

Tales of the Grotesque and Dungeonesque



Adventures on Gothic Earth

by Jack W. Shear

Introduction: What is Gothic Fantasy?

The word "Gothic" has had a strange evolution. Originally, the word was used to describe a tribe of Germanic "barbarians" who often opposed the Roman Empire. Oddly, Gothic literature rarely focuses on tribes of marauding barbarians and the characters we encounter in Gothic literature bear little resemblance to these early AD peoples—what is going on here?

By the eighteenth century, the word "Gothic" had come to refer to anything "barbaric," "medieval," or "belonging to the past." For example, the eighteenth century saw a resurgence of Gothic architecture that drew upon the aesthetics of the Middle Ages as its artistic inspiration. Gothic architecture is highly ornate and quite baroque in its decorative complexity; this style of architecture was a reaction against the popularity of neo-classical architecture, which took its aesthetic sense from the Greek and Roman Classical age. The flying buttresses and adornments of a typical Gothic cathedral are entirely oppositional to the clean lines of neo-classical structures.

The aesthetic difference between neo-classical architecture and Gothic architecture mirrors an ideological difference at play in the eighteenth century. Remember, the eighteenth century was the Age of Enlightenment; Western Europe was self-congratulatory over its embrace of rationality, reason, and scientific/cultural progress as the way to a just and ascendant society. Neo-classical architecture represented those Enlightenment principles through form and aesthetic unity: it symbolized civilization, Classical learning, and a connection to the Golden Age of antiquity.

The Gothic, on the other hand, symbolized the medieval past of irrationality, unreason, and superstition. To disparage something as "Gothic" was to call it a thing of the past that is best forgotten or discarded. Gothic literature emerged as the counterpoint to mainstream fiction in much the same way that Gothic architecture was the antithesis of neo-classical aesthetics. Whereas the realist fiction of the eighteenth century concerned itself with faithfully depicting the world in sensible hues and having its characters behave in rational ways, the Gothic gave vent to fantastical and irrational depictions of madness, ghosts, violence, and all those other exciting things that proper literature wasn't supposed to deal with.

There are as many definitions of "Gothic literature" as there are scholars working in the field of Gothic studies. On one hand, this is problematic because it doesn't give us any sort of consensus opinion or agreed upon definition of the Gothic. On the other, it gives us a great deal of freedom to work with the very idea of what the Gothic is and to make the topic our own.

In fact, scholars are unable to agree as to what texts should be included in the Gothic's literary corpus, when the Gothic begins, and when (or if) the Gothic has an expiration date. One typical way of demarcating the Gothic's boundaries is to assume that it begins in 1764 with the publication of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*—the first novel to bear the subtitle *A Gothic Story*—and ends with the publication of Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* in 1822.

That said, I find that time-line dissatisfying for two reasons. For one, it seems to imply that the Gothic appeared out of nowhere in 1764 and conveniently forgets the points of reference that Walpole makes to earlier literary forms. *The Castle of Otranto* (and thus the entirety of Gothic literature) is the inheritor of a wide-range of bloody and strange literary forms; it contains recognizable elements of revenge tragedies, medieval romances, and especially plots, characters, and themes cribbed straight from Shakespeare.

Another problem that arises: if we condemn Gothic literature to an early grave in 1822, what do we then call the thematically and imagistically-similar fiction that appeared after *Melmoth*? Why does *Frankenstein* (published in 1818) get to be a Gothic novel but *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (published in 1890) and *Dracula* (published in 1897) do not?

So what makes a piece of literature "Gothic"? First, it's important to note that the application of the word Gothic to literature is mostly a twentieth century phenomenon. During the 18th and 19th centuries, these texts were far more likely to be called "romances" or "novels of the terrorist school"—the idea of a body of literature known as the Gothic had yet to be invented. The Gothic label has been applied retroactively by literary critics to define a body of texts that share certain literary conventions.



Gothic literature is filthy with the following generic conventions: an imperiled heroine whose life and/or virginity is often at stake, a Catholic setting (generally either Spain or Italy in the early Gothic novels); a focus on terror (psychological fear) or horror (disgust) or both as affect; a long-buried secret from the past that can no longer be repressed; monstrosity (whether human or inhuman) or villainy (often a patriarchal figure of power); violence and sexuality that passes beyond the border of the socially acceptable; incest; doubling (doppelgangers, mistaken identities, etc.); a decrepit castle, monastery, fortress, dungeon, or other medieval structure as part of the setting; the Inquisition and the misuse of religious authority; specters, ghosts, or phantasmal visions (remnants of the past that cannot be repressed); mysterious veiled women; fragmentary narratives (framed narrative, missing text, etc.); enclosure, premature burial, and imprisonment.

Unlike many other forms of literature, the Gothic survived long past its initial popularity. The reason for its survival is the adaptability of its conventions to suit new eras and the anxieties that thrive beneath them. For example, as the individual sense of self became more important than the sense of communal belonging, the authors of Gothic fiction were able to respond to this shift by re-purposing the Gothic's conventions to fit new representations of horror and terror. As such, it is best to think of the Gothic as a mode of literary production rather than as a genre. A genre assumes that the literary form has some immutable internal structure; while the imagistic and stylistic conventions that define the Gothic are recognizable, the Gothic's mutational proclivities are far too broad, changeable, and migratory to fit into a strict generic designation.

Indeed, authors of Gothic fiction frequently use the mode to challenge the very idea of stable categories. The Gothic both absorbs other literary forms and hybridizes them, treating them as the raw material from which new forms of artistic production can be created. Though the mode began as a form of prose fiction, it has since infiltrated other forms of media such as theater (such as the Gothic dramas of the eighteenth century and the Grand Guignol of the nineteenth century), film (such as early expressionist works like *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and our modern horror films), television (*Dark Shadows*, *The X-Files*, and *American Horror Story*), and even children's books—what are the *Lemony Snickett* books but the training wheels of the Gothic novel proper?

Gothic Fantasy is the importation of Gothic literature's conventions to the realm of old-school fantasy role-playing. Whereas the early editions of fantasy role-playing games used the high fantasy fiction of J. R. R. Tolkien and the sword & sorcery stories of Robert E. Howard and Fritz Leiber as their points of inspiration, a Gothic take on old-school role-playing asks, "What would our game be like if we pursued a different set of influences and approached the idea of gaming from a different literary lens?" A fantasy world shaped by the imagery, atmosphere, and tropes of the Gothic mode will necessarily give a different game experience than one shaped by the usual grab-bag of classic fantasy; essentially, in this campaign we will be playing in a fantasy version of 19th century Earth shaped by the conventions of Gothic fiction. Monsters are real, occult rites can harness untold powers, and the fate of humanity lies in the contest between the light of rationality and the shadows of ancient superstitions.



What follows are the rules, monsters, special spells, and setting notes I use when I run games set in a Gothic version of Earth (circa the 19th century). The **player-facing rules** are found on pages 5-29, the **Gothic Earth Grimoire** (new spells) are found on pages 30-37, the **Gothic Earth Bestiary** (new monsters) is found on pages 38-70, the **Game Master-facing rules** are found on pages 71-98, the **13 Flavors of Fear** section (setting notes) is found on pages 99-127, and an **Appendix of Magic Items** is found on pages 128-129. Rounding out this book is an "Appendix N" of Gothic Fantasy literature on page 130.

Happy Gaming!

Jack W. Shear

Suggestions for Gothic Character Archetypes

“The passions are the seeds of vices as well as of virtues, from which either may spring, accordingly as they are nurtured.”

– Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*

The first step in most character generating processes is to envision the kind of character you would like to play. Of course, this can be a bit of a challenge for players who aren't intimately familiar with the stock characters and archetypal protagonists that populate the pages of Gothic literature. The purpose of this section is to provide brief descriptions of character types common to the Gothic mode; these descriptions are meant as starting points for players who may not have time to digest the depth and breath of Gothic literature before play begins. Nevertheless, please consider these model archetypes as points of departure or as the raw material for your own imagination—feel free to customize these archetypes as you wish for your own characters and do not feel constrained to slavishly imitate the conventions of Gothic literature!

Beguiling Enchanter – You are a seductive hedonist with the power to bend others to your will. Some characters in Gothic literature possess the uncanny ability to fascinate others and control their thoughts and actions through the power of suggestion. Female enchantresses are generally of the *femme fatale* type; they leverage supernatural power and feminine wiles to leave men powerless against their agendas. In contrast, male enchanters tend to be far more domineering; they control others through a combination of personal magnetism and fear. In both cases, a Beguiling Enchanter's most fantastic powers tend to come from an otherworldly source such as the inherited powers of an unnatural bloodline, inner mesmerism, or the study of the occult sciences of mental domination.

Suggested character classes: magic-user, illusionist

Literary examples: Dionea in Vernon Lee's “Dionea,” Lucas in Dion Fortune's *The Demon Lover*.

Cunning Bandit – You are a condemned criminal who skirts the line between loyalty and selfishness. Faceless bandits are the *de rigueur* threats that lurk in the forests and mountain passes of Gothic literature, but the Cunning Bandit is a different breed. Rather than being a mere footpad or thug, a Cunning Bandit is an artist of the criminal underworld. Such a character might be a cruel thief who pits his skill and devious mind against the laws of polite society or a dashing rogue forced into a life of crime by circumstances beyond their control. In any event, a Cunning Bandit always lives in fear of discovery; since a trip to the gallows pole waits the captured criminal, most Cunning Bandits either take shelter within the underworld of thieves and assassins or make their lairs far from the reach of civilized justice.

Suggested character classes: thief, ranger, fighter

Literary examples: Montoni in Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Jack Sheppard in William Ainsworth Harrison's *Jack Sheppard*.

Dispossessed Noble – You are the forgotten or usurped heir of a noble house. The trajectory of many Gothic tales follows the path of the rags-to-riches story, but with a twist: instead of later success being the reward for virtuous living, such characters are usually noblemen and noblewomen who are ultimately restored to their proper station. This restoration is rarely a surprise in Gothic literature; a Dispossessed Noble's aristocratic virtues (honor, kindness, and sensibility) are always already obvious and are intimately connected to the fact of their rank and class. The life of a Dispossessed Noble is one of striving to return to their place at the top of the social hierarchy; such a life inevitably entails discovering the betrayer who caused their disinheritance and bringing them to a fitting end.

Suggested character classes: fighter, paladin

Literary examples: Theodore in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, Ellena in Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian*.

Expert Investigator – You are a delver into secrets best left undisturbed. Expert Investigators are often highly-educated professionals who leverage their knowledge and insights against the world's murkiest mysteries. Proficient in the arts of research, observation, and inference, Expert Investigators rely on their intellects and powers of perception to penetrate the foul enigmas that embroil them. However, the Expert Investigator's natural intellectual curiosity is frequently their downfall; indeed, the quest for knowledge and the drive to understand the unutterable has driven many an Expert Investigator into the waiting arms of an insane asylum.

Suggested character classes: thief, magic-user, illusionist

Literary examples: Sherlock Holmes in Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Henry Armitage in H. P. Lovecraft's "The Dunwich Horror."

Faustian Bargainer – You are a diabolic sorcerer who trades portions of your soul for earthly power. Absolute power, we're told, is absolutely corrupting—but for the Faustian Bargainer it is the path to power that is fraught with corruption. Some Faustian Bargainers deal with devils for a greater cause, such as being reunited with a lost love, but others are simply hungry for the magical power that trafficking with the infernal world can grant. Faustian Bargainers tend to be cunning, charismatic, and ready to assert their will over horrific, otherworldly beings. However, Faustian Bargainers also tend to be frivolous with their power and their flippant attitude towards their immortal souls often damns them to an eternity of fiery torment.

Suggested character classes: magic-user, warlock, cleric

Literary examples: Manfred in Lord Byron's *Manfred*, Ambrosio in Matthew Gregory Lewis's *The Monk*.

Haunted Necromancer – You are a dabbler in the occult who crosses the boundary between life and death. Contrary to the high fantasy notion of necromancers being skull-clad wizards who conjure up armies of the undead, the Haunted Necromancer found in Gothic literature tends to be a much more subtle form of spell-caster. A Haunted Necromancer might be a spiritualist who conjures the ghosts of the dearly departed during drawing room seances, an occultist who seeks to explore the line betwixt the living and the unliving, or a foul sorcerer who has transgressed against the divine order by returning from the grave to pursue their unholy studies. Of course, the nature of their power often make Haunted Necromancers disquieting to be around; at best they have an air of the spectral about them, at worst the morbid atmosphere of the grave clings to them like a personal miasma.

Suggested character classes: magic-user, cleric

Literary examples: Volkert in Ludwig Flammenberg's *The Necromancer*, the Carnby brothers in Clark Ashton Smith's "The Return of the Sorcerer."

Intrepid Explorer – You are a restless expeditioneer driven to seek out untold lands and savage circumstances. Some Gothic tales eschew the horrors of the home front to instead detail the terrors that lurk in the world's unmapped corners. An Intrepid Explorer seeks out those strange and distant locales to conquer them in the name of civilization. Some Intrepid Explorers are motivated by what Rudyard Kipling called “The White Man's Burden,” a belief that it was the duty of Europeans to spread their enlightened culture and way of life to the “dark places” of the earth. Others might wish merely to put their names on the map by locating a fabled tomb, a lost treasure, or an unknown tribe. All Intrepid Explorers wish for lasting glory, and hubris is often their downfall.

Suggested character classes: fighter, ranger

Literary examples: Quincey Morris in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Leo and Holly in H. Rider Haggard's *She*.

Knight Errant – You are a devoted champion tormented by fleshly desires. Knights Errant are characters who travel to fulfill a lofty quest. The quest is sometimes divinely-ordained; many Knights Errant are inspired to take up the questing life by dream-visions or holy visitations. Nevertheless, despite the often spiritual nature of their quests, Knights Errant are unusually prone to sexual temptation. For example, a Knight Errant charged by a pious monk to seek out and restore a usurped prince to the throne may find himself side-tracked by a beautiful daughter belonging to the house of the usurper. Generally, Knights Errant are recalled to their purpose by a higher power or die with the object of their quest left unfulfilled.

Suggested character classes: fighter, paladin

Literary examples: Frederick in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, the nameless knight in Edgar Allan Poe's “El Dorado.”

Monster Slayer – You are a stalker of evil willing to sacrifice your life to rid the world of abominations. Monster Slayers come in two distinct variations in Gothic tales. The first type faces the supernatural evils that haunt the world head-on; these Monster Slayers, much like the mighty woodsmen of fairy tales from which they are descended, fight with brute force and martial prowess. The second type uses all the powers of the mind in the battle against unholy creatures; these Monster Slayers fight with their wits and often outfox their opponents with the latest scientific advances, cunning traps, and superior tactical acumen. However, it should be noted that the path of the Monster Slayer is an unusually lonely one—few Monster Slayers are afforded the luxury of family life and many go to their graves in defense of humanity.

Suggested character classes: fighter, ranger, paladin, monk

Literary examples: Abraham van Helsing in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Grégoire and Mani in the film *Brotherhood of the Wolf*.

Pious Cleric – You are a servant of faith whose fervor is contested by grave doubts. Pious Clerics are rarely the protagonists in Gothic stories; rather, they often serve as support for the principle characters by giving wise counsel, reinforcing the beliefs of the righteous, and by helping the downtrodden escape from the clutches of the Inquisition. These characters tend to be monks, nuns, friars, and priests who aid the main actors in a tale and then slip away into the background. That said, there is no reason why a Pious Cleric couldn't be approached as a protagonist in their own right. Certainly, there is room for characters of faith to take center stage in exploring a world fraught with Gothic possibilities. Nevertheless, the prevalence of fallen or corrupted officers of the Church in Gothic literature perhaps gestures toward the major character fault that Pious Clerics possess: they are susceptible to having their faith horribly tested by earthly temptations (such as corrupting power, wealth, or sexuality) or by the fallibility of their own religious convictions.

Suggested character classes: cleric, paladin

Literary examples: Sister Olivia in Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian*, Father Karras in William Peter Blatty's *The Exorcist*.

Veiled Stranger – You are a mysterious agent pursuing an unknown agenda. In many ways, a Veiled Stranger is both the most rewarding and most difficult Gothic archetype to play. Veiled Strangers cultivate the Gothic's aura of the mysterious: they frequently travel under assumed names and invent their own histories. Often, the truth about a Veiled Stranger is left unsolved or unknown at a story's end. In terms of playing a Veiled Stranger, this means taking on a role that is essentially “no role” or at least a role that is constantly shifting and uncertain. Nevertheless, such a character can be quite enjoyable because Veiled Strangers are a bit like spies who adapt and discard identities as if they were nothing more than overcoats. Much like secret agents, all Veiled Strangers possess a goal or hidden scheme; this agenda might be benign (such as exposing a fraudulent prince as a parricide) or it might be malign (such as a burning desire for revenge).

Suggested character classes: thief, assassin

Literary examples: Melmoth in Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer*, Carwin in Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland*, Montresor in Edgar Allan Poe's “The Cask of Amontillado.”



Gothic Virtues and Vices

“It was the passions about whose origin we deceived ourselves that tyrannized most strongly over us. Our weakest motives were those of whose nature we were conscious.”

– Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

For those who like to have a sense of who their character is before play begins—as opposed to letting a character's personality emerge during play—the following list of virtues and vices might be helpful for defining your character's personality. Each virtue and vice is arranged in a binary pair that represents a possible tension within the character's psyche; divide 10 “points” between the virtue and vice of each pairing to determine the extent to which the character favors the virtue or the vice. For example, a particularly superstitious character might have Reason 3/Superstition 7 or a character torn between chastity and lust might have Faithfulness 5/Lasciviousness 5.

Virtues/Vices:

Reason/Superstition – does your character confront the supernatural with the light of reason or do they resort to the ancient ways of folk belief?

Reserve/Passion – does your character exercise control over their emotions or do they give their impassioned impulses free reign?

Restraint/Excess – when exposed to drink, gambling, and other vices, does your character place limits upon their conduct or do they indulge past the satiation of their urges?

Faithfulness/Lasciviousness – are your character's romantic entanglements limited to one beloved object of affection or is your character prodigious with their lusts?

Forgiveness/Vengeance – does your character pass over the many slights offered by the world or do they swear to exact revenge against those who wrong them?

Authority/Liberty – does your character respect the temporal and religious restrictions imposed by the civilized world or do they value their personal freedom of action above all else?

Lawfulness/Criminality – does your character follow the laws of the land or are they inextricably pulled toward the underworld?

Piety/Worldliness – is your character's worldview colored by the hues of spiritual belief or are they instead drawn to the worldly glitter of wealth?

Valor/Fearfulness – does your character confront the world's darkness with bravery or do they cower in the face of danger?

Mercy/Cruelty – does your character temper their conduct with mercy for the weak and defeated or do they exult in the agony of others?

House Rules for Gothic Earth Campaigns

“He have done all this alone; all alone! From a ruin tomb in a forgotten land. What more may he not do when the greater world of thought is open to him? He that can smile at death, as we know him; who can flourish in the midst of diseases that kill off whole peoples. Oh! If such an one was to come from God, and not the Devil, what a force for good might he not be in this old world of ours!”

— Bram Stoker, *Dracula*

Character Generation House Rules

Rolling for Ability Scores: roll 4d6/drop lowest six times, arrange to taste.

Races: Gothic Earth is a human-only setting, so “demi-human” races are unavailable.

Classes: See my Character Class House Rules for changes to the classes. In addition to the classes in the *Advanced Edition* book, also available is the warlock class.

Weapons and Armor: Any class can use any weapon and wear any armor. However, some class abilities (such as magic-user spell-casting and thief abilities) are penalized or prohibited in certain types of armor.

Armor Class and Attack Bonus: We will use ascending Armor Class and an Attack Bonus instead of the attack matrix.

Hit Points: All characters get maximum Hit Points at 1st level.

Alignment: I don't generally bother with it, but feel free to write it on your Character Sheet if you like. Spells and powers such as *Detect Evil* or *Protection from Evil* will effect supernatural beings instead of “evil” in the usual alignment sense.

Starting Cash: 3d6 x 10 in dollars.

Miscellaneous House Rules:

Rites and Rituals — since I tend to cap my games at 10th level for player-characters, higher level spells don't see use—which is a shame since many of them are actually pretty interesting. To put them back in play I rule that those higher-level spells can instead be cast as rituals (for arcane magic) or religious rites (for divine magic). Any caster of the appropriate class can cast a ritual or rite, but the casting takes as many hours equal to the spell's level and the caster must make a Saving Throw vs. Spells to successfully perform the ritual or rite. (If you've got some sort of “failed casting results” random table ready to go, you should definitely use it for a failed Saving Throw for a miscast ritual or rite!) Additionally, I sometimes require that the caster gather rare ingredients or spend money on appropriate material components for the casting. For spells that have an immediate effect, the caster binds the effect to an object and can then release the spell with a standard action. A character may only have one such “bound spell” of a given spell level.

Critical Hits, Attack & Damage Modifiers: A natural to-hit roll of 20 does maximum damage. Strength modifiers effect to-hit and damage rolls with melee weapons. Dexterity modifiers effect to-hit and damage rolls with ranged weapons. Thrown weapons can apply Strength modifiers instead of Dexterity modifiers. Light, one-handed melee weapons that do 1d6 damage or less can apply Dexterity modifiers instead of Strength modifiers.

Life's Thread Cut Short – in general, I don't like dickering about with negative Hit Points and the usual rules for death and dying. Instead, when a character reaches zero Hit Points (or less) their player has the privilege of rolling on the following table to determine their character's fate:

Life's Thread Cut Short Table

d20	Result
1-2	A Second Chance – the character is un-phased by a blow that would fell a lesser creature; they may act normally.
3-5	A Stunning Blow – the character is not killed, but is instead stunned (may take no actions) for 1d4 rounds.
6-10	A Felling Blow – the character is knocked unconscious and must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Death or die every turn until they receive doctoring or magical healing.
11	A Crippling Blow – the character is knocked unconscious and additionally suffers a loss of 1d4 points of Strength, Constitution, or Dexterity (determine which randomly).
12	A Blow to the Head – the character is knocked unconscious and additionally suffers a loss of 1d4 points of Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma (determine which randomly).
13-14	A Death-defying Stand! – the character has been mortally wounded and will die in 1d10 rounds unless medical aid or magical healing is obtained. Until that time the character may act normally as they grit their teeth and fight on through the pain.
15-18	The Reaper's Scythe Falls – the character dies. <i>Raise Dead</i> or similar is their only hope now.
19-20	Horrific Demise! – the character is dispatched in a truly gruesome, stomach-churning manner. It's going to take a <i>Resurrection</i> spell to bring them back from beyond the veil. All allies who witness this atrocity must make an immediate Saving Throw vs. Horror.

Ectoplasmic & Other Supernatural Creatures – I tend to be a bit stingy with magic weapons (or I just plain forget to include them in loot piles), so one house rule I use for “spectral” monsters such as ghosts, groaning spirits, poltergeists, *et al*, is that they aren't fully ethereal—and thus aren't only harmed by magical weapons. Instead, my spectral monsters are “ectoplasmic”; they possess a form made-up of an uncanny substance that is the raw physical manifestation of spiritual essence. An ectoplasmic creature takes only half damage from physical attacks, but takes full damage from magical attacks. I use a similar ruling for creatures such as demons, devils, corporeal undead, and any other creature that is usually only damaged by enchanted weapons.

Character Class House Rules

“No one is adequate to comprehending the misery of my lot! Fate obliges me to be constantly in movement: I am not permitted to pass more than a fortnight in the same place. I have no Friend in the world, and from the restlessness of my destiny I never can acquire one. Fain would I lay down my miserable life, for I envy those who enjoy the quiet of the Grave.”

– Mathew Lewis, *The Monk*

Cleric

Changes: 1d8 Hit Points per level. The Turn Undead ability now covers more than just undead; clerics can banish “unclean spirits,” which will include some non-undead monstrosities. However, a cleric can only channel this ability once per day per character level. Clerics do not choose their spells per day; rather, the GM chooses which spells a cleric's deity grants them for the day. These spells should be chosen with the challenges the cleric is likely to face in mind—after all, the gods have knowledge of the future. However, if a cleric discovers a new clerical spell in a prayerbook or sacred scroll relevant to their faith, they may opt to swap out a spell of the appropriate level that is given to them by their deity to instead take that spell.

Druid

Changes: 1d8 Hit Points per level. See cleric for changes to the way spells are granted. Also, druids can have an animal familiar at the start of play.

Fighter

Changes: 1d12 Hit Points per level. Fighters have three class abilities not covered in the rule books: *Weapon Expertise* – when a fighter wields a weapon it counts as one die better for damage rolls (1d4 → 1d6 → 1d8 → 1d10 → 1d12). Also, fighters get a +1 to-hit with all weapons. **Reaching 3rd level: *Unending Brutality*** – when a fighter reduces an opponent to 0 Hit Points or less in combat they may make a free attack against an adjacent foe when using a melee weapon or against any foe within range when using a missile weapon. **Reaching 7th level: *Vulgar Display of Power*** – when a fighter kills a foe, an opponent of lesser Hit Dice than the creature that was just dispatched must make an immediate morale check.

Paladin

Changes: 1d10 Hit Points per level. In this campaign the paladin's moral code will be a bit more flexible than usual; after all, evil must be rooted out at all costs! See the cleric entry for changes to the Turn Undead ability and rules about spells granted by deities.

Ranger

Changes: 1d10 Hit Points per level. Instead of gaining a bonus against goblinoids, a ranger gets to choose an enemy that they receive their combat bonuses against from the following groups: undead, were-creatures, demons (includes devils), automatons (golems and constructs), aberrations (hags and other warped, chaos-tainted creatures), outsiders (Cthulhoid entities), fey (goblins, elves, and the like). See the rules for the cleric entry for rules regarding spells granted by a deity (regarding any druid spells) and the warlock entry for rules gained through bargaining with strange entities (regarding any magic-user spells granted by a nature spirit). Also, feel free to substitute the paladin's healing powers for the ranger's spell progression, if you want.

Magic-user

Changes: 1d6 Hit Points per level. Many spells will receive a heavy re-flavoring to be more in-line with the genre. Expect many of those flashier staples (*Fire Ball*, *Magic Missile*, etc.) to become more subtle and more darkly hued. For example, while the usual *Fly* spell is pretty lame as-is, if it becomes a spell that can only be used to fly if that character rides a broom Walpurgisnacht-style, then we might be in business. It's a very flavorful thing to give your magic-user a "theme" that colors his or her use of magic. For example, if your magic-user uses "shadow magic," then we can give all of her spells subtle (or not-so-subtle) trappings and effects that reflect her style of magic. Some possible themes: spectral magic, summoning magic, blood magic, necromancy, astrological magic, etc. Also, magic-users gain bonus spells as per the cleric's bonus spells chart; simply substitute Intelligence for Wisdom when consulting the chart.

Illusionist

Changes: 1d6 Hit Points per level. See magic-user for changes in the way spells are flavored. Also, illusionists gain bonus spells as per the cleric's bonus spells chart; simply substitute Intelligence for Wisdom when consulting the chart.

Thief

Changes: 1d8 Hit Points per level. A thief gets a +10% bonus to the Pick Locks, Find and Remove Traps, Pick Pockets, Move Silently, and Hide in Shadows special abilities. We will also use the bonuses to thieves skills granted by high Dexterity.

Assassin

Changes: 1d8 Hit Points per level. Assassins get all thief abilities as if they were a thief of the same level with a +5% bonus. We will also use the bonuses to thieves skills granted by high Dexterity.

Monk

Changes: 1d8 Hit Points per level. Monks get a +5% bonus to all thief skills they have normal access to. We will also use the bonuses to thieves skills granted by high Dexterity.

Firearms Table

Weapon	Damage	Ranges	Shots	Reload	Weight	Cost
Pistol	1d10	150/300 ft.	1	3 rounds	3 lb.	\$10
Revolver	1d10	300/600 ft.	6	1 round	3 lb.	\$15
Rifle	1d12	400/800 ft.	1	3 rounds	10 lb.	\$25
Carbine	1d10	500/1000	20	1 round	8 lb.	\$15
Shotgun	1d12 at normal range/1d6 at long range	50/100 ft.	5	2 shells per round	10 lb.	\$30
Bullets (20)						\$2

Warlock/Witch Class

Requirements: INT 9, CHA 9

Prime Requisites: INT, CHA

Hit Dice: 1d8 through 9th level, +2 per level thereafter

Maximum Level: none

Experience Chart: Elf

Attacks/Saves: Fighter

Weapons/Armor: Any

Warlocks are the daredevils of the occult world; they barter their souls and sanity away with otherworldly entities in return for arcane power. A warlock might be a shaman who attains magical powers from primal spirits, a demonologist who bargains with infernal intelligences, a petitioner of the fey, or a cultist who borrows the eldritch might of the strange beings who exist beyond the stars.



Special Abilities:

Class abilities as per the elf racial class. See magic-user for changes in the way spells are flavored. Because a warlock barter for his or her spells with an otherworldly source (such as a demon, an archfey, a voodoo spirit, a terror from beyond space and time, etc.), they only get to choose half their spells per day; as with the cleric, the GM chooses the other half of their daily allotment of spells with the patron entity's agenda in mind.

Also, warlocks gain bonus spells as per the cleric's bonus spells chart; simply substitute Charisma for Wisdom when consulting the chart. However, if a warlock discovers a new magic-user spell in a grimoire or scroll, they may opt to swap out a spell of the appropriate level that is given to them by their patron to instead take that spell.

Terror, Horror, and Madness Rules

Terror – In Gothic literature, the experience of terror is frequently described as a soul-expanding experience of awe. When one feels terror, one's mind is elevated to a new understanding of the world's terrifying possibilities; possibilities that were once repressed by the rational mind now threaten to undue the psyche's defenses. As such, terror is generally an inward experience; it is centered on psychological interiority, the ways in which a sense of self is located in relation to the outside world, and the realization of our inconsequential smallness in the face of something unthinkable.

For concrete examples of how terror function in Gothic works, consider the disoriented psychology of Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House*, the obfuscating mysteries and conspiracies of Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian*, or the film *Carnival of Souls*.



One way to introduce the Gothic notion of terror into your games is to have players make a Saving Throw vs. Terror when their characters encounter something that expands their knowledge in a threatening way. As a GM, you might call for a Saving Throw vs. Terror when the characters are confronted by a creature or being that defies rational explanation, when the characters encounter supernatural phenomena that cannot be explained away as a natural occurrence, or when they learn a terrifying truth about a character or situation that goes against all of their assumptions. Reading a grimoire filled with unutterable secrets about the cosmos could trigger a Saving Throw vs. Terror, as could watching the dead animate and once again walk the earth. When the characters' reality bends, so should their minds.

A Saving Throw vs. Terror is always a Saving Throw vs. Petrify or Paralyze made with the following modifiers:

Wisdom modifier (one's connection to the world and higher spiritual powers is a safeguard against terror)

The character is well armed and armored – +1

An innocent is endangered – +1 (even evil characters are affected by innocence)

The terror involves a loved one – +1

The terrifying event is spectral in nature – -1

The terrifying event dwarfs our insignificant human scale – -2

The character has faced a similar terror within the last day – +3

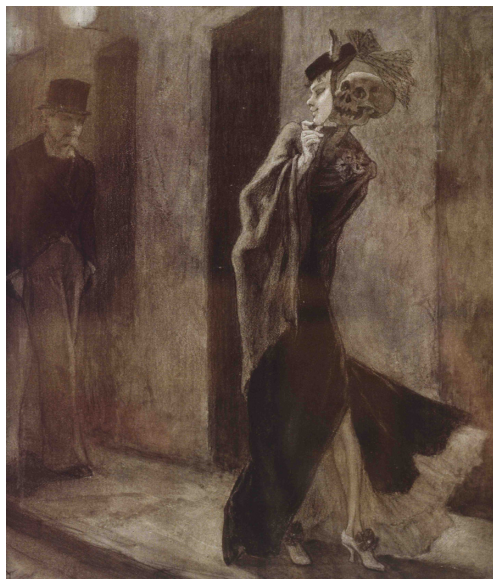
The character has failed a Terror Save against a similar terror within the last day – -3

If the character passes their Saving Throw vs. Terror, they may act normally. If the character fails their Saving Throw vs. Terror, roll on the following chart to determine how they react to their source of their terror:

Terror Effects Table

d12	Effect
1	Shocked – Your hair turns snow white due to the shock of what you've encountered, but you may otherwise act normally.
2-3	Shaken – You fight through your feelings of terror; you take a -1 penalty to all actions attempted within the presence of the object of your terror.
4-5	Staggered – You reel backward in terror; you lose any actions for the round except for moving directly away from the object of your terror.
6-7	Paralyzed – You are momentarily stunned by the experience of fear; you lose any actions for the round.
8-9	Flee – Fear overtakes you, forcing you to retreat; you must flee the terrifying scene for 1d6 rounds.
10-11	Faint – Your mind gives way and consciousness steals away from you; you fall unconscious for 1d4 rounds.
12	Madness – Your mind cannot handle the extent of your terror! Roll once on the Madness table; this condition begins to afflict you at the start of your next adventure.

If a character who has failed a Saving Throw vs. Terror has a *Remove Fear* spell cast upon them, it immediately negates the effects of the failed Saving Throw.



Horror – In many ways, the experience of horror is the opposite of the experience of terror; feelings of horror are soul-shrinking impressions of disgust or revulsion. When one feels horror, one's mind contracts and attempts to shut out the horrifying possibilities of what you've just experienced or attempts to repress the horrible implications of what you've just witnessed. In Gothic literature, objects that inspire horror are generally exterior to the sense of self; they are more visceral than actively psychological.

Where we find examples of horror in literature: *Corpses, blood, and gore*: when a character encounters a decaying body or other remnant of human life they tend to react with disgust and are often temporarily stunned by the discovery. The visceral workings of the body are a reminder that we too are mortal and subject to bodily disintegration. *Bodily transformation*: when a character discovers that a villain is physically monstrous, misshapen, grotesque, or inhuman, it challenges their perceptions of embodied subjectivity and frequently causes them to react with revulsion. The revelation that the villain harbors a bodily secret—that they are a werewolf, possess a horrible deformity, or disturbing wound—cause us to experience horror at the thought that the form that defines human existence is fallible, mutational, or unstable.

For concrete examples of how horror functions in Gothic works, consider the physical excesses of Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*, the bodily gruesomeness of David Cronenberg's *Videodrome*, or the disassembled bodies in the film *Hellraiser*.



One way to introduce the Gothic notion of horror into your games is to have players make a Saving Throw vs. Horror when their characters encounter something that reminds them of the base reality of the human condition. As a GM, you might call for a Saving Throw vs. Horror when the characters encounter a scene of horrific gore and mutilation, when the characters witness a grotesque bodily transformation, or when the characters observe a particularly lurid detail at the scene of a murder. If the characters still possess human sentiment, they should react with appropriate revulsion in circumstances that call bodily integrity into question.

A Saving Throw vs. Horror is always a Saving Throw vs. Poison made with the following modifiers:

Intelligence modifier (a rational mind helps process the truth of our biological fallibility)

Constitution modifier (a strong gut can choke back feelings of revulsion)

The character has passed a Saving Throw against a similar scene of horror in the past – +1

The character has failed a Saving Throw against a similar scene of horror in the past – -2

The character is Lawful in alignment – -1

The character is Chaotic in alignment – +1

The scene of horror takes place in an enclosed or claustrophobic location – -2

If the character passes their Saving Throw vs. Horror, they may act normally. If the character fails their Saving Throw vs. Horror, roll on the following chart to determine how they react to the source of their horror:

Horror Effects Table

d12	Effect
1-5	Disgusted – You fight through your feelings of revulsion; you take a -1 penalty to all actions attempted within the presence of the object of your horror.
6-7	Recoil – As the horror of the scene before you batters your mind, you begin to lose your grip; you drop whatever you are holding as you recoil in fear.
8-9	Sickened – You gag with horror at the sight that assaults your eyes; you lose your next 1d4 rounds of actions.
10	Repulsion – You feel an overwhelming urge to retreat from the object of your horror; you must flee the horrific scene for a full turn.
11	Rage – Your horror turns to anger as the blood runs cold in your veins. If the object of your horror is a creature, you attack it with a +1 bonus to hit and damage. If the object of your horror is a situation or object, you find some violent means to vent your rage upon it.
12	Madness – Your mind cannot handle the extent of your horror! Roll once on the Madness table; this condition begins to afflict you at the start of your next adventure.

If a character who has failed a Saving Throw vs. Horror has a *Remove Fear* spell cast upon them, it immediately negates the effects of the failed Saving Throw.

Madness – Madness is too often the unfortunate consequences of encountering the supernatural and the unknown. Characters may gain a mental illness as the results of a failed Saving Throw vs. Terror or Horror, or they might gain a madness due to a sanity-destroying mental attack, reading a cursed tome, or glimpsing the world beyond the veil of reality. When you want to see what kind of madness a character has developed, roll on the following table:

Madness Effects Table

d20	Madness	Effects
01	Addictive Personality	You have turned to drink or drugs to stave off your persistent fear. You will constantly be in search of intoxication. When under the influence of your vice, you take a -1 penalty on all rolls; when you do not have access to your substance of choice, you take a -2 penalty on all rolls.
02	Black Melancholia	You are consumed by depression and ennui. You take a -1 penalty on all rolls.
03	Changed Personality	Your experiences have destroyed your original personality; a different personal more suited to surviving in an uncertain world has arisen in its place. All of your former personality traits now operate in reverse. If Lawful or Chaotic, your alignment changes to its opposite; if Neutral, you must pick an alignment and role-play it to the extreme.
04	Fear of Enclosed Spaces	You are stuck with a permanent fear of enclosed spaces, tight fits, and premature burial. Whenever you find yourself in these circumstances you take a -2 penalty on all rolls.
05	Fear of the Dark	You are struck with a permanent fear of the dark. You cannot sleep in darkness; you must have a burning candle or lamp by your side or you do not gain any of the benefits associated with a restful night of slumber. Additionally, whenever you are in a dark environment you take a -3 penalty on all rolls.
06	Fingersmith	You are overcome with the compulsion to steal. If presented with the opportunity to take something important that does not belong to you, you must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Spells to avoid the temptation.
07	Fixation on the Occult	You are overcome with the irrational belief that if you master the occult you can master your fear. All of your extra income must be spent pursuing occult tomes and private instruction.
08	Gluttony	You are overcome by the irrational belief that if you consume you will not be consumed by your fear. Your gluttony causes you to lose four points of Constitution and Strength while you suffer from this madness.
09	Imp of the Perverse	You are overcome by an irrational urge to do the wrong thing in important situations. Anytime you are confronted with the opportunity to do something wrong without further motive, you must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Spells or do the opposite of what you believe to be right given the situation.

10	Insane Bravery	Your continued survival in the face of the unnatural has given you the irrational belief that you are invincible. You cannot retreat or withdraw from dangerous situations by any means.
11	Murderous Rages	Your fear finds vent in violent rages and an uncontrollable temper. If provoked, you must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Spells or physically attack your provoker.
12	Nervous Wreck	Your madness has weakened your already fragile mental state. You take a -4 penalty to Saving Throws vs. Terror and Horror.
13	Odious Quirks	Your madness manifests itself as disturbing personality quirks such as talking to yourself, laughing like a maniac, saying and doing inappropriate things, etc. You lose four points of Charisma while suffering from the effects of this madness.
14	Prone to Nightmares	Your fear finds you in your dreams—dreams from which you awake screaming and unrested. After awakening from a night of slumber, roll 1d6. On a roll of 1-3 you feel no ill effects; on a roll of 4-6 you gain none of the benefits of a full night's sleep and suffer a -1 penalty on all rolls for the day.
15	Religious Mania	Your madness have given you the irrational belief that religious faith will protect you from your fear. All of your extra income must be spent tithing to a religious institution.
16	Self-Starvation	Your madness has inspired the irrational belief that if you deny yourself food you can deny the extent of your fear. You permanently lose five Hit Points while under the effects of this madness.
17	Self-Torturer	You torture yourself with thoughts of your own failure and a belief in your unavoidable doom. You take a -2 penalty to all Saving Throws while suffering from this madness.
18	Stupefied	Your madness has left you periodically deaf and dumb to the world around you as you retreat within yourself to escape your fear. You lose four points of Intelligence while under the effects of this madness.
19	Voices in Head	You are continually distracted by a number of voices that only you can hear. You lose four points of Wisdom while under the effects of this madness.
20	Truly Troubled	Your madness is pervasive; roll twice on the Madness Effects Table and take both results. If the extent of your mental trauma is discovered you run the risk of being institutionalized.

Since madness often takes time to develop, a character who gains a madness does not suffer from its effects immediately; rather, they begin to suffer its effects and display its symptoms at the start of their next adventure.

Characters may be restored to their former sanity by use of a *Cure Disease*, *Heal*, or *Restoration* spell, if the GM deems mental illness to be within their scope. Additionally, a character might be cured of madness by a stay in an asylum that offers therapeutic psychological treatments. A stay in this type of institute grants a character a Saving Throw vs. Spells. If the Saving Throw is successful, the character regains their sanity and no longer suffers from the effects of their madness. If the Saving Throw is failed, the character's madness persists; additionally, any further Saving Throws made to overcome the madness are made with a cumulative -1 penalty for each Saving Throw that has been failed against it. Life among the incurably insane (to say nothing of the brutal treatment patients encounter in such environs) often helps ease any remaining grip on sanity.



Some GMs may want to have a character's class factor into how susceptible they are to terror and horror. Consider using the following:

These classes get a +1 to Saving Throws vs. Terror because their familiarity with the soul-expanding power of the divine insulates them against the experience of terror: clerics, druids, paladins, and monks.

These classes get a +1 to Saving Throws vs. Horror because their familiarity with bloodshed insulates them against the experience of horror: fighters, rangers, paladins, thieves, and assassins.

These classes get a +1 to Saving Throws to both Terror and Horror because their familiarity with unspeakable arcane secrets insulates them against the experience of the otherworldly and the horrific: magic-users, illusionists, and warlocks.

New Spells

Cause Terror

Level: Cleric/Magic-user 3

Duration: Instant

Range: 10'

The victim's mind is filled with images of the uncanny and a sensation of soul-expanding terror. Unless the target makes a successful Saving Throw vs. Terror, they must roll on the Terror Effects table. Mindless creatures, intelligent undead, and otherworldly beings are immune to this spell.

The reverse of this spell, *Remove Terror*, instantly dispels the effects of experiencing terror for one target within the spell's range.

Cause Horror

Level: Cleric/Magic-user 3

Duration: Instant

Range: 10'

The victim's mind is filled with images of visceral gore and bloodshed. Unless the target makes a successful Saving Throw vs. Horror, they must roll on the Horror Effects table. Mindless creatures, intelligent undead, and otherworldly beings are immune to this spell.

The reverse of this spell, *Remove Horror*, instantly dispels the effects of experiencing horror for one target within the spell's range.

Inflict Madness

Level: Cleric/Magic-user 5

Duration: Instant

Range: Touch

Unless the target makes a successful Saving Throw vs. Spells, they must roll on the Madness Effects table. Their madness takes hold instantly and can be treated in all of the normal ways.

The reverse of this spell, *Soothe Madness*, cures the target of one madness effect that is currently bedeviling their fractured mind.

Dangerous Sorcery: Alternate Rules for Rites and Rituals

A spell cast as a rite or ritual does not count against the caster's usual spells-per-day limit. To cast a rite or ritual, the character must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Spells to see if they have properly marshaled and controlled the forces of magical power. This Saving Throw gains a bonus or penalty based on the level of the spell-caster and the level of the spell being cast; simply subtract the level of the spell being attempted from the spell-caster's level to find the applicable bonus. The Saving Throw is further modified by the character's ability score bonus or penalty for whichever ability score governs their spell-casting ability. For example, a 5th level magic-user with an Intelligence of 16 attempting to cast a 3rd level spell as a ritual would get a +4 bonus to their Saving Throw (+2 for level, +2 for Int bonus).

A character may also attempt to cast a spell from a scroll or grimoire that is higher than the level of spells they are able to memorize. For example, a 3rd level magic-user attempting to cast a 5th level spell from a scroll would take a -2 penalty to their Saving Throw.

If the spell-caster fails their Saving Throw, the character has lost control of the eldritch energy they were attempting to harness and must then roll on the Magical Mishap table found below.

Instructions for the Magical Mishap Table: roll d66 (roll one d6 for the “tens” place and one d6 for the “ones” place and consult the following table to determine exactly how the spell goes awry. Of course, a GM may wish to use these results merely as suggestions to be riffed off of if they prefer to tailor the results to their particular campaign.

Magical Mishap Table (d66)

11-16	Formulaic Dissipation – as the arcane energy required to power the spell gathers, the caster momentarily loses control of the mental formula that gives the spell its shape. The spell fails to have any effect and the text it is cast from is destroyed.
21	Witchlight – the errant magic culminates in a burst of unnaturally-colored light. All creatures, including the caster, within 30' must make a Saving Throw vs. Spells or be blinded for 1d4 rounds.
22	Internal Rupture – the errant magic attacks the caster's body from within, rupturing internal blood vessels. The caster takes 1d4 points of damage per round until they make a successful Saving Throw vs. Spells.
23	Cold Transmogrification – the wild magic of the miscast spell transforms the caster into an immobile stone statue.
24	Mental Maelstrom – the caster's mind becomes a confusion of words, images, and esoteric formulas. Roll a d6: on a roll of 1-3 the caster suffer the effects of <i>Confusion</i> for 1d4 rounds; on a roll of 4-6 the caster suffers the effects of <i>Feeblemind</i> for 1d4 rounds.
25	Fire and Brimstone – flame erupts in a 60' radius centered on the caster; all within that area take 1d4 points of damage and the area gains all the properties created by a <i>Stinking Cloud</i> spell.

26	Opening the Way – the failed spell rends the barrier between the planes, resulting in the summoning of a demon. The level of the failed spell determines the abilities and type of monster called forth from beyond; the effects of this miscast are equal to a <i>Summon Monster</i> spell of the same level as the spell that has gone awry. Any monster summoned by this spell is automatically hostile to all present, especially the caster.
31	Chaotic Corruption I – magical energy twists the caster's body in strange and unnerving ways. The caster obtains a random mutation; have the player roll on whatever random mutation chart suits your whims.
32	Chaotic Corruption II – 1d4 randomly determined beings within the failed spell's range must roll on whatever random mutation chart suits your whims.
33	Arcanum Storm – the weather within a mile changes radically and without warning, even if the caster is indoors or deep underground. A violent storm may appear, or a sudden frost, or blinding rays of sunlight might fill the area. Fortean phenomena, such as a rain of toads, may also occur at the GM's discretion.
34	Swept Along by the Tide of Magic – a tornado of multi-hued wind picks-up the caster and deposits them in a random location. The caster is moved to a location (near or far) of the GM's choosing.
35	The Mind Flayed Open – the caster's mind is flooded with esoteric truths that are too much to bear; the casters loses 1d6 points of both Intelligence and Wisdom.
36	Dissolution of Form I – the caster's body dissolves into that of a green slime. The caster may take any actions available to a slime, but may not cast spells while in this form. The caster reforms into their original shape in 2d10 turns.
41	The Mirror of Fate – the failed spell opens a rift that allows a doppelganger of the caster to slip through from an alternate plane. This doppelganger has the same stats as the caster at the moment of summoning. The double immediately attacks the caster; they will take no action but to attempt to kill the caster. If the double kills the caster, the player may take over the doppelganger as their character; it possesses all of the abilities of the original character, but has a completely different personality.
42	Disgusting Demise – the caster is immediately killed as the magic unleashed by the failed spell tears their body apart, makes them explode in a cloud of gore, or turns their flesh inside-out. All who see this must make an Saving Throw vs. Horror.
43	Dissolution of Form II – the bodies of 1d6 nearby beings dissolve into green slimes. They may take any actions available to a slime, but may not cast spells while in this form. They reform into their original shapes in 2d10 turns.
44	Fearful Ululations – a horrific cosmic music fills the area; all within the effect must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Spells or be deafened for 3d8 rounds.
45	Dragged to Hell – demonic hands erupt from the floor or ground to grab the caster and drag them down into Hell. The caster is not dead; rather, they may be rescued if their companions are hale enough to brave a trip into the underworld.
46	The Dead Walk – the cold wind of necromancy blows through the area accompanied by the stench of decay. The errant magic of failed spell summons the restless dead; 1d4 skeletons per level of the failed spell rise from the earth and attack all living beings who are present.

51	Eldritch Detonation – a blast of arcane energy harms all within 120' of the caster. Anyone within that range takes 1d6 points of damage per level of the failed spell; a successful Saving Throw results in half damage.
52	Primal Form – the failed spell has unleashed the primal elements of the cosmos. The caster's body becomes as that of a random elemental. The caster assumes their normal form in 1d6 rounds.
53	Primal Form II – 1d4 random creatures within the vicinity are transformed into a random elemental. They assume their normal forms in 1d6 rounds.
54	Animal Form I – the caster's body is transformed into that of a random animal. The caster assumes their normal form in 1d10 rounds.
55	Animal Form II – 1d6 random creatures within the vicinity are transformed into a random animal. They assume their normal forms in 1d10 rounds.
56	Nightmares Unbound – the errant magic unrestrained by the caster delves into the deepest recesses of the minds of all present, searching out their greatest fears and making them manifest. All within the spell's range are effected as if they had been subjected to a <i>Phantasmal Killer</i> spell.
61	Runes from Beyond – hideously glowing runes appear in the area around the caster. All within the spell's range are effected as if they had been subjected to a random <i>Symbol</i> effect.
62	Psychic Stun – the building power of magic becomes too much for the caster to comprehend; the caster is knocked unconscious for 1d4 rounds.
63	A Great Withering – all plant life within 200' immediately withers, blackens, and dies. All plant creatures within that range take 4d12 points of damage; a successful Saving Throw vs. Spells results in half damage.
64	A Great Souring – all food within 200' immediately rots, molds, sours, or otherwise becomes rancid and inedible.
65	A Foul Disenchanting – all magical items with 60' immediately lose their enchantment and all spell-casters lose the power to cast spells for a day.
66	A Wild Hex – a booming, spectral voice pronounces a dire malediction; all within the vicinity become subject to a <i>Bestow Curse</i> spell.

New Magic Items

Implement of Casting – These items are among the most common enchanted items. They generally take the form of a wand, rod, staff, orb, or athame. If a magic-user, illusionist, or warlock casts a spell while wielding an Implement of Casting, they receive a +1, +2, or +3 bonus to the Saving Throw vs. Spells to successfully use a rite or ritual—depending on the strength of the implement's enchantment. (These items are only of utility in games that are using the Dangerous Sorcery alternate magic rules.)

Bauble of Cautious Wizardry – When this glass bauble is crushed by a spell-caster, it allows them to alter the results of a miscast spell (they change the results on the Magical Mishap Table) by up +1 or -1 in any direction. Greater versions of this magical item are said to exist which give greater control (+/- 2 or 3) over the effects of a miscast spell.

Whims of the Sublime: Alternate Divine Magic Rules

“To make anything very terrible, obscurity seems in general to be necessary, for a great deal of apprehension vanishes when we are able to see the full extent of any danger. Night adds to our dread of ghosts; almost all the heathen temples were dark.”

– Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*

While divine magic is far more reliable than arcane magic, woe unto the clerics, druids, rangers, and paladins who offend the beings that grant them holy power! If such a character has acted egregiously contrary to the tenets of their faith or their deity's purview, they must make a Saving Throw vs. Death every time they cast a spell. If the Saving Throw is successful, the spell takes effect as normal; if the Saving Throw is failed, they must roll on the following table to see what doom befalls them.

Divine Doom Table

d20	Result
1-10	<i>Repeat the Holy Words Once More</i> – The caster's spell does not take effect this round, but the spell will go off next round if they spend it continuing to utter the holy words of their invocation. If they choose not to continue their prayers in the next round the spell is lost.
11	<i>Suffer for Your God</i> – The caster's spell takes effect if they are willing to take 1d6 points of damage as an offering of repentance to their deity.
12	<i>Revel in My Fearful Glory</i> – The caster's spell is successful but they are stunned for 1d4 rounds as their mind is filled with an unthinkable divine glory.
13-15	<i>Your Lack of Faith is Disturbing</i> – The caster's spell is lost.
16	<i>Kneel Before My Glory</i> – The caster must immediately kneel and pray to their god for 1d4 rounds or lose the ability to cast spells until they venture to a temple, shrine, church, sacred grove, etc. to repent and pray for forgiveness.
17	<i>Smote by the Divine</i> – The caster takes 2d10 points of damage and loses the ability to cast spells until they venture to a temple, shrine, church, sacred grove, etc. to repent and pray for forgiveness.
18-19	<i>Your Lack of Faith is Offensive in Mine Eyes</i> – The caster's ability to cast spells is lost until they venture to a temple, shrine, church, sacred grove, etc. to repent and pray for forgiveness.
20	<i>Face My Judgment</i> – A divine emissary arrives from the caster's god; the caster must fight this holy champion. If they lose, they permanently lose all divine spell-casting. If they win, they are restored in status in the eyes of their deity.

Note: divine casters who receive their spells from nature deities or primal spirits get a bonus or penalty to their Saving Throw based on the current phase of the moon:

1 – New Moon (-2 penalty), **2 – Waxing Crescent** (-1 penalty), **3 – First Quarter** (no bonus or penalty), **4 – Waxing Gibbous** (+1 bonus), **5 – Full Moon** (+2 bonus), **6 – Waning Gibbous** (+1 bonus), **7 – Third Quarter** (no bonus or penalty), **8 – Waning Crescent** (-1 penalty).

Strange Familiars Table

*“Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts! unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty”*
– William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

Take a look at the *Summon Familiar* spell. It definitely has a historical basis, but it's a bit boring. I give spell-casters a choice: they can take a normal and inconspicuous animal familiar as per the spell description or they can opt to receive an outlandish familiar by rolling on the following table:

d12	Familiar	Sense Augmented
1	All-too-human Black Cat (wears a dapper waistcoat, walks upright on hind legs, philosophizes about the will-to-power)	Hearing and night vision
2	Chain-rattling Spirit (ghostly form clad in a death shroud and weighed down with chains, surprisingly chipper personality)	180 degree vision
3	Dandyish Devil (tiny, wears a jaunty cap and smokes cigars, complains of ennui)	Improved smell
4	Hovering Skull (a skull that hovers in mid-air, has a ridiculous accent, talks about books a lot)	Much improved distance vision
5	Mechanical Owl (made of brass and tin, makes whirring and chirping noises)	Hearing, night vision
6	Miniscule Gargoyle (stoic, likes to sit motionless on bookshelves to be mistaken for a paperweight)	Much improved distance vision
7	Non-euclidean Dog (looks like a normal dog—but something just seems off about it, always smells vaguely of sulfur)	Hearing, improved smell
8	Puckish Sprite (dressed in green finery, demands to be carried everywhere inside a kettle, makes lewd jokes)	Hearing
9	Rabid Raven (looks like a normal raven, speaks English, encourages everyone within earshot to kill-kill-kill)	Improved vision
10	Shaggy Manthing (small creature covered with hair, its features are impossible to discern, wobbles about, makes odd noises at random intervals)	Improved hearing, improved smell
11	Tiny Devilgirl Dancer (small female devil, dressed provocatively, will dance any dance if asked)	Improved smell, night vision
12	Uncanny Marionette (a walking, talking ventriloquist's dummy, stares creepily, makes dire pronouncements)	Improved vision

Ascending Armor Class Table

Armor	Cost	Armor Class	Weight
Banded Mail	85 gp.	+5	35 lb.
Chain Mail	70 gp.	+4	30 lb.
Helmet	10 gp.	—	5 lb.
Horse Barding	150 gp.	+4	60 lb.
Leather	6 gp	+1	15 lb.
Padded	4 gp	+1	10 lb.
Plate Mail	450 gp	+6	50 lb.
Scale Mail	50 gp	+3	40 lb.
Shield	10 gp	+1	10 lb.
Splint Mail	75 gp	+5	45 lb.
Studded Leather	30 gp	+2	20 lb.
Unarmored	—	11	—

Descending Armor Class	Ascending Armor Class
9	11
8	12
7	13
6	14
5	15
4	16
3	17
2	18
1	19
0	20
-1	22
-2	23
-3	24
-4	25

Attack Bonus Chart

Cleric or Thief Level	Fighter Level	Magic-user Level	Monster Hit Dice	Attack Bonus
1-3	1-2	1-3	1	+1
4-5	3	4-7	2	+2
6-8	4	8-10	3	+3
9-10	5	11-12	4	+4
11	6	13	5	+5
12	7-8	14-15	6	+6
13-14	9	16-18	7	+7
15-16	10-11	19-20	8-9	+8
17-18	12	21-23	10-11	+9
19-20	13	24+	12-13	+10
21+	14		14-15	+11
	15		16-17	+12
	16		18-19	+13
	17		20-21	+14
	18		22+	+15
	19+			+16

Cleric and Thief column includes: Cleric, Druid, Thief, Monk, and Assassin. Fighter column includes: Fighter, Paladin, Ranger, and Warlock. Magic-user column includes: Magic-user and Illusionist. Monsters with + Hit Dice (as in HD 1+1) count as the next highest Hit Dice category (so HD 1+1 counts as HD 2)

A roll of 20 is always a hit; a roll of 1 is always a miss.

A Gothic Earth Grimoire

When the Devil would have us to sin, he would have us to do the things which the forlorn Witches use to do. Perhaps there are few persons, ever allured by the Devil unto an Explicit Covenant with himself.

– Cotton Mather, On Witchcraft

Cleric Spells

Savonarola's Booming Malediction

Level: Cleric 1

Duration: Instantaneous

Range: 120'

This spell momentarily gives the caster the ability to channel the voice of their deity to make a dire pronouncement against one foe. The foe must make a saving throw or suffer 1d6 points of damage and be stunned (unable to take any actions) for 1 round.

Torquemada's Divine Scepter of Righteous Bloodletting

Level: Cleric 1

Duration: 4 rounds + 1 round/level

Range: 0

This spell causes a shining mace to appear in the caster's hands. This mace does 2d4 points of damage and has a +1 bonus to hit. Additionally, any corporeal undead creatures struck by this mace begin to bleed profusely; they suffer an extra 1d4 points of damage per round. This extra damage only ceases when the wielder of the mace is dead; unfortunately, this often makes the caster the sole target of any undead creature that has been struck by the weapon. The mace cannot be given or wielded by anyone but the caster; if dropped, it dissipates and the spell ends.

The Fox Sisters' Wreath of Souls

Level: Cleric 2

Duration: 3 rounds +1 round/level

Range: 0

After making a fell sign, the caster is surrounded by a whirling mass of specters who help deflect any attacks aimed at the caster. All incoming missile attacks take a -4 penalty to hit the caster and all incoming melee attacks take a -2 penalty to hit.

John Murray Spear's Control Automaton

Level: Cleric 4

Duration: 2 rounds per level

Range: 120'

This spell grants the caster complete control of an automaton of up to 6 HD or a combination of automatons whose HD add up to 6 HD. Intelligent automatons get a Saving Throw vs. Spells to resist the effects of the spell.

The Fox Sisters' Spectral Ensnarement

Level: Cleric 4

Duration: 1 round/level

Range: 120'

This spell summons a howling, amorphous mass of angry ghosts who latch on to the target with ectoplasmic hooks. Any time the target—which can be either a creature or a mobile object such as a rolling boulder—moves toward the caster its movement rate is reduced to a third of how quickly it would normally move as it must strain against the ensnaring spirits. If the target creature is slain and the spell's duration has not yet expired, the caster may designate a new target for the spirits to ensnare.

Edward Kelley's Spectral Promenade

Level: Cleric 6

Duration: Instantaneous

Range: Touch

The victim of this spell must make a Saving Throw vs. Spells; a failed Saving Throw means that the victim is visited by the spectral apparitions of everyone they have ever killed. The following bonuses and penalties apply to the Saving Throw: +1 if victim is Chaotic, -1 if victim is Lawful, -1 – -3 depending on how many people the victim has killed, -3 if the victim has intentionally taken the life of a loved one. If the Saving Throw is failed, the victim immediately gains the Black Melancholia, Murderous Rages, and Prone to Nightmares madresses. If the victim of this spell has never taken a life it has no effect.

Increase Mather's Uncion of the Eternally Peaceful Grave

Level: Cleric 7

Duration: Permanent

Range: 5'

When this ritual is performed over a properly interred corpse—whether buried or sealed in a vault—it insures that the body will not arise as an undead creature, nor can it be raised from death and returned to life. A corpse thus blessed cannot be the recipient of a *Raise Dead*, *Animate Dead*, or *Resurrection* spell.

Druid Spells

Bulwer-Lytton's Jaunty Tune to Repel Vermin

Level: Druid 1

Duration: 10 rounds/level

Range: 0

By playing this magical song on a wooden flute the caster surrounds themselves with an invisible barrier 10' in diameter that no vermin (such as rats, bats, insects, etc.) can cross or penetrate. (Giant vermin of 2 HD or more are unaffected.) If the spell-caster forces a verminous creature into the barrier (such as by cornering the creature and approaching it), the spell ends. The caster must continue to play his or her flute until the spell's duration expires to maintain the effects of the spell.

LeFay's Apples of Internal Sorrow

Level: Druid 1

Duration: 1 day +1 day per level

Range: 0

This spell conjures 2d4 golden, enticing apples. If eaten, each apple causes extreme gastric pain that results in 1 point of damage per apple ingested. Additionally, if a creature eats two apples conjured by this spell they must make a saving throw or be struck blind for a day.

Manfred's Enraging Dirge

Level: Druid 2

Duration: 1 round/level

Range: 120'

By playing this mournful tune on a violin the caster grants as many allies as he or she has levels the following bonuses: +1 to all melee attacks, +1 to all damage rolls, and +1 to all saving throws. However, the enraging effects of this spell also make the recipients of the previous bonuses foolhardy and reckless; they also take a -2 penalty to Armor Class and a -2 penalty to all missile attack rolls. The caster must continue to play his or her violin until the spell's duration expires to maintain the effects of the spell.

Roger Bacon's Visage of Bestial Savagery

Level: Druid 3

Duration: 1 round/level

Range: 0

To cast this spell the druid must strip the face from a freshly slain beast. The spell is cast and the gory beast-face is transformed into a hardened mask that only the caster may wear. When wearing the mask the druid gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls, damage rolls, and Saving Throws. Additionally, the mask makes the caster immune to fear effects. The mask may be prepared ahead of time; the spell's duration only begins when the mask is donned. At the end of the spell's duration the mask quickly rots away into nothingness.

Rasputin's The Hungry Branches

Level: Druid 4

Duration: 2 rounds/level

Range: 30'

This spell must be cast upon a tree. The spell causes 1d4 branches, +1 additional branch per level, to drop from the tree and transform into scuttling, voracious beasts. These monsters are under control of the spell-caster and can be directed to attack foes, perform guard duty, etc. At the end of the spell's duration the monsters revert to being fallen branches.

The beasts created by this spell have the following stats:

Branch Beasts

Move: 120' (40') AC: 13 HD: 2 Attacks: 1 (AB: +2) Dam: 1d4+1 (bite) Mor: 12

Isobel Dowdie's Curse of the Spoiled Seed

Level: Druid 5

Duration: Permanent

Range: Touch

The victim of this spell must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or be unable to father or bear children. A *Remove Curse* spell negates the effects of this charm.

Magic-User Spells

Crowley's Curry of Majestic Presence

Level: Magic-user 2

Duration: 12 hours

Range: 30'

Upon casting this spell, a beautifully-spiced curry appears in an elegantly-carved wooden bowl. The first person to consume a bite of the curry receives a +4 bonus to Charisma for the duration of the spell. All others who eat of the curry's meat receive no such benefit. After the curry is eaten, the wooden platter it arrived upon disappear in a pleasingly-scented waft of smoke.

John Dee's Blood of the Stars

Level: Magic-user 2

Duration: 1 round/level

Range: 0

For the duration of this spell the caster's blood is replaced with an acidic liquid that burns when exposed to normal air. Anyone damaging the caster must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Wands or suffer 1d4 points of acid damage from the blood that spurts forth from the wound. A caster may wound themselves in order to make use of the acid's corrosive properties.

La Voisin's Caustic Arrow

Level: Magic-user 2

Duration: Instantaneous

Range: 150'

This spell sends forth an arrow made of caustic acid at one foe. The arrow is a missile attack made as if the magic-user were a fighter of the same level. The caustic arrow does 2d4 points of damage; for every three levels, the acid persists for another round and automatically inflicts another 2d4 points of damage. (At third level the arrow lasts for two rounds, at sixth level it lasts for three rounds, etc.)

Melmoth's Gallows Humor

Level: Magic-user 2

Duration: 1 round/level

Range: 30'

The victim of this spell is struck with a pinkish bolt of crackling arcane energy that causes them to begin to laugh maniacally and suffer from spasmodic movements that vaguely resemble an untrained attempt to dance. A creature thus afflicted suffers a -3 penalty to all attack rolls and saving throws. However, the unpredictable, jerky movements caused by this spell make the afflicted creature more difficult to hit; they receive a +1 bonus to Armor Class. A successful saving throw negates the spell's effect.

Arthur Dee's Eye of Mana Evaluation

Level: Magic-user 3

Duration: Instantaneous

Range: 120'

This spell must be cast upon a fellow spell-caster, such as a cleric, druid, magic-user, illusionist, or warlock. The target of the spell must make a Saving Throw vs. Spells; if this Saving Throw is failed, the caster immediately gains knowledge of what spells the target currently has memorized or is capable of casting.

Mother Shipton's Scarlet Tendrils

Level: Magic-user 3

Duration: special

Range: 120'

Upon finishing the dread utterance that triggers this spell an area 30' in diameter erupts with writhing blood-red tendrils. The spell effects 1d4 creatures in the effected area; each effected creature must make a Saving Throw vs. Breath Weapons or be held fast (unable to move or attack) and constricted for 1d4 points of damage. Each subsequent round an effected creature may make a new Saving Throw to break free from the constriction; each failed Saving Throw continues the constriction and causes the creature to take another 1d4 points of damage. However, a constricted creature gains a cumulative +1 bonus to their next Saving Throw when they fail a save to break free from the scarlet tendrils.

Cagliosto's Globes of Flame

Level: Magic-user 3

Duration: See below

Range: 180'

This incantation allows the caster to hurl globes of flame (one per level of the caster) at a rate of one per round as missile weapons with a +2 bonus to-hit. A globe of flame does 1d4 points of damage to a creature struck and may ignite flammable materials. On each subsequent round after the spell has been cast the magic-user may throw a globe of flame (until they have thrown as many globes as they have levels) and take another action, such as attacking, casting another spell, etc.

Madame Blavatsky's Caul

Level: Magic-user 4

Duration: 6 turns/level

Range: Touch

The subject of this spell finds a disconcerting black caul enveloping their head. The subject may see and hear normally through the caul. More importantly, the caul allows the subject to breath normally in environments that lack oxygen, such as underwater and in planes or alien worlds that lack breathable air. This spell also makes the subject immune to any substances that take effect through respiratory ingestion, such as poisoned spores, sleeping gas, hallucinogenic fumes, etc.

Machen's Curse of the Nightmare from Beyond

Level: Magic-user 4

Duration: special

Range: 30'

The target of this spell must make a Saving Throw vs. Spells or suffer through a night of horrific nightmares. If the target is a spell-caster, he or she cannot regain any spells that they would normally receive with rest. Upon waking from the nightmares conjured by this spell, the target will discover vicious claw wounds all over their body; they take 1d10 points of damage from these wounds.

Moina Mathers' Flight of the Penanggalan

Level: Magic-user 4

Duration: 2 rounds/level

Range: 0

Upon the completion of this spell the caster's head detaches from his or her body, gains the power of flight (maximum movement 60' per round), and sprouts several gore-dripping tentacles from where their neck used to be. These tentacles can be used to attack at the caster's normal Attack Bonus and do 1d6 points of damage for every two levels the character possesses. Additionally, any damage done by these tentacles saps the life-force of the target creature and transfers it to the caster; the caster gains half as many Hit Points as it deals in damage via the tentacles.

The caster may continue to cast spells as normal while under the effects of *Flight of the Penanggalan*. However, while under the effects of this spell the caster takes damage from exposure to holy water and contact with holy symbols. Additionally, while the character's head is detached its body is still vulnerable and can take damage normally. Also, if the spell's duration expires and the caster's head has not rejoined its body, the caster loses both the power of flight and the tentacle attack, and can only crawl via its tentacles at a speed of 10' per round. The caster may chose to rejoin its head to its body at any time, but both head and body must be touching for this to happen.

Walter Raleigh's Aspect of Stone

Level: Magic-user 4

Duration: See below

Range: 240'

The recipient of this spell has their skin hardened against physical damage. They are immune to weapon attacks or physical traumas for the next 1d4+1 attacks per two levels of the caster. After the recipient has taken that many attacks the spell ends.

Carwin's Voice of the Marionette

Level: Magic-user 5

Duration: 4 rounds + 1 round/level

Range: 120'

The target of this spell must make a Saving Throw vs. Spells or have control of their voice ceded to the caster. While under the effects of this spell the target creature must say anything the caster wishes; he or she cannot speak unless the caster bids it.

Christina of Sweden's Inspiring Feast for Sellsword Captains

Level: Magic-user 5

Duration: 12 hours

Range: 30'

Upon casting this spell, a magnificent banquet table appears. The table arrives with as many chairs as the caster has levels; similarly, the table is laden with an assortment of feasting foods that will feed as many diners as the caster has levels. The feast takes an hour to consume; all the while the diners are served by mute, inhuman servants who are also conjured by this spell.

Those who eat the food created by this spell are cured of all disease, become immune to poison and fear for the spell's duration, gain +1 bonuses to attack rolls, damage rolls, and a +4 bonus to morale checks.

Marie Laveau's Danse Macabre

Level: Magic-user 5

Duration: 2 rounds per level

Range: 60'

All undead within 60' of the caster may make an additional attack per round for the spell's duration and gain an additional Hit Die. The extra Hit Die is lost at the end of the spell's duration; if this brings the undead's Hit Points to 0 or below, they crumble into dust.

Marie Laveau's Unhallowed Persistence

Level: Magic-user 5

Duration: 2 rounds per level

Range: 60'

All undead within 60' of the caster become immune to the Turn Undead ability and become immune to the effects of holy water and *Protection from Evil* spells.

Poe's Morbid Tidings

Level: Magic-user 5

Duration: Instantaneous

Range: Unlimited

This spell summons a magical raven who will carry a short message (four sentences or less) to any one recipient the caster knows personally. The raven finds the intended recipient instantaneously. The recipient automatically knows who has sent the raven. If the message sent tells the recipient of a woe or bad turn of events that would involve the recipient emotionally (for example, "Your wife is dead at my hands!") the recipient must make a Saving Throw vs. Spells or fall into an enervating depression that saps his or her life-force for 5d6 points of damage. The message must be true; the raven will not carry falsehoods.

Margaret Matson's Baleful Eyes

Level: Magic-user 5

Duration: 1 round/3 levels

Range: 30'

This spell imbues the caster with the ability to stricken his foes with a horrific, fearful curse. When under the effect of the curse a creature visibly trembles, feels intense nausea, and sweats blood. The caster may afflict one creature per round of the spell's duration. The effects of the the spell are dependent on the target's Hit Dice:

4 Hit Dice or less: the creature must flee from the caster for 1d4 rounds as if under the effects of a *Cause Fear* spell. At the end of its panicked flight the creature falls unconscious as if under the effects of a *Sleep* spell.

5-9 Hit Dice: the creature must flee from the caster for 1d4 rounds as if under the effects of a *Cause Fear* spell. At the end of its panicked flight the creature suffers from a -2 penalty to all attack rolls, damage rolls, and Saving Throws until the next sunrise.

10 Hit Dice or more: The creature suffers from a -2 penalty to all attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws until the next sunrise.

A successful Saving Throw vs. Spells negates the effects of this spell; however, any creature struck by Baleful Eyes takes a -4 penalty to the Saving Throw.

Saint-Germain's Caustic Fog

Level: Magic-user 6

Duration: 1d4 rounds +1 round per level

Range: 90'

This spell creates a 20' area of highly acidic fog. All vegetation in the area is destroyed; furthermore, all animals not immune to acid take 4d4 points of damage while in the fog cloud. The fog cloud can only be moved by a strong wind, but it is dispersed by fire effects.

A Gothic Earth Bestiary

Format: Movement, Armor Class, Hit Dice, Number of Attacks (Attack Bonus), Damage (Method of Attack), Morale, Special Abilities & Rule Exceptions.

Accursed Wight

Accursed Wights are Saxon warriors who once sided with a usurper and have, as a consequence of their treason, been cursed with an eternity of rotting servitude. In undeath they are charged with protecting the burial mounds of the ancient rulers of Albion.

Move: 90' (30') **AC:** 16 **HD:** 5 **Attacks:** 2 (AB +5) **Dam:** 1d6 (short sword) **Mor:** 8

Special Abilities: *Spiritual Sever* – anyone hit by an Accursed Wight's sword feels their connection to the spiritual cosmos rent and torn; this effect causes the victim to lose 1d4 points of Wisdom. This Ability Score damage can be repaired by a *Restoration* or *Heal* spell. *Undead*.

Animate Hide

An Animate Hide is nothing more than the outer skin of a creature that has been given unlife through a disgusting ritual in which the hide is peeled from a still-living being.

Move: 90' (30') **AC:** 11 **HD:** 2 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +2) **Dam:** 0 **Mor:** 12 **Special Abilities:** *Envelop* – on a successful attack, an Animate Hide envelops its victim; once enveloped, the victim automatically takes 1d4 points of suffocation damage per round. The victim's friends must be careful not to harm the person enveloped by this creature if they attack it. *Undead*.

Awakened Sorcerer

Awakened Sorcerers are spirits of long-dead wizards who have transcended death itself; they possess the animated bodies of corporeal undead creatures. While inhabiting the form of an undead creature, an Awakened Sorcerer gains all of its powers and limitations; thus, it behooves an Awakened Sorcerer to inhabit the body of a powerful type of undead—though it sometimes serves their obscure purposes to take over the body of a minor form of undead (such as a skeleton or zombie) so that they might better pursue their goals without drawing undue attention.

Move: as per host creature **AC:** as per host creature **HD:** as per host creature +3

Attacks: as per host creature **Dam:** as per host creature **Mor:** 8 **Special Abilities:** *Grave Wizard* – an Awakened Sorcerer is always at least a 5th level magic-user. *Symbiotic Spirit* – a *Dispel Evil* or *Exorcise* spell automatically destroys an Awakened Sorcerer, but leaves the host creature intact. *Undead*.

Barnacle'd Chanter

Barnacle'd Chanters are the re-animated remains of sailors who have died at sea, sunk to the furthest reaches of an underwater hell, and returned to impart horrific revelations to the living.

Move: 90' (30') **AC:** 18 **HD:** 6 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +6) **Dam:** 1d6 (short sword) **Mor:** 12

Special Abilities: *Damnably Secrets* – a Barnacle'd Chanter continually sings the dreadful secrets of the grave; anyone who can hear these dreadful revelations must make a Saving Throw vs. Terror. *Briny Death* – anyone struck by a Barnacle'd Chanter's attack must make a Saving Throw vs. Death or have their lungs fill with spectral salt water; a character must spend the next round expelling this water or drown. *Undead*.

Battering Hound

Places of Satanic cult activity are often guarded by Battering Hounds. Battering Hounds are demonic creatures that look like massive war-hounds who have corroded metal plates fused with their flesh; instead of a head, a Battering Hound instead has a metal battering ram.

Move: 160' (60') **AC:** 17 **HD:** 5 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +5) **Dam:** 2d8 (battering ram) **Mor:** 11

Special Abilities: *Demon. Juggernaut* – Anyone hit by a Battering Hound's battering attack must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Death or be knocked prone for a round.

Bird with the Crystal Plumage

These birds are an unholy fusion of a large hawk-like bird and a crystalline construct. Birds with the Crystal Plumage are filled with multicolored, luminescent liquids. When a Bird with the Crystal Plumage pecks a foe it injects its victim with the magical elixir contained within its body.

Move: Flight: 180' (60'), On foot: 60' (20') **AC:** 17 **HD:** 3 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +3) **Dam:** 1d6 (beak)

Mor: 5 **Special Abilities:** *Chaotic Injection* – anyone hit by a the Bird's beak attack must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or be injected with a liquid that has the effects of a random potion. *Construct*.

Blood(thirsty) Hound

These undead canines are vampiric wolf-hounds who often serve vampire lords or liches.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 13 **HD:** 1 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +1) **Dam:** 1d6 (bite) **Mor:** 10

Special Abilities: *Blood-drinker* – when a Blood(thirsty) Hound bites a victim it regains Hit Points equal to half the amount of damage it has inflicted. *Undead*.

Brain in a Jar

Sometimes wizardly apprentices favored by liches have their brains preserved in jars; sometimes these jars are given enchanted mechanical legs with which to move and pursue their master's strange agenda.

Move: 90' (30') **AC:** 15 **HD:** 2 **Attacks:** 0 **Dam:** 0 **Mor:** 6

Special Abilities: *Mentalist* – a Brain in a Jar can use *Suggestion* and *Telekinesis* at will.

Cambion Seducer

Cambions are the product of unholy unions between mortal women and demons. A Cambion Seducer plots to obtain power through guile and charm. They might appear human, but somewhere on their body is a feature that tells of their infernal heritage.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 13 **HD:** 9 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +9) **Dam:** 1d6 (rapier) **Mor:** 9

Special Abilities: *Devilish Phantasmagoria* – a Cambion Seducer casts spells as a 9th level illusionist. *Demon*.

Cambion Conqueror

Cambions are the product of unholy unions between mortal women and demons. A Cambion Conqueror plots to obtain power through military prowess and battlefield stratagem. They have blood-red skin and prominent horns atop their heads.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 18 **HD:** 10 **Attacks:** 3 (AB +10) **Dam:** 1d8 (longsword) **Mor:** 11

Special Abilities: *Gaze of the Conqueror* – the gaze of a Cambion Conqueror can act as a *Hold Person* spell three times per day. *Brutal* – a Cambion Conqueror re-rolls all 1s rolled for damage. *Warmage* – a Cambion Conqueror casts spells as a 5th level magic-user. *Demon*.

Cambion Enigma

Cambions are the product of unholy unions between mortal women and demons. A Cambion Enigma is a devilish figure completely wrapped in chains that floats three feet off the ground. What a Cambion Enigma is after is usually a complete mystery; they are inscrutable plotters who play games with the lives of men as if it were nothing more than a game of chess.

Move: Flight 180' (60') **AC:** 18 **HD:** 12 **Attacks:** 4 (AB +12) **Dam:** 2d8 (chain whip) **Mor:** 10

Special Abilities: *Bad Juju* – a Cambion Enigma casts spells as a 12th level magic-user. *Brutal* – a Cambion Enigma re-rolls all 1s rolled for damage. *Fortress of the Iron Mind* – a Cambion Enigma is immune to all forms of mind-reading, charm effects, and scrying. *Demon*.

Cambion Hellknight

Cambions are the product of unholy unions between mortal women and demons. Cambion Hellknights are devil-spawn who have completely given themselves over to the infernal corruption that lives in their hearts. Hellknights are always encountered in rune-etched armor with full helmets; none know what such a being looks like beneath their casque.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 17 **HD:** 12 **Attacks:** 2 (AB +12) **Dam:** 2d10 (greatsword or greataxe) **Mor:** 11

Special Abilities: *Brutal* – a Cambion Hellknight re-rolls all 1s rolled for damage. *Staggering Strike* – a successful attack by a Cambion Hellknight also drains 1d6 points of Strength. *Infernal Magicks* – a Hellknight can use the following spell-like abilities once per day: *Cause Fear*, *Death Spell*, and *Symbol*. *Demon*.

Candy Golem

Candy Golems are strange automatons made of rock candy used to guard the fantastical confection laboratories of a nattily-dressed man known only as Wilhelm Wonke.

Move: 60' (20') **AC:** 13 **HD:** 2 **Attacks:** 2 (AB +2) **Dam:** 1d4 (sticky fists) **Mor:** 12

Special Abilities: *Delicious in Death* – upon reaching zero Hit Points, a Candy Golem shatters into a pile of completely edible candy. Each inert Candy Golem produces enough sweets for ten servings; when consumed, the remains of a Candy Golem cause a massive sugar-rush, granting the eater the effects of a *Haste* spell. *Construct*.

Carrion Vulture

Carrion Vultures are created by necromancer-priests to act as sentries and spies. They are animated through inhuman rites in which a normal vulture is fed a diet of zombie flesh, killed ritualistically, and then raised as undead creatures. A Carrion Vulture has an unbreakable telepathic bond with its creator that allows the priest to see what the it sees.

Move: Fly 480' (160') **AC:** 13 **HD:** 5 **Attacks:** 3 (AB +5) **Dam:** 1d6/1d6/1d8 (claw/claw/bite)

Mor: 12 **Special Abilities:** *Necrotic Wounds* – Any damage dealt by the bite of a Carrion Vulture will not heal through natural means. *Undead*.

Chrono-crone Hag

Chrono-crones are women whose appearance is bifurcated lengthwise down their bodies; the left half of their bodies is withered and old, while the right half of their bodies is youthful and blooming. Chrono-crones are often magically linked to enchanted clocks. If the clock is tampered with—for example, if the hands of the clock are moved manually—the room first goes black, is then filled with eerie, spectral light, and then the Chrono-crone appears. Chrono-crones summoned in this way will offer to strike a bargain with a group of adventurers, such as providing the effects of a *Haste* or *Time Stop* spell when they most need it, because any tampering with the orderly flow of time does honors their strange, otherworldly masters.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 14 **HD:** 10 **Attacks:** 2 (AB +10) **Dam:** 1d4 (claw) **Mor:** 6

Special Abilities: *Stasis Touch* – anyone hit by a Chrono-crone's claw attack must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Petrify or be struck with a *Hold Person* effect. *Mistress of Time* – A Chrono-crone can cast *Haste* and *Slow* at will, *Passwall*, *Dimension Door*, and *Teleport* three times per day, and *Time Stop* twice per day.

Daughter of the Grave

When a pregnant woman is seduced and converted to unlife by a vampire there is a chance that her unborn child can still be delivered. However, the child too is altered by her mother's unholy transformation; such children are always born female and always born as evil monstrosities known as Daughters of the Grave. The upper torso of a Daughter of the Grave is generally that of a comely, if pale, woman, but below the waist she has the form of a great skeletal snake.

Move: 90' (30') **AC:** 15 **HD:** 5 **Attacks:** 2 (AB +5) **Dam:** 1d6 (burning touch) **Mor:** 9

Special Abilities: *Anti-temporal Touch* – any living creature touched by a Daughter of the Grave also grows 1d4 years younger in addition to the burning damage inflicted by the Daughter's hands. Characters who have their ages reduced have their Ability Scores modified accordingly. It is possible for a Daughter of the Grave to reduce a character's age to the point where they simply cease to exist. Of course, some elderly or vain folk see entering into strange bargains with a Daughter of the Grave as a possible way to achieve eternal youth. *Undead*.

Demon of Violet Degradation

These demons are violet-skinned, long of limb, and have massive tongues that continually drip viscous fluids. They are often summoned to preside over orgiastic rites.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 14 **HD:** 3 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +3) **Dam:** 1d6 (tongue lash) **Mor:** 9

Special Abilities: *Demon. Tongue Lasher* – anyone hit by the tongue lash of a Demon of Violet Degradation must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or lose 1 point of both Intelligence and Wisdom to the hallucinogenic fluids secreted by the demon's tongue.

Dero

The Dero are a malicious, degenerate race who live beneath the surface of the world. Dero only venture forth from their cavernous hives to abduct men and women from the day-lit world; Dero bring these abducted people to their lairs to be tortured and devoured. Dero look much like humans themselves, but they tend to walk on all fours like beasts, their mouths are full of inhumanly sharp incisors, and their eyes are utterly blank. Dero move almost mechanically and their faces never betray even the slightest hint of recognizable emotion; when they torture their captives, they do so perfunctorily and without malice—acting as if they are merely fulfilling some pre-programmed behavior far removed from the human condition.

Move: 90' (30') **AC:** 12 **HD:** 4 **Attacks:** 3 (AB +4) **Dam:** 1d4/1d4/1d6 (claw/claw/bite) **Mor:** 9

Special Abilities: *Uncannily Unnerving* – because Dero look nearly human, yet behave in a manner that is clearly inhuman and nearly robotic, anyone viewing a Dero must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Terror. *Ray of Negativity* – once per round a Dero may attack one creature with an invisible ray of negative thoughts in addition to their normal attack routine. A creature who is subject to this ray attack must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Spell or suffer the effects of a *Bestow Curse* spell. A Dero may use this ability three times per day.

Drowned Witch

In the moors of Yorkshire it was once tradition to seal demon-worshipping witches into wells as punishment for their blasphemy. The witches drown within the well, but sometimes seek vengeance beyond death and return as Drowned Witches. Drowned Witches are pallid, water-logged wretches; their faces are continually obscured by long manes of sodden black hair.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 15 **HD:** 9 **Attacks:** 2 (AB +9) **Dam:** 1d6 (claws) **Mor:** 11

Special Abilities: *Spectral Blinking* – a Drowned Witch possesses the blinking ability of a Blink Dog. *Accursed Touch* – anyone hit by a Drowned Witch's claws must make a Saving Throw or be afflicted by *Bestow Curse*; the curse is averted if the victim tricks someone else into her clutches within 7 days. *Undead*.

Ebony Butterfly Swarm

Ebony Butterfly Swarms are whirling masses of black-winged death. Ancient Japanese legends hold that each butterfly in the swarm is the reincarnated soul of a peasant who somehow displeased the gods. While no one knows whether this legend is true, it is known that the wings of the butterflies who make up the Ebony Butterfly Swarm are as sharp as steel. Ebony Butterfly Swarms are carnivorous and have been known to attack livestock in fields and have occasionally descended on mass to feast upon human villagers in the countryside.

Move: 10' (5') **AC:** 13 **HD:** 5 **Attacks:** none (see special abilities) **Dam:** none **Mor:** 12

Special Abilities: *Rending Cloud* – an Ebony Butterfly Swarm doesn't really attack per se. Rather, the swarm covers an area of 20'; any living creatures within the swarm suffer the follow effects: if the being has 3 Hit Dice or less it must make a Saving Throw or be slain by the cutting wings of the ebony butterflies. If the being has more than 3 Hit Dice it must make a Saving Throw or suffer 3d8 points of damage.

Ectoplasmic Fiend

Ectoplasmic Fiends are semi-corporeal spirits who are lured onto the material world and trapped in warded jars by enterprising necromancers. These necromancers often use trapped Ectoplasmic Fiends as parts of traps; once the trap is sprung, the jar is broken and the Fiend released to attack the trespasser.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 12 **HD:** 3 **Attacks:** 2 (AB +3) **Dam:** 1d8/1d8 (chilling touch) **Mor:** 10

Special Abilities: *Ectoplasmic* – because an Ectoplasmic Fiend's corporeal form is made of ectoplasm, it only takes half damage from all physical attacks. *Possessor* – an Ectoplasmic Fiend may use *Magic Jar* as a spell-like ability three times per day. *Undead*.

Flayed Walker

Flayed Walkers are zombies that are created through unwholesome rites known only to the necromancer-priests that revere Nyarlathotep. The victim of these rites is first stripped of his or her skin whilst still alive, dosed with alchemical potions, and then buried prematurely. When the victim claws their way out of their grave seven days later they emerge as a Flayed Walker, a skinless zombie whose musculature has become dense and hardened.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 12 **HD:** 3 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +3) **Dam:** 1d6 (claw) **Mor:** 12

Special Abilities: *Disquieting Aura* – because of their horrific appearance, anyone who sees a Flayed Walker must make a saving throw or suffer the effects of a *Cause Fear* spell. *Brutalized Physiognomy* – due to the damage already inflicted upon them, Flayed Walkers are tough and difficult to wound further. All weapon attacks directed against them do half the normal amount of damage. *Undead*.

Forsaken One

A Forsaken One is the undead remains of a child who has died due to being abandoned by its parents. A Forsaken One has a body of shriveled flesh and a skeletal head. (Their heads sometimes resemble animal skulls rather than human.)

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 11 **HD:** 2 **Attacks:** 3 (AB +2) **Dam:** 1d4/1d4/1d4 (claw/claw/bite)

Mor: 9 **Special Abilities:** *Voice Thief* – anyone struck by the bite attack of a Forsaken One must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Spells or lose their power of speech. This loss persists until the Forsaken One is destroyed. If a Forsaken One steals a person's voice, it then gains the ability to speak in that character's voice. *Undead*.

Frost Maiden

Frost Maidens are ghostly undead women of great beauty who haunt the countryside of the Japan. In life they were the geisha, but during a puritanical purge by a local lord they were driven out and their home was burned to the ground. As they huddled together for warmth, they made a pact that they would not let their deaths go unavenged. Their bodies died of exposure, but their spirits live on to attack the living and demand the whereabouts of the lord and his soldiers.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 14 **HD:** 7 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +7) **Dam:** 1d10 (freezing touch) **Mor:** 10

Special Abilities: *Undead*. *Ectoplasmic* – a Frost Maiden only takes half damage from physical attacks. *Breath of Winter* – a Frost Maiden may exhale a *Cone of Cold* in lieu of attacking with her freezing touch. A Frost Maiden can use this ability three times per day. *Heart of Ice* – Frost Maidens are immune to both cold and fire attacks. Furthermore, a Frost Maiden exudes an aura of intense cold that gives a -2 penalty to-hit to anyone in close combat with her.

Galvanic Zombie

Galvanic Zombies are the creations of the American spiritualist John Murray Spear. Spear was obsessed with harnessing the power of electricity for spiritual ends; his experiments managed to use lightning both as an animating force for his zombies as well as using it to bestow upon them a dangerous method of defense.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 13 **HD:** 3 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +3) **Dam:** 2d6 (electrical touch) **Mor:** 12

Special Abilities: *Galvanic Field* – anyone attacking a Galvanic Zombie with a metal weapon or implement takes 2d6 points of damage from the electrical current running throughout its body.

Immune to Electrical Attacks – a Galvanic Zombie takes no damage from electrical attacks.

Undead.

Germ-Free Adolescent

Germ-Free Adolescents are the alchemical children constructed by the men of Stepford, Connecticut.

These adolescent children are vastly different from the stereotypical teenager. They always agree with their “parents,” are fanatically opposed to any sort of rebellion or non-conformity, and are obsessed with tidiness, cleaning, and are overly cheerful.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 11 **HD:** 1 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +1) **Dam:** as per weapon **Mor:** 6

Special Abilities: *Aura of Banality* – while within 30' of a Germ-Free Adolescent, a character must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Spells to do anything untoward, illegal, or impolite. If the character fails the Saving Throw, they find themselves behaving in what is likely an uncharacteristically pleasant way. If they pass the Saving Throw they may act as normal. *Hatred of Riotous Sound* – Germ-Free Adolescents take 1d6 points of damage per round when exposed to loud, discordant music or noise. *Construct.*

Glass Eye Zombie

Glass Eye Zombies are made from normal zombies that have had their eyes removed by the necromancer who animates them; after removing the original eyes, the necromancer replaces them with enchanted glass eyes that give the undead creature additional powers. Glass Eye Zombies are often found guarding treasure vaults secret beneath the old cemeteries of Boston.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 12 **HD:** 4 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +4) **Dam:** 1d8 (slam) **Mor:** 12

Special Abilities: *Baleful Eye Rays* – in addition to its normal slam attack, a Glass Eye Zombie can use the power granted by its enchanted glass eyes once per round. The power granted by the necro-artificial eyes is determined by their color (choose or roll 1d6): 1. Blue – *Dominate* 2. Brown – *Ray of Enfeeblement* 3. Green – *Feeblemind* 4. Hazel – *Hold Person* 5. Gray – *Disintegrate* 6. Violet – *Enervation*. Rare Glass Eye Zombies are fitted with two differently-colored glass eyes. Such creatures gain both powers granted by their magical glass eyes, but can only use one per round. Some claim that if an enchanted eye is taken from a Glass Eye Zombie it can be fitted to the empty socket of a living creature; researchers at Miskatonic University believe that a living creature could learn to call forth the powers of such an item—albeit in a much more limited fashion. *Undead.*

Ghost in the Machine

A Ghost in the Machine is a mechanical construct (which looks something like a large, upturned bucket festooned with wand-like protrusions) that is inhabited by the spirit of a savage. These monsters are rumored to have been created by some sort of alien “deathless master.”

Move: 90' (30') **AC:** 19 **HD:** 5 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +5) **Dam:** 2d6 (burning ray) **Mor:** 12

Special Abilities: *Annihilate & Destroy* – twice per day a Ghost in the Machine can emit a beam that functions as a *Disintegrate* spell. *Symbiotic Spirit* – a *Dispel Evil* or *Exorcise* spell automatically destroys a Ghost in the Machine. *Undead*.

Grim Reaper

Grim Reapers are personifications of the forces of undeath. Grim Reapers are skeletal figures with burning eyes; they are always robed in dark-colored shrouds and they carry fearsome scythes. They sometimes pursue those marked for destruction mounted on Nightmares.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 16 **HD:** 7 **Attacks:** 2 (AB +7) **Dam:** 1d10 (scythe) **Mor:** 12

Special Abilities: *Death's Regards* – anyone hit by the scythe attack of a Grim Reaper also loses 1d8 points of Constitution. *Undead*.



Guardian Prayer Tree

Ancient Chinese legends tell the tale of a wandering monk who made it his life's ambition to bestow a powerful blessing on the holiest Buddhist temples of Japan. This blessing took the form of granting one or more trees near the temple a limited form of life as Guardian Prayer Trees. If a temple that received this blessing is attacked, the blessed tree will animate and come to the temple's defense.

Move: 60' (20') **AC:** 16 **HD:** 9 **Attacks:** 2 (AB +9) **Dam:** 3d6 (smashing branch) **Mor:** 12

Special Abilities: *Prayer Strips* – each Guardian Prayer Tree has 1d4+1 prayer strips entwined in its branches; each prayer strip can be used as a clerical scroll. Once a prayer strip is used by the Guardian Prayer Tree, it is consumed; a Guardian Prayer Tree can use one prayer strip per round in place of its normal attacks. To determine what kind of prayer strips a Guardian Prayer Tree has, roll 3d6 on the following table:

3d6	Spell
3	<i>Conjure Earth Elemental</i>
4	<i>Holy Word</i>
5	<i>Cause Blindness</i>
6	<i>Dispel Magic</i>
7	<i>Cause Fear</i>
8	<i>Cure Serious Wounds (on self)</i>
9	<i>Cause Serious Wounds</i>
10	<i>Call Lightning</i>
11	<i>Flame Strike</i>
12	<i>Sticks to Snakes</i>
13	<i>Cause Disease</i>
14	<i>Bestow Curse</i>
15	<i>Blade Barrier</i>
16	<i>Spiritual Weapon</i>
17	<i>Insect Plague</i>
18	<i>Harm</i>

Headhunter Worm

Headhunter Worms are large, violently pink worms whose bodies culminate in a fang-lined maw. Their bodies are covered with replicas of the faces of creatures they have bitten.

Move: 60' (20') **AC:** 16 **HD:** 7+1 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +7) **Dam:** 1d10 (bite) **Mor:** 8

Special Abilities: *Headhunter* – anyone bitten by a Headhunter Worm must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Death or lose 1 point of Intelligence. Furthermore, a character thus bitten loses one of its senses; roll a d4 to determine which sense is lost: 1—smell, 2—sight, 3—hearing, or 4—taste. This sense can only be regained if the Headhunter Worm is slain. Additionally, once a character has been bitten the Headhunter Worm sprouts a face on its body that looks exactly like that character's visage.

Heikegani

Heikegani appear to be giant crabs with human-like faces. In truth, they are the reincarnated spirits of bushi who chose to flee battle instead of rallying to the defense of their lord. Cursed by a Shinto priest for their cowardice, they now wait within the seas to challenge warriors who happen by their lairs, for it is only through dying in battle that their souls will be allowed a place in the afterlife. Heikegani can sense warriors of virtue and will seek them out in preference to all other foes.

Move: 60' (20') **AC:** 16 **HD:** 3 **Attacks:** 2 (AB +3) **Dam:** 1d6 (claw) **Mor:** 9

Special Abilities: *Entrapping Claw* – on a natural to-hit roll of 18-20, a heikegani is able to grab an opponent's weapon and disarm them in lieu of doing damage.

Hopping Vampire

Hopping Vampires are an unusual species of undead native to China. They are said to come into being when an undead creature becomes inhabited by a demonic spirit; the commingling of the powers of undeath and the powers of Hell result in this strange abomination. Hopping Vampires are easily recognizable due to their elongated fingernails and, of course, their peculiar form of locomotion.

Move: 90' (30') **AC:** 17 **HD:** 7 **Attacks:** 2 (AB +7) **Dam:** 2d6+3 (Ki-draining claws) **Mor:** 10

Special Abilities: *Undead. Demon. Obsessive* – if grains of rice are spilled in front of a Hopping Vampire it must stop to count them. *Foetid Breath* – once per round a Hopping Vampire can release a 10' cloud of foul breath; anyone within that area must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or suffer the effects of Type 12 poison.

Hungry Shroud

Hungry Shrouds are undead creatures made of burial shrouds that have been stitched together in a humanoid shape. The Hungry Shroud is then inflated (and thus animated) by an angry ethereal spirit captured from beyond the veil.

Move: 150' (50') **AC:** 11 **HD:** 2 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +2) **Dam:** 1d8 (necrotic touch) **Mor:** 10

Special Abilities: *Prone to Leaks* – with each attack that hits a Hungry Shroud, it sustains a wound and begins to leak its spectral essence. Once it has sprung a leak, the Hungry Shroud takes a -1 penalty to attack rolls and damage rolls. If the Hungry Shroud is damaged again it receives another cumulative -1 penalty to attack and damage rolls. Additionally, the round after a Hungry Shroud has sprung a leak it emanates spectral essence that has the effects of a *Stinking Cloud* spell, but this cloud of choking spectral gas only lasts 1 round. *Undead*.

Infernal Crocus

The Infernal Crocus is an immense mobile flower that is renowned for the brilliant orange, red, and yellow pedals that adorn its monstrous face. When provoked, an Infernal Crocus chants a death hymn to its foes.

Move: 90' (30') **AC:** 13 **HD:** 7 **Attacks:** 2 (AB +7) **Dam:** 2d4 (fiery burst) **Mor:** 12

Special Abilities: *Heart of Flames* – twice per day an Infernal Crocus can spew forth a *Fire Ball* as if it were a 7th level magic-user. Infernal Crocuses are immune to all fire attacks. *Demon*.

La Llorona

La Llorona are the ghosts of women who have abandoned their children in order to be with a man. Once such a woman dies she will be barred entry into the afterlife until she has been re-united with and made amends to her children. Unfortunately, if the woman's children have died before her she is likely cursed to walk the world in search of children who no longer exist. A La Llorona will seize upon any child she finds and attempt to carry them off; a La Llorona will mistake any child she encounters for one of her own.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 16 **HD:** 3 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +3) **Dam:** 1d6 (mournful wail) **Mor:** 12

Special Abilities: *Ectoplasmic* – a La Llorona takes half damage from all physical attacks. *Mournful Wail* – in combat a La Llorona attacks by unleashing a terrible, heart-rending shriek in the face of a foe; any foe struck by the force of the wail must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Spells or become demoralized with grief. Such a character takes a -2 penalty to all rolls until they have had a chance to mourn on their own.

Memento Mori

A Memento Mori is a spirit bound to a location such as a crypt or vault. These spirits are usually called forth from beyond the veil to guard a coffer of treasure, but they sometimes remain in the world of their own accord to safeguard a treasure dear to them in life. They appear to be spectral skeletons dripping with ectoplasm.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 17 **HD:** 4 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +4) **Dam:** 1d8+4 (chilling touch) **Mor:** 12

Special Abilities: *Bound Spirit* – a Memento Mori cannot be turned. However, a *Dispel Magic* spell causes the Memento Mori to dissipate; it returns in 1d4 rounds. A Memento Mori takes half damage from all physical attacks due to its ectoplasmic form. *Creeping Chills* – a Memento Mori gains in strength as it fights interlopers; each round after it damages an opponent it gains an additional 1d8 damage die. (After the first time a Memento Mori hits a foe it does 2d8+4 damage on the next hit.) *Undead*.

Morgue-Dweller

Morgue-Dwellers were serial murderers in life who have been brought back in a state of undeath by the will to kill again. These creatures look like skeletal remains with chunks of flesh adhering to their frames here and there; in a Morgue-Dweller's chest cavity is an abnormally-long, pulsating tongue. This tongue fills the chest and spills out of the creature's mouth.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 17 **HD:** 9 **Attacks:** 3 (AB +9) **Dam:** 1d8/1d8/1d6 (claw/claw/tongue lash)

Mor: 12 **Special Abilities:** *Paralytic Saliva* – anyone struck by a Morgue-Dweller's tongue lash attack must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Paralyze or be paralyzed for 1d6 rounds. *Undeath's Herald* – anyone killed by a Morgue-Dweller immediately rises again as a zombie under its control. *Undead*.

Mucazoid Tree

The Mucazoid Tree looks like a stunted, gnarled tree that is in a state of perpetual rot. Its bark is coated in a glistening layer of mucus-like slime. Its trunk features many mouths that mutter incomprehensible words and randomly titter as if laughing at some unheard joke.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 16 **HD:** 8 **Attacks:** 2 (AB +8) **Dam:** 1d10 (branch smash) **Mor:** 12

Special Abilities: *Poison Mucus* – anyone coming into contact with a Mucazoid Tree (for example, if they are hit by its branch smash attack) must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or suffer the effects of Type 4 poison. *Demon*.

Mucus Gob(lin)

Mucus Goblins look like regular Goblins, except their skin has a pronounced slimy sheen to it. They are not, in fact, fey creatures like usual goblins, but are instead alchemical constructions made by the goblins to serve as decoys.

Move: 60' (20') **AC:** 11 **HD:** 1-4 Hit Points **Attacks:** 1 (AB +0) **Dam:** as per weapon **Mor:** 12

Special Abilities: *Snot Bomb* – when reduced to 0 Hit Points, a Mucus Goblin explodes into a mass of sticky, foul-smelling slime in a 10' radius. Anyone in the blast radius must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or spend their next round frantically wiping the goo off of themselves. *Construct*.

Necrotic Sphinx

The leaders of the modern Set cult in Egypt employ scavengers to bring them any sphinx corpses they find in the wild-lands. The priests use these corpses as the raw material to create Necrotic Sphinxes—horrific combinations of automaton constructs and undead beasts.

Move: 180' (60') **AC:** 17 **HD:** 7 **Attacks:** 3 (AB +7) **Dam:** 2d6/2d6/1d8 (blade/blade/stinger) **Mor:** 12 **Special Abilities:** *Poisonous Stinger* – any creature hit by the tail stinger of a Necrotic Sphinx must make a Saving Throw or suffer the effects of Type 17 poison. *Undead.* *Necrotic Breath* – once per round a Necrotic Sphinx exhales a 30' cloud of gas. To determine what kind of gas the Necrotic Sphinx exhales, roll once every round on the following chart:

1d6	Gas Type
1-2	<i>Sapping Cloud</i> – Save vs. Poison or lose 1d4 points of Strength
3-4	<i>Enervating Cloud</i> – Save vs. Poison or lose 1d4 points of Constitution
5-6	<i>Nerve Toxin Cloud</i> – Save vs. Poison or lose 1d4 points of Dexterity

Obsidian Soldier

Obsidian Soldiers are mindless warriors constructed from shards of black stone that are held together by dark magic. Obsidian Soldiers are sometimes found in the retinues of German warlocks.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 14 **HD:** 1 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +1) **Dam:** 1d8 (longsword) **Mor:** 12 **Special Abilities:** *Wave of Mutilation* – when reduced to 0 Hit Points, an Obsidian Soldier explodes in a 30' cloud of black stone shrapnel. Anyone caught in this area of effect must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Breath Weapons or take 1d6 points of damage. *Construct.*

Ocular Fiend

Ocular Fiends are demonic creatures often sent to the world to act as spies and sentries for the leaders of witchcults. They are dog-like creatures whose bodies are covered in spikes; they possess one large central eye that never blinks.

Move: 180' (60') **AC:** 15 **HD:** 6 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +6) **Dam:** 1d8 (bite) **Mor:** 10 **Special Abilities:** *Necrotic Bite* – anyone bitten by an Ocular Fiend must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Petrify or take an additional 1d6 points of damage. *All-seeing* – an Ocular Fiend can see invisible creatures, can see through disguises (even magical ones), and is never surprised. *Demon.*

Offal Golem

Offal Golems are mindless constructs made of stitched-together innards.

Move: 90' (30') **AC:** 13 **HD:** 6 **Attacks:** 2 (AB +6) **Dam:** 2d6 (thump) **Mor:** 12 **Special Abilities:** *Dirty Bomb* – when an Offal Golem reaches 0 Hit Points it explodes in a 30' of intestinal wreckage; anyone within that area must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or contract a random disease. *Construct.*

Penanggalan

A Penanggalan is a woman cursed with undeath. During the day, a Penanggalan appears to be a normal human woman. (She often has class levels like a player character.) At night, the woman's head detaches from her body and flies about in search of prey—trailing beneath it a writhing mass of innards that drip horrid acidic secretions. Penanggalan feed off the blood of the living; they use their powers of hypnotism to ensnare mortal slaves and to create their own personal herd of feeding thralls. Penanggalan prefer to make victims of beautiful women—they only feed off of men when no better option is available.

Move: Human form: 120' (40') Flying head: 180' (60') **AC:** 11 (human form) or 13 (flying head) **HD:** as per class level (human form) or human form +4 (flying head) **Attacks:** 1 (human form) or 2 (flying head) (AB class level +4) **Dam:** by weapon (human form) or 1d6/1d4 (bite/acidic tendrils) **Mor:** 10
Special Abilities: *Maddening Blood Drain* – the bite of a Penanggalan drains 1 point each of Intelligence and Wisdom. *Hypnotic Eyes* – the gaze of a Penanggalan have the effect of a *Hypnotism* spell, but any Saving Throw against it has a -3 penalty. If a character has been previously hypnotized by the creature it takes a cumulative -1 additional penalty equal to the number of times it has been hypnotized by the Penanggalan. *Acidic Tendrils* – anyone hit by the Penanggalan's intestinal-tendrils takes 1d4 points of acidic damage until they wash off the slime that coats its intestinal appendages. *Horrifying Decapitation* – anyone who witnesses a Penanggalan's head detach from its body must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Spells or fall unconscious for a day; thereafter they suffer the effects of *Feeblemind* for an additional three days. *Human Form Immunities* – in its human form a Penanggalan is immune to things that usually work against undead, such as Turn Undead, curative magic, holy water, etc. *Undead*.

Primordial Betrayer

Primordial Betrayers are hunch-backed vulture-men who were formerly Native American shamans serving the world's primal spirits, but they betrayed their nature gods and diverted their power to the white man's devils. Primordial Betrayers were “blessed” with their current form as a reward for serving devils; they may only eat carrion and often stink of rotting flesh.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 14 **HD:** 4 **Attacks:** 2 (AB +4) **Dam:** 1d4 (claw) **Mor:** 4

Special Abilities: *Blinding Gesture* – a Primordial Betrayer may forgo one of its claw attacks to instead make a blasphemous gesture toward a character; that character must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Spells or be blinded for 1d6 rounds. *Summoner* – a Primordial Betrayer can summon 1d4 Shadows per day. Five or more Betrayers working together can summon a Vrock.

Pumpkinhead

Pumpkinheads have the bodies of gaunt, nearly-skeletal men with great grinning jack-o-lantern-esque heads. An eerie, burning light pours from their eye sockets and mouths. Pumpkinheads are often found acting as bodyguards and sentries for Irish witches and warlocks.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 13 **HD:** 2 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +2) **Dam:** 1d4 (fist) or by weapon **Mor:** 8
Special Abilities: *Arresting Gaze* – three times per day a Pumpkinhead can cast *Hold Person* as a gaze attack in addition to its normal attack.

Pyrowife

Pyrowives are mutant fire elementals created by the alchemical experiments of Spanish wizards. They outwardly appear to be normal human women, but when they wish they can set themselves ablaze with riotous flame. For some untold reason, Pyrowives maneuver within the marriage market to make sure they are matched with men who own vast and ancient estates—which the pyrowife then proceeds to burn down in the name of sacred pyromania.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 12 **HD:** 1 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +1) **Dam:** 1d4 (flaming touch) **Mor:** 7
Special Abilities: *Start a Fire* – anyone hit by the Pyrowife's flaming touch attack must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Wands or be lit aflame. A burning character takes an additional 1d4 points of damage per round until they are doused or stop, drop, and roll.

Rimed Soldier

Rimed Soldiers are the undead remains of an obscure branch of the Templars who were wiped out in Russia under forgotten circumstances. They are the rank and file of the Rimed Host.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 14 **HD:** 1 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +1) **Dam:** 1d8 (longsword) **Mor:** 12
Special Abilities: *Undead. Frostborn*—only takes half damage from cold attacks on a failed save; takes no damage on a successful save.

Rimed Knight

Rimed Knights are the undead remains of an obscure branch of the Templars who were wiped out in Russia under forgotten circumstances. They are the upper caste of the Rimed Host.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 15 **HD:** 3 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +3) **Dam:** 1d10 (greatsword) **Mor:** 12
Special Abilities: *Undead. Frostborn*—only takes half damage from cold attacks on a failed save; takes no damage on a successful save. *Black Blade of Winter*—the first successful attack made by a Rimed Knight deals additional damage as per a *Shocking Hands* spell, but the damage is cold-related instead of electrical.

Rimed Lord

Rimed Lords are the undead remains of an obscure branch of the Templars who were wiped out in Russia under forgotten circumstances. They are the leaders of the Rimed Host.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 18 **HD:** 6 **Attacks:** 2 (AB +6) **Dam:** 1d8 (longsword) **Mor:** 12
Special Abilities: *Undead. Frostborn*—only takes half damage from cold attacks on a failed save; takes no damage on a successful save. *Black Blade of Winter*—the first successful attack made by a Rimed Lord deals additional damage as per a *Shocking Hands* spell, but the damage is cold-related instead of electrical. *Brutal*—re-roll all ones rolled for damage.

Scythe Mantis

Scythe Mantises, like Necrotic Sphinxes, are bizarre combinations of the animated dead and technomantic construction. They have the lower bodies of mantis-shaped automatons and the upper torsos of skeletal humans; their heads are always encased in a fierce iron death mask and their arms end in vicious scything talons. They are used as bodyguards and assassins by the cult of Set.

Move: 160' (50') **AC:** 18 **HD:** 5 **Attacks:** 2 (AB +5) **Dam:** 1d6 (scythes) **Mor:** 12

Special Abilities: *Brutal*—re-roll any ones for a Scythe Mantis's damage rolls. *Undead*. *Impale*—on a natural twenty on a Scythe Mantis's damage roll they do double their maximum amount of damage.

Scorpiwhale

Scorpiwhales are a chaotic hybrid of killer whales and giant scorpions that haunt North America's Atlantic coast.

Move: 240' (80') **AC:** 17 **HD:** 12 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +12) **Dam:** 2d10 (stinger) **Mor:** 10

Special Abilities: *Poison Stinger* – if a Scorpiwhale hits a creature with its stinger attack they must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or be paralyzed for 1d4 rounds (which can be catastrophic at sea).

Shadowborn

Shadowborn were once human, but they pledged their eternal service to death itself after experiencing a great and profound personal tragedy. They appear as humans, but everything about them seems faded and unreal.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 19 **HD:** 12 **Attacks:** 3 (AB +12) **Dam:** 2d4 (bladed chain) **Mor:** 11

Special Abilities: *Shadow Lament* – when reduced to 0 Hit Points, a Shadowborn explodes into a 30' cloud of *Darkness* that persists for 10 rounds. *Shadowplay* – once per day a Shadowborn can use the following spells: *Summon Shadow*, *Dispel Magic*, *Passwall*.

Skelemingo

Skelemingos are the animated remains of flamingos. They are sometimes used as assassins by the elderly mages of Florida.

Move: 60' (20') **AC:** 13 **HD:** 3 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +3) **Dam:** 1d6 (peck) **Mor:** 12

Special Abilities: *Undead*. *They Make You Bleed* – anyone hit by the Skelemingo's peck takes an additional point of damage on the following round.

Sons of the Hydra's Teeth

In life the Sons of the Hydra's Teeth were a much-feared company of Hessian mercenaries who were traveling to participate in the American Revolution. Their ship went down under mysterious circumstances, but their love of warfare insured that they would rise from their watery graves to continue to act as warriors for hire.

Move: 60' (20') **AC:** 17 **HD:** 1+1 **Attacks:** 2 (AB +2) **Dam:** 1d8 (longsword) **Mor:** 12

Special Abilities: *Stalwart* – Sons of the Hydra's Teeth cannot be turned. *Undead*.

Spectral Sparks

Spectral Sparks are a mass of unquiet spirits who appear as a swarm of ghostly balls of luminous light. Legend has it that the spirits who comprise Spectral Sparks were minions of an evil leader in life; while their own misdeeds were not great enough to earn them a return as a more powerful form of undead, these minions are cursed to serve another great malefactor even in undeath.

Move: 180' (60') **AC:** 15 **HD:** 3 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +3) **Dam:** 1d10 (spiritual burning) **Mor:** 7
Special Abilities: *Ectoplasmic* – Spectral Sparks take half damage from all physical attacks. *Curse of Ages* – anyone hit by Spectral Sparks must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Petrify or suffer the effects of a *Slow* spell. *Undead*.

Sporepod Cultist

Sporepod Cultists are floating pods covered in unblinking eyes. There serve as conduits for the dark power of demons and devils.

Move: Fly – 210' (70') **AC:** 16 **HD:** 4 **Attacks:** 2 (AB +4) **Dam:** 1d8 (eye rays) **Mor:** 12
Special Abilities: *Ordained* – a Sporepod Cultist can cast spells as a 4th level Druid. *Demon*.

Suckleweed

Suckleweed is a mobile demonic plant of a purplish hue that moves itself by means of four leg-like stalks; it also has two long feeder tendrils that end in fanged apertures. The Suckleweed emanates a fiendish purple glow at all times, and it howls in agony when struck.

Move: 90 (30') **AC:** 14 **HD:** 6 **Attacks:** 2 (AB +6) **Dam:** 1d12 (feeder tendril) **Mor:** 12
Special Abilities: *Vampiric Plant* – anyone struck by the feeder tendril attack of the Suckleweed also loses 1d4 points of Constitution. For each point of Constitution drained the Suckleweed regains a like number of Hit Points. *Demon*.

Taxidermy Avenger

A legendary order of German wizards possessed a special way of taunting their enemies: if they manage to kill an especially hated foe, they perform unholy rites of taxidermy on the corpse and then reanimate the body as a sentient undead creature so that it must forever endure the wizard's insults and deprecations. However, this form of necromantic torture sometimes backfires; occasionally a person reanimated in this way regains the ability to move via pure force of will and a burning desire for revenge. When this happens, the creature is known as a Taxidermy Avenger—a monster that will stop at nothing to gain revenge on the wizard who desecrated their corpse and violated their eternal rest.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 12 **HD:** 8 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +8) **Dam:** 1d8 (fist) **Mor:** 12
Special Abilities: *Strangling Killer* – any character hit by a Taxidermy Avenger's fist attack must make a Saving Throw or be strangled by the monster for an additional 1d6 points of damage. Once a Taxidermy Avenger latches on to a victim it can opt to forgo attacking to deal an automatic 1d6 points of strangulation damage to its victim. A character who opts to do nothing else on its turn except struggle to free itself from the creature's grasp may make an additional Saving Throw to escape. *Transfixing Gaze* – once per round a Taxidermy Avenger can attempt to transfix a living creature with its gaze. This gaze has the effect of the *Hold Person* spell. *One Track Mind* – if the wizard who created the Taxidermy Avenger is nearby (a Taxidermy Avenger can unerringly sense its creator) it will ignore all other creatures (even if they attack the Taxidermy Avenger) to find and attack their tormentor. When the wizard who created it is nearby, a Taxidermy Avenger gets a +3 bonus to hit and inflicts double damage. *Undead*.

Taxidermy Bulldog

Some British bulldog owners become so attached to their pets that they take the corpse of their beloved companion to a wizard to be re-animated as mobile taxidermy by using magic stolen from German necromancers.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 15 **HD:** 6 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +6) **Dam:** 2d6 (bite) **Mor:** 12

Special Abilities: *Psychotronic Gaze* – once per round a Taxidermied Bulldog may fix its gaze on a victim in addition to its bite attack; the victim of its gaze must make a Saving Throw or suffer the effects of a *Confusion* spell. *Undead*.

Tiki Golem

Tiki Golems are animated wooden constructs that are used by some Polynesian magic-users to guard their lairs and to frighten the natives into thinking that they have power over the gods themselves. Tiki Golems have spindly arms, squat legs, and absurdly large heads; their faces are often carved into grotesque comedic grimaces.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 16 **HD:** 6 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +6) **Dam:** 2d6 (headbutt) **Mor:** 12

Special Abilities: *Construct. Wooden* – a *Warp Wood* spell, or similar effect, deals 3d8 points of damage to a Tiki Golem. *Intoxicating Breath* – once per day a Tiki Golem can exhale a cloud of intoxicating mist in a 50' spray from its mouth. Roll on the following table to see what kind of intoxicating mist is exhaled by the golem:

d6	Effect
1	Bahama Mama Mist – each character caught in the spray must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Breath Weapons or suffer the effects of a <i>Slow</i> spell.
2	Blue Hawaiian Mist – each character caught in the spray must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Breath Weapons or be demoralized for 2d10 rounds. A demoralized character suffers a -2 penalty to all attack rolls.
3	Captain's Grog Mist – each character caught in the spray must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Breath Weapons or suffer the effects of a <i>Confusion</i> spell.
4	Mai Tai Mist – each character caught in the spray must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Breath Weapons or suffer the effects of a <i>Phantasmal Killer</i> spell.
5	Tropical Storm Mist – any character in the spray takes 6d6 points damage from hail and lightning. A successful Saving Throw vs. Breath Weapons results in half damage.
6	Zombie Mist – any character killed by the Tiki Golem will immediately reanimate as a zombie under the golem's control on the next round.

Verminous Skull

A Verminous Skull is a human skull that has had bat-like wings attached via sorcery; they are often used as spies and guards by Tibetan necromancers and witches.

Move: Flight: 180' (60') **AC:** 13 **HD:** 1-4 Hit Points **Attacks:** 1 (AB +1) **Dam:** 1d4 (bite)

Mor: 12 **Special Abilities:** *Vomit of Worms* – once per round a Verminous Skull can vomit a mass of writing worms on a character instead of attacking; the victim of this attack must make a Saving Throw vs. Horror. *Undead*.

Weirdbeard

A Weirdbeard is the re-animated corpse of a lumberjack that has been possessed by an ectoplasmic spirit of the Pacific Northwest. Weirdbeards appear to be zombie lumberjacks, save for the fact that a number of writhing, spectral tentacles emerge from their thick beards.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 13 **HD:** 2 **Attacks:** 1 (AB +2) **Dam:** 1d8 (axe) **Mor:** 12

Special Abilities: *That Beard is Weird* – in addition to a Weirdbeard's attack, they get 1d4 additional beard-tentacle attacks per round; these attacks do 1d4 points of damage. *Undead.*

Whispering Ghoul

Whispering Ghouls are peculiar undead creatures who prowl the wastelands of the Middle East; a Whispering Ghoul constantly makes comments to itself in low, chattering voice. At night, sentries posted in wilderness encampments listen intently for the tell-tale sign that a Whispering Ghoul is approaching.

Move: 90' (30') **AC:** 15 **HD:** 4 (Turn as HD 5) **Attacks:** 3 (AB +4) **Dam:** 1d6/1d6/1d6 (claw/claw/bite)

Mor: 9 **Special Abilities:** *Fiendish Whispers* – once per round a Whispering Ghoul may use its voice as a *Charm* effect on one creature within earshot. For this power to be effective, the creature must be able to hear the Whispering Ghoul's voice. *Paralytic Touch* – characters struck by a Whispering Ghoul's attacks must make a successful Saving Throw or be paralyzed for 2d4 turns. *Call of Undeath* – a Whispering Ghoul can summon 1d6 ghouls from beneath the earth. *Undead.*

Wormfrond

The Wormfrond is a mobile plant that is so named because it resembles a gigantic festering mass of writhing, jet-black worms. Despite its size and ungainly appearance, it slithers into combat quickly and silently.

Move: 180' (60') **AC:** 17 **HD:** 10 **Attacks:** 3 (AB +10) **Dam:** 2d4 (claws) **Mor:** 12

Special Abilities: *Sorcerous Plant* – twice per day a Wormfrond may cast *Polymorph Other*. Once per day a Wormfrond may cast *Charm Person*, *Invisibility*, and *Cloudkill*. A Wormfrond gains a +2 bonus to all Saving Throws vs. Spells. *Demon.*

Zombie Liege

For reasons not yet known by researchers into the necromantic arts, zombies occasionally "awaken"—gaining sentience, intelligence, and power over their fellow undead. These awakened zombies are known as Zombie Lieges.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 16 **HD:** 13 **Attacks:** 2 (AB: +13) **Dam:** 1d10 (slam) **Mor:** 10

Special Abilities: *Lord of the Dead* – Zombie Lieges can control undead as a 13th level cleric. Also, even if uncontrolled by the Zombie Liege, mindless undead will never attack such a creature. If commanded to do so, mindless undead will simply stand inert in the presence of a Zombie Liege. Even intelligent undead will be reluctant to attack a Zombie Liege. *Secrets of the Grave* – Zombie Lieges cast spells as a 10th level cleric or magic-user. *Brutal* – re-roll all ones rolled for damage caused by a Zombie Liege. *Undead.*

Riffing on Already Existent Monsters

Axe Spirit – Sentient manifestation of violence; some say that Lizzie Borden was possessed by one when she killed her father and step-mother. Stats as per a **Ghost**, but it can take control of a melee weapon if the bearer fails a Saving Throw vs. Wands.

Crematory Wraith – The ashes of the cremated form a dust-devil like tornado and attack the living! Stats as per an Air Elemental, but anyone hit by it must make a Saving Throw vs. Breath Weapons or be blinded for 1d4 rounds.

Crypt Keeper – Stats as per a **Crypt Thing**, but instead of teleporting the characters it has a debilitating cackle (make a saving throw or suffer -2 to attack and damage rolls and makes a lot of puns).

Dough Boy – Faceless, dwarf-sized golems made out of gooey dough; stats as per an **Adherer**, but with half Hit Dice and damage dice; explodes in a poppin' fresh explosion at 0 Hit Points.

Ghoul Hand – Stats as per a **Crawling Claw**, but with the **Ghoul's** paralyzing touch.

Headless Horseman – Undead horsemen with no head (pumpkin-head optional but recommended—maybe the pumpkin explodes when thrown); stats as per a **Death Knight**, except immune to all mind-affecting powers. A Headless Horseman always rides a Nightmare. Whoever possesses its skull can force the Headless Horseman to do their bidding.

Madness Spirit – Sentient manifestations of insanity; stats as per a **Specter**, except its touch causes disease on a failed Saving Throw.

Origami Golem – Stats as per a **Goblin**, but causes 1d4 bleeding on the round following a damaging hit. An Origami Golem has the usual construct immunities.

Tubercular Shadow – Shadows of people who died in sanatoriums from horrific diseases; stats as per a **Shadow**, except its touch causes disease on a failed Saving Throw.

Undead Dryad – Stats as per a **Dryad**, except with a touch that drains 1d4 points of Constitution.

Variant Vampire Abilities

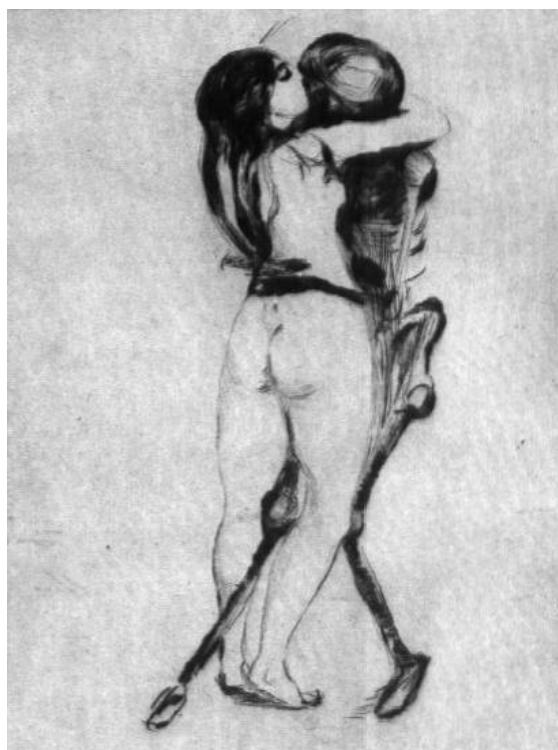
*“Each matin bell, the Baron saith,
Knells us back to a world of death.”*
– Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “Christabel”

In general, I don't give undead monsters level-draining powers because I've always felt that is a poor way to model the effects of a vampire's bite or a ghostly encounter as we see it in cinema and literature. Instead, I usually give them ability score drain. After all, a vampire's bite leaves you enervated and listless (a loss of Strength and Constitution) and doesn't make you lose something as nebulous as “experience.”

Of course, I like to mix it up when it comes to the undead. This is especially true when it comes to vampires since there are so many differing literary and cinematic depictions of them out there. When I want to spice-up an individual vampire antagonist, I either roll on the table below or pick an option that suits my fancy.

d20	Variant Ability
1	Blood Lust – once an opponent has been wounded, the vampire gains a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls, but can never retreat from combat.
2	Caustic Blood – anyone who wounds the vampire in melee combat takes 1d6 points of damage from the vampire's acidic blood.
3	Master of Degeneration – the vampire drains double the amount of levels or ability score points for its type.
4	Master of Stone – the vampire can summon 1d4 gargoyles per day to do his or her bidding.
5	Master of the Dead – any mindless undead under the vampire's control are as difficult to turn as the vampire itself.
6	Master of Tooth and Claw – the vampire can cast <i>Summon Animal III</i> as an 8 th level druid once per day.
7	Mesmeric Eyes – in place of the vampire's usual <i>Charm Person</i> ability, roll 1d6 to determine what power their gaze possesses: 1 – <i>Amnesia</i> 2 – <i>Scare</i> 3 – <i>Hold Person</i> 4 – <i>Fumble</i> 5 – <i>Hypnotic Pattern</i> 6 – <i>Phantasmal Killer</i> .
8	Unconstrained – the vampire can cast <i>Passwall</i> three times per day.
9	Undying Lord – the vampire gains a +1 bonus to all Saving Throws.
10	Unusual Animal Form – instead of transforming into either a wolf or a bat, roll a d12 to see what kind of creature the vampire can become: 1 – raven 2 – great cat 3 – enormous armadillo 4 – war-hound 5 – nightmare 6 – phase tiger 7 – dire bear 8 – giant spider 9 – carcass scavenger 10 – giant wasp 11 – vermin swarm 12 – catoblepas

d20	Variant Ability
11	<i>Alchemical Vampirism</i> – the vampire was not created by the bite of another vampire, but rather attained its vampiric status through alchemical experiments. As such, this vampire is immune to all of a vampire's normal vulnerabilities (sunlight, holy symbols, etc.).
12	<i>Detachable Hands</i> – the vampire's hands can detach as independent crawling claws.
13	<i>Feeds on Energy</i> – the touch of the vampire has the effects of a <i>Slow</i> spell.
14	<i>Master of Darkness</i> – the vampire can cause <i>Darkness</i> at will.
15	<i>Master of the Years</i> – the vampire's touches causes the victim to age 1d6 years.
16	<i>Plague-bringer</i> – the vampire's bite carries a random disease.
17	<i>Spectral Form</i> – the vampire can become ethereal three times per day.
18	<i>Unseen Master</i> – the vampire can become invisible three times per day.
19	<i>Unusual Species</i> – the vampire belongs to a non-human species. Roll 1d20 to determine its race: 1 – elf 2 – dwarf 3 – halfling 4 – gnome 5 – drow 6 – merman 7 – goblin 8 – orc 9 – troll 10 – ogre 11 – kobold 12 – hobgoblin 13 – giant 14 – troglodyte 15 – deep one 16 – satyr 17 – gnoll 18 – yeti 19 – snakeman 20 – lizardman
20	<i>Unusual Weakness</i> – the vampire is incapacitated by 1 – music 2 – silver 3 – silk rope 4 – a rare herb 5 – burning incense 6 – the presence of keys



Flesh Golem Augmentations

“Articulation is not a simple matter. Language is the effect of articulation, and so are bodies. The articulate are jointed animals; they are not smooth like the perfect spherical animals of Plato’s origin fantasy in the Timaeus. The articulate are cobbled together.”

– Donna Haraway, “The Promise of Monsters”

For some wizards, a flesh golem is like a classic hot-rod: it is a ripe for customization. However, instead of a flamejob paint scheme or an insane engine block, flesh golems are generally modified to increase their pure killing power.

d10	Augmentation
1	Basilisk Eyes – the flesh golem has been given the eyes of a basilisk; any character looking at the flesh golem must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Petrify or be turned to stone. A character who attacks the golem without looking at it suffers a -4 penalty to attack rolls.
2	Brain Transplant – the flesh golem has been given the brain of a talented individual instead of the brain of a common drudge; the golem retains whatever class abilities the person whose brain has been transplanted possessed.
3	Brute Arms – the flesh golem has the arms of some monstrosity strong creature, such as an ogre or an owlbear; +2 to hit, +2 to damage.
4	Extra Arms – the flesh golem has four arms instead of the usual two; +2 attacks per round.
5	Ghostsilver Shards – the flesh golem has shards of ghostsilver embedded in its knuckles; anyone hit by its slam attack loses 1d4 points of Dexterity.
6	Talon Terror Hooks – the flesh golem has the hooks of a Talon Terror in place of the usual cadaverous hands; re-roll any 1s rolled for damage.
7	Promethean Core – the flesh golem has been animated by a bound fire elemental; three times per day it may expel a <i>Fire Ball</i> as if it were cast by a 5 th level magic-user.
8	Soul Stone – the flesh golem has been animated by a bound infernal spirit; it may use whatever spell-like abilities are native to the animating type of demon or devil.
9	Troglodyte Glands – the flesh golem has been implanted with the scent glands of a troglodyte; any creature who comes near the flesh golem must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or suffer a -2 penalty to attack rolls due to the horrific stench.
10	Troll Blood Infusion – the flesh golem has the blood of trolls infused directly into its system; after 3 rounds have passed since the flesh golem has taken damage, it begins to regenerate Hit Points at a rate of 3 per round.

Variant Lycanthrope Abilities

Wolves may lurk in every guise! Now, as then, it's simple truth, sweetest tongue has sharpest tooth!

– *The Company of Wolves*

Lycanthropes are a bestial, deadly lot; many of them, especially those who prowl Black Forest of Germany, possess strange and unexpected abilities.

d12	Ability
1	Black Ring Assassin – the claws of the lycanthrope drip with black venom; anyone hit by the lycanthrope's claw attack must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or suffer the effects of a random poison.
2	Blessed by Satan – the lycanthrope is favored by Satan; re-roll any 1s that come up on the lycanthrope's damage rolls.
3	Bone-shaking Howl – once per day the lycanthrope can unleash a terrifying howl that immediately triggers a Saving Throw vs. Horror.
4	Claws of Filth and Fury – while the bite of a lycanthrope famously carries their horrible disease, this lycanthrope's claws also carry contagion; any character hit by the lycanthropes claws must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or contract a random disease.
5	Impenetrable Hide – the lycanthrope's hide is especially difficult to pierce; it gains a +2 bonus to Armor Class.
6	Legendary Beast – the lycanthrope is hardier and tougher to kill than the average example of its kind; it gains +1 Hit Point per Hit Dice and regenerates an additional Hit Point per round.
7	Lunatic Frenzy – there is a 50% chance each round that the lycanthrope gains an additional attack that round.
8	Packmaster – the lycanthrope holds an uncanny dominion over the world's beasts. Once per day the lycanthrope can cast <i>Animal Summoning III</i> .
9	Ravenous Gaze – once per round the lycanthrope can attempt to paralyze a character with its ever-hungry gaze; the gaze has the effects of a <i>Hold Person</i> spell.
10	Shaman of the Beast Gods – the lycanthrope can cast druid or cleric spells as a member of those classes with a level equal to its Hit Dice.
11	Spirit of a Tainted Nature – the lycanthrope exists partially on another plane of existence. As such, anyone hit by its bite attack runs the risk of having his or her connection to the earthly realm severed; anyone who is bit by the lycanthrope must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Death or die instantly.
12	Stench of the Beast – the lycanthrope is surrounded by a permanent <i>Stinking Cloud</i> .

Variant Mummy Lord Abilites

“The fourteen steps down and the unbroken seals were thrilling. But when we came to handle all her clothes and her jewels and her toilet things - you know they buried everything with them that they used in life? - well, when we came to unwrap the girl herself...”

– *The Mummy*

The mummy lords of Egypt possess a wide and varied suite of powers that canny adventurers had best prepare for:

d12	Variant Ability
1	<i>Binding Sarcophagus</i> – once per round the mummy may make use of an ability that mimics the <i>Hold Person</i> or <i>Hold Monster</i> spells. Anyone effected by this ability feels like they have been encased in a sarcophagus and buried alive for the duration.
2	<i>Chant of the Damned</i> – in combat the mummy intones a dire chant that gives all within earshot a -2 penalty to all their actions.
3	<i>Dominating Gaze</i> – three times per day the mummy can cast any combination of the <i>Hypnotic Pattern</i> , <i>Charm Person</i> , and <i>Charm Monster</i> spells.
4	<i>Esoteric Secrets of the Pharaohs</i> – the mummy is a master of the occult arts. It can cast spells as a magic-user or illusionist of a level equal to its Hit Dice.
5	<i>Fragrant Resins</i> – the mummy's corpse-like body is covered in fragrant, but highly sticky, resins and incense. Anyone attacking the mummy with a weapon must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Petrify or have their weapon adhere to the mummy's body, rendering it useless.
6	<i>Friendly Guise</i> – the mummy may cast <i>Alter Self</i> at will. Once per day the mummy can cast <i>Polymorph Self</i> .
7	<i>Hieroglyphic Hexes</i> – the mummy's bandages are scribed with powerful enchanted hieroglyphics. These hieroglyphics increase the efficacy of the disease spread by the mummy's touch; all Saving Throws made against the disease face a -2 penalty.
8	<i>Master of Canopic Cats</i> – once per day the mummy may summon 1d6 mummified great cats; these mummified cats have the abilities of normal tiger plus the usual undead immunities.
9	<i>Power of the Pyramids</i> – once per day the mummy can unleash a mental blast that effects everyone within a 60' cone. All within the area of effect must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Wands or be stunned for 3d4 rounds.
10	<i>Reflecting Seals</i> – any spell that is negated by the mummy's Magic Resistance rebounds back upon the caster.
11	<i>Unearthly Step</i> – the mummy may cast a <i>Fly</i> spell three times per day.
12	<i>Venomous Master</i> – once per day the mummy can summon 1d6 giant snakes.

Some Unusual Giant Bats

“Meditate while awaiting your turn, for it would be extremely difficult for you to get away from me, unless of course you have wings like a bat.”

– *The Fearless Vampire Killers*

Vampire lords frequently have giant bats for their minions. Some vampires have studied alchemy and monstrous breeding over their long centuries; the esoteric secrets gleaned from this study has been used to breed giant bats with strange, and often surprising, powers. If you'd like to put a nasty surprise in the way of your players, roll on the following table to give your giant bats a trick or two.

d10	Unusual Trait
1	<i>Baleful Stare</i> – once per day the bat may unleash a death-dealing stare upon one character; the power of this stare has the effect of a <i>Disintegration</i> spell.
2	<i>Blood-dripping Maw</i> – anyone who comes within 30' of the bat must make a Saving Throw vs. Horror
3	<i>Deadly Keening</i> – once per day the bat can let loose a terrible screech; anyone within 30' of the bat must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Death or die instantly. Any character who passes this Saving Throw is deafened for 2d4 rounds.
4	<i>Double-headed</i> – the bat has two heads; each head may attack with a bite per round.
5	<i>Firebrand</i> – three times per day the bat may breath a gout of flame in a 30' cone; the flames do 4d6 points of damage, but a successful Saving Throw vs. Breath Weapons results in half damage.
6	<i>Gripping Claws</i> – if both of the bat's talon attacks hit, the character must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Death to break free from the bat's clutches. On any round that the character fails to break free from the bat, he or she takes an automatic 3d4 points of rending damage and the bat may attack as normally with its bite attack.
7	<i>Plague-mouthed</i> – anyone bitten by the bat must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Death or contract Chiroptic Plague. Anyone thus afflicted only receives half of the benefits of magical and mundane healing.
8	<i>Poisonous Fangs</i> – anyone bitten by the bat must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or suffer the effects of Type 11 poison.
9	<i>Sickening Keening</i> – once per day the bat can let loose a terrible screech; anyone within 30' of the bat must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Spells or take a -2 penalty to all actions for 1d10 turns. Additionally, each character who fails this Saving Throw is deafened.
10	<i>Unseen Assassin</i> – the bat can become invisible three times per day as per the <i>Invisibility</i> spell.

Some Unusual Giant Spiders

"They had not gone more than a few yards when from behind came a sound, startling and horrible in the heavy padded silence: a gurgling, bubbling noise, and a long venomous hiss."

– J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Two Towers*

Has fighting giant spiders become mundane for your players? If so, roll on this table to see what unusual and surprising ability the next arachnid they face possesses:

d12	Unusual Trait
1	Arachnid Juggernaut – the spider regenerates 2 Hit Points per round and is immune to poison and disease.
2	Blinding Venom – once per round the spider can spout a jet of blinding toxin on any character engaged in melee combat with it; that character must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Breath Weapons or be blinded for 1d4 rounds.
3	Caustic Webs – once per day the spider can eject the equivalent of a <i>Web</i> spell; however, anyone caught in the web takes 1d4 points of damage as the web is made from an uncannily acidic substance.
4	Crystalline Terror – the spider's body is embedded with scintillating crystalline tumors; once per round it may emit a <i>Prismatic Spray</i> as per the spell.
5	Cursed by God – the spider was once a priest, but was cursed with the form of a spider for some blasphemy. The spider can still vocalize as a man and has turned to the worship of dark powers since its fall. It casts spells as a cleric; its level equals its Hit Dice.
6	Hideous Shriek – the spider emits an ear-piercing shriek when engaged in combat; everyone within the vicinity must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Spells or be deafened for 2d10 turns.
7	Lightning Warped – the spider crackles with electrical energy. Anyone striking it with a metal weapon takes 2d6 points of damage.
8	Mechaspider – the spider is part mechanical monstrosity; its Armor Class is improved by 2 points and it is immune to sleep, illusions, and any mind-affecting powers or spells.
9	Petrifying Bite – anyone bitten by the spider must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Petrify or be turned to stone.
10	Polymorphed Sorcerer – the spider was once a human wizard but was permanently transformed into a spider by a wizardly rival. The spider can still vocalize as a man. It casts spells as a magic-user; its level equals its Hit Dice.
11	Scything Mandibles – re-roll all 1s and 2s rolled for damage inflicted by the spider's bite.
12	Shadow Lurker – the spider can choose to engulf itself in an area of <i>Darkness</i> that covers a 30' radius. This pool of magical darkness travels with the spider.

Some Unusual Trolls

Trolls are creatures of chaos; some possess unusual and unexpected powers. If you want a troll to have a little something special, roll on the following tables.

Table I (1-6 on 1d12)

d12	Special Feature
1	<i>Bone carapace</i> – the troll is covered by an exoskeleton of bone. Its Armor Class is improved by two points.
2	<i>Brainiac</i> – the troll has an elongated skull that houses a gigantic brain. Because the troll can more efficiently process information it acts as though it were the recipient of a permanent <i>Haste</i> spell.
3	<i>Deafening Screech</i> – the troll can emit a terrifying, bone-shaking screech. All that hear it must make a Saving Throw vs. Petrify or suffer the effects of a <i>Hold Person</i> spell and deafness for the duration of the effect.
4	<i>Devotee of Satan</i> – the troll's flesh has been branded with runes sacred to Satan. These runes give the troll a +3 bonus to all Saving Throws vs. Spells.
5	<i>Devotee of Belphegor</i> – when the troll dies a random slime or ooze gushes forth from its mouth and eyes.
6	<i>Devotee of Leviathan</i> – once per day the troll may use <i>Animate Dead</i> .
7	<i>Devotee of Mammon</i> – once per day the troll may vomit forth a Shambling Mound which is under its mental control.
8	<i>Devotee of Beelzebub</i> – once per day the troll may vomit forth a 60' stream of rot grubs.
9	<i>Devotee of Lucifer</i> – the troll has pieces of demonstone embedded in its flesh. The troll's touch (such as a successful melee attack or a touch attack against the troll) can cause mutations; the character must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Spells or suffer a random mutation that takes 1d10 days to fully manifest.
10	<i>Four-armed</i> – the troll has an extra set of arms that end in razor-sharp claws. These extra arms give the troll two additional claw attacks per round.
11	<i>Incendiary</i> – when the troll dies it explodes in a 30' radius of flaming troll chunks. Anyone in the blast zone must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Breath Weapons or take 3d6 points of damage.
12	<i>Stonecursed</i> – when the troll dies it turns to stone. If the troll was killed by a weapon attack, the wielder must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Death or have their weapon trapped in the troll's stony body.

Table II (7-12 on 1d12)

d12	Special Feature
1	<i>Corroding Flesh</i> – the troll possesses the same ability to corrode metal as a Rust Monster.
2	<i>Frostchild</i> – the troll gives off an aura of unnatural cold. Anyone hit by its claw attacks takes an additional 1d4 points of damage from cold and must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Spells or suffer the effects of a <i>Slow</i> spell.
3	<i>Hallucinatory Bite</i> – Anyone bit by the troll must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Spells or suffer mind-bending hallucinations for 1d6 rounds. A hallucinating character must roll a d10 each round to see how they act: 1-10: gibbers mildly about swirling colors; 11-15: cries and whimpers about their parents; 16-18: runs in a random direction; 19-10: attacks the nearest creature while screaming about wild conspiracy theories.
4	<i>Lifebane</i> – the troll gives off an aura of morbidity and decay. Anyone hit by its bite attack must make a Saving Throw vs. Spells or lose 1 point of Strength.
5	<i>Shadow-builder</i> – twice per day the troll can exhale a 60' cloud of <i>Darkness</i> , as per the spell.
6	<i>Shapeshifter</i> – once per day the troll may use <i>Polymorph Self</i> .
7	<i>Swampstench</i> – the troll gives off a hellish stench. Anyone in close combat with the troll must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or take a -2 penalty to all to-hit rolls against it.
8	<i>Telepathic Chanter</i> – when confronted the troll begins to chant, but this chant is no mere vocalization. Rather, the troll chants directly into the minds of all sentient creatures within 60'. Anyone who is subject to the troll's horrific, unholy chant must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Spells or lose 1 point of Wisdom.
9	<i>Tongue Lasher</i> – the troll's tongue is abnormally long, strong, and prehensile. The troll may make an additional attack per round with their tongue that does 1d6 points of damage.
10	<i>Uncanny Maw</i> – if the troll rolls a natural 20 on a to-hit roll, its jaw unnaturally extends and swallows its foe. Once inside the troll's belly the character takes 1d8 points of damage per round, but can hit the troll automatically for maximum damage.
11	<i>Unclean!</i> – anyone hit by the troll's claws or teeth must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or contract a random disease.
12	<i>Venomous</i> – the troll's bite has the effect of a random poison.

What's the Deal with Igor's Hump?

FACT #1: All mad scientists (and many vampires) have a hunchbacked assistant.

FACT #2: That assistant is always named Igor (some pronounce it EYE-gore, some EEE-gore)

FACT #3: Here's the deal with Igor's hump:

d10	Hump Type (hey oh!)
1	Black-Blood Blister – if Igor takes any damage there is a 50% it will rupture his hump, which is, in fact, a giant blood blister filled with the Black Blood of the Earth. If ruptured, the Black Blood takes 1d4 rounds to congeal into a coherent mass that then attacks everyone nearby (use the stats of a Black Pudding).
2	Camel-like Fluid Storage – Igor's hump contains a randomly-generated potion. If Igor is killed without damaging his hump, the characters may be able to siphon it out of him as the least-appealing treasure ever.
3	Demonstone Tumor – Igor's hump is actually a tumor caused by small pieces of demonstone that are embedded in his back. The demonstone causes any spell cast within 30' of Igor to trigger a roll on the Magical Mishap Table.
4	Embedded Meteor – what looks like a hump is actually an meteor from space that collided with Igor's back. The radiation from the meteor has been slowly mutating Igor; at the moment that is least convenient for the player-characters Igor will transform into an evil Shambling Mound.
5	Hardened Bone – Igor's hump is a giant knob of bone. Indeed, Igor's skeleton is hard as iron, granting him a +2 bonus to his Armor Class.
6	Mold Infection – Igor's hump is really a symptom of an inner mold infection. If Igor takes any damage there is a 50% that his hump will explode into a cloud of mold spores (use the stats of a Gas Spore).
7	Psychic Brain – Igor's hump houses a second brain that possesses the mind blast ability of a Brain Lasher.
8	Pus-filled – instead of being a solid mass, Igor's hump is really a pus-filled membrane. If Igor takes any damage there is a 50% chance that his hump bursts open, discharging a thick yellow and green ooze. This pus takes 1d4 rounds to congeal into a coherent mass, which then attacks everyone nearby (use the stats of a Green Slime).
9	Stunted Twin – what looks like a hump is actually the visible portion of Igor's twin brother who failed to develop properly in utero. The hump can detach itself from Igor's body at will to wreck havoc (use the stats for a Gremlin).
10	Tentacle Cluster – Igor's hump is a gift from the Demon Lord Zzorch. It can sprout a multitude of tentacles to attack with; while the tentacles do no damage on their own, they possess the paralytic ability of a Carcass Scavenger.

What is the Deal with this Angry Mob?

Gothic literature is rife with anxieties concerning the uncontrolled actions of mobs, masses, and multitudes. The delusions of crowds are a magnification of our fears; the faceless majority is capable of anything when passions overtake reason and rationality. Here are a few angry mobs that the characters might encounter and interact with.

d8	The Deal
1	<i>Bring the Killer to Justice!</i> – a spate of serial murders have plagued the community, and the crowd believes that it has the perpetrator in its clutches. Of course, this person may or may not be the guilty party, but they are in immediate danger of being pulled limb-from-limb by the incensed mob.
2	<i>Burn Witch Burn!</i> – the mob has identified someone they suspect of being a witch, warlock, or other consort of dark powers. This could lead to a fraudulent trial based on spectral evidence, a dunking in a witch's stool, or a quick roast on a stake.
3	<i>Grave Defilers</i> – the masses believe that their village or town is haunted by a vampire who rises from the grave each night to suck their blood. They have identified a likely culprit (whether recently deceased or not – no matter) and are on their way to dig up that person's corpse and put a stake through its heart.
4	<i>March of the Hungry</i> – abused by conditions of famine, the crowd runs rampant as it attacks the local food reserves. “Let them eat cake” isn't what they want to hear; any unlucky people of wealth and privilege may face execution in the public square by means of a hastily-erected guillotine.
5	<i>Monster Hunters</i> – the mob believes that a recent death was caused by a monster inhabiting a nearby wild-land or abandoned castle, and has gathered with pitchforks, torches, and weapons to make war against the supernatural horrors of the world.
6	<i>Religious Mania</i> – the crowd has been swept up in the mania of a new religion. The assembled multitude rends its clothing and flagellates itself wildly as it heads to burn down an opposing church or place of worship.
7	<i>Rioting against Taxation</i> – the people are on their way to make a glorious revolution against what they feel to be unnecessary and unjust taxation. They have bricks, clubs, and firebombs at the ready, so the forces of authority had best beware.
8	<i>Stop, Thief!</i> – the mob is in hot pursuit of a thief, who may or may not be guilty of the burglary they are accused of; if the thief is guilty, the extenuating circumstances attached to their theft will fall on deaf ears unless the crowd can be brought to listen to reason or at least delayed until the law can arrive to take charge of the situation.

Random Weird Monster Tables

Give a monster a base amount of Hit Dice and assume an unarmored Armor Class, then roll four d12s and add up the results from the following tables. Thus, a roll of 4, 9, 6, and 2 would result in a monster with a frost-covered body with a feline head and long, withered fingers that has a petrifying gaze.

d12	Head	Body
1	<i>Ape-like</i> – +1 to-hit	<i>Animate shadow</i> – as per a phase tiger
2	<i>Arachnid</i> – <i>Web</i> attack	<i>Armor Shell</i> – +4 Armor Class
3	<i>Bird-like</i> – peck attack (1d6)	<i>Chitin carapace</i> – +3 Armor Class
4	<i>Canine</i> – bite attack (1d6)	<i>Crackling with lightning</i> – anyone hitting it with a metal weapon takes 1d8 damage
5	<i>Cyclopean</i> – sees invisible creatures	<i>Frost-covered</i> – nearby creatures take -1 to-hit
6	<i>Deformed humanoid</i> – can speak	<i>Iron-plated</i> – +5 Armor Class
7	<i>Feline</i> – bite attack (1d4)	<i>Molten</i> – nearby creatures take 1d4 damage
8	<i>Fleshless skull</i> – fear aura	<i>Muscled simian</i> – +1 damage rolls
9	<i>Horned beast</i> – gore attack (1d6)	<i>Reptilian scales</i> – +2 Armor Class
10	<i>Insect-like with mandibles</i> – spits poison or acid	<i>Shaggy beast</i> – +1 Armor Class
11	<i>Octopoid</i> – mental blast (1d8) and stun	<i>Skeletal beast</i> – half damage from piercing weapons
12	<i>Reptilian</i> – bite attack (1d4) causes disease	<i>Slimy ooze</i> – immune to acid and fire damage

d12	Limbs	Special Ability
1	<i>Bestial claws</i> – 1d6 damage	<i>Ability score drain</i> – 1d4 points
2	<i>Club-like protrusions</i> – 1d8 damage	<i>Breathes fire</i> – as per red dragon
3	<i>Humanoid</i> – uses weapon to attack	<i>Diseased touch</i> – random disease
4	<i>Metal limbs</i> – slam attack, 1d10 damage	<i>Hypnotic eyes</i> – <i>Charm Person</i>
5	<i>Mummified limbs</i> – 1d4 decaying damage	<i>Invisibility</i> – as per the spell
6	<i>No limbs!</i>	<i>Paralytic touch</i> – as per carcass scavenger
7	<i>Raptor claws</i> – 1d4 damage	<i>Petrifying gaze</i> – as per basilisk
8	<i>Reptilian claws</i> – 1d6 damage	<i>Poisonous touch</i> – Save or die
9	<i>Simian</i> – slam attack, 1d8 damage	<i>Regeneration</i> – 1d4 Hit Points per round
10	<i>Whip-like appendages</i> – 1d6 damage	<i>Resistant to magic</i> – 50% magic resistance
11	<i>Withered fingers</i> – claw attack, 1d4 damage	<i>Shapeshifter</i> – <i>Polymorph Self</i>
12	<i>Writhing tentacles</i> – 2 attacks, 1d4 damage	<i>Unholy stench</i> – as per troglodyte

Gypsy Fortune Telling

“The way you walked was thorny, through no fault of your own, but as the rain enters the soil, the river enters the sea, so tears run to a predestined end. “

– The Wolfman

Gypsies may be found anywhere in the world. Their caravans and riverboats often arrive without warning and leave just as mysteriously. Wherever they are found, the curious flock to them hoping to have their fortunes told for a handful of coins. Gypsies use a variety of fortune-telling methods, such as palm reading, gazing at tea leaves, conferring with a crystal ball, *et al*, but the most favored method at their disposal is to consult a deck of special playing cards. Most of the cards belong to one of four suits (coins, cups, daggers, and skulls) and are numbered one through nine or feature a herald, knight, queen, king, or ace. However, each deck also contains twenty-two pictorial trump cards. These trump cards are considered the most portentous within the deck.

When a gypsy gives a character a reading using these cards, the preamble is always boilerplate, such as “I see a dark man in your future,” “The many roads of life stretch out before you,” or “Beware a chill wind from the east.” However, the reading always ends with the revelation of one of the deck's trump cards. Whether the gypsies arrange this through sleight-of-hand or whether the cards hold the mystical power to arrange themselves is unknown; nevertheless, many denizens of the world believe whole-heartedly in the cards' significance.

You may wish to randomly draw a Major Arcana tarot card to determine what this final card entails (tarot cards use the same numbering as this system). Or, if you are feeling particularly crafty, you may wish to either draw your own cards or make use of Google's image search to discover appropriate artwork to affix onto regular playing cards purchased from a dollar store.

After receiving their reading, the character is beset with the weal or woe associated with that final trump card, as listed below. If you would prefer the fortune telling powers of the gypsies to be less accurate, roll a d6 in secret. On an odd roll the character receives the blessing or curse associated with the trump card; on an even roll the card holds no effect at all.

Trump Cards and Their Meanings

0. Laughing Bloody Murder

Image: A bloody-faced jester laughs maniacally.

Meaning: Positive influences favor those who seek adventure.

Effect: The character receives a +2 bonus to all Saving Throws for the duration of the adventure.

1. Witches Rune

Image: A comely witch etches a mysterious rune into a tree with an athame.

Meaning: The thoughts of a self-confident traveler will inspire their compatriots.

Effect: When this character is near, all within the party receive a +1 bonus to Saving Throws vs. Terror and Horror.

<p>2. Scars Flown Proud <i>Image:</i> A woman's wrist outstretched; a number of scars decorate that wrist. <i>Meaning:</i> Supportive feminine influences are at work in the current situation. <i>Effect:</i> The character receives an additional 2 Hit Points when they are the subject of magical healing for the duration of the adventure.</p>
<p>3. Eve at the Mansion <i>Image:</i> A beautiful woman in opulent finery is the object of everyone's attention at a gala ball. <i>Meaning:</i> Luck and bounty are with you. <i>Effect:</i> The character will discover 25% more wealth than they would otherwise in any treasure pile they discover for the duration of the adventure.</p>
<p>4. Child King <i>Image:</i> A youth sits upon a golden throne; in one hand he holds a scepter, in the other he holds a sword. <i>Meaning:</i> All dealings with authority can be finessed to fit the desired ends. <i>Effect:</i> When dealing with authorities and social superiors the character is treated as if they had an 18 Charisma for the duration of the adventure.</p>
<p>5. Cabaret Fortune Teller <i>Image:</i> A gypsy fortune teller gazes into a crystal ball. <i>Meaning:</i> Money slips through one's hands like grains of sand. <i>Effect:</i> Any wealth discovered by the character over the duration of the adventure will be 25% less in worth than they would be otherwise for the duration of the adventure.</p>
<p>6. Romeo's Distress <i>Image:</i> A broken-hearted Romeo watches in horror as his Juliet is stolen away by bandits. <i>Meaning:</i> Conflict is on the horizon, but it can be overcome. <i>Effect:</i> Any action taken by the character to defend a loved one receives a +3 bonus for the duration of the adventure.</p>
<p>7. The Golden Section <i>Image:</i> A golden mechanical horse stampedes across a verdant plain. <i>Meaning:</i> All obstacles can be overcome through perseverance. <i>Effect:</i> The character gains a +3 bonus to hit any being who damages him or her in combat.</p>
<p>8. Opheliac <i>Image:</i> A woman pulling herself from a tide pool that threatens to drown her in its depths. <i>Meaning:</i> Courage will be needed to prevail against the things to come. <i>Effect:</i> The character gains a +2 bonus to damage rolls for the duration of the adventure when outnumbered.</p>
<p>9. The Scarlet Thing in You <i>Image:</i> A habit-clad nun dismembers a corpse within a lonely cave. <i>Meaning:</i> Beware isolation and withdrawal. <i>Effect:</i> The character receives a -1 penalty to all Saving Throws vs. Terror and Horror.</p>
<p>10. In Search of My Rose <i>Image:</i> A deceased woman lies in state with a red rose clutched between her teeth. <i>Meaning:</i> Life is entering a tumultuous phase, but this too shall pass. <i>Effect:</i> Roll a d6 at the start of any encounter. On an even roll the character receives a +1 bonus to attack, damage, and Saving Throw rolls for the duration of that encounter; on an odd roll the character receives a -1 penalty to attack, damage, and Saving Throw rolls for the duration of that encounter.</p>

11. The Throne of Agony

Image: A weeping man is seated upon a barbed and bladed throne.

Meaning: The unjust will be held accountable for their actions.

Effect: If the character willingly harms any innocent beings for the duration of the adventure they must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Death or fall victim of a “heart attack.”

12. The Drowning Man

Image: A man clutching his throat as he drowns within a violently raging river.

Meaning: Success in the trials to come will require self-sacrifice.

Effect: Once during the adventure the character may choose to take the damage an adjacent character would take.

13. Dark Entries

Image: A pair of demonic eyes peer from the shadows beneath a darkened archway.

Meaning: Ill influences, possibly supernatural in origin, are at work in the current situation.

Effect: The character takes a -1 penalty to all rolls for the duration of the adventure.

13. Long Live Death

Image: A skeletal reaper cuts down a young man in an empty street.

Meaning: Sudden change is coming.

Effect: Roll a d6. On an even roll the character receives a +3 bonus to Saving Throws vs. Death for the duration of the adventure; on an odd roll the character receives a -3 penalty to Saving Throws vs. Death for the duration of the adventure.

14. The Hair Shirt

Image: A grim-faced monk wearing a hair shirt scourges another monk in a private cell.

Meaning: Circumstances to come will require adaptation and quick-thinking.

Effect: The character, and any character who travels with them, get a +1 bonus to Initiative rolls for the duration of the adventure.

16. Cities in Dust

Image: A city in ruins being consumed by flames.

Meaning: Catastrophe lurks in the near future.

Effect: Any natural roll of 20 made by the character is treated as a natural roll of 1 instead for the duration of the adventure.

17. Halo Star

Image: A star encircled by a halo of blazing light.

Meaning: Divine inspiration will take hold when you most need it.

Effect: For the duration of the adventure the character will be treated as if they had an 18 Wisdom.

18. The Snake and the Moon

Image: A full moon encircled by an ouroboros.

Meaning: Something from beyond the stars has taken an interest in recent events.

Effect: The character, and any character who travels with them, takes a -1 penalty to Initiative rolls for the duration of the adventure.

19. God Damn the Sun

Image: A blazing sun grins knowingly.

Meaning: Contentment and mercantile success awaits the bold.

Effect: One treasure chest opened by the character will contain contents 50% more valuable than it would have otherwise.

20. Day of the Lords

Image: A trio of vampires rise from their graves, their faces spattered with gore.

Meaning: A growing awareness is on the horizon.

Effect: For the duration of the adventure the character cannot be surprised.

21. Part of Her Creation

Image: A green and gray planet spins in the palm of a goddess's hand.

Meaning: Those who travel will be kept safe by the powers of the cosmos.

Effect: The character gains a 10% bonus to any Experience Points earned during the adventure.

New Magic Item

Witchboard – a witchboard is a ouija board whose letters have been inked with witch's blood. Its physical form is a thin wooden board: the letters of the alphabet arch across the middle of the board, the words YES and NO reside in the upper corners of the board, and the word GOODBYE is spelled out across the bottom. Such a board is always found in the company of a wooden planchette. Once per day a character may use the witchboard to contact a spirit from beyond the veil. The character may then ask the spirit a question, which the spirit will answer to the best of its ability by possessing the planchette and using it to spell out words or to answer YES or NO.



However, for each question the character asks they must make a Saving Throw vs. Spells. Each question after the first adds a cumulative -1 penalty to the next Saving Throw. A failed Saving Throw means that the spirit has resisted the power of the witchboard; it moves the planchette across the word GOODBYE and cannot be summoned again for twenty-four hours. If the player rolls a 1 for their character's Saving Throw, their character becomes the victim of a *Magic Jar* spell as the spirit tries to take over their body.

The Gothic Fantasy Domain Game

“Better freedom and a chilly road than a warm hearth and servitude.”

– Fritz Leiber, *“The Cloud of Hate”*

In many old-school fantasy role-playing games, when the characters reach 10th level the nature of the game changes from one of adventurous exploration to the maintenance and defense of a domain. This is essentially a change in tone; whereas free-wheeling dungeon delving and general skullduggery was the order of the day, it gives way to the localized concerns of politics, intrigue, and lordship that accompany “settling down.”

The “domain game” level of play is entirely possible for games that skew toward Gothic Fantasy, but for these games “settling down” always comes at a price—and not just the sacrifice of autonomy! Gothic fiction has many examples of characters who have inherited, won, or married into estates that come with a problem to be solved. For our purposes, an “estate” can be any functional building that a character of a given class might gain control over: it could be a castle and the surrounding lands, an outpost or fortress, a wizard's tower, a thieves' guild, a temple or church, *et al.* Of course, you may use whatever rules you like for the normal administration of such an establishment, but once the characters are in charge of a location you should roll on the following table to see what special problem they will need to deal with.

You Inherited an Estate, but There's a Problem...

d12	Problem
1	Accursed – For some mysterious reason the estate has been cursed and ill-luck that will plague any who take ownership of it. This ill-luck can take many forms, and indeed its severity should escalate the longer the curse has been left un-investigated; its effects could include minor accidents that happen on the premises up to madness and death. As to the cause of the curse, perhaps a murder was committed on the estate and the culprit has yet to be brought to justice.
2	Contaminated – The estate is literally plagued with a debilitating disease that eventually sickens all who resides there. The cause of the disease could be traceable to a variety of possible causes: a trio of hags who poison the estate's wells, a clan of wererats who are tainting the meat of the local farms, or a pocket of decaying zombies who are trapped within the estate's water system are all possible causes that will need to be investigated and rooted out.
3	Contested – While the new owner of the estate may assume they have sovereign control over their domain, some other lordling believes he or she has a rightful claim on the territory. The claimant may be mundane (such as a mad noble who believes himself to be the rightful heir to the land) or supernatural in nature (such as a vampiress who has awoken from an ancient sleep to regain her former holdings). If the structure is new, the claimant believes they are due to the land the estate sits on.
4	Disrepair – The estate is in a frightful state of ruin and will require additional expenditure to put into working order. However, the more pressing concern will be to discover why the estate is in such disrepair. Perhaps a family of ghouls who live deep within the dungeons of the estate have taken to raiding the surface levels for wood and stonework, or perhaps the structure is slowly being swallowed by a horrific creature lurking within the land itself.

5	Haunted – The estate is home to a number of non-corporeal undead spirits. These spirits may be banshees, ghosts, specters, wraiths, or some combination of the same. These spirits will harass the new owner of the estate, ruin any important social engagements held there, and will make it difficult to retain staff and servants. The spirits have unfinished business and it is up to the estate's new owner to lay them to gentle rest.
6	Hazardous – The estate is located in a part of the world that is fraught with danger. If the estate is located in a remote part of the world, it could be in danger of attack from bandits or an antediluvian supernatural threat. If the estate is located in a more civilized part of the world, it could be in danger from a thieves guild bent on ransacking it, revolutionaries looking to make a grand political statement, or a supernatural threat of an urban character.
7	Indefensible – While the estate is fine on the face of things, an army or warband of some kind is already marching to lay siege to it. Unfortunately, the estate is poorly garrisoned, poorly positioned for war, lacking in defensive walls and fortifications, lacking in war machines (and crews to man them), or some combination thereof. It will be up to the estate's new owner to innovate a plan to save the estate from certain destruction.
8	Infested – The estate is infested with some kind of vermin. The vermin might be rats, snakes, insects, or something else, but their constant scurrying disrupts all sleep within the estate and has given it a reputation as an unclean and forsaken place. The cause of this infestation will resist mundane treatment; something otherworldly or decidedly sinister (such as a mad monk bent on revenge or a mummy lord using the vermin to spread contagion) will be the root cause to be discovered and dealt with.
9	Meager – The estate has very few resources to draw upon. Perhaps the land around the estate isn't growing enough food to support the tenants—has a vengeful witch placed a hex upon the farmers that only the estate's owner can lift? Perhaps the estate's capital is being embezzled by a dastardly housekeeper who is using the funds to support a vile demon cult. Perhaps the estate's vineyards have been blighted by an undead evil that has made its lair among the vines.
10	Mutinous – For some reason, the vassals, servants, and retainers attached to the estate are planning an uprising against their new master. Perhaps they've fallen under the sway of a vile hypnotist who uses them as pawns to gain control of the estate. Perhaps they belong to a witch-cult that has dark plans for the estate. Perhaps they remain loyal to a former owner of the estate and are attempting to drive the current owner mad through fiendish acts of gas-lighting.
11	Unfashionable – For some reason the estate is unpopular with both the locals and the important powers that be. This means that the estate's owner will be neglected, passed by for honors, and robbed of all-important social capital. The cause of this slight could take a variety of forms: the deep woods near the estate harbor a coterie of bandits, a monastery on the estate's grounds is rumored to be involved in blasphemous doings, or the estate itself is intentionally being cut off from social circulation by a villainess who wants it for herself.
12	Ruined – The estate is not currently in habitable shape due to the vagaries of time, war, vandalism, or something similar. Much work will be done in order to set things to right and to make the estate a functional location. What will be discovered amongst the rubble? Perhaps a dungeon still inhabited by all manner of monstrous creatures. Perhaps a cursed treasure that will lead the estate's owner abroad in search of a mysterious hex-breaker. Perhaps a mad uncle, long thought to be deceased, has been inhabiting a ruined tower with his hideous creations.

What Type of Haunting is Afoot Table

“In that single instant, brief and vivid as a landscape beheld in the flash of summer lightning, I saw the moon shining down through a rift of stormy cloud—the ghastly sign-post rearing its warning finger by the wayside—the broken parapet—the plunging horses—the black gulf below.”

– Amelia B. Edwards, “The Phantom Coach”

Many an old home is said to be haunted, but sometimes you haven't planned in advance what form a particular ghostly manifestation takes. Here's a table to find out what kind of spectral manifestation is afoot:

What Kind of Haunting is Afoot?

d8	Haunting Type
1	Army of the Fallen – a detachment of spectral soldiers practices formations in the moonlight. Where do they march off to? If followed, they might re-enact a bloody battle—or perhaps they turn on any onlookers and take them to be reincarnated foes.
2	Ghost Watchdog – a spectral baying can be heard each night of the full moon. Is the baying an indication of some forthcoming familial doom or does the spirit-hound indicate where remains lie without proper burial?
3	Haunted Portrait – a certain portrait in the gallery has eyes that seem to follow your every movement. On a special anniversary the portrayed person can step from its frame. Why do they ascend to the attic? If friendly, what knowledge might they impart to those who ask politely?
4	Phantom Coach – at a prescribed time, a ghostly coach arrives at the front gate and the shrouded driver beckons any onlookers to enter within. Where does it take its foolhardy passengers? Do they arrive at a place of adventure or does the coach re-enact a tragic plummet from a jagged cliff?
5	Spectral Footsteps – ghostly footsteps can be heard in a particular hallway all through the night. If the footsteps are followed, where do they lead? Do they end at a secret passage or do they lead below into the crypts where a fiend awaits?
6	The Hidden Nosferatu – a strange moaning can be heard coming from behind a brick wall. If the wall is broken, a vampire will be discovered chained within. It is weak from lack of nourishment, but will offer strange wealth for its release.
7	The Pitter-Patter of Little Feet – a child ghost haunts an obscure staircase. Perhaps this child merely wants to be played with and entertained, or perhaps it rises from the well each night with sodden hair to do worse than mischief.
8	The Rattle of Chains – the sound of rattling chains can be heard to emanate every night from the basement. Someone was incarcerated there, but what will happen if this specter is confronted? Perhaps this person was unjustly locked away and is in need of exorcism, or perhaps they were put away for the safety of all.

What a Terrible Night to Have a Curse

In *Simon's Quest*, the second installment of the long-running *Castlevania* video game franchise, the coming of nightfall spells a period of increased danger for the game's whip-wielding protagonist; when the moon rises, the monsters become harder and more deadly. Similarly, there are cursed places in the world where monsters grow in unholy might as the sun sets. To find out how the foes of men and women who inhabit these accursed realms strengthen as the light goes dim, roll on the following table:

What a Terrible Night to Have a Curse Table

d12	Effect
1	Aria of Mortification – The infernal hooting of owls begins to sound like a chorus calling for blood to be spilled. All monsters may re-roll any damage rolls that come up a 1.
2	Blood Opera – The night air is filled with the terrible sound of the cawing of vultures. All monsters may re-roll any attack rolls that come up a 1.
3	Bloodmoon Dissonance – The moon turns the color of blood, driving the foes of mankind into a frenzy. All monsters gain an additional attack per round.
4	Harmony of Morbidity – The howling of hungry wolves inspires the children of the night to weave through mankind's pitiful resistance. All monsters gain +1 Armor Class.
5	Miasma of the Ancients – A foul mist rises from the land that strengthens the lost and the damned! All monsters gain +1 Hit Dice.
6	Midnight Puissance – The eerie light of the moon guides the fangs and claws of beasts with its sickening rays. All monsters gain a +1 on their attack rolls.
7	Nocturnal Alacrity – A savage wind rips across the land, granting wrathful speed to all the world's terrors. All monsters gain a +10' bonus to their movement.
8	Rondeau of Agony – The haunting sound of ravens in flight fills your ears like the beating of a war drum spelling the doom of all mankind. All monsters have their spells and spell-like abilities extended in duration by 1d4 rounds.
9	Scourge of Innocence – The night sky deepens to an unholy shade that seems blacker than pitch; this unnerving sight emboldens the creatures of darkness. All monsters gain a +1 bonus to their Morale.
10	Shadow Lamentations – The shadows cast by the moon seem to crawl and writhe as if they had been given hellish life. All monsters gain a +1 bonus to their Saving Throws.
11	Sorrowful Judgment – A dense, choking fog arises to shroud the occult workings of those who serve evil. All monsters have their spells and spell-like abilities extended in range by 50%.
12	Symphony of Ruin – The wind carries the chilling voices of the dead on its unseen waves; this cacophony goads the foes of mankind to strike true into the hearts of the living. All monsters gain a +1 on their damage rolls.

What Happens Inside the Red Room?

d6	There's always something off about a room painted blood-red, right?
1	<i>Temporal Slippage</i> – when the characters enter this room they see the occupants replay a scene from the past. The occupants of this room cannot leave it; they are doomed to repeat their motions and statements over and over. Whatever happens in this room has no effect on the course of history—it is merely an echo of the past.
2	<i>Dimensional Tapestry</i> – this room contains a pictorial tapestry depicting a scene that occurs somewhere else. The tapestry may be stepped into; it will transport anyone who steps into it to the vista it portrays.
3	<i>Horror of the Waxworks</i> – this room contains a number of wax models of historic figures. When some triggering condition is met the waxwork models will come to life and attack.
4	<i>The Covered Pit</i> – this room contains a pit that is covered by a trapdoor. If opened, the trapdoor will release a vengeful spirit from the pit. Alternately, the pit might contain a mutant alligator or a similar beast.
5	<i>The Family Portraits</i> – this room contains a number of painted portraits whose eyes follow you no matter where you move within the chamber. If addressed, the portraits will answer questions asked of them.
6	<i>The Haunted Desk</i> – this room contains an ancient wooden desk. Inside one of the desk's drawers is a letter from a long-dead man. If a letter to this man is placed within the drawer, a reply from his specter will appear within it the next day.

Random Unnerving Sounds Table

d20	Sound	d20	Sound
1	Growling of a large dog	11	Anguished weeping
2	A child's whisper	12	Cries of pain and agony
3	An adult's whisper	13	Something heavy being dragged
4	Hissing of a large reptile	14	The flapping of wings
5	Tortured moaning	15	Intermittent screams
6	The rush of wind	16	A strange ululation
7	Maniacal laughter	17	An incessantly ticking clock
8	Hushed conversation	18	The scrapping of furniture across the floor
9	Heavy footsteps	19	Steady, rhythmic pounding
10	Labored Breathing	20	A child's laughter

Gothic Room Dressing Table

Roll a few times on this table to give any boring room a Gothic make-over. Think about the connections between the random results; they might start to suggest an idea of what is going on within the larger structure if you're in need of an adventure seed.

d100	Room Dressing	d100	Room Dressing
01-02	A book of gruesome fairy tales	51-52	Alchemy laboratory
03-04	A blasphemous altar	53-54	A statue of a beautiful man or woman
05-06	A book of tales of horror	55-56	A bust of a famous philosopher
07-08	Disturbing family portraits	57-58	A profane idol
09-10	A painting of a saint's execution	59-60	A book on infamous highwaymen
11-12	A painting of the carnal act	61-62	A book on infamous pirates
13-14	A painting of famous massacre	63-64	A fireplace carved with a child's face
15-16	Ancient and rusted suits of armor	65-66	A stone or marble gargoyle
17-18	A chair with built-in restraints	67-68	A painting depicting occult symbols
19-20	An iron maiden	69-70	A fountain with statue centerpiece
21-22	Manacles on the wall	71-72	Thick cobwebs and dust
23-24	A bed that is bolted to the floor	73-74	A disused organ
25-26	A tapestry depicting knights at war	75-76	A wunderkammer
27-28	A tapestry depicting the apocalypse	77-78	A collection of skulls
29-30	A book about infamous villains	79-80	A collection of brains in jars
31-32	A book on religious persecutions	81-82	Art made from toenails
33-34	Guttering candles	83-84	A massive helmet with black plumes
35-36	Ornate candelabra	85-86	A desk etched with words of insanity
37-38	Rotten taxidermy	87-88	A locked armoire
39-40	A bloody dagger	89-90	A brazier burning incense
41-42	An old blood stain upon the floor	91-92	A crate chained shut
43-44	A fresh blood stain upon the floor	93-94	Stained glass windows
45-46	A terrarium with carnivorous plants	95-96	A symbol scrawled in chalk
47-48	A collection of creepy dolls	97-98	A ouija board
49-50	A book on the history of witchcraft	99-100	Tarot cards laid out in a reading

Thieves Guild Generator

STEP 1: roll three d12s to generate the guild's specialty, general resources, and access to special resources:

d12	Guild Specialty	General Resources	Special Resources
1	Mugging	Poor	Non-existent
2	Breaking & entering	Poor	Non-existent
3	Pickpocketing	Poor	Non-existent
4	Riverboat piracy	Fair	Poor (1 special item)
5	High-seas piracy	Fair	Poor (1 special item)
6	Extortion	Fair	Poor (1 special item)
7	Drug peddling	Average	Fair (1d2 special items)
8	Gambling & wagers	Average	Fair (1d2 special items)
9	Smuggling	Average	Fair (1d2 special items)
10	Forgery	Wealthy	Average (1d4 special items)
11	Banditry	Wealthy	Average (1d4 special items)
12	Fencing stolen goods	Hideously flush	Flush (1d8 special items)

STEP 2: Generate the locations and security of the guild's hideouts, halls, and safehouses. A typical guild has 1d4 such locations, but add +1 to this roll for each level above fair that the guild possesses in general resources:

d12	Location	Security
1	Underneath a tavern	Everyone knows about it
2	Within a noble's home	Everyone knows about it
3	Within a workshop/factory	An open secret in the underworld
4	Beneath a front business	An open secret in the underworld
5	Within the sewers	Few know of it
6	Within a private residence	Few know of it
7	Cave system outside of town	A well-kept secret
8	Abandoned fortress or tower	A well-kept secret
9	In a moored boat	A well-kept secret
10	Within an inn	Known only to the guild
11	Within a forest or other wilderness	Known only to the guild
12	Hidden in plain sight	Known only to the guild's leadership

STEP 3: Roll four d20s to determine the guild's leadership, its organization, the strength of its leadership, and the style of its leadership:

d20	Leadership	Guild Organization
1-2	Guildmaster	Centralized
3-4	Guildmaster	Centralized
5-6	Guildmaster	Centralized
7-8	Guildmaster	Cohesive
9-10	Guildmaster	Cohesive
11-12	Guildmaster	Cohesive
13-14	Guildmaster	Factionalism
15-16	Democracy	Factionalism
17-18	Council (1d4+1 members)	Internal warfare
19	Inhuman guildmaster	Internal warfare
20	Inhuman council	State of anarchy

d20	Leadership Strength	Leadership Style
1-2	Strong control	Cruel & despotic
3-4	Strong control	Cruel & indifferent
5-6	Strong control	Cruel & populist
7-8	Moderate control	Indifferent & despotic
9-10	Moderate control	Purely indifferent
11-12	Moderate control	Indifferent & populist
13-14	Weak control	Just & despotic
15-16	Weak control	Just & indifferent
17-18	Weak control	Just & populist
19	Losing control	Anarchic & capricious
20	No control	Anarchic & capricious

STEP 4: Roll five d20s to determine the guild's relationship to the local law, the merchant consortium, the assassins guild, local beggars, and non-guild thieves.

d20	Local Law	Merchant Consortium
1-2	Persecution & brutal suppression	Open warfare
3-4	Persecution & brutal suppression	Strong opposition
5-6	Vigorous hassling	Strong opposition
7-8	Vigorous hassling	Standard opposition
9-10	Standard opposition	Standard opposition
11-12	Standard opposition	Standard opposition
13-14	Standard opposition	Weak opposition
15-16	Bribery & indifference	Weak opposition
17-18	Bribery & indifference	Powerless submission
19	Corruption & collaboration	Thieves guild has infiltrated the consortium
20	Corruption & collaboration	Consortium has infiltrated the thieves guild

d20	Assassins Guild	Local Beggars	Non-Guild Thieves
1-2	Hostile	Hostile	Persecution
3-4	Indifferent	Hostile	Persecution
5-6	Indifferent	Indifferent	Persecution
7-8	Indifferent	Indifferent	Hostility
9-10	Indifferent	Indifferent	Hostility
11-12	Indifferent	Favorable & friendly	Hostility
13-14	Favorable & friendly	Favorable & friendly	Indifferent
15-16	Favorable & friendly	Collaborative	Indifferent
17-18	Collaborative	Collaborative	Indifferent
19	Collaborative	Collaborative	Co-operative
20	Hopelessly entwined	Hopelessly entwined	Co-operative

STEP 5: Roll a d20 to determine what kind of supernatural or fantastical problem plagues the guild.

d20	Fantastical Thieves Guild Problem
1	The guild has stolen “jewels” which are, in fact, monster eggs. Now they're hatching.
2	The guild has stolen an item from a reliquary that has cursed them with an urge toward charity.
3	The guild has been cursed by a wizard; their curse makes them steal junk instead of proper valuables.
4	There is a poltergeist within the guild hall that is hiding their ill-gotten gains.
5	There is a doppelganger impersonating guild members and framing them for crimes they did not commit.
6	The guild's leadership has contracted a mania for religion; they demand the guild members sacrifice an untenable amount of stolen treasures to this new god.
7	The watch has acquired the services of a stolen-goods-sniffing hound.
8	Long ago the guild's leadership sold their collective souls to a devil for protection from the authorities; the devil has now re-appeared to collect his infernal bounty.
9	Something inhuman is murdering guild members one-by-one.
10	The guild has petrified a treasure-laden monster, but does not know how to un-petrify it.
11	The guild's leadership has been cursed; whenever they touch gold it turns to lead.
12	The guild has a map to fey treasure in the fey realms, but has no idea how to travel into that magical realm.
13	A rift to a rival guild's hall has opened in one of the guild's safehouses.
14	The guild has acquired cursed coins that scream the names and locations of who has stolen them. They have no idea how to get rid of them, as smelting them didn't work.
15	One of the guild members is a vampire who can walk by day, but which is it?
16	One of the guild members is under the mental influence of a brain lasher.
17	One of the guild members is a hag wearing a skin-suit made from that now-dead member.
18	The authorities have made a pact with a devil to clear out the thieves guild.
19	The merchant consortium have made a deal with a devil to clear out the thieves guild.
20	The thieves guild really shouldn't have stolen that mummy's sarcophagus.

Wizard's Tower Generator

STEP 1: Give the wizard's tower a name or use the following table to determine its title –

d12	The (Adjective)	(Noun) of (insert Wizard's Name)
1	Looming	Tower
2	Dreaded	Laboratory
3	Oracular	Sanctuary
4	Panoptic	Fortress
5	Cyclopean	Spire
6	Sorcerous	Steeple
7	Enshrouded	Hall
8	Black	Citadel
9	White	Manse
10	Magnificent	Bastion
11	Fell	Stronghold
12	Secluded	Fastness

Roll two d12s; rolls of 4 and 8 would generate “The Panoptic Citadel of X,” for example.

If you don't have a name for your wizard, you can roll for it on this table

d20	Random Wizard Name	d20	Random Wizard Name
1	Orfeus or Orfia	11	Zeria or Zerio
2	Melango or Melangela	12	Erathia or Eraster
3	Sersey or Sersus	13	Iraal or Iraalia
4	Katya or Katrick	14	Rhaldeus or Rhaldeia
5	Marlinius or Marlinia	15	Calabish or Calabisha
6	Horodius or Horodia	16	Araldo or Araldia
7	Snetch or Snetchnia	17	Balto or Balta
8	Brambleford or Bramblefordina	18	Amar or Amarinth
9	Zaster or Zastria	19	Sholtar or Sholtara
10	Phoulus or Phoulotia	20	Imogrand or Imograndia

STEP 2: This wizard is really into...

d12	Theme	d12	Theme
1	Necromancy	7	Seances
2	Things Man Was Not Meant to Know	8	Demonic pacts
3	Apotheosis	9	Mutational magic
4	Biological experimentation	10	Orgone magic
5	Black masses	11	Golem construction
6	Planar travel	12	Raising an army

STEP 3: A wizard's tower is usually designed to be foreboding of aspect so as to scare away any potential interlopers. Roll on the following table to determine what keeps the locals away.

d10	Foreboding Aspect
1	The main entrance is shaped like a demon's maw
2	The area leading up to the tower is a perpetually skeletal forest
3	The area near the entrance is a forest of corpses impaled on wooden stakes
4	A storm continually rages over the tower
5	The area around the tower is subject to Fortean weather phenomena
6	The area around the tower is subject to spectral howling at all hours
7	Horrific illusions near the entrance
8	Skeletons wander the area near the tower
9	The bodies of former interlopers hang from the trees
10	The area around the tower smells of the abattoir

STEP 4: The wizard's overall aesthetic style is...

d10	Aesthetic	d10	Aesthetic
1	Cluttered and disorganized	6	Baroque
2	Neo-classical	7	Neo-gothic
3	Minimalist, everything-in-its-place	8	Cthulhoid, tentacular
4	Overly refined	9	Ascetic and monkish
5	Gaudy; nouveau riche	10	Rustic and charming

STEP 5: A wizard's tower has 1d4+1 levels (or 2d4+1 levels in the case of especially powerful wizards)

STEP 6: A wizard's tower contains the following levels (re-roll any duplicates):

A – the wizard's private chambers (bedroom, kitchen, dining area, etc.)

B – the wizard's library

– randomly roll for the rest of the levels; each level will have a series of related rooms –

d20	Level
1	Ritual chambers – incense, braziers, permanent summoning circle
2	Mutational experiment laboratory – vivisection equipment, animals in cages
3	Alchemical laboratory – alembics, retorts, strange and rare ingredients in vials and jars
4	Scrying chambers – mirror pools, crystal balls, tarot cards, books on divination, entrails
5	Necromantic laboratory – bones, flesh, stitchery, dreadful tomes
6	Cages and holding pens – humans, animals, wooden or metal cages, whips, locks
7	Henchmen's quarters – rough quarters, some money, weapons, dice and cards
8	Enchanted portrait galleries – talking portraits, portraits that step from their frames
9	Musical rooms – self-playing instruments, enchanted musicians
10	Trophy rooms – stolen goods, broken wands from wizardly duels, treasure on display
11	Wunderkammer – medical oddities, natural history specimens
12	Operating theaters – operating tables, scalpels and saws, blood stains
13	Extra-dimensional rooms – dimensional doors, portals, gifts from otherworldly beings
14	Igor's chambers – manacles, rough clothes, foulness
15	Concubine's chambers – pillows, chained men/women/both, willing slaves, succubi
16	Harem chambers – pleasure consorts, spearwives, orgiastic cult
17	Apprentice's chambers – minor books of the occult, minor magical baubles
18	Treasure vaults – gold, silver, art works, precious gems
19	Observatories – telescope, astrological charts, hymns to those beyond the stars
20	Torture chambers – the rack, thumbscrews, the iron maiden, whips, manacles

STEP 7: The wizard's tower is primarily protected by

d12	Protection
1	Complex mechanical traps (roll 1d4 to determine the most common type found in the tower: 1 – gaseous attacks 2 – tripwires that fire crossbows 3 – doors and chests trapped with poison needles 3 – descending spiked ceilings 4 – trap door)
2	Crude mechanical traps (roll 1d4 to determine the most common type found in the tower: 1 – pitfalls 2 – deadweights 3 – pots of boiling oil 4 – thrusting spear)
3	Magical traps (roll 1d4 to determine the most common type found in the tower: 1 – trap releases monster from stasis 2 – fiery explosions 3 – curses 4 – petrification)
4	Misguiding illusions (roll 1d6 to determine type: 1 – illusory wall 2 – phantom sound 3 – illusory image 4 – illusory image that causes terror 5 – illusory image that causes horror 6 – illusory image with phantom sounds)
5	Summoned demons (roll 1d6 to determine the demons' general methodology: 1-2 – brute force and battle 3-4 seduction and misdirection 5 – demonic possession 6 – magical hindrance)
6	Hired mercenaries (roll 1d6 to determine the type of mercenaries: 1-2 – bandits 3-4 – sellswords 5 – berzerkers 6 – fallen soldiers)
7	Charmed beasts (roll 1d10 to determine the most common type: 1 – cadaver grub 2 – umber hulk 3 – basilisk 4 – medusa 5 – cockatrice 6 – manticores 7 – griffin 8 – otyugh 9 – lycanthrope 10 – ankheg)
8	Necromantic servitors (roll 1d10 to determine the main type of necromantic servitors that follow the wizard's commands: 1-3 – skeletons 4-6 – zombies 7-8 – ghouls 9 – wights 10 – wraiths)
9	Hauntings (use the What Type of Haunting is Afoot Table)
10	Riddle-based traps (roll 1d4 to determine the riddle's method of delivery: 1 – sphinxes 2 – <i>Magic Mouth</i> spells 3 – fey creatures 4 – talking oil paintings)
11	Enslaved humanoids (roll 1d12 to determine the main type of enslaved humanoids in service to the wizard: 1 – kobolds 2 – goblins 3 – orcs 4 – hobgoblins 5 – bugbears 6 – gnolls 7 – ogres 8 – trolls 9 – dwarves 10 – elves 11 – halflings 12 – lizardmen)
12	Created monsters (roll 1d6 to determine type: 1 – golem 2 – homunculus 3 – clockwork man 4 – living statue 5 – caryatid column 6 – gargoyle)

STEP 8: The wizard's tower is secondarily protected by → roll again on the previous table, discarding a matching result; this secondary method of protection will simply be less prevalent than the primary method generated in **STEP 7**.

Some Associated Tables

d6	Don't Touch That Because...	You Knocked That Over And...
1	It's a mimic	Now it's eating through the floor
2	It's cursed	Now it's smoking
3	It's a disguised ooze	Now we hear strange chanting and ululations
4	It's an illusion	Now we seem to be somewhere else
5	It's poisoned	Now the tower seems to be falling apart around us
6	It's going to explode	Now a secret door has opened

d6	Odd Room Features	Abortive Experiments
1	Unusually high ceiling	Half-owl, half-boar (owlboar)
2	Wall covered in runes	Shadow shedu
3	Choked with furniture	Gollum-shaped golem
4	Everything is one color	Hybrid blink dog/hellhound
5	Everything is striped	Hybrid medusa/gorgon
6	Naked portrait of the wizard	Half-ettercap, half-drider (spiderman)

d20	What's In the Wizard's Dustbin?	d20	What's In the Wizard's Dustbin?
1	Infernal dictionary	11	Bent forks
2	Gelatinous flesh	12	A broken skull
3	Old love letters	13	Multicolored prisms
4	Unhatched, monstrous eggs	14	Catgut
5	A snake made of human teeth	15	Pile of cinders
6	Empty bottles of perfume	16	Insect husks
7	Rusty razor blades	17	Shattered globe
8	A small casket	18	Empty hourglass
9	Soap cask	19	Drained wine bottles
10	Pipe cleaners	20	Misplaced keys on keyring

Which Literary Wizard Am I Ripping-Off for this NPC?

This table is useful for generating a wizardly foe for the player-characters, a sorcerous mentor for a magic-user, or any magic-using NPC you might need.

d20	Which Literary Wizard Am I Ripping-Off for this NPC?
01	A demon-spawned mage for whom time runs backwards; destined to have all of his carefully-laid plans foiled.
02	A minor goddess of magic with the propensity for transforming her foes into swine.
03	A wizardly duke who plans on renouncing magic because he now believes that it smacks too much of diabolism.
04	Albino sorcerer who has abandoned his doomed homeland to certain ruin; he is possessed by the demon-sword that both keeps him alive and kills all he loves.
05	Cruel, raven-haired wizard who is an arrogant master of alchemy; he is obsessed with a lost love who he would like to revive via necromancy.
06	Evil schemer who has sundered his own soul; his skin is pale and snake-like.
07	Evil witch who has control over an army of winged subhumans.
08	Fey temptress who plans to use magic to ensnare the attentions of a leader of men; she plans on mothering a child by him to establish her own magical dynasty.
09	Gossipy mage who trades in information; is rumored to have an odd number of eyes.
10	He claims to be a powerful wizard, but is instead little more than a stage magician.
11	Hooded, taciturn wizard who is of indeterminate gender; may be Baba Yaga.
12	Kindly wizard in gray robes who smokes a churchwarden pipe; he is in fact an otherworldly creature despite pretending to be a bit simple and rustic.
13	Patrician wizard with long white hair and beard; he seems to have his apprentice's best interests at heart, but in truth he is using him or her as a pawn against dark forces.
14	Picaresque wizard who cares more for carousing than study; loves prismatic spells.
15	Precocious, forehead-scarred child wizard; protected by the ghosts of his parents.
16	Secretive schemer who plans on bending a leader of men to his will so that he might rule as the power behind the throne.
17	Weak, black-robed wizard with strange eyes; he plans to become powerful enough to become a god.
18	White-haired mage who constantly brags about the number of powerful sorceresses that are in love with him; he is, of course, an absolute liar.
19	White-haired mage who seems like a senile bumbler, but is rumored to be quite powerful and purposeful; in fact, he is insane and should be locked-up.
20	Wizard-detective who really, really wants you to know how film noir he is.

Dark Secret Tables

To further a particular element of genre emulation, I've worked up a few tables of "dark secrets" that can plague the characters in Gothic Earth games. In Gothic fiction, protagonists and antagonists alike tend to have horrible, repressed truths lurking in their pasts that threaten to reveal themselves; the revelation is usually apocalyptic on a personal scale or at least exposes the character to danger. And that's exactly what you should want for characters in your Gothic Fantasy games: personal apocalypses and a constant exposure to danger.

To add to the Gothic atmosphere of my games I sometimes have each player roll once on the following tables to see what dark secret lurks in their character's past. These aren't tables that generate anything of mechanical heft; rather, they're designed to add something that can inconveniently arise in play. In general I advise not to bring any of these elements fully into play too quickly. Hint to a player that someone may have a little dirt on their character, but don't make it explicit. Use their paranoia to ratchet up the tension. These tables can also be used to generate the dark secret that lurks in an NPC's past.

Furthermore, I've added where in the literature these ideas came from, both so you can see how I use the influence of Gothic fiction in my games and in case you want to do some additional reading to find your own inspiration.

Dark Secret Tables

First, roll 1d6 to determine which of the following tables will generate your Dark Secret. Then, roll 1d10 on the appropriate table and record the results on a slip of paper you keep hidden from the other players.

Table I (1d6 roll of 1-2)

d10	Result
1	Fratricide/Matricide – You have killed one or both of your parents. If this secret is ever revealed, you can expect to be shunned by polite society. Also, there may be a vengeful brother, sister, or constabulary on your trail. Inspiration: Anonymous, “The Parricide Punished”; Shirley Jackson, <i>We Have Always Lived in the Castle</i>
2	Inhuman – Somewhere in your lineage is a bloodline not of human origin. You have an ancestor who may have sexually consorted with a demon, a vampire, or a deep one. You bear some visible (though concealable) sign of your inhuman heritage. If your secret is revealed you might be hunted down as a monster. Inspiration: Vernon Lee, “Dionea”; Arthur Machen, “The Great God Pan”
3	Plunderer – At some point in the past you stole an item or treasure of great worth. However, absconding with your ill-gotten gains proved difficult so you were forced to hide your prize. If your connection to the item's theft is discovered you can expect to be hunted by the law and quite possibly executed for your crime. Inspiration: William Godwin, <i>Caleb Williams</i>
4	Blasphemer – You once belonged to a strict faith, but some imp of the perverse goaded you into violating the tenets of your religion in a spectacular way. Perhaps you defiled a holy altar or defaced a rare sacred scripture. If your secret is revealed you might be hunted down by the faithful and burned as a heretic. Inspiration: Matthew Lewis, <i>The Monk</i> ; Nathaniel Hawthorne, <i>The Scarlet Letter</i>

5	Grave Defiler – At some point in the past you worked as a resurrectionist; you dug up and sold fresh corpses to medical schools for their anatomical lessons. If your secret is discovered you can expect the families connected to the bodies you procured to exact vigilante justice against you. Inspiration: Mary Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i>
6	Changeling – You are not human; the family that assumes you are of their blood had their infant child switched by the capricious fey for a changeling baby. You show the marks of your inhuman heritage, such as slightly pointed ears, red hair, and an aversion to cold iron. If your secret is discovered your own “family” will confront you and demand the return of their natural-born babe. Inspiration: Elizabeth Gaskell, “The Doom of the Griffiths”
7	Haunted – You murdered someone in the heat of passion; now their ghost haunts you still. Your secret is mostly safe, but those with psychic sensitivity or occult knowledge might be able to see the ghost that constantly pesters you. If they reveal your crime you will be hunted down by the law. Inspiration: Horace Walpole, <i>The Castle of Otranto</i> ; Clara Reeve, <i>The Old English Baron</i>
8	Debauched – You are addicted to sensual pleasure. In fact, you have led other, younger folk down the heady path of the hedonist. If your role in such degeneracy is discovered, the families of the people you have corrupted will seek you out and demand satisfaction. Inspiration: Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, <i>Venus in Furs</i> ; J.-K. Huysmans, <i>A Rebours</i>
9	Consorter with Demons – As a child you were taught the ways of summoning demons from their Hellish homes. While you have the ability to conjure forth devils through magical rituals, this power gives you no tangible benefits. However, if you are ever discovered to have this power it is likely that you will be burned at the stake as witch. Inspiration: M. R. James, “Casting the Runes”
10	Drug Fiend – You are a drug addict. Perhaps you favor the sweet oblivion provided by opium or perhaps you cannot resist drinking yourself into a stupor; in any case, the result is the same: you have lost your family's fortune to your vice and subsequently run away from them in shame. If your secret is ever revealed your family will confront you and demand recompense. Inspiration: Thomas De Quincey, <i>Confessions of an English Opium-Eater</i> ; Oscar Wilde, <i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i>

Table II (1d6 roll of 3-4)

1	Institutionalized – At one point in the past you had a complete mental breakdown. The reasons for your breakdown are known only to you, but if word of your mental instability should become common knowledge, no one will ever be able to trust you again. Inspiration: Charlotte Perkins Stetson, “The Yellow Wall-paper”
2	Shipwreck Survivor – You were the only survivor of a terrible shipwreck, and only you know that the wreck was caused by supernatural means. In fact, you struck an abominable deal with the cause of the ship's destruction that allowed you to survive. If your secret were to be revealed you would be reviled by all god-fearing folk and possibly pursued by the families of the people who perished aboard ship. Inspiration: Herman Melville, <i>Moby Dick</i> ; H. P. Lovecraft, “Dagon”
3	Voices in Your Head – Since childhood you have always heard voices in your head that urge you to do cruel, inhuman things. Sometimes you listen to the voices. If knowledge of the voices you hear were to become known, you would likely be locked away in an asylum for the incurably insane. Inspiration: Shirley Jackson, <i>The Haunting of Hill House</i> ; Henry James, <i>Turn of the Screw</i> ; Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Wieland</i>

4	Expedition Survivor – You were the sole survivor of an expedition into the wild, unmapped places of the earth. Unfortunately, circumstances during the expedition forced you to indulge in the most heinous of acts in order to survive: you cannibalized your fellow explorers. Sometimes you still hunger for the taste of human flesh. If your crime were to be exposed you would be shunned by all as a savage and hunted down by the families and friends of those you consumed. Inspiration: Kelly Link, “Survivor’s Ball, or, The Donner Party”
5	Silent Witness – You once witnessed a serial murderer in the midst of dispatching a young woman to an early grave, but were too cowardly to intervene or inform the authorities. Her screams still echo in your mind. If your secret were to be discovered you would certainly be confronted by the angry friends and family of the murdered girl. Inspiration: Clive Barker, “The Midnight Meat Train”
6	Scientific Meddler – You once considered yourself a scientist working to further man’s rational dominion, but your studies brought you down the path of meddling in areas of knowledge not fit for mankind. Perhaps you became obsessed with animating dead matter; perhaps you experimented with splicing animals together into unholy new forms. If your secret were discovered you would be disowned by the scientific community and denounced by the world as a usurper upon god’s domain. Worse yet, you are stalked by some aberrant creation that escaped your lab. Inspiration: Mary Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i> ; H. G. Wells, <i>The Island of Doctor Moreau</i>
7	Spy for the Inquisition – You were once a willing spy for the Inquisition, turning in anyone suspected of witchcraft and heresy. However, you also turned in a rival who you knew was innocent. You are haunted by the knowledge that they were tortured upon your word. Should word get out about your underhanded dealings you might find yourself in the clutches of the Inquisition. You might also be pursued by the person you falsely accused. Inspiration: Isaac Crookenden, “The Vindictive Monk or the Fatal Ring”; Edgar Allan Poe, “The Pit and the Pendulum”
8	Arcane Meddler – You once fancied yourself an occultist who would command the greatest of supernatural mysteries. However, you performed a ritual far too powerful for you to complete or control. You are now haunted by minor manifestations of infernal presences. If your secret should be discovered you would be burned at the stake as a sorcerer. Inspiration: Charles Maturin, <i>Melmoth the Wanderer</i> ; Clive Barker, “The Yattering and Jack”
9	Uncanny Double – Since childhood you have had a doppelganger—there is a person who looks exactly like you that sometimes assumes your identity to commit awful crimes. If you should ever be linked to the deeds of your strange double, you would risk paying the price for their misdeeds. Inspiration: Edgar Allan Poe, “William Wilson”; James Hogg, <i>The Confessions and Memoirs of a Justified Sinner</i> ; Robert Louis Stevenson, <i>The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i>
10	Catacombs Disturber – You were once party to an expedition that violated the sanctity of an ancient resting place for the dead. The catacombs that you explored (and looted, in the name of archeology) were cursed: now your nights are haunted by horrific dreams and your days by the creeping dread that something has followed you back from those far-away lands. If your secret ever became public you would be shunned as little more than a tomb robber. Inspiration: Bram Stoker, <i>The Jewel of Seven Stars</i> ; H. Rider Haggard, <i>She</i>

Table III (1d6 roll of 5-6)

1	Failed Exorcist – You once worked as an exorcist; however, you had no particular skill or ability to banish demonic presences. In fact, while most of your cases involved people who were mentally disturbed, your last involved a young woman who slew her family while possessed by a particularly vicious devil—you were powerless to stop her. If your secret is ever found out you will be hounded as a fraud and perhaps confronted by church officials. Inspiration: William Peter Blatty, <i>The Exorcist</i>
2	Gambling Debt – You are addicted to gambling and have racked-up an impressive debt in one of the lowest sort of gaming houses. Your debt is now so far past due that there is no hope of squaring it except through the most magnificent of sums; the criminals to whom you owe the debt have contracted assassins to kill you as an example to others. If your secret is exposed your life will be in grave danger and no one from the gambling world will associate with you. Inspiration: Emily Brontë, <i>Wuthering Heights</i>
3	Diseased – You are the inheritor of a terrible disease passed down through your family. The disease represents a great sin perpetrated by an ancestor that you are doomed to repeat; the disease has a few tell-tale signs and the fear of physical degeneration constantly sets your nerves on end. If your disease (or its familial cause) is discovered, you will be shunned by all in polite society and disreputable doctors may send their agents after you to retrieve a “specimen.” Inspiration: Edgar Allan Poe, “The Fall of the House of Usher”; Henrik Ibsen, <i>Ghosts</i> ; Robert Louis Stevenson, “Olalla”
4	Abandoner – The pressures of respectable family life were too much; you abandoned your spouse and children, leaving them to fend for themselves. If your secret is discovered you will be hunted down by detectives hired by your family to ascertain your whereabouts and bring you to justice. Inspiration: Ann Radcliffe, <i>The Italian</i> ; Charlotte Brontë, <i>Jane Eyre</i>
5	Fraudulent Spiritualist – You once worked as a spiritualist who could supposedly contact the spirits of the dearly departed—for a price. Of course, you were nothing but a fraud. If your secret is revealed you will be stalked by the grieving families that you once deceived. Inspiration: Clive Barker, “The Book of Blood”; Sarah Waters, <i>Affinity</i>
6	Blackmailer – You once blackmailed a prominent member of society. Unfortunately, they have retrieved whatever evidence you once held against them and now wish to exact a painful revenge against you. Should your secret come out you will have to fear being discovered by both the law and your former victim. Inspiration: Arthur Conan Doyle, “A Scandal in Bohemia”
7	Family Cult – You belong to a family that is deeply involved in a pagan or demonic cult. While you may or may not belong to the family faith, if your connection to this cult is discovered you will be hounded by the religious and perhaps condemned as a witch. Inspiration: H. P. Lovecraft, “The Dunwich Horror”
8	Sadist – You are addicted to inflicting pain on others. In fact, when you were once abusing a young servant you went too far and killed your unfortunate plaything. If your secret is discovered you will be called to answer for your crime by the law and perhaps pursued by the servant's friends and family. Inspiration: Marquis de Sade, <i>Justine</i> ; Alejandra Pizarnik, “The Bloody Countess”

9	Prostitute – In the past you have worked the streets and back alleys to earn your daily bread. If your secret is ever found out you will be shunned by polite society and you may be sought out by any prominent past clients who wish to make sure that you can never reveal your involvement with them. Inspiration: Alfred Hitchcock, <i>Marnie</i> ; George Bernard Shaw, <i>Mrs. Warren's Profession</i>
10	Accursed – You are the unfortunate inheritor of a family curse and the knowledge that you are the last of your family line. If your connection to your accursed family (or the reason why your family is accursed) is ever discovered you will run the risk of being shunned by all; furthermore, you must always be vigilant not to fulfill the terms of the familial doom or risk cutting your life short. Inspiration: Horace Walpole, <i>The Castle of Otranto</i> ; Elizabeth Gaskell, “The Doom of the Griffiths”; Nathaniel Hawthorne, <i>The House of the Seven Gables</i>

Karina von Gussle

Need a nefarious NPC? My immediate point of inspiration for this NPC was Arthur Machen's masterful Decadent horror novella *The Great God Pan*.

Karina von Gussle

As a girl, Karina von Gussle was tragically orphaned by a freak house fire. She was slated to be sent to an orphanage when Doctor Reynolds swooped in and adopted the girl. Karina grew to be a beautiful young woman, so no one was surprised when the Doctor made a bride of his lovely little charge.

Doctor Reynolds's area of research was a strange intersection of medical science and the occult. He believed that it was possible to operate on the brain to modify its structure and allow eldritch power to be channeled more effectively. What few realized is that when Reynolds took Karina as his wife, he also intended her to be the test subject for this arcane theories.

After the operation, Karina was a changed woman. She was transformed from a demure, meek girl into a voluptuously-minded woman who used her charms to bend men to her will. When asked about this abrupt change in her personality, Karina claimed that her husband had opened her mind—both literally and figuratively—to a powerful force that exists beyond the veil of reality. She refers to this being as Meligra, Sister of Twilight's Embrace.

Overcome with remorse for what he had done, Reynolds hanged himself from the rafters of his laboratory. Karina disappeared, but has since resurfaced in both urban locations and rural hamlets in Europe under a series of assumed names. She claims to be searching for a man whose mind is similarly open to the Sister of Twilight's Embrace. She believes that their union is necessary to open a gate between worlds that will allow Meligra to walk the earth.

Move: 120' (40') **AC:** 12 **HD:** 2 (10 Hit Points) **Attacks:** 1 (AB +1) **Dam:** 1d4 (dagger)
Mor: 7 **Special Abilities:** *Meligra's Will* – *Charm Person* (3x per day), *Confusion* (2x per day)

Instruments of Terror

Music can be a form of magic in the world; these enchanted music instruments are but a sampling of its legendary melodious wonders.

The Viola of Erich Zann – This ancient viola is said to have belonged to a master musician named Erich Zann. According to legend, Zann devoted his later years to studying how the power of music could be harnessed to keep otherworldly evil from entering the world. Zann's viola is believed to be imbued with his spirit; indeed, any music played on this instrument gains an unnerving, alien tone. Once per day a musician may frantically play the viola to conjure forth weird music unlike any that can be heard elsewhere. This music has the effect of a *Protection from Evil 10' Radius* spell. Furthermore, once per day the viola can be played in front of a portal to another dimension to seal it. However, portals sealed in this way may re-open in 2d8 weeks.

Kangling of Funereal Power – A kangling is a trumpet made from a human femur. Most kanglings are used in religious rites meant to pacify a deceased spirit in preparation for its entrance into the afterlife. However, when a kangling is made from the femur of an executed criminal and enchanted according to certain vile rituals it gains the power to summon forth the dead as an undead army. Once per day a Kangling of Funereal Power may be played in such a way as to have the effects of an *Animate Dead* spell.

The Devil's Own Golden Fiddle – Folklore states that this fiddle once belonged to a powerful devil who traveled the world procuring the souls of musicians. This devil would challenge a fiddler to a musical duel. If the devil won, he claimed the musician's soul—but if the musician won, they would be given this magical golden fiddle. Only one musician managed to beat this devil at his own game; once beaten, the devil disappeared and has yet to be heard from again. However, the stories attached to this fiddle state that the devil will someday return to challenge its current owner for possession of the golden prize. Once per day the musician playing this fiddle may use it to call forth the effects of a *Flame Strike* spell.

Drum of the Thunder Belly Tribe – This bass drum was constructed by a powerful shaman of a vanquished tribe. It is said to be made from the dried-and-stretched skins of the tribe's enemies. Indeed, when played at a certain rhythm the sound emitted by the drum recalls cries of anguish set to an infernal tattoo. Once per day the drum can be played to make all foes within range of hearing it take an immediate Saving Throw vs. Terror. The drum has been fitted with straps to allow for it to be played while the wearer is moving.

Flute of the Pied Piper – This wooden flute supposedly belonged to a legendary figure known as the Pied Piper. While now regarded as merely an allegorical figure from fairy tales, the Pied Piper was said to be a bard who offered to rid hamlets and villages of their vermin for a price; if he was refused payment after performing his duty, he would instead lead away the village's children—and they would never be seen again. This flute can be used to replicate the effects of the *Repel Vermin*, *Charm Animal*, and *Charm Person* spells, but the *Charm Person* effect only works on children.

Fiendish Cults of Gothic Earth

The Cult of Mater Pestilencia – the cult of Mater Pestilencia worships a female aspect of the devil Belphegor. In the guise of Mater Pestilencia, Belphegor is depicted as a thin, leprous woman whose open sores leak a frightful ichor. Among members of this fell cult it is considered a mark of devotion to Mater Pestilencia to cut one's body and allow the wound to fester until it reaches a gangrenous state. Worshipers of Mater Pestilencia believe that their faith in their demonic master will prevent the gangrene from poisoning their blood; those who die of their wounds are judged to have been creatures of little faith. Seemingly average folk have been known to join this cult for two primary reasons: firstly, they give their devotion to Mater Pestilencia in times of plague in hopes that they will be spared the sweep of contagion; secondly, those who wish to see their foes stricken with disease pray to Mater Pestilencia to visit their enemies with horrific wasting illnesses. Beings frequently summoned by this cult include mongrelmen, satyrs, otyughs, and tubercular shadows.

The Cult of the Red Devourer – the cult of the Red Devourer worships a corrupt aspect of the Hindu goddess Kali. In the guise of the Red Devourer, Kali is depicted as a bloated, eyeless face whose gaping jaws are festooned with a variety of jagged, blood-red teeth. To become a member of this cult a prospective devotee of the Red Devourer must cannibalize a person who already belongs to the cult; members of the cult believe that to hunt, kill, and eat a worshiper of the Red Devourer honors her by repeating a mythic battle in which she slew and consumed her own godly kin. Furthermore, members of this cult believe that those who eat sentient beings of their own species gain their power and knowledge. Though the requirement for membership in the Cult of the Red Devourer dissuades the squeamish and well-adjusted, in times of famine communities in which the cult is active have become hotbeds of murder and cannibalism as neighbors vie against neighbor to join, as it is believed that the Red Devourer protects the faithful from starvation. Beings frequently summoned by this cult include manscorpions, driders, and purple worms.

The Thirteenth Coven – the Thirteenth Coven worships a feminine aspect of the devil Asmodeus known as the Brood Mother. In the guise of the Brood Mother, Asmodeus is depicted as a perpetually-pregnant and swollen-bellied woman whose grin promises lascivious pleasure. This aspect is also sometimes known as the Mother of Monsters, for she represents the spawning of inhuman beasts and frightful slithering horrors. Indeed, only women still capable of bearing children are admitted to this cult. Once they are part of the Thirteenth Coven, its members strive to summon demons from hell to mate with willingly; each woman who belongs to the Thirteenth Coven longs to be impregnated with a devil-spawn, for such is looked upon as a boon and a blessing from their demonic patron. Beings frequently summoned by this cult include incubuses and all manner of male demons or devils.

The Cult of Nephren-Ka – the cult of Nephren-Ka worships a servitor of Nyarlathotep. To the members of this cult, Nephren-Ka is the Demon Lord of Vampires. As such, he is depicted as a colossally tall and impossibly pale man of royal visage; his full mustache droops over what could only be called an aristocratic lip. Members of this cult strive to become vampires, as they feel that vampires represent the triumph of undeath over the pathetic state of weak mortal flesh. All members of the cult of Nephren-Ka act submissively and obediently to all vampires they meet—they often prostrate themselves before their un-living masters in hopes of being rewarded with the vampire's eternal kiss. Indeed, many vampires exploit members of this cult and use them to further their own schemes. While this cult seldom summons monsters to do its bidding, it does practice ritualized seances to bring forth ghosts that can grant them knowledge of where ancient vampires slumber.

The Cult of Bleeding Zarott – the Cult of Bleeding Zarott worships a bestial aspect of Lucifer. Zarott appears to his followers in dream-visions as a bat of monstrous size whose eyes burn with a sickly green luminescence. As part of their initiation to this cult, devotees are expected to undergo voluntary crucifixion. Indeed, crucifixion is considered a holy rite that may be endured often by the faithful; it is believed by worshipers of Zarott that it strengthens the mind and will, and that Zarott sends messages and portents to those who affix themselves to the profaned crux simplex. Members of this cult strive for nothing less than the dissolution of civilization. They infiltrate society at all levels in hopes of disrupting its mores and encouraging humanity to return to the brutal state of nature. A well-positioned cult member who serves in Parliament might, for example, help craft policies that will inspire unrest and revolt, while a cult member who is merely a farmer might sabotage the local granary to sow discord and anarchy. Beings frequently summoned by this cult include giant bats and wyverns.

The Cult of the Black Liturgy – the Cult of the Black Liturgy worships an aspect of Leviathan they refer to as She Who Scuttles Below. She Who Scuttles Below is depicted as a spider of prodigious size and possessing of three female faces: one a maiden, one a mother, and the last a crone. As part of their ceremonies, members of this cult become drunk and debauched on vast quantities of wine, into which miniscule amounts of poison have been added. In this way, initiates of this cult work to make themselves immune to most common toxins. The goal of this cult is alchemical in nature; they strive to discover a magical poison that transforms the imbiber into a hideous, twisted amalgamation of spider and human. Their mission is literally to remake the human populace in She Who Scuttles Below's image. Beings frequently summoned by this cult include ettercaps and various spider-like fey creatures. Furthermore, this cult counts upon the assistance of dark elves and goblins.

The Cult of the Sightless Ones – the Cult of the Sightless Ones is an ancient and secretive sect that worships Satan. As worshiped by this cult, Satan is depicted as a robed being with the head of a mantis. To gain entry into this cult each prospective member must undergo an arduous and painful ritual that leaves them blinded; nevertheless, the mystical component of the ritual grants them the ability to sense the world around them with near-perfect accuracy. The mission of this cult is to spread destruction, particularly destruction of the natural world, as this is seen as the righteous veneration of Satan—who wishes to see the world of the living crumble into oblivion. Acts that would be considered holy to this cult include summoning a plague of locusts to devour a community's crops, conjuring forth an earthquake to shatter the walls of a city, etc. Rumor has it that the ultimate goal of the Sightless Ones is to magically destroy the sun so that all the people of the world might be plunged into eternal darkness—thus destroying the cycle of death and rebirth to usher in pure morbidity. Beings frequently summoned by this cult include mantis-men and wights.

13 Flavors of Fear: Conventions and Modes for Gothic Fantasy Adventures

The Gothic is a migratory, mutational mode that incorporates a myriad of different conventions and approaches that are perfectly-suited for fantasy adventures. In this section I will detail thirteen different “Gothic modes” that can be used as the basis of your own Gothic Fantasy adventures.

1. The Cold Northern Wind

“In the foggy embraces of maternal woods, where wolves and red riding hoods are lost and found, where strange becomings take place, at night, you can here howls, growls, and grunts. Inarticulate words create gothic soundscapes of abject horror and ritualistic transgression.”

– Aspasia Stephanou, “Playing Wolves and Red Riding Hoods in Black Metal”

George R. R. Martin's *A Game of Thrones* isn't a Gothic tale, but the sections of the novel set at the Wall—an enormous barrier of ice that separates the Seven Kingdoms from the savage, unknown North—show all the signs of being rooted in the tradition. The Wall is patrolled by the rangers of the Night's Watch. Theirs is a grim duty: they withstand the howling, bitter winds of the icy North, struggle against barbarian raiders and wild beasts, and act as wardens against an evil race of mysterious beings known only as the Others. Life at the Wall is a mundane grind of military discipline and preparations for the coming winter, but behind the banal trials and tribulations of the everyday lurks something ominous and supernatural that threatens to break through. This particular constellation of conventions is a specific kind of Weird tale; it is a tale of bleakness, of the mad chaos of natural sublimity and natural savagery, of roaring wind and deadly frost, and of bloody red against a field of snowy white. It is a tale of the Cold Northern Wind.

The Setting: An isolated northern outpost at the border between the civilized world and the unknowable wilderness. The outpost can be a garrison, a keep and its surrounding fiefdom, a trade town, or a rough, ramshackle refuge for wanted criminals. The outpost is encircled by natural vistas that are both beautiful and threatening: dense, primordial forests and rugged, towering mountain ranges. Every journey from the outpost has the potential for danger; the wild beasts who live in the forests and mountains are ferocious and have a taste for human flesh. Beyond the outpost, the northlands become a blighted tundra that is both unmapped and home to a grave, unknown menace.

The Themes: *The natural world is harsh and unforgiving*—use the setting itself as an adversary against the characters. Emphasize the biting winds and the way the chilling frost can be felt in the characters' bones. Steal all warmth and comfort from them.

Civilization versus the Wild—make the outpost a place that the characters have a vested interest in defending. Make it clear that the outpost is civilization's first and best line of defense against something monstrous that could spell doom for all humanity. Imperil their community; make them scramble to protect the life they know.

Grim fatalism—death is inevitable in the Weird north; it is something to be faced with a stoic mien and a hardened heart. Put the characters in the position of making tough, if not impossible choices. Final stands against the darkness are a must.

The Foes: *The Frozen Dead*—those who succumb to frostbite in the wilderness rise again as tireless enemies of mankind. Their beards covered in hoar and the axes rimed with frost, they will ceaselessly pursue the living through forest and mountain.

Giants—not the dunderheaded giants usually found in fantasy, these are the vicious giants of northern legend. They are more than mortal, they are the corrupted remnants of once-godlike nature spirits who wish to cleanse the land itself from the taint of man's civilizing influence.

Wolves—in all their forms: dire wolves, werewolves, wolves who speak of blood in the voices of men, wolves who prowl the streets during the nightside eclipse. Never a single wolf, always an uncountable multitude of wolves, a wolfing, an endless pack of tooth and claw.

Wendigo—sometimes the howling of the winter wind is not just the howling of the winter wind, sometimes it is the ominous call of the wendigo. The wendigo has a voice like the bottomless depths, can lift a man from the earth with an unseen hand, burn him with cold, and drive him mad by showing him things no mortal was meant to see.

The Soundtrack: The Cold Northern Wind requires a soundtrack that is both pummeling and funereal. *Earth, Angels of Darkness, Demons of Light (I and II)*.

Literary and Cinematic Inspirations: Antonia Bird's *Ravenous*, Algernon Blackwood's "The Wendigo," John Carpenter's *The Thing*, Angela Carter's "The Company of Wolves," August Derleth's "Ithaqua," Christophe Gans's *Brotherhood of the Wolf*, John Linqvist's *Let the Right One In*, Steve Niles's *30 Days of Night*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (particularly the frame narrative), Snorri Sturlson's *Prose Edda*.

Gaming Inspirations: *Death Frost Doom* and *Weird New World* (for Lamentations of the Flame Princess), *Hellfrost* (for Savage Worlds), *Keep on the Borderlands* (for D&D).

Miscellaneous Inspirations: Alferd Packer and cannibalism, blood eagle, the Dyatlov Pass Incident, the Yeti.

2. Dark Medieval Times

“Nay, said Balin, for this sword will I keep, but it be taken from me with force. Well, said the damosel, ye are not wise to keep the sword from me, for ye shall slay with the sword the best friend that ye have, and the man that ye most love in the world, and the sword shall be your destruction. I shall take the adventure, said Balin, that God will ordain me, but the sword ye shall not have at this time, by the faith of my body.”

– Thomas Mallory, *Le Mort d'Arthur*

Many gamers associate fantasy with the Middle Ages, but they couldn't be further off the mark — historically speaking. The typical fantasy kingdom is place devoid of grit; there might be a class division between peasant and lord, but it doesn't tend to amount to much: peasant boys leave home and return as knights in service to their liege, the common people toil happily under the protection of kindly kings, and monsters are a known quantity instead of mysterious, folkloric beings who defy rational understanding. All of that might be the stuff of typical fantasy, but it certainly isn't fit for a Weird campaign. In this case, the solution isn't to introduce more layers of the fantastic; rather, a fantasy campaign has much to gain in darkness, blood, and strangeness if it incorporates real (or even faux) medievalisms into the fabric of its setting.

In the second introduction to his faux-medieval Gothic novel *The Castle of Otranto*, Horace Walpole claims that the purpose of his narrative was to explore how ordinary characters in a medieval setting would react to the sudden introduction of the supernatural. That is the essence of Dark Medieval Times; crush the characters with the mundanity of their existence, then plunge them headlong into the Gothic.

The Setting: A petty fiefdom far from the centers of power. The fiefdom is regulated by a steward, sheriff, or minor nobleman who has sworn fealty to the king. Most of the fiefdom is farmland tended by peasants who live hand-to-mouth; their lot in life is one of backbreaking labor, squalid conditions, and early death, punctuated only by the brief joys of festival days. The steward's lot is nothing to envy, but to the peasants it seems luxurious; of course, the steward's household only mixes with the peasantry when custom demands it. There is a small church in town where a minor curate tends to the spiritual discipline of the community. One end of the fief is bordered by a deep, nearly-impenetrable forest; some peasants, fed up with their toil, have fled their farms to take up banditry in the woods. The other end of the fief is connected to the trade road, but few come or go—the fiefdom exists in isolation.

The Themes: *Death is everywhere*—life is brutal and short. Adjust in-game healing times and the availability of healing magic to make it explicitly apparent how dangerous the world is. Play up the high mortality rate; simple accidents will likely lead to fatal infections, the plague is feared by all, and combat results in mangled bodies and shattered skulls.

Everyone is assigned a place by birth—emphasize the rigid social stratification of the setting. You're born a peasant and you die a peasant, no exceptions. Everyone in the setting knows their place and knows who is their social better.

The world beyond the fief is strange and mysterious—the vast majority of the fiefdom's residents will never leave the place where they were born. Keep the action of your campaign isolated to the fief; even the characters should feel like they have no hope of ever seeing the greater world, even if they hear of marvelous things in lands they will never know.

The Foes: *The Fair Folk*—there are no silly sprites or cavorting leprechauns here. Instead, the Fair Folk are unknowable and alien; their motives are utterly unguessable. They have the power to beguile, ensnare, and lead astray. They have no souls and may be the remnants of the Old Gods. Some say they shoot men down in the fields with unseen arrows just for sport.

The Fell Pilgrims—wanderers and penitents who are not what they seem. They arrive hooded and cloaked, tolling bells, and chanting the psalms, but what are they really after? Do they bring disease or are they harbingers of the End Times?

The Usurped Specter—the land on which the fief stands has known many masters. Perhaps the current steward gained the fief by wresting it from the rightful owner; the true lord of the land may have died mad and imprisoned. His shade now walks the earth seeking vengeance for his betrayal.

The Great Worm—a horrible beast allied with the Devil is said to sleep beneath the standing stones within the woods to the east of the fiefdom. All manner of malevolence is ascribed to the slumbering monster: when the crops fail, it is surely the work of the Worm; when a woman's child dies in infancy, it is surely the work of the Worm; when a man is possessed by demons, it is surely the work of the Worm.

The Soundtrack: Dark Medieval Times requires a soundtrack that is medieval-esque, without sounding like a Ren Faire. *Dead Can Dance*, *Aion* and *Within the Realm of a Dying Sun*—by turns mystical and haunting. *Unto Ashes*, *Moon Oppose Moon* and *Saturn Return*—witchy medievalism that is dark and otherworldly.

Literary and Cinematic Inspirations: The anonymous *Beowulf*, the anonymous “Dream of the Rood,” the anonymous *Gawain and the Green Knight*, Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal*, Richard Carpenter's *Robin of Sherwood*, Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*, the lais of Marie de France, Thomas Malory's *Le Mort d'Arthur*, Christopher Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, Leslie Megahey's *The Advocate*, William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, Christopher Smith's *Black Death*, Clark Ashton Smith's *Averoigne* stories, Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*.

Gaming Inspirations: *Ars Magica*, *Conspiracy of Shadows*, *Cthulhu Dark Ages* (for Call of Cthulhu), *Harn*, *Middle Ages* and *Robin Hood* (for GURPS), *Pendragon*, Kenneth Hite's “Travelin' Man: Sir John Mandeville,” “Stalking the Wild Manticore,” “There's More to Faeries Than Their Glamour,” “Into the Woods with Robin Hood,” and “The Maiden and the Monster: Joan of Arc and Gilles de Rais” (Suppressed Transmissions).

Miscellaneous Inspirations: Arthurian myth, the Black Death, the dancing sickness and St. Vitus's Dance, Frances and Joseph Gies's *Life in a Medieval Town*, Gilles de Rais, the Grail mythos, Hildegard von Bingen, illuminated manuscripts and grimoires, the Knights Templar, Joan of Arc, leprosy, Marjorie Rowling's *Life in Medieval Times*, medieval alchemy, medieval heresies and demonology, Robin Hood.

3. Southern Gothic

“She remembered how it was here that she had seen a side of her mother that had frightened her, a scary, frenzied, secret self that normally hid behind soft bleached aprons and stoic silence. And it wasn’t just her momma who changed. The services would transform familiar, ordinary people, people she saw every day, into creatures as fascinating and horrifying as the beautifully patterned scales of the serpents they caressed.”

– Linda Chandler Munson, *Moonblind*

War leaves lingering scars on both bodies and minds. The conventions of the Southern Gothic use those scars to draw out the deeper tensions that exist in an antebellum society that has grown fallow after a great war. The Southern Gothic depicts the world in grotesque terms; physical deformities and exaggerated bodily characteristics always sympathetically correspond to mental, emotional, and psychological aberrations: the big-nosed woman in the house next door is invariably a gossip and a busybody, the lame-legged preacher possesses a soul crippled by guilt, and the twisted old man who presides over the town council is gripped by equally twisted desires.

Of course, not every scar is apparent on the surface. In the Southern Gothic, things generally look peaceful, placid, and genteel, but dig a little deeper and you find a culture whose heart beats to a sickening rhythm. There is always a sharp divide between a town's old, landed aristocracy and those who work with their hands for a living. Though the days of the plantation were over after the war, the social chasm between the haves and the have-nots is a simmering cauldron of resentments apt to spill over into outright violence. The tipping point is likely to be the inherent hypocrisy of the town's “moral” guardians; whether family patrician, pious man of God, or respectable debutante, the town's upstanding citizens all harbor dark secrets.

The Setting: A cheerily-named town of white-washed fences, grand plantation houses, and rough habitations on the wrong side of the tracks. There is a town meeting hall where the various old families endlessly maneuver for pride of place and political power. There is a well-attended church where a preacher delivers hellfire and brimstone sermons to his ever-sinning congregation. (They may even handle poisonous snakes and speak in tongues to demonstrate their religious fervor.) There is a bawdy tavern that everyone knows about, but no one ever mentions at the outskirts of town. It's said that the drinks, women, and music there are all fast, fiery, and loose.

The Themes: *Evil wears the mask of propriety*—the town is rotting from the inside out. There is no real outside threat to the town's existence; rather, it is the evil that men hold in their hearts that endangers the good people of the town. This danger hides itself behind a facade of cultured manners and Southern charm, making it insidious and difficult to detect.

Class warfare—the town is home to barely-repressed social resentments. The poor and the rich hate each other instinctively, the old money has a vested interest in keeping the middle and working classes from gaining too large a share of cultural capital, the disenfranchised minority is kept at the menial, abject fringes of society. If your group has the stomach for it, you might even work racial tensions into this heady brew of contention.

The grotesque conflates revulsion with empathy—although the grotesque characters of the Southern Gothic tradition are engineered to illicit disgust, their very human fallibility also marks a point where they evoke our sympathies. For every horrible secret that is revealed about a society matron's past, we should also learn a fact that puts his actions into perspective. For every revolting detail that comes out about the secret life led by the pastor's son, there should also be some note of sympathy. Though their actions can never be forgiven, there must be something about them that makes us wonder if we would have done any differently given the momentous choices they had at hand.

The Foes: The antagonists in the Southern Gothic are rarely explicitly supernatural or monstrous; instead, they illustrate that man is the worst monster of all.

The Town Father—he brings wealth and stability to the town, but what secret does he guard about his family's past? What accursed deals has he struck to insure the town's prosperity?

The Preacher—a traveling man of the cloth who has set up a tent in the town's poorest district. He claims that he wants to save the bodies and souls of the needy, but what if he were indoctrinating the indignant as his own personal army?

The Belle—she's the beautiful young woman that all the unmarried men come to court. She's the picture of proper behavior, grace, and unblemished reputation...until the sun sets. Perhaps she might be found down by the river, introducing her suitors to strange, unwholesome rites.

The Soundtrack: The Southern Gothic requires a soundtrack that mixes gentility with gritty desperation. *Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, Papa Won't Leave You, Henry and Murder Ballads*—filthy, murderous, outlaw music. *Various Artists, People Take Warning!*—authentic recordings of Americana songs about death, catastrophe, and disaster rescued from the scrap heap of history. *Marissa Nadler, Ballads of Living and Dying*—the sweetest of voices, cutting right to the bone. *The Scarring Party, Losing Teeth*—uncanny and nasty, like a hex lurking at the bottom of a dry well.

Literary and Cinematic Inspirations: Poppy Z. Brite's *Lost Souls*, Nick Cave's *And the Ass Saw the Angel*, William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying, The Sound and the Fury*, and “A Rose for Emily,” Daniel Knauf's *Carnivale*, Charles Laughton's *Night of the Hunter*, Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*, Linda Chandler Munson's *Moonblind*, Flannery O'Connor's *A Good Man is Hard to Find* and *Wise Blood*, Marlene van Niekerk's *Triomf*, Eudora Welty's “Clytie,” Tennessee Williams's *Suddenly, Last Summer*.

Gaming Inspirations: *Hangman's Noose* (for D&D).

Miscellaneous Inspirations: Jim Crow laws, Pentecostalism, Tent revivals.

4. Behind the Facade of the Seaside Town

“During the winter of 1627-28 officials of the Federal government made a strange and secret investigation of certain conditions in the ancient Massachusetts seaport of Innsmouth. The public first learned of it in February, when a vast series of raids and arrests occurred, followed by the deliberate burning and dynamiting—under suitable precautions—of an enormous number of crumbling, worm-eaten, and supposedly empty houses along the abandoned waterfront.”

– H. P. Lovecraft, *“The Shadow Over Innsmouth”*

There will come a time in your campaign when the player characters will be tired of roughing it through the dangerous wilderness and weary of slumming through urban decay. What better time for a trip to a quaint, scenic seaside town for a little rest and relaxation? Of course, what at first appears to be a relaxing interlude between ventures into the unknown simply must turn out to be the characters' worst nightmare. Behind the facade of the seaside town lurks something ancient and sinister; the town's gleaming white cottages, picturesque wharf, and overly-friendly inhabitants masks a corruption that resides within the very lifeblood of the community.

The Setting: A small, but charming, seaside town. The town itself is mostly comprised of quaint cottages, fishing boats moored at the dock, a bustling cannery, and a series of attractive little shops along the high street. However, there are some areas of the town that most people don't know about. There are secret tunnels that lead from the caves near the beach to the crypts of the ancient burial grounds; these tunnels were formerly used by smugglers bringing their wares in under the cover of night, but they now serve to convey a far more disturbing traffic in human beings. There is a surprisingly well-stocked library that counts a number of powerful eldritch tomes among its shelves. There is an artist's colony in the town that produces strange, disquieting paintings. There is a castle not more than a day's journey from the town that is home to a mad inventor; will the inventor prove to be friend or foe? There are twin lighthouses on an island off the coast. What might the lighthouse keepers know about the doings in town?

The Themes: *Outsiders are different from Family*—while the people who reside in the town will be warm and welcoming at first, it should quickly become apparent that they keep outsiders at arm's length. Characters will catch groups of townspeople eying them with suspicion before going about their business; there will be parts of town—perhaps the local temple—where they are barred entry.

Corruption is blood-deep—whatever is wrong in the seaside town is connected to the lineage of the town's inhabitants. Are they descended from settlers who bear an ancestral curse? Are they the product of centuries of interbreeding between man and something horrific from the depths of the sea? Are they transplants from the Old World who have brought a blood malady—perhaps a blood-thirst—from the forsaken places of a forgotten country?

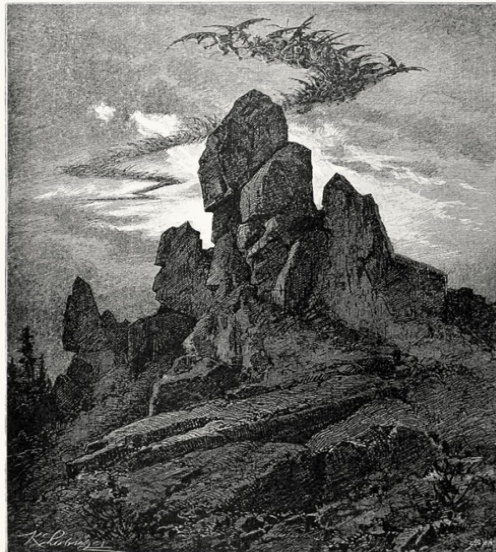
The sea demands sacrifice—the people of the seaside town depend on the ocean for their survival. Without a plentiful catch of fish, the town would dry up and blow away. To what lengths would the town's populace go to insure that the sea continues to provide for their needs?

The Foes: *The Townspeople*—sure, they're all smiles when the characters first encounter them, but then the characters will start noticing that there is something not quite right about them. Perhaps it's the wide-set eyes, the disappearing chins, or the abrupt slope of the forehead, but the more time the characters spend in the town the more noticeable it becomes that the townspeople are less (or more) than human.

The Beasts of the Sea—a trip out to sea is dangerous for anyone who doesn't belong to the Family of the seaside town. Sea serpents, giant squid, or other primordial beasts might rise from the depths to prevent the escape of visitors to the town.

Deep Ones—the people of the town have an ongoing, illicit trade in the flesh of outsiders. They bring captives through the tunnels and down to the beach, where they are met by inhuman, amphibious men from the ocean.

The Dark Gods of the Waves—the Deep Ones are the servants of something indescribably horrible and otherworldly that sleeps in a sunken kingdom off the coast. While these “gods” slumber, they dream—and their dreams impart omens and maledictions to those who sleep within the town's borders.



The Soundtrack: The soundtrack for Behind the Facade of the Seaside Town recalls the desperation and blood-hunger of old sea shanties. *Reverend Glasseye and His Wooden Legs*, *Black River Falls*—murder, madness, and despair in a New England mood. *The Tiger Lillies*, *The Sea*—down-and-out at the dockside with the criminal castrati cabaret.

Literary and Cinematic Inspirations: Clive Barker's *Galilee* and “The Madonna,” Dan Curtis's *Dark Shadows*, Sebastian Gutierrez's *She Creature*, H. P. Lovecraft's “The Shadows Over Innsmouth,” “The Call of Cthulhu,” “Dagon,” “Pickman's Model,” and “The Dunwich Horror,” Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*.

Gaming Inspirations: *Kingsport* and *Arkham Now* (for Call of Cthulhu), *Freeport*, *Shrine of the Kuo-Toa* (for D&D).

Miscellaneous Inspirations: The Bloop, David Cordingly's *Under the Black Flag*, Hammond Castle, the Loch Ness Monster, J. P. O'Neill's *The Great New England Sea Serpent*, the Salem Witch Trials, the Vermont Eugenics Survey.

5. Pilgrims in a Strange Land

“More than two thousand raging savages broke from the forest at the signal, and threw themselves across the fatal plain with instinctive alacrity. We shall not dwell on the revolting horrors that succeeded.—Death was every where, and in his most terrific and disgusting aspects. Resistance only served to inflame the murderers, who inflicted their furious blows long after their victims were beyond the power of resentment. The flow of blood might be likened to the outbreaking of a torrent; and as the natives became heated and maddened by the sight, many among them even kneeled to the earth, and drank freely, exultingly, hellishly, of the crimson tide.”

— James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans*

This flavor of Gothic Fantasy assumes that the characters belong to a political or religious minority that was persecuted in their native land. To escape oppression their community has traveled across the sea to establish a colony where they can practice their beliefs in freedom. Although they may have set off with the idea of establishing a utopia or a shining city on a hill, these pilgrims in a strange land will find their very survival imperiled by forces both within and without. Upon their arrival on foreign soil the colonists discovered that the land is already inhabited by savages that resent the intrusion and will wage bloody war to drive the newcomers from their rightful territory. Worse yet, what if the colonists have brought something dark with them—some horror they harbor within their midst—to the new world?

The Setting: A fortified colony on the shores of a strange land. The heart of the colony is its only church; the church is the finest building in all the colony and acts as the last place of refuge in times of strife. The colony itself is a flickering light of civilization carved out of the vast, dark wilderness. The surrounding forest teems with savages, strange creatures, and unholy temptations. Those who spend too much time in the woods are liable to be thought tainted by the bestial powers that call it home; in the minds of the colonists, the forest's influence is something to be resisted and conquered. The world beyond the forest is a complete mystery to the colonists—they possess no maps of knowledge of the new world beyond the borders of the colony itself.

The Themes: *Discipline is survival*—the only way to persevere against the savagery of the new world is to remain stoic and disciplined in the face of chaos. Rigid adherence to law and order requires that the colonists forge their souls from cold iron to weather the misfortunes of this strange land.

The beacon of civilization is surrounded by barbarism—the colony's survival is a fragile thing. Natural dangers, bloodthirsty braves, and supernatural threats encircle the colony and any venture into the forest is a likely suicide mission. While the subjugation of the wilderness will necessarily entail some loss of life, the greatest threat is that the colonists will abandon their civilized ways and fight savagery with savagery.

The devil cannot be outrun—whatever persecution the colonists have fled from will catch up with them eventually. There is always a viper in wait, and the most damning sins are carried by pious hearts.

The Foes: *Savages*—the natives of this strange land are terrifying Others bereft of the moral outlook that civilization brings. They are an incomprehensible people who love battle, spare none from the ax, indulge in cannibalism and wild lusts, and howl their prayers to primordial demons. (No, this use of “savages” is not particularly politically-correct, but it certainly is representative of the genre.)

The Beasts Who Walk as Men—even the local savages are frightened of the beings whose bodies incorporate the worst impulses of man and beast. These skinchangers are protean evils who fights with tooth, claw, and forged weapons, but their real power is in their ability to steal the face and form of another to infiltrate the colony.

The Lost Colonists—of course, the current crop of colonists were not the first stranger to attempt to establish themselves on this foreign country. The previous colonists disappeared without a trace. Will they return as the undead, as new-born barbarians who have “gone native” or as empty vessel filled with the monstrous souls of ancient evils?

The Devil in the Woods—despite their self-exile to the colony, the demonic force behind the colonists' persecution has followed them to the new world. Does it walk among them in a familiar guise? Any colonist who spends too much time in the woods—perhaps rallying the savages to a united warband or raising the bodies of the lost colonists—is a potential servant of the devil himself.

The Soundtrack: Pilgrims in a Strange Land requires a soundtrack that is folksy, yet puritanical. *16 Horsepower*, *Sackcloth 'n' Ashes* and *Folklore*—foreboding Americana with a touch of hellfire and brimstone. *Munly & the Lee Lewis Harlots, s/t*—Gothic Americana perfect for chaotic forays against the savage tide. *Rasputina*, *Frustration Plantation* and *Oh, Perilous World*—both are schizophrenic takes on alternate American history. *Zoe Keating*, *Into the Woods*—experimental, ambient cello loops that speak to the mystery and terrifying sublime of the forest.

Literary and Cinematic Influences: Aphra Behn's *Ooronoko*, Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland*, James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*, Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, *The House of the Seven Gables* and “Young Goodman Brown,” Robert E. Howard's *Solomon Kane* stories, Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, Isaac Mitchell's *The Asylum*, William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

Gaming Inspirations: *Colonial Gothic*, “Croatoan or Bust: Finding the Lost Colony” (from Kenneth Hite's *Suppressed Transmissions*), *Solomon Kane* (for *Savage Worlds*), *Warhammer Fantasy Role-Play*'s beastmen and dark elves.

Miscellaneous Inspirations: Bigfoot, Cotton Mather, Deer Woman, Indian captivity narratives, Molly Pitcher and the Marblehead magician, the Salem Witch Trials, the Roanoke Colony, Sir Walter Raleigh, Stick Indians.

6. The Urban Gothic

“This latter is one of the principle thoroughfares of the city, and had been very much crowded during the whole day. But, as the darkness came on, the throng momentarily increased; and, by the time the lamps were well lighted, two dense and continuous tides of population were rushing past the door.”

– Edgar Allan Poe, “The Man of the Crowd”

Man is most alone when he is surrounded by the teeming masses of mankind. Typical urban adventures tend to be described with the adjectives “gritty,” “dark,” and “sprawling”; on their own, these adjectives can make for an exciting adventure, but with a little work we can tip each over fully into the realm of the Gothic.

The Setting: A massive city crowded with businesses, homes, brothels, seats of governance, drug dens, dockyards, open markets, slums, and warehouses. Bring out the grit by making a sharp delineation between the law and order that rules a city by day and the criminal element that controls it by night. Walking the cityscape during the day should pose no real danger—until you're ready to turn the tables on the players, of course—but nightfall should bring with it double-dealings, random gang violence, and an almost carnivalesque level of lawlessness.

Emphasize the city's darkness by drawing on the convention of another “dark” genre that is centered on the urban experience: film noir. The basic film noir set up is perfect for gaming: someone has a problem and is willing to pay the characters to solve it, someone needs something investigated and is willing to pay the characters to snoop around on their behalf, someone needs a mysterious package delivered—no questions asked—and is willing to pay the characters to make sure it gets done. Besides the basic set up, there is much to borrow from film noir; amp up the shadows, double-dealings, and moral ambiguity at every turn. Not only is the city a sprawling mass of labyrinthine streets, back alleys, and plazas, it's also essentially unknowable; no matter how long you spend in the city it will always have new areas to explore and new ways to horrify.

The Themes: *Alienation is all*—the city is far too large for anyone to feel connected to their fellow man. Worse yet because the city is a place of back-alley deals and rampant crime, no one feels like they can trust anyone else. Play up the feeling of urban paranoia by limiting the characters' contacts, having the other denizens of the city eye them with suspicion and hostility, and by showing the casual brutality that comes with urban life.

The city is a place of wonders—while day to day life in the city is a struggle for survival, the metropolis is a place that seems to collect life's wonderments. Most markets and bazaars will be selling base goods, but tucked away at a small stall might be a beautiful (but accursed) puzzlebox that brings both woe and weal. A dusty bookshop might have a notorious grimoire among its offerings. What if its well-known streets began to warp and rearrange themselves according to some occult pattern?

Life is cheap—a knife in the back comes when you expect it and when you least expect it. Make the city a dangerous place to be and design your adventures there to draw the character's down its worst alleys and most violent neighborhoods. Never hesitate to show them what happens to the unwary.

The Foes: *The Rivals*—if the adventurers are the usual suspects—that is, a group of ne'er-do-wells out for gold—one way to challenge them in a city environment is to establish a similar group of swords-for-hire who compete with them for gainful employ. Make their rival group just as competent, if not more heartless. Skew the rivals toward the Gothic by giving them a strange benefactor who possess arcane powers or a supernatural lineage. Perhaps the rivals are even doppelgangers; anonymity is both a blessing and a curse in a city environment. Make identity-theft part of a vast conspiracy that the characters unravel one thread at a time.

Sewer-dwellers—what happens on the streets is bad enough, but why not make the characters plunge into the abject by having them investigate what happens beneath the city streets? Confuse and confound the players about the nature of the menace; you're spoiled for choice when it comes to the final reveal: beastmen, sentient shambling mounds, skaven, a cult sworn to the service of a plague demon, etc.

The Serial Killer—something is stalking the streets of the city with murderous intent by night, why not have it come after the characters or someone the characters care about? Perhaps the killer plays a deadly game of cat-and-mouse with the players by sending them clues hidden in ciphers within blood-stained notes. The killer, of course, always manages to slip away into the fog and shadows before being apprehended; what are the killer's motives and is there a supernatural element to its uncanny ability to evade detection?

The Soundtrack: *Sxip Shirey*, *Sonic New York*—chaotic bursts of song that replicate the mad tumble through city streets. *World/Inferno Friendship Society*, *Addicted to Bad Ideas*—an anarchistic album with a Weimar Berlin feel; Peter Lorre references abound.

Literary and Cinematic Inspirations: Honore de Balzac's *Pere Goriot*, Clive Barker's "The Forbidden" and "Midnight Meat Train," Jules Dassin's *Night and the City*, Charles Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend*, Howard Hawks's *The Big Sleep*, John Huston's *The Asphalt Jungle*, J.-K. Huysmans's *La-Bas*, Fritz Lang's *M*, Fritz Leiber's *Fafhrd and Gray Mouser* stories, Thomas Ligotti's short fiction, H. P. Lovecraft's "The Horror at Red Hook," Richard Marsh's *The Beetle*, George du Maurier's *Trilby*, China Mieville's *Perdido Street Station*, Edgar Allan Poe's "The Man of the Crowd," Roman Polanski's *Chinatown*, Alex Proyas's *Dark City*, Georges Rodenbach's *Bruges-la-Morte*, Takeshi Shimizu's *Marebito*, Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

Gaming Inspirations: *The City State of the Invincible Overlord* (for older editions of D&D), "Jacks Wild: Six Stabs at Jack the Ripper" (by Kenneth Hite in *Suppressed Transmissions*), *Lankhmar* (for older editions of D&D or RuneQuest), *Sharn: City of Towers* (for 3.5 D&D), *Vornheim* (for *Lamentations of the Flame Princess*).

Miscellaneous Inspirations: Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*, the Black Dahlia murder, H. H. Holmes, Jack the Ripper, mole people, absinthe houses, Parisian catacombs, Spring-Heeled Jack, Victorian London's East End opium houses, Anthony Vidler's *Warped Spaces* and *Uncanny Architecture*, Weimar Berlin, the Zodiac Killer.

7. Pagan Outskirts

"I think I could turn and live with animals. They are so placid and self-contained. They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins. They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God. Not one of them kneels to another or to his own kind that lived thousands of years ago. Not one of them is respectable or unhappy, all over the earth."

– *The Wicker Man*

This flavor of Gothic Fantasy assumes that your setting has an established religion that holds sway throughout the realm and that the characters were born and raised under the auspices of that religious institution. Of course, the trick here is to thrust the characters into the outskirts of civilization where the established church offers no protection or sanctuary; what the characters will soon discover is that not all the people of the realm hold the same beliefs or hew to the same faith that they are familiar with. In the Pagan Outskirts, the old ways still command loyalty and the ancient ways of worship—blood sacrifice, pacts with demonic forces, and pledges to the fierce, primordial spirits of nature—still hold power over the hearts and minds of a secretive rural populace.

The Setting: An isolated village or town far from the reach of the established church hierarchy. The village is self-sufficient and self-contained; local farming, animal husbandry, traditional artisan handicrafts, and bee-keeping provide for the people's material well-being. Indeed, their self-reliance is such that they largely govern themselves; religious and secular authority wields nominal power, at best. The people's spiritual well-being is provided for under a darker cast; these villagers or townspeople cleave to the ancient pagan ways that dominated the land prior to the spread of the normative, modern religion.

The Themes: *The modern is endangered by the ancient*—make sure the characters have every modern innovation that seems to guarantee their survival. They should be equipped with modern tools of warfare (such as well-forged swords, crossbows, and perhaps even early firearms) and the tools of modern faith (holy water and the shield of true belief). However, make a point to show them that while the old ways—pagan magic and primordial beasts—might currently slumber, they are still strong. Perhaps even stronger than steel and sacrament.

Corruption is a worse fate than death—the pagan people will be welcoming. Too welcoming. They do not wish to oppose outsiders with force of arms, they wish to convert outsiders back to the old ways through seduction and the arousal of primal lusts.

The New Age is upon us—play up the cyclical nature of the threat that faces the characters. While the pagan ways may have lain dormant for ages, make the characters privy to their movements as they stir and awaken. Perhaps a prophecy of comes to pass, perhaps occult rites are nearing completion, perhaps the stars are aligning...in any case, the primordial beings once worshiped by fearful men arise anew and the characters number among those chosen to witness the rebirth of the pagan order.

The Foes: *The Pagans*—at first, the pagans will seem like cheerful, fulfilled people. Indeed, as the characters witness their simple lives of observing nature's cycle and obeying their natural inclinations, they may begin to envy the freedom of their lifestyle. But this will change when the characters learn of the means these smiling, friendly folk use to appease the dark gods they serve.

The Scarecrows—the fields and farmsteads of the pagan outskirts are protected from thieving birds by pumpkin-headed effigies filled with straw. Or at least that is all they seem to be until they are called upon to ravage those who threaten the villagers or their way of life.

The White People—where did the villagers learn the ways of pagan magic in the first place? Why, from the white people, of course. The white people are a race of cave-dwelling degenerates forgotten by time. Unevolved and uncivilized, they are brutal, ignorant, but possessed of uncanny senses and an innate connection to the blood-magic used by the pagan people of the village.

Nature's Hunger—something ancient and primeval stirs in the wilderness, awakened from its slumber by the sacrificial blood-rites practiced by the pagans. Perhaps the characters arrive too late and the hungering maw is already loose in the wild, or perhaps the characters have been lured to the pagan outskirts as the final sacrifice.

The Soundtrack: Pagan Outskirts requires a soundtrack that takes folk back to its bloody pagan roots. *Fern Knight*, *Castings*—self-described “music for witches and alchemists,” tarot symbolism abounds here. *Sol Invictus*, *The Blade*—the grim, unflinching determination of nature is the order of the day.

Literary and Cinematic Inspirations: Clive Barker's “Rawhead Rex” and “In the Hills, the Cities,” Ingmar Bergman's *The Virgin Spring*, Piers Haggard's *Blood on Satan's Claw*, Robin Hardy's *The Wicker Man*, M. R. James's “Oh, Whistle and I'll Come to You, My Lad,” Stephen King's “Children of the Corn,” Arthur Machen's *The Great God Pan*, “The Shining Pyramid,” and “The White People,” Vernon Lee's “Dionea,” Michael Reeves's *Witchfinder General*, Ken Russel's *The Lair of the White Worm*, Christopher Smith's *Black Death*, Bram Stoker's *The Lair of the White Worm* (the film and the novel are quite different from each other), Lars von Trier's *Antichrist*.

Gaming Inspirations: *100 Bushels of Rye* (for HarnMaster), *Green and Pleasant Land* (for Call of Cthulhu), *Through the Drakwald* (for Warhammer Fantasy Role-Playing 2e).

Miscellaneous Inspirations: Celtic druids, Benjamin Christensen's *Haxan: Witchcraft Through the Ages*, Sir James Fraser's *The Golden Bough*, human sacrifice, Margaret Alice Murray's *The Witch Cult in Western Europe*, the pagan rival of the 1890s, standing stones, Montague Summers's translation of the *Malleus Maleficarum*.

8. High Gothicism

“And since, in our passage through this world, painful circumstances occur more frequently than pleasing ones, and since our sense of evil is, I fear, more acute than our sense of good, we become the victims of our feelings, unless we can in some degree command them.”

– Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*

I've already touched on ways to bring in influences gleaned from Gothic literature in Dark Medieval Times, but in this section I'm going to focus on how to change the conventions of the second-wave of Gothic fictions—the novels that marked the high point of the Gothic's literary popularity in the late 18th century—into grist for the Gothic Fantasy mill. The main focus of the Gothic's second-wave of novels is an implicit contrast between the norms and mores of the rational, Enlightened British Isles and the “Gothic barbarism” of Europe's continental powers. High Gothicism generally implies a Renaissance level of culture and technology; indeed, the British authors who wrote Gothic fiction during its most influential years tended to set their tales in fanciful re-imaginings of France, Spain, and Italy.

The Setting: A moderately-sized town in a pseudo-European locale. The townspeople are an ignorant, superstitious lot; they cling to their religion and their superstitions, and they see the work of the supernatural everywhere—even where a rational answer seems more plausible. The town has two significant landmarks nearby: a old castle and a monastery or nunnery. The castle is the family seat of an old line of blue-blooded aristocrats. This family believes that their rarefied blood sets them apart from the common man; they prefer to keep to themselves and disdain intrusion upon their secrets. The monastery or nunnery is thought to be a place of religious contemplation, but in truth its master is a cruel, calculating villain who uses the guise of spirituality to mask a variety of misdeeds. The town is also near a deep woods and towering, majestic mountains. These sublime natural features are both awesomely beautiful and home to cunning bandits.

The Themes: *Reason vs. the Supernatural*—High Gothicism pits Enlightenment rationality against the superstitions and supernaturalism of the benighted past. One way to emphasize this theme is to take away any supernatural powers the characters might normally have; make arcane and divine magic, enchanted items, and extraordinary powers solely the province of the villains. Make the players rely on ordered, rational plans instead of mystic MacGuffins.

The church is a corrupt institution—there are only two types of believer: those who blindly follow the church's doctrine because they are afraid of what awaits in the next life and those who use the mask of piety to hide a multitude of sins. As with the previous theme, it is entirely appropriate to eliminate clerical spells and holy powers when playing in High Gothicism mode. Similarly, it is appropriate to give religious characters and places a horrible hidden secret: perhaps the goodly monk is tormented by carnal desires; perhaps the nunnery gives sanctuary to an unrepentant assassin, or perhaps the local abbess has made a pact with the very devil she claims to rebuke.

Emotions runneth over—if ever there was a time to indulge your thesby inclinations, now is it. Characters in High Gothicism should display the revolt of emotions kept too long in check; sorrow, melancholia, terror, horror, and mania should be writ largely upon the important characters that the players interact with. In this case, it's encouraged to ham up the performance and create personalities that are overwrought and unhinged; melodrama is your friend here.

The Foes: *The Bandits*—run-of-the-mill foes to be sure, unless...they are at the beck and call of someone or something far more sinister. In fact, discovering who these miscreants serve is half the battle.

The Monk—oh how the mighty fall! Once a pious ecclesiastic, now mired in a spiritual darkness. What preys upon the cleric's soul? Is it bodily lust? Lust for arcane power that can only be had through a Faustian bargain? Political gain? Whatever it is, make sure the characters are directly obstructing the monk from his goal.

The Cavalier and his Retinue—the eldest son of the castle's aristocratic family is a knightly man who will immediately take a disliking to the characters' low-born status. Or, if they be nobles themselves, he will set himself to prove his obvious virtue against theirs.

The Crypt-Thing—the land below the local nunnery or monastery is riddled with hidden crypts known to few. The characters will discover just how labyrinthine those crypts are when one of the villains outlined above steals away a young maiden and secrets her within a forgotten vault. Of course, what the villain doesn't know is that the crypts are far from uninhabited. What kind of misshapen beast crawls along the catacombs, feasting on the flesh and bones of the long-dead?

The Soundtrack: High Gothicism requires a soundtrack that is inspired by Romanticism and darkness. *Black Tape for a Blue Girl*, *As One Aflame Laid Bare by Desire* and *Remnants of a Deeper Purity*—the sound of passion consuming faith and reason. *Mors Syphilitica*, *Feather and Fate*—the lush Gothicism of a soaring, heavenly voice.

Literary and Cinematic Inspirations: Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, Roy Ward Baker's *The Vampire Lovers*, Mario Bava's *Black Sunday*, Isaac Crookenden's "The Vindictive Monk or The Fatal Ring," Richard Cumberland's "The Poisoner of Montremos," Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya*, Thomas Hardy's "Barbara of the House of Grebe," Sheridan Le Fanu's "Carmilla" and "A Chapter in the History of a Tyrone Family," Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*, Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*, Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer*, Eliza Parsons's *The Castle of Wolfenbach*, Edgar Allan Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado" and "The Pit and the Pendulum," Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Italian*, the Marquis de Sade's *The Misfortunes of Virtue*, Percy Shelley's *Zastrozzi* and *St. Irvyne*, Robert Louis Stevenson's "Olalla," Guillermo del Toro's *The Devil's Backbone*, John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*.

Gaming Influences: *The Darkest Night* (for Lady Blackbird), *GURPS Screampunk*, *Ravenloft* (for AD&D or later editions of D&D), *My Life With Master*, Phillpe Tromeur's *Wuthering Heights*.

Miscellaneous Inspirations: Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, the *Codex Gigas*, Gothic architecture, the Grand Guignol theater, the Hand of Glory, Maria Monk's *Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk*, Romanticism.

9. The Gothic West

“All right, I’m coming out. Any man I see out there, I’m gonna shoot him. Any sumbitch takes a shot at me, I’m not only gonna kill him, but I’m gonna kill his wife, all his friends, and burn his damn house down.”

– *The Unforgiven*

Of course, if one wants a full-blown Wild West campaign there are several games on the market that offer a full immersion in the tropes of that fictional mode, but for our Gothic purposes I’m going to focus on how you can inject a bit of the Ol’ West into a fantasy campaign to amp-up the strangeness. The technique to use here is imaginative substitution: change out the too-blatant “Western” conventions for similar figurations that keep the symbolic meaning intact. If your campaign world doesn’t have firearms, there certainly won’t be any shoot-outs at high noon. However, you can replace the quick-draw gun fight with crossed swords in the town square. That’s how they do it on the frontier—questions of honor are answered by who has the fastest draw, the steeliest eye, and the most vicious cut. (See just about any samurai movie for inspiration here; after all, samurai movies borrowed from the Westerns, so it’s only fair to re-appropriate!)

The Setting: A rough, ramshackle border town on the western frontier. While the town does have a sheriff and his deputies as the nominal law, they’re too few and too weak to hold back the tide of lawlessness. Prospectors have struck silver and gold in the nearby hills, causes a rush to establish mines and land contracts before the wells run dry. Of course, where there’s gold, there’s greed. And where there’s greed, there’s murder and the scent of death on the wind.

The Themes: *Justice is where you take it*—the powers that be, such as they are, aren’t able to provide satisfaction. If you want justice or to uphold a notion of the law, you’d best do it yourself and be able to enforce it with the strength of steel.

Be quick or be dead—the Gothic West should favor quick action instead of calm, measured plan-making. Put the characters in situations where their lives hang in the balance of a single, foolhardy decision that must be made now.

The stakes are high among outlaws—the Gothic West is a setting where outlaws, wanted men, and wolf’s heads go to evade the due process of the world back east. Such men have nothing to lose; they jump at the opportunity to snatch at wealth, no matter how dangerous the circumstances. Stagecoach robberies, bank heists, and mine raids are among the brazen crimes the characters should be witness to—regardless of what side of the law they fall on.

The Foes: *The Ghost-Dancers*—of course, the frontier was not an uninhabited place before the arrival of gold-crazed prospectors and explorers. The native population will resent the intrusion on their land, especially once pogroms for their removal get underway. While the Ghost-Dancer tribe's bloody raids are fearsome enough, their shamans have the power to summon and direct ectoplasmic horrors from beyond the grave; they're not too squeamish to use the screaming souls of the characters' loved ones against them.

Derro—dwarves love gold, but these aren't your usual Tolkienian warriors or your typical crafty Norse artificers. Rather, the derro are a race of dusky-skinned, white-eyed calibans who are drawn to gold as a moth is drawn to a flame. They will take gold and silver through both cunning and atrocity alike; they need the precious metals to appease He Who Roils in the Darkness.

The Revenant—if they're in the Gothic West, the characters likely have some ghosts in their past. What if those ghosts were to borrow the rotting corpse of some hanged fool to seek revenge?

Dust Devils—whirling tempests that scour the flesh off the bones of the living. Dust Devils are particularly active at night in the wastelands, but have been known to descend on border towns without warning.

The Soundtrack: The Gothic West requires a soundtrack that is grotty, sweaty, and full of piss and vinegar. *Black Jake & the Carnies*, *Where the Heather Don't Grow*—punk bluegrass that spits fire and casts a deadly spell. *The Builders and the Butchers*, *Salvation is a Deep Dark Well* and *Dead Reckoning*—the sound of a country apocalypse. *Johnny Cash, American I-IV*—there's a reason why he's called the Man in Black. *The Legendary Shack Shakers*, *Pandelirium* and *Swampblood*—raucous, untamed psychobilly; perfect for saloon brawls, shoot-outs, and last rides.

Literary and Cinematic Inspirations: Paul Thomas Anderson's *There Will Be Blood*, Robert Altman's *McCabe and Mrs. Miller*, William S. Burroughs's *Cities of the Red Night*, *The Place of Dead Roads*, and *The Western Lands*, Clint Eastwood's *Unforgiven*, George Hickenlooper's *The Killing Box*, John Hillcoat's *The Proposition*, Alejandro Jodorowski's *El Topo*, Stephen King's *Dark Tower* novels, Sergio Leone's *A Fistful of Dollars* and *Once Upon a Time in the West*, Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian* and *All the Pretty Horses*, Eugene Manlove Rhode's *West is West* and *Copper Streak Trail*, John Vernon's *The Last Canyon*.

Gaming Inspirations: *Boot Hill*, *Deadlands* (either the original game or the Savage Worlds edition).

Miscellaneous Inspirations: The Alamo, Custer's Last Stand, Doc Holliday, the Ghost Dance, the Gold Rush, the Hatfield-McCoy feud, Old West gunfighters, manifest destiny, the Sun Dance, the Trail of Tears.

10. Inside the Black House

"No live organism can continue for long to exist sanely under conditions of absolute reality."

– Shirley Jackson, *The Haunting of Hill House*

In his essay on the *unheimlich*, Sigmund Freud theorizes that things that resemble objects, people, and places that are familiar to us, yet have noticeable and nagging differences, hold the power to unsettle and terrify. Uncanny things are the opposite of the homely—that is, the opposite of the welcoming and reassuring home and hearth. Since the heart of Gothic Fantasy is turning the familiar, heimlich world on its head, let's steal a page from Freud and make the old familial seat a place of horror.

The Setting: The characters are drawn into an old, dark house next to a still lake. Perhaps one of the characters has inherited the house as part of a bequest; perhaps the characters simply awake inside the house with no memory of how they got there. Once they are in, however, the front door refuses to open and the windows remain closed no matter what the characters do; they can't be broken down by force, magic, or divine will. The only way out is to solve the house's mystery.

The house is unthinkable vast and full of twisting hallways, random staircases, hidden passages, and confusing rooms—it appears to have been designed at the request of a madmen. The house cannot be fully explored in a day or in a week; it is a landscape unto itself and of a size far larger than it has any logical right to be. Above all, though, the house is not quiet; stairs creek, floorboards groan. And sometimes the house screams. Sometimes it speaks with a whispering voice. Words and messages will appear scrawled on mirrors. This is a house with a tale to tell.

The house's tale is wrapped up in its history. Perhaps it was formerly the home of a powerful black magician who unleashed powers that still permeate the house's walls. Or could it be that a madwoman was prematurely buried in the familial crypt and her spirit still haunts the premises? Bit by bit, piece by piece, the characters will need to assemble that history from disparate fragments; their very lives will depend on sifting the past and realizing what the house wants of them.

The Themes: *Claustrophobia*—enclose, entrap, and bury the characters. Put them in narrow corridors where the use of their most powerful weapons—axes, sword, bows, etc.—is impossible. Make them squeeze through tiny portals to escape hordes of hungry, gnawing rats. Make sure that they fear their environment as much as any foe.

The Past Never Dies—something horrific happened with the walls of the house and it is up to the characters to set things right. Use portends, prophecies, scraps of discovered information in old tomes, and supernatural manifestations to make them seek resolution with urgency.

Not Every House is a Home—play with the characters' pasts by presenting distorted and uncanny versions of the objects and people that make them recall their lives before they entered the house. For example, if one of the characters has a wife, perhaps one of the servants in the house could be her twin—save for one difference that turns the woman into an *unheimlich* reminder of the world he is now estranged from.

The Foes: *The Residents*—the house is home to a strange, reclusive family of an ancient bloodline. The characters will only catch glimpses of the family as they scurry away to disappear into secret passageways. The nature of the residents should remain a mystery until the ultimate scene of the adventure or campaign; of course, this doesn't preclude the residents from harrying the characters along the way.

The Unquiet Dead—the house is haunted by specters who demand satisfaction from beyond the grave. These ghosts might alternate between raging against the characters with undead fury and pleading with them to locate their bones to lay them to rest. The stronger spirits may even be able to possess the characters to use their bodies as vehicles of revenge.

The Servants—while the residents of the house might remain mysterious for a time, the character surely will encounter their servants, a race of hunch-backed, deformed butlers, maids, and cooks that live to carry out their master's orders. The cruellest of the servants will have been given the jobs of jailer, torturer, or executioner.

The Thing in the Lake—once the characters free themselves from the house, they may have to resolve the plot they've uncovered at the lake. What will rise up from the depths to meet them? Will it be the corpses of the men and women sacrificed to the residents' dark gods or a long-necked serpent summoned by their eldritch rites?

The Soundtrack: Inside the Black House demands a soundtrack that is spectral, tragic, and manic. *Attrition*, *All Mine Enemys Whispers*—spectral ambient music based on the real-life crimes of Mary Ann Cotton, a Victorian woman who poisoned her children and husbands with arsenic. *Coil*, *Love's Secret Domain*—experimental industrial that manages to be both warm and unsettling.

Literary and Cinematic Inspirations: Alejandro Amenabar's *The Others*, Brad Anderson's *Session 9*, Poppy Z. Brite's *Drawing Blood* and “Entertaining Mr. Orton,” Tim Burton's *Beetlejuice*, Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves*, Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* and “The Ghost in the Bride's Chamber,” Thomas Hardy's *Turn of the Screw*, William Hope Hodgson's *The Casebook of Carnaki the Ghost-Finder*, Tobe Hooper's *Poltergeist*, Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House* and *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, M. R. James's *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary*, Caitlin R. Kiernan's *Silk*, Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*, Sheridan Le Fanu's *Uncle Silas*, Tanith Lee's *Dark Dance*, Paul Leni's *The Cat and the Canary*, H. P. Lovecraft's “The Dreams in the Witch House,” Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, Meryn Peake's *Titus Groan*, Edgar Allan Poe's “The Fall of the House of Usher,” Bram Stoker's “The Judge's House,” Lars von Trier's *The Kingdom*, Sarah Waters's *Affinity*, and James Whale's *The Old Dark House*, Oscar Wilde's “The Canterville Ghost.”

Gaming Inspirations: *Castle Drachenfels* (for Warhammer Fantasy Role-Play), *Castle Amber* (for D&D).

Miscellaneous Inspirations: Aleister Crowley, Sigmund Freud's *The Uncanny*, the Loch Ness Monster, Nicholas Royle's *The Uncanny*, the Winchester House.

11. The Pit Stop in Hell

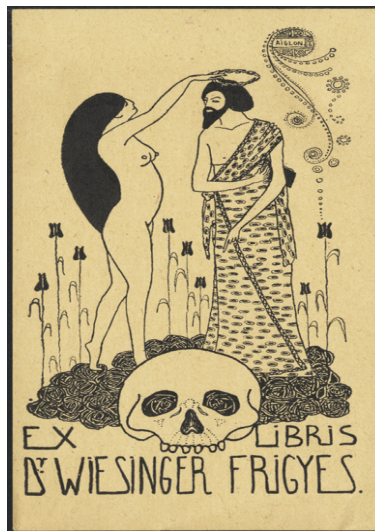
“Who will survive, and what will be left of them?”

– tagline from the Texas Chain Saw Massacre posters

The Pit Stop in Hell isn't meant to be a campaign setting in itself; rather, it is a micro-setting to be used in-between the characters traveling from point A to point B. Along the way, something happens to sidetrack them from their destination—perhaps their horses are suddenly lamed by caltrops scattered across the road or perhaps their wagon is mysteriously sabotaged at night. Of course, just then it begins to piss down rain. But there's a lantern lit at a house off the beaten path. The characters can seek help and shelter there, right?

Draw them in and let the butchery begin.

The Setting: A ramshackle house in the middle of nowhere. The house itself is full of secret passages, hidden rooms, and perilous traps. The basement of the house is little more than a prison for whoever falls into the Family's clutches. The house is essentially a dungeon that a family lives in. There are untended fields of grain behind the house, perfect for a chase scene in which the characters hide from and attempt to dodge a pursuing madmen armed with an ax. If they characters run far enough they will reach a plundered cemetery where the Family takes all their meals—here they will discover the final fate of the Family's captives.



The Themes: *Gore is God*—if you've ever wanted a chance to indulge in lurid, splatterpunk descriptions, this is the place. Feel free to get as gross as you like; the closer you come to verbally outdoing a Cannibal Corpse album the better.

Out-savaging the savage—the only way for the characters to survive their trek into The Pit Stop in Hell is to become as vile and bloodthirsty as their opponents. There is no running away; there is only descending into madness and bloodlust. How far will they compromise their beliefs to survive?

The Foes: *The Family*—inbred backwoods psychos, one and all. They love to murder, they're cannibals, they possess a variety of disease-ridden blades and bludgeons, and they seem impervious to pain. Make sure to differentiate them. Here's some common types: the Patriarch (or Matriarch), the decrepit head of the family who calls the shots; the Thinker, the planner and setter of traps; the Hulking Brute, large and physically powerful; the Feral Woman, she oozes animal sexuality, but like the black widow spider she kills after she mates; the Madman, even the rest of the Family is afraid of him. It goes without saying that the Family doesn't necessarily have to be fully human; they could be ghouls, mutants, or worse.

The Broken Ones—the family loves to experiment on their hardest victims, performing crude operations that stitch them together into new, uncanny forms. Of course, the process of becoming a medical monstrosity drives the Broken Ones insane. The Family keeps them as pets, watchdogs, and bloodhounds to hunt down anyone who escapes them.

Traps—while the family lives in squalor, they are adept at creating sophisticated traps. Traps such as pits, guillotines, and exploding shrapnel grenades are secreted throughout their house and across their property. The world of The Pit Stop in Hell is one big, mechanized slaughterhouse.

The Family's Pets—no dire wolves or mastiffs will suffice here. Give the Family something unusual they can use to hunt down any getaways. Mutant crocodiles, if the Family lives on the bayou. Trained bloodhawks, if they live in the woods. Disease-mouthed komodo dragons, if they dwell in the desert. Thrice-headed bears, if they are a mountain people.

The Soundtrack: The Pit Stop in Hell requires a soundtrack that is brutal, loud, and gut-churning. *Grinderman*, *s/t* and *Grinderman II*—psychotronic and psychosexual; the sound of a million exploitation films all playing at once. *Murder by Death*, *Red of Tooth and Claw*—murderous parables about the cheapness of human life. *O'Death*, *Broken Hymns*, *Limbs and Skin*—roughshod alternative country; primitive hootin' and holerin'.

Literary and Cinematic Inspirations: Alexandre Aja's *Haute Tension*, John Boorman's *Deliverance*, Richard Connell's "The Most Dangerous Game," Wes Craven's *The Hills Have Eyes*, Xavier Gens's *Frontier(s)*, Jean-Luc Goddard's *Week End*, Michael Haneke's *Funny Games*, Tobe Hooper's *Texas Chain Saw Massacre* and *Eaten Alive*, David Moreau and Xavier Palud's *Them*, H. G. Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, Fabrice du Welz's *Calvaire*, *The X-Files* episode "Home," Rob Zombie's *House of 1000 Corpses* and *The Devil's Rejects*.

Gaming Inspirations: *GURPS Horror* and Kenneth Hite's *Nightmares of Mine*.

Miscellaneous Inspirations: Ed Gein, home invasions, Sawney Bean.

12. Through the Looking Glass

“Toto, I’ve a feeling we’re not in Kansas any more.”
– *The Wizard of Oz*

In the third act of Rob Zombie's *House of 1000 Corpses* an exquisite change occurs in the tone and narrative direction of the movie. The preceding two reels are a standard, if inventive and compelling, example of the Pit Stop in Hell. However, as soon as Denise and Jerry are lowered into the underground lair beneath the cemetery they are truly through the looking glass—a fact slyly signaled by the Alice in Wonderland costume that the Firefly clan has dressed Denise in. The rest of the movie makes good on that phantasmagoric descent; gone are the more overt aping of grindhouse and exploitation cinema clichés, and in their places the viewer gets an eyeful of surreal, disjointed nightmare imagery. The fictive laws that govern the first two-thirds are suspended—the laws of the Gothic now holds court.

Through the Looking Glass aims to capture the power of that sudden and unexpected tonal shift. As such, it isn't a great place to start a campaign. After all, if the players don't have a familiar, comforting backdrop to yank away, then there isn't going to be much reaction to the change of mode. Rather, think of Through the Looking Glass as a kind of capstone for a campaign that has begun to grow stale. Perhaps the characters have put paid to the evils that lurk Behind the Facade of the Seaside Town and kept the Cold Northern Winds at bay. They've claimed a few victories and made the world a less weird place. What better way to re-invigorate their sense of wonder by stealing the characters away from the world they've become accustomed to and plunging them into a mirror image of it that is exotic, alien, and altogether Gothic? Whereas it is generally advised to mix the Gothic with the mundane in your setting, Through the Looking Glass encourages you to go full-on Gothic. There's no going back from this and you can never go home again.

The Setting: Pick a locale that your players are comfortable with, then run it through a funhouse mirror. Add or take things away at random. Make areas that were well-trodden and known newly byzantine and complicated. Take the characters the players interacted with and make them into twisted, barely recognizable caricatures of their old selves. Whatever the “laws of physics” governing your game were, throw them out. Borrow elements from surreal fiction and films and exoticized “Oriental” fantasy to emphasize the return of the Weird. Oh, and wherever your game is set now has a labyrinth. Everyone knows about the labyrinth; rumors about its nature abound, but no one agrees on who built it, why it exists, or what lies at its heart.

The Themes: *Everything you once knew is gone*—unsettle the players by radically altering the game world they've come to expect. Subvert their expectations and throw them from their comfort zone.

The rule of law is absurd—steal a page of Kafka and expose the new workings of your world as ambiguous, bureaucratic, and arbitrary. Those in power should have no right to it and less sense of what to do with it.

Nothing seems real—make the world a gauzy, dream-like, hallucinogenic place. Don't be afraid to flout the precepts of realism; this is a bad trip, not a subtle stroll through the uncanny.

The Foes: *Rakshasa*—man-eating spirits confined in the flesh of aristocratic cat-men. The rakshasa and their ultimate goals should be inscrutable; forget getting a straight answer from them, as they are the servants of the Prince of Lies. Also, you can forget about keeping your plans secret from the rakshasa; the hordes of stray cats that prowl the streets act as their eyes and ears.

Mugwumps—vile insect men whose secretions act as a powerful hallucinogen that is traded openly on the gray market. Mugwumps are muses gone sour; they hold the power to inspire great works of literature and art, but the price they exact is paid in shattered souls.

The Howlers in the Wilderness—the supernatural predators that haunt the wilderness are heard, but seldom seen. Their baleful howls warn of their approach, but what are they? Are they ghuls who eternally hunger for human flesh or are they djinn who wish to capture and enslave men as chattel?

Larva Mages—mystical sages comprised of crawling insects in the shape of men. They are wise and learned in the magical arts, but for what purpose do they walk amongst mankind? It is said that for a price they can shape a man's flesh to make him pleasing to the eye.

The Soundtrack: Through the Looking Glass requires a soundtrack that is lost in spires of incense and otherness. *Dead Can Dance*, *Into the Labyrinth* and *Spirit Chaser*—Eastern and world music influenced sonic journeys into the fantastical. *Jaggery*, *Polyhymnia*—prog-touched, many-hued splendor.

Literary and Cinematic Inspirations: The anonymous *One Thousand and One Nights*, Edwin Abbott's *Flatland*, Clive Barker's *Weaveworld*, L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, William Beckford's *Vathek*, William S. Burroughs's *Naked Lunch*, Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*, Jim Henson's *Labyrinth*, William Hope Hodgson's *The House on the Borderland*, Neil Gaiman's *Stardust* and *Neverwhere*, Nathan H. Juran's *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad*, Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" and "In the Penal Colony," Tanith Lee's *Night's Master*, *Death's Master*, and *Delusion's Master*, C. S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, H. P. Lovecraft's "The Nameless City," "The Cats of Ulthar," and "The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath," David Lynch's *Blue Velvet*, *Lost Highway*, and *Twin Peaks*, Alan Moore's *Lost Girls*, Thomas de Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, Clark Ashton Smith's *Zothique*, Jan Svankmejer's *Alice*, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Guillermo del Toro's *Pan's Labyrinth*.

Gaming Inspirations: *Al-Qadim* (for AD&D), *Dungeonland* (for AD&D), *Everway*, *GURPS Arabian Nights*, *JAGS Wonderland*, *Lacuna*, "City in Dust: Many-Columned Irem" (in Kenneth Hite's *Suppressed Transmissions*), *Over the Edge*, *Talisanta*, *The Zorcerer of Zo*.

Miscellaneous Inspirations: Astral projection, The City of Brass, djinn, dream interpretations, ghuls, the Greek myth of the Cretan Minotaur, time travel.

13. Two Variations

First Contact

Pilgrims in a Strange Land assumes that the game set in the colony begins in media res, but this doesn't necessarily have to be the case. What if the characters are the first people of their culture to explore the strange, new land? They might be sent to establish a colony to insure their own freedoms, they might be missionaries sent to convert the godless natives, or they might be conquistadors in search of wealth (or the fabled Fountain of Youth).

Literary and Cinematic Inspirations: John Buchan's *Prester John*, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and H. Rider Haggard's *She* and King Solomon's *Mines*, and Werner Herzog's *Fitzcarraldo* and *Aguirre, the Wrath of God*, Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* and "The Mark of the Beast," William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

Gaming Inspirations: *GURPS Aztecs*, *Maztica* (for AD&D), *The Isle of Dread* (for D&D).

Miscellaneous Inspirations: The Aztecs, the Boer Wars, British colonization of India, the cannibals and head-hunters of Borneo, The Fountain of Youth, Jaguar warriors, the Mayans, Michel de Montaigne's *Essais*, Prester John, Robert Louis Stevenson's travel writings.

The Cursed Bayou

Another way to remix Pilgrims in a Strange Land is to set your game in a bayou plantation that uses enslaved native labor to work the land. Perhaps the characters have been transported to the plantation as a punishment for past mistakes; they might not agree with the politics of the way the plantation system works—especially the cruel beatings given to the slaves—so this might put them in an interesting moral quandary: do they do as they are told in hopes of doing their time and eventually regaining their freedom or do they subversively work to undermine the plantation master?

Both sides should be dangerous. The plantation master has a bokor (an evil native sorcerer) in his pay that can raise corpses as the walking dead. The walking dead are used as both tireless labor and as deadly enforcers. Escaped slaves who hide in the wilds of the bayou drum wildly by night, raising bog mummies and shambling mounds from the depths of the swamp to raid the plantation house.

Literary and Cinematic Inspirations: Wes Craven's *The Serpent and the Rainbow*, Victor Halperin's *White Zombie*, Alan Parker's *Angel Heart*, Jacques Tourneur's *I Walked with a Zombie*.

Gaming Inspirations: *All Flesh Must be Eaten*, *Night of the Walking Dead* (for AD&D).

Miscellaneous Inspirations: Francoise Duvalier, Haiti, the Loa, Marie Leveau, Tommy Johnson, Voodoo, the White Witch of Rose Hall, zombie powder.

Adventure Seeds

These tables are intended to both give you some ideas for the kind of adventures you could build in the previous settings and provide a basic game outline for those times when you're suffering from a creative block. I've only written tables for the first five settings; hopefully this will give you enough of an indication of what you might do with the others. Of course, with a little twisted and re-purposing, any of these basic plot seeds could fit within whatever flavor of Gothic Fantasy you're using.

The Cold Northern Wind Kickstart Table (d4)

1. Something has been prowling outside the outpost's gate under the cover of darkness for a week. The adventurers are tasked with venturing outside the outpost's walls, doing reconnaissance to figure out what that something is, and getting back inside to help form a plan of attack for dealing with it.
2. The monthly supply caravan is late with a crucial shipment of food. There have been reports of avalanches along the Trade Road, so perhaps the caravan has been buried under fallen rock and snow. The characters have been tasked with journeying up the Trade Road to discover what happened to the caravan and, if possible, retrieve the much-needed supplies.
3. A child has gone missing. She was last seen picking berries at the edge of the forest. Over the last month strange piping sounds have been heard emanating from deep in the woods. The characters have been tasked with finding the child and returning her to her parents' care.
4. A famous explorer arrives at the outpost with a charter from the Queen authorizing him to form a party to map the unknown regions in the howling northlands. He offers good pay and the adventure of a lifetime, but perhaps he harbors ulterior motives for bringing a company of mortals into the frost-bitten north.



Dark Medieval Times Kickstart Table (d4)

1. Signs point to a witch in the midst of the fief. The characters are tasked with rooting him or her out and putting them to swift justice. But is the supernatural afoot, or is someone being framed for a slight real or imagined?
2. The fief has paid its yearly tribute to the lord of the land, but the collectors have gone missing. They were last seen at the outskirts of the fief; the characters have been tasked with discovering the errant tribute, else the fief face a crippling repayment to the lord.
3. The peasant farmers have been struck with a strange malady that causes them to sing, whirl, and dance until they die. The characters have been tasked with discovering either the cause of this disease or its cure.
4. A dishonored knight has sought shelter within the border of the fiefdom. Why has he come to this particular land? Who pursues him? What has he carried back with him from the Holy Land?

Southern Gothic Kickstart Table (d4)

1. The patriarch of a powerful, wealthy family has died. The characters have been tasked with taking his remains to a familial crypt on the outskirts of town. They must be on their guard as a faction of town elders would like to make sure the corpse never reaches its final resting place—why?
2. The characters have been asked to escort the daughters of a old-blood family to a masked ball. To decline the pleasure would be seen as an affront to the family's honor. However, one of the daughters is not what she seems.
3. The town's pastor has asked the characters to infiltrate and investigate the doings of the traveling preacher who has set up a tent revival in the town square. What does the pastor really want of them and what is the preacher's real reason for setting himself up in the heart of the town?
4. A worker from a local plantation has contacted the characters and wishes to meet with them. The note he sent claims that he has something of terrifying importance to tell them, but before the characters can meet with him he turns up dead—drowned in the fountain in front of the mayor's home. What mystery is being concealed here? Can the characters uncover it before a secret from the town's past erupts to trouble the present?

Behind the Facade of the Seaside Town Kickstart Table (d4)

1. The characters have been tasked by a wealthy art collector with locating a painter from the seaside town who has recently gone missing. While investigating his disappearance, they will discover that his paintings have also gone missing; what horrible truths were disclosed by those canvasses?
2. The characters have been tasked by a merchant-prince with uncovering why all of the ships that have recently docked at the seaside town were never heard from again. Is this the work of a wrecking crew or is something supernatural afoot?
3. The characters have been tasked by a scholar with taking notes on a rare tome owned by the seaside town's library. While copying out the required section of the book, one character discovers something unnerving about their family history that points to the possible location of a lost inheritance that could be sought out and reclaimed.
4. The characters have been tasked by a smuggler to bring in barrels of rum through the “secret” tunnels that link the beach-caves to the ancient cemetery. Of course, the tunnels are already in use...but by whom and for what purpose?

Pilgrims in a Strange Land Kickstart Table (d4)

1. Winter is coming and the colony's food stores are perilously low. It is rumored that the lost colony had plentiful reserves of food housed in underground vaults. The players have been tasked with exploring that blighted and abandoned village. What will they find their besides sustenance?
2. Word has reached the colony that a nearby settlement is under siege. Fellow pilgrims have sent a plea for help, but they are curiously silent about the nature of their attackers.
3. Goodwife Martinette had made a habit of going into the woods alone, now she stands accused of witchcraft and adultery. Is she really a servant of the Devil or is she a scapegoat drawing attention away from the real evil afflicting the colony? The characters have been tasked with determining her guilt.
4. Ominous drums coming from the forest break the silence of the night. Something is amassing in the woods, and by the sounds of the drums it is moving ever closer to the colony. The characters have been tasked with scouting out this threat to the colony's survival.

Wandering Encounter Tables

d12	Black Hole of Calcutta Dungeons	d12	Yorkshire Moors (Britain)
1	Otyugh	1	Scarecrow
2	Rat swarm (6 HD)	2	Taxidermy bulldog looking for its master
3	Drow expedition (1d4)	3	Banshee
4	Mongrelmen squatters (2d6)	4	Leucrotta
5	Olive slime pack (1d4)	5	Brownie redcaps out for blood (1d8)
6	Green slime pack (1d4)	6	Elf archers looking for sport (1d8)
7	Ghoul scavengers (1d4)	7	Druids (1d4)
8	Ghast outcast	8	Accursed wight
9	Colonial wights (1d2)	9	Phase tiger
10	Wraith	10	Goblins cannibals (2d4)
11	Giant bloodworm	11	Orc raiders (1d6)
12	Troll	12	Annis hag posing as outcast woman

d12	Black Forest (Germany)	d12	Death Valley (California)
1	Ettercaps (1d3)	1	Aztec mummies (1d2)
2	Cave bear	2	Aztec mummy lord (greater mummy)
3	Storm giant warrior	3	Manscorpion ambush
4	Bugbear bandits (1d6)	4	Hunting basilisk
5	Human bandits (2d4)	5	Hunting mantis-man
6	Treant	6	Death Valley family cult (1d6)
7	Dwarf berzerkers (1d6)	7	Elemental salamander
8	Xenophobic elves (1d4)	8	Giant sand spiders (1d4)
9	Giant spiders (1d4)	9	Carrion Vultures (1d6)
10	Blood(thirsty) hounds (1d4)	10	Hobgoblin scavengers (1d6)
11	Dire wolves (1d6)	11	Headhunter worm
12	Green dragon	12	Gnoll hunting party (1d4)

d12	Aokigahara (Japan's Suicide Forest)	d12	Innsmouth (Massachusetts)
1	Wandering ogre mage	1	Deep ones looking for sacrifices (1d4)
2	Scavenging ghouls (1d4)	2	Dagon cultists (1d6)
3	Frost Maiden	3	Shoggoth
4	Ebony butterfly swarm	4	Crabmen pirates (1d4)
5	Lost Kappa	5	Mutant mermen (1d4)
6	Necromancer gathering ingredients	6	Rampaging water elemental
7	Skeletons (1d8)	7	Barnacle'd Chanters (1d6)
8	Spectre	8	Wary nixie
9	Ghost	9	Wary nereid
10	Wraith (1d2)	10	Giant crabs (1d4)
11	Poltergeist (1d4)	11	Ghouls (1d8)
12	Banshee	12	Sea serpent

d12	Louisiana Swampland	d12	Sedlec Ossuary Dungeons
1	Bullywug marauders (2d4)	1	Crawling claws (1d8)
2	Muckdweller pack (2d6)	2	Skeletons (1d6)
3	Shambling mound	3	Crypt thing
4	Voodoo cultists (2d4)	4	Necrophidius (1d4)
5	Giant crocodile	5	Decaying bone golem
6	Juju zombies (1d6)	6	Crypt keeper
7	Mudmen (1d6)	7	Ghast
8	Green hag on swampboat	8	Hungry shroud
9	Tribal lizardmen (1d8)	9	Ectoplasmic fiend
10	Vampiric mist swarm(1d3)	10	Weakened dracolich
11	Giant bluebottle flies (1d4)	11	Wraith
12	Young black dragon	12	Emaciated wight

Appendix A: Magic Items of Gothic Earth

Warpaint of the Dying Tribe — This enchanted warpaint is used by the suicidal warriors of an obscure tribe of savages. Once applied on the face, neck, and arms, the warpaint grants the wearer +2 on all to-hit and damage rolls for an hour. However, at the end of the war paint's hour duration, it causes the wearer 1d4 points of damage—which is often enough to kill a savage warrior, so they don the warpaint without expecting to survive its use.

Cup of the Oath Breaker — Anyone who drinks from this enchanted goblet once owned by a disgraced Prussian prince is freed from the effects of a *Geas* or *Quest* spell.

The Ravenblade — This ornate black short sword is etched with red enameled runes that issue forth smoke when the sword is in the presence of the undead. In all other respects it is a short sword +2 that also possesses the powers of a mace of disruption.

Round of Conflagration — This item is a single round of pistol or rifle ammunition that explodes in a 30' fiery explosion that does 5d6 points of damage to all within that range (save for half). Once fired the round's magic is expended.

Round of the Suicide King — This item is a single round of pistol or rifle ammunition. On a hit both the target and the attacker must make Saving Throws vs. Death; if either or both fails, their soul is sucked out by a black vortex that spirals forth from the bullet wound. Once fired the round's magic is expended.

Pipe of the Tobacco Mage — This nondescript pipe has a mystical word etched upon its stem. Once per day when filled with tobacco and smoked, the owner may intone the mystic word and blow forth a cloud of smoke that emulates the effects of either a *Stinking Cloud*, *Obscuring Mist*, or *Cloudkill* spell.

Arrows of Herne — These enchanted arrows are said to have been blessed by a pagan nature deity of Sherwood Forest; they appear to be finely-crafted arrows with an ancient script written upon their shafts. They function as +1 arrows, but when an Arrow of Herne is fired at an opponent it splits into 1d6 arrows that strike the target or adjacent foes. These arrows are usually found in groups of 2d6.

The Warpsword — This grim-looking Scottish claymore is crafted from a sharpened piece of demonstone. When swung in combat it warps through space and time; thus, it is difficult to defend against and any foe counts as being unarmored for the purpose of to-hit rolls when using the Warpsword. However, if an attack from the Warpsword hits its target, the wielder must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or suffer an immediate random poison effect.

Lizzie Borden's Axe — This hand axe is said to be the implement used by Lizzie Borden to murder her family. It is a +1 weapon for purposes to to-hit and damage rolls. When the axe's command word is spoken by its wielder it grants them the ability to regenerate as per a troll for ten rounds; this ability may only be used once per day.

Collar of the Celtic Chieftains — These golden collars were given to the great clan chieftains of the Celtic peoples. They bestow upon their wearer a +3 bonus to all Saving Throws vs. Spells and make the wearer immune to fear effects.

Hellish Sacrificial Dagger of Kali – These highly-ornate daggers are said to have been blessed by Kali. These daggers function as +1 weapons; additionally, for each human killed, the dagger gains an additional +1 to-hit and damage (up to a maximum of +10) for a twenty-four hour period. These additional bonuses disappear at the next sunrise.

Death's Head – These desiccated and gruesome items are trophies made from the decapitated heads of enemies of the cult of Set. Once per day the head's mouth may be pried open to release a thick cloud of flies that encompass a 60' circle around the head. These flies cause the enemies of the head's bearer to take a -2 penalty to all to-hit rolls and make spell-casting within the 60' circle impossible. The radius of flies travels with the head, but the effect only last for 2d4 rounds.

Bonearrow – If a creature is killed by this +3 arrow it becomes a zombie under the control of its slayer. The arrow can only grant this power once; after it has transformed a foe, the arrow loses its enchantment.

Woodrot armor – This armor functions as +2 leather armor, but whenever a wooden weapon hits the wearer it immediately crumbles into dust; also, any plant-based monster that hits the wearer takes 2d6 points of damage.

Shadowcloak – Shadowcloaks are tenebrous garments created by Dutch illusionists. A shadowcloak grants its wearer the ability to use *Dimension Door*, but the character must both enter and leave through a patch of deep shadow. A shadowcloak may be used in this way three times per day. Furthermore, a shadowcloak can perfectly conceal one hand weapon within its folds of impenetrable darkness.

Cauldron of the Lamenting Mother – This massive black iron cauldron is festooned with the skulls of warped and mutant creatures. Once per year the cauldron may be filled with pure water from a rushing river and brought to a boil to activate its mystical powers. Once activated, the remains of a once-living creature can be placed within it; if the boiling it kept up until midnight, the remains will be brought back to life as per a *Resurrection* spell. A person raised from the dead in this fashion must attend a midnight mass each month; if they fail to attend, they will again die—but this death is final and there is no hope of future resurrection.

Lemarchand's Lost Configurations – These puzzle boxes are identical constructions made from rosewood. Each has a hidden button; when the button on one box is depressed, the user is instantly transported to wherever the second box resides.

Ghostsilver Lantern – This baroque lantern houses a trapped Will O' the Wisp. When the lantern's hood is opened the spectral light from within will cause any hidden doors within range of the lantern's light to be outlined in a pale, flickering phosphorescence.

Casket of Nephren-Ka – This stone sarcophagus from Egypt transforms any humanoid corpse sealed within it into a thick, honey-like fluid that smells of vinegar. If the liquid is consumed, its imbiber gains knowledge of any hidden treasure the humanoid has secreted.

Trinder's Blood Tonic – This British patent medicine works as a *Neutralize Poison* spell.

Dr. Kilmer's Swamp Root – This American patent medicine works as *Cure Light Wounds* and *Cure Disease* spells.

Appendix N: Gothic Fantasy Literature

I think when most folks hear the phrase "Gothic literature" they think of *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*. Unfortunately, the predominance of those two novels has really obscured other works in the Gothic mode. To address that, here's my "Appendix N" for anyone interested in expanding their knowledge of this often-denigrated "literature of terror"!

There are quite a few little-read gems here; I urge you to go off the beaten track and pick up *Wieland*, a Vernon Lee collection, or the like. You won't be sorry.

Horace Walpole – *The Castle of Otranto* and *The Mysterious Mother*
Clara Reeve – *The Old English Baron*
Sophia Lee – *The Recess*
Ann Radcliffe – *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Italian*
Matthew Lewis – *The Monk*
Charlotte Dacre – *Zofloya*
Lord Byron – *Manfred*
Percy Bysshe Shelley – *Zastrozzi* and *St. Irvyne*
John Polidori – *The Vampyre*
Mary Shelley – *Frankenstein*
James Hogg – *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*
Charles Maturin – *Melmoth the Wanderer*
Charles Brockden Brown – *Wieland*
Edgar Allan Poe – "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Cask of Amontillado," "The Masque of the Red Death," and "The Pit and the Pendulum,"
Nathaniel Hawthorne – *The House of the Seven Gables*, "Rappaccini's Daughter," and "Young Goodman Brown"
Charlotte Brontë – *Jane Eyre*
Emily Brontë – *Wuthering Heights*
William Beckford – *Vathek*
Sheridan LeFanu – *Uncle Silas* and "Carmilla"
Robert Louis Stevenson – *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and "Olalla"
Henry James – *Turn of the Screw*
Oscar Wilde – *The Picture of Dorian Gray*
Bram Stoker – *Dracula*, *Lair of the White Worm*, and "The Judge's House"
Vernon Lee – "Dionea"
Charlotte Perkins Stetson – "The Yellow Wall-paper"
H. G. Wells – *The Island of Dr Moreau*

Arthur Machen – *The Great God Pan*, "The Inmost Light," and "The White People"
W. H. Hodgson – *The House on the Borderlands* and the Carnacki stories
Richard Marsh – *The Beetle*
Algernon Blackwood – "The Willows" and "The Wendigo"
M. R. James – "Oh, Whistle, and I'll Come to You, My Lad" and "Casting the Runes"
H. P. Lovecraft – *At the Mountains of Madness*, "The Call of Cthulhu," "The Dunwich Horror," "Dagon," and "Dreams in the Witch-House"
Clark Ashton Smith – "A Rendezvous in Averroigne" and "The Return of the Sorcerer"
Daphne du Maurier – *Rebecca*
Mervyn Peake – *Gormenghast*
Shirley Jackson – *The Haunting of Hill House* and *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*
William Gaddis – *Carpenter's Gothic*
Thomas Ligotti – *The Shadow at the Bottom of the World*
John Lindqvist – *Let the Right One In*
Tanith Lee – *Dark Dance*
Toni Morrison – *Beloved*
Koji Suzuki – *Ringu*
Angela Carter – "The Bloody Chamber" and "The Company of Wolves"
Patrick McGrath – *The Grotesque* and *Asylum*
Mark Z. Danielewski – *House of Leaves*

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