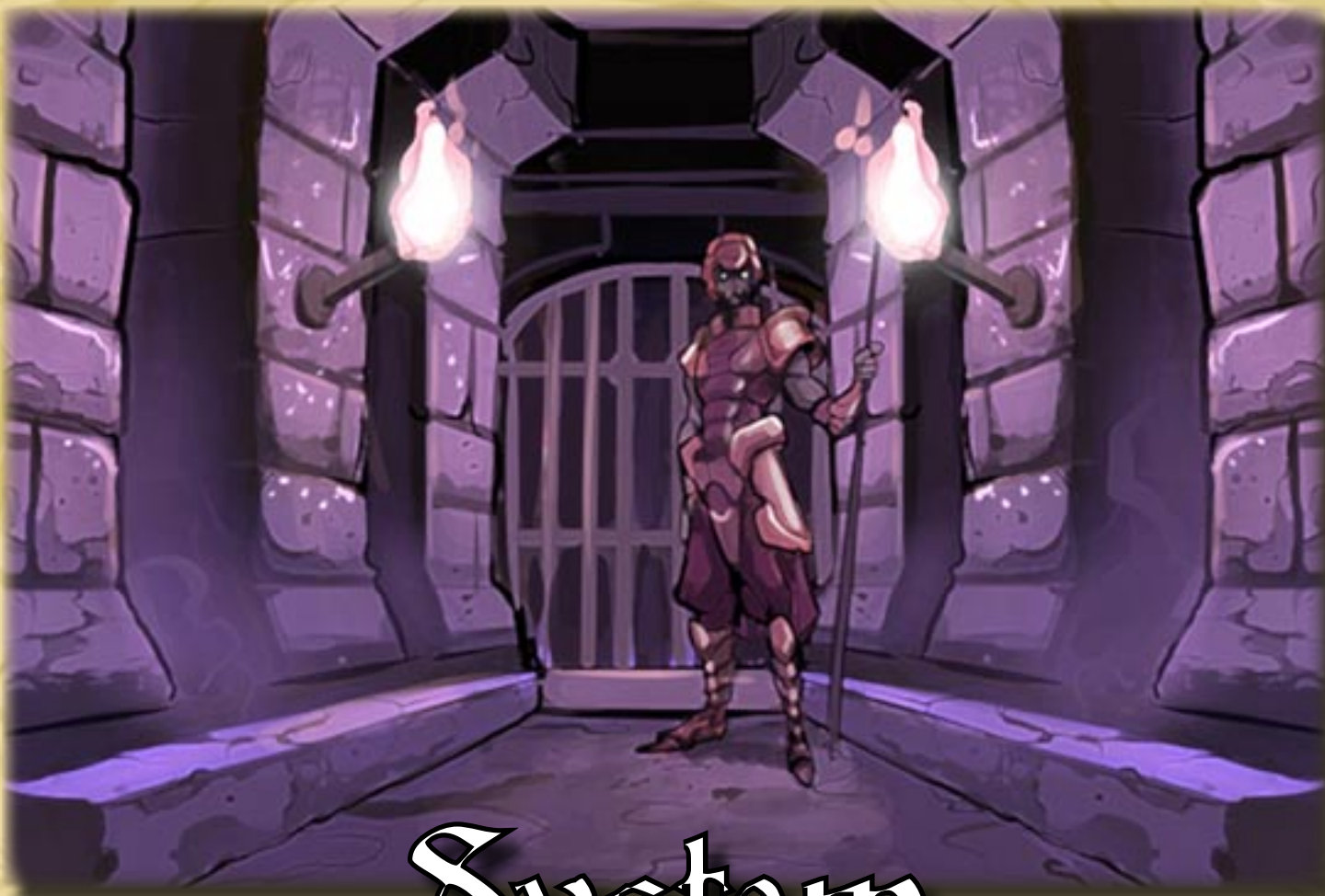
Many begin well into the life of the subject, a life nearly rotten to the core. An evening that has become typical of veilmist encounters descends upon them and they find themselves in a place not quite their home, not quite what they were expecting. Normal encounters with everyday folk, tenets or landlords, family, common merchants and acquaintances, are all... “off”. Who takes center stage in this morality play varies from person to person, but it often includes someone close to the person, currently

living or even dead. This central figure guides the subject through a harrowing version of their daily life, in some cases presenting worst case scenarios of daily life, in other showing the subject a distorted view of themselves, possibly representative of how others view them. These experiences are violent, frightening, and revelatory for the subject. It typically concludes with a final violent confrontation with the residents of this shadow realm, echoes of those in the subject’s normal life, plunging the subject into the depths of terror and despair.

Those who tell their tales with the bards and sages tracking these occurrences manage to flee the scene of the encounter, often surviving a deadly event such as a raging inferno, weapon-wielding mob, and other maladies. Some claim to bear scars of the events, marks from weapons and flame. Upon escaping this other-realm and realizing the nature of their encounter, they vowed to turn over a new leaf, righting wrongs perceived in the shadow realm and changing their life so as not to anger those they really know as the shadow’s denizens were so angered.

Dissenters and those who discount these tales claim common drunkenness for the experience. Indeed, the hazy memories, distorted view of their common world, moralistic angle and deep remorse are all common symptoms of drunken remorse, the weight of one’s own guilt summoning imaginary, personal demons to torment them.

Supporters, however, point to time lines constructed, wherein the subject was no where to be found during the duration of their experience. They also cite the mysterious disappearances of other miserly and miserable folk who are otherwise counted among so many disappearances of unliked, unwanted individuals. Additionally, they cite the universal transformation of the folk whose tales are recorded, who have achieved a complete change in their life to become better people and atone for their earlier ways; common, drunken remorse hardly ever results in such drastic, permanent changes to one’s life and more often than not leads to a vomit-covered death in a back alley somewhere.



System

New Features

Game designers and game masters alike share one, common, idea: system matters. This means that the game system you are designing or playing influences what your players will do. The rules, by virtue of what they cover and detail, will tell players what is valued and therefore what they should pursue. Change that system and potentially everything changes.

Playing in a unique setting then requires some unique approaches to game play. A setting such as Shadowglade, with darker horror and suspense elements and an air of uncertainty, plays poorly in the standard OGL system which is chalk full of strong heroes, grand powers, and near certainty in the rightness of the cause. To achieve the atmosphere we want then, we need to make some alterations to the system. Playing in a game where the world conspires against you requires the system to likewise conspire against you, at least more frequently than normal.

Some of this is already done; players will have noted the 10th level cap and a nearly complete ban on spell casting classes as featured in the **Shadowglade Player's Guide (SPG)**. Without access to higher powers and direct magic, players *feel* less powerful, and it generally restricts player access to spells and abilities that allow simple, direct removal of an obstacle instead of making them face it head on or find a way around it.

Beyond this, some extra rules from other sources have been included and expanded here for you as game master to challenge your party even more. These include: alternate options on how to grow characters and campaigns even with our 10-level cap; simple rules to incorporate interesting fear effects in the campaign; an overview of magic in the realm and a host of new spells appropriate for the campaign or worlds beyond; an expanded look at sanity, its effects, and alternate options to include in the campaign world; a closer look at skills and how one might use them differently or more effectively for Shadowglade; and a finally a mechanical overview of constructing your own traits and defects appropriate for this setting and many others!

Shadowglade, E10

Potentially the biggest change to a Shadowglade campaign isn't one of theme, as you can find similar themes in many systems and many worlds. Shadowglade, unlike other settings, takes a lot of the system and throws it out the window. Contrary to popular belief, and knee-jerk reaction, this is actually for the better.

The full mechanics of the E10 system are discussed in the **Shadowglade Player's Guide**, but to refresh Shadowglade is a campaign setting where advancement stops at 10th level, not 20th. This is done here for a number of reasons, some of which wouldn't work well outside of the setting. Many of those reasons, and ways to exploit them for the benefit of the campaign, are discussed here. For full information about how exactly this is implemented check out the section *Shadowglade, E10* in the **Shadowglade Player's Guide**.

What is E10? EX?

E10 is simply a shorthand for the level 10 cap, "Epic 10". The term "EX" is used in some places because 10 isn't the only level cap folks use; some use a 6th level cap, stopping players just as they hit the heroic tier, and some use an 8th level cap, stopping midway through the heroic tier.

Shadowglade chooses to use 10th level as its cap for several reasons. First, the other lower-cap systems were tried and true under the original OGL 3.5 system, wherein there were some stark differences between the classes at higher levels; the EX variants kept players closer to the same power level. Pathfinder helps balance out a lot of those concerns, meaning characters are closer to each other in terms of effectiveness longer; its less likely one character will outshine the others.

Second, Pathfinder already uses level 10 as a mid-way point for many classes. Level 10 is typically the first chance a character has to acquire something that is considered "advanced" for their class. By taking it up to 10th level, players get the chance to get something a bit more powerful, functionally acting as a capstone ability for this campaign, while at the same time barring them from what would otherwise be destabilizing magics and powers that don't mesh well with the setting.

Addition to the Atmosphere

In Shadowglade, characters aren't necessarily stars of their own epic ballads; they are relatively normal people caught up in plots and situations larger than themselves but not always world-spanning or earth shattering. This is frequently covered in the setting material and, hopefully, players come to the realization on their own. Some won't, however, for which the concept of the 10 level cap should help drive the idea home; if they realize level 10 characters won't stand toe to toe with demons, they won't expect those sorts of stories.

By capping the level at 10, you also ensure that there will almost always be things larger than the characters, things worthy of fear and dread. As the setting plays on the unknown, unknowable, and sometimes the overwhelming, the E10 level cap means players will recognize this mechanically if they don't recognize it otherwise in character.

Better Encounters

Many Game Masters have been in the same place before; an elaborate NPC "boss", a thoughtful setup, and a lot of dedication to setting the atmosphere and attitude of the scene just right... only to have the players bash in and rush the enemy, overwhelming it with sheer numbers, lucky rolls, and brute force. An EX game makes these sorts of outcomes much less likely.

Characters in an EX campaign aren't able, and aren't expected, to go up against high CR creatures and encounters in the same fashion as other campaigns. Once a character has reached their cap they can earn new feats, and thereby new options, but they don't have the same access to resources, the linear growth of hit points, attacks and bonuses, and spells that occurs in the standard OGL leveling up process. Thus, high CR challenges, such as perhaps the aforementioned perfectly positioned NPC, become more puzzles to be solved and challenges to overcome, not just meat bags to beat into the ground.

Reduced Prep Work

Once you start reaching higher and higher levels, it becomes daunting to stat out NPC characters to provide suitable threats to the party. It also becomes challenging to take into account all of the player's options, as well as all of the standard effects that they have and makes leveling up players more difficult, as with each level they should have upwards spiraling hordes of loot and treasure. EX campaigns allow the game master, and players, to know more or less what the hard limits are and plan for them.

The timetable plays a lot into this. EX campaigns can play fast or slow as the GM and players prefer, but in general the players won't gain levels and power so fast that they outclass lower-level threats on an almost daily basis. GMs can stat out a series of NPCs and have a good idea where

their player's direction will take them. It becomes possible to reuse characters and character builds more frequently; a local bandit who menaced the area village when the game started easily becomes a team of bandits when the players reach an appropriate level, while a well stated NPC used at the start of the game can return time and again with little or no change by the GM to keep pace with the party. No need to level it up three times when you can attach three feats and have it be right on par for the group.

Speed of Play

In general, most players know the lower levels like the back of their hand; many don't break too far past level 5 and thus know those options almost without thinking about them. Likewise, at these lower levels there are just fewer options to worry about when it comes to an optimal decision as you play. As a result, sessions will wind up accomplishing more in less time! Players will know instinctively what to do, there will be fewer stops to look something up in the books, and in general the flow will be smoother and easier.

In combination with the above (Reduced Prep), most game masters are far more familiar with the tactics and threats posed by lower level creatures making on-the-fly encounters, off the cuff DC calculation, and more behind the screen decisions far easier. Raw knowledge of the material coupled with understanding your players tactics and options means you can easily run something challenging without too much thought.

Variant Rewards

Leveling in the campaign, if following the suggestions laid out in the **Shadowglade Player's Guide**, can be slow. While this is intended, it may be too slow for some players. Rather than speed up the whole of play, occasional rewards may be more appropriate; this allows you to keep the desired pace while allowing players to still feel like they are accomplishing something and growing as characters.

Traits (Optional Rules)

Outside of feats, which can create a power-creep similar to gaining levels, variant rewards are possible. These will more often be story-focused and less mechanically minded, but offer a mechanical boost of some sort.

First off are additional traits. These are covered in the **SPG** as well, while Trait Construction is discussed here in the **SGMG**. Traits are small mechanical boosts, often tightly tied to the setting or campaign. Awarding new traits is a small mechanical way to reward players without the same power creep of feats, and it can be done more frequently. Trait construction can also lend a hand for another option. "Favors" is a trait option discussed ahead which includes being able to call in favors from NPCs. Typically these traits allow for a regular service, such as free room & board, moving unwanted treasure to collectors for a better return,

helping the party out of relatively minor legal scrapes, etc. They'll also include one-shot bonuses, such as weighing in on an interrogation or questioning, procuring a more specific item, etc.

Adding such NPCs with a regular service as a reward or "restocking" NPCs with whom players have already used their one-shot effect is another route to offer rewards. These aren't tied tightly to the character and allow for potential one-shot bonuses that can swing a story line in one direction without creating a power imbalance or overload on a regular basis. It also fleshes out the world more, giving players new characters to interact with and creating more of a connection to these people; "it's not just an NPC, it's *my* character's contact."

Defects (Optional Rules)

In a similar vein to traits are defects, likewise discussed in the **SPG** and their construction here in the **SGMG**. A simple reward would be to remove a defect from a character, relieving the burden placed on them and the associated features. The character experiences better outcomes without actually tipping the power and options higher.

Post 10th Level Rewards (Optional Rules)

The **SPG** also covers rewards and advancements post 10th level. Generally, the idea is that every so often, say eight CR appropriate encounters or 20,000 XP gained, the character is able to obtain a new feat.

As a trait is widely valued as worth half of a feat, new traits can be awarded a bit more frequently as post 10th-level options for every four CR appropriate encounters, or 10,000 XP.

Story-based Advancement (Optional Rules)

At times, the slow pace of a Shadowglade campaign, coupled with the level cap, can leave some players not feeling rewarded adequately. They spend so much time at one level and then run out of levels, rewards, so quickly. Likewise, some players find the concept of leveling jarring; kill enough bad guys and suddenly you know more about history? Doesn't quite make sense.

One way around this feeling is to institute smaller rewards as the group plays along. At various points between each level, allow the players to select one facet of the next level and award that facet early. Once they reach their new level they earn the other features as appropriate. Some sample facets include:

- Hit Points
- Skill Points
- BAB Increase
- Save Bonuses
- One Class Feature
- Level-based Feat

Now the trick to these is to make this relevant to the story. In a combat-intensive session where the character struck several solid blows, they could be rewarded with their next level's base attack bonus. If they took quite the beating, their next level's hit points may be an appropriate reward. A research intensive session could award the next level's skill points or an appropriate class feature.

For the purposes of each of these rewards the character is considered the next higher level. In the case of skill points, they can allot the points as though they were one level higher, allowing them to put ranks in skills that are already maxed out. For hit points, they are considered one hit die higher than their level indicates. This applies only for features that are so earned; remember, the character earns these aspects early, not the full level. Effects that look at character level see the character as the last full level the character obtained.

To evenly spread these benefits out, reward a benefit at each of the 20% marks between levels. For example, award the extra hit die after the first 20% of experience for the level has been earned, the skills as 40% of the experience has been earned, base attack bonus at 60% of the experience earned and so on.

Characters in Shadowglade

As Shadowglade is an original realm with some different features as noted earlier, the traditional status of characters in the realm isn't always applicable.

Races

Races are an important part of maintaining the isolated feel of Shadowglade. Unlike other settings which have a diverse cast of races ranging from standard fantasy fare to far flung experimental concepts, Shadowglade is a human-centric world, and this is one aspect where there are no real hidden clauses. Player appropriate races for supernatural species, such as werewolves and vampires, have been developed but these creatures at almost all times look and act human and, in several cases, were once completely human themselves.

Outside of the supernatural variations, the most appropriate "races" are those found in the **Shadowglade Player's Guide**; the Cityfolk, Grassfolk, Normal Folk, and Shortfellows. Other core races can be adapted should a player truly desire; for example, a dwarf might be a "Mountainfolk" from the slopes and mines of Northport. The region doesn't consist exclusively of these people, but they are a common enough sight.

Rarely should you allow an outside race from third-party materials. If you do choose to use such a race, follow the same example set forth in the Player's Guide; adapt the race so that it is human, found in a particular environment of the realm.

Classes

Classes in the realm are discussed at length in the Shadowglade Player's Guide, save two: the sorcerer and the wizard. Of the core classes, these two are the only two completely left out of discussion because, according to the average citizen, they do not exist.

Sorcerer

Sorcerers can and do exist in the realm of Shadowglade despite what the Player's Guide states. The sorcerer is not intended for common player use, however. These characters are most frequently NPC characters, sometimes enemies though sometimes innocents. When discovered, they are commonly assaulted or hunted by their fellow villagers, which is where the party can come in. Using their own judgement, they can agree that the purported sorcerer is indeed a threat or they could decide such a character is indeed innocent. If a party keeps to the attitudes of the world, however, this should be a difficult conclusion to reach.

Beyond simply the raw class and flavor associated with it, you can re-purpose the sorcerer class to help inject a bit more mystery into the setting. A legendary thief, for example, could easily have a level of sorcerer with a spell selection that allows him or her to pull off amazing thefts undreamt of in the land. Flavor wise, the character should still be a full rogue in these cases, the mechanical level of sorcerer just granting the access to the unusual abilities. Likewise, a player with an exceptional character concept that bends, not breaks, the conventions of the realm can be allowed to take a level or two in sorcerer with a very narrow spell selection based on the concept. Keep to spells that adhere to the ideas of magic in the setting (see *Magic in Shadowglade, ahead*) while achieving the desired results from the character concept.

Wizard

Wizards in Shadowglade really do end up quite simple: they simply do not exist. This isn't a trick nor misdirection, as the Player's Guide does discount both classes, but a practical extension of the setting: no one really knows anything about magic. As a result of that, no one can be taught magic. Because wizards are trained in the magical arts, it isn't something that necessarily comes naturally, people cannot be trained if the materials don't exist to train them.

Like the discussion above, however, a level of "wizard" can be granted to someone with a mechanically sound concept provided the flavor agrees with the rest of the world: the character is not, actually, magical but rather well trained in various arts and excellent at the art of deception.

Now, that said, as a game master you are free to use whatever tools you have at your disposal. In regard to wizard NPCs, feel free to use the build to construct spell casters of great power and depth. Bear in mind these characters should still be presented as sorcerers or spontaneous casters such that players aren't tempted to take materials from a slain wizard character and learn magic themselves.

Arcane spell casters as PCs have a great potential to impact the campaign. Often fugitives, on the run or in hiding, they are also feared and misunderstood. Some are rightly pursued, the result of using their powers and abilities for personal gain at the expense of other citizens. Some are accidental criminals, their powers manifesting suddenly through stress and injuring another, or worse. Other arcane casters are feared because they were discovered and *might* be a threat, but are pursued with the same zeal. Campaigns including arcane spell casters should be prepared for a life being pursued, carrying out covert actions, and keeping a low profile.

Unique Class Features

Several classes have unique features about them that have an almost magical quality, or are indeed magical. As Shadowglade doesn't include magic at a mundane level, a small, though important, bit of re-flavoring needs to occur. With the exception of the divine classes and the sorcerer and wizard classes, any other class features that are magical, or at least very close to magical, need a more mundane rationalization.

Bards, for example, aren't "magical", but they are expert ventriloquists and masters of the stage, utilizing a number of small gadgets and common items to produce amazing and eerie effects.

The specifics are left up to GMs and players to tackle, as every group has different ideas about what might be cool or work with someone's back story. These abilities function mechanically as normal, so there's no balance mix-ups, but the re-flavoring is important to maintaining the mind set and helping everyone at the table better see what it is that's happening.

Magical Equipment

Most "magical" equipment in the setting functions like the unique class features discussed above; they function mechanically as they always do, but they are slightly re-flavored to better fit with the expectations of the world at large.

A simple example would be a bracer that held an "infinite" number of blades. As in most battles, the true need for "infinite" is nearly nonexistent. The important aspects of the item are simply the character always has access to throwing daggers. A simple re-flavoring of the item would say it's rigged to drop a knife into the wearer's hand with a simple, minor gesture. At the end or beginning of a day, as the rest of the party might be meditating, praying, or preparing for the day themselves, the wearer simply restocks the bracers from a seemingly endless supply of knives. And where do these knives come from? They could be picked up after they were used, pulled from the bodies of slain enemies, pilfered from enemy loot and gear etc. The function then remains the same, but the flavoring of the item, how it "works" in the setting, is more in line with the rest of the world.

Alignment

Alignment is fully discussed in the Shadowglade Player's Guide. In general, players should refrain from an "evil" branch of the alignment tree unless the whole of the campaign is predicated on one of the darker, frequently supernatural, aspects of the setting. Keep the party to a chaotic or neutral alignment if they don't want to be necessarily "good" or "lawful". Because of the rampant superstitions in the world, outright evil is bound to attract the wrong attention on the part of the common person and

earn the party the animosity of nearly any locale they set foot in.

Religion

Thanks to the cataclysmic events of the Upheaval and the political developments after the fact, faith is an important aspect of the world. Thanks to the setting background covering the pre-Upheaval era you as game master are well aware of what actually happened, but the populace, and the players, are not as well informed.

The primary faith of the realm is based on worship of a singular entity, Erislan. This isn't to say, however, it is the only faith. In the setting, numerous other faiths have sprung up throughout the world, some dedicated to spirit worship similar to the concepts of our Shintoism while others are citing "lost" gods, deities who were worshipped well before the Upheaval.

The god Erislan is the most worshipped deity in the realm. Named the creator, protector, and avenger of the world by his worshipers, all major churches pay homage to Erislan. While the separate churches worship the same god, they don't necessarily agree however. Differences between them range from philosophical to political and sometimes include a little of both. As the "mainstream" faith of the land, PCs will generally have an Erislanian faith as their own, though to which degree is open to wide interpretation.

Asurik is the dark half of Erislan. A god of evil and destruction, many blame the suffering of the world on Asurik in some fashion. To some followers of Erislan, Asurik was the root cause of the corruption that Erislan eradicated in the Upheaval. Others follow a more direct route, laying the devastation of the Upheaval at the feet of Asurik; had Erislan not had to confront and destroy him, the Upheaval never would have happened. As Asurik is the "dark god" of the mythology, he is a poor choice for a PC's devotion, much like an evil alignment. At the very least, such a character would have to take great precaution should they choose to follow Asurik that no one knows of that; should it become common knowledge, the PC should find him or herself in great peril, as such worshippers are shunned, hunted, and worse.

Beyond the established cosmology of Erislan, other faiths have cropped up in the setting and are becoming more widely accepted. As a player, this means virtually any form of faith or deity you wish to inject in the setting can be fitted in with little trouble. Divine magic will work for the worshipper in the same fashion that it does for the clerics of the established churches.

The only things to consider when using an original faith or deity is going to be location and public reaction. Within the established city-states and their surrounding lands, worship

of Erislan is a significant part of daily life. The majority of citizens are members of one of the two major Erislanian churches and view any other deity or faith as blasphemous. Divine magic using characters espousing a difference of faiths, then, will frequently be viewed as "evil", "impure", or some variation as such. Thus, use of even divine powers in this area should be done carefully and with great consideration.

Outside of these areas, however, the populace is more accepting. Far from the dogma of the parent churches, even Erislanian churches on the fringe of civilization will react less aggressively to patrons of other faiths so long as their own church and its members are left alone. These other faiths, likewise, will often hold a similar "live and let live" mentality, extending a courtesy they wish returned to themselves.

Perception in these outlying areas is a major factor; practitioners of one faith will see the divine gifts of anyone as a sign that their chosen faith is legitimate, regardless of if the other person shares that faith or not.

Lastly, no matter who worships which spirit or deity, a universal truth in the realm is that no one has ever met one of these "gods". Some claim their patron works through them or communicates with them through signs, portents and dreams, but no deity has set foot on physical soil in the memory of the world. This fact alone has allowed other faiths to take root, basically being able to say while they cannot prove the absolute existence of their god, nor can any other faith.

Fear and Terror

Fear and terror are a constant companion in Gothic horror tales, which are among the atmospheres you can encounter or induce in Shadowglade. Some systems go to great lengths to simulate terror, fear, and horror through the rules. Generally, however, simple is better. The fairly simple rules presented ahead boil down to a basic roll; succeed and your party keeps their nerve. If they fail, they are brought low by the effects of fear. Much of the remaining rules help you as game master build appropriate checks by which to challenge your party.

Summary

The terror rules present a set of Will save DCs that characters must make in order to keep their nerve in the face of horrific creatures. Every creature has a fear rating (FR) based on its type, size, and an arbitrary rating selected by the GM to reflect its appearance, nature, and reputation.

When confronted with a creature, characters must make Will saves with a DC equal to the monster's FR. Characters that succeed at this save maintain their nerve and fight on. Characters that fail by a small margin are unnerved and take penalties to their actions, while those who fail by a wide gap may flee, freeze in horror, or otherwise take random actions.

Mechanics

When a character comes within 100 feet of a creature that has a fear rating (FR), he must make a Will save with a DC equal to the creature's FR. A character must only make this save if he can see or otherwise perceive the creature.

Furthermore, if a character uses spells or a magical item to observe a creature with the same clarity as if it stood within 100 feet of him, he must also make a save. For example, a wizard who uses clairvoyance to view a monster on the other side of a door must make a save, as the creature is visible to him as if it were within 100 feet.

If the Will save is successful, the character suffers no ill effects. If it fails, a character suffers penalties based on the difference between his total save result and the creature's FR. The effects of a failed FR save persist for 10 rounds - a character's Wisdom modifier, with a minimum of 5 rounds. A fear save counts as a mind-affecting, fear-based effect. Creatures immune to mind-affecting abilities do not need to make these saves, while creatures that gain a bonus against fear may use it on saves against FR.

A character need only make a saving throw once per creature type per encounter. For example, if the party encounters five demonic trolls that are FR 14, they only

need to save once, not five times. If they ran into five demonic trolls and three half-fiend gnolls, they would save once for the trolls and once for the gnolls. Apply the least favorable saving throw result to each character. For example, if a character sees a creature with FR 10 and another with FR 13, he must save against both. If one leaves him shaken and the other panicked, he suffers from panic.

If a character who suffers from the effects of a failed save encounters new creatures with FR, he must make new saves. If he fails any of these saves and suffers a worse result than his current condition, he gains that condition. When a character becomes more afraid in this manner, the duration of the fear effect resets. He sustains his new condition for 10 rounds - his Wisdom modifier, with a minimum of 5 rounds. Note that a worse result is defined as one that occurs with a greater margin of failure when compared to another result. For example, frightened is a worse result than shaken.

If there is ever a situation in which a character automatically fails his save to resist a creature's FR, such as a curse or some other magical effect that causes saves to fail, treat the character's roll as a 1. If the character's Will save modifier would push the total result above the creature's FR, treat the character as shaken. This rule also applies when a player rolls a natural 1, a result that normally counts as an automatically failed saving throw.

Creatures that have a fear rating are much harder to scare than mortal men are. They are accustomed to horrific sights and do not easily lose their nerve. A creature with an FR score adds it to any Will saves it must make to resist fear. If the creature's FR is higher than its opponent's it does not need to save to resist fear.

Table SGMG 1: Will Save Failure

Will Save Failed By	Result
1-6	Shaken A shaken character takes a -2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks.
6-10	Frightened A frightened character flees from the source of his fear as best he can. If unable to flee, he may fight. A frightened character takes a -2 penalty on all attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks. A frightened character can use special abilities, including spells, to flee.
11-15	Panicked A panicked character must drop anything he holds and flee at top speed from the source of his fear, as well as any other dangers he encounters, along a random path. He cannot take any other actions. In addition, the character takes a -2 penalty on all saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks. If cornered, a panicked character cowers and does not attack, typically using the total defense action in combat. A panicked character can use special abilities, including spells, to flee.
16-20	Cowering The character is frozen in fear and can take no actions. A cowering character takes a -2 penalty to Armor Class and loses her Dexterity bonus to AC (if any).
21+	Overwhelmed The character is so utterly overwhelmed with terror that he loses his grip on reality. He acts at random as per the spell confusion.

Note: Any rules that require you to determine the difference between the result of the save and a DC can prove cumbersome doing the math during a session can slow things down. Before running an adventure, you can determine the various DCs for each level of fear. In essence, you do the math once to complete all the work before the encounter. When a character makes a save, find the lowest DC that he fails to equal or beat to determine the fear effect he suffers. The math is simple enough that you could even take a moment to figure it out before an encounter starts.

Optional Rule: Combining Fear Ratings

As an optional rule, you can combine multiple fear ratings to represent the effect of viewing multiple terrifying monsters. Treat the creatures' FRs as challenge ratings and combine them as if you were calculating an encounter level. The result is the group's combined fear rating. This optional rule has two effects on the game. Rather than make several saves, the characters only make one. This change reduces the effect bad luck has on the PCs. The more saving throws the characters need to make, the greater the chance that they suffer from bad luck and fail one. On the other hand, the saving throw DCs are higher for this one save, making it more likely that PCs with poor Will saves may flee or cower in terror. In general, using this optional rule helps characters with good Will saves. They need to make fewer saves, reducing the chance that they roll poorly, and the save DCs do not climb so high that they eclipse their save bonuses.

Calculating Fear Rating

A fear rating represents a creature's appearance, its size, and its reputation. Appearance has an obvious effect on how the characters might react to a monster. A beast covered in slimy tentacles and wreathed in a cloak of moaning, human faces is much scarier than a seemingly normal person. By the same token, a creature that towers above the PCs has an innately scarier, more intimidating appearance. Finally, reputation has a major impact on how adventurers regard a beast. From the example earlier in this paragraph, the tentacle beast with the ghastly cloak may be well known as a minor supernatural creature. While it has a horrific appearance, a few sword strokes can send it back to the hell that spawned it. On the other hand, that innocent-looking person may match the description of Mordecai Fellheart, a well-known murderer who drank a mighty potion that rendered him impervious to mortal weapons. With that information in mind, the characters are much more likely to lose their nerve around the person than in the presence of the creature.

Determine a creature's fear rating with the following formula:

$$\text{FR} = \text{half challenge rating} + \text{size modifier} + \text{appearance} + \text{reputation}$$

- **Challenge Rating** This measure serves as a base guide for how scary a creature should be. Tougher creatures are more fearsome because they are usually stronger than other beasts, they have a wider range of magical powers, and they have fearsome reputations. Use the creature's challenge rating as listed in its description divided by 2. If dividing a creature's CR drops it below 1, count it as 0. As usual, round down any fractions.

- **Size Modifier** Larger creatures are innately scarier than smaller ones. While this rule is not absolutely true (a poisonous spider is far more intimidating than a cow) it serves as a reliable rule of thumb. Use the size rating table to determine how a creature's size affects its fear rating.

- **Appearance** A creature's looks go a long way to determine how others react to it. The stranger and more alien a creature appears, the more likely it unnerves the characters. By the same token, creatures with gory, horrific visages obviously strike fear into mortals' hearts. A creature's appearance modifier is based on its type or an arbitrary rating selected by the DM to reflect the creature's looks. If you want to quickly generate a monster's fear rating, use the modifiers given for the creature types and subtypes.

Add the modifier for both the creature's types and any subtypes it may have. Otherwise, use the guidelines given to select an appropriate rating. Do not use both values, as that may drive a creature's fear rating too high.

Instead of using a creature's type and subtype, you can also determine its FR modifier based on your judgment of its appearance. Use the appearance table to determine the overall modifier that presents a best fit for a creature.

Use this method for creatures that go against the general tendencies of the types and subtypes, or use it to assign scores to particularly gruesome and frightening monsters.

- **Reputation** This modifier is a sort of X factor that allows you to account for creatures that do not fit into the categories given above. For example, a vampire does not look frightening but everyone knows that it is a dangerous creature. The reputation modifier to FR is based solely on your judgment. You can use it to account for local folklore, cultural bias, and recent events in an area. For example, in a land where mummies are wholly unknown, such creatures might not initially arouse much fear. You can later elevate their FRs as word of their horrific strength and magical disease spreads. Use the table below as a guideline for assigning reputation modifiers to fear ratings.

Assigning Fear Ratings

As a rule of thumb, any creature that looks significantly unnatural should receive a fear rating. If a creature closely resembles a real-world animal, its appearance is probably not strange enough to warrant a fear rating. Use the FR summary for creatures from the core rules as a guide. Note that the values given for these monsters are by no means canonical. You can alter them based on appearance and reputation based on your campaign's background, a monster's role in your game, and any changes you made to the creature's appearance and history.

In Shadowglade almost all creatures have a FR; about the only exception are NPCs of the standard races. Unnatural creatures, generally those that might be otherwise accepted in a fantasy world but not ours, are just as unnatural in Shadowglade as they are here. Likewise, seriously augmented natural animals, such as dire or fiendish variations of animals, monstrous insects, etc. are all quite frightening.

Creatures commonly encountered or recommended as encounters for Shadowglade already have a basic fear rating calculated and included in their listing in the Shadowglade Bestiary, included with the SGMG.

NPCs and Fear Ratings

When first reading over these rules it may seem that fear ratings are useful only for monsters, undead beings, and other supernatural threats, but you can also use them with fearsome wizards, dreaded necromancers, and other mortals who have gained a widespread reputation. The mere name of the mighty necromancer who commands legions of skeleton warriors might be enough to cause a tense silence to descend over a tavern.

The rules also give you a convenient tool to differentiate between run-of-the-mill monsters and noted individuals, powerful beasts, and legendary creatures that play a major role in your campaign's background. A prime candidate for a fear rating could be a dark lord who conquered much of the land and who, according to rumor, was never defeated but instead slumbers and waits to return and reclaim his conquests.

Favored Enemies and Fear (Optional Rules)

Characters with favored enemy class features are not immune to the horrors but neither are they as easily rattled. When faced with a favored enemy that possesses a fear rating the character may add 1/2 their appropriate class level to their save against the fear rating.

Non-Creature Events and Fear Ratings

While horrific monsters are the most common source of fear rating saves, characters can also encounter terrible scenes and bizarre events that trigger them. For example,

the characters might stumble across the remains of a cult's sacrificial altar. The blood-spattered monument caked with skin, bone fragments, and other grim reminders of its purpose can send a temporary shock through the characters. You can use these checks to simulate the horrific environments and terrible events that can befall the characters independent of the creatures they battle.

The site and event table gives you guidelines for assigning FRs to a variety of events and sites that the PCs may encounter in the course of their adventures. Generally speaking, the more active or immediate an event the higher the FR will be. In other words, witnessing an event as it unfolds has a higher FR than finding its aftermath. In addition, any personal connections to the events increase the FR. Seeing a companion or friend transformed into a gibbering, boneless lump of flesh is a more powerful blow than witnessing the same thing happening to a total stranger. Both events a traumatic, but the former has a greater, more direct emotional impact.

Table SGMG-2: Site and Event Fear Ratings

FR	FR Site/Event
10	A mildly disturbing scene, such as a profane altar covered in gore
15	The aftermath of a bloody death or injury, such as a horribly mutilated corpse
20	A bloody death as it happens, such as a person eaten alive by a monster
25	A horrible event that befalls a friend or ally, such as a companion eviscerated by a horrid monster
30	An apocalyptic vision, such as the bloody death of hundreds

General Notes on Fear Ratings

Since a fear rating is essentially a Will save DC, it is a good idea to look at the party's composition and the characters' Will save bonuses when using monsters. A single creature with an overwhelming FR can defeat the party if the PCs are rendered helpless by its mere appearance.

To help guide you in selecting monsters and assigning FRs at various character levels, consider the following. A low FR value represents a creature that has only a 50% of having any effect on any of the PCs. A moderate one has a good chance of affecting weak-willed PCs and about a 50% chance of causing fear in PCs with good Will saves. A high FR value almost always has an effect on a PC with a poor Will save and has a 75% or greater chance of affecting a PC with a good Will save.

As a reminder, any class that has a Will save modifier of +0 at 1st level has a bad Will save, while one that starts with a +2 bonus has a good one. As a rule of thumb, use low FRs for common encounters, such as thugs, cultists, and minor creatures and monsters.

Medium FRs are a good fit for milestone encounters and tough creatures that lead up to the important villains and creatures that form the basis for a campaign or adventure. Those climactic encounters should use the high FRs, as they make important encounters suitably difficult and lend them a sense of horror since most characters suffer the effects of failed saves against FR.

Table SGMG 3: Size FR Modifier

Size	Fear Rating Modifier
Fine	0
Diminutive	0
Tiny	0
Small	0
Medium	0
Large	2
Huge	4
Gargantuan	8
Colossal	16

Table SGMG 4: Creature Type FR Modifier

Creature Type	Fear Rating Modifier
Aberration	5
Animal	0
Construct	2
Dragon	4
Elemental	2
Fey	4
Giant	2
Humanoid	0
Magical Beast	3
Monstrous Humanoid	2
Ooze	3
Outsider	6
Plant	0
Undead	6
Vermin	2

Table SGMG 5: Creature Sub-type FR Modifier

Creature Subtype	Fear Rating Modifier
Air	0
Aquatic	0
Chaotic	2
Cold	1
Earth	0
Evil	3
Fire	2
Goblinoid	1
Good	0
Incorporeal	4
Lawful	0
Reptilian	1
Shapechanger	1
Water	0

Table SGMG 6: Appearance Modifier Description

0-5	A creature with a moderately frightening or disturbing appearance, such as a skeleton, a vampire, or a poisonous spider. These creatures are natural in origin, are created by minor magical spells, or closely resemble a normal creature save for a few details.
5-10	Creatures with disturbing appearances and otherworldly or magical origins fall into this range. These creatures resemble no natural creature or have alien body forms. Imps, quasits, zombies, and ghosts fall into this range.
11-15	Powerful outsiders, creatures with revolting appearances, and monsters that have gory, bloody, and horrific appearances fall into this category. This includes greater demons, powerful undead, and similar beasts.
16+	Blasphemous monstrosities whose very existence defies the fundamental nature of the cosmos. These beings can shatter an observer's nerves as they warp and twist minds by their mere presence. Creatures from beyond reality or from truly alien realms qualify for these modifiers.

Table SGMG 7: Reputation Modifier Description

Less than 0	The stories concerning the creature describe it as weak, easily defeated, or include some common, effective method for defeating it.
0	The creature's reputation is not especially frightening. It is known as a vicious monster, but it is not any more or less fearsome than creatures of a similar size and CR.
1-5	Stories, rumors, and legends commonly paint the creature as vicious, deadly, and difficult to overcome.
6-10	The creature is commonly known to torment victims before slaying them, to inflict fates worse than death such as imprisoning its opponents' souls or eating them alive. Otherwise, it is commonly known to use fearsome tactics or follow gruesome practices. This also applies to creatures that can kill an opponent with a single use of a special attack, such as petrifying breath.
11-15	This rating is best applied to particularly fearsome individuals who have carved out a terrible reputation, such as specific dragons, powerful vampires, and similar creatures of dreaded stature.
16+	Creatures with this modifier are so terrifying that no one dares speak their names aloud for fear that they will overhear and answer the call to them. Mighty individuals that play roles in important myths and legends fall into this category.

Magic In Shadowglade

Arcane vs Divine

When discussing “magic” in Shadowglade, we are frequently discussing the arcane, flashy, typical magic of your standard fantasy realm. That does not exist in the mainstream world view of Shadowglade; it is present, contrary to what is discussed in the Shadowglade Player’s Guide, but it is no where near as prevalent as in other settings.

Basic Rules

The first important note of magic of any kind in Shadowglade is this: it is subtle. It is not blatant, obvious, or flashy. Detection spells and abilities, for example, convey an understanding without auras, audio cues or anything of the like. Different spells and effects will not produce spouts of energy and power, nor will they require blatant motions and maneuvers. A spell caster with a telekinetic spell, for example, need only guide an object with movements as subtle as their eyes, guiding an object with their line of sight as opposed to traditional gestures. Spells such as hold, charm, etc. follow the same guidelines; the caster will simply know they have made a connection whereas those around the caster can only note the change in behavior, such as a sudden inability of a companion to move or overt friendliness to an otherwise complete stranger.

This rule is limited, however, to those spells that are normally, or could be, subtle in the first place. Fireballs, for example, will still emanate from the caster of the spell, and other effects that are impossible to avoid hiding will give away tell-tale signs. Lines and cone effects will vary depending on the spell. A cone of cold, for example, will have no visible effect save for visible breath as the temperature drops, while cones of flame will produce, as expected, cone-shaped gouts of flame.

Arcane Magic

Arcane spell casters are virtually nonexistent in the world. Rarely, a wild talent will appear, a stray commoner manifesting a natural mystical talent. A number of things happen to these folks. Some manifest a singular talent and improve upon that. These individuals will specialize in one effect and may develop a myriad of ways of using it. These often go undetected by the world at large, as the user simply has a “knack” for something and is widely viewed as useful. Others may go on to develop damaging powers and abilities, intentionally or accidentally harming others in the use of their powers. These individuals are viewed as “witches” or “warlocks” (rightly, in some cases) and pursued and slain or otherwise harmed by vicious mobs. As such, arcane spell casters usually fit one of the following molds:

- **A commoner, likely a first-level sorcerer or adept, without a full understanding of his or her powers.** These individuals typically match the social morals of his or her community and fit in quite well. Their abilities may be known to the larger body of the local population but are merely viewed as talented or gifted. Enchanters are widely liked for reasons unknown to the subjects. Illusionists are viewed as entertainers who can weave a wondrous lie, those specializing in abjuration are viewed as wise in lore for knowing how to protect against malicious spirits, and diviners are met with mixed emotions depending on how much they reveal. Conjurers who use only healing abilities of a limited degree can disguise their talents with medicinal and herbal “treatments”, but knowledge of their ability to spontaneously heal could render them as outcasts.
- **An outcast, between first and fifth level sorcerer or adept, often of an evil alignment.** Their lot is shaped mostly by their treatment at the hands of their “brethren”, and their “evilness” an outgrowth of a need or lust for revenge on those who shunned them or worse. These outcasts are typically of other schools of magic, those with the most obvious effects. Conjurers are viewed as communing with demons and ill-mannered spirits, no matter the inclination of those actually summoned. Diviners, as noted earlier, are met with mixed emotions; those who know too much are thought to be in communication with dark forces and are outcast. Evocation, as well as transmutation, are some of the most obvious schools of magic in terms of their effects and are universally reviled for their interference with the natural order. Necromancy, likewise, is viewed with horror and disgust though it is the rarest of all talents among those with arcane abilities.

Divine Magic

Of “spell casters” in the world, divine spell casters could be considered the most common, though still rare. Of the organized religions, those dedicated to Erislan are the most prevalent and thus priests of his exercising great power are viewed as divinely touched. As divine spells in the first place are more akin to those “talents” that are accepted among the commoners, their acceptance is greater than those flashy, explosive, or destructive spells of other schools.

- **Adherents to Erislan are typically clerics, druids, paladins and priests.** The Church of the Lord of the Stars, headquartered in Ire, maintains clerical and druidic branches; traditionally, the positions are split between men and women, the men trained as clerics, paladins, and priests, while the women train as druids. Clerics, paladins, and priests of Erislan can commonly be found throughout the mainlands, while druids are quite rare, often remaining in Ire to see to the governance of the island nation. The Iberian Church employs more priests than the Iren church and far fewer clerics and paladins, opting not to follow the

Iren church's path of martial organization and seeking a more scholarly route.

- **Natural Exemplars** In locations where spirit worship is common, druids and rangers can perform minor feats of divine magic with little fear of reprisal, the populace viewing the practitioner as a conduit for the spirits they worship much like how mainstream society views Erislanian clerics and paladins. Outside of these areas, however, they can often be met with the same violence as other magic-using individuals.
- **Uncommon Clerics** Clerics professing differing beliefs are met with a number of different responses depending on the region. "Civilized" lands, or those lands who are staunch worshippers of Erislan, view them as clerics of Asurik and their abilities derived from his dark powers. Lands where these uncommon faiths are stronger, however, engender the opposite response. Territories where spirit worship is common likewise respect these practitioners, seeing their works as evidence of the same spirits they worship even if they disagree with the stated source of the abilities.

Magic and the Commoner

Viewing magic, true magic, is a significant event for a commoner and almost anyone else in the realm of Shadowglade. Tale of it will spread through surrounding villages like wildfire, and the practitioner will be instantly recognized the moment they set foot into a village.

In all likelihood, fear will be the first emotion elicited, no matter the effect. Unless the result can somehow be waived off, the viewer will regard the practitioner in a completely new light. In the lower classes, fear gives way to aggression in some form. Fear that the power will be turned against them if the practitioner is a friend, fear that the practitioner is touched by evil in many cases, fear that the user will take from them, etc. Many will not act alone against a practitioner, the fear of reprisal too strong, but a band with little understanding incited to fear has been known to accomplish frightful things, both in reality and in fiction. Such mobs will seek out those they view as dangerous and proceed to excise the evil they perceive, often ending in the death of the practitioner.

Clerics, priests, and paladins of Erislan have been around long enough and the gifts of their lord established as dogma to the satisfaction of many others. Aiding the acceptance of these miracle workers is the simple fact that their divine powers are significantly less flashy or obvious, allowing the commoners to more easily accept that a force is working through the character as opposed to the character him or herself possessing powers. Erislanian clerics are widely viewed as neutral parties, giving commoners a breath of relief and acceptance that the cleric stands to gain nothing through harming them. As mythical

as magic is, however, it does not necessarily prevent the commoner from seeing magic in any ill that befalls them. Like the superstitious lots of other realms, commoners in Shadowglade are just as likely to attribute bad tidings and tragic events to malicious magic as they are to the will of the gods, simple fate, or far more human sources. Fervent in their belief, they can fall upon a perceived threat with as much fear, malice, and strength of numbers as any other threat.

Peasant Rage (Optional Rules)

Characters, especially commoners, unprepared for spell casting could prove a significant threat to the safety and well-being of spell casters. When any character casts a spell or uses a spell-like effect that produces spectacular results, roll a FR check equal to 10 + the spell's level for onlooking characters such as NPCs. Failure indicates the observing characters are deeply frightened, while a critical failure on the roll indicates a character enraged by such a blatant violation of the natural order and as a challenge to Erislan or their deity of choice. They will cry out for the blood of the "wicked magic-user" and attack at the first opportunity. Treat these characters as though they were under the influence of a *rage* spell whose sole target is the casting character.

Changes to the Classes

For several of the classes, the implications of magic in the realm changes how they will function. Some greatly, some not nearly so much as a mild re-flavoring.

• Bards

Bards are one of the classes that skate by, so to speak. They maintain their full complement of abilities, but care should be given to flavor each ability or magical power as an element of slight of hand, stagecraft, or showmanship. Glowing lichen explain "Dancing Lights", ventriloquism can explain Ghost Sounds and similar effects, etc. If ultimately pressed, well, a good magician never shows how the trick is done...

• Clerics, Druids, Paladin, Priests, Ranger

The divine classes receive some of the biggest changes to the flavors of the magic-using classes. All divine spell casters receive the following class feature, **Prayer Casting**.

Prayer Casting: Prayer Casting is the process by which divine-based casters cast their spells in Shadowglade. This entails the following:

- All spells for these characters require a verbal and somatic component, even if they do not normally. This represents the character praying for the divine intervention and making the appropriate gestures while doing so.
- Because the act of prayer is required, the spell cannot be silenced or stilled.

• Sorcerer, Wizard

Sorcerers and wizards are actually untouched. Their abilities are, undeniably, magical in origin. The only catch to these classes is that, because they are indeed magical, they cannot explain or justify their abilities to the satisfaction of a fearful crowd.

Changes to the Spells

Due to the nature of the realm, not all spells operate the same. The following spells are handled differently than in standard materials:

• Creation Spells

Creation spells themselves frequently aren't an issue mechanically speaking, but their place in the realm is otherwise fuzzy.

In Shadowglade, the "material" for the use of creation spells pulls from the spiritual energy around the land; in short, the creations of the spells are drawn from the spirits of the dead. While these spells themselves are not necromantic in nature, it is their source of material that gives off faint traces of negative energy. When an item is actually crafted with these spells, the finished product gives off a faint necromantic aura.

One particular spell of note in this regard is *unseen servant*. As the school creates its constructs from negative energy and the spirits around it, the entity created by the spell isn't necessarily created but a spirit summoned and bound to the confines of the spell. This carries additional implications as well, discussed ahead.

• Detection Spells

Often there are no clear lines between "good" and "evil" in the Shadowglade setting. Torchbearers slaying supernatural monsters are not necessarily evil, they certainly do not view themselves as such, but the act of slaying an innocent simply because he or she is a wyre or a vampyre *is* an evil act. As the lines are fuzzy and the world generally lacks the overwhelming paragons of good and evil found in other lands the spells Detect Good and Detect Evil were never developed and players generally won't have access to them. This can be circumvented through the "discovery" of pre-Upheaval magical items that allow characters to do so but they should not be able to do so independently.

The spells Detect Chaos and Detect Law are common in the land however. This allows supernaturally inclined or divinely gifted investigators to achieve a quick read on a potential suspect. A character who is generally lawful will not have broken any laws in the last twenty four hours and generally read "lawful", while a character who has committed crimes within the last day will read as a fainter lawful if that is their natural alignment or chaotic.

When using any form of detection spells in Shadowglade, reveal only impressions; general areas, strengths, etc. Specific numbers tend to defeat the idea of suspense while the understanding that "something" is evil can do a lot to help heighten it. And, oppressive auras can easily blot out minor ones; wandering through a haunted house that has a number of ghosts, for example, would register as a strongly evil read on detect evil, even though the party may be looking for a petty thief and murderer who hid within.

The other alternative is to use relativity; how do people in the area of the spell see themselves? The aforementioned Torchbearer may see himself as a hero, which wouldn't show up on a detect evil casting. Or, he could see himself as a monster as well, slaying innocents unjustly punished by a terrible curse, which very easily could show up on a detect evil despite the fact that all of their "victims" were heinous murderers themselves.

Finally, another way to preserve the mystery is to simply reduce the range of many of the detection spells to touch. With this, the character has to make contact with the suspect in order to glean any information. This makes it much more inconvenient to get a read on particular people or items.

• Divination Spells

Divination spells, those spells that give a peek into something else, should probably be disallowed, though this one is up to GM fiat. There are interesting things that can be done with faulty information and half-truths that could be gained with such a spell and would keep players on their toes.

Simply consider that magic isn't normally present in the world, which means the normal scrying and divination defenses aren't in place. Players accessing this magic will frequently try to jump the gun on mystery adventures, for example. You can play with that, as the "fickle finger of fate" shows something like a distorted view of a crime, such as from a child witness' nightmare, a scene from the criminal's point of view that leads the party to specific clues, and the like.

In short, divination remains a matter to be decided for your group. Players attached to its effects should appreciate the compromise, while said compromise should still allow you to keep the suspense elements of the adventures intact. Players that have to have the spells work exactly as written however would probably do better without them at the table.

• **Summon Spells**

The “outer planes” do not exist in the world of Shadowglade, and as such the summoning of elementals from different planes, or even the calling of angelic or demonic entities, cannot be performed.

The solution with a summon spell is a simple one; those summoning normal, live animals are allowed to function, drawing the creature from the local area to the caster’s location as the spell is meant to do. They do not “magically” appear, however arrive very quickly, called by an empathic beckon to the summoner’s aid. Those drawing creatures normally not of the mortal plane, such as primal elementals, the aforementioned angelic or demonic creatures, etc. are not allowed and do not function.

• **Teleportation Spells**

Teleportation, like flight, has a strong possibility to derail a campaign, allowing characters to move incredible distances in a short time. From a thematic angle, these spells should frequently be avoided. If they were more common practice, travel through Shadowglade wouldn’t be nearly as long nor treacherous.

Acceptable versions of the teleportation spells include those that allow a character to step through one thing and out of another, such as the druid’s *tree stride* or *travel through plant*. These sorts of teleportation spells are highly specialized and available at higher levels. In-setting this means few characters have the power to perform such acts, reducing the likelihood that society would attempt to capitalize on the talent.

New Spells

Ahead are several new spells aimed at exploring concepts introduced or made more prevalent in the Shadowglade campaign setting. Not all of these are generally known to spell casters in the realm but a few are more apt to turn up in particular circles, such as those dealing with firearms in areas home to many druids.

The Summon Spirit line you might note goes all the way up to the 9th level Summon Spirit VII, despite the level cap at 10th level frequently meaning even dedicated spell casters cannot go higher than 5th level spells. As with some elements of the campaign, this is done so that a game master ignoring the level cap or using the material in other campaign settings can include Shadowglade material. These can also be used in haunts, traps, and a number of other effects that allow for higher-level spell effects without necessarily making them available to characters, player or not.

Also note, spells have been assigned to classes thematically appropriate for the Shadowglade campaign setting. Classes not addressed in the campaign setting may

not have gotten as much attention as others, which means some spells could still be appropriate for other classes. Use your best judgement when making these spells available to characters outside the realm of Shadowglade.

Man Was Not Meant To Know (Optional Rules)

This is an optional rule meant for use with the Sanity rules provided herein.

In Shadowglade, magic is not as magic in other worlds. It is derived of the life essences of the gods, Asurik and Rheana. Divine magic is magic properly channeled for the benefit of others, a self replenishing pool of sorts. Arcane magic, meanwhile, taps directly into the gods themselves. Rheana’s connection with the mortals of the realm is mostly severed, while the only real divine presence in the realm are those spaces infused with Asurik’s insanity.

Should a character cast an arcane spell of magnitude, require a Wisdom check, DC equal to the DC of the spell the character is casting (10 + the spell’s level + the character’s requisite spell-casting stat modifier). Failure means the character has glimpsed some part of the incomprehensible unknown and is incapable of reconciling it, losing their mind and sanity points in the process. For the purposes of sanity loss, treat the spell as an encounter with a CR equal to the spell’s level.

As this is an optional rule, what spells would trigger the checks and sanity loss we leave to you as GM and your own interpretation of magic in the realm. It could be any magic use triggers such a check, it could be only spells of second level or higher, or it could be spells with particular descriptors such as “evil.” Whichever avenue you choose, just be consistent in its application.

Spells

Bard Spells

0-Level Bard Spells: *Misfire*

1st Level Bard Spells: *Cripple, Eye of Erislan, Inner Glow, Nightmare Essence, Relief*

3rd Level Bard Spells: *Summon Spirit I*

4th Level Bard Spells: *Summon Spirit II*

5th Level Bard Spells: *Summon Spirit III*

6th Level Bard Spells: *Summon Spirit IV*

Cleric Spells

0-Level Cleric Spells: *Misfire*

1st Level Cleric Spells: *Cripple, Inner Glow, Foul Gunpowder, Relief, Sense Guilty*

3rd Level Cleric Spells: *Purify Gunpowder, Summon Spirit I*

4th Level Cleric Spells: *Improved Foul Gunpowder, Summon Spirit II*

5th Level Cleric Spells: *Summon Spirit III*

6th Level Cleric Spells: *Summon Spirit IV*

7th Level Cleric Spells: *Summon Spirit V*

8th Level Cleric Spells: *Summon Spirit VI*

9th Level Cleric Spells: *Summon Spirit VII*

Druid Spells

0-Level Druid Spells: *Misfire*

1st Level Druid Spells: *Eye of Erislan, Foul Gunpowder*

3rd Level Cleric Spells: *Purify Gunpowder*

4th Level Druid Spells: *Improved Foul Gunpowder*

6th Level Druid Spells: *Anticombustion Aura*

Inquisitor Spells

1st Level Inquisitor Spells: *Sense Guilty*

Paladin Spells

1st Level Paladin Spells: *Eye of Erislan, Inner Glow, Relief*

Sorcerer/Wizard Spells

0-Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells: *Misfire*

1st Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells: *Eye of Erislan, Nightmare Essence, Unseen Spirit*

3rd Level Sorcerer/Wizard Spells: *Goblyn Curse, Summon Spirit I*

4th Level Wizard/Sorcerer Spells: *Summon Spirit II*

5th Level Wizard/Sorcerer Spells: *Summon Spirit III*

6th Level Wizard/Sorcerer Spells: *Summon Spirit IV*

7th Level Wizard/Sorcerer Spells: *Summon Spirit V*

8th Level Wizard/Sorcerer Spells: *Summon Spirit VI*

9th Level Wizard/Sorcerer Spells: *Summon Spirit VII*

Witch Spells

1st Level Witch Spells: *Cripple, Inner Glow, Relief, Sense Guilty, Unseen Spirit*

3rd Level Witch Spells: *Goblyn Curse*

Anticombustion Aura

School abjuration; **Level** druid 6

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M/DF (pinch of black powder, vial of water)

Range 10 ft.

Area 10-ft.-radius emanation, centered on you

Duration 10-min./level (D)

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** none

An invisible aura surrounds you and moves with you. Within this aura, normal laws of physics do not apply; specifically those relating to combustion.

An anticombustion aura suppresses all of the natural laws involved in the combustion of all matter within the aura. This weakens large blazes, turns minor fires into smoldering embers, and cancels or prevents the ignition of small fires or sparks, such as from a campfire or igniting the powder of a firearm.

This spell does not prevent the effects of burning or exploding outside of the field from reaching within the field, including heat and smoke. A line of fire that runs through the field will burn up to the edge of the field and then fizzle out. Matter on the opposite side of the field will not reignite. Matter burning within a field as it is cast will cease to burn. Powder burning as a field encompasses it will also cease to burn.

Cripple

School enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]; **Level** bard 1, cleric 1, witch 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, DF

Range 50 ft.

Area 50-ft.-radius burst, centered on you

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

All affected enemies have their worst traits brought to the fore and used against them. For each affected creature with a defect penalty, that defect's penalty is increased by 1/2 your caster level (max 5). For each affected creature without a defect or without a defect possessing explicit penalties, they receive a penalty to attack equal to 1/2 your caster level (max 5).

Eye of Erislan (*Moonlight*)

School evocation [light]; **Level** bard 1, cleric 1, druid 1, paladin 1, sorcerer/wizard 1

Saving Throw Will (see text); **Spell Resistance** no

As the spell *daylight*, except as follows: the object sheds a cool, dim light, roughly the shade of pale moonlight, in a 30-foot radius. This illumination increases the light level for an additional 30 feet by one step (darkness becomes dim light, dim light becomes normal light, and normal light becomes bright light). Creatures that take penalties in bright light are unaffected while within the 30-foot radius of this magical light.

The following are also true, except that their effects are little known and often misattributed.

- *The caster is aware of any undead creatures that approach within 30 feet of the lighted object as the spell detect undead. Each round the creature remains within this first level of light the caster learns more about it as appropriate.*
- *Lycanthropes in human form approaching within 30 feet of the lighted object must make a Will save (DC 16 + your*

Clergy & Gunpowder

So, if divine casters have access to "Purify Gunpowder" in the realm, why don't they simply go into business selling pure black powder? Much of this has to do with ideals, and really if any entity is going to stick to a decision on principle it should generally be the leaders of a faith.

Clerics of Erislan come from a proud warrior tradition. The clerics of Ire emulate Erislan as paladin-like knights of the faith, while the clerics of Iber descend from a line of proud, and arrogant, sword masters. To both parties firearms are a coward's weapon; while a Bowman requires training and skill on par with the training they must endure as knights and fighters, and are viewed more favorably as a result, a gunman can pick up a weapon and do extensive amounts of damage disproportionate to their skill or ability.

Druids likewise see firearms as they view almost all technology, as an affront to nature. Add the destructive potential of gunpowder and the harm it can do to the natural world and druids want nothing to do with firearms either.

So, while either line of divine spell caster can, in theory, ramp up production of pure, usable gunpowder, most choose not to for their own reasons.

relevant ability modifier) or assume hybrid or animal form.
• *Lycanthropes within 30 feet of the lighted object suffer a -5 penalty on Will checks to assume human form.*

Goblyn Curse

School transmutation (polymorph); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 3, witch 3

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range touch

Target one living creature

Duration 1 day/level

Saving Throw Fortitude negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

The touched creature transforms into a hideous little goblyn of Shadowglade lore, complete with sickly green skin, pointy ears, and a broad, toothy grin.

The affected creature's size becomes Small. While not a natural goblyn, the creature gains a +10 bonus on Disguise checks made to appear as a goblyn. The creature suffers a -5 penalty to all Intelligence and Charisma based skill checks and speaks unintelligibly.

Inner Glow

School enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]; **Level** bard 1, cleric 1, paladin 1, witch 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, DF

Range 50 ft.

Area 50-ft.-radius burst, centered on you

Duration 1 min./level

Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

Your allies are inspired to their greatest heights yet. All affected allies with a trait increase their trait bonus by 1/2 your caster level (max 5). Affected allies without a trait or allies without a trait possessing explicit bonuses receive a bonus to their Charisma equal to 1/2 your caster level (max 5).

Foul Gunpowder

School transmutation; **Level** cleric 1, druid 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range 10 ft.

Target 10 doses of black powder/level

Saving Throw Will negates (object); **Spell Resistance** yes (object)

This spell turns a powder horn of normal, pure black powder into impure powder. The spell affects the nearest ten doses worth of powder/level when the spell is cast; this can

render powder loaded into weapons as impure, powder horns carried on a character as impure, and even the first several shots out of a powder keg as impure. The caster does not determine the effect of the impure powder.

Foul Gunpowder, Improved

School transmutation; **Level** cleric 4, druid 4

As Foul Powder, except the spell transforms up to fifteen doses/level worth of powder into impure powder. The caster selects the effect of the impure powder.

Misfire

School transmutation; **Level** bard 0, cleric 0, druid 0, sorcerer/wizard 0

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range 10 ft.

Target one firearm

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will negates (object); **Spell Resistance:** yes (object)

This spell causes a targeted firearm to increase its misfire rate by +1 the next time it is fired.

Nightmare Essence

School transmutation (polymorph); **Level** bard 1, sorcerer/wizard 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M ()

Range touch

Target creature touched

Duration 1 min./level (D)

Saving Throw Will (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

The touched creature takes on a hideous visage as you sculpt terrible scars and misformed features rendering the creature terrifying to behold.

The touched creature gains a FR equal to 5 plus 1/2 your caster level, plus any appropriate modifiers for size, creature type and subtype, and reputation. Any creature other than the caster who would view the creature within 100 ft must make a Will save with a DC equal to the touched creature's FR.

If the touched creature already has a FR, add 1/2 your caster level to the creature's existing FR. See *Fear and Terror* for full details.

Purify Gunpowder

School transmutation; **Level** cleric 3, druid 3

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range 10 ft.

Target 10 shots of impure black powder/level

Saving Throw Will negates (object); **Spell Resistance** yes (object)

This spell transforms impure black gun powder into pure, proper black powder suitable for use in a firearm. The spell affects the nearest ten doses worth of powder/level when the spell is cast; the caster does not select which groups of powder are affected first.

Due to the way the spell functions, impure powder is stripped from the sources leaving it with less powder than initially present. For every dose worth of powder purified, one is lost overall. Each casting then yields usable powder equal to one-half the original amount.

Relief

School enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]; **Level** bard 1, cleric 1, paladin 1, witch 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, DF

Range one touched creature

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw Will (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

Your touch brings relief to those unbearably afflicted. For the duration of the spell, the affected creature does not suffer from the penalties of up to one defect that character has.

Sense Guilty

School divination; **Level** cleric 1, inquisitor 1, witch 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Component V, S, DF

Range 60 ft.

Area cone-shaped emanation

Duration concentration, up to 10 min./level (D)

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

You can sense the presence of guilty subjects. The amount of information revealed depends on how long you study a particular area or subject.

1st Round: Presence or absence of guilt.

2nd Round: Number of guilty individuals in the area and the power of the strongest feelings of guilt present.

3rd Round: The strength and location of each aura. If

an aura is outside your line of sight, then you discern its direction but not its exact location.

The spell only determines feelings or knowledge of guilt, not actual crimes. The auras match the strength of this feeling and not necessarily the severity of the crime committed. Thus, a hardened murderer may appear to be guilty of something relatively minor, while a merchant who is deeply concerned about cheating on taxes will appear quite guilty. The aforementioned killer will *feel* little to no guilt or remorse but have a minor aura knowing he committed a crime, whereas the merchant could be an otherwise honest man who cheated on his taxes for one reason or another and feels simply awful for it, giving off a strong aura.

Because if the unreliable nature of the detection, the spell is most often used by low-ranking clerics and priests of the various faiths to help otherwise good people cope with their feelings. Those of a lawful mind might also use the spell to identify petty criminals, those who feel guilt because they know it is wrong, but are otherwise undeterred enough to stop their criminal activities. In many societies, however, the use of this spell is by itself not admissible as a part of legal action, only empirical evidence confirms guilt. Thus, the spell is used during investigations to help narrow a field of suspects but almost never used by itself as a basis for arrest or incarceration.

Each round, you can turn to sense the guilty in a new area. The spell can penetrate barriers, but 1 foot of stone, 1 inch of common metal, a thin sheet of lead, or 3 feet of wood or dirt blocks it.

Summon Spirit I

School conjuration (summoning) [evil]; **Level** bard 3, cleric 3, sorcerer/wizard 3

Casting Time 1 round

Components V, S, F/DF (a small candle and an article belonging to a deceased person)

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect one summoned creature

Duration 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

This spell summons to your side an incorporeal undead. The summoned spirit appears where you designate and acts immediately on your turn. It attacks your opponents to the best of its ability. If you can communicate with the spirit, you can direct it not to attack, to attack particular enemies, or perform other actions as you command.

A summoned spirit cannot summon or otherwise conjure another creature, nor can it use any teleportation or planar travel abilities. Spirits summoned using this spell cannot use spells or spell-like abilities that have expensive material components (such as wish).

Table SGMG-8: Summon Spirit

1st Level

Ghost (CR 1/2 base creature or weaker)

Poltergeist

2nd Level

Allip

Ghost (CR 1 base creature or weaker)

Shadow

3rd Level

Attic Whisperer

Ghost (CR 2 base creature or weaker)

4th Level

Ghost (CR 3 base creature or weaker)

Wraith

5th Level

Ghost (CR 4 base creature or weaker)

Revenant

6th Level

Ghost (CR 5 base creature or weaker)

7th Level

Ghost (CR 6 base creature or weaker)

Greater Shadow

The spell conjures one of the creatures from the 1st level list on *Table SGMG-8: Summon Spirit*. You choose which kind of spirit to summon, and you can change that choice each time you cast the spell. All spirits on the table are evil unless otherwise noted.

The spirit abides by your commands and wishes for the duration of the spell. Once the duration has ended, the spirit is free to act as it chooses which can, and frequently does, include attacking the character who summoned it.

While the form can vary, the soul used to animate the incorporeal undead is bound to the item used in the summoning. Using the same item results in the summoning of the same spirit each time, thereby risking the spirit's wrath. There is a chance that a spirit summoned multiple times will revolt, immediately ending the spell's effects and attacking the caster, equal to 60% + X% where X is the level of spirit summoned (see tables) + 1% for each time it has been summoned in this manner. A spirit summoned five times who is now summoned as a greater shadow has a

72% chance to revolt.

Summon Spirit II

School conjuration (summoning) [evil]; **Level** bard 4, cleric 4, sorcerer/wizard 4

This spell functions as *summon spirit I*, except that you summon one 2nd-level spirit or 1d3 1st-level spirits of the same kind.

Summon Spirit III

School conjuration (summoning) [evil]; **Level** bard 5, cleric 5, sorcerer/wizard 5

This spell functions as *summon spirit I*, except that you can summon one 3rd-level spirit, 1d3 2nd-level spirits of the same kind, or 1d4+1 1st-level spirits of the same kind.

Summon Spirit IV

School conjuration (summoning) [evil]; **Level** bard 6, cleric 6, sorcerer/wizard 6

This spell functions as *summon spirit I*, except that you can summon one 4th-level spirit, 1d3 3rd-level spirits of the same kind, or 1d4+1 lower-level spirits of the same kind.

Summon Spirit V

School conjuration (summoning) [evil]; **Level** cleric 7, sorcerer/wizard 7

This spell functions as *summon spirit I*, except that you can summon one 5th-level spirit, 1d3 4th-level spirits of the same kind, or 1d4+1 lower-level spirits of the same kind.

Summon Spirit VI

School conjuration (summoning) [evil]; **Level** cleric 8, sorcerer/wizard 8

This spell functions as *summon spirit I*, except that you can summon one 6th-level spirit, 1d3 5th-level spirits of the same kind, or 1d4+1 lower-level spirits of the same kind.

Summon Spirit VII

School conjuration (summoning) [evil]; **Level** cleric 9, sorcerer/wizard 9

This spell functions as *summon spirit I*, except that you can summon one 7th-level spirit, 1d3 6th-level spirits of the same kind, or 1d4+1 lower-level spirits of the same kind.

Unseen Spirit

School conjuration (summoning); **Level** bard 1, sorcerer/wizard 1, witch 1

This spell functions as *unseen servant* except that the servant is an invisible, incorporeal undead, not a mindless shapeless force.

There is a chance that a spirit summoned multiple times will revolt, immediately ending the spell's effects and attacking the caster, equal to 60% + 1% for each time it has been summoned in this manner. Treat a spirit that revolts as a poltergeist (CR 2).

Note: In the realm of Shadowglade, this spell replaces *unseen servant*, regardless of if the caster realizes it or not.

Sanity

Sanity is just as important in a horror themed setting and story as much as anything else. While slasher stories involve a fear of loss of life or serious, physical damage, many other stories prey on another fear: the loss of one's self or one's mind.

Summery

Sometimes, directly ripping into a character's stats doesn't have the same achievement or sense of dread, the ticking clock. Spells or special attacks can induce ability damage just as often as narrative matters. It also showcases a different suspense. Sanity, however, is treasured among many. These rules present an opportunity to introduce a new "stat" to your players, one that allows you to taunt and tease differently and create a different suspense than standard play.

Mechanics

Sanity Points represent an optional rule, a way to track a character's exposure to the unusual and its impact without directly hampering a character's progression until it seriously matters.

Sanity is calculated rather simply; a character begins play with a number of points equal to the character's hit dice + their Wisdom modifier, minimum 1. This is their maximum Sanity. Each level, this number increases appropriately with the character's hit dice and any changes to their Wisdom modifier.

Losing Sanity

Sanity can be lost any number of ways; how is up to the game master to decide as appropriate.

First, as a stand alone mechanic, any time the character witnesses a mind-blowing, earth-shattering, highly unusual and inhuman creature, event, or site they must make a Wisdom check, DC 15. Failure to do so results in a variable loss of sanity points.

Second, sanity points interact nicely with the Fear Ratings discussed earlier. Use the tables provided therein as examples of what might induce a sanity check. Failing a FR check with these rules results in a loss of Sanity points then and not necessarily fear-induced panic. Or, if one is feeling particularly devious, it could affect both.

How much sanity is lost depends greatly on the challenge before the characters. All sanity-sapping encounters run the risk of driving the character insane, at low or high levels. Use the accompanying chart to help determine appropriate sanity losses for a given CR. The average result will sap a

Table SGMG-9: Variable Sanity Loss

CR	Sanity Loss
1	1d2
2	1d3
3	1d4
4	2d2
5	1d6
6	2d3
7	1d8
8	2d4
9	1d10
10	1d12
11	2d6
12	2d8
13	1d20
14	2d10
15	2d12

character of roughly a quarter of their sanity. The following characters are immune to sanity loss: aberrations and those with aberrant blood (such as sorcerers with the aberrant bloodline), outsiders, extra planar entities and those with extra planar blood, and non-intelligent creatures.

Result of Sanity Loss

Once a character reaches 0 Sanity Points, they are insane; they are afflicted with one of a variety of forms of insanity at the game master's discretion but generally associated with the nature of the events that took the character's sanity. More creatively and indirectly, the game master could instead consider the character under the effect of the *insanity* spell for the duration of their illness.

Recovering Sanity

Sanity is a dangerous quality to lose ground on and it is equally difficult to regain.

Characters who have suffered sanity loss but not reached or fallen below 0 sanity points have an easier time. They recover 1 Sanity Point/week, provided they are not exposed to any new terrors. Witnessing an unfathomable situation that could cause loss of sanity, even if the character makes its Will save, interrupts this process and they must now go a week from that encounter to recover Sanity again.

Full insanity, wherein a character is afflicted by a specific insanity or the insanity spell-like effect, can only be cured through magical means. *Greater restoration*, *heal*, *limited wish*, *miracle*, or *wish*, or as described under each individual form of insanity's entry removes the affliction and also restores a PC's Sanity points to full. Until such time, however, the character cannot regain any Sanity points.

Using Sanity

Using sanity rules properly is a large part of making them work. Use the following to help guide your use of the rules.

First, if you plan on using sanity rules and points during game play, make this clear at the start. Test your party's sanity from time to time early in the game before throwing them a real mind-bender.

Do not throw the sanity rules at the party in the midst of an adventure. Doing so creates a number of thematic and logic issues. Assuming a common Shadowglade campaign, the party will have already encountered mind bending or reality questioning events; doing so without involving sanity rules and then suddenly injecting them at best feels awkward and at worst acts as a tell, it lets the party know "crazy" things are about to happen. Consistent application of the rules, however, means the party is less likely to pick up on this possibility.

Second, because "Sanity" doesn't appear on a character sheet, consider keeping a character's sanity score to yourself; the players have no idea what their sanity score is let alone how much sanity they have lost. Obviously any player who knows the system from its previous use or from here in Shadowglade will know how to calculate sanity easily, but other players won't have the same benefit. Simply make them aware that their mental balance is a viable target and that some things in the world can make their character question reality, themselves, and everything going on around them.

Favored Enemies and Sanity (Optional Rules)

Characters with favored enemy class features are not immune to the horrors but neither are they as easily rattled. When faced with a favored enemy that would require any check against Sanity, the character may add 1/2 their appropriate class level to their save against the effect. Apply this only once if Sanity interacts with Fear Ratings in your campaign.

Method to Madness (Optional Rules)

While at 0 Sanity, while suffering from a mental disease, or while suffering under the effects of the insanity spell, a character may have a moment of absolute clarity. When the character reaches 0 Sanity or gains the affliction, they may attempt a DC 15 Wisdom check to attempt to gain insight into the situation or creature in the form of a burst of sudden awareness.

Alternatively, in a campaign using a form of Hero or Action Points, characters can spend one such point while at 0 Sanity or insane to attempt the same.

Table SGMG-10: Sanity Wisdom Check Chart

Roll	Result
+0	Offer a hint about the current scenario; allow the player to ask one yes or no question.
+5	Offer a hint about the current scenario; allow the player to ask two yes or no questions.
+10	Offers a more direct hint about the current scenario. Provide a note or fact related to the current scenario, creatures faced, etc.
+15	Offer a blatant hint about the current scenario, including information otherwise unknown or unavailable to the characters.

Negative Sanity (Optional Rules)

Sanity should otherwise never drop below 0 points; there's not a lot of reason for it. Healing removes the insanity the character experiences and restores Sanity to full. Should you desire it, however, allow Sanity to do just that.

While in the negatives, the character experiences a penalty to Charisma, Intelligence, and Wisdom-based skill checks equal to the negative value as the madness eats away at them. This can be in addition to any penalties from an insanity effect or could replace the insanity effect for your own campaign.

To counterbalance steep negatives, you can offer players an Insight bonus of the same value to a variety of checks, such as Perception for the hypervigilant, akin to the Method to Madness optional rules above. This can allow a player to portray a character well past the breaking point but still, somehow, stumbling through with the occasional burst of insight.

Should a character's Sanity be driven deep enough into the negatives to meet or exceed their Wisdom stat, the character becomes catatonic and unresponsive. Only intensive medical care or powerful restorative magics will return the character to a functional level.

Spell casters with particular focuses can make additional use of this alternate option. While their Sanity is in the negatives, add the same to the DC of appropriate spells and granted powers. For example, a cleric with -3 Sanity would have a +3 bonus to their Madness domain granted powers and domain spells. Such clerics still suffer the other penalties of their madness, but this provides fuel for their particular brand of magic. Likewise, arcane spell casters using mind-affecting spells could see a bonus as their madness reinforces the strength of their power, superimposing their reality on others around them.

Skills & Checks

Above and beyond new components, old components and items that you are already familiar with can offer new challenges for the players. With Shadowglade's focus on intrigue, skill is quite often more valuable than brute force. Ahead are some times on using skills in the setting.

Little Used Skills

Shadowglade is a setting of lost knowledge and history. It should come as no surprise then that navigating these forgotten areas demands equally rare knowledge as it demands strength.

• Knowledge (arcana)

Knowledge (arcana) is a skill primarily in the domain of the spell casting classes, used for recognizing spells as they are cast, magical writings, and items of the like. Because spell casting classes are quite rare in the setting, this will be an often overlooked class skill.

Lost cathedrals and ruins littered with glyphs and runes that point the way through a puzzle then would be quite challenging then if they were dependant on the Knowledge (arcana) skill.

• Knowledge (religion)

Primarily used by hunters of the undead, Knowledge (religion) can actually be more potent in Shadowglade. Allow Knowledge (religion) to be used in place of some other knowledge rolls if appropriate; faith often incorporates the history of the people recording it, which means that, while biased in one direction or another, knowledge of a given faith can also impart historical awareness as well.

Likewise, most magic in Shadowglade is divine, not arcane. Use of Knowledge (religion) in place of Knowledge (arcane) can signify reading religious runes and iconography as mystical elements, possibly the work of a mad cleric or worshipper who may or may not have the right idea about the power of the symbols.

• Linguistics

Language can throw characters for a curve quite easily. Backwoods regions that speak broken dialects and old forms of the common tongue or old settlements of Iber or Ire that have kept the languages of their homeland alive are just a few of the examples of potential language barriers. Likewise, important information can be spelled out in plain text, just not one the character can read easily.

An overlooked use of linguistics is the use of *Create/ Detect Forgeries*. Especially for mystery-based campaigns, information and documents could be, or might need to be, forged. Use of the skill then allows characters

to detect forged documents or planted evidence or to do the very thing themselves.

Due to the importance of items, documents, and texts in the setting, the ability to detect forgeries also makes an excellent skill set for someone looking into the veracity of such items. Characters needing to make sure they have the correct information before acting, such as original manuscripts or authentic incantations or artifacts, would do well to ensure they possess the ability to verify it before they end up in over their heads.

• Spellcraft

Spellcraft allows characters to identify spells as they are cast, learn new spells, identify magical items, etc. Again, with magic virtually unknown and divine characters not needing spellcraft to prepare their spells, this skill should see little support.

Spellcraft would be a fine skill for archeologists researching unusual artifacts and items. Determining what the properties of the item are can tell such a character much and might be useful in finding the key to an ancient site.

Troubleshooting

Trouble here is, only a handful of characters have access to the skills mentioned in the first place, and of them not only do you need to have such a character in the party, the character has to have at least one rank spent on the skill as it can only be used if the character is trained in it.

Traits encourage taking skills. Develop campaign traits that award a bonus to the skill and make some unusual skills a class skill. Tie it tightly to a back story element, such as a religious order the character is a part of or one of the secret societies. In most cases, players taking the trait will put the first rank in just to get the bonuses from the trait and leave it at that. Assuming a good ability score and no further investment of skill ranks you're looking at a +7 (+1 rank, +2 modifier, +3 class skill bonus, +1 or better trait bonus) to the skill.

Aside from that, some simple tweaks can occur at the beginning of the game. Encourage more of the skill-based classes, such as bard or rogue, and present the alternate options included in the Advanced Player's Guide for unique concepts. Or, award extra skill points for some of the other classes; an extra skill point per level, as Shadowglade's setting is more skill intensive, is appropriate for the characters who are more likely trained in broader arts.

Valuing Skill Effects

Its a generally accepted fact; what the game master wants to happen, happens. You'll find this topic discussed elsewhere, but this case relates specifically to certain skills and player perceptions.

Several skills have built in effects that matter when another character, likely an NPC, attempts to discover or undo a PC's actions. Most GMs gloss over that for the sake of the story, deciding that they do or do not as the GM wants the story to go. In such cases, the party finds out the bad guy realized the map was a dupe and tailed them despite the perfect, though misleading, forgery the bard had crafted.

Instead of proceeding with the story despite the player's actions, try to keep to these rules as often as possible and let players see the effects of doing so. In the aforementioned example, allow the players to tail the bad guy as he follows up on leads to ensure the validity of the map. Let the players see you roll and check against their skill. If the bad guy does discover the fake, the party is well aware and can plan appropriately. If he doesn't, then they're in the clear.

Short of it is to value the skills and effects the whole time, not just while the PCs or the items in question are on the stage.

Wisdom & Knowledge Checks

Wisdom is the stat that represents common sense; do this, don't do that, run when you see this, laugh when you see that. A Wisdom check then tests to see if the character gets these basic concepts or if something is potentially beyond the character's understanding. Knowledge skills are sets of skills representing education, what the character has been taught or learned about a given subject. Knowledge checks test that education to see if the item in question is something the character actually learned or can recall without the player necessarily knowing it.

Wisdom & knowledge checks can be used in a Shadowglade campaign to help players learn their way around. This is a campaign that turns a few of the basic assumptions on their heads, which can leave players unaware of the differences, defaulting to actions and tactics learned in other games and campaigns that really aren't appropriate here.

A fine example of this sort of thinking comes from clerics. Mechanically, their "Channel Energy" feature remains intact: good clerics channel positive energy, positive energy heals the living and harms the undead. A couple of encounters in to a Shadowglade campaign and the GM starts describing a horrific scene that includes the dead rising up. Normal rules might have the party make Will saves to start with, keeping their nerve or fleeing. From there, the cleric who's made their save might likely respond with "I channel energy." In the setting, however, the undead are an anomaly in normal, every day life, not the sort of thing encountered on a regular basis. Clergy don't automatically become undead fighting machines and are not trained in the art of fighting them off more effectively than other creatures. Thus, why would the *character's*

first reaction be to use their ability to heal to deal with a monstrosity that isn't supposed to exist? It generally wouldn't.

The first option in preventing issues of player knowledge trumping character knowledge is to encourage all of your players to read up on the setting before hand. A well read player will already assume something is going on and that, despite what appears to be happening, something else is really happening. In short, it looks like undead but it likely isn't undead but clever bandits. Beyond that, someone seeking to act in-character will make the assumption even though they as player think they know better.

The second option is regular uses of wisdom and knowledge checks. Wisdom, being common sense, would reflect initial impressions and instincts: I see dead bodies standing up all around me, what do I do? The fear checks solve the fight or flight dilemma, which leaves characters at this point asking "What do I do now?"

Wisdom says the average person who has resolved to stand and fight will indeed fight; break out the weapon and start swinging or shooting away. It would take a rather large leap and assumption from that character to decide to use their god-given talent to heal offensively; if they assume the creatures are indeed undead then something isn't right, though if they assume it to be mortal men in costume then why heal the people who are attacking you and your allies?

Knowledge will tell a character what it is that they are facing. In the case of the undead, knowledge religion is frequently used, which would tell the character that the walking dead are an abomination to be destroyed. Religion is silent on how these things are best destroyed because they aren't encountered in the realm.

Additionally, the *Perception* and *Sense Motive* skills can be utilized in similar situations. Perception would tell the player what the character sees; if the opposing creatures look like humans, move like humans, they are probably human. Sense Motive, meanwhile, has the *Hunch* feature, which can be used to test player assumptions against character assumptions.

Tactics based on the setting should generally indicate that the character should either run or swing, especially on a first encounter, unless they land seriously decent Perception or Sense Motive rolls. As they encounter the creatures more and more, insight bonuses would allow them a greater chance of discovering the weaknesses of the creatures. Until then, however, character knowledge should trump player knowledge as often as possible.

Table SGMG-11: Recommended Difficulty Class

Level	Likely Bonus	Very Easy	Easy	Moderate	Hard	Very Hard
1	+7	9	13	18	23	27
2	+10	12	16	21	26	30
3	+11	13	17	22	27	31
4	+13	15	19	24	29	33
5	+14	16	20	25	30	34
6	+15	17	21	26	31	35
7	+16	18	22	27	32	36
8	+17	19	23	28	33	37
9	+18	20	24	29	34	38
10	+21	23	27	32	37	41
11	+22	24	28	33	38	42
12	+24	26	30	35	40	44
13	+25	27	31	36	41	45
14	+26	28	32	37	42	46
15	+27	29	33	38	43	47
16	+28	30	34	39	44	48
17	+29	31	35	40	45	49
18	+30	32	36	41	46	50
19	+31	33	37	42	47	51
20	+32	34	38	43	48	52

Likely Bonus is calculated as:

- Character Level (Ranks)
- +2 Stat Modifier, increased to +3 at 5th Level and +4 at 12th Level and +5 at 20th Level
- +3 Class Skill bonus
- +1 Trait bonus
- +2 Feat bonus the 2nd level and increased to +4 at the 10th level for the feat's second effect (+4 instead if 10 or more ranks).

This model the effectively shows how easy or hard it would be for a character generally designed to take these actions. Adjust the expectations downward by 2 or 3 points for characters not as focused (lacking an appropriate feat, trait, or a slightly lower stat modifier) or even upward by 2 or 3 points for characters tightly focused with unusual racial bonuses and modifiers, etc.

Each recommended DC is based on the likely bonus plus:

- +2 for Very Easy (about 90% chance for success)
- +6 for Easy (about 75% chance for success)
- +11 for Moderate (about 50% chance for success)
- +16 for Hard (about 25% chance for success)
- +20 for Very Hard (about 10% chance for success)

Should your party's bonuses vary from the likely bonus, adjust the chart using the above to determine appropriate DCs for your party.

Extrapolating

Looking at the chart above, you can chart expectations for characters fairly easily. For example, say a character gets a Trait that treats a skill as a Class Skill and gets a +1 bonus to that. The character puts 1 rank into it and nothing else. Generally, this character will have a +6 or +7 to that skill assuming no penalties; the character could accomplish Very Easy tasks as high as 13th level characters. This particular character will have a progressively harder time, but they can still contribute to the party and skill checks even if that skill isn't their forte.

Supernatural Points

Supernatural points a new mechanical item you will find affixed to various creatures of supernatural origin. These are used as a currency to routinely power supernatural abilities, especially those a player may end up with access to some day.

Mechanics

The powers and abilities available to characters varies based on if they are afflicted or born with their supernatural stature. Regardless, each supernatural form has a "Supernatural stat", an ability score tied to that form's unusual powers. Vampyres, for example use Charisma while wyre use Wisdom.

Born Supernatural Creatures

Creatures naturally born as supernatural entities have complete control of their status. Races such as the vampyre and wyre of Shadowglade are such creatures. The following abilities are racial abilities granting them access to their unusual heritage.

Supernatural (Su): You have the ability to supernaturally alter yourself. At the start of each day, you gain a number of Supernatural Points equal to your [Supernatural stat] modifier (minimum 1). Your supernatural points go up or down throughout the day, but usually cannot go higher than your [Supernatural stat] modifier (minimum 1), though some feats and magic items may affect this maximum. Temporary changes to your [Supernatural stat] do not change this number. Supernatural points are spent to accomplish a variety of actions and can be regained in the following ways:

Supernatural Acts (Su): As a free action, you may spend a supernatural point to gain one of the following benefits until the end of your next turn. You may spend any number of supernatural points in a turn, but may only select any single benefit once in a round.

- Agile: Receive a +1 Dodge bonus to AC, +1 supernatural bonus to all Dexterity-based skill checks and Reflex saving throws until the end of your next turn.
- Brilliant: Receive a +2 supernatural bonus to Intelligence based skill checks.
- Cunning: Receive a +1 supernatural bonus to Wisdom-based skill checks and Will saving throws until the end of your next turn.
- Perceptive: Receive a +2 supernatural bonus to Perception, gain Darkvision 60 ft. until the end of your next turn. If you already have Darkvision, increase the range by 60 ft.
- Resilient: Receive a +2 supernatural bonus to AC.

- Strong: Receive a +1 supernatural bonus to Strength-based attacks and skill checks until the end of your next turn.
- Surprising: Receive a +10 supernatural bonus to [First Skill] and [Second Skill] skill checks until the end of your next turn.
- Swift: Receive a +10 foot bonus to speed.

The acts described above are the "basic" acts available to many supernatural creatures. Not every supernatural creature will have access to all of these abilities, however. Each supernatural creature will feature a write-up of their own particular abilities and affliction which may feature unique abilities not included above.

Afflicted Supernatural Creatures

Some creatures are not born supernatural; they acquire the status. As it is not a racial ability, the character gains a bonus feat to represent the affliction that brings with it a limited version of supernatural power coupled with a loss of self-control; for a time, all afflicted characters will be under the control of the game master as they do not have a complete grasp of their affliction.

Afflicted Supernaturalist [Supernatural]

You have been afflicted with a supernatural condition, willingly or not. You now have access to unusual and powerful abilities, but at a price. While you maintain much of your mind, occasionally the effects overwhelm you and the beast within overtakes all reason.

Prerequisite: You do not already have the Supernatural ability.

Benefit: You have a small amount of supernatural power and ability. At the start of each day you gain 1 Supernatural Point though throughout the day you can gain Supernatural points up to a maximum of your [Supernatural Stat's] modifier (minimum 1). You also gain a Supernatural Act and a natural attack appropriate for the supernatural affliction you possess.

Additionally, your condition manifests itself at various times outside of your control. Whenever you are reduced to 1/2 your maximum hit points or less, or whenever you are struck by a critical hit, you must make a Will save, DC 25. Failure indicates you fly into a frenzy, attacking friend and foe as though under simultaneous *confusion* and *rage* spells for 1d6 rounds.

At least once per month, based on triggers appropriate for your supernatural affliction, you must make a DC 25 Will save. Success means you have suppressed primal urges related to your condition. You must then make checks on subsequent nights, DC 25 plus 1 per previous success this month. Failure indicates you have succumbed to the primal urges; you transform into a supernatural terror until the next sunrise or after eight hours, whichever comes first.

Upon becoming so afflicted, other conditions can be imposed and powers granted unique to that supernatural

condition.

Using Supernatural Points

Supernatural Points are something of a limited commodity. As a racial power they are not incredibly strong, though in the right build they can certainly grant a defining edge over opponents.

Many abilities that are powered by Supernatural points expend them. The abilities cost a number of points which are deducted from that character's available pool, much like *ki* points and similar functions.

Other abilities have an effect so long as the character has at least 1 Supernatural point remaining. These abilities are "always on" so long as the character has 1 or more Supernatural points but ceases once that character has 0 points.

These create interesting scenarios for characters who have to decide between using the last point to activate a stronger power or holding that point in reserve to power a set of other abilities that could be more useful.

Each round, the character can spend any number of supernatural points, but cannot activate a given power multiple times. Thus, a character could spend points to increase their speed and their strength, but couldn't increase their strength twice.

Additional feats can be taken, provided the character is of an appropriate race or supernatural affliction. This allows creatures such as vampires and werewolves to share similar powers but leave certain powers in the exclusive realm of the others.

Regaining Supernatural Points

Supernatural points can be replenished throughout the day by taking appropriate and thematic action. Exactly how varies by the race, but this always rewards that particular species or supernatural force for doing what it normally does.

All supernatural creatures have natural weapons and are rewarded for using these; when confirming a critical hit using a natural weapon, a supernatural creature recovers 1 Supernatural Point.

Whenever the character succeeds at an appropriate skill check with a Hard DC for their level (see *Table SGMG-11: Recommended Difficulty Class*), they recover 1 Supernatural Point. These encourage the player to use the character, and their tendencies, in a manner befitting the creature type. Vampyres, the suave and charismatic masters of the night, will benefit from charismatic interactions such as Diplomacy, whereas wyre will find strength in more direct, blunt interactions such as Intimidate.

Additional feats can be acquired that replenish supernatural points as well, offering different options.

Traits & Defects

Character Traits have been around the OGL game system for some time, formalized in the **Pathfinder Advanced Player's Guide** for the Pathfinder version of the system. Shadowglade adds Character Defects to the mix, mechanically similar features that introduce penalties to the characters instead of bonuses. This is done as an optional set of rules to help enhance the sense of suspense, potential for horror, and general grimness of the setting as opposed to others. A built in flaw immediately says the character isn't a perfect warrior. At the same time, creatively finding a way to overcome such limitations is often cause on its own for rejoicing and an epic moment in that character's life.

Ahead we have included the material on Traits and Defects from the **Shadowglade Player's Guide** for ease of reference. Common traits and defects can be found in the Player's Guide while traits and defects related to rules included in the GMG are included here.

Character Traits

At its core, a character trait is approximately equal in power to half a feat. Yet a character trait isn't just another kind of power you can add on to your character-it's a way to quantify (and encourage) building a character background that fits into the world. Think of character traits as "story seeds" for your background; after you pick your two traits, you'll have a point of inspiration from which to build your character's personality and history.

Alternatively, if you've already got a background in your head or written down for your character, you can view picking his traits as a way to quantify that background, just as picking race and class and ability scores quantifies his other strengths and weaknesses.

Many traits grant a new type of bonus: a "trait" bonus. Trait bonuses do not stack-they're intended to give you a slight edge over the non-PCs of the world, not a secret back door way to focus all your traits on one type of bonus to gain an unseemly advantage over the rules.

It's certainly possible, for example, that somewhere down the line, a "Courageous" trait might be on the list of shortfellow race traits, but just because this trait is on the shortfellow race traits list and the basic combat traits list doesn't mean you're any more brave if you choose both than if you choose only one.

Gaining Traits

Character traits can be acquired in several ways.

In most cases, a new PC should gain two traits, effectively gaining what amounts to a bonus feat at character creation. Some GMs may wish to limit this somewhat, depending upon their style of play; players may only be able to pick one trait, or you might allow three or more. Even if you choose not to use bonus traits at character creation, PCs can still pick up some with the Additional Traits feat.

Second, traits can be used as story rewards in place of loot or treasure. This is especially easy with the ally traits, wherein a character gains a connection who can grant bonuses to skill checks or specialized favors based on their position.

And finally, as Shadowglade has adopted the 10th level cap, traits can be used as minor rewards and upgrades in place of feats and full levels.

Types of Traits

There are five types of character traits to choose from.

Basic Traits: There are a total of 40 basic traits-ten each, split among the categories of Combat, Faith, Magic, and Social. Note that each of these four categories roughly equates to the four modes of adventuring, but aren't tied to specific classes. It's perfectly possible to have a religious rogue, for example, or a magic-obsessed fighter. Basic traits are "generic," and should be able to fit into any campaign setting with a minimum of customization. These traits can be found in the **Pathfinder Advanced Player's Guide**.

Campaign Traits: These traits are specifically tailored to give new characters an instant hook into a new campaign. Campaign traits tailored to a specific campaign and often provided by the game master or included in a Player's Guide for a published campaign. If your GM is using campaign traits, one of your starting traits must be a campaign trait; other traits can come from the other lists.

Race Traits: Race traits are keyed to specific races or ethnicities. In order to select a race trait, your character must be of the trait's race or ethnicity. If your race or ethnicity changes at some later point (as could be possible due to the result of polymorph magic or a reincarnation spell), the benefits gained by your racial trait persist only if your mind and memories change as well do you lose the benefits of a race trait. Of course, in such an event, you're also likely to lose skills, feats, and a whole lot more!

Regional Traits: Regional traits are keyed to specific regions, be they large (such as a nation or geographic region) or small (such as a city or a specific mountain). In order to select a regional trait, your PC must have spent at least a year living in that region. At first level, you can only select one regional trait (typically the one tied to your character's place of birth or homeland), despite the number of regions you might wish to write into your character's background. Regional traits as used in Shadowglade also considers a character to be of that region for the purposes of many mechanical options, including Knowledge (local) checks and specific feats.

Religion Traits: Religion traits indicate that your character has an established faith in a specific deity; you need not be a member of a class that can wield divine magic to pick a religion trait, but you do have to have a patron deity and have some amount of religion in your background to justify this trait. Unlike the other categories of traits, religion traits can go away if you abandon your religion, as detailed below under Restrictions.

Restrictions on Trait Selection

There are a few rules governing trait selections. To begin with, you as GM controls how many bonus traits a PC begins with; the default assumption is two traits. When selecting traits, players may not select more than one from the same list of traits. Certain types of traits may have additional requirements, as detailed in the section above.

Remember also that traits are intended to model events that were formative in a character's development, either before he became an adventurer, or (in the case of additional traits gained via the Additional Traits feat) events that happened while adventuring. Even if he or she becomes a hermit and abandons society, they'll still retain their legacy of growing up an aristocrat if they took a social trait. The one exception to this is religion traits- since these traits require continued faith in a specific deity, PCs can indeed lose the benefits of these traits if they switch religions. In this case players should, consult with you for options. You may simply rule that the player loses that trait, or you could allow the player to pick a new religion trait tied to the new deity. Another option is that if a player abandons a religion, they lose the associated religion traits until they gain an experience level, at which point they may replace lost religion traits with basic faith traits.

Trait Construction

Traits attach to specific qualities of the character, typically those features that are derived from other sources, such as skills, saving throws, etc. They are also used to include a particular skill as a class skill, regardless of class, or to give some other small bonus. Use the following to help construct your own traits.

- Broad Save (all Fortitude, Reflex, Will), +1 Max
- Bonus Class Skill (1) and +1 Bonus to that skill
- Bonus Class Skills, 2
- Combat Bonus (attack, AC, CMB, CMD), +1 Max
- Penalty Reduction, -1 Max
- Skill Bonus to one (1) skill, +2 Max
- Skill bonus to two (2) skills, +1 Max
- Specific Saves (against fear, enchantment), +2 Max
- Other, check with Game Master (Stabilize On Touch, Material Component Cost Reduction, 0-level spell 1/day, +900gp Starting Gold)

The examples listed under "Other" includes several options presented in existing materials of small benefits not directly linked to a save, skill, or other value. These add extra options to the character, some of which have small but interesting impacts on game play. Traits regarding these should always be carefully considered.

Character Defects

Defects are a companion to Traits for the Pathfinder system and operate in similar fashion except that they are a penalty instead of a bonus. While unorthodox, penalizing players and all, this can help even out balance concerns for a table and provide a strong impetus for a character to adventure, often with the end goal of removing the defect.

Gaining Defects

There are a couple ways to acquire defects. Regardless of how they are acquired, these especially are subject to the approval of the Game Master. All defects taken should be appropriate for a character's race and/or class, or modified accordingly. For example, a Fighter should take "Slow to React", which penalizes initiative, over "Nightmares", which penalizes initiative and concentration; while a player may lobby for Nightmares for thematic reasons, fighters also do not often need to make concentration checks. The fighter could be slow to react because of nightmares, but this becomes a narrative difference; the fighter's player can call the cause nightmares, but should suffer the -2 penalty to initiative, not the -1 to initiative and -1 to concentration. Likewise, a character who is a scholarly sort without a physical background can already be assumed to have poor strength, especially if their ability score already bears this out. That character then would be a poor candidate for the "Weak" defect; they would be better suited for the "Poor Memory" defect.

First, it is recommended that each character in a Shadowglade campaign take at least one defect at character creation. Ideally the defect, like traits, should play a significant role in the back story of the character and help advance the character concept. Defects that do not do this can be stricken by the Game Master. This should have significance to the build of the character and its back story and offer some obstacle to overcome. A character who is “Downtrodden”, “Lame”, has “Weak Fortitude”, or is just “Unlucky” by way of unnatural means, will have the source in their back story; berated by a powerful authority figure, injured in a duel, spent many years ill, or upset a local woman believed to be a witch. As a result, they may adventure to overcome that limitation: develop the strength to stand up to the authority figure, who is in essence a bully; avenge their injury on the assailant who caused it; seek a cure, or at least prove they can still provide a viable service despite their prolonged illness; and finally, find some way to appease the witch who cursed the character, or find the source of the unluckiness should it prove to be something else. Defects taken at character creation should be limited to one, though more can be allowed with Game Master approval.

Second, a Game Master may issue a defect after a significant in-game event. A recurring villain striking an especially damaging critical hit, for example, could earn the character the “Nightmares”, “Scar”, or “Unnatural Wound” defects, leaving a lingering mark on the character: nightmares exaggerating the scenario, a distinctive scar, or an unusual weapon that has left a mysterious wound medicine and divine intervention cannot seem to heal. Unlike defects at character creation, which should be limited to just one, the Game Master can assign such defects as they see fit throughout the course of play, resulting in characters with several defects.

Compensating for Defects

Defects do not exist to just hamstring characters unnecessarily. As with several other defect-like systems in other games, there is something of a reward for taking such a restriction. These should only be compensated for later in the game; defects taken at the start of the game should remain independent.

First is the awarding of bonus traits. Defects acquired later in the game, say from injury at the hands of the recurring villain, could be tied to a trait. Following the previous example: “Nightmares” could eventually allow for a combat bonus trait, the constant replaying of the scenario has given the character insight into how that enemy character, or class, fights; an especially gruesome scar is rather frightening and could add to intimidation checks; and finally, an obvious unnatural wound constantly bandaged can engender sympathy from locals, a diplomacy bonus, resulting in folks more likely to offer help, lodging, etc.

Second, a Game Master can award bonus experience points for defects. This can also be done one of two ways. First, a flat experience reward, a lump sum given when the defect is taken in the amount of 5% of the experience necessary to reach the next character level. Alternatively, a Game Master can require that a player role-play the defect, and award bonus experience based on the defect’s use in play. A character would gain a bonus 5% experience in each encounter or experience rewarding occasion where the defect played a role. The second option should be used over the duration of a level’s worth of play.

Finally, a defect cannot compensate for itself or another defect. For example, by itself a “Scar” cannot grant a bonus to intimidation. No matter how it might be framed, by themselves defects are penalties to abilities, skills, and other features. Should a player wish to have a defect grant circumstantial aid without a bonus trait tied to the defect, consider the “Make It Work” feat.

Eliminating Defects

In the course of adventuring, a character can attempt to have their defect eliminated with Game Master approval. A character with an Unnatural Wound, for example, may have received it in a duel with an opponent who coated their blades with unusual toxins. Finding that character again and forcing them to give up an antidote or treatment could cure the wound. Likewise, a character who suffers Nightmares could lose their defect by confronting those fears in play. Removing a defect should be an event of some importance, not just a side effect of leveling up.

In campaigns with greater access to magic, spells of suitable strength could suppress or remove a defect per game master discretion. *Greater restoration*, *heal*, *limited wish*, *miracle*, or *wish* are all strong healing spells capable of removing a defect. *Lesser restoration* can suppress the effects of a defect for 1/hour per caster level, while *restoration* can suppress the effects of a defect for 1/day per caster level.

Defect Construction

Defects attach to specific qualities of the character. Defects related to Ability Scores include a -1 penalty to the modifier, and as a result all checks or related features. Defects related to skills or non-ability checks often include a -2 penalty. Use the following to help construct your own defects.

- Ability Score Modifier, -1 Max
- Broad Saves (all Fortitude, Reflex, or Will), -1 Max
- Class Skill, -3 Max
- Combat Penalty (Attack rolls, AC), -2 Max
- Penalty Increase, +2 Max
- Percentile values, +/- 5%
- Single Skill Penalty, -2 Max
- Specific Saves (against fear, illusion), -2 Max

Note that when constructing a defect, it should always have a numerical effect attached. Non-numeric defects have unpredictable consequences and could prove to be of little concern at all or significantly more influential than intended. Even if the defect somehow ends up impacting the character little, there is still a mechanical penalty to something and has created a field the character avoids use of, thereby limiting their options.

Scaling Defects (Optional Rules)

The defects provided in the **Shadowglade Player's Guide** are appropriate for characters at the start of their careers, which is to say first level or so. As the character grows however, they gain skill points, bonuses, and new options that could easily outclass any defects taken. While a -1 penalty at the start hurts the odds, by 2nd level the new skill ranks already outweigh the penalty, a zero-sum, and by 3rd level the defect is nearly meaningless as skill ranks offset the defect's penalty.

If this is a concern, scale the defects with the characters much like certain feats scale bonuses to skills. This ensures that the defect is always there and must be recognized. Upon reaching 5th and 10th levels increase the penalty of any defects a character has by 1. In the case of defects without simple numerical values broaden the effect of the original defect.

Players-Only

Something for you as GM to remember; traits and defects are generally intended for players-only. They are after all unique characters in the world as your story revolves around them. While we have taken measures to let players know they are not the center of the whole world, in their story they deserve to have a bit of a leg up over the other characters.

If you wish to include a trait on an NPC, use the Additional Traits feat, featured in the **Shadowglade Player's Guide**. This awards the character two traits from two different lists. This still qualifies for the player-only leg up as the NPC has to use one of their feats to gain traits while, if you follow the recommendation, players get at least two traits as bonuses from the word go.

Contacts

Contacts represent a unique type of character trait or defect as appropriate. While typical traits or defects are elements of a character's back story, a contact is a character involved in the current plot.

Commonly, a contact trait or defect offers a bonus or penalty per usual, with an added caveat: once per session, they can interject. For a contact listed as a trait, the character can provide a boon, a one-shot bonus to a skill or provide a contact or item the character could not otherwise procure. For a contact chosen as a defect, this represents a liability: an urgent need to return an item to them, the possibility of blowing the character's cover during an important moment, etc.

Because of their importance to the stories and the impact they can have, contacts should always be treated as campaign traits or defects and rarely anything else. They should not be designed by players, nor should they be a first choice for a trait. Contacts are certainly the domain of the game master, to use as you see fit. Offer the player a choice of a contact tied to the story or campaign for a trait or defect, but on the grounds that you design this character and their benefits. Take into account the character's back story, their involvement in the current area, and the needs of the campaign. Local law enforcement or clergy make excellent, and helpful, contacts and can offer information, assistance, and the like. Meanwhile, a childhood friend down on their luck, an injured or ill family member, or an enforcer from a local mobster can provide a defect prone contact to menace the character's life.

Use the benefits and drawbacks listed earlier to determine any static effects for a contact. When dealing specifically with a contact's one-shot offers, however, feel free to offer solid aid. A +10 bonus to one skill check, say to press the local elected leader for information, for the session due to the contact's aid is entirely permissible. Likewise, a -10 penalty at a crucial moment, such as blowing a character's cover so the contact can try and collect an old debt, can hamstring a character nicely and create interesting encounters and tensions.

Additional

Traits & Defects

The **SGMG** introduces new rules and features that interact with characters in different ways. Ahead are some new traits and defects that interact with these new rules and flesh out some suggestions from before. We've also included a handful of defects that are appropriate as story based penalties.

Traits

• Beneficial Guide

The character has a persistent and powerful hallucination: a deceased acquaintance, friendly to their cause, appears to them and offers words of advice. This could be the character's own wishful thinking or it could be a legitimate haunting, a mentor or loved one watching over them.

Effect: The character receives a +2 Morale bonus against Fear effects.

• Old World Expert

You are well versed in the material of the old world that has been discovered so far. You are adept at deciphering its script and at discovering forgeries of these valuable items.

Benefit: You gain a +2 trait bonus on Appraise and Linguistic checks to identify old world artifacts, script, and potential forgeries. One of these skills (your choice) is always a class skill for you.

• Steel Nerves

You have nerves of steel.

Benefit: Unlike normal saves, the Will save to resist a Fear Rating does not automatically fail on a roll of 1. In this case, add your Will save modifier as normal and then check to see if the save is successful.

• Shake it off

You bounce back faster than others when disturbed.

Benefit: If you fail the Will save to resist a creature's FR, its effects last 1 round less.

• Well Grounded

You are well grounded and unshakable, even in the face of the unknown.

Benefit: You gain 1 Sanity Point

Beneficial Contacts

The following are some common potential allies for a character. While combat with these characters should never be an option, if it does occur, such as to aid in a scuffle, use the recommended NPC stat block from the *Game Mastery Guide*.

• Jovial Merchant

You have a strong contact among the local merchant guild.

Benefit: During your time in town, you may call on your friend for a favor. Once per session, you can ask for one of the following favors: a single mundane, disposable item worth 10gp or less, your merchant friend can find a premium buyer for an exceptional item netting 10% more than usual for the sale, or the friend can provide a +10 trait bonus to a single appraise check.

• Town Priest

You have studied with the local clergy men for years and find yourself at ease in a house of worship. The local church leader has taken a shine to you and can help you occasionally.

Benefit: During your time in town, you may call on the local priest for a favor. Once per session, you can ask for one of the following favors: a free minor healing, a ward (such as a religious symbol, bottle of holy water, etc), or +10 to a single Heal or Knowledge (religion) skill check.

• Town Sheriff

While in town, you have made the acquaintance of the local sheriff. Happy to have a well rounded individual such as yourself around, the sheriff will happily lend a hand when you are willing to help keep law and order in his town.

Benefit: During your time in town, you may call on the local sheriff for a favor. Once per session, you can ask for one of the following favors: release from local imprisonment for a minor crime or misunderstanding, the assistance of 1d4 guards for a specific plan in the interest of the city, or a +10 trait bonus to one Diplomacy *Gather Information* or Knowledge (local) skill check.

Defects

- **Assume the Worst**

You've read and heard far too many scary tales growing up. As such, you think you know them all and assume the worst at every turn and are more frightened sometimes than is reasonable.

Effect: The character suffers a -2 penalty to fear rating checks.

- **Disturbed**

You're not quite right, something known to all around you. You otherwise keep to yourself, however, so everyone lets you be...

Effect: The character has 1 less Sanity Point. If this would cause them to have 0 Sanity Points they do not suffer the side effects until they would lose Sanity.

- **Easily Unhinged**

While your companions are stronger in the face of danger, you have yet to overcome your own anxieties.

Effect: If The character fails the Will save to resist a creature's FR, its effects last 2 rounds longer.

- **Hallucination**

The character has a persistent and powerful hallucination; a deceased acquaintance, be it friend or foe, appears to them, haunts them, and demoralizes them. This could be the character's own guilt eating away at them for something they did or didn't do or it could be a legitimate haunting by an enemy of little power but vicious demeanor who has chosen to spend their afterlife heckling the character.

Effect: The character receives a -2 Morale penalty for sensitive matters as their hallucination taunts them and makes them question their actions or distracts them from the task at hand.

- **Frontier Sickness**

You are afflicted, sadly, with all too common of an illness seen in the Frontier. As such, you are not as hardy as you could be though no one can tell you why.

Effect: The character has greywood poisoning, though the source is unknown. The malady is referred to as "frontier sickness" by the uninitiated.

- **Soft Will**

Your will and your mind are soft, weak, especially prone to becoming overwhelmed.

Effect: The character suffers a -2 defect penalty on any check that would reduce their Sanity.

Disadvantaged or Threatening Contacts

The following are some common potential hindrances to a character. While combat and killing particularly annoying threats should never be an option, if it does occur use the recommended NPC stat block from the Game Mastery Guide. Of course, killing one thug from the local mobster might end the hindrance for the night, there are always more where they came from.

- **Injured Family Member**

You have an injured or ill family member. While stable, their condition and the threat of it deteriorating weighs on your mind.

Effect: Once per session, at the GM's discretion, this weight may express itself as one of the following: require a Concentration check, DC 10, when attempting an action or -5 to a single fear or despair inducing effect.

- **Mobster or Loan Shark**

Your past comes back to haunt you as deeds or debts owed to local mobsters come due. While you can duck the enforcers for a little bit, they still follow your every move.

Effect: Once per session, at the GM's discretion, the enforcers may make their presence known with one of the following effects: a -10 penalty to one Stealth or Disguise check as enforcers call you out in public or an NPC contact's starting attitude is one step worse toward you alone due to well-placed rumors.

- **Shifty, Needy Friend**

You have one of "those" friends; someone who never grew up, never got their life together, and has been unable to make much of their lot in life. Despite their personal shortcomings, however, they are near and dear to you and you would do almost anything for them.

Effect: Once per session, at the GM's discretion, the friend may ask a favor of you or impose a penalty. The following are common requests and effects: a -10 defect penalty to a single Diplomacy check as your friend's intrusion offends the other party, an expenditure of 10% of the gold on your person to pay for your friend's crucial debts, or the loss of one minor disposable item worth 10 gp or less.



Supernatural

Supernatural in the Setting

Shadowglade is a low-fantasy world, one more akin to our own world during the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance than to sprawling fantasy realms typically played in. The world suffered significant trauma to its people, its governments, and its very way of life. As a result, the world that exists today is one that was built on the ashes of old, and is still very much a work in progress.

Despite some of the trappings discussed already, an important note is that Shadowglade is *not* exclusively a horror setting. A more proper description might be “Supernatural Action”, as while there are horror elements, the emphasis is on the action and the unusual rooted in the supernatural, not necessarily the horror.

It is very much a “points of light” campaign world; the population is heavily dispersed across a wider area, a

result of finally being able to spread out after the years of confinement along the central river. As such, the people are fiercely defensive of their property and way of life and do not take well to intrusion or meddling. Subservience to a larger political force is a distasteful necessity and tolerated only when, as long as it remains, necessary.

As a low-fantasy world, the population of the realm reflects this. The only known sentient race of the world is humans, and thus is the basic choice for characters. Repurposed variations on traditional fantasy races are available as discussed earlier, though they are technically still human.

Publicly, threats to the safety of these villages and smaller city-states commonly come in the form of marauding bandits, natural disasters, and the like. Occasional warlords rise up amidst the population and overtake small swaths of territory. They are often quickly put down by the larger powers, however, reducing their reign to mere months. The unknown in Shadowglade is possibly the biggest threat however, something everyone knows on some level. Even the bastions of civilization fear what lurks “out there”. As a global consciousness, the lack of real answers regarding

the Upheaval eats away at the peoples of the world, hence the fierce adherence to the Erislanian churches. Tales from long ago, however, hint at other dark powers in the world, some of which still lurk in the shadows today. Some forces know more than they are letting on, while others know far less than even they believe they do. Deception and misdirection are common elements, a fact which players, and characters, would do well to remember.

The Common World

The Common World is the world that everyone in the realm is familiar with; the day to day goings-on, political and religious entities, etc. Also called the “mundane world”. This is the world that is detailed in the **Player’s Guide to Shadowglade**, the companion title to this **Game Master’s Guide to Shadowglade**. For full details on the setting please read through that as well as **An Introduction to Shadowglade**.

For the most part, this world is quite similar to our own, especially France and Germany around the tail end of the dark ages. The environment, technology, and social aspects of the setting mirror our dark ages or early Renaissance Europe, with isolated settlements, lords controlling large swaths of land, and the church having a commanding influence in the daily life of commoners and the political body as well. To these people, the world they see is the world they know, and much of what we consider appropriate for a “traditional fantasy” setting is completely alien or just as much fantasy to these souls as it is to us.

Superstitions do run rampant and occasionally a wave of fear over what amounts to nothing sweeps through a region. Some tales prove more difficult to disprove, however, and through this ancient traditions and wards live on.

The Shadow World

Appropriately, many of the other elements of the world hide under cover of darkness and shadow. This is a secret world of supernatural forces, dark magics, and foul creatures. Here also lies scared and desperate people, unwilling or unable to function in the world at large. Buried in this darkness is also the truth of the world, the root of the Upheaval, and the essence of what was lost on that fateful day.

Here is where the fantastical forces of the realm lie. Valiant heroes struggle and fight in these shadows to rid the world of all manner of evil, and many succumb to death or darkness with little to no fanfare. Otherwise good people perform heinous acts in the name of preservation, real or imagined. And some hide themselves here, accepted among “freaks” and unable to face the rest of a xenophobic world incapable of comprehending them.

Over arching Concepts

Many campaigns have a “theme”. For some its high-adventure, others pulp-adventure. Even other supernaturally oriented campaigns have various themes; good over evil, knowledge over ignorance, and even the struggle of the supernatural to hold on to their humanity. Shadowglade parts ways with several supernatural and horror-themed campaigns in a number of ways. It strives to be a more open campaign setting, focusing not just on the dread and horror, but on adventure as well, discovery and exploration. Where the supernatural is concerned, it is often as backdrop or the driving force behind other discoveries and interactions. In much the same way, science fiction uses the far-fetched pseudoscience of tomorrow to explore moral quandaries of today.

Shadowglade also toys with several tropes of role-playing in general. The supernatural aren’t just enemies to be slain, they are real characters. While other campaigns dwell on supernatural creatures maintaining their mortality, Shadowglade instead looks to mortals exposed to the supernatural to see if they can overcome their own preconceptions of what is “out there” and discern the truly evil from their true allies.

Shadowglade’s over arching concepts then deal with adventure and exploration, its not a full grim-dark setting with evil around every corner. By the same token, it is a setting that should make players and characters ask questions, question assumptions, and explore the world and the people around them.

Supernatural Forces

The supernatural is an important part in the darker underbelly of the realm. While the normal folk go about their lives, the supernatural runs rampant. It usually creeps through the shadows, back alleys, and dark woods, but it occasionally lives on Main Street in any town or village in the realm, right out in the open for the world to see if only they would pay attention.

The following are some basic examples of unnatural or supernatural forces in the realm.

Beasts

"Beasts" is a catch-all term for what amounts to unusually intelligent, malevolent, and powerful creatures. Unlike normal or even dire versions of standard animals, these creatures are acutely aware of their surroundings, those who hunt them, and what they can do to bring immeasurable amounts of suffering.

Constructs (Flesh golems, constructs)

Constructs themselves are not typically supernatural, though the technology of the realm isn't sufficiently advanced.

As a result, alchemists and inventors seeking to unlock the mysteries of artificial life typically resort to the occult and dark arts to animate their creations. Constructs in Shadowglade can run the gamut from "flesh golems" such as the Frankenstein Monster to mechanical terrors fueled by an anger and hatred from beyond the grave. Rarely are these creatures intelligent, and they almost never exist in numbers. They are the creation of a brilliant, though often disturbed, mind and usually, and thankfully, the only one of their kind. Constructs should not be confused with the golem, discussed ahead.

Ghosts

As discussed earlier, the entry way to the afterlife has remained sealed since the Upheaval, resulting in an inordinate amount of supernatural activity in the realm. Ghosts are a common manifestation of this breach of nature. While normally content to wait until what they assume is "judgement day," some spirits have unfinished business they seek to rectify.

Ghosts themselves can range anywhere from simple sensations and voices pointing the way to a murder or to full-fledged manifestations of ethereal entities. Likewise, they can be benevolent or malevolent, seeking to avenge their death, warn their loved ones, or cause harm for their own, twisted reasons.

Goblyns

Goblyns are, truth be told, common enough in the Midland and Frontier. Not a potent force of supernatural power in the realm, they none the less are one of the more commonly encountered specimens of the unusual judging by the numerous tales that tell of the creatures. Often vicious and mean spirited, they have a constant shadow-war with various kobolds and similar protective spirits in the outlying villages.

Golem

The golem have little to do with the world, a common trend among the supernatural of this world. The golem take this several steps further and keep their communes from even casual view, making no attempt to blend in to common culture and instead hide in the shadows and outskirts of society. There is good reason in this, as members of the communities are reconstructed mortals. The appearance of a "dead" loved one would send ripples through a community no amount of explanation could quell. Thus, they keep to the shadows and themselves and only a scarce few even realize the communities exist, let alone their true nature.

Golem should not be confused with the "common" construct, the flesh golem. Unlike those creatures, the golem are fully self aware and in full control of themselves, not mindless automatons.

Hags

Hags are a warped and twisted creature that are found in the depths of the marshes, swamps and woodlands. Often mistaken for a mortal witch, those who cross a hag quickly learn she is more than a mere mortal. It is information they rarely get to share however as hags are one of the truly and wholly evil creatures in the realm; they enjoy little more than a fresh meal of any traveler they can get their claws on.

Kobolds

The kobolds of Shadowglade are quite unlike the kobolds of other realms; in fact, they are more akin to house elves seen in those worlds. This is a closer tie to the kobolds of European lore, as a helpful spirit who maintains the home it has chosen in exchange for housing and care in the form of treats or food left after the family sleeps for the night.

Angered kobolds are a force to be reckoned with and they will stop at little to defend their chosen home. Likewise, there is little to match the fury of a mistreated kobold.

Normal People

Even in a world where the supernatural prey on the innocent and unsuspecting, "normal" people are still capable of some of the most horrifying crimes of all. Any Torchbearer worth his or her salt knows not leap to

a supernatural cause straight away when a mundane, mortal suspect is just as likely. Others in the realm are not so wise, however, and look in shadows for monsters that are under their nose every day.

These crimes run the gamut of possibilities. From simple crimes dressed up to appear supernatural, as the perpetrator disguises their actions to prey upon the fear of the superstitious locals, to cruel and disturbing acts mistaken for supernatural perpetrators, because that no mortal mind could conceivably perform such deeds.

Occult Practitioners

Practitioners of the occult are surprisingly common in the realm, though they take great pains to keep their identities secret. This grouping includes the standard “evil” cultist, but it also includes ancient orders in the vein of the Masons and Illuminati. They delve deeply into the hidden secrets of the world and possess a modicum of power that they use to their benefit, be it the betterment of the world around them or personal gain is something only that person can decide.

Sorcerers

Wizards may not exist in the realm because there is no one to teach them magic, but sorcerers most certainly do. Born of family lines who have had encounters with the supernatural, these individuals have an innate ability to interact with the world that brings wonder and fear to those around them. Sorcerers in the realm are just like any other folk and can choose to use their power for good or evil, as they see fit.

Due to the backlash and people assuming them to be possessed, worshippers of Asurik, and other claims of immorality, sorcerers keep a very low profile but still try to live in the “normal” world with their friends and families.

Undead

Undead are an exceptionally rare supernatural creature in the realm. This includes corporeal creatures such as ghouls, skeletons, and zombies. These creatures are indeed evil through and through, though not because of their intents (they have none as mindless undead) but rather the forces that went into animating them. To animate a deceased person as a puppet to do one’s bidding is an abhorrent act, and those who seek the power to do this very thing are not doing so with the best of intentions to begin with.

The biggest caveat regarding these forms of horrific undeath is simple: they are often the means to an end, not the culprit themselves. Rarely will a natural confluence of events create a mindless eating machine. Usually they are animated by another force and given direction by the same.

Vampyres (Vampires)

The vampyres of Shadowglade today are the offspring of those who rebelled hundreds of years ago. Distanced from the war, they frequently revel in their newfound powers, using their immortality and talents to carve empires for themselves out of the darker hollows of the world or the business realms of the major cities. Their forefather’s necromancer overlords are very much aware of the younger creature’s presence and activities and slowly work to bring them back under their thumb once more or at least eradicate them before beginning the war anew.

Like many supernatural races present vampyres are not innately evil. Many new vampyres are victims of chance or circumstance, though agents of the Guild are transformed as a reward for their service to the organization. There are a number who try to use their newfound power for good, though others simply do their best to do as little damage as possible to the world around them. They still have to feed and though the more compassionate among them attempt to slake their thirst with the blood of animals, only the blood of humans can end the cravings once and for all.

Wyre (Werewolves)

The wyre are a very common supernatural race, though their neighbors could never tell the difference. Preferring to live among their own kind, they dwell mostly in the Frontier in tight-knit communities that protect their secret and watch each other’s backs.

The legends of the werewolves that do plague the Midlands are the result of the more aggressive of their kind. Banished for their crimes or their beliefs, they seek to carve a new place in the world, starting with the weak villages of the humans and eventually to take their place as rightful leaders of their own kind.

Man Or Monster?

One significant difference between the supernatural forces in this realm and those in others is that many of these creatures *aren’t naturally evil*. Many are citizens of the land just as normal humans and seek only to live a quiet existence.

The golem, possibly more alien and inhuman than any of the others, cares little for humanity. Their indifference has them waiting patiently on the sidelines of the mortal realm, knowing they can outlast any mortal civilization and have no need to hasten it along. In fact, exposure only hurts their cause and they have little reason to expose themselves just yet. Occasionally one will break with their community and indulge in any number of common, mortal, vices or acts of violence.

In the Frontier, entire villages exist where all of the residents are wyre, werewolves. Living as normal humans and hunting area woodlands for wild game, they lead a quiet life away from prying eyes, knowing the fear their kind can inspire. The occasional upstart or dissenter is exiled from such a village, someone who refuses to live by the rules of the clan. These exiles turn on normal humans, giving rise to the legends of werewolves in the land and the impression that they are all murderous beasts.

Vampyres, while rare, walk a thin line between mortal and god. In the quiet baronies of the Centerspine, small communities exist who have struck an accord with vampiric lords; service, and sustenance, in exchange for protection from other, darker, forces. Like human lords, some are benevolent and just, while others are tyrants. Rarely will a vampyre seek a life among the Midlands, but it is not unheard of. Again, like normal humans, these individuals run the gamut of law-abiding citizen and dark-hearted criminal.

Countless other legends and rumors swirl about the lands regarding what commoners think these creatures are. Some are partly accurate, others are completely off base. Regardless, there is no blanket mind set for many of these creatures.

Players as Supernatural Entities

Thanks to the prevalence of the supernatural in the realm, this is one of the few settings where characters can not only contract a supernatural status such as lycanthropy or vampirism, but can willingly join their ranks or even begin as such a creature.

This is a delicate area, however. Typical transformations outlined in the **Bestiary**, such as into a werewolf or a vampire, represent a creature stronger than the average player. These normally include level adjustments to help bridge the gap, such that a 3rd level Fighter who is also a werewolf is considered a 4th level character. While such a consideration does help balance the powers of the race and scale it to a player-appropriate level, some players prefer not to take level adjustments, wanting to grow into their class fully, without that weight holding them back or disrupting their design.

To further this goal, and make growing into a supernatural race more interesting, certain creatures are receiving treatment for the Shadowglade campaign setting to allow players to play a supernatural creature out of the gate and without modifications such as a level adjustment.

Golem are newly awoken representatives of the surviving race. The secrets of their kind are held by the elders, the Children of the First, though new offspring are readily taught the importance of patience, the dangers of those not Born, and the raw elemental power they can wield. Each Golem is allowed to choose their own path and, without

cause to do otherwise, most choose a neutral road and one that generally trends toward good.

The Wyre player race represents the civilized werewolves of Shadowglade. These are otherwise well adjusted individuals from the werewolf communities who have taken up an interest in questing and the mantle of adventurer for their own purposes.

The Vampyre player race offers players the chance to grow from a fledging vampire into a strong and capable creature under their own power. These are often agents of masters in the distant Centerspine, sent to carry out business in the Midlands, but can be individuals making their own way in the human world.

Additional creatures are slated for treatment; if you don't see a race that interests you or your players yet, let us know and we'll see if its on deck or if its one we missed out on!

Reception

As you can expect, the common citizen of the realm has a poor understanding of the supernatural. The appearance of such a creature elicits a violent reaction in nearly all communities. Only a handful of folks not of supernatural decent are aware of the existence of the creatures, which leaves good intentioned werewolves, vampires, and others with few or no allies.

Recognizing that one's birth does make one's destiny, the Order of the Ebon Throne extends their protection to all, human or otherwise, who seek a life of peace and tranquility. Among their number even the Order counts several spell casters, vampires, werewolves, and others as valuable and effective agents. By the same token, however, dark souls have been known to abuse their leniency, using their relative safety to perpetuate dark deeds. While most are eventually found out and stopped, such is the price of offering the benefit of the doubt.

The Torchbearers, on the other hand, are products of their environment. Their ranks swell with those who have been scarred by the shadows and seek not only justice but vengeance. Their fury blinds them to the possibility that such creatures share more in common with them than they could imagine, and at times this attitude results in needless, and unjust, deaths.

And finally, even beyond the secret organizations, supernatural races, and intrigue abounding the world over, a final, dark threat lies in wait for anyone. In a world of uncertainty and mystery, fear of the unknown is more than enough to drive otherwise seemingly normal people to dark places. While monsters lurk within the shadows, monsters lurk also within the most human hearts in this world.

Traditional Monsters

In Shadowglade

So, you've got several tomes of monsters, ranging from the "core" creatures to far-flung specialty sets and you're itching to use them. But, the Shadowglade setting precludes a lot of that, doesn't it? Not exactly. Like much of the fantasy gaming genre, fantasy creatures have their root in real world myths and legends. A key difference is these fantasy games have taken these staple creatures of myth and lore and attached additional information to them, expanded upon them, made them more common. The Shadowglade setting, on the other hand, is more heavily rooted in our dark ages, not the fantasy realm many have come to expect. Here, monsters return to a status of folklore, myth, and rumor. The trick to using them in Shadowglade then is to foster that same sense of horror, wonder, fear, and amazement that lurked in the original tales from which our favorite fantasy monsters sprung.

A Change in Mentality

The biggest difference to the traditional, sword & sorcery monsters in Shadowglade is one of mentality. The atmosphere of the setting precludes wide-spread monster settlements, regular monster incursions, and mercenaries kicking back in the local tavern talking about a nest of goblins they just eliminated. In this world, the folk are concerned with mundane things, and have mundane defences.

While this means you won't run into goblins everywhere, it also means that those same goblins are even more fearsome and ferocious because no one really knows what they are, nor how to combat them.

Legends & Lore

No one kills "a" goblin, because no one has seen a goblin. They're not common place, its not at all like killing a rodent or other vermin. "THE" Goblyn of Westerlane Woods, however, is a different matter. Same basic creature, but a different level of mystique.

Many players have no fear of goblins, kobolds, lizardfolk, and the like simply because most all of them have read through a **Bestiary** or similar title. They know the statistics, specifications, powers, abilities, and weaknesses of most of the common enemies. To make the creature a threat, the biggest trick lies in creating a particular mythos, even if it is just localized stories, that makes the creature out to be something fearsome, ferocious, or otherwise threatening. Often times, you will get the most mileage by taking an otherwise mundane, traditional creature and ramping up its reputation, and generally reducing it to a singular entity.

This is how many of the monsters in traditional sword and sorcery were born in the first place. Fantasy staples such as Medusa or the Minotaur are, in real world mythology, singular creatures. They are legends in their own right, with many tales behind them. Fantasy gaming took these legends and extrapolated, creating entire species from these stories. Here we need to do exactly the opposite. This also helps in building tension and suspense. Following in the steps of some of the better horror and suspense movies and stories, tensions are higher when there is but one enemy out there, or the characters don't even have an idea how many there are, they don't know what it is, how to defeat it, and it keeps harming them or picking them off, one by one.

Location, Location, Location

Taking a look at our "Goblyn of Westerlane Woods" and other historical examples like the Minotaur, we have one common trope: the creatures are usually associated with one place or another. These creatures become bound in the mind set of the locals, and even in the minds of others sharing the tales, to that location. In our case, its a place called "Westerlane Woods." Real life examples of such beasts include the Loch Ness Monster, found in Loch Ness of Scotland and "Champ" found in Lake Champaign of New York.

Tall Tales & "Eye Witness" Reports

Next, no one has actually *seen* the creature. Snippets, tall tales, bare sightings, and the occasional, sudden, face-to-face encounter that left the subject so terrified they were unable to properly function and recall very little.

Spotting the Goblyn

The Goblyn of Westerlane Woods has been seen by hunters and lumberjacks for years. Old Man Rellings saw the creature once near the river, catching fish with its bare hands and eating them on the spot, raw and complete, bones and all! Taking all of the stories together, the creature is between three and ten feet tall; green, blue, red, and yellow; and had these big, little beady eyes that glowed in the dark. And had claws, three feet long, on all of its fingers and toes.

Behind the Creature

Finally, especially in the case of creatures who have been around for a while, anecdotal origins are created by those who live around the area. Often, these are adapted by local parents as a means to frighten their children into behaving or to drive home a moral important to their family. Other times it amounts to pure, wild, speculation with no foundation what-so-ever. These can also be the source of quaint or unusual area traditions or names, such as the naming of certain, mildly-poisonous berries "Goblyn Berries".

Birth of the Gblyn

The Gblyn of Westerlane Woods, who may or may not be ten feet tall, blue, and has swords for fingernails, was once a local child. He was a bratty, selfish sort who never listened to his parents, took what he want and never left anything for anyone else. So, one day, his father who was tired of being berated and abused by the troublesome child took him out into the woods; as the boy wanted new fangled thing or another, the father told him he had a gift for him, and he would give it to him on a trip through the woods. Once in the woods, the father sat the boy down and told him to wait right there, he would be right back. Knowing the boy wouldn't wait and would get into everything, the father had sat him beside a special berry bush, which the boy found. Never listening to his parents or anyone else, the boy never learned about the berries, or that they were bad for anyone. The boy ate all the berries on the bush he could find and, after a few minutes, felt ill and tired. Once he fell asleep, the father left him there in the woods and took off back to town. While the boy was sleeping, the town picked up and left. When the boy awoke, he wandered back toward town only to find it, and everyone had left. Sadly, the boy learned too late that he needed his family, and needed the townspeople. But, it was indeed too late. The boy returned to the woods and continued to live in the trees and bushes. Not knowing what was good for him and what wasn't, the boy ate everything he could find, making him sicker and sicker until he looked on the outside as bad as he was feeling on the inside.

So, unless children want to end up a little goblin left in the middle of the woods, children better listen to their folks and learn what is good for them and what isn't.

Often, these tales will have a dark or dire consequence for failing to abide by the moral. While generally perceived as "scare tactics", different regions regard them with different levels of respect; for some, they are an amusing tale to be told over a campfire, while for others they are serious warnings of what could come. For further examples of such dark tales, refer to the classic **Grimm's Fairy Tales**.

Hard, Cold Reality

The reality of the stories doesn't always have to match up. As was shown in the rambling above, eye witness reports aren't always reliable for one, and some material is just plain fiction, the product of rumor and fear mongering, folks desperate for attention, and, just as likely, the insane.

The Encounter

An adventuring party is contracted to check up on a caravan that's gone missing. A common, staple task for low-level adventurers. Further inquiry reveals the locals believe in a devilish little creature dubbed the "Gblyn of Westerlane Woods", whom they blame for all manner of misfortune. They ascribe all sorts of fantastic powers

and abilities to the monster, claiming it impossible to kill, let alone find. Likely, the creature was also responsible for the attacks the locals believe. Examination of the route supports that it was attacked and apparently hauled off...and small footprints dot the scene.

Following the trail, the party runs afoul a band of five to six small, green skinned creatures with little eyes and wide mouths and ravenous appetites. After the raucous little beasts attack the party, it is discovered that they are flesh and blood, just like anything else; in the course of fighting, however, one of the horrid little creatures runs off. Pursuing it after dispatching the others, the party runs into a small, woodland cave...and a whole nest of the nasty little creatures who pour forth like ants from a doomed hill.

Expanded Notes & Variants

The world of Shadowglade is a wide and varied one; as such, monsters and creatures of the dark exist for all corners of the world. While the notes here shed some light on how to deal with the monsters you already know, the **Shadowglade Bestiary** takes a look at a few other options for standard creatures.



Secret Societies

Aside from apparently random forces of nature or darkness, secret societies and a few public organizations are the driving forces behind this shadow realm, for good or ill.

Major Organizations

The following major organizations are movers and shakers in the realm. They frequently become involved in inter-city politics, bending leaders to their will to accomplish their designs or inciting incidents to hide their true intentions.

The Guild is a shadowy organization of thieves and daggers-for-hire with a strict code of loyalty to each other.

The Necromancers of Soularus present the single greatest threat to the world, though as of yet they have yet to recover their power...

The Order of the Ebon Throne is a secretive military order determined to protect the realm from the shadows by becoming the shadow themselves.

The Order of the Sacred Light seeks out the darkness in the land and eliminates such threats for the glory of Erislan.

The Redguard sweep forth from the mountain stronghold of Northport to conduct various raids and hunts for artifacts of incredible importance without alerting the world who they are, what they want, or who it is they work for...

The Torchbearers are more direct representatives of the people, those scarred by the shadows and darkness of the land who have had enough and are ready to stand up for themselves, their family, and the unfortunates across the land...

Others

The secret societies and organizations discussed herein make up some of the more common in the realm. Rumors or legends exist for most of the hidden groups, though little proof can be found to back up such claims. Others are more public but not widely known.

Other organizations exist, of course, though these are much more mysterious. Often regional in nature, these smaller groups are typically offshoots of one of the major faiths, a splinter group of other organizations such as the Torchbearers, and so on.

The Guild, Guild of Shadows

Notable Persons Antione, Andressa Romain
Base of Operations Mir

"It's nothing personal, just business." could very well be the motto of the Guild. Consummate entrepreneurs, the Guild has their hands in everything in the city of Mir, from legal transactions and legitimate storefronts to a hand in the back pocket of every thief in the city. Most politicians in the city are on their bankroll in one fashion or another as well, though the Guild doesn't take the time to deal in petty politics; they keep the law makers happy long enough to manipulate specific policy to their liking then keep them under their thumb with proof of their complicity as threat.

The Guild takes contracts from nearly all channels, often working both sides of an industrial espionage war or assassination attempts. They aren't fools, however, and their services don't come cheap. All potential clients and operations are vetted well before hand and missions optimized for minimal effort, minimal collateral damage, and maximum profit. The Guild will not recklessly commit agents to operations that are ill-thought or have too great a potential for operative losses.

The Guild, unlike many other criminal enterprises, values its agents. Many of them are family, or very near to being family. Under the tutelage of Antione Romain, the recently departed leader of the Guild, the organization worked hard to watch each other's back and protect their own even as they undermined the corrupt officials and merchants around them in a very "Robin Hood"-esque fashion. The elder Romain was known among the lower classes as the "Nobleman", a revered figure among the street urchins from among whom Romain sprang. Hard work in the Guild gave rise to his leadership of the most complex criminal empire in the land, though Antione saw it more as using corruption against the corrupt. With his position, he wanted to help the best and brightest of the street find a real place in the world and so sought out the most talented of the pick-pockets, street performers, and their kind to help give them a chance as much as to improve the ranks of the Guild.

Today, the Guild is led by Andressa Romain, the daughter of Antione. Antione was killed recently by a contract operative who didn't share the organizations values, giving rise to a worldwide manhunt for the perpetrator. Andressa meanwhile has assumed operations of the organization, wanting to join the hunt for her father's killer but accepting the responsibility for managing her father's organization as an appropriate tribute. Unlike Antione, however, Andressa

grew up in the organization with her father as a prominent individual. She does not value the street folk the same way her father did. While she does invite urchins and pickpockets to the Guild, she does so for her purposes and to support the Guild only, without much concern for the individual.

While existence of the Guild is something of an open secret, no one can really point to anyone and say with certainty that they are or are not a member, save for the upper tiers such as the Romans.

Unknown to the rest of the world, however, is the fact that it is the Guild that the Baronies of the Centerspine interact with, not the elected officials. The Guild is well aware that a number of the lords of the Baronies are vampyres. In exchange for keeping those lords appraised of peculiar events in the southern lands, as well as procuring various artifacts without question, the baronic lords bestow honored members of the Guild with the gifts of vampirism, creating an even more agile and effective force of agents both for the lords and for the Guild.

A small point of note; the proper title for the organization is simply the "Guild", not the "Guild of Shadows". The addition of "of Shadows" was done at some point more recently by the conspiracy theorists and rumor mongers. While the Guild finds it slightly amusing, the addition is widely and publicly panned, as why would an otherwise illegal guild take pains to indicate that they are, indeed, acting suspiciously.

Using the Guild

The Guild is a perfect thieves guild and espionage ring; any story involving shadowy undertakings is a perfect opportunity to roll out the Guild.

Characters can frequently be recruited by the Guild, and citizens in and around Mir and their other operations frequently are. Hired through intermediaries, many don't even realize they are working for the Guild; such hired hands minimize Guild involvement and potential Guild losses should the operation go south. Operatives who prove their worth as such contract employees can be invited to join.

The Guild can easily turn up as allies or enemies depending on the scenario, and the same operatives can fill both roles at different times. After all, it is just business. Agents can accept the easy fact that at one job a character may have been on the other side while today the two share the same goal. The only time a Guild operative holds a grudge is when one of their own is lost; then, heaven and Erislan help the poor soul who slew the operative. If they are forced to, agents will work to see that the job is finished, but after the dust settles all bets are off. Unknown to the Guild are the fact that they are frequently

used by agents of the necromancers in Soularus and wealthy lords who subscribe to the tenets of the Order of the Darkened Sky to perform their dirty work without tipping their hand to the Order of the Ebon Throne or Torchbearers. For all of their posturing and lofty aspirations, the Guild ends up as hired muscle and thieves more often than they would care to admit to, especially under the guidance of profit conscious Andressa.

Common Classes: The Guild has a number of people in their pocket, but actual agents are typically the usual suspects: bards, fighters, and rogues. All are frequently between levels 1 and 3, though a few can rise higher to higher stations.

Andressa Romain (CR 9)

XP 6,400

Female human rogue 10

N Medium humanoid

Init +7; **Senses** Perception +18

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 55 (10d8+10)

Fort +4, **Ref** +10, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities evasion, improved uncanny dodge, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +11 (1d4-2/19-20)

Ranged mwk dagger +11 (1d4-2/19-20) or
mwk light crossbow +11 (1d8/19-20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +5d6

Spell-like Abilities (CL 10th, concentration +13)

3/day – *prestidigitation*

2/day – *true strike*

STATISTICS

Str 7, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 16

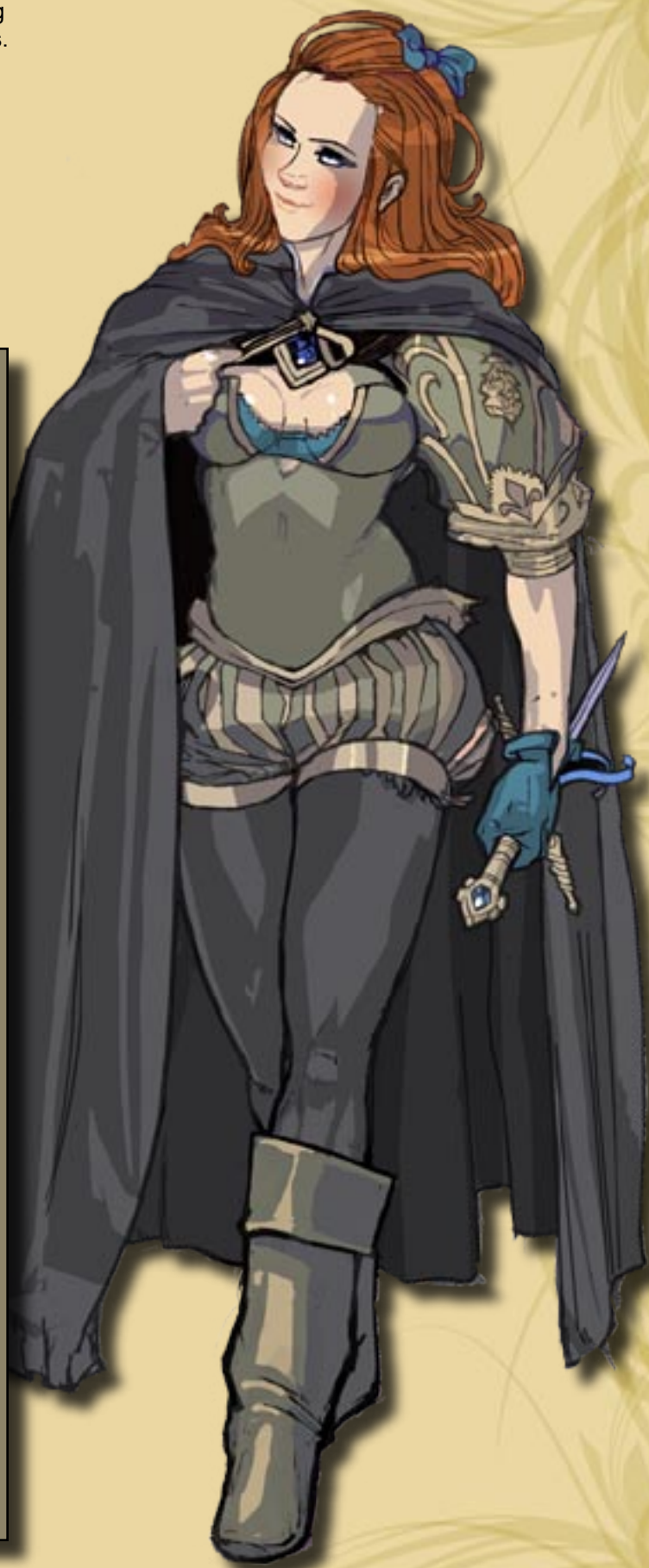
Base Atk +7 **CMB** +5 **CMD** 18

Feats Alertness, Extra Rogue Talent, Improved Initiative, Persuasive, Shadow Strike, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +16, Appraise +16, Bluff +16 (+21 to deceive someone), Diplomacy +20, Disguise +16, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (local) +16, Linguistics +16, Perception +18, Perform +16, Sense Motive +18, Sleight of Hand +16, Stealth +16

SQ poison use, rogue talents (honeyed words, lasting poison, major magic, minor magic, snap shot, sniper's eye), skilled liar +5

Other Gear blue whinnis (4 doses), chain shirt, disguise kit, masterwork dagger x2, masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts, masterwork thieves' tools, sassone leaf residue (2 doses), oil of taggit (2 doses)



Necromancers of Soularus

Notable Persons Orazious, Eyranes the Flesh Queen, Terranos

Base of Operations Soularus

The Necromancers of Soularus, though not an official identity, are the single greatest threat to the world of Shadowglade. From their massive, walled city deep within the salt field known as the Great White Desert they continue plotting their revenge.



Defeated during the war preceding the Upheaval through their own hubris, the necromancers found themselves without their greatest asset, the deranged god Asurik. They retreated to their once glorious city of Westmin on the western coast only to be confronted with the desolate salt wastes and massive, craggy shores. Diminished of power and without the massive armies they once commanded, the necromancers knew they would have to find a way to rebuild before they could attempt another strike on the lands of the living.

Using the salt desert to their advantage, they constructed the city of Soularus on the western edge, a fortified fortress of horrors. Out there, they found the den of the Green Dragon, corrupted by the Upheaval and transformed into a Black Dracolich. Imprisoning him, they tortured and manipulated the once great protector of life into serving their needs.

In the wasteland, the necromancers have continued their quest for power and seek to resurrect Asurik, rebuild their armies, and attempt once more to take the world of the living and the Seat of the Stars. Without Asurik, the necromancer lords of the city are convinced that their efforts will fail. Their attempts have yielded fruit over the years; they have finally created a perfect servant race, mindless and soulless creatures dubbed “husks”, which they use for menial labor, raw magical power, and spare parts for their grim experiments with the undead.

While it is far too early to consider a strike, the necromancers have slowly moved out into the civilized world under the cloak of shadow. Single agents and small teams have infiltrated communities, learning more about the world at large and what has become of it over the last several centuries. They are constantly on the look out for pre-Upheaval artifacts, spells, and sources of power to add to their growing arsenal. Likewise, they are well aware that their progeny, the vampyres and golem survived the conflict and seek to bring them either under their control or eradicate them before the final push against the mortals begins.

Using the Necromancers of Soularus

While in most instances of the setting characters and races are presented with shades of grey and questionable morality, the Necromancers of Soularus are undeniably evil through and through. They began the pre-Upheaval war in a quest for raw power regardless of cost and continue that pursuit today.

The Necromancers are one of the only sources of sorcerers in the realm. Agents sent out into the world are between first and third level husks, and of the aberrant and undead bloodlines. These agents often head small groups of local hirelings under a veil of secrecy, paid well enough to stand their ground but not enough to know what their employer is

really up to. Their job, frequently, is to secure information or resources the city lacks; for all of its magic, some basic necessities are still required. Likewise, raw biological material in the form of live people, bodies, and body parts become necessary for one gruesome experiment or another and husks won't always prove an appropriate substitution. These are secured and shipped through various channels to the edge of the desert and beyond.

Likewise, they will occasionally send agents out into the world simply to sow discord among the city states. Blatant displays of wicked power undermine the faith of the land and give rise to deeper research into Asurik, which the necromancers hope will aid their own cause. Darkened Sky cells (see below) are frequently manipulated by the necromancers and then discarded once they are through with them.

The Necromancers are opposed directly by the Order of the Ebon Throne (see below) and individual vampyres with the means to do so. They watch both carefully and attempt to distract or sidestep their efforts. Occasionally the necromancers succeed, which is never a good thing for the mortal realm, though they are frequently stymied and turned back to their wasteland with little to show for it.

The true lords of Soularus haven't left the confines of their city in several hundred years. Thus, only agents of the city are encountered in the inhabited lands. Rarely do these agents deviate from the average populace in appearance or mannerisms. It is truly rare that one of the higher ranking, and equivalently higher leveled, sorcerers of the city leaves its walls let alone one of the lich lords.

Common Classes: The Necromancers of Soularus generally employ whatever means necessary to accomplish their goals. Agents thus have at least one level of sorcerer with aberrant or undead bloodlines plus a level or two of a different, common class to effect their missions. Operations of great importance may be overseen by a full-fledged sorcerer of fifth or sixth level who keeps a low profile while they are in the known lands.

Soularusan Agent (CR 1)

XP 400

Male human rogue 1/sorcerer 1

LE Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 12 **touch** 11, **flat-footed** 11 (+1 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 8 (2 HD; 1d8+1d6)

Fort +0, **Ref** +3, **Will** +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +0 (1d4-1/19-20)

Ranged dagger +2 (1d4-1/19-20) or
light crossbow +2 (1d8+1)

Special Attacks acidic ray (1d6, 5/day), sneak attack (1d6)

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st, concentration +3)

5/day - acidic ray (1d6)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 1st; concentration +3)

1st (4/day) - *chill touch* (DC 13), *disguise self* (DC 13)

0 (at will) - *acid splash*, *ghost sound* (DC 12),

prestidigitation, *touch of fatigue* (DC 12)

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 12, **Con** 10, **Int** 12, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +0 **CMB** -1 **CMD** 10

Feats Eschew Materials, Lightning Reflexes, Stealthy

Skills Bluff +7, Diplomacy +7, Disguise +7, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Perception +4, Slight of Hand +6, Stealth +8

Languages Common, Ancient

SQ trapfinding +1

Other Gear padded spidersilk robe, daggers(3), light crossbow with 20 bolts, disguise kit, thieves tools

Order of the Ebon Throne

Notable Persons Sir Xavier Halegrad, Kaylor

Base of Operations Shadowglade

Many things are said about the Order of the Ebon Throne. Many of them are true. Most all of them, however, lack support, at least support that can prove the existence of the Order. The Order of the Ebon Throne is a covert government organization with their fingers in all matters supernatural, all in the name of defense of the kingdom. The city of Shadowglade is built on the ruins of the former city of Silverglade, the name itself a tribute to the pre-Upheaval world before it. As the only government with any shred of support to their standing before the cataclysm, the founders of Shadowglade considered it a sacred duty to ensure the survival of the city and its citizens. Upon learning more of the cataclysm, its causes, and the fact that the necromancers remained even after the apocalypse destroyed their world, the founders vowed to see that the dark forces could never rise again.

They fulfilled their vow by forging an alliance with the essence of the great White Dragon and founding an order of agents to act under its direction. The Dragon taught the Shadowglade founders much of what it could remember, but even in the early years its memory had become scattered, spotty; it knew the necromancers caused the war, the cataclysm, and that they remained and must be stopped, destroyed.

Using what the Dragon taught them, the Order of the Ebon Throne built a secret society that sought out similar instances of supernatural power: sorcerers, wyre, vampires, golem, and learned more about them. Some were brought into the fold, given shelter while their kind suffered elsewhere in the realm because of the misunderstandings surrounding them. Others deemed threats to the society at large were imprisoned or destroyed.

Using the Order of the Ebon Throne

The Order of the Ebon Throne and the Order of the Sacred Light have many similarities, though the Ebon Throne is considerably more lenient. Under the tutelage of the White Dragon, the Ebon Throne has always had a better understanding of the supernatural elements of the world. That isn't to say that they're not as aggressive about the protection of the city.

Ebon Throne agents seek out supernatural elements. They keep a well stocked array of informants in nearly all

governments and outposts and their ear to the ground for any suspicious activity. They are the only power aware of the necromancers in Soularus and take great pains to keep that knowledge to themselves; without knowing what the necromancers are capable of, or where they already have agents of their own installed, they cannot risk full exposure.

Likewise, the Order of the Ebon Throne has an interest in artifacts of the pre-Upheaval society, be they magical or mundane. In their quest to better understand their enemy, the Ebon Throne looks for whatever hints they can find wherever they can find them.

Characters are likely to encounter Ebon Throne agents on the road. Their duties take them across the land, not only to eliminate individuals or retrieve artifacts, as with the Sacred Light, but also to protect the citizens of the land. Supernatural flare ups in Shadowglade territory always draw the attention and agents of the Ebon Throne, and many outside of their sphere of influence see support from the Ebon Throne, though not always overt.

Common Classes: The Order of the Ebon Throne accepts all comers who pass their inspections, trainings, and background checks; as a result, theirs is a widely varied number. Encountering agents on the roads typically means the character will be well suited for their mission. A typical strike team would consist of a strongman, such as a well equipped fighter or barbarian, a ranged striker such as a talented rogue or ranger, and a well educated cleric for support, both in patching the team up and researching or providing intelligence on a threat. Numbers will vary based on the needs of the mission. Otherwise, anyone in the realm could, theoretically, be a member of the Ebon Throne.



Sir Xavier Halegrad (CR 9)

XP 6,400

Male human fighter 10

LG Medium humanoid

Init +5; Senses Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+9 armor, +2 shield, +1 Dex)

hp 85 (10d10+20 con, +10 from Toughness feat)

Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +6; +3 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk greatsword +17/+12 (2d6+7)

Ranged mwk heavy crossbow +17/+12 (1d10+7)

Special Attacks weapon training (heavy blades +2, crossbows +1)

STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 14

Base Atk +10 CMB +13 CMD 24

Feats Alertness, Cleave, Great Cleave, Greater Weapon Specialization, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Persuasive, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword)

Skills Bluff +7, Diplomacy +9, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (local) +4, Perception +8, Sense Motive +8

Languages Common, Iberian, Iren

SQ armor training 2

Other Gear mwk full plate, mwk heavy steel shield, mwk greatsword, mwk heavy crossbow, holy water (3), signet ring of office

Order of the Sacred Light

Base of Operations Ire



The Church to the Lord of the Stars is hardly a secret organization; they are in fact the most public and well known of the Erislanian faiths. They do, however, house a number of secret societies dedicated to various functions for the preservation and betterment of the church.

One such order, the Order of the Sacred Light, conduct military operations for the church in defiance of the sanctions placed upon them by the other nations; they ultimately answer to the law of Erislan, not the law of men. The Iren church views this sect a necessity and indeed a holy rite, to carry out the will of Erislan when no other path will do. These are often surgical, pin-point, operations with clear goals and no connection, apparently, to the church. They are of vital importance, however, which is why the church would never entrust such delicate deeds to anyone else.

The Order of the Sacred Light answers only to the Grand Marshall of the Iren church.

Using The Order of the Sacred Light

The Order of the Sacred Light is often dispatched to remove blatantly supernatural threats, or at least threats that they become aware of that aren't necessarily common knowledge. Awareness of any sorcerer, vampyre, or wyre in a community, for example would be reason to dispatch an agent to eliminate that threat.

In keeping with the general attitude of the supernatural species, this target could be a perfectly normal person who happens to have a supernatural heritage, perfectly content to go about their life without delving into those aspects of themselves. They can just as easily be the monster painted by the church as well. Player characters then may be put into a position where they are hired to help protect such a person who knows they are hunted or enlisted to help hunt the person who is billed as a criminal.

Members of the order are likewise tasked with retrieving artifacts of importance to the church, acquiring Erislanian tomes and items before the Iberian church or destroying items that threaten the church.

A key note in using the Sacred Light is remembering these characters are very much Lawful Good in alignment; Ire is home to a large body of good clerics and paladins after all. What they do they do because they believe with every fiber of their being that it is noble and right. They should almost never be presented as the major villain; a strong adversary, misguided, yes, but out and out villain no.

Common Classes: Cleric, Inquisitors between 3rd and 5th level.

Redguard

Base of Operations Northport

The Red Guard are notorious secret force operating out of the city of Northport. They are known mostly in the underground intelligence community, though rarely spoken of. Really, outside of territorial clashes with the Order of the Ebon Throne, the Redguard exists mostly to further Northport's interests while not officially acting as an army.

Redguard cells typically consist of a decorated member of the Northport elite who acts as financier, outfitter, and commander of hired hands. The rest are often recruited from the outlying lands, often the Frontier, and turned loose as appropriate.

Northport regularly needs access to large pools of labor for the mining of valuable resources and work in the foundry buried beneath the mountain stronghold. They obtain this frequently through slave raids of Frontier communities as conducted by the Redguard. Commanders of these cells frequently care little for who or where the capable workers come from, they only know they have quotas to fill. Thus, villages selected are often rivals in one shape or another of the hired hand's home town.

The Redguard are viewed with mixtures of awe and hatred. They are capable of bringing down the wrath of Northport with all of its technological might, leveling cities and small villages before the sun has set. As such, Frontier folk who are aware of their actual existence either despise them or wish to join them if only to spare their village the ravages of the elite guard.

Using the Redguard

The Redguard are one of a few, undeniably evil organizations or forces in Shadowglade. That isn't to say that all of its members fit the mold, however.

Redguard excursions are typically done under the cover of darkness or with a great deal of shadow play; they cannot exist and so they must not exist. They mask their actions with bandit raids, appearing as a minor war party from a disgruntled rival village, etc. Elaborate missions require elaborate measures as well; it isn't unheard of for a Redguard project to take advantage of local superstitions, using agents disguised as creatures of local lore or secretly replicating scenes that invoke supernatural elements. Doing so distracts a village from what the guard really are up to.

The Redguard are regarded as evil, truly evil, because they are the essence of progress at all costs. Their labor pool is made up of Frontiersmen and Midlanders abducted for slave labor. In the deep forges of Northport many die as a

result of the brutal, back-breaking labor forced upon them. While the products of the forge city stand to revolutionize the world, the price in blood is far too high. Those who know of the city's actions may hire mercenaries for rescue missions, to retrieve loved ones or at least word of their fate.

As noted earlier, not all individuals fit the sinister mold of the organization; there are many within its ranks that feel pressured, trapped. Often former slaves themselves, they have come to accept their position in life and attempt to do the best they can given their circumstances. In the right moment these souls could change allegiances, but until they know for sure that they can make a difference many remain stuck, cowed to the whims of cruel masters.

Common Classes: Alchemist, Barbarian, Fighter, and Rogue between 2nd and 4th levels. Cell commanders can reach as high as 5th level.



The Torchbearers

Notable Persons None

Base of Operations None, though a meeting hall exists in Four Rivers.

The Torchbearers are a loosely organized vigilante group of monster hunters active in the Frontier. They believe, rightly, that the realm is infested with inhuman creatures and they seek to destroy those who would harm normal folk. Unfortunately, the Torchbearers are often shortsighted, stubborn, and dangerously ignorant. Many are unaware

that creatures such as the wyre are generally peaceful, seeing only the monstrous beasts they presume are responsible for all manner of pain and suffering.

More is discussed about the Torchbearers in their own booklet, "The Torchbearers". A sample Torchbearer, Thomas, is presented below.

Common Classes: Torchbearers are, almost exclusively, of the torchbearer class. Characters with levels in other classes are typically rangers or rogues besides torchbearer.

Thomas (CR 1/2)

XP 200

Male human torchbearer 1

CG Medium human (grassfolk)

Init +2; **Senses** Low-light vision, Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat footed 14 (chain shirt +4, dex +2)

hp 12 (1d10+2)

Fort +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee Greatsword +3 (2d6+2 19-20/x2)

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15

Feats Alertness, Catch Off-Guard

Skills Acrobatics +4, Bluff +5, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (Local) +5, Perception +8, Sense Motive +8, Survival +6

Languages common

SQ Ferocity, Torchbearer Defense, Torchbearer Focus, Track

Other Gear Greatsword, chain shirt, explorer's outfit, backpack (bedroll, crowbar, flask of acid, flask of holy water, flint & steel, hemp rope (50 ft.), sunrod x3, trail rations x5, waterskin, wooden holy symbol)

Torchbearer Defense: Starting at 1st level, Thomas gains a +2 class bonus to Reflex saves, as determined by his Torchbearer Focus.

Torchbearer Focus (Ex): Thomas gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls and +1d6 on damage rolls against Corporeal supernatural creatures. He also gains a +1 bonus on Bluff, Knowledge, Perception, Sense Motive, and Survival checks against these creatures.



Minor Organizations

The minor organizations presented here are smaller, frequently regional groups. They have an awareness of the supernatural, but only have a few of the pieces. Their explorations frequently take them through the shadows and reveal far more than any of them would have wanted to know.

• Order of the Darkened Sky

Notable Persons Ashton Sinclair

Base of Operations Varies; each cell possess their own meeting space, workshops, etc.

The Order of the Darkened Sky was once an organization in its own right until the untimely death of its founder. Today, the only thing tying believers together are scant copies of Sinclair's work. The premise of the Order of the Darkened Sky is simple: Asurik, who's existence was key to the balance of the world as the dark to Erislan's light, has been destroyed and with him the balance upset. Accepting this premise, followers for years have sought out ways to help recreate the fallen god through any means necessary: divine, arcane, science, blends of the three, etc. all in an effort to restore the balance independent of any other concerns. As a result, great leaps in biology, technology, and even arcane and supernatural studies have been made, but also lost. The original group sought this outcome solely for their religious reasons; they wanted to restore the world to its pre-Upheaval state which legend and lore speaks of as being a pristine world of beauty. Today that mission has been twisted without guidance from true believers, leading the texts, constructs, and experiments of the Darkened Sky to become collectors items among the elite and wealthy seeking new diversions or avenues of power.

Would-be members of the organization are highly independent, often intelligent, frequently wealthy or backed by wealthy supporters, and focused, some would say to the point of obsession or insanity. Advancements made in the name of the Darkened Sky, however, are rarely held onto; the nature of the work, delving into controlling negative energy, life forces, etc. frequently has a tendency to backfire. Thus, in addition to Sinclair's works, common Darkened Sky texts include failed experiments and concepts just waiting for someone else to fix the fatal flaw.

Modern groups consist of small cells, groups of about five or six actual members of the "Inner Circle". They will include more in their plans, and even promise to include others in the Inner Circle, but rarely keep such promises. It isn't uncommon for multiple cells in one area to come to blows, as each may need a rare and singular artifact for different reasons.

Using the Order of the Darkened Sky

The Order of the Darkened Sky runs the gamut from religious scientist seeking out the mysteries of the universe to the typical, pulp-era, evil cult bent on world domination. Most of these individuals or groups are not only not related beyond namesake and their search for the texts but often at odds with each other for control of information and resources both cells need.

Rich and affluent individuals are drawn to the Darkened Sky texts because of their purported power. It is said that Sinclair transcended death, which many mortals wish to do. The rich feel that there must be some way they can buy the same, and so delve into Darkened Sky texts and experiments to accomplish this. In many ways, these aristocrats are quite like upper crust folk of the early 20th century, with their fascination with the occult, fortune telling, seances, etc. Aware of their own mortality they seek out ways to prolong life or buy off death.

Frequently, player characters will become aware of these groups as they prepare their master plan. The characters could be hired to retrieve or steal expensive, rare, texts, components, materials, etc. Characters in a law enforcement position can also come across the individuals as they try to cover their tracks, killing minor errand-runners in an effort to keep their plans secret.

Occasionally a true believer appears and can do so at any end of the income and sanity spectrum. A wealthy individual could be a true believer, dedicating their lives to achieving Sinclair's work. These folks will likely be more diligent about their effort and leave fewer obvious signs of their intentions. Frequently these sort present little threat as the master plans are so large even they know they won't finish the work in their lifetime but could make it possible for someone else to after their passing. Such characters could make valuable NPCs, sources of information regarding more malicious cells of the Darkened Sky, a potential victim for another interested in the darker arts, or a source of unique items and gadgets.

Other times, the wealthy are manipulated by a true believer in lower income brackets. Preying on the vanity of their patrons and investors, they promise great power in exchange for their support. Cells including these folks can be random and unpredictable; the true believer commonly lacks the charisma and force of personality typically needed to keep vain men used to getting what they want in check. The patrons will act too quickly before devices or plans are fully finished, push hard for a quicker deadline, and generally the group falls apart in a spectacular fashion.

Finally, players are more likely to encounter the insane cultists and their leader than a true believer. These groups will stop at nothing to achieve their goals of

immortality, world domination, and more. These are also the groups most frequently susceptible to influence from the Necromancers of Soularus, using wealthy aristocrats and their vast web of connections to carry out their own missions in the populated territories without alerting the Ebon Throne of their presence.

Common Classes: Mostly NPC classes make up Darkened Sky sects, including adepts and experts. The occasional sorcerer appears as well, especially with Soularusan influence, and hired hands or muscle as the plot demands it. Most are all low-level, between 1st and 3rd.

• **Seekers of Memory**

Base of Operations Shadowglade

The Seekers of Memory were once regarded as a force to be feared. Revolutionaries at the dawn of the new era as civilization attempted to rebuild itself, the Seekers sought to recover the peoples' lost memories by any means necessary. Frequently this proved disruptive and counterproductive. Today, however, the Seekers have settled into a much more mundane position.

The Seekers of Memory are possibly the most prominent adventurers guild in the land; though none bear their name, many companies are members none the less. They keep their primary base of operations in Shadowglade though they have outposts in all major cities except for Northport. Especially active sites include the chapter based in Prisse's Folly and one at the feet of the Centerspine, between Northport and the Baronies. Though that second outpost violates several international treaties, it is kept well hidden and impossible to find for non-members, making it difficult to enforce such treaties.

Like the Guild, the Seekers act as hands for hire, though rarely for such wet work as the Guild is known for in illicit circles. The Seekers instead are archeologists and hunters, seeking out that which has remained buried. They are responsible for the discovery of several sites of reasonable importance and items of interest over the years.

Some of their operations are secret while others are done in full view of the public. Their guild houses carry many titles to throw suspicion from them except that most of the major powers know who they are in the first place. They especially have a difficult time with their former "brothers" in Northport and are frequently at odds over recently discovered troves of knowledge and antiquities.

Using the Seekers of Memory

As an adventuring guild, the Seekers of Memory are a prime organization for the PCs to become involved with. Joining is normally a simple matter of filling out forms

and paying a membership fee that varies by location. These are sometimes waived should an applicant provide them with an interesting treasure, piece of lore, or unique contribution to their coffers.

With the connections provided by the Seekers, PCs would have no shortage of jobs. Seekers are hired out as guides, protectors, and hunters. Seeker jobs always require the benefit of knowledge, however, meaning very few mundane jobs would ever turn up; no caravan guards, no messenger jobs, etc. In fact, should the Seeker office find out that is what the job consisted of the client would be black balled from ever using Seeker services again.

The catch to working on a Seeker job however is that, regardless of what is uncovered, it is the organization's property and by extension held for the public study and trust. The Seekers despise anyone who would collect such relics and items and hold them back in private collections. In fact, the Guild frequently makes a good income as Seeker chapters engage in dueling thefts with private collectors, each one tapping the Guild to procure a lost relic for their own designs.

Common Classes: The Seekers employ anyone who can further their goals and explorations. Fighters routinely make up muscle of expedition crews, while bards, experts, and rogues make knowledgeable allies.

• **Red Raven Society**

Notable Persons The Poet

Base of Operations Libraries and homes in larger cities

The Red Raven Society is an interesting group of young, adventuresome socialites who have discovered a common trope among written works, a thread left by a secretive and elusive writer they call the "Poet" who weaves lost tales of the world-before and warnings of a dire future into his works of poetry, stagecraft, and fiction. The Poet is a mystery as his or her handiwork appears in writings spanning the centuries, well after a mere mortal should have died.

These are literate individuals from the cities, typically Mir and Shadowglade as well as Prisse's Folly and the larger settlements outside of the city-states. Their interests in history, literature, and puzzle solving has led them to the Society and the Poet.

Joining is simple enough; many texts are said to contain common threads that, when taken together, form messages in new, decrypted, poems and stories. Finding one of these typically leads the reader to the Society. A number of coffee and conversation houses, book stores, antique dealers, and even adventurer guild houses take names from these hidden poems in an effort to lure those who have discovered the Poet's works to their club.

The Red Raven Society isn't much of a secret society, just a little known one. Seekers of Memory, public and private, chuckle and scoff as they watch the "children" chase shadows in story books. The Order of the Ebon Throne also keeps an eye on various chapters of the group but considers them "mostly harmless"; their exploits thus far have resulted in very little of concern. Occasionally their dogged research has resulted in the unearthing of a hidden archeological cache, but many attribute that to pure luck as opposed to honest deduction.

Using the Red Raven Society

The Red Raven Society is very easily a player character organization as much as any other could be. Typically composed of chapters of about five or six close friends or acquaintances, they meet in larger groups to discuss recent finds and hidden meanings. Several of these groups frequently meet under the banner of a older member, usually a manager of a business that caters to society interests. Coffee houses, book and antique dealers, adventurer and cartographer guilds are all prime meeting places and associations for the society.

The true goal of the Red Ravens is to find the Poet and learn directly from him or her what the terrible fate that is alluded to really is. Members are convinced that the Poet is still alive, as the same threads appear in works spanning centuries, from classic plays to contemporary literature produced under pseudonyms.

While they could never offer much, impassioned pleas and promises of sharing wealth, credit, and knowledge could be used to buy the assistance of players for the search for one of their lost treasures. Many times these will prove to be bogus, red herrings or misinterpreted texts, but every once in a while the Ravens will turn up something of legitimate interest.

Common Classes: The Red Ravens are typically armchair adventurers and thus mostly NPC classes, expert and warrior. Standard classes include bards, clerics, and rogues; in general, anyone who could be well read.

• Sages of Westmin

Notable Persons

Base of Operations None

The Sages of Westmin are a secretive group of men and women who believe in the reality and potency of "magic" in the land of Shadowglade. They believe that the power to alter and bend reality is real and pursue additional understanding of that knowledge. They are completely unrelated to the necromancers of Soularus despite their namesake; that was taken from old texts whose context has been lost to the ages.

Most members of the Sages of Westmin are at least 1st level Sorcerers. These members either *were* sorcerers, discovering their talents accidentally, or learned some form of the craft while interacting with the Sages, unlocking that potential. Those that are not Sorcerers are otherwise normal humans seeking, without success, to unlock their own magical powers. The Sages have no idea what the source of this power is, however, and so encourage anyone with the thirst for knowledge to keep pursuing the path.

Using the Sages of Westmin

Like a few other groups, the Sages frequently function as small groups though they do maintain tighter ties to a central authority. This is a group that is quite likely to wind up well over their heads in something unpleasant.

Low-level members could easily run afoul angry townsfolk who discover their talents and make the automatic assumption, as discussed in the Player's Guide, that the person in question is a worshipper of Asurik and therefore evil. Parties that stumble across this could move to help the scared person in question or join the mob. One of the larger organizations that become aware of these young people could easily dispatch agents to the scene; to protect, abduct, or eliminate depends on the creeds of the group in question.

Higher level sages can also cause problems for their community, intentionally or unintentionally unleashing forces larger than they can control. This will almost certainly draw the attention of larger groups.

And finally, like any other group, the Sages do keep their eyes open and ears to the ground in pursuit of arcane importance. Parties can be hired to acquire such books or relics, or help find members who set out for those items themselves.

Common Classes: Nearly all members of the Sages have a single level in sorcerer, the only force outside of Soularus who does, while a few have yet to awaken their blood or simply don't have it in them. The members make up differences in classes with nearly anything else; their sorcerer class will have been the most recently acquired, their knowledge of the magic in their blood recently awakened. Very rarely, a member will have levels exclusively in sorcerer; these folk will appear frailer than others of similar age and experience but carry an aura of power. The highest ranking member of the Sages is a 3rd level sorcerer.



Running a Campaign

Running a Shadowglade campaign is a delicate balancing act. On the one hand, you want the classic adventure your players are expecting. But, by the same token, if you're this far into Shadowglade you and possibly your players are looking for something a bit different.

Collected ahead are a number of notes and ideas on how to achieve that balancing act, as well as making the experience more unique and enjoyable. It includes everything from some basic framework for the campaign, how to get it started, how to keep it rolling, table tips for increasing suspense both in the story and at the table, and some reading and viewing suggestions to get the creative wheels turning!

Starting a Shadowglade Campaign lays out some basic campaign concepts. While individual adventures can take on many forms even across these genres, the listed variants provide a great jumping off point. **Character Builds** right after it lays out a quick look at which characters could excel best at these campaigns or adventures.

Introducing the Unusual helps chart out how to bring various groups into the unusual and supernatural aspects of the setting, while **Managing a Shadowglade** campaign looks at various ways to manage a group under way. This includes tips on building your adventures, maintaining atmosphere both in character and at the table and some advice about using the material.

Finally, **Resources and Inspirations** lists some appropriate materials to reference to help showcase the adventures and stories we have had in mind writing the Shadowglade setting. Delve into these yourself or cue up a segment for your party to help set the stage for your own adventures!

Starting A Shadowglade Campaign

The first step in kicking off a campaign, especially in Shadowglade, is determining what sort of campaign you want to run. The opportunity for various campaign types in the Shadowglade setting are numerous. Many times the best campaigns will feature elements of all of these, but hopefully the following subjects help spark an idea for your own series of adventures!

Archeological

The archeological campaign is one that has a lot of potential and root in our own world, circa 1920s, 1930s, during a world-wide rush to explore and exploit the ancient finds in Egypt and the rest of Africa. Much like pulp action heroes, characters can explore lost ruins and vacant sites in the search for historical truths.

These campaigns are likely to be very investigation intensive, but also combat intensive. Many treasures worth having are treasures that many people would like to have. Rival hunters can catch wind of a significant find, representatives of the Seekers of Memory can attempt to procure items for study, agents of the Guild could be searching for the item for a wealthy patron, any one of the churches could desire the find to add to their own troves or to keep some knowledge hidden and their authority unquestioned...really, the list is endless!

Often, these cases will rarely result in supernatural occurrences, but be high on the action quotient. Defeating a dungeon is just step one, after which the party has to out maneuver competitors and return the item to their own people for reward or study. Occasionally, these finds will turn out to be quite a bit more than the party had hoped for, however, which can result in adventures all of its own...

Criminal Investigation

A fantasy CSI of sorts; the characters are law enforcement agents, investigators, who are summoned to particular cases to keep local bias out of a situation. All of the major cities offer such services to those allied with them as an effort to keep the peace and keep some semblance of law and order in the wilds. Characters travel to new locations with almost every adventure, encounter different people and scenarios, and have the authority to do what they need to. These have more variety than the "Monster-of-the-Week" ahead, but can fall victim to the same trite pattern if one is not careful.

Government Work

Red tape and bureaucracies halt forward momentum of governments and often keeps good work from going undone. Threats to sovereignty must occasionally be dealt with even though the government itself cannot take the steps necessary. This is where the party comes in.

The powers that be in Shadowglade live in an uneasy truce. Four Rivers attempts to maintain true neutrality but stands up for the often trampled rights of the Frontier, while Mir seeks to plunder what riches they can wherever they can, regardless of cost. Northport is a constant enigma and target of all of the other powers for frequent industrial espionage. Shadowglade is seen as a threat by many, their open ways inviting dissent in other cities and secretive government capable of Erislan-knows-what. For all of these reasons, operatives are regularly needed to infiltrate the cities and offices of the other nations and learn what can be learned.

Monster-Of-The-Week

So called after typical television shows, each adventure or over arching story line features one monster, which the party investigates, hunts, and ultimately defeats. Sometimes it returns, having been defeated though not killed, sometimes it had someone or something that cared enough to take vengeance for the party's actions, or sometimes there was simply more than one.

These campaigns are obviously high on the supernatural, but this puts the party and the supernatural on more equal footing, a perfect campaign for Torchbearers. The catch is, however, the formula gets stale fast: ride into town, investigate weirdness, slay monster, ride off. Rinse and repeat. This works once in a while to break up pace or lull a party into a false sense of security ("Oh, its just another [blank], we can take that."). Stories that rely on this structure too much frequently fail or move on to different formats.

Mystery Solvers

Perhaps the world is exactly what it seems to the characters, and the rumors of supernatural occurrences are just a bunch of hogwash. Characters in these campaigns can be called on to solve all manner of apparently supernatural crimes and phenomenon, unmasking would-be criminals and saving the day through ingenuity and cunning. Too often this can fall victim to the worst of the "Monster of the week" phenomena discussed above, so the same caveats apply.

Political Intrigue

The characters are representatives of a single government, or even various governments, that have to work toward a single goal. Unlike the earlier "government work", this has characters acting as very real, very visible, proponents for their nation. Each faction has their own desires, fears, and

concerns that must balance out against those of the other characters. Played well, inter-party conflict will stem from role-playing concerns as each character vies for control of the situation. This format can be difficult to work with, as it requires a certain level of investment from characters, but can also be an interesting and entertaining format for players who want less group mentality and a little more interparty friction.

Supernatural Action

Following in the steps of comic books, a supernatural-action campaign features unusual lead player characters who fight back against the darkness. Occasionally, these characters are themselves supernatural, members of the “other side” who have made a conscious decision to defend mortals and normal folk from the worst of their kind. In Shadowglade, this isn’t unlikely; most of the non-human sentient creatures just want a peaceful life. Other times, the heroes are completely normal and want to stop the “others” from ruining the world.

Traditional Fantasy

Traditional fantasy is, believe it or not, a perfectly possible campaign sort in Shadowglade. Granted, dragons don’t lurk around the corner of every dungeon, but characters “in” with the underground magical culture can certainly take part in what many regard as a traditional adventure. Local sorcerers have learned of a hidden complex containing a lost manuscript, a nest of goblins has been plaguing a trade route, an upstart warlord is challenging accepted rule, etc.

Mundane Campaigns

While not entirely recommended, you can actually run a pretty mundane campaign within the setting if you so choose, bypassing many of the tropes of even traditional fantasy.

For a touch of the supernatural, there is “the truth is out there” style of approach. Excitement, and tension, mount because for all intents and purposes the supernatural doesn’t exist, *but it just might*. For many of these kinds of situations, occurrences that seem supernatural really aren’t, though occasionally something arises that just barely defies explanation. A trick to maintaining this style of campaign arc is not to take too much away during the wrap up. Always leave the possibility open that it was not-of-this world, and always keep the players guessing. The truth is revealed in these campaigns towards the end, when there is a unifying goal and an underlying plan in place to end evil once and for all, or perhaps join the darkness forever...

Or, the characters can skirt the supernatural. They play out otherwise traditional adventures involving the typical starter work, clean out a few dungeons, encounter a couple of warlords, and so on. While several of these might be supernaturally augmented so that they’re stronger than the standard opponent in the setting, it’s not something that

really matters to the players or their characters.

Character Builds

Deciding how you want to play says a lot about the character builds that will be expected. Communicate this to your players as you are going through character creation, and listen to them as well for indications on what type of adventures they would want to run.

Archeological Archeological campaigns should emphasize agility, cunning, and knowledge. Bards and rogues spring to the forefront as the iconic skill masters of the game, while fighters provide solid muscle and can help with traps if he is properly outfitted. Clerics and paladins can help deal with unusual illnesses, curses, and other maladies that stem from disturbing the tombs and ruins of lost cities and possibly lend a hand deciphering archaic religious references.

Criminal Investigation, Mystery Solvers & Political Intrigue

Mysteries and intrigue are nearly the exclusive province of bards, rogues, and classes of intelligence and sophistication, though others are perfectly capable of functioning in these environs. They are often aided by strongmen capable of watching their back when a detective delves too deeply, but otherwise brains and charm triumphs over brawn.

Government Work Government work in Shadowglade generally assumes a certain amount of “wet work”. Rogues with particular skills in poisons work wonderfully, and bards can spin a yarn and get a party nearly anywhere they need to get. Of course, no band of assassins would be complete without the muscle: barbarians and fighters are often the brutes needed to get the final job done. Otherwise, diplomacy is a key ability and characters with good charisma such as bards and rogues can work to diffuse a situation before resorting to violence.

Monster-Of-The-Week Monster of the week campaigns are the perfect place for martial characters to shine. Bards, clerics and rogues act as back up to the raw brutal power of barbarians, fighters, monks, rangers, and others who can charge into the fray and stand toe-to-toe with horrors the likes of which the world has never seen.

Supernatural Action Supernatural action is a category that can employ all characters equally; in fact, supernatural actions often share material with many other campaign styles discussed so far. These often involve a rather traditional fantasy setup including mad sorcerers, ancient cults, unnatural abominations and monsters, and the like. The party’s sole job? Seek them out and beat them down. This requires a measure of finesse and stealth, knowledge and lore, and raw physical power.

Traditional Fantasy Traditional fantasy assumes a

standard party of adventurers, not supernatural warriors crusading against the darkness. Herein, a typical team of a divine healer, martial fighter, ranged combatant, and skilled expert dodge through harrowing adventures and probably weave their way through many of the previous adventures as well.

Mundane Campaigns Mundane campaigns assume a lack of the unusual. Character types that mesh better with mundane tasks, such as barbarians, fighters, rangers, and rogues, fare better here.

Overwhelming Campaigns Player classes are generally designed to be heroes, characters of epic destiny. Shadowglade does take steps to down play some of these aspects but otherwise leaves these truths intact; the player characters are supposed to be strong and inspiring. To change it up, draw down the power level further so that the characters are much more mundane, consider using the NPC classes; adept, expert, and warrior. These classes are weaker than the PC classes and offer different and potentially interesting interactions. These classes work well for any of the above where a feeling of seriously being in over one's head is the desired atmosphere.

Introducing the Unusual

Starting a Shadowglade campaign can be tricky. You want to draw your players in, but you don't want to give away too much right off the bat. Much of how you introduce the unusual will depend on the style of campaign you wish to run as discussed earlier.

The Slow Method

This particular entry involves a lot of "teasing"; you're putting a little bit in front of your party and either quickly taking it away or offering a simpler, more realistic seeming explanation of their experience.

This method requires a lot of forethought on your part. Your goal is to make them question things, not throw them totally off the scent. Explanations should be well built on your end, but contain the occasional hole, leaving the players room to explore further.

Likewise, be sure this is a style of play your group will enjoy. Blood-thirsty, combat oriented groups will tire of this quickly, but nearly anyone can get bored if the action doesn't gain traction with a reasonable amount of time.

Step #1 - Disarming

The first step in preparing players and characters for the setting lies in disarming them. On the surface, Shadowglade is a very generic, dark-ages setting. Stripped mostly of magic and fantastic races, players are left with a fairly familiar world if they are familiar with our own history and are likely setting aside preconceptions about what the game will contain. Though you will probably reveal things to be otherwise shortly into playing, it is important at the open to drive down fantastic expectations.

Getting your players hooked on playing this campaign will hinge on catching their interest. Without overtly giving away the darker aspects of the setting, emphasize the mysterious aspects of the setting, the lost history, the rediscovery. All of these are aspects the players will encounter and with such they will expect a slower start, which helps buy you some time to prepare the more interesting aspects.

Step #2 - Reinforce

To follow up with the first step, its a good idea to reinforce the mundane nature of daily life in the realm. Start out the campaign with what is an otherwise mundane assignment, without any significant unnatural twists or turns. A caravan guard assignment is an easy, traditional way to start things off, which also starts the party in any one of the trading towns and can send them either to the wilderness from the

larger cities or vice versa. Throw in some bandit assaults, possibly a double crossing partner, and you have a simple introduction for the party and an easy way to kick things off.

Step #3 - Ease In The Unusual

Depending on how quickly you want to get things cooking with the additional elements of the setting, you can skip this one and throw your team straight into the fire or you can take your time and ease them in.

At this point, the players have some basic characters, a job or maybe two under their belt, and a set of basic assumptions about the world. This is where you start messing with that.

A new job crops up that seems similarly straight forward to other jobs taken, though you'll want to be careful not to throw too much mundane material at them. Once taken, the job unfolds as expected...until something unusual happens. It could be related to the job, or completely disconnected.

- While camping for the night, howls in the deep woods keeps the party up through the night. At a following stop in the wilderness a night later one of the horses goes missing, the carcass found up the road a day or so later. It has apparently been ravaged by a very hungry wild animal...
- While staying in a small town, one of their companions becomes ill; pale, restless, etc. If they tarry too long, the companion dies, but if they leave quick enough the companion begins to recover. Alternatively, if they do leave in time, the caravan is plagued by unusual sightings on the return trip, animals are skittish, and perhaps other members of the group exhibit similar symptoms.
- Finally, simple encounters such as unusually large canine footprints could be found, mysterious moaning in the woods, and shadowy figures seen out of the corners of eyes can certainly break up a trip and unsettle an audience.

The biggest trick at this stage is one of classic horror movies: don't reveal too much. Any one of those notes above has simple and mundane explanations: large wolves live in the area, fat off plentiful livestock; an unusual disease is indeed plaguing the town; the shadowy figure stalking the troupe is a simple, but inept, thief looking to strike an easy mark. Keep the first experiences simple and with mundane explanations, though the occasional hint that the explanation doesn't fit should nag the observant eye...

If you have the time, patience, and the party is enjoying themselves, consider stretching out this phase for a bit. Players who enjoy a good horror movie are among the kinds of players who will enjoy this teasing, realizing that *something* is out there, but not knowing *what*...

Step #4 - Ripping Out The Rug

Also called the "big reveal", this is the point where you confirm the party's growing suspicions. An adventure based around this big reveal can unfold in any number of ways.

- If the party has been skirting some dark character or plot for a while, bring them in on what is really happening. All of the caravan runs made for the wealthy business man, for example, have been assembling a vampire's collection of brides, at which point he is going to take over the trading town the party has been operating out of.
- If the party has been taking various jobs and simply traveling the country side, they happen to stumble upon a grave and grim plot; a minor werewolf has been posing as a monster hunter, all the while slowly infecting the villagers to create a werewolf village.

The end of the adventure should leave little doubt that the supernatural threat is real, but little clue should be given about how pervasive the threats are.

Into The Fire

For those groups who simply cannot wait to get right into the thick of things, go ahead and throw them right into the mess of the supernatural.

The Torchbearers represent a great way for a player to get a character involved right from the first level. Their basic background as monster hunters from around the world allow nearly any character to be inserted into the organization. As a 20-level class, characters can follow the path straight through a campaign even outside Shadowglade, and their own diversity means multiple players can have Torchbearers in a group without stepping on each other's role or toes too frequently.

The Order of the Ebon Throne, the government-backed covert operations group, is another fantastic entry point. Their frequent use of mercenary forces allows a rag-tag group to be hired for a seemingly simple job that immediately leads into the supernatural, while their internal use of all of the basic classes, including arcane spell casters, means any standard character concept can find a home straight away.

While more restricting than the others, the Guild out of Mir employs a vast army of rogues. Like the Order of the Ebon Throne, they can frequently employ mercenary bands or non-rogues for initial jobs. Their agents can easily stumble upon a dark plot in the course of a mission, or run afoul dark forces while contracted out to the Order of the Ebon Throne.

And finally, characters can simply be thrown to the wolves, literally and figuratively, without any ties to an established group or some kind of safety net. Their first outing as

a group and they run smack dab into a village of evil werewolves, a sorcerer plotting revenge against those who wronged him, or an army of the undead brought back to menace a region during a harvest festival are all simple, exciting ways to introduce your party to the supernatural quickly and easily.

Managing a Shadowglade Campaign

So the campaign is underway, and everyone is off to a good start. How do we maintain the proper sense, atmosphere, and keep this from being yet another hack and slash? Several techniques exist, using everything from your environment to your everyday game materials to keep pressure and uncertainty on!

Adventure Design

Ultimately, keeping the suspense going begins with the design. Many Shadowglade adventures will require a bit more work than traditional fantasy adventures, especially if you are aiming to keep up an atmosphere of uncertainty and suspense. In some settings, you can play certain aspects by ear, but to keep tensions its a good idea to have all of your notes and ideas together, first so that you don't contradict yourself and second so that even if the players take the adventure "off the rails", you still have an end direction to steer back towards.

• Start Simple

Even the most complicated of plots in any setting starts with something simple. A murder, a caravan escort job, scouting a new area, researching a lost treasure, etc. You don't need to start out with a wild premise to end up with an usual, freaky, or wild adventure. The best ones remembered for their freakiness end up being ones that started out quite simply and took a dark turn that no one involved had seen coming!

• Plan Ahead

Some campaigns and adventures you can simply "wing it" and come out fine. Not so in Shadowglade. As many of the scenarios are going to be built on complicated situations, complex NPC characters, and include a certain amount of misdirection or hidden information, it is important for you, as Game Master, to keep your wits and your notes about you.

• Give Everyone Something To Do

At first glance this one may not need too much additional explanation, but it is one that is too often overlooked: make sure all of the player's have something to do. Its too easy to let the cleric take point when dealing with a haunted house and let the fighter or ranger run the

show when hunting werewolves through the woods. Instead, try to pepper each adventure with something the characters can each get involved in; the haunted house could continually animate various items or suits of armor. While the force that animated them was supernatural, the objects themselves are very real and need to be dealt with by a combat expert.

• Keep It Logical

Yes, this is an action, fantasy, horror, supernatural, setting, in which ever proportions you choose to run it as. Typically, this means that you'll have access to some potent magic or unreal creatures and characters to populate a plot line with. Regardless, the one thing you should always strive for is to keep it logical. The world might be fantastic, but the people within it are people, and the natural laws, both the physical and social, still apply.

Especially true for this setting is the simple idea that villains are not by default monsters, who do grisly things for the sake of being "eeevil". Even those who are technically monsters are not simply killing machines; there is a reason, a rhythm, a "method to their madness" so to speak. Looking at traditional Gothic "villains", Dracula was lonely and angry at the world, betrayed by his god, and sick with love. Frankenstein's Monster also felt abandoned and unloved and was driven to make his creator feel the same. Had they potentially chosen other avenues to vent their frustrations they could have been great heroes, and indeed in certain renditions Vlad Dracul once was such a hero. Instead, they turned in on themselves and saw only what they lost or were missing and, selfishly, sought to take it for themselves. These are all very real, very common human emotions, its just that in these cases it happens that inhuman creatures are having them.

• Don't Railroad!

Conventional wisdom says that most characters need not take ranks in abilities that allow them to track, find tracks, or similar actions. If the GM wants the party to find something, such as tracks, they will put them in front of the players and make mention of them. While common, this is a minor form of railroading, putting players on a one track course and not deviating from that. Many players have come to accept this, and even expect it sometimes, but they also chaff under excessive railroading.

This one may be difficult to avoid in such a story-driven environment, partly out of "necessity" as well as temptation, but it is quite crucial not to railroad your players, or at the very least to do your best to disguise or lighten the railroading if you feel you must. Consider your adventure, consider which avenues players are most likely to explore, and do your best to develop at least cursory notes to cover these possible contingencies. Include tips and hints that make use of the abilities the characters possess, and consider using some skills differently.

As opposed to simply calling out the infamous tracks, account for a character's skills in Perception to recreate a scene for them; where bodies fell in an attack, which direction things are facing as they're knocked over, etc. Allow a character with acrobatics, jump, and similar skills the chance to reach higher ground and scope out the setting; let a character with good Stealth abilities scout the surrounding area for clues. Takes a bit more time than the standard "You see drag marks indicating something was pulled in a northwesterly direction", but it allows various players to flex more character muscle and makes use of skills they have.

• **Keep The Options Open**

This is a very important one: keeping your players' options open. You never want to create a situation with only one right answer, and you truly never want to create a no-win situation for the players.

Choice is the most important power players have over the game world. This ranges from choices in what they can do with their powers and abilities to what they can do and where they can go in the world. A poor adventure denies them choices, ties their hands obviously, and prevents them from doing much. This is typically steering the players in one, single direction and leaving them no recourse, but can also include no-win battles not of the player's decision, basically railroading as discussed above.

Believe it or not, players have a lot of power over the game, especially if the game master builds the scenario right. The most shocking situations, the most dire, and the most satisfying to observe as game master are those situations borne of a player's own design. How you get to this point varies with the situations, but throughout the preceding scenarios the players should have been making choices. When you reach the end game, when the player realizes the dire situation they face is because of the decisions they made before, you have a significantly more rewarding session, and the players really feel as though they contributed to the table, even if the scene ends badly for them.

• **Create Levels**

Too often, games and actors will find one note, be it anger, excitement, disbelief, or any number of emotions and play only that emotion. Players will do it at a game table; the gruff fighter, the brooding outcast, the snarky rogue. Game Masters will follow suit in their adventure and environment, emphasizing one feeling, be it oppression, terror, tension, violence, etc. Real life doesn't exist on one emotional feeling, and a good game won't either. To combat this, consider creating different emotional levels in the campaign.

Don't be afraid to break up the encounters and the adventures. Lighten up from time to time, toss the party a softball, especially if they have had a grueling trek through some treacherous terrain or hostile foes. Or, give them a break, a situation so absolutely simple, non-violent, and heart warming it creates a complete break with the current atmosphere. Likewise, if it's been all daisies and lollipops thus far, don't be afraid to drop the hammer, put the fear of Erislan in their characters, touch their characters' lives with a bit of darkness.

Doing this adds spice, variety, to the campaign. Trek along too long on the same feeling, the same emotional state, things become stale. What was supposed to be frightening garners lukewarm responses. What was supposed to be taken seriously was casually dealt with, demeaning the situation and the work put into it by the game master. Likewise, when acting out scenes and scenarios, both game masters and players would do well to know that displaying these emotions doesn't always need to be one expression. A character who is angry doesn't always need to yell; restrained anger can be just as powerful, or more, and add an edge of menace to it. Happy characters can be subtle about their joy, taking pleasure in the little things instead of shouting from the mountain tops. And every emotion in between can be moved up or down to different levels, all with different effects on the outcome and delivery.

• **Beware "Save or Suck"/"Save or Die"**

Shadowglade recommends that wide use of fear ratings and checks be used, but only to heighten the tension and mechanically show that fear impacts play. Higher levels of fear, however, result in save-or-suck and save-or-die situations, wherein the player rolls and succeeds or fails and is out of the whole next session.

The recommended scenario is to use the features enough to keep players and characters on their toes, but not so much that the characters are cowed quickly and unable to contribute. Build in points where characters can stop and catch their breath, recovering from such effects.

• **Deus ex Machina**

Deus ex machina is a Greek theatrical term meaning "god from a/the machine". In practical application, it means an outside force in the story acts upon the events in a way the characters could not know or influence.

The phrase is kind of a dirty word in storytelling because it often circumvents something otherwise carefully built. It is also seen as a cheat, the result of the writer writing him or herself into a corner and using an impossible, unknowable, third party to extricate the characters and move the story along. Characters finding out that their entire journey up to that point meant nothing is quite the rude awakening for a number of readers, and players. Its also a form of railroading, the GM forcing the story to go in

a particular direction regardless of player input. In various forms of horror and suspense, this is still an oft used tactic however. Its typically found at the end of the tale for that one, last, twist of the knife. Like any other tactic, it is one that can work but only when rarely used and lightly applied.

The best cases of this, or something like this, are as contingency plans. Don't invalidate player choices with it, don't make them feel like everything they did amounts to a whole lot of nothing. With the adventure "The Path In Gold", there are optional notes at the end for a supernatural twist, in effect a *deus ex machina* event; the situation is taken out of the player's hands. Rather than invalidate the player actions to that point, however, this particular example should help enhance them. The bandit lord defeated, likely arrested, and more than willing to talk is suddenly cut down by an inhuman force. It serves the dual purposes of advancing the story line, as the notes suggest using the tactic to further a conspiracy-theory plot or "no witnesses" style situation, as well as putting players in an uncomfortable position by showing them they are not in complete control. The event happening, however, is logical from a certain perspective; if the bandit lord is involved in unsavory business, it would stand to reason that partners or employers would want to tie up loose ends. They just so happen to also be supernatural in this case. The event is also triggered thanks to the player's actions, not in spite of them. The bandit lord is still defeated, the raids on the caravans will stop so the primary goal is achieved, and they've uncovered a greater threat than originally thought. Had they not defeated the bandit lord, he would still continue raiding and still be in the good graces of his allies. To add more player control, should they learn someone might be out to get the defeated bandit lord, allow them the chance to defend him so he can have his say and his day in court. If they can defend him, he sticks around. If they can't, then he's toast.

As mentioned earlier, these kinds of tactics are best used sparingly. Should a GM use the suggested notes in a low level encounter, they're best off not doing anything similar for some time. From here out, the GM should try a general policy of bringing the characters in deeper before throwing another big twist their way.

Setting the Stage

With the adventure written and prepared, its time to consider the playing area. Sometimes, setting the stage is the most important step in bringing everyone into the adventure. You can use all of the tips provided, but if you're playing in a brightly lit, happy, safe area the effects you're attempting to create can fall flat on their face. Now, this approach won't work for all groups; some players just want to play, regardless of other aspects of their play area. Others like having the mood set, the ambiance added to by little, real-world touches.

• Open and Closed Spaces

Isolation tends to drive suspense and horror tales, and that might be a bit difficult to create in the real world. Some simple tips for using your play area to enhance this involves creative use of the room.

- If there are windows, especially with shades or curtains, keep them open if it is dark, such as during a storm or at night, or close them off, closing off the room.
- If the weather is appropriate, such as during the summer or warmer period, leaving the window open just the slightest crack can cause the curtains to flutter ever so slightly. Correspondingly, a cracked window during cooler periods can have an effect as well, lowering the temperature. Be careful not to let it get too cool to be distracting, however. Enough of a temperature difference to raise the goose bumps of your players is all that is necessary; any colder and players will be more concerned with keeping warm than what is going on at the table.
- If you have a door to the room, leave it open ajar, but still mostly closed. Consider dimming or leaving lights off on the other side of the door such that the only light the players are aware of is the light within the room itself. This creates a kind of island in the darkness, where players are safe in the light, but the unknown of what is "out there", even subconsciously, is unnerving.
- An interesting one, try emptying the room of whatever you can so that you have your play space, seating, and little else. Most folks are used to being in rooms with *something* around them; incidental furniture such as coffee tables or night stands, lamps, pictures on the wall, etc. A mostly barren room is unsettling on a different, subtle, level.

• Lighting

This is a rather easy trick of course; lighting can be used to great effect to emphasize any situation.

- For basic effect, play with a mostly dim room, enough light so players can read their sheets, but enough so shadows are cast, its difficult to see what you as game master might be doing, etc.
- For more advanced techniques, if you have access to a dimmer of some kind, use that to move between scenes, fading out as it gets darker. You can also cut to black suddenly, either with a dimmer or suddenly pulling the plug on the light. Its a cheap trick, but a good one to cause an occasional jump.

• Auditory

Auditory effects are great at unsettling the players, but these require a lot of setup, more so than other aspects.

- Creative use of background noise is one way to manipulate the environment. Several options exist: first, playing a low level sound, white noise basically, that you can acknowledge is there but doesn't distract. During tense moments, kill that sound. The players won't notice it right away, but something will feel different with its absence, something strange and unusual. Second, start the session with an audio playback that has several minutes of silence to begin with, then a slow fade in and out throughout. Something of appropriate length looped will aid in creating an uneasy feeling.
- Vocal manipulation is an easy way to create auditory effects, but requires a lot of focus on what you are saying and doing at any given time. Keep a low volume, just loud enough that your players can hear you but low enough that they have to occasionally lean in. Also keep the tone even, monotone where appropriate. This allows you to make significant changes in your own delivery that have an effect on the players. A loud noise at a tense moment, a sudden change in delivery that speeds up the moment, are enough to put folks on edge.

Maintaining Atmosphere

You've planned the adventure and set the stage. Now how to keep things going while you're at the table? Atmosphere is a important factor in many aspects of a Shadowglade campaign. It is not an ordinary realm, and the telling of its tales requires a different approach.

Unlike other settings with a similar focus, Shadowglade is not a dedicated horror setting, which should help you measure your approach to its tales in particular. The air is not always oppressive, the towns are not always fearful, and not everyone looks under their bed at night for monsters of untold horrors. The world is unsettled, they are untrusting of the national powers and the people in charge of the churches. Their faith that tomorrow will be better and that forces greater than themselves watch over them, however, is unshakable.

Horror in Shadowglade *can* be found in the stark contrasts of the realm. Areas believed safe suddenly assailed by the unknown can set entire regions on guard, but first the players must feel these spaces are actually safe. Figures who appear to be well adjusted and in control suddenly revealed as horrible monsters likewise unsettle players and characters alike if this is a person they have genuinely grown to trust. On the other side of that coin, however, characters who are built up to be monsters and revealed to be not only innocent but significantly unlike their reputation can leave a party with a differing view, horrified at times of others but possibly horrified in themselves for their own actions. The power of the horror in this setting lies in the simple fact that its not expected at every turn, its people are not jaded. Many encounters should be very mundane, thereby enhancing this shock, this jolt, when it does occur.

Tensions in the Shadowglade setting exist between the major powers. While open warfare is unheard of, skirmishes in the past were frequent enough and well remembered. Citizens become edgy when things are unsettled between the powers, fearful of such outright battles but also of subterfuge; while open warfare doesn't occur, all powers are guilty of waging covert assaults on their enemies. No one power trusts the others completely, but they all find themselves needing the other powers all the same. As such, a "cold war" mentality exists in the world, the major powers all with their hands at their weapons while wearing a smile and average populace unsettled and weary of the unknown.

Isolation is a significant feature of the setting in general, which supports both the horror elements and the cold war mentality. Communication between areas is slow, villages are quite some distance apart, and travel is grueling. Add to that the fact that many areas are uncharted or areas that were charted and villages known are now unfamiliar, the village gone and no record or clue as to what happened. Characters can easily find themselves cut off from the rest of the world for significant periods of time. What might have been an easy encounter three days ago has become significantly more difficult with dwindling resources and low morale.

Control of information is another key aspect of running an effective Shadowglade campaign and maintaining the atmosphere. Narratively, this means using more than the standard description; embellishing details, fleshing out descriptions, and injecting a fair deal of flowery prose serves to paint a more vivid picture, but it doubles as information control. By appealing to the senses, and not necessarily knowledge, you can flood a party with information, only some of which is useful. Doing so can allow you to embed information, or cover your own tracks. Avoid outright naming things, making the players take a closer look into what is around them for confirmation. Done frequently enough, players will overlook subtle clues and hints; this can be a welcome occurrence, and an entertaining moment of realization when the players finally understand what it is that they missed, but be careful: it can also be a hindrance, because if players gloss over too much because of past experiences they can miss significant leads.

Finally, this is also an action-oriented setting on top of the horror and suspense elements. Once characters get past the initial horror, shock, or surprise, they should have the heart and fortitude to do what must be done: the eradication of true evil. Yes, the charming rogue mercenary is really an evil werewolf who is dominating the village. Yes, the older gentleman is really an intelligent ghoul who now commands several of your allies. No matter; with weapons drawn and a heart of conviction, anything is possible.

This is where your typical fantasy role-playing techniques come in to play. By now the party will have figured out what is going on, who is at the heart of the sinister plot or foul deed, so there is not much need to keep up the cloak & dagger shadow games; this is their shining moment. The long odds might be against the party, but someone has a brilliant idea that just might save the day. The lead fighter of the group is engaged in a no-holds barred, duel to the death with the foul ghoulish lord; the rogue expertly darts between the legs of the zombies and skeletons, carefully protecting the scroll the party has fought so hard for. Keep the details light, the pressure on, and the blows stunning. These kinds of encounters will often cap several sessions of tension, suspense and mystery and are a great way to blow off some tension and steam on worthy foes.

Table Tricks

Maintaining an atmosphere with words and emotion is one thing, but table-talk and other aspects can break that atmosphere. Some will suggest avoiding it entirely to focus on that mood and atmosphere, but to a point they're missing out on some fantastic avenues to heighten tension at the table, not just in the story. Part of keeping that tension, that guessing, lies in manipulating the system to your own ends as well. Collected ahead are a handful of tips and tricks for using the system and the nature of game-play against the party's expectations.

• Asides

Don't worry about always managing the players as a group. When appropriate, take individuals aside, such as to a side room, and present them with pertinent information. Try to take everyone aside in a similar fashion even if you only need to share information with one player. This helps obscure who is given additional or separate information and can sometimes be quicker than notes (see *Pass Notes* below).

• Bloodbath

The occasional bloodbath isn't necessarily a bad thing. Players make the assumption way too often that what they are seeing, what they are fighting, is of their level and should be overcome either easily or with a bit of effort, but overcome none the less. Tossing them into a deeper end of the pool then puts them into a panic, at least for a short term. Even going a few levels ahead on the CR charts can make for an exciting, dangerous, and nail-biting encounter; a party of first level characters taking on a pair of CR 4 monsters is truly terrifying for the player. In these cases, reward ingenuity in attempting to take on the beasts, but also be fair when they decide to call in a retreat. Most times it's inevitable, but creative means to get away or trip up the enemies can be as equally rewarding as a straight kill, more so if the players realize the disparity in power and still succeed. And the players will be talking about their "close call" for some time to come!

• Calling for seemingly random checks

Calling for perception checks and initiative are two checks that will put players on edge almost instantly. This normally is a tell to the party that *Something Bad* is coming their way. Skillful use of red-herring checks will throw players off and make real events more surprising, or at the very least reduce the number of players reacting to things their characters wouldn't possibly know. It also makes characters who pull their weapons at every call for a check appear paranoid, which has its own rewards!

• Flip Through The Bestiary, Rulebook

This is a great way to pique your group's interest. Ask for or grab your own copy of a book such as the **Bestiary** or **Core Rulebook** and start flipping through the pages. Uncertain what's coming, the party will start expecting *Something Bad*. If you have a player in the group who knows these books inside and out and can tell or reasonably guess where you are by how the pages fall, pick something suitably devious that will fill them with a bit more dread. You're not actually using the creature, but you are preying on that encyclopedic knowledge.

• Keeping Notes

Keep your own notes about character capabilities. While you could keep copies of character sheets, that's often too much information for these purposes and requires a lot of shuffling of papers, an obvious tell to the group that you're looking for something. A basic 3x5 notecard with some simple numbers is all you really need, and if you have the space behind the screen you can arrange them according to player seating order so that it's quick and simple to see which card belongs with which player.

Simple notes can include the basic perception skills, initiative, saves, and armor class for each member of the party, though you can include any notes you might want for your own needs. As all of the examples are often used in combat or pre-combat rolls, you should be able to pull off a true surprise round without anyone being the wiser: when you announce the party is flanked and two characters have already taken damage as a result, they really won't know what hit them.

• Pass Notes

Passing notes to players throughout the session is a great way to keep player information and character information one and the same, without the temptation to act on what they do not know. No matter how hard a good player tries, their actions can be colored by knowledge they possess that their characters do not. Likewise, a poor player will simply avoid even the slightest pretense of character knowledge and act on what they themselves know. By passing a note, a specific player learns specific information that they can act on both as a player and as a character. Other players at the table then cannot act on that unless the player who received the note shares.

Passing notes has a number of other fantastic applications, when done correctly.

- Giving each player a note, even if only one or two characters managed to make their perception checks, hides who actually caught on. These other notes can easily be “dummy” notes with casual observances, such as “It is a bright and sunny day” or “The room smells like well worn and seldom washed clothing.” In many cases the characters would simply share their discovery, true, but in others this can be used to foster uncertainty, especially if the party suspects one of their own is compromised.
- Use of dummy notes throughout the session, not just when a perception check is called for, can throw players off as well. If you are only passing notes before *Something Bad* happens, players will begin to catch on and get ready for trouble, no matter what their own note says. A whole round of “It is a bright and sunny day” and similar notes can help obscure when you really are preparing for *Something Bad*.

• Pre-roll Charts

A quiet alternative to the “Random Rolls” tip, this is intended for the opposite situation: get a number when you don’t want the group knowing that you’re rolling dice. Keep a simple notecard with a few dozen rolls of a die behind the screen, consult it when you want a roll, check off values as you use them, simple as that.

• Random Rolls, Notes

An old Game Master trick, but a good one, is randomly rolling behind the screen, or equivalent. Especially good for quieting groups, the throw of a handful of dice followed by a meaningful stare down of your notebook and jotting of something will catch attention and redirect focus on the table rather quickly. Often, this doesn’t have to mean anything at all, just being obvious is all it has to be. This makes players nervous because they don’t know what you’re doing: are you rolling for attacking monsters, missed spot checks, traps? The list in their mind goes on and on and most players will stop whatever they’re doing to pay attention.

• Roll For Your Players

Not something to do all the time, but occasionally making rolls for your players can unsettle them at the table. While they might know the end result, they won’t know what the roll was to get that result. They hit the enemy, but what was the roll? Or, vice-versa, they missed the enemy, but how high or low was it? Use this one sparingly when you really want to sow confusion and doubt, but not regularly as many players feel die-rolling is one their biggest items of control in the game. Take it away too often and players might feel the game devolves into a one-sided storytelling session.

• Roll Quietly

Lay down a sheet of felt or other kind of soft material behind your screen and roll only on that. This is another old game master trick for keeping your die rolling a secret; if the dice make no noise, and you’re rolling behind a screen where no one can see you then players won’t know when something is going down or when you’re just staring at a chart.

• Technology

Technology can be a great boon at times, but should be used only when you are certain you can get away with it. Laptops at the table can allow game masters to share PDF copies of important information, reducing clutter around the table. Online gaming tables can allow a game master finer control over what the party sees; with a click of a button the whole of the room is revealed without you needing to drop a map onto the table or update a sketched map already out. Likewise, you can perform many of the suggested techniques at the table quite easily. With the help chat programs or text messaging, simply send your intended recipient a message with the details. Need a die roll quietly? Use one of the many online die rollers.

As with many of the suggestions here, even this one has its caveats. Items like laptops or cell phones can be distracting, allowing a bored player, or even a player with a moment of down time, the ability to wander the internet. This can break atmosphere, slow down interactions as you have to bring everyone back into the moment and possibly update them on everyone else’s actions, and generally impede progress, not enhance it. If you choose to embrace such items at the table, be sure your players are using it responsibly and without becoming distracted or distracting others.

• Accomplices

This final topic is last as it bears some additional discussion and makes the following topic (*Trade Your Currency Carefully*, below) an even more important read: accomplices. Like partners in crime, accomplices can be quite the benefit but a potential liability as well.

The idea here stems from a de-facto player mentality; named NPCs are often regarded with suspicion not because of any in-game reason but because players have a tendency to blow off such NPCs, while player characters are welcome automatically with open arms, again for no in-game reason and simply because he or she is “one of us”. This makes betrayal plot lines especially difficult because the NPC will never have the party’s trust and it makes real allies even more difficult because, without being able to earn their trust, the NPC has no reason ultimately to keep working on the band of miscreants players usually end up playing.

The accomplice is another player at the table, but not really one who is going to be a regular part of the campaign. They are on hand for one or two arcs and effectively are playing an NPC. The player of the character is “in on” the scenario and plays a prescribed role for the party. “Traitor” is the common one that springs to mind of course, but temporary ally is quite possible, someone the party has to work with.

Generally, introduce the player as a friend from out of town, or if they’re already familiar to the group then just say the friend has a free night, or a few free nights as needed, and wants to game. Obviously they should want to play, no point in forcing someone who doesn’t want to play into the game, but preferably they have a schedule that matches the expected life span of the character they are to play; it would be a shame to get someone involved who really enjoyed playing only to kick them right out when their job was done. From there, provide them with a pre-generated character you “happen” to have on hand and provide the others at the table with the pertinent information.

From here, hopefully your choice of accomplice will be well deserving. With most groups, the player and by extension your otherwise NPC character will be accepted completely and without hesitation. They will happily let the character sleep in the camp, turn their back on him or her in combat, and conduct themselves in ways no real person would given the circumstances. After the seeds are sown and the time is right, with your direction, the accomplice will strike and the players should never really see it coming, for good or ill.

Again, however, note that this tip or tactic is highly fraught with the potential to backfire. Use it for a thrilling moment when all else fails, or would fail, and quite sparingly. Characters should always be wary of new recruits looking to join up, but players should always be welcome at the table. Over-use of this particular effect will lead your players to distrust all new players and degrade the experience for someone who legitimately wants to play and is coming in late to the party .

Trade Your Currency Carefully

The position of Game Master is often a trusted and established position of power. The group, often your friends or close acquaintances, are trusting you with their character and entertainment for the next several hours, weeks, months, or years.

The first tips of this section should help create a greater ambiance and enhance the adventures, while the last segment should help make players jump instead of just characters. The trick, though, will be using all of these tips, and others that you’ve learned elsewhere, in balance. Constantly messing with the player’s expectations will

degrade the play experience, in effect squandering that trust you’ve earned. Why should they bother playing if their expectations and input are constantly invalidated? Its a fine line to walk, but an important one none-the-less: use all techniques carefully and evenly, and make sure that when the “twists” or suspense-heightening tips are used, they are used for dramatic effect and greater enjoyment for everyone, not just to sandbag player efforts.

Golden Rule

Many systems and game materials have a “golden rule”. For Shadowglade, it is this: you, as Game Master, are not competing with the players, and the players are not competing against you. For some games, this opposing-forces concept is a mentality that works out very well; the GM provides an amazing dungeon and the players have to find their way through it, past the obstacles, and solve the puzzles. A Shadowglade adventure, however, isn’t about the treasure at the end of the dungeon, its about the journey to get there. As such, always play with the players to unravel the story. Enjoy where it takes you, enjoy when the drama that has evolved reaches a point where all you have to do is kick back and watch. That’s not to say you should make it easy, just don’t go out of your way to slaughter the group at every turn.

Scenarios

Kicking off any campaign can be a chore; existing material can be a great boon in getting your party ready, but players can still be creative enough that they pick out the most awkward details that render the pregenerated adventure useless to awkward itself.

The following scenarios are written up as quick shorthand to help start off your own campaign. They are intended for first and second level characters to help get their feet wet, meet up with the other party members, and get their first taste of adventure. They are not fully fleshed out, and indeed not fully detailed so that you can drop these in to any campaign you see fit. They are also fairly mundane and can be used to kick start nearly any Shadowglade, or any other, campaign you may want to run.

Title A quick title and shorthand for the scenario.

Premise Quick; what is the scenario about? This tells you want to look forward to.

Hooks Help your party become invested in the initial scenario by letting them fill in some blanks. These hooks create deliberate attachments for characters who cannot or will not come up with their own, but are only recommendations. If a player has a good connection of their own, by all means let them run with it!

The Job This generally lays out what the scenario expects the characters to accomplish. This is also information generally relatable to the party and should help frame their expectations and goals.

Accomplishing And accomplishing lays out how, generally, that would be executed! The point of these scenarios is to set you as game master up with reasons for these people to be together, and relatively mundane reasons to pick up and “adventure” in a world that generally won’t support this. This includes recommended and relevant ability checks, general ranges for enemies at that point, etc. At early levels, a DC of 13 gives fair odds of clearing an obstacle, while difficult DCs, between 14 and 16 should be used to make the characters work a bit harder.

A Little Slice of an Empire

Premise More aggressive than road side bandits, a former highwayman has decided that, since the major powers generally ignore the area, he was going to step up and take command. Your small town has been made aware of this by messenger and ordered to pay taxes to the bandit or suffer the consequences.

Hooks

- In general, this is bad for everyone; violence and higher “taxes” paid out to bandits to name a few of the issues with this.

The Job It is well known that this would-be bandit king has the muscle to back up his claim; there is little the town and its neighbors can do about it. The townsfolk have selected from among themselves by random draw a team to reach out to a Shadowglade outpost about two solid days’ travel away. The party’s job then is to make it through the area undetected, reach the outpost, and relay the plight of the village.

Accomplishing The head bandit would be 4th or 5th level himself, and his flunkies anywhere from 1st to 4th as well. How many he has isn’t that important, just that any encounter the party has with him will result in the party being out classed and out leveled. That’s not to say they’re that intelligent however.

Over the course of the next couple days, the party will duck and weave through the woodlands to make it out to the Shadowglade outposts. Stealth and survival checks will be important to chart directions and evade detection. Should the bandit lord become aware of the party’s existence (failed stealth rolls at checkpoints, opposed gather information checks revealing the mission) he would dispatch a team to deal with the party consisting of some 1st level flunkies and a 2nd or 3rd level ranger capable of tracking the party. Simple traps and aggressive wildlife also await the party on their way to the outpost.

Dancing Bandits

Premise All members of the would-be party are in a town of decent size, each for their own reason. While on the bustling streets, entertainers catch each of their eyes while “assistants” working the crowd catch the PC’s valuables.

Hooks

- This scenario needs virtually no hooks; the characters are robbed and, very quickly, it becomes apparent who is responsible for this.

The Job The job in this case is quite simple; find and retrieve the stolen gear, not for anyone else really but for the character’s own sake. Alternatively, a bystander can also be robbed at the same time, leading to another character to include in the setup and a potentially grateful NPC.

Accomplishing The characters should be led on a wild chase through dark corner and back alley, likely making use of the chase rules per the **Pathfinder Game**

Mastery Guide. Each trial on the chase should test some of the characters while leaving others at a bit of a disadvantage, though one that is readily closed by the aid of another character. Working together, the party should be able to find and apprehend the thieves. In doing so, they make an impression on the local constabulary who may have other tasks suited to the team's unique talents.

Likewise, they can easily make an impression on the thieves themselves, or rival thieves, earning them the respect or enmity of the bandits as appropriate. The characters can then be further tested by the bandits to see if they would make reasonable additions to their ranks or simply harassed by the bandits until a final confrontation occurs.

Lunatics

Premise A woodland priest has been arrested for incitement and threats to the community, preaching his belief in a canine god destined to destroy the world, starting with the village. Upon his arrest just before a full moon, he has issued the warning that, upon the completion of the full moon he will be free and complete a ritual to summon said god.

Hooks

- The players become involved as the local government seeks to keep the mad priest under wraps. No one quite believes he speaks the truth, but he has riled up a good portion of the town and the sheriff believes the possibility of his followers breaking him out bears merit. They are hired for one specialty or another from the surrounding lands to keep an eye on the priest until the celestial event, and the local anger, passes.
- **Barbarian, Fighter** You are the raw muscle. You were brought on for raw intimidation and brute force.
- **Bard, Rogue** You are the eyes. Protecting the imprisoned madman requires sharper eyes and ears than most. While the muscle can handle anyone who gets too close to the prisoner, the more advance notice they have the better they can do their job.
- **Cleric, Druid, Paladin** The mad priest, while obviously a raving lunatic, was once somewhat respected in the community. Some otherwise sane locals see the crackdown and arrest of the priest as an attempt to silence alternative religions in the area. Your duty is to help calm those fears, as well as the fears of the resident faithful that demon-worshippers and pagan madmen are running amok in the community and to remind them of the charity and kindness within their own faith.

The Job This job is simple; survive the night and keep the mad priest contained.

Accomplishing Followers of the mad priest will attempt to free him in the night so that he can proceed with the ritual, and possibly succeed in freeing him from his cell. The party should organize patrols, watches, and attempt to keep the mad priest contained or, if he does escape, return him to custody.

Organize several waves of attacks, all of which would be first or second level druids, rangers, and rogues, all of which have more feral tendencies. Use unusual methods of entry to keep the party on their toes. The prison could be a standard, frontier one-cell prison, could be a larger facility, or could even be an asylum, all of which have their own unique options for entry and surprise.

As an additional option to emphasize the mundane nature of the campaign, the ritual the priest aims to accomplish really could be a bunch of hog-wash. The players could conceivably lose the prisoner, be fended off long enough that it is completed, and have absolutely nothing occur; the man really is insane.

Pieces of the Puzzle

Premise The death or disappearance of a mutual friend brings the characters together, wherein they realize a recent, minor, favor they did for the friend ties into a larger plot.

Hooks

- **Barbarian, Fighter, Ranger** These classes routinely act as strongmen and hunters; the friend asked for something related to the character's current life, be it something from the woods, a weapon they wouldn't normally use, etc.
- **Bard, Rogue** The friend was in need of information, something you had readily available from local gossip at the bars or overheard on other exploits. It wasn't anything of importance then, but it suddenly seems like it factors in to the friend's misfortune.
- **Cleric, Druid, Paladin** Lately the friend had a dour attitude, something was weighing heavily on them. As clergy, the characters worked to help relieve that burden and learned a bit about what was troubling the friend: finances, employment, personal life, etc. as appropriate.

The Job Everyone should quickly realize they have a piece of a larger puzzle that doesn't fit anything else they know about the friend. The job then becomes tracking down the friend or their killer.

Accomplishing This scenario should allow all characters the chance to play out their strengths. Characters like bards can be indispensable in acquiring information, aided by others with good diplomacy skills. Using organizational ties, characters can tap into larger networks, find out who may be connected. Rogues and stealthy characters can do some reconnaissance, learn

more about their targets or the interests of their friend prior to the situation. Once potential enemies have been identified, the more physical classes can step in and step up, organizing raids or storming safe houses or hideouts.

Alternatively, the characters can discover that the situation is much larger than they are, leading them into the arms and assistance of a group capable of helping with their search for the friend or their killer.

Where Everybody Knows Your Name

Premise The party, a group of regular patrons of a small watering hole, are recruited to help the barkeeper recover some stolen property.

Hooks

- **Barbarian, Fighter, Ranger** These martial classes are fighters, brawlers. These characters as patrons have come to enjoy the atmosphere of the bar; it suits them nicely. On breaks between hunts, jobs, or brawling for the sheer joy of it, they make their way to the tavern for a drink and some entertainment. There's no where quite like it.
- **Bard** Not many have an appreciation for the arts, and indeed many of the taverns you have been through have had little appreciation of you. This establishment, however, has taken a real shine to you; barkeeper's wife says it brings her husband's hovel a bit class, while the barkeep himself is just happy that you keep the otherwise surly drunks content, singing bawdy tunes and relaying epic tales as the night warrants.
- **Cleric** Its a small community and as such you are its only real warden of health and sawbones. You've been called to the tavern on numerous occasions to help patch up wounded drunks. While you would normally do so anyway, it was the barkeeper who sought you out to begin with and made the calls to have you tend to his customers.
His concern for his patrons earned him your respect and patronage; if nothing else, you're on hand when the going gets rough.
- **Rogue** Everyone needs a place to hang their hat, including you. Generally you avoid public spaces, but you made a connection with the barkeep early on, breaking up a fight that would have otherwise spilled your drink. Simple enough you suppose, but the man behind the counter appreciated the gesture and as a token of thanks allows you to keep a low profile in the bar when needed, no questions asked.
- **Druid, Monk, Paladin** In a smaller community such as this, you are simply passing through on your way to other duties. This little hole-in-the-wall has some how struck your fancy, however. If your services are needed you wouldn't mind taking a bit of time from the road to lend a hand to an establishment such as this.

The Job Over the course of the last couple weeks, the barkeeper has had several patrons talking about missing articles; coin, small personal effects, and the like. Using some wits of his own, he has deduced that one of the patrons is currently stealing from the others. The party he has ruled out; each PC has been nothing but a joy to the owner. Knowing each one values the establishment as well, he has called the group together one afternoon before the bar opens for the evening and laid out the situation. He'd like to keep it quiet, so as to keep face about the establishment, and would like to see about recovering whatever stolen goods he can. He's offering a moderate reward, a couple gp per head and a generous bar tab, for the party to find the goods and keep it quiet so as not to affect business.

Accomplishing That night, players attending the bar can discuss the matter with a number of patrons, some who have had affects disappear and others who haven't. After a few checks to gather information, sense motive, and perhaps bluff their way through a conversation, the party should arrive at a trio of suspects; ideally, each party member will come to conclusions about two and compare notes with the others. One of them is correct, the others are red herrings or minor thefts and not the real source of the tavern's issues. If the PCs correctly deduce which of the patrons it is, follow them home and apprehend them they will discover the cache of stolen goods. Failure to earns the disappointment of the barkeeper who will allow for one more chance to apprehend the thief and collect the reward. They can track and capture only one patron a night for a variety of reasons, including traveling distances, suspects becoming aware they are being watched, and other appropriate obstacles.

Resources &

Inspiration

Source material is often important in understanding where a setting came from and where you might want to take it. Taking a look at several of the literary elements that bolster the fiction helps paint the picture for you and your play group, allowing you to reach into the facets that entertain your group and give you a wholly unique experience while still enjoying the setting.

Shadowglade isn't a normal fantasy campaign setting. The overriding concepts of "kill stuff, take it's loot" won't work very well in this world, something players should discover quickly if they hope to survive. Their foes aren't mindless beasts and fantastic monsters, but rather cunning and inventive people like themselves, or worse...

Thanks to many factors, Shadowglade is a realm of mystery and intrigue. The unknown in Shadowglade *can* kill you, and as such many are wary. A lost past, tall tales, and uncertain future all lead to interesting possibilities. Tapping into the elements of the unknown, the literary fields of Mystery, Gothic Horror, and Political Intrigue present the best options to test your character's mettle and keep them guessing to the very last.

Gothic Horror

Far from "slasher horror", where characters are often pursued by a weapon wielding maniac, elements of Gothic horror lend quite well to the realm. While a slasher horror would be reduced simply to a common "Kill it and take its loot" mentality, Gothic horror relies on atmosphere to create its effects. Situations that start out mundane slowly twist, as one thing leads to another it becomes apparent that "Something's not quite right". Horror comes in these situations from the unknown, the inability to simply swing a sword to fight back. Threats in Gothic horror are not simply to one's body but to one's immortal soul and self. Transformative tales twist otherwise good people and loved ones into horrid mockeries of life and of themselves.

Gothic horror adventures are often drawn out further than other adventures. The characters are teased with glimpses of the enemy, the brief encounter, and the likelihood that the characters are in over their heads. Dread is more important in a Gothic horror adventure, dread that should be carefully built and managed to be effective.

Cthulhu Mythos Movies, novels, short stories. A series of dark tales of investigations of the supernatural and unknown horrors that lurk beyond human awareness. Commonly features relatively weak mortal protagonists

against entities ranging from deranged cultists who present little threat to mind-numbing horrors from beyond reality.

Dark Shadows TV Series. Follow the lives of the Collins family through the ages as they grapple with ghosts, werewolves, witches, and vampires intruding in their family affairs.

Dracula Movies, novel. The heart of all modern vampire mythology. The mysterious Count Dracula comes to England and leaves a trail of blood and sorrow.

Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus Movies, novels. The classic tale of a scientist and his abominable creation, a man made from the bodies of others and restored to unnatural life. Many variations place the man and the monster in different points of history ranging from its original eras to modern settings.

Grimm Fairy Tales Short stories. The original collection of European folklore, the Grimm Brothers fairy tales are well known sources of grim and dark misadventures of children, supernatural forces, and often serve as warnings to avoid certain behaviors, lest the child fall victim to something horrible "out there."

Picture of Dorian Gray Novel, film. A Faustian tale of vanity and self-indulgence; Dorian Gray, a handsome aristocrat, becomes entangled with a portrait of himself that ages and bears the weight of his moral failings while he, himself, remains as youthful as the day the portrait was completed. After a hedonistic life of debauchery, his life is ended in a fit of rage as he attempts to destroy the horrific painting that reflects his soul.

Poe, Edgar Allen Author, various. Edgar Allen Poe's work was massively influential in Gothic literature, focusing on the terror and madness in Gothic tales. His poetry, including "The Raven," and stories, including "Fall of the House of Usher," "The Tell-Tale Heart," and "The Pit and the Pendulum," play on the concepts of terror and madness as opposed to direct supernatural occurrences.

Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde Novel. The foundational novel that explores duality in human nature, mental illness, and other aspects of the human psyche. The kindly Dr Jekyll seeks a way to eliminate evil from the human condition and, he believes, succeeds in experimenting on himself only to discover he only segregated it, giving rise to a wicked alter ego Mr Hyde.

Vampyre Novel. The grandfather of even the Dracula novel. A series of letters and accounts of a young man meeting an eccentric and enigmatic Baltic lord who apparently dies, only to be found again in Britain. The author character is bound to silence and can only watch

as the undead lord seduces a young lady with dark intents.

Morality Tales

Above and beyond shock and awe, a number of unusual or darker stories act as morality tales, cautioning those who hear of it about potential transgressions or pitfalls while using the unusual, unnatural, or surreal to address the matters. A party can easily be caught up in a series of such tales, or could sample them from time to time as the path of their adventure warrants.

Aesop's Fables Short stories. While whimsical, it wouldn't take too much to twist the introduction to many of the classic Aesop's fables to fit with the atmosphere of Shadowglade.

Grimm Fairy Tales Short stories. As mentioned above, the Grimm tales are one of the most recognizable, mid European series of tales exploring morality and the world around its people. Characters often walk away from unusual or supernatural experiences with a new appreciation for their life, if they walk away at all...

Outer Limits, Twilight Zone TV Series. Both series, in several iterations, offer a look at what could become of mankind through a variety of lenses. Some of these are supernatural, others technological and scientific, and frequently a blend of the two. Each episode looks at a hypothetical incident with relevance to the day and explores how individuals react faced with such decisions and situations.

Tales from the Crypt, Tales from the Darkside TV Series. Both shows tend toward the horror, macabre, and supernatural but otherwise share a lot of similarities with other items mentioned. Resolution frequently features a form of dark justice for the terrible choices the lead characters make. Right, but not always good, usually wins out in these stories.

Mystery

Mystery is a field loaded with potential for Shadowglade. With much of its history lost ages ago, things exist in the world that cannot be explained, at least just yet. Especially on the Frontier, where superstition reigns among the simpler populace, a well educated individual could easily ferret out the true cause of their ill-fortunes, turning up bandits in disguise, well constructed illusions, and the like.

Adventures with their roots in mystery will involve a good deal of investigation. They begin with a supposition, often rooted in superstition or myth, and are broken down as the plot unravels, revealed to be nothing more than an elaborate ruse. Characters, or players, involved should be well equipped with reasonable educations, deductive reasoning, and an insatiable curiosity.

Prestige, The Movie. Talented magicians, stage performers, and former friends carry on an intense rivalry after a tragic accident, disrupting each other's performances and searching for ever larger and more amazing feats of illusion, eventually blurring the lines between fantasy, illusion, and science.

Scooby-Doo Animated series. Do-gooder kids/young adults solve mysteries and purported "hauntings". Many are revealed to be elaborate hoaxes, while others have more mysterious roots...

Sherlock Holmes tales Movies, novels. The original super sleuth, Holmes travels Victorian-era England in pursuit of the truth through research and deduction, often revealing cases with a purported supernatural origin are nothing more than clever ruses preying on superstition.

Political Intrigue

Political forces throughout the world are vying for supremacy or at the very least survival. Plots exist throughout the land to undermine one force or another. Mir itself wants to keep the trade routes open, but merchants and minor political powers aren't above manipulating circumstances for larger profit. Northport has nursed a deep and abiding hatred of the Shadowglade royal family and covets the purportedly vast resources of the Centerspine Baronies, leading them to scheme toward various ends. Shadowglade wages numerous battles on numerous fronts, ideologically, politically, and actual conflict, often against numerous hidden forces.

Dune Series Movies, novels. Young nobleman develops awe-inspiring powers in interstellar empire. His family betrayed, he reclaims his title and takes that of Emperor with the help of fanatical desert warriors who revere him as a god. Features a good deal of quasi-supernatural powers, mythology building, and political intrigue.

Man in the Iron Mask Movies, novel. Mystery and intrigue surround the fabled "Man in the Iron Mask", a political prisoner in the French prison known as the Bastille. Theories range widely and include a plot involving royal twins and the switching of one petulant young king for his kinder, gentler, twin wrongfully imprisoned.

Three Musketeers Movies, novels. Heroic musketeers in the employ of the French king thwart royal intrigue, protect the country and the life of the king.

Supernatural & Science Fiction Action

The supernatural and alien exists all around the mortal kind, we're just too blind to see it for what it is. Skillful cover-ups, by the government or private interests, keep the masses in the dark while quiet extractions or assassinations keep the truth hidden when it is uncovered.

Brothers Grimm Movie. Charlatan brothers posing as monster hunters find themselves trapped in a real supernatural mystery rooted in dark, forgotten, lore.

Grimm TV Series A young man discovers a lost heritage; he is a descendant of the Grimm brothers, whose stories are cautionary tales of genuine creatures and sub-cultures lurking within our own world.

Hellboy Comics, movies. Government agents employ the supernatural, including a demon, a merman, and a pyrokinetic, among others, in the defense of humanity against supernatural foes.

Indiana Jones Comics, movies, novels. Archeologist Indiana Jones travels the world searching for lost artifacts while keeping one step ahead of cultists, Nazis, and Soviet agents. While quite mortal himself, his quests are for items of true myth and legend that often prove to be very real and very dangerous.

Men-In-Black Comics, movies. Government agents monitor and interact with extraterrestrials living in hiding on Earth, protecting them from normal humans and discovery while also preventing interstellar enemies from destroying the world.

Mummy Trilogy Movies. Archeologists unearth the body of a long-dead Egyptian priest, cursed upon death while simultaneously granted immense power. He attempts to resurrect his lost love and in a later installment claim an undead army. The third chapter sees a mummy of a distant land seeking true immortality and the awakening of a lost army to finish his conquest begun centuries ago.

Sherlock Holmes Movie. Holmes apprehends a cultist and murderer who is sentenced to death. The act carried out, London recoils in terror as the man rises from the grave to carry out a diabolical plot to overthrow the British government, and only Holmes stands in his way.

Supernatural TV Series. Brothers travel modern America hunting and slaying supernatural foes, including demons, ghosts, and more.

Underworld Trilogy Movies. Vampires and werewolves wage an ancient blood feud through the streets of modern Europe.

Suspense

Suspense is a mixed bag, because it can include mundane thrillers or supernatural nail-biters.

King, Stephen The “master of the macabre” touches on nearly all of the elements found within Shadowglade

within his novels. They run a gamut from high-fantasy to horror to science fiction. Effectively normal folks find themselves in unusual situations and, alone or with friends, powerless or empowered, must find a way to survive.

Others

Shadowglade is a varied setting. While the supernatural, action, horror, and Gothic atmosphere do tend to take center stage, other materials are quite beneficial as well. Check out these other tiles for some different ideas on where to take a campaign through the realm.

A Connecticut Yankee In King Arthur's Court Novel. An interesting picture of Camelot, wherein a “modern” (19th century) man ends up rather far back in time. The blend of medieval culture and later technological developments paints a decent picture for the realm and the influences of Northport.

House On Haunted Hill Movie. Particularly the original 1959 release featuring Vincent Price. An eccentric millionaire hosts a party for his wife in a secluded estate rumored to be haunted. Anyone who survives the night is promised a substantial sum of money. Through the course of the night, guests are terrorized and the millionaire's wife is apparently killed. Another guest is particularly plagued with visions and supernatural occurrences only to have it revealed many of these are staged by the wife of the millionaire and her lover who are using the event as a means to drive a guest to kill her husband. The plan backfires on the husband's apparent death however, and both the wife and lover die instead. While many supernatural occurrences on the premises are explained away as tricks and deliberate attempts to induce paranoia in the guests, others remained unexplained, lending an air of supernatural and mystery to the production.

Invisible Man, The Novel, movies, TV series. An H.G. Wells novel, it is one part science fiction in that it features super-science and an attempt to render one's self invisible through medicine, but it is also part Gothic horror in that it expounds on the moral “power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” The title character develops a formula that renders himself invisible but cannot transform back. Rage eventually consumes him as he plots a “Reign of Terror,” only to be betrayed by a former classmate and he ultimately dies in an attempt to kill his betrayer. Various adaptations have been produced that play on a sympathetic nature of the character, the plight of his being so far removed from others. Others have taken a more sinister approach and rendered the character a villain bent on using his newfound power for evils both great and small.

Sleepy Hollow Movie, Short story. An American Gothic tale, the ghost of an enemy agent of the American

Revolution is said to stalk the countryside, taking the heads of those it finds to replace its own lost skull. In the movie adaptation, empiricist Ichibod Crane looks past the supernatural elements of the events and finds an all too human hand pulling the strings of an elaborate plot of murder, betrayal, and revenge.

Verne, Jules novels. Just about anything by Jules Verne. Following in the train of thought behind Connecticut Yankee above, Verne has a unique look at technology in earlier eras widely adopted by what we know as the steam punk culture.

History

For those who haven't deduced it thus far, the setting of Shadowglade borrows quite heavily from real-world history. While many settings are ripe for it, Shadowglade is especially ready to take advantage of our own history, including our superstitions, fears, prejudices, and the darker aspects of ourselves and our history. Look closely to the history of many European nations, the legends and lore of the countryside, and even to early American history and the tales and lore that spread from isolated settlements back to civilization.

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