

TALES OF THE GROTESQUE AND DUNGEONESQUE



A GOTHIC FANTASY COMPENDIUM FOR OLD-SCHOOL FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

JACK W. SHEAR

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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, what this supplement proposes to do is give you the tools to evoke a different flavor of fantasy in your games.

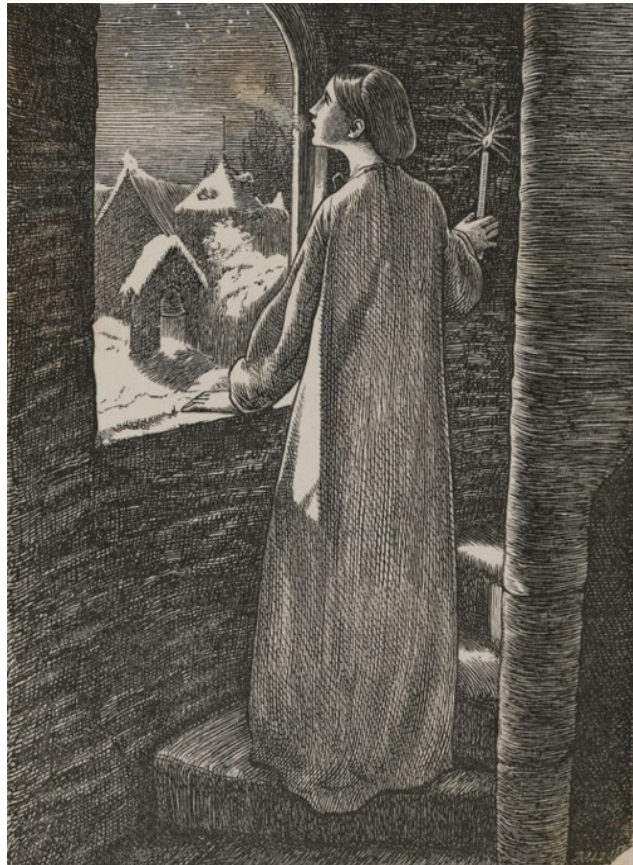
There are already a wide variety of different approaches to old-school fantasy gaming out there. Aside from the usual fantasy fare that initiated the hobby, modern role-playing game writers have given us versions of fantasy gaming based on Lovecraftian "Weird Tales," otherworldly science-fantasy, and strange amalgams of film noir and sword & sorcery adventure. *Tales of the Grotesque and Dungeonesque* follows in the footsteps of those game books by giving you the tools to add as much or as little Gothic influence as you want into your games.

The name of this supplement is emblematic of the spirit of literary admixture; it's a play on the title of Edgar Allan Poe's brilliant short story collection, *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*. Where Poe mixed the *grotesque* of the Gothic with *arabesque* exoticism, in this supplement we will attempt a most unholy fusion: let us marry the Gothic's *grotesquery* to the limitless potential for adventure found in the *dungeonesque*.

This supplement is compendium of the notes that comprise my Gothic Fantasy setting The World Between. The precise admixture of "Gothic" and "Fantasy" varies between campaigns and even between sessions; of course, I expect the reader to use as little or as much of the Gothic Fantasy content herein to get the level of Gothic strangeness that appeals to them. The first section details my home campaign setting, which is further fleshed out by tables, new monsters, new spells, and adventure seeds that could be used in any game world with a little work. Feel free to use my setting whole-cloth, remix it at will, or extract the one thing you want to use in your own games.

Happy Gaming.

Jack W. Shear



A BRIEF PRIMER TO THE WORLD BETWEEN

Caligari - Decadent empire riddled with crime, drugs, and cabaret halls.

Frostreave - Grim frozen northern land with berserk warriors and snow witches.

The Ghael Isles - An island chain that is home to cannibals, voodoo, and swamp witches.

Harrowfaust - Vampire families battling penanggalan families amidst a Gothic backdrop of superstitious peasants and occult mysticism.

The Iron Principalities - Petty kingdoms constantly at war, with scheming political dynasties and mercenary kings.

The Island of Jade Mysteries - Isolated realm of holy shrines, warrior clan warfare, ceaseless bureaucracy, and an immortal queen.

The Islands of Unparalleled Liberty - Lawless pirate islands where rum is cheap and life is even cheaper.

Midian – A degenerate family feuding for control of a fractured kingdom amidst a backdrop of traveling carnivals, fanatical inquisitors, and duelists looking to prove their skill.

Mord-Stavian - Death-obsessed desert kingdom ruled by clockworkian despots serving an undead sorcerer-king.

Relmeenos - Warrior cults contest with each other in a land where proving individual merit is a spiritual path unto itself.

The Ruinous Scar - A destroyed kingdom home to vast wastelands and labyrinthine ruins.

Scarabae - A cultured kingdom of knightly virtue haunted by the spirits of a past age.

The Scavenger Lands - Nomadic barbarian tribes struggling to survive in post-apocalyptic badlands.

The Shae Isles - Fey-touched realm of storytellers and pagan cults that follows the logic of warped fairy tales.

Ulverland - A dreary land of rain, despair, and stoic warriors; morbidity, tradition, and reliance on magic as the ideals of a moribund culture.

THE WORLD BETWEEN IN DETAIL

CALIGARI

Precis: Decadent empire riddled with crime, drugs, and cabaret halls.

Conspectus: Ruled by Empress Christiana the Scarlet; secret pleasure cults that worship Slithian Vor (Demon Queen of Aestheticism and Carnality); wizards who manufacture clay golem servants for the very wealthy; rampant crime and gangs of thieves; opium dens, cabarets, and parlors where illusionists entertain using shadow magic; forests teeming with mongrelmen, werewolves, and blood-owls; vast cathedrals dedicated to the Lady of the White Way with even vaster dungeons underneath; brain lashers and doppelgangers waging a secret war against each other; hedonism and excess; sewers infested with wererats; aristocrats possessing demonic blood (tiefplings and cambions); forests patrolled by the Arboreal Guard (a righteous band of mystic yetis)

Taste, Sound, Image: Cold lager, The Tiger Lillies's "The Crack of Doom," Gustave Moreau's *Salome Dancing Before Herod*.

FROSTREAVE

Precis: Grim frozen northern land with berserk warriors and snow witches.

Conspectus: Ruled by Katrina Rimeheart (The Masked Queen of Iron and Ice); dread stars worshiped as gods; berserkers who ride polar bears into battle; raiders from beyond space and time; frost giants, trolls, and rakshasa in skeletal forests; mead halls, drinking contests, and skalds recounting tales of valor; reverence for Merrihel (Goddess of Death and Glorious Battle) and her shadowborn Valkyrie servants; dwarf artificers who craft magical items in return for pure flaxen hair; grim fatalism; white dragons; the hallucinogenic mushroom forests of Khem populated by mad goblins

Taste, Sound, Image: Meat all bloody and red washed down with ale, Woven Hand's "Winter Shaker," Frank Frazetta's *The Silver Warrior*.

THE GHAEL ISLES

Precis: An island chain that is home to cannibals, voodoo, and swamp witches.

Conspectus: Ruled by plantation masters whose operations are fueled by either the labor of enslaved natives or zombies; peasants who fear curses above all else; worship of spirits as gods (such as Papa Simett, Lord of Secrets and Whispers, and Mama Lazuul, Lady of the Midnight Hour) and possession as a religious rite; lizard men, hags, and aboleths; tribes of primitive savages living in bayous; secret entrances to the Dreamlands; frog men; gibbering chaos beasts regarded as divine oracles; otherworldly slavers; cursed gold coins, "Lost World" islands of prehistoric beasts; The Crystalline Brotherhood of Admixers (an exiled order of alchemists); bayou halflings with houseboats

Taste, Sound, Image: Gumbo, The Hellblink Sextet's "Dementish Waltz," Vodou veves.

HARROWFAUST

Precis: Vampire families battling penanggalan families amidst a Gothic backdrop of superstitious peasants and occult mysticism.

Conspectus: Half of the kingdom is ruled by Maximilian von Karlok (an ancient vampire lord), the other half is ruled by Gabrielle Lorbrek (a penanggalan priestess); ignorant, fearful peasants; the demon Morgath (Lord of Undeath, the Corpulent Reaper) worshiped as a god; gypsy caravans and riverboat travelers; isolated mad scientists crafting magitech that is fueled by lost souls; ancient keeps and fortresses; Hammer Horror atmosphere; penanggalan cults vs. vampire cults; armies of animate skeletons and zombies; secret societies of vampire hunters; tarot card magic; the poisonous gardens of Mother Mina; undead vultures as spies

Taste, Sound, Image: The coppery tang of blood, Katzenjammer Kabarett's "Eve at the mansion," the film *Nosferatu*.

THE IRON PRINCIPALITIES

Precis: Petty kingdoms constantly at war, with scheming political dynasties and mercenary kings.

Conspectus: Comprised of many small fiefdoms, each ruled by a backstabbing family of schemers and poisoners; brisk mercantile activity because there are few (if any) trade restrictions; gigantic bazaars; mercenary bands that revere Hakhan (Demon Lord of Bestial Bloodshed) or Astariax (Goddess of Intrigue, Stratagem, and Mercantile Prosperity); The Guild of the Red Hand (assassin's guild); artistic renaissance and enchanted paintings; famed mask makers and grand balls; sacred murderers of the cult of Matakhan (Demon Queen of Assassins, Executions, and Poison, who may be connected to the worship of Hakhan); the drowned city of Karmodia

Taste, Sound, Image: Red wine, Jill Tracy's "The Fine Art of Poisoning," the Paumgartner altarpiece

THE ISLAND OF JADE MYSTERIES

Precis: Isolated realm of holy shrines, warrior clan warfare, ceaseless bureaucracy, and an immortal queen.

Conspectus: Ruled by the Eternal Princess, Maida I; worship of ancestors and primal nature spirits at far-flung, mountainous retreats; warrior nuns and military monks who use voice magic; runes and water divination; master weapon-smiths working with thrice-blessed steel; ogre magi, serpent men conducting strange experiments in wilderness fortress cities, and kappa guarding bridges; amazingly complex governmental bureaucracy and legal system; deadly games of chess played with human pieces, werefox tricksters, and cults that worship Mong-Trall (the Capricious Monkey God); wandering exorcists

Taste, Sound, Image: Sushi, Faith and the Muse's "Bushido," Utagawa Kuniyoshi's *Mitsukini Defying the Skeleton*.

THE ISLANDS OF UNPARALLELED LIBERTY

Precis: Lawless pirate islands where rum is cheap and life is even cheaper.

Conspectus: Ruled by the Pirate Countess Isolda Tarmapp; grog, jezebels, and the lash; shark-men, deep ones, and sacrifices to Father Sothack (God of the Briny Depths, the Drowned King, Prince of the Kraken's Maw) and his consort Mother Lothack (Demon Queen of the Raging Sea, The Tempest Queen, Our Lady of the Sharks); ghost ships manned by spectral sailors; damnation games and buried treasure troves; wrecking crews, brigands, houses of ill repute; a strangely opulent and out-of-place opera house known as The Shell by the Sea; towers dedicated to Zzorch (Demon Lord of Mutation and Wild Magic); pirates, outlaws, outcasts, disowned royals, and other “wolf's heads”; the Order of the Consecrated Tenebrates, monks who tend roadside shrines to Killane of the Road (The Luck Lord, The Prince of Coins, The Keeper of the Crossroads)

Taste, Sound, Image: Rum and fried shrimp, Humanwine's “Rivolta Silenziosa,” Wayne Reynold's *Tales of the Razor Coast*.

MIDIAN

Precis: A degenerate family feuding amongst itself for control of a fractured kingdom amidst a backdrop of traveling carnivals, fanatical inquisitors, and duelists looking to prove their skill.

Conspectus: Ruled in the east by Prince Medrose II and ruled in the west by Princess Avengelina—two siblings who contest the other's right to sit upon their father's throne; traveling carnivals and fortune tellers; fanatical worship of a goddess known as The Lady of the White Way (a warrior-mother goddess whose faith was spread by the sword in ancient ages); inquisitors, witch hunters, templars, and flagellants; settling matters of honor with rapier and dagger duels; fencing schools; dust bowl-roaming bandits and bugbear thugs; Southern Gothic atmosphere; rising cults devoted to Kumo-Thlis (the Snake God, The One Who Slithers)

Taste, Sound, Image: Rotgut tequila and beef jerky, Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds's “Papa Won't Leave You, Henry,” Jerome Jean Leon's *Duel After a Masquerade Ball*.

MORD-STAVIAN

Precis: Death-obsessed desert kingdom ruled by clockworkian despots serving an undead sorcerer-king.

Conspectus: Ruled by a lich-king called The Necropolitan (high priest of a pantheon of a hundred death gods including The Dismembered One, The Flayed Maiden, and The Carrion Marquis); clockworkian (sentient automatons made of metal and wood) upper caste who use Anubian (jackalwere) enforcers to keep the human populace under control; giant scarab beetles used as mounts; thri-kreen, kruthiks, and fire giants in the wilds; dragon-liches; necromancy, necrophidius, and mummies; tomb guardians and professional mourners; dervish tribes seeking enlightenment in the desert; the Guild of the Frayed Noose (kukri-wielding spies and assassins); the Colossal Sepulcher of Faraad-Ka, which is known to be guarded by necrotic sphinxes

Taste, Sound, Image: Honey, Abney Park's “Neobedouin,” Hubert Robert's *Klassiche Ruinen*.

RELMEENOS

Precis: Warrior cults contest with each other in a land where proving individual merit is a spiritual path unto itself.

Conspectus: Independent city-states ruled by Poet Kings and Queens (who are often insane and incomprehensible); succubi, harpies, and nymphs; satyr cults and orgiastic rites to the Gods of the Grapes; yearly competition of athletic prowess, philosophical debate, and poetic ingenuity called The Annual Wrestling with the Self and the Divine; frequent skirmishes between the Sisterhood of the Rending Spear (a cohort of wild, debauched warrior-women devoted to Thanalia, Goddess of Forging, Sailing, and Cavorting) and the Purple Helm'd Brethren (legions of militarist, pseudo-fascist warrior-men devoted to Asthaeton, God of Civilization, Virgins, and Progress); mathematical magic stolen from the mazes of minotaurs; werebears, medusa, and phase tigers; gladiatorial games where crabmen and dragonians face off against hydras and cyclops; stirge swarms

Taste, Sound, Image: Spanakopita, Estradasphere's "King Krab Battle," Frank Frazetta's *Atlantis*.

THE RUINOUS SCAR

Precis: A destroyed kingdom home to vast wastelands and labyrinthine ruins.

Conspectus: Former holy land decimated by a forgotten magical apocalypse; dungeons, caverns, and endless mazes of tunnel-compounds beneath the earth; chaos mutants and mutagenic magical "radiation," accursed artifacts and the remnants of past civilizations; temples to elder elemental gods; the Tomb of Seven Swords, carcass scavengers, giant acid roaches, otyugh, and reddish-brown hulks, lost grimoires and scrolls of forbidden knowledge; architectural magic, portals to other worlds, and shrines to Junox (the Ever-Flowing God) and Skaylex (Goddess of Fungi)

Taste, Sound, Image: Dust and sour water, The Black Heart Procession's "Wasteland," Simon Marsden's photographs of Whitey Abbey.

SCARABAE

Precis: A cultured kingdom of knightly virtue haunted by the spirits of a past age.

Conspectus: Ruled by Liza VI (The Sun Queen); worship of sorceresses as avatars of The Lady of the White Way; questing knights in search of the grail; roadside chapels and wandering clerics; red dragons, bulettes, philosopher manticores, and basilisk-riding cuckolds; spiritualists, seances, and ghosts; ectoplasm horrors; devil cults and false prophets; haunted battlefields patrolled by wights and wraiths; courtly intrigue, romanticism, and debts of honor; elven towers that disappear into a misty haze unless approached with the correct talismans; dryads and lamia struggling against each other for control of the Talonback Woods.

Taste, Sound, Image: Pure water, Marissa Nadler's "Ghosts and Lovers," Aubrey Beardsley's *Excalibur in the Lake*.

THE SCAVENGER LANDS

Precis: Nomadic barbarian tribes struggling to survive in post-apocalyptic badlands.

Conspectus: Ruled by tribal leaders; worship of Beast Gods (such as The Golden Lion, The Luminous Hawk, and The Unconquered Badger) through blood rites and occult totems; barbarian tribes; djinn, gnolls, fomorians, and ogres; dragon cults and vision quests; highly prized recruits for mercenary bands; hobgoblin warbands; exiled Black Warlocks and their orc servants; drow cities underneath the plains—occasional evangelists of the cult of Narlathia (Fey Goddess of Enchantment, Pain, and Plunder) travel the surface with a vanguard of driders; blue dragons; the fabled Spring of Unexplainable Youth; The Plains of Unquenchable Sorrow.

Taste, Sound, Image: A highly-spiced stew, Siouxsie & the Banshees's "Cities in Dust," Edwin Lord Weeks's *The Maharaja of Gwalior Before his Palace*.

THE SHAE ISLES

Precis: Fey-touched realm of storytellers and pagan cults that follows the logic of warped fairy tales.

Conspectus: Ruled by clan chieftains and druid hierophants; worship of pagan nature gods (such as The Forest Who Walks, The Lamenting Mother, and The Crooked Moon) by witch cults, warlocks, and druidic initiates; banshees howling across the moors; the Seelie and Unseelie Courts of the fey; treants, shambling mounds, and branchlings as protectors of the forests; bards and magical storytelling; blue-tattooed warriors; elf bargains, blood contracts, hollow hills, and the Wild Hunt; curses and hexes—wandering hex-breakers; green dragons; perytons, bog mummies, animate scarecrows, families of cursed ghouls

Taste, Sound, Image: Irish whiskey and soda bread, The Pogues's "The Sickbed of Cuchulainn," John William Waterhouse's *Circe Invidiosa*.

ULVERLAND

Precis: A dreary land of rain, despair, and stoic warriors; morbidity, tradition, and reliance on magic as the ideals of a moribund culture.

Conspectus: Ruled by Barthon I (The Glorious King) and his Council of High Wizardry; worship of Garm-Gorak (the Bloody Maw, God of Wolves and War) and lesser gods of the Storm Sovereigns pantheon (such as The Gaunt Gent, God of Knowledge, Libraries, and Silence; Maham, the One-Eyed God of Beast Taming; Charlak, God of Imprisonment; and Hulmora, Goddess of the Elements); cockatrices kept as pets by the aristocracy; skull oracles and divination via entrails; hidden libraries guarded by berbalang and gargoyles; wandering towers and deathknights; black dragons, kenku, owlbeats, and talon terrors; the Orxham school of magic and other occult universities; blood oaths and raven messengers; cavernous fortresses of the eyes of terror and their kin, dandy highwaymen; stoicism as a way of life; secret cults devoted to Slurge (Demon Lord of Pestilence, Famine, and Gallows Humor)

Taste, Sound, Image: Guinness, Sol Invictus's "Laws and Crowns," Stephen Kasner's *The First Greeter*.

WHAT I KNOW ABOUT THE GODS OF THE WORLD BETWEEN

What I know about the Gods of the World Between...is not much at all. I know that there are many beings (proper Gods, primal spirits, ancestral spirits, and Demon Lords and Queens) that are worshiped as deities. I know that there are hundreds of religions, pantheons, sects, and local deities worshiped throughout the World Between. I know that the gods (whether proper Gods or powerful Demons) are cruel and weird; they all display very little regard for humanity and are worshiped mainly to be placated rather than adored. I know that the gods have little power to force their wills upon the world and that they are dependent upon their chosen worshipers to further their unfathomable agendas. I also know the following:

Asthaeton (God of Civilization, Virgins, and Progress) – he's basically the dour god of no-fun; his followers might be the worst kind of fundamentalists and Puritans

Astariax (Goddess of Intrigue, Stratagem, and Mercantile Prosperity) – always depicted as wearing luxurious clothing and with her nose turned up in the air haughtily; like if Paris Hilton were Machiavelli

The Carrion Marquis – super creepy and gross death god worshiped in Mord-Stavian; god of death in war; depicted as a rotting general surrounded by a cloud of black flies

Charlak (God of Imprisonment) – Storm Sovereign pantheon; it is said that he carved out dungeons beneath the world before men ever walked the globe

The Crooked Moon – cruel nature god; definitely *Wicker Man*-y

The Dismembered One – super creepy and gross death god worshiped in Mord-Stavian; depicted as horribly crippled and missing limbs

Dragon Cults – barbaric cults revering ancient, powerful dragons—especially dragons with mutations, such as multiple heads; five-headed dragon goddesses fit in here

Father Sothack (God of the Briny Depths, the Drowned King, Prince of the Kraken's Maw) – grim sea god; Neptune crossed with Dagon; his avatar looks like that Cthulhoid guy from *Pirates of the Caribbean*; his rites involve near-drowning baptisms

The Flayed Maiden – super creepy and gross death god worshiped in Mord-Stavian; depicted much like Julia in *Hellraiser II* before she gets her skin back

The Forest Who Walks – a cruel nature god; definitely *Children of the Corn*-y

Garm-Gorak (the Bloody Maw, God of Wolves and War) – Storm Sovereign pantheon; like a Viking on an LSD-and-PCP cocktail

The Gaunt Gent (God of knowledge, libraries, and silence) – Storm Sovereigns pantheon; *berbalang* are said to be his special servitors in the world; his avatar looks like Angus Scrimm in *Phantasm*

The Golden Lion – Beast God; God of Pride, Honor, and Martial Prowess

The Gods of the Grapes – Gods of Libations; depicted as satyrs (may have “The Great God Pan” connotations)

Hakhan (Demon Lord of Bestial Bloodshed) – depicted as a massive minotaur or beastman-like creature covered in blood and girt with a belt of skulls; basically the god of death metal album covers

Hulmora (Goddess of the Elements) – Storm Sovereigns pantheon; like if Thor were a permanently pissed-off goddess who threw thunder and lightning and rain everywhere

Junox (The Ever-Flowing God) – a god more feared than worshiped; said to have created oozes, slimes, jellies, puddings, etc.; rules from a throne made of garbage and refuse

Killane of the Road (The Luck Lord, The Prince of Coins, The Keeper of the Crossroads) – revered by gamblers, pirates, bandits, and travelers; a happy-go-lucky god; definitely a trickster

Kumo-Thlis (The Snake God, The One Who Slithers) – definitely sinister; his rites involve snake-handling, speaking in tongues, rolling in the aisles; the cult devoted to Kumo-Thlis views the church of the Lady of the White Way as idol worship

The Lady of the White Way – a warrior-mother goddess, like Mother Mary crossed with Joan d'Arc; worshiped in Caligari, Midian, and Scarabae as a monotheistic goddess—all other divine beings are considered to be false idols and demons; has a hierarchical priesthood, a pope, cathedrals, inquisitors, witch hunters, and templars; her church views the cult surrounding Kumo-Thlis to be little more than a pack of devil worshipping heathens; four apostolic saints:

Arianna, the Bloody Redeemer, a crusader who brought the fledgling Church of the Lady to the pagan south. She is depicted as a mighty warrior in plate armor wielding a sword stained with the blood of infidels. She is especially revered by cavaliers, mercenaries, warlords, and nobles from military families

Calbrius, the Light Seeker, a monk who compiled the scattered theological documents said to be the holy writ of the early Church into the Book of the Lady. He is depicted as a cowed, hunchbacked scribe laboring over ancient tomes. He is especially revered by scholars, astrologers, wizards, and learned theologians

Bernus, the Stumbling Wayfarer, was a merchant who converted to the faith of the Lady after an encounter with an angel on the road to Caligari. He is depicted as a blind-folded pilgrim leaning on a shepherd's crook. He is especially revered by travelers, traders, gypsies, and penitents

Coraline, the Voice of Doom, was a mystic who became a prophet after wandering the wastelands of the north. She is depicted as a gaunt figure whose eyes burn with divine radiance. She is especially revered by oracles, inquisitors, templars, and witch-hunters.

The Lamenting Mother – a cruel nature goddess; definitely Shub-Niggurath-y; inspires *Suspiria*-esque shenanigans

The Luminous Hawk – a Beast God; barbarians believe that he drags the sun into the sky each day; he is the enemy of the undead

Maham (the One-Eyed God of Beast Taming) – Storm Sovereigns pantheon; lost an eye taming a celestial bear; enemy of the Beast Gods; depicted as a one-eyed ogre

Mama Lazuul (Lady of the Midnight Hour) – goddess of crimes that happen under the cover of darkness and late-night rendezvous; goddess of thieves and love

Matakhan (Demon Queen of Assassins, Executions, and Poison) – purple-skinned and multi-armed; bloodthirsty; may be a female avatar of Hakhan; has devotees in the Island of Jade Mysteries and the Iron Principalities

Merrihel (Goddess of Death and Glorious Battle) – the Morrigan via German opera and Romanticism; has shadowy Valkyries; hates Baba Yaga

Mong-Trall (The Capricious Monkey God) – a trickster god; his temples are defended by monkeys wielding razors

Morgath (Lord of Undeath, The Corpulent Reaper) – a big fat fleshy grim reaper; fit for doom metal album covers; worshiped by liches, vampires, penanggalan

Mother Lothack (Demon Queen of the raging sea, the Tempest Queen, Our Lady of the Sharks) – the demonic consort to Father Sothack; those who survive shark attacks are considered to be blessed by her

Narlathia (Fey Goddess of Enchantment, Pain, and Plunder) – her servants are deadly red-caps and drow; revered by marauders; spider goddess; Cenobite-y

Papa Simett (Lord of Secrets and Whispers) – it is said that anything that is whispered is heard by Papa Simett

Skaylex (Goddess of Fungi) – more feared than worshiped; the mushroom men are her servants

Slithian Vor (Demon Queen of Aestheticism and Carnality) – sinister-sexy demoness as designed by Oscar Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley; sends succubi as emissaries

Sluurge (Demon Lord of Pestilence, Famine, and Gallows Humor) – always depicted as wearing a top hat; a diseased dandy

Thanalia (Goddess of Forging, Sailing, and Cavorting) – party-time goddess

The Unconquered Badger – a Beast God; he is the God of defending hearth and home; you've seen the honey badger video, right? He's like Ron Swanson in honey badger form

Zzorch (Demon Lord of Mutation and Wild Magic) – like a mad wizard interested in mutations and magical experiments; Victor Frankenstein would have worshiped Zzorch

NOTES ON “DEMI-HUMANS” IN THE WORLD BETWEEN

Since my campaign setting is humans-only for the player characters, I tend to make demi-humans monsters associated with fears linked to the human condition; that is, each demi-human race represents some problematic aspect of mankind that we like to pretend doesn't exist.

Dragonian – *Dragonian play on the fear of masculinity.* Dragonians act as unbridled representations of masculine force without emotional counterbalance. They embody competition, pure physicality, and proving oneself through strife, and possess limited faculties for empathy, group endeavors, or concern for moral and ethical considerations. A dragonian simply takes action, driven by his own sense of infallibility, and damns the consequences as belonging to the world of weak-willed and weak-bodied untermensch. Dragonians frequently subscribe to Dragon Cults that support their feelings of innate superiority.

Drow – *Drow play on the fear of decadence.* The drow have their own corrupt empire beneath the surface of the World Between in the Neverwhere, from which they rule the Unseelie Court of the fey. Whereas the ideals of a grand empire should run towards progress, egalitarianism, and the personal growth of its constituents, the empire of the drow is regressively barbarous, brutally hierarchical, and morbidly fixated on exploring the boundary between pain and pleasure. Their empire is a deeply magical one; they have mastered arcane spell-casting, alchemy, and the art of brewing enchanted poisons. However, drow magic is never used to the betterment of their society—rather, it is deployed to bring about the ruin of others. Drow also bolster their power by seeking divine favor; Narlathia is their patron goddess, but many drow also revere Matakhan, The Lamenting Mother, and the Demon Queen Slithian Vor. One final note on the drow of the World Between: they are not color-coded for your convenience; they range from the palest skinned to the darkest skinned, and are thus impossible to separate from regular elves or eladrin at first glance.

Dwarves – *Dwarves play on the fear of avarice.* Dwarves are capable of fantastical acts of creation; their rune-inscribed weapons are the most powerful to be found in the World Between and they can harness the intersection of magic and technology to craft wonders that no other race is capable of. However, a dwarf feels an unreasonable need to be paid magnificently for his or her labor. Dwarves are unpredictable in what they will accept as tender; each is driven by a specific greed: some lust after gold, some favor gems, yet others crave stranger things like the hair of blonde maidens. A dwarf who feels he has been cheated will go to great lengths to exact revenge and gain their reward; cheating a dwarf is the mark of a suicidal mind. Dwarves tend to worship Astariax, the gods of the Storm Sovereigns pantheon, or the pagan gods of the fey; there is also a group of corrupt dwarves known as the duergar who fell into worship of the various infernal powers.

Eladrin – *Eladrin play on the fear of alien-ness.* Though the eladrin are the *de facto* leaders of the Seelie Court, their motives and desires are utterly inexplicable from a human perspective. Eladrin exist at a remove from the World Between, and are content to pursue their own ends within their mystical traveling towers. However, when humans come into contact with the eladrin they are left with an impression of emptiness, coldness, and dispassion towards the vagaries of the human condition. While eladrin may sometimes aid mankind, their reasons for doing so are their own and seldom possess a correlation to an understandable human explanation.

Elves – *Elves play on the fear of chaos.* Though elves are friendlier to mankind than much of the fey, they are creatures of terrifying impulses. Elves are beings of constantly shifting moods who follow their whims and caprices with no regard for the harm that this causes to mortal men. One day an elf may offer to help a cobbler create wondrous shoes so that he might better feed his family, the next day that same elf may shoot down the cobbler's children with arrows for mere sport. Unpredictable and motivated entirely by their passions, elves exist in what seems to be a constant state of madness; they are capable of moments of manic revelry, crushing sorrows, and fierce violence. As creatures who represent the chaos of the natural world, they give worship to a myriad of gods and goddesses associated with the wilds, such as the Crooked Moon, the Forest Who Walks, and the Lamenting Mother. Other types of fey (such as sprites, pixies, brownies, etc.) act in much the same way as elves.

Kobolds – *Kobolds play on the fear of misrule.* Kobolds are animal-headed fey (most are dog-headed) who were horribly warped by the cataclysm that caused the Ruinous Scar; in fact, they may be the only beings who remember what transpired to create the Scar due to their nigh-immortality. Kobolds are generally immune to aging and death by decrepitude—so long as they consume human flesh at least once a month. The terrible price required by their immortality has transformed the kobolds from a race of merry fey pranksters into a species who use foul traps and trickery to catch potential human meals. Indeed, the lures, snares, and mechanical traps of the kobolds are infamous and have inspired many a cautionary fairy tale throughout the World Between.

Giants – *Giants play on the fear of inebriation.* The sad truth is that all giants—whether the rarefied philosopher kings of the cloud giants or their malformed cousins the fomorians—are slaves to their addictions. While some are more functional than others, all are dangerous when under the influence of alcohol or other (more exotic) substances. While in their cups they rage and destroy, turn against friend and ally, and are capable of the basest deeds. The day after their rampages will be one colored by crushing remorse, but they are doomed to forever repeat their tragic cycle.

Goblins – *Goblins play on the fear of science run amok.* Goblins are the great magical experimenters of the fey; they use sorcerous rites to invent bizarre hybrid creatures (owlbears, manticores, and talon terrors are said to be their handiwork), magical automatons (the secrets of golem-craft and the clockworkians are rumored to have originated with them), and cursed magic items. Above all else, goblins love to use their experimental magic on living creatures; they have been known to raid human lands for subjects on which to test their demonstone-fueled mutational processes. The existence of closely-related kindred species (such as nilbogs, bugbears, and hobgoblins) are likely the results of demonstone experiments that the goblins have inflicted on their own kind. Though they primarily worship their own ability to create, goblins have a healthy respect for the goddess Narlathia, whom they see as the original creator of their race and as the “dark spark” that initiated the known universe.

Gnolls – *Gnolls play on the fear of animality.* While man prides himself on his ability to tame and domesticate the animals of the World Between, gnolls stand as a reminder that not all of the World's creatures can be taught to accept man's yoke. Gnolls exemplify the state of nature; they revel in the bestial violence that makes their lives nasty, brutish, and short. The gnoll social unit—the pack—stands in opposition to the more complicated bonds of reciprocity that have allowed mankind to flourish across the World Between. Gnoll shamans most often serve Hakhan and Slurge.

Gnomes – *Gnomes play on the fear of the unheimlich.* Gnomes typically appear as perfectly-proportioned humans, save for the fact that their mouths are filled with rows of shark-like teeth. Gnomes are known throughout the World Between as the Fell Bargainers, for while they can offer powerful enchanted items their deals always come at a horrific price. Gnomes often appear to adventurers bearing exactly what they need, when they need it, but a gnomish bargain almost always brings a terrible doom. Gnomes are notorious masters of illusion (and are sometimes to be found performing on the cabaret stages of Caligari) and have an unnatural ability to converse with and control animals.

Halflings – *Halflings play on the fear of place.* Whether dumpy and diminutive or lithe and agile, halflings curiously take on the worst qualities of where they live. For example, the bayou halflings of the Ghael Isles are backward, ignorant, illiterate, and slyly cruel, while the halflings who have made their homes in Caligari City are urbanely corrupt, convincing dissemblers, and prone to engage in urban criminality. Smiling scamps that they are, halflings tend to revere Killane of the Road as their patron god. Much like their god, halflings are tricksters, shysters, con-men, and charlatans; and yet, there is something supernaturally charming about them that often disarms the folk they regularly cheat.

Ogres – *Ogres play on the fear of cannibalism.* Ogres appear as brutish humans inflated to an ungainly size that seems like a mockery of mankind's form. They rarely possess more than the rudiments of what might be called culture or society; rather, they live in family-based tribes that often appear to be a cruel satire on the social arrangements of the lowliest lower-class humans. Ogres are justly feared because of their never-satiated hunger. Their desire to consume can drive them to commit unparalleled acts of gruesome consumption; it is said that an ogre who has given over to their hunger will devour any living creature that comes within their grasp. Ogres tend to worship the primal spirits associated with fire, for like fire an ogre must live with the burning desire to consume until nothing is left.

Orcs – *Orcs play on the fear of savagery.* Orcs are not a natural species in the World Between; they are sorcerous creations birthed in the laboratories of wizards and from the cauldrons of witches. They are created solely for the purpose of bloodshed and are used by their creators as brute henchmen, assassins, bodyguards, and as the basis of evil warbands. Orcs care for little more than slaughter; the only thing that gives them joy is to snuff out the candle of life through direct, violent means. If an orc survives their creator, they usually migrate to the wild-lands of the World where they congregate with others of their kinds into barbaric hordes who assault the settlements of the World Between solely for the pleasure they find in destruction. Such orcs have been known to come under the influence of the Demon Lord Hakhan.

Tieflings – *Tieflings play on the fear of racial degeneration.* Tieflings are the results of consorting with demons and devils; as such, they represent both the allure and danger of mixing one's bloodline with that of infernal beings. Tieflings are secretive, shadowy, and manipulative by nature. They are openly accepted in Caligari, Harrowfaust, and the Ghael Isles, but in other lands they may be hunted down as unclean abominations. All tieflings are looked upon as potential servants of the Demon Lords and Demon Queens; it is rumored that many of the tieflings of Caligari are members of the cult of Slithian Vor.

Trolls – *Trolls play on the fear of the abject.* Impossibly gangly and horrifically countenanced, there is just something wrong about trolls. Men feel the presence of trolls long before they spot them; a man or woman knows that a troll approaches when they feel the hair on their arms prickle and their skin involuntary shiver. When confronted by a troll, a person's mind is attacked by brief flashes of unclean things such as viscera, human waste, and diseased flesh. The smell of a troll is an unmistakable blend of rubbish, spoiled meat, and swamp vegetation. As creatures of filth and squalor, trolls are the servants of the Demon Lord Slurge.

HOUSE RULES FOR THE WORLD BETWEEN CAMPAIGN

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

Races: The World Between is a human-centric setting, so “demi-human” races are generally unavailable. Instead, you may roll on the Random Background Table for an Ability Score bump and some free equipment. (If you ask really nicely about a non-human race we might be able to work something out.)

Classes: See my Character Class rules for changes to the classes. In addition to the classes in the *Advanced* book, also available are the barbarian, bard, mutant, and warlock classes.

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.

Second Wind: There is a Second Wind mechanic also in use to supplement your Hit Points.

Alignment: I don't generally bother with it, but feel free to write it on your Character Sheet if you like.

Charisma and Hirelings: Your Charisma scores doesn't determine the maximum number of followers you can hire; rather, it limits the number of fanatics you can attract.

Critical Hits: A natural to-hit roll of 20 does maximum damage.

Shields Will Be Splintered: Is in full effect.

Encumbrance: We will use the *LotFP* system for this, when I remember to check.

CHARACTER CLASS HOUSE RULES

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, 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: 1d10 Hit Points per level. Fighters have two 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:** *Cleave*—when you reduce an opponent to 0 Hit Points or less in melee combat you may make a free attack against an adjacent foe.

PALADIN

Changes: 1d10 Hit Points per level. The paladin's moral code will be a bit more flexible than the paladin's; 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: 1d8 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, lycanthropes, demons (includes devils), automatons (golems and constructs), hags (and other warped, chaos-tainted creatures), outsiders (Cthulhoid aberrations), 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).

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, but 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.

MONK

Changes: 1d8 Hit Points per level. Monks get a +5% bonus to all thief skills they have normal access to.

MUTANT

Changes: 1d8 Hit Points per level. Otherwise as per the mutant class in *Mutant* book. A "psychic" character can be made by using the mutant class and only taking mental mutations; physical mutations and physical mutation draw backs are ignored.

BARBARIAN CLASS

Requirements: STR 13, DEX 12, CON 14

Prime Requisites: STR, CON

Hit Dice: 1d12 through 9th level, +3 per level thereafter

Maximum Level: none

Experience Chart: Ranger

Attacks/Saves: Fighter

Weapons/Armor: All swords, axes, spears, daggers, shortbows, and longbows/leather armor, studded leather armor, and shields

Barbarians are typically warriors who hail from nomadic or uncivilized cultures. They are usually found in areas of the world that are still wild. The barbarian's fighting spirit is imbued with this wildness; they are frenzied berserkers, warp-spasm-prone marauders, and reavers accustomed to life amidst the wastelands.

Special Abilities:

Barbarians may track as per a ranger of the same level.

Barbarians are surprised only on 1 on 1d6; they may surprise others on 1-3 on 1d6.

Savage Rage—a barbarian can choose to go into a violent rage once per day at 1st level and once more per day for every three levels the barbarian attains. While in the throes of a rage a barbarian gains a +2 bonus to hit and damage. A rage lasts for 1d6 rounds + Constitution modifier; however, a barbarian can pre-emptively end a rage. While in a rage a barbarian can only attack in melee and gains a +4 bonus to Saving Throws vs. fear effects.

Reaching 6th level: *Vulgar Display of Power*—when a barbarian kills a foe he or she may choose an opponent whose Hit Dice are lower than the barbarian's level; that foe must make an immediate morale check.

Reflavoring: Of course, a barbarian character doesn't necessarily have to hail from a barbaric culture. A barbarian might be a normal soldier who falls into a murderous rage in the heat of battle. Or perhaps a barbarian might be a normal man or woman who is sometimes possessed by the bloodthirsty spirit of a deceased maniac or murderer.

BARD CLASS

Requirements: INT 12, WIS 12, CHA 15

Prime Requisites: WIS, CHA

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

Maximum Level: none

Experience Chart: Ranger

Attacks/Saves: Cleric

Weapons/Armor: All swords, all bows, daggers/leather armor, studded leather armor, chain mail, shields

Bards are wandering troubadours, mystic minstrels, charming rogues, inspiring warlords, adventuring dilettantes and magical storytellers whose abilities are intimately connected to the power of myth and the unfolding archetype of legendary heroism. Their deeds, and the deeds of their companions, are magnified by the mythic resonance the emanates from a bard's cunning and personal magnetism.

Special Abilities:

Force of Personality—three times per day a bard may draw upon their magnetic personalities to invoke one of the following effects: *Charm Person*, *Command*, or *Hypnotism*. Upon reaching 3rd level, a bard may also use this ability to emulate the effects of a *Hypnotic Pattern* or *Suggestion* spell. At 10th level a bard may use this ability to mimic the effects of a *Mass Charm* spell. A bard may also use this ability to counter the effects produced by the magical vocal powers of mythic beings, such as the seductive song of the siren or the death-dealing howl of the banshee. When a bard uses their countersong ability their allies gain a +2 bonus to Saving Throws versus their foe's vocal powers. For any use of Force of Personality, a bard must be able to vocalize and the intended target of this ability must be able to both hear the bard's words and understand the bard's language.

Inspire Courage—when in the presence of a bard, a bard's allies gain a +1 bonus to Saving Throws against all fear effects. The bard also receives this bonus.

Decipher Script—because of a bard's mastery of language, they can often roughly translate any piece, even if it is written in a language they do not fully understand. A bard's chance to glean a useful translation from a text is equal to a thief of the same level's chance to Pick Pockets. A bard also gains one additional language of the player's choice.

Reaching 2nd level: *Inspire Legendary Deeds*—because bards are so powerfully connected to the archetypal story of success against daunting odds, heroic deeds tend to happen with uncanny regularity in their presence. Three times per day a bard may grant themselves or an ally a +2 bonus to a roll (or a +10% bonus to a percentile skill). This ability increases to +3 at 5th level and +4 at 7th level.

Reaching 4th level: *Jack of All Trades*—a bard may pick four of the thief class's skills to use as a 2nd level thief. At 5th level, those skills increase to those of a 3rd level thief, etc. Due to a bard's wide range of experience, they also have a percentage chance equal to the Find/Remove Traps ability of a thief of the same level to know something useful about any topic. Any topic (sailing, ancient history, heraldry) may be rolled for in this way; if the roll is successful, make a note that the bard knows something about that topic for future reference should the topic come up again.

Reaching 6th level: *Arcane Dabbler*—a bard can cast spells as per a ranger, save that these abilities are gained two levels earlier. This ability increases exactly as it does per the Ranger Spell Progression chart, but at two levels earlier.

Reaching 8th level: *Loremaster*—due to their unbreakable connection to mythic stories and legends, a bard may use *Identify* or *Legend Lore* once per day.

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.

Warlocks may have some sort of familiar at the start of play. 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.

CHARACTER BACKGROUND TABLE

Since the World Between is a “humans-only for player characters” setting, players may roll on the following table to see what their character did before becoming an adventurer. This table gives a random bonus to Ability Scores, as well as a few items of equipment left over from the character's previous life. Additionally, each entry features a "leading question" to consider as you piece together your character's background; a player may answer the question to develop a quick back-story for their character.

| d100 | Career |
|------|---|
| 01 | Actor – Whether a busking musician, actor, or carnival performer, you earned your bread through the performing arts. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Charisma or +1 Dexterity <i>Trappings:</i> Disguise kit, costumes from various roles <i>Leading question:</i> What is the strangest audience you have ever performed for? |
| 02 | Alchemist – You were formerly a seeker after the forbidden knowledge encoded in the occult science of alchemy. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Intelligence or +1 to all Saving Throws vs. Poison <i>Trappings:</i> Laboratory equipment (glass beakers, braziers, and tools) <i>Leading question:</i> What were the aims of your alchemical research? |
| 03 | Alienist – You were formerly a doctor working with the mentally ill. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Intelligence or +1 Wisdom <i>Trappings:</i> Straightjacket, 2d6 pieces of parchment, bottle of ink and a quill pen <i>Leading question:</i> The mad gibber unspeakable things; what was the strangest thing a patient ever said in your presence? |
| 04 | Animal Handler – Whether you dealt with horses, falcons, or circus bears, you made your living as a tamer and trainer of animals. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Constitution or +1 Wisdom <i>Trappings:</i> Muzzle, whip, and padded gloves <i>Leading question:</i> They say that animals can sense things that man cannot; what is the strangest thing one of your animals has ever reacted to? |
| 05 | Artisan – You made your living at a skilled craft such as woodworking, smithing, brewing, etc. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Dexterity or +1 Strength <i>Trappings:</i> Tools of the trade <i>Leading question:</i> Who were your rival artisans and why do they wish you ill? |
| 06 | Artist – You made your living producing beautiful paintings, sculptures, stained glass, etc. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Dexterity or +1 Wisdom <i>Trappings:</i> Tools of the trade <i>Leading question:</i> You once created a grotesque work of art based on something you saw in your dreams; what was it? |

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| 07 | <p>Astrologer – You earned your living predicting the future based on the position and patterns found in the stars.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Intelligence or +1 Wisdom</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Astrological charts and a telescope</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> What horrific thing that you saw in the stars did you refuse to foretell as part of your astrological predictions?</p> |
| 08 | <p>Author – You once made your living penning literature such as novels, penny dreadfuls, poems, or plays.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Intelligence or +1 Wisdom</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Random assortment of books (1d6), 3d6 pieces of parchment, bottle of ink, and a quill pen</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> You once wrote a grotesque text based on something inhuman that you witnessed; what was it?</p> |
| 09 | <p>Bandit – You formerly haunted the wilds or backstreets of the world to prey upon and rob unwary travelers.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Dexterity</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Any one-handed weapon and leather armor</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> Your gang of thieves was lead by a terrifying personage; who were they?</p> |
| 10 | <p>Beggar – You were once an indigent who begged in the streets for alms.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Constitution or +1 Charisma</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Alms bowl</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> What unforeseen ruin descended upon you to reduce you to this state?</p> |
| 11 | <p>Bodyguard – You were employed as the hired muscle for an important personage.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Constitution</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Leather armor, any hand weapon</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> The person you were contracted to protect met an unfortunate end; why?</p> |
| 12 | <p>Bounty Hunter – You earned your coin seeking out criminals and forcing them to stand trial for their misdeeds.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Wisdom</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Manacles, any hand weapon</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> Who was the most vicious criminal you ever apprehended?</p> |
| 13 | <p>Bravo – You were once employed as a knife-for-hire.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Dexterity</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> A black mask, any hand weapon, light crossbow with 20 bolts</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> Your last assassination attempt went horribly wrong; why?</p> |
| 14 | <p>Bureaucrat – You formerly earned your keep as a minor government functionary such as a tax collector or seneschal.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Intelligence or +1 Charisma</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> 1d6 random books, 2d6 pieces of parchment, bottle of ink and a quill pen</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> What was the most troublesome event you ever had to deal with in an official capacity?</p> |

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| 15 | <p>Burglar – You once operated as a “second-story man” who specialized in robbing homes and domiciles.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Dexterity</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Grappling hook, 40' rope, and thieves' tools</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> You once broke into a home, but the residents were prepared for you; what were you subjected to before you made good your escape?</p> |
| 16 | <p>Caliban – You were born in a village, town, or neighborhood haunted by the wicked powers of a witch; due to the infernal magic in the environment, you were born stunted or malformed in some way. Many regard you as an inhuman monster.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Constitution or +1 to Saves vs. Spells</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Hooded cloak or cowl</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> What was one incident where “normal” people treated you cruelly?</p> |
| 17 | <p>Cavalryman – You served a nobleman as a cavalryman and general protector of the realm.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Constitution</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Warhorse, lance, shield</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> What atrocities did you witness being committed in your lord's name?</p> |
| 18 | <p>Charlatan – You once traveled from town to town selling swamp water and snake oil as curative tonics and patent medicine.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Intelligence or +1 Charisma</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> 2d6 bottles of patent medicine in a wooden case</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> What events led to you being exposed as a charlatan?</p> |
| 19 | <p>Circus Performer – Whether as a strongman, an acrobat, or else, part of your life was spent with a traveling carnival.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Dexterity</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Tools of the trade, circus garb</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> Carnival folk tell many strange tales not for the ears of marks; what is the oddest story you ever heard during your time with the circus?</p> |
| 20 | <p>Coachman/Coachwoman – You earned your bread transporting travelers to locations both near and far.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Constitution or +1 Dexterity</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Horse and coach</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> What is the most disturbing location you've ever been paid to transport a customer?</p> |
| 21 | <p>Consulting Detective – You once worked as an independent detective who investigated crimes that left the official authorities stumped.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Intelligence or +1 Wisdom</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Disguise kit, magnifying glass</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> What is the one unsolved case that still haunts you?</p> |
| 22 | <p>Courtier – Though not an aristocrat or noble yourself, you are a known personage at a noble court.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Intelligence or +1 Charisma</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Expensive clothing, 50% more starting funds</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> Rumors abound about the disquieting customs of the upper classes; what horrific scenes of debauchery have you witnessed at court?</p> |

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| 23 | <p>Dandy – In the past you came into possession of a sum of money grand enough to afford you a lifestyle of leisure; you were able to pursue whatever subjects interested you.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Dexterity or +1 Charisma</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Expensive clothing, 50% more starting funds, 1d4 works of art</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> How did you come to be able to afford a period of idle living?</p> |
| 24 | <p>Demon-blooded – Somewhere in your direct family line is an ancestor who dallied with the tempters of hell; your life is forever tainted by your demonic bloodline.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Constitution or +1 Charisma</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> 1d6 books on the occult that have been passed down the generations</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> What is the tell-tale sign of your infernal heritage?</p> |
| 25 | <p>Duelist – You made your living through strength of arms, whether it be boxing, wrestling, or swordplay.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Dexterity or +1 Charisma</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Dueling weapon of choice</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> What events led to you killing an opponent in a violent rage?</p> |
| 26 | <p>Engineer – Your aptitude for mechanics served you well as an engineer in the employ of a wealthy lord or civic authority.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Dexterity or +1 Intelligence</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Hammer, pulley, 1d6 books on engineering or science, 2d6 schematic drawings</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> What was the most unusual mechanical solution you were asked to devise?</p> |
| 27 | <p>Explorer – You were part of an expedition to either explore an unmapped portion of the world or a colonist sent to civilize a savage land.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Constitution or +1 Intelligence</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Wineskin, spyglass, 2d6 maps</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> What was your most terrifying interaction with a native populace?</p> |
| 28 | <p>Farmer – Whether you worked a farmstead owned by a lord or were an independent landholder, you made your living working the land.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Constitution</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Farm implements (pitchfork, hoe, scythe, grain flail, etc.)</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> The people of the rural lands sometimes stick to antiquated, pagan ways; what was the most unusual superstition or rite that you've been privy to?</p> |
| 29 | <p>Fence – You once trafficked in illicit and stolen goods.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Charisma or +1 Intelligence</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> 1d4 fake gemstones or counterfeit coins</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> What is the most unnerving object you've ever found a buyer for?</p> |
| 30 | <p>Ferryman – You made your way by ferrying others across the world's waterways.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Charisma</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Skiff and pole</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> You once fished a bloated corpse from the river; what did you discover in its pockets?</p> |
| 31 | <p>Fisherman – You formerly made your living off of what you could catch from the sea.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Constitution or +1 Dexterity</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Fishing pole, line, lures, and net</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> There is more to the waters of the world than just fish; what is the strangest thing you've ever spotted while casting your line?</p> |

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| 32 | <p>Forger – You made your living off of trickery and deceit by counterfeiting coins and forging documents. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Dexterity or +1 Intelligence <i>Trappings:</i> 1d8 counterfeit coins and falsified documents, faked signet rings <i>Leading question:</i> What is the worst spot of trouble your duplicity ever got you in?</p> |
| 33 | <p>Fortune Teller – You once made a career of telling the future by consulting a crystal ball and tarot cards or reading tea leaves and animal entrails. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Wisdom or +1 Charisma <i>Trappings:</i> Tools of the trade (crystal ball, tarot card, dowsing rods, etc.) <i>Leading question:</i> What is the one fortune you saw but refused to reveal to a client?</p> |
| 34 | <p>Friar/Nun – You once took a vow to pursue the life of a cloistered devotee of a church. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Intelligence or +1 Wisdom <i>Trappings:</i> Wooden holy symbol <i>Leading question:</i> What temptation led you to abandon your vow?</p> |
| 35 | <p>Frontiersman/Frontierswoman – You were once a settler trying to eek out a living from the wilds of the world. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Constitution <i>Trappings:</i> Light crossbow and 20 bolts <i>Leading question:</i> What horrors have you seen on the frontier that you could never imagine in the world's more civilized places?</p> |
| 36 | <p>Gambler – Whether by luck or by cheat, you made your living playing at games of chance. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Dexterity or +1 Charisma <i>Trappings:</i> Pack of cards and dice <i>Leading question:</i> What is the most uncanny object you've ever won at a game table?</p> |
| 37 | <p>Game Warden – You were employed by an aristocrat to keep their private hunting lands free from poachers. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Dexterity or +1 Constitution <i>Trappings:</i> Longbow with 20 arrows, manacles <i>Leading question:</i> The dark of the forest hides many strange things; what have you seen in the depths of the woods?</p> |
| 38 | <p>Grave Digger – Death is a constant in the world; someone has to dig the holes to dispose of death's remainders. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Constitution <i>Trappings:</i> Shovel and crowbar <i>Leading question:</i> While digging a grave you once discovered that something was already buried in the appointed plot; what was it?</p> |
| 39 | <p>Herbalist – You formerly made your living as an apothecary or country doctor who mixed up herbal remedies for the ill and infirm. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Intelligence or +1 Wisdom <i>Trappings:</i> Mortar and pestle, bag of herbs <i>Leading question:</i> What is the one concoction who were asked to brew, but refused because of the possible consequences?</p> |

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| 40 | <p>Hermit – You led a lonely existence of isolated contemplation before returning to the world and its ways. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Constitution or +1 Wisdom <i>Trappings:</i> 1d10 random books <i>Leading question:</i> What events led you to the life of a hermit?</p> |
| 41 | <p>Highwayman – You were a “gentlemen (or gentlewoman) of the roads,” a dashing robber on horseback who relived travelers of their goods at sword-point. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Dexterity or +1 Charisma <i>Trappings:</i> Riding horse, rapier <i>Leading question:</i> Horses are sometimes skittish creatures; what did you encounter on the lonely roads that threw yours into a foaming panic?</p> |
| 42 | <p>Hostage of the Fey – You were stolen from your crib as a child and replaced by a changeling babe; your fey abductors returned you to the world as a teenager with little memory of your time spent in the fey courts. <i>You gain:</i> +1 to all Saving Throws vs. charm effects or you may cast one 1st level Druid spell per day (in addition to any other spells you gain through your character class) <i>Trappings:</i> 1 random magical miscellaneous item <i>Leading question:</i> What is your most persistent memory of your time spent among the fey?</p> |
| 43 | <p>Hunter – You lived a rugged life of living off the land in a wild, untamed location. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Dexterity or +1 Constitution <i>Trappings:</i> Longbow and 20 arrows <i>Leading question:</i> Gruesome beasts lurk in the wild-lands; what kind of monstrous creature have you encountered?</p> |
| 44 | <p>Initiate – You were once set upon the path of becoming an ordained priest of a religion. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Intelligence or +1 Wisdom <i>Trappings:</i> Iron holy symbol, prayer book <i>Leading question:</i> What events soured you on following through with taking a life of spiritual service?</p> |
| 45 | <p>Inventor – Your wandering mind led you to a life of tinkering and invention. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Dexterity or +1 Intelligence <i>Trappings:</i> 2d6 books on science or engineering, hammer, pliers, screwdrivers <i>Leading question:</i> What was the most fantastic invention you've ever seen that was crafted by one of your rivals?</p> |
| 46 | <p>Knight – Whether born to knighthood or raised from the ranks, you were a trained warrior in service to a lord or lady of the realm. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Charisma <i>Trappings:</i> Warhorse, chain mail armor, any hand weapon <i>Leading question:</i> What was the cause of the tensions between you and the lord or lady you were sworn to serve?</p> |
| 47 | <p>Laborer – Whether a carpenter, a weaver, or else, you earned your keep with the work of your hands. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Constitution <i>Trappings:</i> Tools of the trade (hammer, chisel, etc.) <i>Leading question:</i> Not all is simple or prosaic in the workshops and factories of the world; what abuses have you seen heaped upon the backs of the working class?</p> |

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| 48 | <p>Lawyer – You led a respectable life as an admitted practitioner of the law.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Intelligence or +1 Charisma</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Powdered wig, 2d6 books of law, 2d6 pieces of parchment, bottle of ink and quill pen</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> Gross miscarriages of justice are inextricably wrapped up in the legal system; what was the most flagrantly mishandled case that you were involved in?</p> |
| 49 | <p>Merchant – Whether a shopkeeper or an importation and exportation magnate, you made your living trading various commodities.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Intelligence or +1 Charisma</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Horse and cart</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> Strange items are sometimes traded as part of a normal parcel of goods; what oddity most stands out in your mind as a good you wished you had never laid eyes on?</p> |
| 50 | <p>Mesmerist – You made use of your powers of persuasion to live off of others as a grifter.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Charisma or you may cast <i>Charm Person</i> once per day (in addition to any other spells you gain through your character class)</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Pendulum</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> You've used your powers for questionable ends; what is the worst thing you've done using your powers of mesmerism?</p> |
| 51 | <p>Miner – You formerly earned your bread by venturing beneath the surface of the world to retrieve precious metals or gems.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Constitution</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Pick axe, prospecting sieve</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> Unfathomable terrors lurk beneath the world's surface; what have you seen in the darkened tunnels of the mines?</p> |
| 52 | <p>Money Lender – Whether as an agent of a banking house or as a private provider of funds, you once issued capital and collected interest.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Intelligence or +1 Charisma</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Small chest with a complex lock, 2d6 pieces of parchment, bottle of ink and quill</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> Who is the person you are most ashamed to have funded?</p> |
| 53 | <p>Musician – Whether attached to a noble's court, a cabaret performer, or a street busker, you made your living with instrument in hand.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Dexterity or +1 Charisma</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Musical instrument</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> Who is the most mysterious personage you've ever been asked to perform for?</p> |
| 54 | <p>Mystic – You have pursued a life amongst dusty tomes of eldritch lore and made a career of learning forbidden secrets.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Intelligence or you may cast one Magic-User spell once per day (in addition to any other spells you gain through your character class)</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> 2d6 books on the occult, 2d6 blank scrolls, bottle of ink and quill</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> You have immersed yourself in unholy lore, but there is one text that even you are afraid to peruse; what is the grimoire you fear most?</p> |

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| 55 | <p>Noble – You were born into wealth, privilege, and a title. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Constitution or +1 Charisma <i>Trappings:</i> double your normal starting wealth <i>Leading question:</i> The noble courts of the world are home to strange intrigues; what is the oddest play for power you've ever been privy to?</p> |
| 56 | <p>Orphan – You were an abandoned child who either grew up on the streets or in an orphanage. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Dexterity or +1 Constitution <i>Trappings:</i> A trinket supposedly left to you by a parent <i>Leading question:</i> What rumors have you heard about your parentage?</p> |
| 57 | <p>Outrider – You were a caravan guard or hired yourself out to protect traveling pilgrims <i>You gain:</i> +1 Dexterity or +1 Wisdom <i>Trappings:</i> Any one-handed weapon and a riding horse with saddle <i>Leading question:</i> What is the most bizarre attack you've ever helped fend off?</p> |
| 58 | <p>Peddler – You were a traveling salesman who ventured far and wide to vend your wares <i>You gain:</i> +1 Intelligence or +1 Charisma <i>Trappings:</i> Wooden case with whatever is left-over from your former stock <i>Leading question:</i> What is the oddest item ever to cross your palm as part of a transaction?</p> |
| 59 | <p>Physician – You have made a study of the human animal and are a qualified anatomist or surgeon. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Dexterity or +1 Intelligence <i>Trappings:</i> Physician's kit (including scalpels and an amputation saw) <i>Leading question:</i> The human body possesses many unsolved mysteries; who was the most uncanny patient you've ever treated?</p> |
| 60 | <p>Pickpocket – You were a street thief who worked the art of the bump-and-grab. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Dexterity or +1 Wisdom <i>Trappings:</i> Modified coat with many secret pockets <i>Leading question:</i> What is the strangest item you ever pilfered from a passer-by?</p> |
| 61 | <p>Pirate – You once sailed the seas in search of plunder and ill-gotten gains. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Dexterity <i>Trappings:</i> Cutlass, grappling hook and rope, a peg leg or hook hand (if you like) <i>Leading question:</i> Pirates hide their treasure in all manner of mysterious locations; where is your former captain's hoard rumored to reside?</p> |
| 62 | <p>Pit Fighter – Whether as an official gladiator or a member of an underground fight club, you earned your coin with your fists. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Constitution <i>Trappings:</i> Shield, cestus or short sword <i>Leading question:</i> It is said that some gladiatorial battles take place between men and unthinkable beasts; what is the most unusual creature you've ever done battle with in the pit fighter's ring?</p> |
| 63 | <p>Preacher – Though you were never an ordained cleric of an established religion, you felt the calling to go forth and preach a deity's gospel as a traveling revivalist. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Wisdom or +1 Charisma <i>Trappings:</i> Holy book, metal holy symbol, 2d6 religious tracts <i>Leading question:</i> What were the most unfriendly circumstances in which you preached your spiritual beliefs?</p> |

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| 64 | <p>Priest – You are an ordained minister of your faith. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Wisdom or +1 Charisma <i>Trappings:</i> Holy book, metal holy symbol, 2d6 theological books <i>Leading question:</i> A life of faith is a life plagued by doubt; what unholy urge tempts you to stray from the path of your God?</p> |
| 65 | <p>Prisoner – You were incarcerated for a crime you may or may not have committed. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Constitution <i>Trappings:</i> A shiv fashioned from what came to hand in prison <i>Leading question:</i> The justice system is full of abuses; what is the most egregious abuse you witnessed while a prisoner?</p> |
| 66 | <p>Procurer – You earned your bread off the labor of prostitutes—your role was either to direct prostitutes to house of ill repute or you were the outright owner of a seraglio. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Intelligence or +1 Charisma <i>Trappings:</i> A fanciful cane that was your badge of office on the streets <i>Leading question:</i> Some clients possess very specific tastes; what is the most inhuman or blasphemous acts you've seen visited upon a woman of the night or rent boy?</p> |
| 67 | <p>Proprietor – You owned or operated an inn, tavern, or eatery of some sort. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Intelligence or +1 Charisma <i>Trappings:</i> Accounting ledger <i>Leading question:</i> Who was the oddest person ever to set foot in your establishment?</p> |
| 68 | <p>Prostitute – Whether as a street walker or a high-class escort, you made your living through the world's oldest profession <i>You gain:</i> +1 Constitution or +1 Charisma <i>Trappings:</i> Cosmetics, stiletto <i>Leading question:</i> What was the one potential customer you felt far too threatened to go with despite whatever remuneration they may have offered?</p> |
| 69 | <p>Rag Picker – You made your living sorting through the world's refuse to scrounge up salable items. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Dexterity or +1 Wisdom <i>Trappings:</i> 2d10 odds and ends of dubious value <i>Leading question:</i> What is the most disturbing item you've ever uncovered from a heap of rubbish?</p> |
| 70 | <p>Raised by Wolves – Whether by accident or design, you were abandoned at birth in the wilds and subsequently raised by animals. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Dexterity <i>Trappings:</i> none <i>Leading question:</i> What led you to leave your animal “parents”?</p> |
| 71 | <p>Rat Catcher – Your lowly task was to hunt down and destroy vermin; you were your home's first line of defense against disease. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Dexterity or +1 Constitution <i>Trappings:</i> Rat-pole, club, small-but-vicious dog <i>Leading question:</i> Some say that there are more than rats in the sewers and back alleys of the world; what horrors have you seen while fulfilling your duties?</p> |

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| 72 | <p>Resurrectionist – You engaged in the unwholesome activity of digging up corpses to sell as dissection cadavers to medical schools.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Constitution</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Shovel, crowbar, and rope</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> Who is the most disquieting person you've ever sold a body?</p> |
| 73 | <p>Revolutionary – You were a rebellious agitator who pushed for violent revolution.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Intelligence or +1 Charisma</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> 2d6 political tracts and 1d6 vials of flammable oil</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> Who did you wish to overthrow?</p> |
| 74 | <p>Sailor – Whether as a privateer or marine, you made your living traveling upon the high seas.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Dexterity</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Hand axe, 2d4 nautical charts, 1d4 bottles of grog</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> They say that monstrous things prowl the depths of the world's oceans; what terrors have you seen in your journeys?</p> |
| 75 | <p>Scholar – You have made your life a life of study, contemplation, and the pursuit of knowledge.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Intelligence or +1 Wisdom</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> 2d12 books on various subjects</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> The halls of academia are home to some truly bizarre characters; who is the most disquieting scholar you know in your field?</p> |
| 76 | <p>Scout – You worked as a ranger for a standing army or mercenary company.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Dexterity or +1 Constitution</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Camouflage cloak, spyglass, short bow and 30 arrows</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> As the advance scout for an army you've seen many a trap laid before you; what happened the one time you missed the tell-tale signs of an ambush?</p> |
| 77 | <p>Scribe – You earn your meager coin by working as a clerk and copyist.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Intelligence or +1 Wisdom</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> 2d6 bottles of ink, 1d8 quill pens, 3d6 pieces of parchment, and ruler</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> In your duties you have been asked to copy rare texts; what is the most blasphemous text you've ever dealt with?</p> |
| 78 | <p>Sea-blooded – Somewhere in your ancestry is a relative who dallied with the hideous and inhuman Deep Ones.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Dexterity</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> none</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> What happens in your disturbing reoccurring dream of the sea?</p> |
| 79 | <p>Sellsword – You once lived by the sword as a member of a mercenary band.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Constitution</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Any one-handed weapon and leather armor</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> The screams of the slaughtered still resound in your ears; what happened?</p> |
| 80 | <p>Servant – You formerly led a life of service as a butler, maid, footman, or page to a person of wealth and prominence.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Constitution or +1 Charisma</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> none</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> What scandal forced you to resign your position?</p> |

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| 81 | <p>Sewer Jack – You once had the unenviable position of patrolling a sewer to root out cultists, mutant beasts, etc. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Constitution <i>Trappings:</i> Any one-handed weapon, lantern, and leather armor <i>Leading question:</i> What is the most horrific thing you've seen deep within the sewers?</p> |
| 82 | <p>Slave – You were formerly another person's property. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Constitution <i>Trappings:</i> none <i>Leading question:</i> How did you win your freedom or escape from bondage?</p> |
| 83 | <p>Smuggler – You worked for a criminal organization sneaking in illicit or banned goods past border agents and watchmen. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Intelligence <i>Trappings:</i> Small chest with a false bottom, lantern, any one-handed weapon <i>Leading question:</i> What was the most mysterious item you were asked to smuggle past the authorities?</p> |
| 84 | <p>Soldier – You were an enlisted warrior attached to a standing army. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Constitution <i>Trappings:</i> Any one-handed weapon and shield. <i>Leading question:</i> What order were you given that your conscience forced you to disobey?</p> |
| 85 | <p>Spiritualist – Whether you were a fake or a true believer, you worked as a medium who conveyed messages from the afterlife for a fee. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Wisdom or +1 Charisma <i>Trappings:</i> Crystal ball and ouija board <i>Leading question:</i> What is the most horrific message you have been asked to relay by a spirit to the living?</p> |
| 86 | <p>Spy – You lived the life of a professional intriguer and secret agent. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Dexterity or +1 Intelligence <i>Trappings:</i> Disguise kit, face mask, and spyglass <i>Leading question:</i> What is the one secret you discovered that you wished that never come to your attention?</p> |
| 87 | <p>Squire – You were once in training to be a knight of the realm. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Dexterity <i>Trappings:</i> Livery, any one-handed weapon, shield <i>Leading question:</i> What led to the end of your knightly aspirations?</p> |
| 88 | <p>Stage Magician – Whether a street magician or an illusionist who toured the world's theaters, you practiced the art of sleight-of-hand to earn your keep. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Dexterity or +1 Charisma <i>Trappings:</i> Wand (non-magical), 2d4 colorful scarves, 1d4 rabbits or doves, pack of cards, and collapsible top hat <i>Leading question:</i> What is the one trick you've seen another magician perform that you have never been able to figure out?</p> |

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| 89 | <p>Thug – You were no dextrous thief or dashing rogue; you mugged people using only brute force and intimidation. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Constitution <i>Trappings:</i> Club, dagger, sap, and leather armor <i>Leading question:</i> You once picked a fight you could not finish; what unnatural event had you mistakenly stumbled into?</p> |
| 90 | <p>Tomb Raider – You were a freelance archeologist who delved into the ruins of the past age in search of precious artifacts and the glory of discovery. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Intelligence or +1 Dexterity <i>Trappings:</i> Crowbar, 2d4 torches <i>Leading question:</i> What is the one tomb whose threshold you wish you had never crossed?</p> |
| 91 | <p>Trapper – You hunted animals for their pelts. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Constitution <i>Trappings:</i> 1d4 animal traps and a dagger <i>Leading question:</i> What is the most terrifying beast who has been caught in your snares?</p> |
| 92 | <p>Tutor – You made your living teaching the heirs of a wealthy family. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Intelligence or +1 Wisdom <i>Trappings:</i> 1d10 books on various topics and a diary <i>Leading question:</i> What mysterious circumstances led to your dismissal?</p> |
| 93 | <p>Vagabond – Rather than hold any form of gainful employment, you once lived as an aimless wanderer. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Constitution or +1 Wisdom <i>Trappings:</i> Ramshackle tent <i>Leading question:</i> The traveling life made you privy to many wondrous sights; what is the most miraculous thing that has unfolded before your very eyes?</p> |
| 94 | <p>Vampire Hunter – You were a professional hunter of the creatures of the night. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Constitution or +1 Wisdom <i>Trappings:</i> 2d4 wooden stakes, 2d6 cloves of garlic, hammer, and crowbar <i>Leading question:</i> Why are you such a tireless pursuer of the undead?</p> |
| 95 | <p>Wasteland Scavenger – You managed to scrape together food and drink in one of the world's most inhospitable locations. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Constitution or +1 Wisdom <i>Trappings:</i> Any one-handed weapon and leather armor <i>Leading question:</i> What terrifying creature have you encountered in the wild-lands?</p> |
| 96 | <p>Watchman – You were once a member of the town watch or a member of the local constabulary. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Strength or +1 Wisdom <i>Trappings:</i> Any one-handed weapon, lantern, manacles <i>Leading question:</i> Who was the most violent criminal that ever evaded your reach?</p> |
| 97 | <p>Wiccaman/Wicawoman – You once lived as an isolated hermit; villagers would come to you for guidance and your ability to work magical charms. <i>You gain:</i> +1 Wisdom or you may cast one 1st level Druid spell once per day (in addition to any other spells you gain through your character class) <i>Trappings:</i> 1d4 books of occult lore and a bag of herbs <i>Leading question:</i> What supernatural even led you down the path of magic and witchcraft?</p> |

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| 98 | <p>Witch Hunter – You once worked as an operative of an established religion; you were charged with rooting out and destroying any instances of witchcraft and heresy.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Constitution or +1 Wisdom</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Iron holy symbol, manacles, 1d6 books on witchcraft, any hand weapon</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> What happened the last time your righteous fury dominated and consumed your mind?</p> |
| 99 | <p>Wizard's Apprentice – You were once the student of a practitioner of the magical arts.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Intelligence or you may cast one 1st level Magic-User spell once per day (in addition to any other spells you gain through your character class)</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> 1d8 books of magical lore and a wand (non-magical)</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> What circumstances led to the end of your apprenticeship?</p> |
| 100 | <p>Wolf's Head – You were once an outlaw on the run from the law.</p> <p><i>You gain:</i> +1 Dexterity or +1 Constitution</p> <p><i>Trappings:</i> Leather armor, longbow and 30 arrows</p> <p><i>Leading question:</i> What circumstances led to you being declared a wolf's head?</p> |



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, Bard, Thief, and Assassin

Fighter column includes: Fighter, Paladin, Ranger, Barbarian, Mutant, 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

SECOND WIND

I know Type IV is generally reviled in the Plane of OSR Blogging, but one mechanic I actually enjoy from that edition is Second Wind. For those of you who haven't played it, Second Wind is a once per encounter ability that all characters can use that grants them 1/4 of their max Hit Points back, as well as a temporary bonus to their defenses.

It might strike some folks as a meta-game mechanic, but Second Wind is really meant to emulate a common convention of the action movie or super hero comics genres: in many action flicks or comics there is a moment where the hero is taking a tremendous amount of punishment. It looks like everything is over for our hero, but wait...suddenly they crack their neck, spout a pithy one-liner, and are suddenly re-energized to enter the fray and ultimately win. Second Wind is that moment.

For my old-school games I give characters a Second Wind value equal to 1/4 their maximum Hit Points. Characters can use their Second Wind to add that value to their current Hit Points once per game (not once per encounter!) and they can only do this in combat immediately after having been struck by a foe. Additionally, a player must role-play what their character does to gain their Second Wind; pithy one-liners, profanity-soaked oaths, and emphatic demonstrations of bloodlust are highly encouraged.

(For Gothic-inspired games you might rules that a character can only use their Second Wind out-of-combat if they rhapsodize about the sublimity of nature. Characters in Gothic fiction are constantly regaining their vigor in the midst of a speech detailing the magnificence of some natural vista or other.)

The upshot of this mechanic is that I can make cheesy healing items (Wand of Cure Light Wounds, I am looking at you) much scarcer.



HANDMAIDENS OF THE GODS!

HANDMAIDENS OF THE GODS! are special servitors of the gods of the World Between. Unlike clerics, paladins, and druids, they fulfill specialized functions in the name of their patron god. Theirs is not a spiritual calling, it's a fanaticism that renders them monstrous and inhuman.

Wild Women of the Grape Gods

Wild Women are the devoted keepers of the sacred vintages that are offered up to the Gods of the Grapes. Despite (or perhaps because of) the nature of their duties, they are prone to drunkenness, debauchery, and bestial anger inspired by their wild gods.

Movement: 120' (40')

Armor Class: 15

Hit Dice: 5

No. of Attacks: 1 (Attack Bonus +5)

Damage: 1d4 (rending tooth & nail)

Save: Cleric 5

Morale: 11

Special Abilities:

Handmaiden of the Gods of the Grapes – all Wild Women can cast spells as a 5th level druid.

Holy Frenzy – if provoked in any way, a Wild Woman must make a Saving Throw vs. Spells; if the save is passed, she may act normally, but if the save is failed she falls into a frenzied bloodlust. While in the grips of this frenzy, a Wild Woman gains an additional Hit Die, takes a -2 penalty to attacks, and gains a +3 bonus to damage. While in a frenzied state a Wild Woman cannot cast spells.

Carnalitrix of Slithian Vor

The Carnalitrixes of Slithian Vor are a secretive order who lead the underground pleasure cults of Caligari.

Movement: 120' (40')

Armor Class: 14

Hit Dice: 6

No. of Attacks: 1 (Attack Bonus +6)

Damage: 1d4 (whip)

Save: Cleric 6

Morale: 9

Special Abilities:

Handmaiden of Slithian Vor – all Carnalitrixes can cast spells as a 6th level cleric.

Dance of the Seven Veils – all Carnalitrixes know a mystical dance that can entrance the viewer. When a Carnalitrix dances the Dance of the Seven Veils, all creatures who see her must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Spells or suffer the effects of a *Hypnotic Pattern* spell.

Gateway to a Pleasurable Hell – a Carnalitrix may summon 1d4 succubi once per week.

Corpulent Deathbride of Morgath

Corpulent Deathbrides are select mortal clerics of the demon Morgath; they toil deep beneath the temples of their demonic overlord articulating skeleton warriors to be animated by the cult of Morgath.

Movement: 90' (30')

Armor Class: 14

Hit Dice: 8

No. of Attacks: 1 (Attack Bonus +8)

Damage: 1d8 (jagged saber)

Save: Cleric 8

Morale: 10

Special Abilities:

Handmaiden of Morgath – all Corpulent Deathbrides cast spells as 8th level clerics.

Touch of Sin – anyone touched by a Corpulent Deathbride must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Death or lose 1d4 points of Constitution.

Bloodlust Frenzy – if a Corpulent Deathbride comes within 30' of fresh blood, she will fly into a savage frenzy. While in a frenzy, a Corpulent Deathbride will attack any wounded creatures and gain a +2 bonus to hit and +3 bonus to damage.

Damsel of the Lady

Damsels of the Lady are Scarabaeian devotees of the Lady of the White Way who are trained from birth to be masters of the magical arts. Damsels of the Lady often travel in the company of questing grail knights or serve the realm by accompanying the armies of Scarabae.

Movement: 120' (40')

Armor Class: 15

Hit Dice: 8

No. of Attacks: 1 (Attack Bonus +8)

Damage: 1d8 (longsword)

Save: Cleric 8

Morale: 10

Special Abilities:

Handmaiden of the Lady – all Damsels of the Lady cast spells as 4th level clerics, 4th level druids, 4th level magic-users, and 4th level illusionists.

Summon Angelic Warriors – once per week a Damsel of the Lady may summon 1d4 Movanic Devas.

Mechpriestess of the Carrion Marquis

Mechpriestesses of the Carrion Marquis are a devoted sect who are assigned to guard the Forges of Creation found at the heart of Mord-Stavian. They are the midwives who help birth the next generation of clockworkian despots.

Movement: 120' (40')

Armor Class: 17

Hit Dice: 7

No. of Attacks: 1 (Attack Bonus +7)

Damage: 1d6 (shortsword)

Save: Cleric 7

Morale: 10

Special Abilities:

Handmaiden of the Carrion Marquis – all Mechpriestesses of the Carrion Marquis cast spells as 7th level clerics.

Vorpal Blessing – any blade wielded by a Mechpriestess acts as a weapon with the vorpal enchantment.

New Spell:

Control Automaton

Level: cleric 4

Duration: 2 rounds per level

Range: 120'

This spell grants the caster complete control of an automaton of 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.

Deathdealers of Mong-Trall

Though the Capricious Monkey God is known for his sense of humor, he sometimes sends fanatical assassins after those who have defiled the golden idols erected in his name.

Movement: 120' (40')

Armor Class: 14

Hit Dice: 3

No. of Attacks: 2 (Attack Bonus +3)

Damage: 1d8 (longsword)

Save: Cleric 3

Morale: 11

Special Abilities:

Handmaiden of Mong-Trall – all Deathdealers of Mong-Trall cast spells as 3rd level clerics.

Sword of the Monkey God – all Deathdealers have the abilities of 3rd level assassins.

CALIGARI: DARK SECRET TABLES

Caligari was influenced by my study of Gothic literature and my love of film noir. To further a particular element of genre emulation, I've worked up a few tables of "dark secrets" that plague the characters in Caligari-focused 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 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 own paranoia to ratchet up the tension.

Furthermore, I've put in where in the literature these ideas came from, both so you can see how I use the influence of Gothic literature 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> |

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| 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)

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| 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</i> |

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| | <i>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 | <p>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></p> |
| 10 | <p>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></p> |

CALIGARI: CAMBIONS

It is rumored that Caligarian aristocrats often consort with devils summoned from the World Below. What strange offspring would these unnatural unions result in? Here are four cambions that might be found mingling with the uppers classes of Caligari.

Cambion Seducer

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.

Movement: 120' (40')

Armor Class: 13

Hit Dice: 9

No. of Attacks: 1 (Attack Bonus +9)

Damage: 1d6 (rapier)

Save: Fighter 9

Morale: 9

Special Abilities:

Devilish Phantasmagoria – a Cambion Seducer casts spells as a 9th level illusionist.

Cambion Immunities – immune to all fire-based damage.

Cambion Conqueror

A Cambion Conqueror plots to obtain power through military prowess and battlefield stratagem. They have blood-red skin and prominent horns atop their heads.

Movement: 120' (40')

Armor Class: 18

Hit Dice: 10

No. of Attacks: 3 (Attack Bonus +10)

Damage: 1d8 (longsword)

Save: Fighter 10

Morale: 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.

Cambion Immunities – immune to all fire-based damage.

Cambion Enigma

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 the game of politics as if it were a game of chess.

Movement: Flight 180' (60')

Armor Class: 18

Hit Dice: 12

No. of Attacks: 4 (Attack Bonus +12)

Damage: 2d8 (chain whip)

Save: Fighter 12

Morale: 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.

Cambion Immunities – immune to all fire-based damage.

Cambion Hellknight

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 helms; none know what such a being looks like beneath their casque.

Movement: 120' (40')

Armor Class: 17

Hit Dice: 12

No. of Attacks: 2 (Attack Bonus +12)

Damage: 2d10 (greatsword or greataxe)

Save: Fighter 12

Morale: 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.

Cambion Immunities – immune to all fire-based damage.

Infernal Magicks – a Hellknight can use the following spell-like abilities once per day: *Cause Fear*, *Death Spell*, and *Symbol*.

JALENE VAN KRUUK: A VILLAIN OF CALIGARI

Jalene van Kruuk

Jalene appears to be an unusually tall woman who dresses in a fashionable suit of sumptuous black fabric. She always wears a top hat that has an obscuring veil attached to the brim. Jalene can see through the veil, but it completely conceals her face. The reason for the veil is that it hides Jalene's monstrous nature; though tall in stature for a human woman, she is in fact a rather short cyclops.

Jalene is a servant of Zzorch, Demon Lord of Wild Magic. Zzorch has blessed Jalene with a variety of mesmeric abilities; when Jalene lifts her veil, her singular eye can transfix and dominate anyone whose gaze meets hers. Furthermore, Zzorch sends Jalene instructions through her dreams and makes his will known in terrifying visions that she experiences as a kind of holy seizure-state.

Goals: Jalene has already ingratiated herself as an adviser to the Karlton Braddock, Lord Mayor of Caligari City. She plans on using the Lord Mayor as a stepping stone to get closer to Empress Christiana—Zzorch has given Jalene hypnotic powers so that she might make Christiana a will-less puppet through which to install the worship of Zzorch as Caligari's state religion.

Lair: Jalene has rented a tower near the Imperial Palace. The tower is guarded day and night by well-paid mercenaries. There may be underground tunnels through which the cultists of Zzorch gain audience with Jalene.

Minions: Of course, Jalene hides her connection to the Cult of Zzorch, but she has constant contact with a variety of cultists and wild sorcerers who serve the Demon Lord.

Henchman: Jalene's right hand is the mad spiritualist Lelani Rhek. Zzorch sometimes speaks directly to Jalene through Lelani. Lelani is a fanatic devoted to both Zzorch and Jalene and is willing to give her life for their dreadful cause.

Enemies: The player characters could find unlikely allies among the cultists of the Demon Queen Slithian Vor. Since Zzorch's plans to usurp control of Caligari conflict with those of Slithian Vor to corrupt the nobility through hedonism, the characters might be able to use the aristocratic cultists of Slithian Vor to diminish Jalene's social capital and access to the Empress. Of course, the priests of The Lady of the White Way will be quick to help crush any activity connected to Zzorch, but the church hierarchy will require that the characters present hard evidence of Jalene's involvement with a demonic cult before getting involved.

FROSTREAVE: THE BLESS'D WARRIORS OF MERRIHEL

The Bless'd Warriors of Merrihel are undead champions created from the remains of templars and paladins who served the goddess Merrihel in life. They are animated by the priests of Merrihel to serve the goddess's strange agenda in Frostreave and to protect sites sacred to the goddess. Their might is sometimes loaned to Empress Katrina Rimeheart to help repel frost giant raiders.

Bless'd Soldier of Merrihel

Movement: as normal man

Armor Class: 14

Hit Dice: 1

No. of Attacks: 1 (Attack bonus +1)

Damage: 1d8 (longsword)

Morale: 12

Special Abilities: *Bless'd Undead*—immune to Turn Undead, Holy Water, etc. *Undead Immunities*—immune to poison, disease, suffocation, etc. *Frostborn*—only takes half damage from cold attacks on a failed save; takes no damage on a successful save.

Bless'd Knight of Merrihel

Movement: as normal man

Armor Class: 15

Hit Dice: 3

No. of Attacks: 1 (Attack bonus +3)

Damage: 1d10 (greatsword)

Morale: 12

Special Abilities: *Bless'd Undead*—immune to Turn Undead, Holy Water, etc. *Undead Immunities*—immune to poison, disease, suffocation, etc. *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 Bless'd Knight of Merrihel deals additional damage as per a *Shocking Hands* spell, but the damage is cold-related instead of electrical.

Bless'd Lord of Merrihel

Movement: as normal man

Armor Class: 18

Hit Dice: 6

No. of Attacks: 2 (Attack bonus +6)

Damage: 1d8 (longsword)

Morale: 12

Special Abilities: *Bless'd Undead*—immune to Turn Undead, Holy Water, etc. *Undead Immunities*—immune to poison, disease, suffocation, etc. *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 Bless'd Knight of Merrihel 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.

FROSTREAVE: WHY KATRINA RIMEHEART WEARS AN IRON MASK

Some rumors and unproven conjectures as to the nature of Frostreave's sovereign.

Half of Rimeheart's face is horribly scarred by the trials she went through to gain her immense magical power. She would heap great rewards upon those who found a way to restore her face to its former symmetry.

Rimeheart's face is so hideous that a mere glimpse of her uncovered visage makes men go rigid with fear and covers their bodies with a layer of ice. It is said she uses this power on lovers she's grown tired of and that she keeps their bodies as obscene trophies of her conquests.

Rimeheart wears a mask to disguise the all-too-obvious resemblance between herself and Empress Christiana the Scarlet of Caligari. Rimeheart is Christiana's older sister who ran away in her youth to escape an arranged marriage. If her true identity were to be discovered, Christiana would send assassins after Rimeheart to prevent any future claims her sister might make on the throne of Caligari.

Rimeheart isn't human after all, but rather a demonette of Zzorch who can disguise her true form by taking the shape of a woman—but her magic is unable to disguise the otherworldly appearance of her face. If it were known that demon sits upon the throne of Frostreave, the clerics of Merrihel would stir the people to revolt against the sovereign.



THE GHAEI ISLES: UNDEAD OF THE GHAEI ISLES

Glass Eye Zombie

Glass Eye Zombies are made from normal zombies that have had their eyes removed by dwarf necro-artificers; after removing the original eyes, the dwarfs replace them with enchanted glass eyes that give the undead creature additional powers. Glass Eye Zombies are often found guarding the ancient treasure vaults deep within dwarf mountain fortresses.

Movement: 120' (40')

Armor Class: 12

Hit Dice: 4

No. of Attacks: 1 (Attack Bonus +4)

Damage: 1d8 (slam)

Morale: 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 the Mandrake Academy of Magical Sciences believe that a living creature could learn to call forth the powers of such an item—albeit in a much more limited fashion.

Undead Immunities – immune to mind-affecting magic, poison, disease, etc.

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.

Movement: 120' (40')

Armor Class: 16

Hit Dice: 13

No. of Attacks: 2 (Attack Bonus: +13)

Damage: 1d10 (slam)

Morale: 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 Immunities – immune to mind-affecting magic, poison, disease, etc.



HARROWFAUST: 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

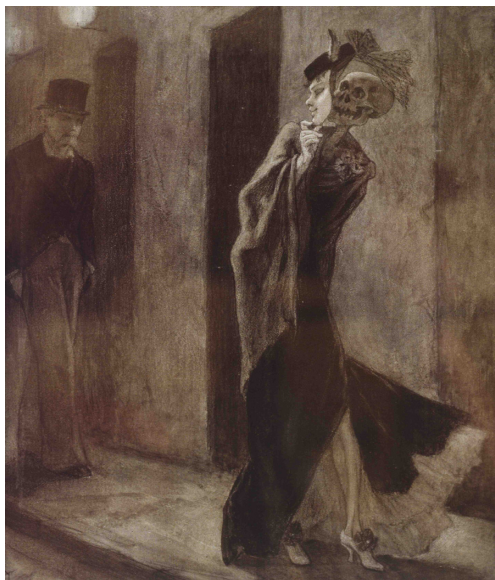
The character has failed a Terror Save against a similar terror within the last day – -3

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 stuck 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, bards, 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, assassins, mutants, and barbarians.

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, warlocks, etc.

NEW SPELLS

Cause Terror

Level: 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: 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: 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.

HARROWFAUST: INTO THE DARK

One terror that characters are often forced to endure in Gothic literature is enclosure within a frightening, claustrophobic underground environment. This convention is a perfect fit to old-school fantasy gaming; after all, old-school role-playing games frequently assume that dungeon-crawling is the default unit of play. Nothing says adventure quite like venturing into the cavernous depths of the earth in search of gold, glory, and mystery. It takes very little to turn this convention into the stuff of Gothic Fantasy gaming. In fact, utilizing the idea of enclosure is largely a matter of thinking in terms of typical Gothic locations that are already ripe for adventure. A dungeon expedition done in the Gothic mode might involve any of the following adventure settings:

The Haunted Manor House—while a haunted house might not have the same dank and unexplored atmosphere of the usual fantasy location, it does offer one point of advantage: by their nature, rooms and hallways are small, enclosing, and give the characters few opportunities to maneuver at their leisure. Setting a dungeon adventure in a haunted house gives the characters the opportunity to be victims of the circumstances of architecture. A sudden battle that breaks out in a haunted upstairs bedroom is certainly going to present a challenge that a similar battle in a wide-open cavern will not.

The Haunted Castle—a haunted castle is much like a haunted manor house, except it allows you to lean more heavily on the tropes of the castle as a medieval remnant that is entirely removed from the rational, progressing world. Whereas there are a limited number of plausible things that can haunt an otherwise normal house, a castle may contain any number of weird secrets. Additionally, a castle is essentially a dungeon that both ascends and descends; the character might be forced to explore both the spiraling towers of a castle, as well as its labyrinthine dungeons.

The Forsaken Monastery—monasteries can be much like castles: they give characters ample opportunities to explore their upper works and their vaults. However, the social function of a monastery can definitely color it as an interesting or unusual dungeon location. If a dungeon is abandoned, it is much the same as any location to be scouted and plundered, but if the monastery is still active it further complicates the characters' plans to infiltrate it for their own ends. Of course, it does without saying that the characters' schemes are doubly complicated if the monastery happens to be inhabited by a group of monks or nuns who have succumbed to heresy or the worship of dark powers.

The Dark Dungeon—literal dungeons (places of confinement, torture, and execution) might be thought of as additional adventure location that can be added on to “dungeon settings” such as castles and monasteries. Nevertheless, by drawing on Gothic conventions you can make each dungeon a unique environment by simply asking yourself, “Who makes use of this dungeon and why?” For example: the dungeon of a castle might be used by its usurping lord as a place to confine the rightful heir of the royal family, the dungeon beneath a monastery might be a sacred crypt that has been taken over by a cult of foul necromancers, or the dungeon beneath the laboratory of a mad alchemist might be the dumping grounds for all the horrible creatures spawned by his foul experiments.

Ancient Crypts and Catacombs—there are burial grounds where the dead do not rest easy; ancient crypts and catacombs are perhaps the most traditional of dungeon environments, but here we might steal a page from actual underground places of burial to keep things interesting. Real crypts are seldom as spacious and easy to maneuver in as their fantasy gaming counterparts. Make your dungeons cramped, enclosing, and maze-like. Imagine the perverse glee you will feel when the characters need to flee from the walking dead and their only method of egress is a narrow passage that hinders their flight!

THE IRON PRINCIPALITIES: ON HEBENON VIALS - POISON RULES

Death by poisoning is by no means an uncommon fate in Gothic tales. Of course, poison represent a particularly treacherous way to murder someone; as far back as Shakespeare's Hamlet with its hebenon vial, the act of poisoning was synonymous with usurpers, frauds, and dishonorable cheats. The following poisons can be used as the tools of your campaign's villains or as models for the venomous effects that supernatural monsters might possess. Alternately, your players may wish to arm their characters with these most treacherous of substances.

If your players wish to brew their own poisons, they will need to invest in the proper apothecary equipment (at least 20 gp for a modest set-up). To create a poison, a character must first locate the needed plant and herbal components by making a Wisdom check or be willing to pay someone with knowledge of plant life to supply them with the necessary roots, flowers, leaves, etc. Since the ingredients for some poisons are more difficult to find than others each entry below notes if there is a bonus or penalty to the Wisdom check; this modifier is applied to the character's Wisdom score directly to alter the target number for the check.

Once the natural ingredients are obtained, the character must also purchase any additional ingredients needed for the preparation. Each entry below notes the cost of preparing one dose of poison. Generally, a successful Wisdom check means that an entire day has been spent gathering the natural components required to brew the poison. (A failed Wisdom check indicates that a day has been spent searching in vain.) Another day of work is then required to prepare the poison using the apothecary equipment; during this part of the process the character preparing the poison must make an Intelligence check to successfully concoct it. If the check is passed, the poison is prepared and ready to be used; if the check is failed, the character must then make a Saving Throw vs. Poison or risk poisoning themselves.

Black Voluptua

Black voluptua is a tea made from the nettles of the voluptua bush. This poison is often used as a sedative during otherwise unbearably painful surgical procedures.

Poison type: Ingested (Onset 2d8 rounds, Detection 60%, Save +2)

Wisdom modifier: +1

Cost to prepare: 35 gp

Effect: Anyone ingesting black voluptua must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or fall unconscious for 2d6 hours. No amount of injury will rouse a character under the effects of this poison.

Duskmilk

Duskmilk is a poisonous concoction made from the thistles of a rare grassland bush. It is sometimes used to induce vomiting if a person is believed to have ingested a more dangerous poison.

Poison type: Ingested (Onset 1d2 rounds, Detection 40%, Save +0)

Wisdom modifier: -2

Cost to prepare: 23 gp

Effect: Anyone ingesting duskmilk must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or do nothing but vomit uncontrollably for 2d4 rounds.

Fool's Folly

Fool's folly is a vicious powdered poison made from the fool's folly mushroom; it causes violent spasms, abdominal pain, and eventually death.

Poison type: Inhaled (Onset 1d6 rounds, Detection 80%, Save +0)

Wisdom modifier: -2

Cost to prepare: 34 gp

Effect: Anyone ingesting fool's folly must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or be incapacitated with pain and muscle contractions for 1d6 rounds. After the pain and spasms have subsided, they must make another successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or die from the effects of the toxin.

Garlic Tincture

Garlic tincture is a special purified oil made from an unusual species of wild garlic. It has an especially strong odor.

Poison type: Ingested or Contact (Onset instant, Detection 80%, Save -1)

Wisdom modifier: +2

Cost to prepare: 5 gp

Effect: Garlic tincture has no effect on normal mortals; however, if a vampire should come into contact with garlic tincture, they must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or immediately suffer 3d10 points of damage.

Greenwart

Greenwart is a bitter herb used in the production of mildly hallucinogenic liquors. When used to produce a liquid extract, however, the herb produces a toxin that often causes violent and unpredictable reactions.

Poison type: Ingested or Contact (Onset 1d8 rounds, Detection 40%, Save +2)

Wisdom: -1

Cost to prepare: 25 gp

Effect: Anyone coming into contact with greenwart (whether through ingestion or skin contact) must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or suffer the effects of a *Confusion* spell for 1d6 hours.

King's Bane

King's bane is produced from the fruit of a rare tree found only in the deepest woods. As a poison, it has a faintly bitter taste that some expert food-tasters can instantly recognize.

Poison type: Ingested or Injury (Onset 1d2 rounds, Detection 20%, Save -2)

Wisdom modifier: -2

Cost to prepare: 50 gp

Effect: Anyone ingesting king's bane must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or die instantly.

Mansnap

Mansnap is a strange poison that has no effect when ingested, but has the power to make wounds fester. Mansnap is made from the venom of the red-striped asp and the leaves of the gallowtree. It is a common belief that wherever a hung criminal's semen falls will be the location in which a gallowtree grows. It is also said that the recipe was invented by a cult of devil-worshippers who used the poison in their battles with the righteous paladins who attempted to stamp-out their blasphemous practices.

Poison type: Injury (Onset instant, Detection 20%, Save +1)

Wisdom modifier: -1

Cost to prepare: 48 gp

Effect: Anyone who is wounded by a weapon coated in mansnap must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or suffer an additional 2d4 points of damage from the wound.

Nun's Hood

Nun's hood is a poisonous liquid made from the dried flowers of night-blooming plant. It is said that because nun's hood is virtually tasteless it is a favorite concoction of professional assassins. The poison gained its name because it was once famously used to poison the well of a peaceful convent.

Poison type: Ingested or Contact (Onset 1d4 rounds, Detection 20%, Save +1)

Wisdom modifier: +0

Cost to prepare: 34 gp

Effect: Anyone who comes into contact with Nun's Hood must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or die within 4d10 turns. While under the effects of nun's hood, a poisoned character can do nothing but convulse and retch.

Witches' Teat

Witches' teat is a vile-tasting liquid made from the root of the Witch Tree. Folklore states that it is frequently administered at witches' sabbaths to inspire the assembled company to deeds of unthinkable licentiousness.

Poison type: Ingested (Onset 1d4 rounds, Detection 80%, Save +0)

Wisdom modifier: +0

Cost to prepare: 27 gp

Effect: Anyone ingesting witches' teat must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or take a -2 penalty to their rolls due to disorientation and hallucinations for 1d4 hours.

Wolfsbane Oil

Wolfsbane oil is derived from the leaves and roots of a fairly common forest plant.

Poison type: Contact (Onset instant, Detection 0%, Save +0)

Wisdom modifier: +2

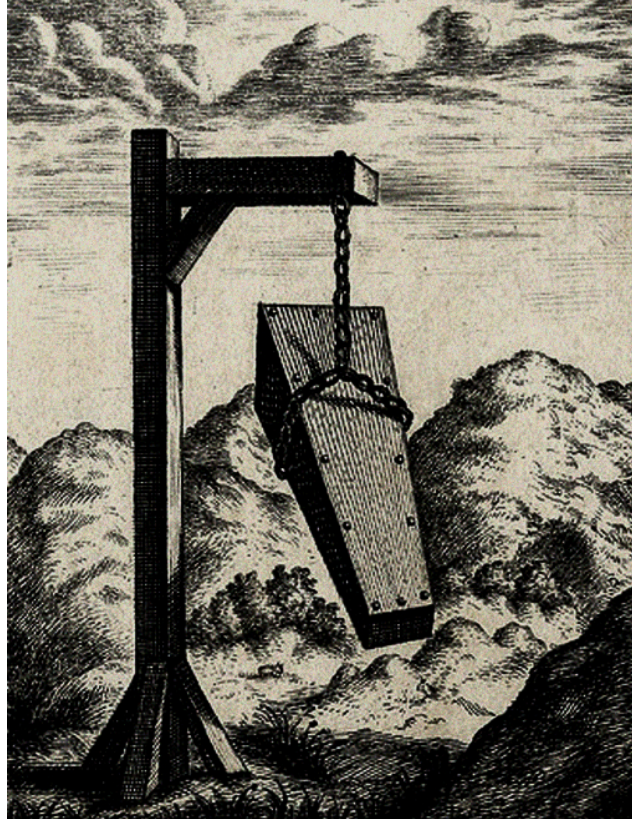
Cost to prepare: 7 gp

Effect: Wolfsbane oil has no effect on normal mortals; however, if a lycanthrope (such as a werewolf) should come into contact with wolfsbane oil, they must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or immediately suffer 3d6 points of damage. Additionally, they will immediately revert to human form.

(If using the *LotFP* rules, simply change the Wisdom check to a Bushcraft check.)

GENERAL POISON TABLE

| d20 | Name | Type | Onset | Detection | Save Adj. | Failed Save Damage | Passed Save Damage | Price |
|---|--------------------|------|--------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|--------------------|-------|
| 01 | Harrowroot Oil | CT | 2d4 rounds | 40% | +2 | 10 | 0 | 20 |
| Symptoms: bodily aches | | | | | | | | |
| 02 | Savior's Venom | CT | 1d6+1 rounds | 20% | +1 | 20 | 0 | 80 |
| Symptoms: sweats, fever, nausea | | | | | | | | |
| 03 | Grizzlemouth | CT | 1d4 rounds | 0% | – | 30 | 10 | 800 |
| Symptoms: parched mouth, swollen tongue | | | | | | | | |
| 04 | Sap of Mendes | CT | 1d2 rounds | 0% | -1 | 40 | 15 | 2000 |
| Symptoms: bodily convulsions | | | | | | | | |
| 05 | Larval Oil | CT | 1 round | 0% | -2 | Death | 30 | 4000 |
| Symptoms: severe bodily pain | | | | | | | | |
| 06 | Redtooth Honey | IG | 2d4 rounds | 80% | +4 | 20 | 10 | 6 |
| Symptoms: itchy rash | | | | | | | | |
| 07 | Poachweed Tincture | IG | 1d4+1 rounds | 60% | +3 | 30 | 15 | 35 |
| Symptoms: burning sensation in throat, nausea | | | | | | | | |
| 08 | Adder's Milk | IG | 1d2 rounds | 40% | +2 | 40 | 20 | 220 |
| Symptoms: burning sensation throughout body | | | | | | | | |
| 09 | Everdream Tincture | IG | 1 round | 20% | +1 | Death | 25 | 520 |
| Symptoms: sudden feeling of light-headedness | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | Tombmilk | IG | 1d4 turns | 0% | – | Death | 30 | 1200 |
| Symptoms: sudden tiredness and lethargy | | | | | | | | |
| 11 | Dust of Lucius | IH | 1d4 rounds | 60% | +3 | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| Symptoms: itchiness throughout body | | | | | | | | |
| 12 | Gravetree Powder | IH | 1d2 rounds | 40% | +2 | 10 | 5 | 25 |
| Symptoms: mild disorientation, brief nausea | | | | | | | | |
| 13 | River Lotus Spores | IH | 1 round | 20% | +1 | 15 | 7 | 35 |
| Symptoms: sudden euphoric feeling | | | | | | | | |
| 14 | Cryptmold | IH | Instant | 0% | – | 20 | 10 | 150 |
| Symptoms: sudden chill felt throughout the body | | | | | | | | |



| | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|----|--------------|-----|----|-------|----|------|
| 15 | Razorfish Powder | IH | Instant | 0% | -1 | Death | 15 | 1200 |
| Symptoms: sudden moment of sensory overload; everything it too bright, too loud, etc. | | | | | | | | |
| 16 | Bishop's Complaint | IN | 2d4+1 rounds | 80% | +4 | 15 | 0 | 15 |
| Symptoms: bodily discomfort, convulsions | | | | | | | | |
| 17 | Knight's Lament | IN | 1d3 rounds | 60% | +3 | 25 | 0 | 75 |
| Symptoms: nausea, aching joints | | | | | | | | |
| 18 | Prince's Doom | IN | 1 round | 40% | +2 | 35 | 0 | 650 |
| Symptoms: swollen tongue, difficulty breathing | | | | | | | | |
| 19 | Queen's Horror | IN | 1 round | 20% | +1 | Death | 0 | 1700 |
| Symptoms: severe, but brief, abdominal pain | | | | | | | | |
| 20 | Pope's Terror | IN | Instant | 0% | – | Death | 10 | 2500 |
| Symptoms: none | | | | | | | | |

To brew any of the poisons listed on the above chart, simply use the Save Modifier as Wisdom modifier for the check to successfully gather the needed natural ingredients. The cost of any additional ingredients will be a fourth of the listed price to purchase the poison.

THE ISLAND OF JADE MYSTERIES: JADE MYSTERIES MONSTERS

Guardian Prayer Tree

Ancient legends tell the tale of the wandering monk, Ishigaza Guro, who made it his life's ambition to bestow a powerful blessing on the holiest temples of the Island of Jade Mysteries. 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 Guro's blessing is attacked, the blessed tree will animate and come to the temple's defense.

Movement: 60' (20')

Armor Class: 16

Hit Dice: 9

Attacks: 2 (Attack Bonus +9)

Damage: 3d6 (smashing branch)

Special:

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> |

Heikegani

Heikegani appear to be giant crabs with human-like faces. In truth, they are the reincarnated spirits of clan warriors who chose to flee battle instead of rallying to the defense of their lord. Cursed by the Monkey God 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.

Movement: 60' (20')

Armor Class: 16

Hit Dice: 3

Attacks: 2 (Attack Bonus +3)

Damage: 1d6 (claw)

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.

Frost Maiden

Frost Maidens are ghostly undead women of great beauty who haunt the countryside of the Dainamyō Prefecture. In life they were the geisha of the Pleasure House of Tang-Feng, but during the puritanical Winter Purges of Lord Hamasari they were driven out and their home was burned to the ground. As they huddled together for warmth in the Dainamyō, 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 Lord Hamasari and his soldiers.

Movement: 120' (40')

Armor Class: 6

Hit Dice: 7

Attacks: 1 (Attack Bonus +7)

Damage: 1d10 (freezing touch)

Special Abilities:

Undead Immunities – poison, disease, etc.

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.



Ebony Butterfly Swarm

Ebony Butterfly Swarms are whirling masses of black-winged death. Legends hold that each butterfly in the swarm is the reincarnated soul of a peasant who somehow displeased Mong-Trall, the Most Capricious Monkey God and Lord of Meaningful Trickery. 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.

Movement: 10' (5')

Armor Class: 13

Hit Dice: 5

Attacks: none (see special abilities)

Damage: none

Special:

Rendering 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.

Amorphous Swarm – anyone within the swarm's area may attack it, but any attack that is usually aimed at an individual opponent (an axe blow, *Magic Missile*, etc.) does half damage since the swarm's strength is greater than the sum of its parts. However, any attack that covers an area (flaming oil, *Fire Ball* spells, etc.) does double damage to the swarm.

THE ISLANDS OF UNPARALLELED LIBERTY: PLACES TO AVOID TABLE

Want to generate some locales that the characters shouldn't be visiting? Roll 1d20 on the following table. Either roll 1d20 once and simply read across the row (roll of 6: The Harlot's Dimples, house of ill repute, front for wererats) or mix it up by rolling 1d20 three times (rolls of 9, 4, 13: The Hag's Tit, pie shop, frequent haunt of Morly Gullcatcher).

| d20 | Name | What is it? | Why should it be avoided? |
|------------|--------------------|--|---|
| 1 | God's Canker | A gambling den, frequented by laborers | Owned and operated by Owen McGauth, a man who uses his innate powers of mesmerism to hypnotize patrons into committing robbery or acts of murder |
| 2 | The Cracked Actor | A gambling den, frequented by rich merchants and traders | Owned and operated by Angelia Dewitt, a medusa who hides her true nature behind a mask and hood. She will attempt to lure any particularly attractive characters (or either sex) into her private rooms to turn them into a statue—she sees herself as an artist who preserves physical beauty for all eternity |
| 3 | Hell's Bitch | Rough pub, frequented by sailors and dock workers | Owned and operated by Doktor Vamker, who uses the bodies of anyone who dies on the premises in his necromantic experiments |
| 4 | The Bucket of Chum | Pie shop that serves vittles of questionable edibility | Front for a coterie of brain lashers; their servants drug patrons and take them to the basement to have their brains devoured |
| 5 | The Broken Ass | Opium den, frequented by exiled aristocrats | Front for the Steel Cadre, a fascist paramilitary organization that is plotting to take over the Islands of Unparalleled Liberty |

| | | | |
|----|-----------------------|--|---|
| 6 | The Harlot's Dimples | House of ill repute, definitely disease-infested | Front for the Spiketail Clan of wererats; their servants knock-out patrons and drag them to a sewer hideout where they are subjected to demonstone experiments |
| 7 | The Wench's Complaint | House of ill repute, specializing in masochism | Front for a disreputable recruiter for the Ulverland navy; patrons might be shanghaied and then press-ganged into military service |
| 8 | The Weeping Cabin Boy | House of ill repute, specializing in sadism | Owned and operated by Jana Sparan, a cultist of the Black Father who will either tempt patrons into selling their souls or sacrifice them to her dark god |
| 9 | The Hag's Tit | Rough pub, frequented by thieves and thugs | Utterly infested by disease and vermin; any amount of time spent here will call for saves vs. disease |
| 10 | The Monkey's Guffaw | House of ill repute, specializing in "exotic races," aka orc women | Cursed by Harland Yarm, a warlock who was killed on the premises. Any amount of time spent here will call for saves vs. curses; this curse can only be removed by giving Yarm's remains a proper burial |
| 11 | The Maggot's Nest | Drug den, specializing in goblin-harvested mushrooms | Front for otherworldly slavers whose servants will drug patrons and then attempt to sell them as laborers to lords in Mord-Stavian |
| 12 | Your Son's Folly | Bawdy playhouse, specializing in all-nude revues that satirize contemporary politics | Owned and operated by Freeman Hull, whose drow lover uses the establishment as a place to test her new poisonous concoctions |

| | | | |
|----|------------------------|---|---|
| 13 | The Miserable Pustule | Cabaret, where all the players are incurably tone-deaf | A frequent haunt of Morly Gullcatcher, a notorious highwayman who is under surveillance by bounty hunters sent to capture him. The characters will get caught in the crossfire |
| 14 | Your Mother's Lament | Fish-and-chips shop, where the chips are always soggy | A den of thieves; the characters will be the victims of pick-pocket attempts |
| 15 | The Knifeman's Stumble | Rough pub, frequented by mercenaries and sellswords | Also frequented by the Bleeding Nihilists, a death cult. Unfortunately, whatever day the characters visit this establishment is the day they've decided to kill themselves...and everyone else they can take with them. |
| 16 | The Grinder's Hole | Bear-baiting ring | Cased for weeks by the Violet Dawn, a thieves guild who will hold-up the establishment on whatever day the characters happen to be there |
| 17 | The Squatting Nymph | Underground pit-fighting ring, no hold barred and fatalities encouraged | Cased for weeks by the Antiking's Men, a radical group who will firebomb the establishment on whatever day the characters happen to be there |
| 18 | The Braying Cousin | Oil-wrestling venue; matches are encouraged to end in copulation for the amusement of the crowd | Owned and operated by Demian Hask, who must keep the walls of one of the establishment's rooms coated in blood lest some horrible Cthulhoid thing break through into the world |

| | | | |
|----|---------------------|---|---|
| 19 | The Whispering Arse | Bawdy tavern; mumblypeg is the chief amusement here | The basement is used as a storeroom for illicit goods; two rival gangs of pirates will descend on this location to retrieve a treasure chest full of plundered gold while the characters are there. Each believes they have the rightful claim to it and will fight to the death for it. The characters will get caught in the melee, at the very least |
| 20 | The Crooked Cock | Rooster-fighting den, frequented by the poorest of the poor | The people who own the cocks that fight here have been purposefully mutating their animals by feeding them chunks of demonstone; some of the roosters will have mutated into uncontrollable beasts with odd powers—they will run amok while the characters are there |

Hopefully you can see the logic behind the “moving parts” of a table like this. While it doesn't give you a fully fleshed-out adventure scenario, it gives you enough content to work with on the fly so you're not completely at a loss for what kinds of trouble the players can get their characters into; the point is to find the middle ground between having game prep feel like homework and grasping at straws at the table. Give yourself a framework, but let the pieces come together in play—you'll be a happier Game Master for it.



MIDIAN: KARINA VON GUSSLE, LATELY OF MIDIAN

Need a nefarious NPC? Here's one currently residing in Midian. I originally made this NPC for one of James Raggi's contests; my immediate point of inspiration 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 Mother Tyler's 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 Midian 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.

Karina von Gussle

Movement: 120' (40')

Armor Class: 12

Hit Dice: 2 (10 Hit Points)

No. of Attacks: 1 (Attack Bonus +1)

Damage: 1d4 (dagger)

Morale: 7

Special Abilities: *Meligra's Will* – *Charm Person* (3x per day), *Confusion* (2x per day)

MORD-STAVIAN: UNDEAD OF MORD-STAVIAN

Necrotic Sphinx

The clockworkian priests of Mord-Stavian employ scavengers to bring them any sphinx corpses they find in the wild-lands. The priests of Mord-Stavian use these corpses as the raw material to create Necrotic Sphinxes—horrific combinations of automaton constructs and undead beasts that are used as warmachines in the armies of Mord-Stavian.

Movement: 180' (60')

Armor Class: 17

Hit Dice: 7

No. of Attacks: 3 (Attack Bonus +7)

Damage: 2d6/2d6/1d8 (blade/blade/stinger)

Morale: 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 the Knight's Lament poison.

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 | Sapping Cloud – Save vs. Poison or lose 1d4 points of Strength |
| 3-4 | Enervating Cloud – Save vs. Poison or lose 1d4 points of Constitution |
| 5-6 | Nerve Toxin Cloud – Save vs. Poison or lose 1d4 points of Dexterity |

Undead Immunities – immune to mind-affecting magic, poison, disease, etc.

Carrion Vulture

Carrion Vultures are created by the clockworkian priests of Mord-Stavian 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.

Movement: Fly 480' (160')

Armor Class: 13

Hit Dice: 5

No. of Attacks: 3 (Attack Bonus +5)

Damage: 1d6/1d6/1d8 (claw/claw/bite)

Morale: 12

Special Abilities:

Necrotic Wounds – Any damage dealt by the bite of a Carrion Vulture will not heal through natural means.

Flayed Walker

Flayed Walkers are zombies that are created through unwholesome rites known only to the necromancer-priests that revere the Flayed Maiden. 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.

Movement: 120' (40')

Armor Class: 12

Hit Dice: 3

No. of Attacks: 1 (Attack Bonus +3)

Damage: 1d6 (claw)

Morale: 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 Immunities – immune to mind-affecting magic, poison, disease, etc.

Scythe Mantis

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

Movement: 160' (50')

Armor Class: 18

Hit Dice: 5

No. of Attacks: 2 (Attack Bonus +5)

Damage: 1d6 (scythes)

Morale: 12

Special Abilities:

Brutal—re-roll any ones for a Scythe Mantis's damage rolls.

Undead Immunities – immune to mind-affecting magic, poison, disease, etc.

Impale—on a natural twenty on a Scythe Mantis's damage roll they do double their maximum amount of damage.

RELMEENOS: WARRIOR CULTS OF RELMEENOS

It is rare that the warrior cults of Relmeenos induct a non-native into the martial secrets of their training regimens, but if a warrior proves their valor and loyalty to a cult they may be formally invited to join the ranks of the Relmeenosian paragons. Outlined below are the benefits of joining the Purple Helm'd Brethren and the Sisterhood of the Rending Spear.

The Purple Helm'd Brethren

Entry: Only men may join the ranks of the Purple Helm'd Brethren. Furthermore, only the most hale and hardened specimens are considered tough enough to endure the Helm'd Brethren's training; a character must have at least a 13 Constitution to survive the hardships involved in learning the martial techniques taught by the Purple Helm'd Brethren.

Training: Prospective Helm'd Brethren must endure the elements without the benefit of protective gear. They must march for days at a time with little or no food. They must train incessantly with sword and shield. They drill constantly in the art of fighting in formation.

Benefits: A character trained in the fighting arts of the Purple Helm'd Brethren can survive on half as much food and water as a normal man, gains a +1 to Armor Class when wielding a shield, and gains a +1 to hit with swords when fighting in formation with other warriors trained in the fighting style of the Purple Helm'd Brethren.

The Sisterhood of the Rending Spear

Entry: Only women may join the ranks of the Sisterhood of the Rending Spear. Furthermore, the Sisterhood values warriors who fight intuitively and find a spiritual aspect to the art of war; as such, a character must have at least a 13 Wisdom to be able to fully comprehend the military and philosophical teachings of the Sisterhood of the Rending Spear.

Training: Prospective Sisters must spend their days learning the tenets of the Sisterhood and practicing their combat maneuvers. In particular, prospective inductees must practice both sprinting in full armor and the art of the spear.

Benefits: A character trained in the fighting arts of the Sisterhood of the Rending Spear gains a 25% increase to their movement rate, a +1 bonus to attack rolls when wielding a spear, and a +1 bonus to damage with short bows when firing in formation with other warriors trained in the fighting style of the Sisterhood of the Rending Spear.

THE RUINOUS SCAR: RANDOM MAGICAL RADIATION MUTATIONS TABLE

When a character suffers prolonged exposure or a brief, high-level exposure to the mutating power of magical radiation, they must make a Saving Throw vs. Spells. A successful Saving Throw negates the effects of the radiation; a failed Saving Throw means that the player must roll on the following chart to determine how their character mutates. For additional “body horror,” describe the mutational process as happening slowly over the course of 2d6 days or game sessions; each day or session should bring incremental changes that hint at the final mutational form.

- 01 – Instead of legs your lower half is now one thick, slug-like appendage. Your movement rate is halved and you leave a trail of slime everywhere you go—you can automatically be tracked.
- 02 – Your skin has turned to iron. Your AC is four points better.
- 03 – You have sprouted big, dangerous horns. You can make one additional attack with your horns for 1d6 points of damage.
- 04 – You now have cloven feet and goat's legs. Your movement rate is increased by 50%
- 05 – You have grown a vicious proboscis somewhere on your body. It can spit a venomous barb for 1d4 points of damage and the target must make a saving throw vs. poison or suffer some random, poison-related effect (sleep, death, slow, etc.)
- 06 – Your body is covered in dreaded rune tattoos. Anyone who strikes you must make a saving throw or suffer the effects of a random curse.
- 07 – Your weapon has become inseparably bonded to your hand/arm. All attacks made with it now receive a +1 bonus to hit.
- 08 – Your skin is now covered in a shaggy hide. Your AC is one point better.
- 09 – Your eyes glow with an eerie light. You now have perfect night vision and can see invisible creatures.
- 10 – You have grown a second head. You can take an additional action, including casting two spells per round. However, you will be prone to arguing with yourself.
- 11 – You have grown an additional arm. You can wield a weapon with this arm for an additional attack per round, but there is a 10% chance that the arm will attack you instead.
- 12 – You have grown a long, whip-like reptilian tail. You can make an additional attack with this tail for 1d6 points of damage or attempt to trip/entangle foes with it.
- 13 – You have grown a functioning set of gills. You can now breath as well in water as you can on land.
- 14 – Your blood has turned to acid. Anyone wounding you in melee must make a saving throw vs. breath weapons or suffer 1d4 points of damage.
- 15 – You can vomit a 30' cone of fire once per day for 3d6 points of damage (save for half).
- 16 – Your body now constantly emits steam and is feverish to the touch. You are now immune to all fire-based attacks.
- 17 – Your body is now constantly covered in frost and is cold to the touch. You are now immune to all cold-based attacks.

- 18 – Tiny arcs of electricity now dance across your skin. You are now immune to all electricity-based attacks and anyone striking you with a metal weapon takes 1d8 points of damage.
- 19 – You are now an albino and being in direct sunlight causes you to take 1d4 points of damage per round.
- 20 – You now heal with unnatural speed. You regenerate 1 hit point per round.
- 21 – Your eyes are now on stalks. You cannot be surprised or sneaked up on.
- 22 – You now emit a horrible stench. Anyone within 30' of you takes a -2 penalty to all actions. Also, you cannot sneak up on anyone—they smell you coming.
- 23 – You have grown vampiric fangs. You may opt to bite someone for 1d6 points of damage; this damage is added to your hit points up to your maximum hit point total.
- 24 – You have grown a mass of tentacles somewhere on your body. These tentacles give you 1d4 extra attacks per round for 1d6 points of damage.
- 25 – You have grown a pair of gigantic wings. You can now fly at your normal land speed.
- 26 – You have grown a third eye in the middle of your forehead. This eye can uncannily discern whether someone is lying to you.
- 27 – Your blood now hates you and seeks to leave your body at any opportunity. When damaged you lose an additional 1d4 points of damage on the following round from blood loss.
- 28 – Your fingernails have grown into perpetually filthy talons. Anyone struck by them takes 1d6 points of damage and must make a saving throw or suffer the effects of a random disease.
- 29 – You now emit an aura that withers any plants around you.
- 30 – Your shadow is now animate. You can command it to do things for you; it has the stats of a Shadow with HD equal to your level. However, there is a 50% chance your shadow will disobey your commands and fuck off to do something else.
- 31 – You have suddenly grown corpulent. You gain 10 hit points.
- 32 – You have suddenly grown gaunt. You lose 10 hit points.
- 33 – You have grown an extra leg, but it's always in your way. Your movement rate is decreased by 50%.
- 34 – Your skin is perpetually covered in snot-like slime. Any attempts to grapple you automatically fail.
- 35 – Your brain has atrophied. Your Intelligence decreases by 2 points.
- 36 – Your body has grown to hulking proportions. Your Strength increases by 2 points.
- 37 – Your body has become monkey-like. Your Dexterity increases by 2 points.
- 38 – You have grown a second heart. Anytime you must make a saving throw vs. death you may roll twice and take the best result.
- 39 – You are now insect-headed.
- 40 – You are now dog-headed. Kobolds will attack you last.
- 41 – You are now cat-headed. Kobolds will attack you first.
- 42 – You are now bear-headed.
- 43 – You are now sloth-headed.
- 44 – You are now elephant-headed.
- 45 – Your face is gone. Oddly, doppelgangers will now take a perverse liking to you.
- 46 – You are now wolf-headed. You will likely be mistaken for a werewolf and hunted.
- 47 – You are now bug-eyed, but this decreases your normal range of vision by 50%.

- 48 – You have grown a second brain. Your Intelligence increases by 2 points.
- 49 – You have grown a scorpion-like tail. You can make an additional attack with your tail for 1d6 points of damage and your victim must make a saving throw or be paralyzed for 1d4 rounds.
- 50 – When you die your body will explode like a Gas Spore.
- 51 – You are now boar-headed.
- 52 – You now float a foot above the ground at all times.
- 53 – You now have suckers on your hands and feet that allow you to flawlessly scale walls.
- 54 – Your skin is now an odd color.
- 55 – You can control the color of your skin, giving you a 2 better chance to surprise enemies when you camouflage yourself.
- 56 – You are now rat-headed.
- 57 – You are now horse-headed.
- 58 – You have grown an enormous pair of faery wings, but they are useless.
- 59 – Your skin is now a mirror-like reflecting surface. Any spell cast on you has a 50% chance of rebounding on the caster.
- 60 – You are now mushroom-headed.
- 61 – You are now snake-headed.
- 62 – You are now sphinx-headed. People will continually ask you for a riddle.
- 63 – You are now skull-headed. You can *Cause Fear* at the start of any encounter.
- 64 – One of your hands has become a crab-like claw. You may make an additional attack with the claw for 1d6 points of damage.
- 65 – Your body has become unstable. You may change form into a Green Slime once per day.
- 66 – Your body continually quivers. You may change form into a Gelatinous Cube once per day.
- 67 – You are now a hermaphrodite.
- 68 – You now have a forked tongue. Oddly, you are now unable to tell lies.
- 69 – Animals are now drawn to your pheromones.
- 70 – Animals are now repulsed by your pheromones and will flee from you.
- 71 – Your skin now appears to be perpetually necrotic and rotting.
- 72 – Your skin now appears to be perpetually crawling with insects.
- 73 – Your head has disappeared; now your face appears on your chest.
- 74 – Your neck has become elongated, like a giraffe.
- 75 – You are now bird-headed.
- 76 – You now have snakes for hair and gain the medusa's petrifying gaze.
- 77 – You can split your body into two fully-formed, identical beings. Each has half your normal hit points.
- 78 – You now bleed ale or wine.
- 79 – Your hands are now hairy.
- 80 – Your hands are now reptilian.
- 81 – You are now 50% shorter than you were.
- 82 – You are now 50% taller than you were.
- 83 – You are now frog-headed.
- 84 – You can vomit a 30' cone of acidic fish once a day for 3d6 points of damage (save for half).
- 85 – You are now fish-headed.

- 86 – Your flesh is now sticky like fly-paper. Any weapon that strikes you has a 50% chance of adhering your body.
- 87 – You have a monstrously elongated tongue. You can speak all languages now.
- 88 – The front of your body is now covered in eyes. You can read all languages now.
- 89 – You are now spider-headed. Drow will prostrate themselves before you.
- 90 – You can emit webs (as per the *Web* spell) from some part of your body.
- 91 – Your body is now covered in thorns or small horns; anyone grappling you takes 1d4 points of damage.
- 92 – Your gender has changed.
- 93 – You emit a pleasing aroma. Your Charisma increases by 2 points.
- 94 – You exude a disquieting aura. Your Charisma decreases by 2 points and children rush to kick you in the shins.
- 95 – You are now a micro-cephalic. Your Wisdom is decreased by 2 points.
- 96 – Your head is now huge and oblong. Your Wisdom is increased by 2 points.
- 97 – Your skin is now translucent.
- 98 – Your body has become hulking and hale. Your Constitution is increased by 2 points.
- 99 – Your body has become hollow like a reed. Your Constitution is decreased by 2 points.
- 100 – Open the monster book of your choice to a random page. That's what you are now.



SCARABAE: UNDEAD OF SCARABAE

Accursed Wight

Accursed Wights are warriors who once sided with a usurper who attempted to steal the throne of Scarabae and have, as a consequence of their treason, been cursed with undeath. In undeath, they are charged with protecting the burial mounds of the ancient rulers of Scarabae.

Movement: 90' (30')

Armor Class: 16

Hit Dice: 5

No. of Attacks: 2 (Attack Bonus +5)

Damage: 1d6 (short sword)

Morale: 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 Immunities – immune to mind-affecting magic, poison, disease, etc.

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.

Movement: 120' (40')

Armor Class: 12

Hit Dice: 3

No. of Attacks: 2 (Attack Bonus +3)

Damage: 1d8/1d8 (chilling touch)

Morale: 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 Immunities – immune to mind-affecting magic, poison, disease, etc.

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 the Wailing Labyrinth.

Movement: 150' (50')

Armor Class: 11

Hit Dice: 2

No. of Attacks: 1 (Attack Bonus +2)

Damage: 1d8 (necrotic touch)

Morale: 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 Immunities – immune to mind-affecting magic, poison, disease, etc.

Galvanic Zombie

Galvanic Zombies are the creations of Auber Orellian, the mad scientist who lives at the House on Thornroot Hill. Orellian is obsessed with harnessing the power of electricity; thus far in his experiments he has 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.

Movement: 120' (40')

Armor Class: 13

Hit Dice: 3

No. of Attacks: 1 (Attack Bonus +3)

Damage: 2d6 (electrical touch)

Morale: 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 Immunities – immune to mind-affecting magic, poison, disease, etc.

DRAKHAEL: A VILLAIN OF SCARABAE

Drakhael (also known as the Black Wyrn of the Slumberhills)

Drakhael is an ancient black dragon who has recently awoken from a century of sleep. Drakhael is of an age where he has begun to forget the details of his long and storied life; though he doesn't remember much of his vast history, his legacy has survived as the folklore and myth of Scarabae—legends abound about the vile dragon known as the Black Wyrn of the Slumberhills.

The one thing that Drakhael does remember clearly is his hatred of mankind and the grudge he holds against them for settling on the lands he once considered his private territory. Drakhael's original form is a massive dragon with ebony scales. Drakhael can also assume the form of an elderly man with jet-black hair, but he only uses this form when necessary because he considers the shape of man to be beneath him.

Goals: Drakhael's goals possess little subtlety. His master plan is to simply drive all men from his lands. Whether he accomplishes this through instilling fear or mass extermination means little to him. To this end he has begun to assemble an army with which to wage a guerrilla war against the people of Scarabae.

Lair: Drakhael's lair is a system of caves deep within the Slumberhills. The caves are filled with many traps that Drakhael has installed over the centuries. The cave system also features many dead ends and false tunnels that are meant to disorientate any trespassers. The legends surrounding Drakhael tell of the massive hoard of treasure he has amassed over his long life.

Minions: Drakhael has gathered a tribe of blackscale lizardmen to his bidding. These lizardmen worship Drakhael as a god, even though he has no divine powers to impart to them. Drakhael's forces have been bolstered by a group of dragontaur that have joined his ranks.

Henchman: Drakhael has three lieutenants: a dragonian mercenary named Raeth, a corrupt nun named Mathilde, and a lizardman shaman known only as the Fang. Raeth serves Drakhael out of respect for the ancient dragon's power and because he too feels that the human race is an inferior species that must be swept from the land. Mathilde is a nun who is supposedly devoted to spiritual contemplation of the Lady of the White Way, but in truth she desires only to steal away with a fraction of Drakhael's treasure hoard. Drakhael knows her true motives and plans on devouring her as soon as she has outlived her usefulness. The Fang fervently believes that Drakhael is a god; he is Drakhael's most trusted servant and will be at the head of Drakhael's lizardman army.

THE SCAVENGER LANDS: ELEMENTAL MAGIC OF THE SCAVENGER LANDS

Gartheon Nack'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.

Yelkar Truth'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.)

Larmak Fermian'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.

Yelkar Truth'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.

THE SCAVENGER LANDS: NECROMANCY OF THE BLACK WARLOCKS

The Black Warlocks are a race of strange magic-users who wander the wastes of the Scavenger Lands. They are immediately recognizable by their somber garb and the ornate helmets that completely obscure their faces. Few have seen what lies beneath the helm of a Black Warlock, but some contend that they are a reptilian race who were exiled from the Dreamlands.

Since they have only appeared in the World Between two centuries ago, it believed by some scholars that the Black Warlocks slept in a kind of stasis beneath the surface of the World and were awakened by whatever calamity caused the Ruinous Scar. Some even believe that the Black Warlocks were the cause of the catastrophe.

Black Warlock

Movement: 120' (40')

Armor Class: 11

Hit Dice: 8

No. of Attacks: 1 (Attack Bonus +8)

Damage: 1d4 (dagger)

Save: Magic-user 8

Morale: 7

Special Abilities:

Black Necromancy – Black Warlocks cast spells as 8th level magic-users; some may have attained much higher levels of magical proficiency. Furthermore, because a Black Warlock can channel the knowledge of the dead, they can speak any language at will.

Soulless – Black Warlocks are immune to death effects, *Magic Jar* spells, etc.

It is known that the Black Warlocks are masters of necromantic magic. These are but two of their signature spells:

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.

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.

THE SCAVENGER LANDS: SOME UNUSUAL OGRES OF THE SCAVENGER LANDS

| d12 | Ogre |
|-----|--|
| 01 | The ogre is a shaman; it has 1d4 levels in cleric or druid; has an affinity for fire-based spells and guards a sacred circle of standing stones that the PCs had better not disturb. |
| 02 | The ogre is an expert sniper and is wearing a gilly suit; 45% to hide in plain sight, +2 to missile attacks; he or she might mistake the PCs for scouts of an opposing army—if the mistaken identity gets sorted out, he might try and enlist the PCs into his army. |
| 03 | The ogre is possessed by an Axe Spirit; +1 to hit in melee, re-roll all ones rolled for damage in melee; crazed, blood-thirsty, but willing to talk shop with other warriors. |
| 04 | The ogre can, and will, eat anything; this beast can't be reasoned with or scared off—he just wants to eat the PCs; Morale = 12. |
| 05 | The ogre is filthy and possessed by a Plague Spirit; anyone hit by his weapon must make a successful Saving Throw or contract a random disease. |
| 06 | The ogre is a pacifist philosopher; he will not fight—even to protect himself; he will, however, ask the PCs to meditate with him—while meditating they might receive a vision of things to come. |
| 07 | The ogre is a lost and delirious ogre prince; returning him to his tribe might result in a rather nice reward. |
| 09 | The ogre was once a young woman who was polymorphed into the shape of an ogre by a foul wizard. Helping return her to her original state might carry a reward—or at the least, good karma. Or maybe she wants to remain an ogre and it is her selfish betrothed who will pay good money to have her changed back. |
| 09 | The ogre is a surprisingly competent bard who plays an over-sized banjo. (If there are multiple ogres, they are a band. One ogre plays banjo, another upright bass, another the tuba, etc.) The ogre's repertoire is limited to murder ballads; some facet of one of his songs will come to pass in the PCs' adventure—premonition style. |
| 10 | The ogre is a knight, riding on a mammoth. He is on a quest to retrieve a chalice sacred to the Beast God he serves. He will entreat the characters to join him on his quest; he will offer them any other items found in the hoard—all he desires to return the chalice to his temple. |
| 11 | The ogre is digging a trench. If asked about the trench, the ogre will reply that it is for a ceremonial battle based on over-running the opposite side's trench. If the characters stick around and take part in this mock battle—which will feature pig bladders filled with paint in an ogrish version of paintball—they might win the respect, admiration, and aid of the ogres. |
| 12 | That's not an ogre! That's a halfling piloting an ogre-shaped automaton! |

THE SHAE ISLES: FEY OFFERINGS AND FAERIE BOONS

The Shae Isles are home to many circles of pagan standing stones. On the 13th day of any month, one may enter a ring of standing stones and perform a ritual that will summon a minor fey lord. If relations with the summoned fey remain cordial, the summoner will be requested to return to the standing stones on the 13th day of the next month with an appropriate gift. If the character brings the fey lord the appropriate gift, they fey lord will grant them a boon that lasts until the 13th day of the next month. If the character brings an inappropriate gift, they will be pursued by the Wild Hunt. Always do your research when it comes to the fey...

Which lord appears to answer the summoning ritual? Roll on the following chart:

| d8 | Fey Lord |
|----|--|
| 1 | <i>Grishnight the Mangler</i> – appears as a hunched, but massive, ape-like creature with the face of a newborn child. Required Gift: twelve pounds of oats sweetened by honey that has flowed between the toes of a maiden girl. Boon: the character receives a +1 bonus to all damage rolls |
| 2 | <i>Korben-a-Hammer</i> – appears as a squat dwarven figure whose body is besmirched with a coal-black dust. Required Gift: twelve pounds of iron that has been spat upon by an intoxicated priest. Boon: any weapon wielded by the character will be unbreakable |
| 3 | <i>Twilah o' the Marshlights</i> – appears as a lithe woman wrapped in multi-colored gauze; her hair floats upward on an invisible draft. Required Gift: twelve boys with copper-colored hair, who will never be seen again. Boon: the character may use <i>Charm Person</i> as an innate ability once per day |
| 4 | <i>Otun the Ever</i> – appears as a slim, tall man made of unfinished wood; wears a crown of green leaves. Required Gift: twelve pounds of farming implements that have been urinated upon by elderly men. Boon: the character gains a +2 bonus to Armor Class |
| 5 | <i>Pucellus the Mucker</i> – appears as a small, grinning sprite in fool's motley. Required Gift: twelve rare books that must be burned within the circle of standing stones. Boon: +2 bonus to all Saving Throws vs. mind-affecting magic |
| 6 | <i>Sodden Susan o' the Glen</i> – appears as a blue woman bearing bleeding abrasions upon her wrists and throat; her hair continually drips brackish water. Required Gift: twelve courtly dresses sewn by blind women. Boon: +2 to all Saving Throws vs. Death effects |
| 7 | <i>Flahtar the Nightly</i> – appears as a goat-legged man bearing a golden lyre. Required Gift: twelve bottles of wine that have been corked by an unloved man. Boon: each night the character regenerates 5 Hit Points |
| 8 | <i>Mikey Coo</i> – appears as a small man with the face of a raccoon; has clawed hands and feet. Required Gift: twelve pounds of hay in which nobles have lain. Boon: +1 to all to-hit rolls |

THE WHITE COLONY: A VILLAIN OF THE SHAE ISLES

The White Colony

The White Colony is not a singular creature; rather, it is a collection of thousands of white spiders who adhere together in a vaguely man-like shape under the direction of their collective hive mind. The White Colony generally disguises its true nature by donning a cloak, long boots, and leather gloves.

The White Colony is a creature who was brought into existence by the priesthood of Narlathia in the Neverwhere. It has been sent to the surface world to engage in both wanton violence and acts of sabotage; it leads night-raids against the people of the Shae Isles and sows destruction by poisoning wells, killing livestock, and blighting crops.

Goals: The White Colony's plans involve terrorizing the hamlets and villages that exist in the hinterlands of the Shae Isles. The purpose of its raids and internal tamperings is to show the people of the Shae Isles that their gods are powerless to protect them. Ultimately, the White Colony will send the message that its reign of terror will cease if the people turn away from their gods and accept Narlathia as the one true deity.

Lair: The White Colony's lair is a dungeon-like burrow beneath the earth. Within the burrow is a treasure-trove of magical books that have been brought up from the deepest recesses of the Neverwhere. Indeed, the burrow also features a hidden door that conceals a tunnel that leads down into the depths of the Neverwhere itself.

Minions: The White Colony has brought with it a small army of giant spiders, driders, drow, and ettercaps to serve as its marauders and infiltrators. Among the drow are several clerics, magic-users, and warlocks. All of the White Colony's servants are devout worshipers of Narlathia; their fanatical devotion gives them nearly unbreakable morale.

Henchman: The White Colony's trusted lieutenant is Morgale, an ettercap who has been trained as an assassin. Morgale is often assigned with murdering a community's temporal and spiritual leaders so that the village or hamlet will fall into utter disarray when the White Colony's raiders strike. The White Colony also counts Farlaja Vaughn, a drow arachnomancer, among its most powerful followers. Vaughn's pet project is to magically fuse a gigantic spider with a hydra to use as a beast of war.

Enemies: The druids of the Shae Isles consider the White Colony to be an abomination. No matter how pagan and unruly they are in general, they will lend their support to any adventurers who strive to rid the Shae Isle of the White Colony's insidious plots. If the characters accept the aid offered by the druids, they may even receive divine support from the gods of nature, such as the Lamenting Mother, the Crooked Moon, and the Forest Who Walks. This support might come in the form of prophetic dreams, or it might come in the form of a cache of blessed weapons and armor that belonged to the Shae chieftains of old.

ULVERLAND: MAGICAL SCHOOLS OF ULVERLAND

Ulverland has a long tradition of universities and schools that teach arcane magic to prospective students who have an aptitude for wizardry. The most prestigious of Ulverland's magic schools is the Orxham Academy. The Orxham Academy usually only accepts students at a young age—generally from ages ten-to-twelve—but they will accept older students who meet the minimum requirements of one of the four houses within the Academy's structure. Students must pay 1000 gold pieces per semester of attendance; after a full year of tutelage, a student of the Orxham Academy gains the benefit associated with the house to which they belong.

The four houses of the Orxham Academy are patterned after the four seasons:

The Spring House – the magic taught by the Spring House of the Orxham Academy deals with enchantment, charms, and control over the natural world. Wizards of the Spring House are famous for operating hospices that see to the needs of the poor, but any positive publicity from these endeavors is somewhat dampened by rumors that the members of the Spring House are rakes and slatterns. Senior wizards of the Spring House tend to wear laurel crowns and pure white robes.

Minimum Requirements for Entry: Int 15, Cha 14

Benefit: Anyone subject to a charm-effect spell you cast takes a -1 penalty to their Saving Throw.

The Summer House – the magic taught by the Summer House of the Orxham Academy deals with elemental magic and control over fire, ice, lightning, etc. Wizards of the Summer House are sometimes tapped to act as warmages in the armies of Ulverland, but many are also drawn to the life of the mercenary. Senior wizards of the Summer House tend to carry ornate staffs and dress in azure robes.

Minimum Requirements for Entry: Int 15, Dex 14

Benefit: +1 per die of damage from spells you cast that do elemental damage.

The Autumn House – the magic taught by the Autumn House of the Orxham Academy deals with illusion and trickery. Most wizards of the Autumn House are illusionists rather than magic-users. Wizards associated with the Autumn House are regarded as deceitful and untrustworthy; many are believed to be spies for foreign nations, but they are also enlisted by Ulverland to act as spies and secret agents abroad. Senior wizards of the Autumn House carry silver athames and dress in black robes.

Minimum Requirements for Entry: Int 15, Wis 14

Benefit: Anyone subject to an illusion you cast takes a -1 penalty to their Saving Throw.

The Winter House – the magic taught by the Winter House of the Orxham Academy deals with necromancy and the secrets of the grave. Wizards of the Winter House are greatly feared, but are often tapped to serve as warmages in the Ulverland armies. They are regarded as a grim, morbid lot; most common folk will avoid them at all costs, believing that they possess the evil eye. Senior wizards of the Winter House tend to wear veils and gray robes.

Minimum Requirements for Entry: Int 15, Con 14

Benefit: Any undead created by a Winter House mage gain +1 Hit Point per Hit Die.

ULVERLAND: ENCHANTED TEAS

The drinking of tea has been practically elevated to a religious mania in Ulverland. It is a widespread belief that tea possesses many curative and beneficial properties; it is believed that tea can settle the stomach, inspire a healthy appetite, and fortify the soul against the vagaries of the human condition. An Ulverlandian with cup of tea in hand fears no quirk of fate.

Indeed, the mages of Ulverland have begun to experiment with sachets of dried tea as a medium for holding enchantments. Certainly, tea has proven to be more hardy and easy to transport than the traditional alchemical potion. The teas below represent the very beginnings of a new form of imbibable magic.

TEA SACHETS

Each sachet will brew enough tea for one drinker.

The Strong Brown Cuppa – This tea immediately relieves the drinker of any fear effects they might be suffering from. Additionally, it grants the drinker a new Saving Throw against any madness they may have acquired due to experiencing terror or horror.

The Fiery Heart Blend – This smoky tea grants the drinker temporary immunity to the effects of normal cold and a +5 bonus to Saving Throws against the effects of magical cold. The effects of the tea last for 6d10 turns.

The Dreamless Slumber Brew – Anyone who drinks this tea must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or fall asleep (as per the *Sleep* spell) for 1d10 turns. While under the influence of this tea, the sleeper has no dreams; in fact, they awaken with a sense of clarity that gives them a +1 bonus to Saving Throws vs. mental and charm effects for the rest of the day.

The Jade Tea – This mild blend allows the drinker to detect any falsehood uttered in his or her presence for 4d12 turns. However, while under the magical effects of this tea the drinker also may not utter anything they know to be a lie.

TEA PARAPHERNALIA

These enchanted devices have been designed to bolster the powers and effectiveness of the above enchanted teas.

Teapot of the Conscientious Butler – Any sachet of tea served in this fine china teapot will expand in volume so that four drinkers can enjoy its magical and culinary delights.

Tea-ball of Spectral Steeping – This metal tea-ball transmutes any tea brewed from it into an ecotoplasmic beverage that can be enjoyed by ghosts, specters, and the like. Most Ulverlandian spectral undead will cease their unwholesome activities if offered a cup of tea. Such an offering makes them immanently more reasonable and amenable to calm discussion.

ULVERLAND: SOME UNUSUAL TROLLS OF ULVERLAND

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 |
|-----|--|
| 01 | Bone carapace – the troll is covered by an exoskeleton of bone. Its Armor Class is improved by two points. |
| 02 | Brainiac – 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. |
| 03 | Deafening Screech – 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. |
| 04 | Devotee of Hakhan – the troll's flesh has been branded with runes sacred to Hakhan. These runes give the troll a +3 bonus to all Saving Throws vs. Spells. |
| 05 | Devotee of Junox – when the troll dies a random slime or ooze gushes forth from its mouth and eyes. |
| 06 | Devotee of Morgath – once per day the troll may use <i>Animate Dead</i> . |
| 07 | Devotee of Skaylex – once per day the troll may vomit forth a Shambling Mound which is under its mental control. |
| 08 | Devotee of Slurge – once per day the troll may vomit forth a 60' stream of rot grubs. |
| 09 | Devotee of Zzorch – 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 | Four-armed – 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 | Incendiary – 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 | Stonecursed – 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 |
|------------|--|
| 01 | Corroding Flesh – the troll possesses the same ability to corrode metal as a Rust Monster. |
| 02 | Frostchild – 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. |
| 03 | Hallucinatory Bite – 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. |
| 04 | Lifebane – 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. |
| 05 | Shadow-builder – twice per day the troll can exhale a 60' cloud of <i>Darkness</i> , as per the spell. |
| 06 | Shapeshifter – once per day the troll may use <i>Polymorph Self</i> . |
| 07 | Swampstench – 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. |
| 08 | Telepathic Chanter – 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. |
| 09 | Tongue Lasher – 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 | Uncanny Maw – 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 | Unclean! – anyone hit by the troll's claws or teeth must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison or contract a random disease. |
| 12 | Venomous – the troll's bite has the effect of a random poison. |

RANDOM POXY FROM A DOXY TABLE

Sometimes characters go carousing and pick up something nasty; sometimes characters get stuck by filthy disease-ridden creatures from the pits of the World Below. For those occasions there is this table:

01 – The Scarabaeae Prance: This disease causes the victim to fall prone to spasmodic movements that vaguely resemble clumsy dancing. Whenever the victim attempts a strenuous physical action, they must make a Saving Throw. If they pass the Saving Throw they make act normally. If they fail the Saving Throw they lose their action for the turn; instead of acting normally, their turn is consumed by awkward, dance-like spasms. While “dancing” the character's armor class is improved by two due to the difficulty of hitting such an unpredictable target.

02 – The Weeping Scabs: This disease covers the victim's body with pus-leaking sores. The disease causes no physical degradation, but since this ailment is so closely associated with consorting with jezebels and slatterns any NPC likely to be judgmental of such conduct reacts to the victim as if their Charisma score was halved.

03 – The Mordish Rot: This disease causes the victim's skin to continually peel off in itchy patches. While suffering from this disease the character only receives half the usual benefit from both natural and magical healing.

04 – The Galloping Gurgles: This disease causes its sufferer to feel as if their guts were a mass of writhing snakes; they also emit horrific bodily noises from their gut. The disease's victim takes a -2 penalty to all physical actions and their belly will make loud, distracting noises at the most inopportune times.

05 – The Sputtering Hack: This disease causes its victim to cough up blood. When first contracted, the disease lowers the character's Constitution score by 2 points. Each week that the disease persists lowers their Constitution a further 2 points. When their Constitution reaches 0, they die.

06 – The Fumbling Shakes: This disease causes the sufferer to shake uncontrollably and occasionally lose motor control. A character with this disease takes a -2 penalty to any actions that involve fine, detailed work. Additionally, in high-stress situations there is a 50% that a character with this disease will drop whatever they are holding.

07 – Frost Fever: This disease causes its victim to alternate between a raging fever and bone-shaking chills. While suffering from this disease a character takes double damage from fire and cold, as well as a general -1 penalty to all actions.

08 – The Ulverlandian Lament: This disease causes its sufferer to feel as if there were a colony of insects scurrying around inside their skull. The disease makes it impossible for a character to concentrate; while suffering from the disease a character takes a -2 penalty to any mental actions. If they are a spell-caster, they will find it impossible to use magic while afflicted. Additionally, each day a character has this disease there is a 30% chance that they permanently forget how to read and write a language they know.

09 – The Ruinous Bloodthirst: This disease causes its victim to fly into a murderous rage at the slightest provocation. When a character suffering from this disease feels slighted or provoked they must make a saving throw or randomly attack 1d4 nearby targets until they are dead or the disease carrier is subdued. While in a rage the character gains a +2 bonus to-hit and damage.

10 – The Midianese Plague: This disease causes its victim to break out in black pustules. The character must make a saving throw once a day; on a failed Saving Throw the character dies in agony.

RANDOM WEIRD ORGANIZATION GENERATOR

Need a weird organization to aid or vex the characters in a hurry? Here's a table for that:

| Roll | The Adjective | Noun | Of Noun |
|------|------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| 1 | The Tenebrous | Order | Of Exorcists |
| 2 | The Cyclopean | Cult | Of Templars |
| 3 | The Squamous | Sisterhood | Of Spiritualists |
| 4 | The Eldritch | Brotherhood | Of Fortune Tellers |
| 5 | The Grotesque | Brethren | Of Oracular Seers |
| 6 | The Unutterable | Guild | Of Tenebriates |
| 7 | The Eldritch | Fraternity | Of Opheliacs |
| 8 | The Antiquated | Sorority | Of Diabolists |
| 9 | The Sacred | Society | Of Mourners |
| 10 | The Dread | Corporation | Of Warchanters |
| 11 | The Blasphemous | Consortium | Of Executioners |
| 12 | The Ashen | Lodge | Of Orphans |
| 13 | The Cadaverous | Association | Of Dirge Scribes |
| 14 | The Corpulent | Syndicate | Of Tomb Guardians |
| 15 | The Jabbering | Union | Of Murder Balladeers |
| 16 | The Pestilential | Coven | Of Dreamthieves |
| 17 | The Crystalline | Sodality | Of Plague Doctors |
| 18 | The Repellent | Coterie | Of Sewerjacks |
| 19 | The Sepulchral | Cadre | Of Mad Cartographers |
| 20 | The Pallid | Mutuality | Of Runebearers |

Roll 3d20; each roll corresponds to a phrase in one of the columns when taken in order. For example a roll of:

8-12-19 would generate The Antiquated Lodge of Mad Cartographers

17-8-2 would generate The Crystalline Sorority of Templars

19-14-5 would generate The Sepulchral Syndicate of Oracular Seers

Let you imagination go from there to fill in the blanks.

WHAT HAPPENED WHILE YOU WERE GONE...

Sometimes a player has to miss a session or three. What was their character up to in the meantime? Roll on this table to find out:

Carousing in the criminal underworld

- 01 – Went on a bender with initiates of the Gods of the Grapes: earned the enmity of a prominent house of ill repute.
- 02 – Went on a bender with mercenaries of the Bronze Juggernaut company: made a powerful contact within a house of ill repute.
- 03 – Went on a bender with philosophy students: earned the enmity of a powerful thieves guild.
- 04 – Went on a bender with Amazonian warrior priestess from the Sisterhood of the Rending Spear: made an important contact within a powerful thieves guild.
- 05 – Robbed by a highway(wo)man: lost half of your coin, but are now infatuated with your assailant.
- 06 – Went on a bender with initiates of Merrihel: earned the enmity of a powerful assassin's guild.
- 07 – Went on a bender with Knights of the White Raven: made an important contact within a powerful assassin's guild.
- 08 – Went on a bender with sailors from the Sorrowsea: woke up with a mild hangover and set of rune-marked keys.
- 09 – Victim of an attempted robbery, but you turned the tables on your assailants: gain 2d8 silver coins.
- 10 – Went on a bender with aristocratic dandies: woke up with a vicious hangover (-1 to all actions for the first 1d4 hours of the day) but also with a map leading to buried treasure.

Adventures in Mercantilism

- 11 – Invested in a tea importation scheme: it pays off; gain 25% more money than you had last time.
- 12 – Invested in a venture exporting exotic spices to a goblin city: it pays off handsomely; gain 50% more money than you had last time.
- 13 – Invested in a snake-oil peddler's latest curative tonic: gain double the amount of money that you had last time and 1 potion of healing.
- 14 – Invested in a traveling carnival troupe from Midian; the troupe goes bust after one performance: lose 25% of your money.
- 15 – Invested in the Grindlespaak Speculative Bank of Harrowfaust; the bank physically disappears under very mysterious circumstances: lose 50% of your money.
- 16 – Invested in an expedition to reach the fabled lands of The Silver Prince across the Straights of Discomfort and Indignation; lose all your money and begin play with 1d4 less than your maximum hit points due to collection agents giving you a sound thrashing.
- 17 – Had a big meeting to discuss a potentially lucrative business opportunity: nothing comes of it except you gain a map to a far-flung fortress.
- 18 – Had a big meeting to discuss a potentially lucrative business opportunity: nothing comes of it except you gain a powerful contact in a merchant's guild.

- 19 – Had a big meeting to discuss a potentially lucrative business opportunity: the meeting turns into a pub crawl; you awoke with a vicious hangover (-1 to all actions for the first 1d4 hours of the day).
- 20 – Had a big meeting, which you spoiled by making an unpardonable *faux pas*: now a powerful merchant prince(ss) has hired an assassin to have you killed.

Away with the faeries

- 21 – You were captured by trolls and forced to cook for them: you escaped with a cookbook that holds one magical recipe.
- 22 – You were enslaved by dwarfs and forced to toil amongst the forges of the Bloodtatter Mountains: you escaped with a magical weapon.
- 23 – You were compelled to dance for a company of elf marauders as they shot arrows at your feet: one of the arrows struck true; you start play with 1d4 less than your maximum hit points.
- 24 – The eladrin of the Verdant Tower randomly chose to celebrate you as a hero of a war you never fought in; the sumptuous food you ate at their table grants you 1d4 temporary hit points above your normal starting total.
- 25 – While traveling through the wilderness, you offended an Unseelie lord by not offering him a bowl of curdled milk; you now are hunted by drow assassins and Narlathia worshipers.
- 26 – While traveling through the wilderness, you offered an Unseelie redcap a nip from your wineskin; he was so pleased that he gave you a silver ring worth 125 silver pieces.
- 27 – A dryad was jealous of your beauty and attacked you in the night; you now bear a facial scar and lose 1 point of Charisma.
- 28 – You laughed at the joke of a branchling you encountered on your travels; you now have a powerful ally amongst the Wild Hunt.
- 29 – You spurned the advances of a nymph; you will have bad luck at sea the next time you set foot on a ship.
- 30 – You were captured by an ogre who found you too unappetizing to eat; the next time you encounter an ogre, troll, orc or the like they will avoid coming near you.

Encounters with mysterious strangers

- 31 – Morlius the Fleshcrafter has altered your appearance; you are now more comely: gain 1 point of Charisma.
- 32 – Morlius the Fleshcrafter has altered your appearance; you are now more ugly: lose 1 point of Charisma.
- 33 – Maximillian the Oath-breaker has given you an iron ring that will make one attack against you fail (no damage from one chosen attack, then the ring rusts and falls to pieces).
- 34 – Her Dreaming Majesty of the River Ophelium has given you a blessing; +1 to all saving throws in your next adventure.
- 35 – Auber Orellian, mad scientist of Thornroot Hill, has given you a strange clockwork puzzle-box of unknown purpose.
- 36 – Master thief Old Graham has picked your pocket; you lose one random item of value that you carry on your person.
- 37 – The ghost of King Alastor has cursed you from beyond the grave; -1 to all saving throws in your next adventure.
- 38 – Deathknights belonging to the Lost Legion of the Blighted Urn have taken a strange liking

- to you; they have given you letters of reference that when presented to an intelligent undead will compel it to give you welcome as long as you disturb nothing in its lair.
- 39 – Mother Tyler, proprietor of the Orphanage for Cast-Off Children, has convinced you to take one of her young charges as your “squire.”
- 40 – Goldfinch Terrial, famed bounty hunter, has given you a weighed net.

Adventures in theology

- 41 – Vindus Pelep-Duhr, questing shaman of the Gnawing Panther, has taught you a charm that will let you calm one dangerous animal on your next adventure.
- 42 – You have had an audience with Popess Yulia XII of the Church of the Lady of the White Way and kissed her signet ring; you gain +1 to all rolls for your next adventure.
- 43 – You have offended a voodoo priest(ess) of the Ghael Isles; you suffer a -1 penalty to all rolls for your next adventure.
- 44 – You have done a service for the templars of Merrihel: they have given you a scroll of undead detection for your troubles.
- 45 – For reasons unknown, templars of Merrihel suspect you to be a necromancer and have dispatched witch-hunters to bring you in for interrogation.
- 46 – You accidentally attended a party thrown by Slithian Vor worshipers: the unholy things you've now seen cause you to lose 1d4 points of Wisdom.
- 47 – You have meditated with a priest(ess) of The Island of Jade Mysteries; you gain 1d4 points of Wisdom.
- 48 – You have done a service for clerics who serve Garm-Gorak or Hakhan (your choice): in return, they have sharpened your weapons; you gain +1 to all damage rolls for the next three encounters.
- 49 – A sorceress avatar of the Lady of the White Way takes a fancy to you; as a token of her amorous intentions she gives you a bracer that glows red when in the presence of poison.
- 50 – You mistakenly chopped down a tree held sacred by a Shaeen witch cult and they hex you for the offense: at an inopportune time you will drop something very important.

The horrors and glories of war

- 51 – You participated in a crusade; you return with a holy relic that will allow you to turn undead once as 5th level cleric.
- 52 – You found work as a mercenary in the skirmishes between the two sovereigns of Midian; you return with booty worth 75 silver pieces.
- 53 – You found work as a mercenary in the skirmishes between the vampires and penanggalan of Harrowfaust; you return with a blood disorder that causes you to lose 1 point of Constitution and your hair is now bone white.
- 54 – You found work as a mercenary in the skirmishes that rage in The Iron Principalities; you were paid for your services in oil paintings worth 100 silver pieces.
- 55 – You were conscripted into the army of Ulverland; while a conscript you participated in a raid on a convent: the Lady of the White Way has cursed you—lose 1d4 points of Strength.
- 56 – Shields will be splintered! One piece of protective gear you own was destroyed in battle.
- 57 – Weapons will be sundered! One weapon you own was destroyed in battle.
- 58 – The spoils of war: you retrieved a magical piece of armor or a shield from a fallen combatant; their ghost demands its return, but so far you've been able to ignore them.

- 59 – The spoils of war: you retrieved a magical weapon from a fallen combatant; their ghost demands its return, but so far you've been able to ignore them.
- 60 – You served as a medic to the berzerker warriors of Frostreave; you gain healing herbs that will cure one wound for 1d6 hit points of damage.

On the road again

- 61 – You have been busking on the streets of Stormhalt; gain 2d6 silver pieces.
- 62 – You stopped to help repair a broken wagon wheel on a gypsy caravan; you gain a magical charm that will make you immune to one petrification attack.
- 63 – You stopped to help repair a broken wagon wheel on a gypsy caravan, but it was just a cunning ruse; they made off with your horse or other animal.
- 64 – You stumbled upon an abandoned cart full of owlbear pelts.
- 65 – You stopped for a drink at a roadside tavern; a brawl broke out: you leave bruised and with 1d4 less than your maximum starting hit points.
- 66 – You stopped for a drink at a roadside tavern; the bard performing inside really touched your heart-strings: you leave feeling invigorated and temporarily gain a +1 bonus to all saving throws for a day.
- 67 – You stumbled upon an unattended cask full of what are either undead eels or animated brain lasher tentacles.
- 68 – You traded food to a group of fish-hat-wearing goblins for 1d4 pots of sticky slime (can be used as a *Web*-spell-grenade).
- 69 – You traded food to a group of fish-hat-wearing goblins for 1d4 pots of sticky slime. (Unfortunately, these slime grenades are inert and will do nothing.)
- 70 – You stumbled upon a left-behind scroll caddy. There is a 50% chance that one of the scrolls is magical. If one of the scrolls is magical there is a 50% chance that scroll is magically cursed.

Adventures on the open seas

- 71 – You spot a kraken from on deck; you are so inspired that you paint said kraken and manage to sell this painting for 3d6 gold pieces at an open market.
- 72 – On the coast of the Ghael Isles you meet a mermaid; in return for not divulging her location to local slavers, she gives you a strand of her hair—if you stuff her hair into your mouth you will be able to breath water for an hour.
- 73 – Your ship is the victim of a wrecking crew; you wash ashore and make your way to the nearest habitation—the Arkhamdale Asylum—where you are mistakenly locked away. You later manage to escape and you may have met a secret heir to the throne of Midian while incarcerated.
- 74 – While working as a coastal smuggler in Scarabae, you discover a network of bootlegger's tunnels that you could use as a hideout if necessary.
- 75 – Crabmen attempt to board and seize the vessel you are traveling on; you help fight them off and in the process tear one of the crabman's claws off. That night, you ate it in butter-garlic sauce: you now have an insatiable hunger for more crabman.
- 76 – Sirens attempt to lure you to your death in the sea, but you resist their song: you are immune to the next charm effect used on you, but now all music sounds like cacophony to your ears.

- 77 – On the last say of your voyage a high-stakes card game breaks out below deck; make an Intelligence check or saving throw or whatever is appropriate: if you succeed you gain 4d6 silver pieces, if you fail you lose 4d6 silver pieces.
- 78 – Your ship sinks mysteriously in the night; you nearly drown, but awaken in an abandoned shrine to Sothack. You escaped with your life and a handful of shark's teeth.
- 79 – In a gulf near The Island of Jade Mysteries you met and fell in love with a cranemay (which are like swanmays but not as stupid). The cranemay will come to your aid once, if possible, but will thereafter find you utterly boring.
- 80 – You were press-ganged into the crew of a pirate ship sailing from The Isles of Unparalleled Liberty; make a saving throw vs. disease or contract some random odd ailment.

A little light reading

- 81 – You've been reading tome after tome about wererats; you've become so obsessed with them that you now own a silver dagger.
- 82 – You've been reading book after book on the domestic patterns of the kenku: when in a kenku lair you will be able to accurately guess the layout of their fortresses.
- 83 – You've been reading scroll after scroll about the life of Saint Ariana (The Sword Maiden Redeemer): you gain a +1 to any saving throws against clerical magic for 1d4 weeks.
- 84 – You've been reading runic stones inscribed with the history of the Desert of Burning Sands: it's mind numbing stuff, suffer a -1 penalty to any saving throws involving willpower for one adventure.
- 85 – You've been reading a strange treatise about the proper way to saddle and ride an unwilling dinosaur: you can now saddle and ride an unwilling dinosaur.
- 86 – You've been reading a dissertation on the rites that banish uncontrolled elemental spirits: sadly, this book was written by a crackpot and the rites detailed therein have no effect.
- 87 – You've been reading curiously subtle penny dreadfuls: through reading them you have gained a thorough understanding of the ceremonies needed to enter the Wailing Labyrinth (a place of unquiet ghosts).
- 88 – You accidentally read an enchanted book that renders you illiterate for 1d8 days.
- 89 – You accidentally read an enchanted book that changes either your alignment or religious affiliation.
- 90 – You accidentally read an enchanted book that grants you a bonus of 1d4 points of Dexterity.

It was just a dream...

- 91 – You dreamed of unspeakable Cthulhoid horrors. You awake with the ability to cast Summon Monster III, but every monster summoned will be some variation on a tentacled chaos beast. Once you cast this dream-spell you forget how to channel its energies and can never cast it again.
- 92 – You dreamed of another plane of existence known as the Happy Hunting Grounds. As you strolled the perfectly green meadows of the Happy Hunting Grounds deer and rabbits kept approaching you and smilingly begged you to kill them.
- 93 – You dreamed of rummaging through an immense pile of never-ending junk and scrap metal. The next time you encounter a golem it will focus all its attacks on you.



- 94 – You dreamed of committing murders in a foreign land: the next time you enter a new city you will learn that a murderer fitting your description is wanted for a string of fatal crimes.
- 95 – You dreamed of a world of shifting geometric shapes that move with the precision of finely tuned clockwork: for the next three days you gain a 50% bonus to detect and disarm traps, even if this isn't an ability you normally possess.
- 96 – You dreamed of a great snake devouring the sun: the next time you encounter a reptile you must make a saving throw or suffer the effects of a *Cause Fear* spell.
- 97 – You dreamed that you were a frogman who frequently trips and lands in puddle of ocher mud; for the next day you suffer a -1 penalty to all saving throws that deal with dodging out of the way—this penalty increases to -3 if you are in a muddy area.
- 98 – You dreamed that you were eating at a banquet honoring a great king; unfortunately, all the dishes were made from your best friends. For the next week you will have to make a saving throw to keep any food down.
- 99 – You dreamed that you were eating at a banquet honoring a great king; unfortunately, all the dishes were made from your best friends. For reasons best left un-analyzed, this dream pleases you immensely: all the food you eat in the next week will taste like the nectar of the gods.
- 100 – You dreamed of being tortured by witch-hunters. You wake up with inexplicable marks all over your body, and any witch or druid you come into contact with for the next month will take a great liking to you.

STRANGE FAMILIARS TABLE

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 common, 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 |

TOMES OF FEARFUL SYMMETRY

Here are some uncanny grimoires to be discovered and dealt with in the World Between.

1. The Red Book of Nelandra Kir

Nelandra Kir was a beautiful mage from Scarabae who was fascinated by spells that transfixed or paralyzed their targets. It is said that her lush garden was decorated by many a rival who had been turned to marble sculpture by her variation of the *Flesh to Stone* spell and that her preferred way to dispatch a particularly meddlesome foe was to torture them while under the effects of a *Hold Person* spell.

The Red Book of Nelandra Kir is a thick, illuminated book bound in blood-hued leather. Aside from the unique spells below, it also contains the magical formula for *Sleep*, *Web*, *Hold Person*, and *Hold Monster*. At the GM's discretion it may also contain recipes for various paralytic poisons.

| Complexity | Study Period | Total Comp. Rolls | Potency | # Spells |
|------------|--------------|-------------------|---------|----------|
| 10 | 3 days | 5 | 12 | 6 |

Scarlet Tendrils of Nelandra Kir

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 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.

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 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.

2. The Gray Fragments of Malkith

Malkith, also known as the Gallows Wizard, was a perverse magician obsessed with necromancy, anatomy, and collecting morbid jokes. He was an instantly recognizable figure amongst the courts of Ulverland; he always wore a fool's cap adorned with skull-shaped bells. This cap is a much-sought item of power—it is believed that it gives the wearer the power to read the thoughts of others.

The Gray Fragments of Malkith is an incomplete, mouldering book that contains arcane spells interspersed with a variety of jokes, puns, and riddles. The book is perhaps Malkith's final joke on the world; anyone reading it must make a saving throw or have their body permanently altered into that of a frogman. It is rumored that the book's items of knavery are actually a code that, if deciphered, reveal the location of Malkith's legendary cap.

Aside from the spell below, the Gray Fragments also contains the *Animate Dead*, *Spiritwrath*, and *Magic Jar* spells.

| Complexity | Study Period | Total Comp. Rolls | Potency | # Spells |
|------------|--------------|-------------------|---------|----------|
| 13 | 5 days | 12 | 16 | 5 |

Malkith'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.

Malkith'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 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.

3. The Final Prayers of Melanthie Del-Rosa

Melanthie Del-Rosa was a vile heretic who was burned alive by the inquisitors of the Church of the Lady. Her views flew in the face of orthodoxy, though none alive can remember precisely what those views were. Some theologians believe that she preached that the world was not created by the Lady's kindness and was in fact a Hell or Purgatory for sinners; other religious scholars maintain that she espoused free love and mystical communion with the Lady through orgiastic rites.

The Final Prayers of Melanthie Del-Rosa was supposedly written by the heretic herself as she awaited execution. The scroll is badly-aged and must be treated with utmost delicacy. A saving throw (modified for Dexterity if the character possesses a bonus) must be made to read the scroll without destroying it. The scroll is mostly a biographical account of Del-Rosa's life, but it does contain two clerical spells as detailed below.

| Complexity | Study Period | Total Comp. Rolls | Potency | # Spells |
|------------|--------------|-------------------|---------|----------|
| 9 | 2 days | 3 | 11 | 2 |

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.

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.

4. The Doomsday Book of the Hexing King

Little is known definitively about the being known as the Hexing King. He may have been naught but a mortal wizard who hid his mundane origins to develop an aura of mystery or he may truly have been an otherworldly creature sent to teach the world the ways of the evil eye. In recent times, however, it has been common to regard the Hexing King as little more than an old wives' tale; the Hexing King is most often spoken of to little children as a boogiemer who scares them into behaving.

The Doomsday Book of the Hexing King is a lavish, gilt tome that is filled with colorful illustrations. Much of the book is given over to cautionary tales in which immoral or antisocial behaviors are punished by the arrival of the Hexing King himself, who seems to take a perverse pleasure in doling out cruel and unusual forms of justice.

The Doomsday Book contains the spells *Spider Climb*, *Phantasmal Force*, and *Contact Other Plane*, as well as the spell below.

| Complexity | Study Period | Total Comp. Rolls | Potency | # Spells |
|------------|--------------|-------------------|---------|----------|
| 12 | 4 days | 10 | 15 | 5 |

Baleful Eyes of the Hexing King

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 negates the effects of this spell; however, any creature struck by Baleful Eyes of the Hexing King takes a -4 penalty to the saving throw.

5. The Shard of Paldra Felm

Paldra Felm was an eccentric druid who lived deep within the forests of the Green Isle. She was sometimes called upon to lead the Wild Hunt against the enemies of the fey; on these trips she frequently left behind exquisitely crafted—but very fragile—clay pots that were inscribed with the sacred runes of druidic magic. Few of these pots survive; in fact, the fabled Shard of Paldra Felm is the only legible fragment known to exist.

The Shard is a very incomplete “spell-book.” It only contains the spells detailed below, *Purify Water*, and *Stone Shape*. The Shard of Paldra Felm is also quite fragile; if the character carrying it receives any sort of physical shock or impact they must make a saving throw or have the Shard crumble into unusable pieces.

| Complexity | Study Period | Total Comp. Rolls | Potency | # Spells |
|------------|--------------|-------------------|---------|----------|
| 11 | 3 days | 6 | 13 | 4 |

Paldra Felm'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.

Hungry Branches

Level: Druid 4

Duration: 2 rounds/level

Range: 30'

This spell must be cast upon a tree. The spell causes 1d4, +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

Movement: 120' (40')

Armor Class: 13

Hit Dice: 2

Attacks: 1 (Attack Bonus: +2)

Damage: 1d4+1 (bite)

Save: Fighter 2

6. The Ocher Book That Breathes

It is said that the Ocher Book That Breathes is not a book of this world. It was not written or printed by human agency; rather, the Ocher Book was ripped from the hewed-open chest of a demon from the World Below by the archmage Kalistrus.

The Ocher Book is a pulsating brown organ and seethes with its own life-force. Its pages are always warm to the touch and their texture is like that of living horse flesh. If the Ocher Book is damaged in any way (pages torn, cover stabbed, etc.) the book oozes a sizzling clear liquid that causes 1d6 points of acidic damage per round until the effected area is immersed in water. The Ocher Book itself is immune to acid and fire.

The Ocher Book That Breathes is a compendious tome containing many spells. Aside from the spells detailed below, it includes the magical formulas for *Identify*, *Floating Disc*, *Summon Monster II*, *Gust of Wind*, *Suggestion*, *Mnemonic Enhancer*, *Anti-Magic Shell*, and *Maze*. At the GM's whim, the Ocher Book may also contain instructions for constructing a variety of golems.

| Complexity | Study Period | Total Comp. Rolls | Potency | # Spells |
|------------|--------------|-------------------|---------|----------|
| 15 | 6 days | 17 | 17 | 10 |

World Walker'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.

Curse of the Nightmare from Beyond

Level: Magic-User 4

Duration: special

Range: 30'

The target of this spell must make a saving throw 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.

7. The Stone Tablet of the Ogre Shaman

The Stone Tablet of the Ogre Shaman was a rather unorthodox spell-book formerly in the possession of Garlak Tor, an ogre spiritualist who lived in the foothills of Frostreave. Garlak's skill at producing spirits from the Wailing Labyrinth made many grieved mourners seek out his isolated home; he would perform seances for anyone who brought him the proper tribute. (Exactly what that tribute is is left to the GM's discretion.)

The Stone Tablet of the Ogre Shaman is a massive flat stone inscribed with the mystical formulas for some of Garlak's most-used spells. The Stone Tablet can only be lifted by characters whose combined Strength scores total 30 or higher. (Three men with Strength 10 could lift the tablet, for example.) Even if the Stone Tablet is lifted, it is difficult and tiring to carry for any great distance; the Stone Tablet will require a cart and horse, at least, to move.

The Stone Tablet of the Ogre Shaman contains the spells detailed below, as well as *Detect Magic*, *Speak with Dead*, and *Animate Dead*.

| Complexity | Study Period | Total Comp. Rolls | Potency | # Spells |
|------------|--------------|-------------------|---------|----------|
| 14 | 6 days | 15 | 15 | 5 |

Wreath of Souls

Level: Cleric 2

Duration: 3 rounds +1 round/level

Range: 0

After making the sign of the fell necromancer Githred the Vile, 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.

Garlak Tor's Spectral Ensnarement

Level: Cleric 4

Duration: 1 round/level

Range: 120'

This spells 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.

8. Text of the Golden Succubus

The Text of the Golden Succubus is a grimoire that was once in the possession of Yelasha Dru, an incantatrix who operated a much-lauded house of ill-repute called The Lush Garden. The Lush Garden catered to only the most wealthy and prestigious clientele; Yelasha promised that through the use of magic she could construct carnal encounters the likes of which no mundane bawdy house could ever hope to match.

The Text of the Golden Succubus is a book of magic bound between beaten metal covers. It is worth a small fortune as an art object; its interior art—which is mostly scandalous in nature—is sumptuously illustrated with glimmering colors that seem to dance before the eyes. There are precious few spells in the Text of the Golden Succubus; it is more a mixture of manual of physical congress and literary erotica than spell-book, but it does contain the spell detailed below and the *Charm Person* spell. At the GM's discretion, the Text of the Golden Succubus may also contain magical rites of a more ritualistic nature.

| Complexity | Study Period | Total Comp. Rolls | Potency | # Spells |
|------------|--------------|-------------------|---------|----------|
| 8 | 1 day | 2 | 10 | 2 |

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.

9. King Relan II's Manual of Gastromancy

King Relan II, the former ruler of a kingdom called Nalconia, was an anomaly in the Iron Principalities; instead of keeping his kingdom by dint of military might, he maintained his reign through guile and magic. His specialty was conjuring enchanted food. It is said that even the most bloodthirsty warlord might have his disposition changed at one of King Relan's great feasts.

The Manual of Gastromancy is a thin book bound in plain black leather. It contains a multitude of recipes for roast meats, sauces and gravies, ales and wines—as well as the spells detailed below. At the GM's discretion, the Manual of Gastromancy might also contain a recipe for enchanted Dwarven Rations. These rations take a day to prepare at a cost of 10 gold pieces for a seven day allotment. These rations never spoil and each day's worth of rations restores 1 Hit Point. Only 1 Hit Point per day can be restored via Dwarven Rations.

| Complexity | Study Period | Total Comp. Rolls | Potency | # Spells |
|------------|--------------|-------------------|---------|----------|
| 8 | 1 day | 2 | 10 | 2 |

Conjure Pheasant of Majestic Presence

Level: Magic-User 2

Duration: 12 hours

Range: 30'

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

King Relan'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.

10. Seelank's Secret Songbook

Seelank was a notorious bard who had formerly been a high-ranking priest of the Church of the Lady. He was defrocked for seducing either a nobleman's daughter or son—accounts vary. After his expulsion from the holy orders, Seelank traveled the World Between using songspells of his own design to aid troubled communities he stumbled upon in his travel. However, Seelank had a truly mercenary heart—as payment he always took the most beautiful young maid or handsome young man away with him. These young charges were never to be seen again.

Seelank's Secret Songbook is a roughly-bound tome that would be entirely nondescript save for one unique feature: the edges of its covers are lined with sharp animal teeth. Indeed, Seelank's Secret Songbook is a hungry tome; if it is placed on a shelf with other books it will consume 1d4 of them in the night, leaving behind nothing more than scraps of chewed paper and streaks of orange saliva. Seelank's Secret Songbook contains notation for many popular ballads, chants, sea chanties, and jigs, but also contains the two spells detailed below.

| Complexity | Study Period | Total Comp. Rolls | Potency | # Spells |
|------------|--------------|-------------------|---------|----------|
| 12 | 4 days | 10 | 15 | 2 |

Seelank'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.

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.

DERO

In the Japanese horror film *Marebito*, Dero are mentioned, as is an strange writer named Richard Shaver. You may recognize the name Derro as a monster found in classic fantasy gaming. Let's trace these allusions backwards, shall we?

In the early 1940s a man named Richard Sharpe Shaver wrote in to *Amazing Stories* magazine to tell them of a degenerate race who lived beneath the surface of the earth. These beings were called "Deros," which was a handy contraction for "detrimental robots." However, Shaver's Deros were not actually robots; rather, they simply displayed a robotic callousness toward human suffering as they preyed upon mankind as a source of food. You see, Deros were prone to kidnapping humans to torture and eat. Editor Ray Palmer punched-up one of Shaver's letters and published it as a story titled "I Remember Lemuria!" *Amazing Stories* was soon flooded with letters and testimonials from readers who confirmed the existence of the Dero and their sadomasochistic ways. A series of Dero-related stories followed; much like the Cthulhu Mythos that bloomed around Lovecraft and his circle in the pages of *Weird Tales*, the Shaver Mystery came to dominate the pages of *Amazing Stories*. It is estimated that 75% of the issues of *Amazing Stories* published from the 1945-1948 contained content related to the Shaver Mystery.

What we have here is the raw material for a new take on the canonical Der(r)o. Here's mine:

The Dero are a malicious, degenerate race who haunt the Neverwhere 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.

Movement: 90' (30')

Armor Class: 12

Hit Dice: 4

No. of Attacks: 3 (Attack Bonus +4)

Damage: 1d4/1d4/1d6 (claw/claw/bite)

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.

MISCELLANEOUS UNDEAD OF THE WORLD BETWEEN

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.

Movement: 90' (30')

Armor Class: 15

Hit Dice: 5

No. of Attacks: 2 (Attack Bonus +5)

Damage: 1d6 (burning touch)

Morale: 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 Immunities – immune to mind-affecting magic, poison, disease, etc.

Sons of the Hydra's Teeth

In life the Sons of the Hydra's Teeth were a much-feared company of mercenaries from Relmeenos. 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.

Movement: 60' (20')

Armor Class: 17

Hit Dice: 1+1

No. of Attacks: 2 (Attack Bonus +2)

Damage: 1d8 (longsword)

Morale: 12

Special Abilities:

Stalwart – Sons of the Hydra's Teeth cannot be turned.

Undead Immunities – immune to mind-affecting magic, poison, disease, etc.

Whispering Ghoul

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

Movement: 90' (30')

Armor Class: 15

Hit Dice: 4 (Turn as Hit Dice 5)

No. of Attacks: 3 (Attack Bonus +4)

Damage: 1d6/1d6/1d6 (claw/claw/bite)

Morale: 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 Undead – a Whispering Ghoul can summon 1d6 ghouls from beneath the earth.

Undead Immunities – immune to mind-affecting magic, poison, disease, etc.

Taxidermied Ulverhound

Ulverhounds are a particularly loyal and fierce breed of dogs native to Ulverland. Some ulverhound 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 the necromancers of the Dreamlands.

Movement: 120' (40')

Armor Class: 15

Hit Dice: 6

No. of Attacks: 1 (Attack Bonus +6)

Damage: 2d6 (bite)

Morale: 12

Special Abilities:

Psychotronic Gaze – once per round a Taxidermied Ulverhound 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 Immunities – immune to mind-affecting magic, poison, disease, etc.

Taxidermy Avenger

The wizards of the Dreamlands have 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.

Movement: 120' (40')

Armor Class: 12

Hit Dice: 8

No. of Attacks: 1 (Attack Bonus +8)

Damage: 1d8 (fist)

Morale: 12

Special Abilities:

Strangulating 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 Immunities – immune to mind-affecting magic, poison, disease, etc.

A NOTE ON MAPS AND THE WORLD BETWEEN

I have a sad admission to make: I absolutely suck at making maps, so when it came time to make a map of my campaign setting I resorted to a time-honored fantasy gaming tradition: I took a map of Europe, erased the place names, and plunked my own nations wherever they seemed to fit. Hey, if it's good enough for the Warhammer franchise, it's good enough for me.

(Fun fact: the first map of the World Between was done on a pizza box when I was in high school. How's that for old-school flavor?)

The various places in the World Between approximately map to these real-world locations:

Caligari – Germany.

Frostreave – Russia and all those Scandinavian countries. (Yeah, sorry Scandinavians, I lumped you lot all in there.)

The Ghael Isles – The Caribbean.

Harrowfaust – Eastern Europe.

The Iron Principalities – Italy.

The Island of Jade Mysteries – Basically where North America would be. This is the most distant land from all the others in the World Between.

The Islands of Unparalleled Liberty – Sicily.

Midian – Spain.

Mord-Stavian – Egypt. Well, all of Northern Africa actually.

Relmeenos – Greece.

The Ruinous Scar – China. It's a big scar.

Scarabae – France.

The Scavenger Lands – The Middle East, India, etc.

The Shae Isles – Ireland.

Ulverland – Great Britain.

PLACING OTHER PEOPLE'S CONTENT IN THE WORLD BETWEEN

As much as I like to homebrew, I also enjoy using the fruits of other talented folks' imaginations. Here are where I place some commercially-available products in my campaign setting:

Anomalous Subsurface Environment (by Patrick Wetmore, Henchmen Abuse) – deep within The Ruinous Scar

Barrowmaze (by Greg Gillespie) – is definitely in Ulverland

Carcosa (by Geoffrey McKinney, LotFP) – numerous portals within the abandoned dungeons of The Ruinous Scar lead to Carcosa

The Isle of the Unknown (by Geoffrey McKinney, LotFP) – is one of the Ghael Isles

Red Tide (by Kevin Crawford, Sine Nomine) – near of the Island of Jade Mysteries

Stonehell (by Michael Curtis, 3 Headed Monster) – in a forsaken area of Midian

Vornheim (by Zak S., LotFP) – Caligari, far north

Weird Adventures (by Trey Causey) – connected through the Dreamlands/Slumberland

Weird New World (by James Raggi, LotFP) – a northernmost section of Frostreave

RUMORS, IDLE TALK, AND MISCELLANEOUS LORE

Caligari

“Nothing moves in Caligari without the consent of the United Trade Guild.”

† *Geoffrey Delp, master inquisitive*

“The state religion of Caligari is all mumbo-jumbo. Haven’t you ever noticed how the Chosen of the Lady talk about feeding the hungry and helping the poor, yet the High Elect wear robes cut from the finest white silk?”

† *Mary Tuelswatter, dressmaker to the hideously rich*

“Anything can be had in the back streets of Caligari if you’ve got the right handful of coins. There are taverns and cabarets if you want to drink your troubles away. It’s not hard to find a gambling den or a fighting pit if you’re in the mood to squander your silver on a bet. If you’re looking for opium or a bawdy house—we’ve got that too.”

† *Pearlina Smoothbottom, procuress of dubious virtue*

Frostreave

“In the northmost realms, the baleful stars shine the brightest. The unknowable evils represented by the constellations Kairon's Belt, the Gibbering Maw, and the Crown of Embers keep a close watch over the Winterlands; some travelers report encountering the avatars of those fell celestial bodies in the world's forsaken places.”

† *Serrun Gloambeard, rogue astrologer*

“Katrina Rimeheart has struck a strange bargain with the disgraced and dishonored dwarves who inhabit the Seelie keeps within the great mountains of the North. She trades them the hair of her maiden subjects for enchanted engines of war. The dwarves have given her a form of aerial conveyance that is powered by ethereal gases. They call this transport a ‘zeppelin’ and are preparing to test its effectiveness in a campaign against a giant's stronghold.”

† *Kras Demmering, runebearer*

The Ghael Isles

“It is said that certain warlocks have the power to allow the specters trapped in the Wailing Labyrinth to escape their eternal bondage for a brief spell. Those people get ‘ridden’ or possessed by the spirits they’ve been in contact with...sometimes they speak in a voice long dead or evidence knowledge of secrets long buried. Of course, most spiritualists are just con men.”

† *Tilney Junks, hexmage of the Green Isle*

“The Isle of Domagio is home to monstrous reptilian beasts, lizardmen, frogmen, and powerful medicinal plants. The Isle is said to be a place where time is forever out of joint.”

† *Garwise-the-Axe, big game hunter*

Harrowfaust

“If you’ve got a madman or lunatic in the family, you could do worse than sending them to the asylum at Arkhamdale.”

† *Grish Spango, hawker of penny dreadfuls*

“The Brotherhood of the Yew has the appearance of being a society for folkloric and historical scholarship, but the organization has an inner circle actively devoted to tracking and destroying the walking dead. Members of that inner circle recognize each other by the silvered half-moon pin they always wear on their lapels.”

† *Morgan Castia, alchemist of Vineyard Hills*

“The Forsaken Keep of the Blighted Urn is the seat of the Knights of the Lost Legion. Cursed by an eternity of lifeless indignity, the Knights can be temporarily forced into service by powerful, occult magic. However, the spells that bind their service can only be cast by the black-haired seventh daughter of a seventh daughter. Anyone else who attempts to ensnare them by sorcery will be dragged into the Keep and forcibly conscripted into the Lost Legion.”

† *Gilliwack Jhemp, plague doctor*

The Iron Principalities

“Some say that the Guild of the Red Hand is just a fairytale told to scare children, but my cousin Vernard was into some bad business. One morn his wife woke-up and found him choked to death in their marriage bed. A palm print was stamped on the wall in gore-colored ink. You can’t tell me that wasn’t the work of the assassin’s guild.”

† *Mortimer Guld, forger and fence for goods of uncertain legality*

“As bad as things are in Caligari, at least we’ve still got a semblance of law and order. You can’t say that about the ramshackle border towns of the Principalities. Not much grows out there in the sandy soil, but there is gold and silver laced through the land. Those metals give rise to greed and greed gives rise to violence—the mining towns of the South are a good place to get yourself killed, if you’re so inclined.”

† *Jennings Slake, retired duelist*

“In the days of King Glavius, the great island city of Karamodia was the center of the known world. But the King did anger the spiteful elemental spirits with his [parchment torn] and the great serpent Amaloch did pull Shining Karamodia to the bottom of the Sorrowsea.”

† *The Chronicles of Sewalus Toole, volume three*

The Island of Jade Mysteries

“The oni of the Jade Mysteries are unlike their ignorant, ruffian ogre cousins. Many of them are powerful shamans who can summon fiery spirits of the ether. While they are more civilized than the ogres of other lands, beware their trickery: the one thing they share with all other of their kind is a taste for human flesh.”

† *Petro Neems, antiquarian collector*

“The kenku who nest at Wrecker's Point build idols to strange, elder gods and steal out at night to prowl the streets looking for the one they call the Hidden Master.”

† *Ullar Greth, warlord*

The Islands of Unparalleled Liberty

“Nathaniel Lathrope, once the Lord of the Silver Fleet, now commands a spectral ship named the Night Saber. When the moon rises, the Night Saber appears in a haze of dank, foul-smelling mist. The vessel is crewed by the souls of damned. Only Isolda Tarmapp, Pirate Countess of the Six Coins, knows the secret of how to escape Nathaniel's infernal clutches.”

† *Stella Carmello, barwench with a difference*

“The crab-men who dwell in the Sea of Turmoil are a danger to any who sail those waters. They have been known to raid ships solely to sheer-off and collect the lefts arms of all aboard, which they then take back to their undersea lairs. What they actually do with those severed limbs is unknown.”

† *Vilana Marshland, barbarian of the Razor Coast*

Midian

“And the Lady called unto her four Apostles and said unto them: ‘I entrust you with the Gospel of my Way. To you, Arianna, I give dominion of those who bring my faith by the Sword. To you, Calbrius, I give dominion of those who bring my faith by the Book. To you, Coraline, I give dominion of those who bring my faith by the merciful Word. To you, Bernus, I give dominion of those who bring my faith along the Roads.”

† *The Book of the Lady 98:15*

“The more orthodox members of the Church of the Lady think it idolatrous to give praise to the Four Saints, but I’ve found that a quick word of prayer to Bernus or Arianna never did any harm if you’re in a pinch.”

† *Goldfinch Terrial, oft-imperiled bounty hunter*

“Duelists prowl the lawless lands, looking to prove who is the true Lord of Steel.”

† *Carrik Leafaux, slayer of beastmen*

“There is curious talk about a labyrinth deep beneath the surface of New Midian that leads to a spring of curative waters. Sadly, New Median is overrun by treacherous kobolds.”

† *Permo Bilk, hopeful alchemist*

Mord-Stavian

“Hidden among the dunelands is a strange convent known only as the Sisterhood of the Voice. It is whispered that none can disobey the commands given by the holy women of that order.”

† *Millicent Billock, falcon trainer*

“Beware the one called Morlius the Fleshcrafter who lives near the Temple of Lamentation. Morlius can make you beautiful, but at a terrible price.”

† *Perfidia Greysowl, mage-mistress of the Autumnal School*

“Past the border towns lies a desert of shifting white sand inhabited by only the most hardy of nomads. Beyond the wasteland the desert gives way to a churning lake of fire. That kind of heat can make a man lose his mind. The burning sands...THE BURNING SANDS!”

† *Alphonsus Peet, mad cartographer*

Relmeenos

“A dream-merchant of Pulaar Ghaan holds the key to the accursed ruins of Songvale. The Thrice-Damned Brotherhood would give much to have that key returned to their safekeeping.”

† *Lashak Thrump, shieldbreaker of the Chimera Mercenary Company*

Scarabae

“Being a member of the Knights of the White Raven used to be an honorable station. Nowadays they’re just as corrupt as everything else. They still wear the mantle of the Lady, but their masters have grown suspiciously wealthy and I’ve heard that their religious observations have taken some *ahem* unorthodox turns.”

† *Gillian Pellwallop, initiate of the Church of the Lady*

“Her Dreaming Majesty is bound to the River Ophelium. The one to free her is sure to curry divine favor.”

† *Carolina Wandcroft, legionnaire of the Bronze Guard*

“The Battlefields of Duzain harbor a horrible curse due to all the blood that was spilled there. Loremasters claim that within a burial mound there is a portal that leads directly to a city within the Wailing Labyrinth called Morian's Crown.”

† *Marcuse Forgefist, grave robber*

“Beware the House on Thornroot Hill, for it is the home of the haunted family of Auber Orellian. A fierce storm rages against the house each night; some say that the storm is summoned to power a fiendish apparatus of unknown purpose.”

† *Victoria Umber, tomb guardian*

“Idle talk suggests that a spiritualist in Scarabae knows the location of the Hand of Butchered Glory.”

† *Mari-Anna Twohearts, spy*

The Scavenger Lands

“Every natural thing in this world is governed by a World Spirit. Show the Spirits proper reverence and miraculous things can happen. An offering of blessed wine to the World Spirit of a river can insure a safe crossing; a howl in the right tones to appease the World Spirit of a mountain will save you from an avalanche.”

† *Kanjo Remalt, druidic initiate*

“Orc raiders search the badlands for owlbear cubs to train as beasts of war.”

† *Harriet Sulkhorn, highwaywoman*

The Shae Isles

“In the East there is a magical school known as the Verdant Tower that teaches the ways of fey sorcery.”

† *Hyacinth Pommelwright, caravan outrider*

“Druids of the Twisted Oak have summoned the Wild Hunt to disrupt and sabotage logging operations near Firdrake Glade.”

† *Yemar Rathspool, bear trainer*

“All ghouls in the World Between are related to the Valarak family, who were cursed with undeath and insatiable hunger by a priest of the Lady in ancient days. While this curse was intended as a punishment for the Valarak's cannibalistic and thieving ways, it created a race of enduring enemies who want nothing more than to plunder the bones of all living creatures.”

† *Philswotta Derath, gypsy caravan master*

Ulverland

“There is a secret, and well-guarded, place within the Barrow Downs called the Forbidden Repository. It houses dread books of magic not meant to be read by mortal eyes.”

† *Vindus Pelep-Duhr, questing shaman of the Gnawing Wolf*

“Throwing in my lot with Old Graham's Gang was the best thing I ever did for myself. Sure, the safe-house is a bit squalid, but Old Graham treats us right. He only takes half of what we steal and he rarely beats us. And he always makes us soup on Sundays.”

† *Pieter Nimblefist, urchin and pickpocket*

“A chamber in an ancient monastery near Rookmere Falls is haunted by the ghost of King Alastor, last lord of an ancient royal bloodline. It is rumored that he bestows fearsome strength upon those who swear their allegiance to his eternal memory.”

† *Wolfgang Ulster, notorious bard*

RUMORS ABOUT OTHER PLANES OF EXISTENCE

While the World Between is generally regarded as a world crafted by the gods from the raw materials of the cosmos, most agree that other spiritual planes also exist. The gods, their angelic servants, and the faithful are said to dwell within the glorious spires of the World Above. The World Below is a place of eternal torment ruled by the Demon Queens and Lords. The Wailing Labyrinth is a gloomy realm of ghosts and ectoplasmic horrors. The Ardenwald is a realm of fey magic and wild natural beauty. The Dreamlands are a place beyond the imagination, a land that brings both sublime visions and horrific nightmares.

“The Book of the Lady is largely silent about the nature of the other planes of existence.”

† *Myrmidor Halfleague, riverboat gambler*

“Few mortals have ventured into the World Above, but a few chosen of the Lady have been called to the higher realm for an audience with the goddess. Some say that a select group of champions have been empowered by the Lady to protect the Celestial Well.”

† *Kyria Sterling, grail seeker*

“An order of ancient scholars live within the domed palaces of the Dreamlands. They study the artificer's art of creating automatons and bestowing life upon inanimate objects. Their golems are particularly valued by the wealthy as a means to protect their counting houses and vaults.”

† *Lovar Kruft, dreamthief*

“Any slight against the fey will be met with reprisals from the Ardenwald, but if one raises the anger of the combined ire of the Seelie and Unseelie Courts they find themselves pursued by the dryads, satyrs, and branchlings of the Wild Hunt and the elk-horned huntsman who leads them.”

† *Teryani Gerrhart, fletcher*

“An endless war rages between two factions of Vile Lords in the World Below. The legions of the Soulsplitters and the Lifedrinkers clash without cessation in a brutal conflict known as the Bloodstone War.”

† *Olath Klegg, wolf's head*

“Spend too much time in the Ardenwald and you will be infected with its preternatural wildness. Travelers to the fey realm return with an inability to get along in civilization; their restless souls have become addicted to the isolated experience of the natural sublime. Like the elves and sprites of the Seelie Court, their minds are gripped with primal urges that border on insanity.”

† *Lorien DeKar, Brass Juggernaut Rider*

“Within the Wailing Labyrinth, journey to the the center of the Shatterwind Tempest, climb Mount Ravenous, fight past the guardian minotaurs, and enter the Unhallowed Caverns. There you will find Malachai's Eye—a cruel, but all-seeing oracle.”

† *Martina Scowl, dirgescribe and murder balladeer*



“Most folk believe that the elves of the Seelie Court are good and that the fey of the Unseelie Court are evil, but this is a gross oversimplification. While the Seelie fey may be friendlier, their capriciousness sometimes gives way to unprovoked cruelty. Similarly, while the creatures of the Unseelie are soulless monsters, they have been known to help the mortal races of the World Between when it suits their purposes. Who can say how the minds of the fey work or if they truly have minds in the conventional sense at all?”

† *Natters Daniel, tobacconist*

“Oh, to be sure, the history books all agree that the Lorbrek family has been of aristocratic blood since time immemorial, but the visions shown to me in the Orb of Phantasms indicates that they are descended from a penanggalan clan from the Dreamlands.”

† *Vareed Gelland, professional mourner*

“Those who drown in the vapors of the Ethereal Sea always return to the World Between as will o' the wisps. If captured in an enchanted vial of amber glass, a will o' the wisp can guide its owner to buried treasure. If captured in a lantern made of ghostsilver, a will o' the wisp emits a light that makes the unseen visible.”

† *Alma Ser, purveyor of oddities*

RANDOM GOTHIC NAMES TABLES

I generally use more fantasy-inspired names, but if you want a more authentic Gothic name for a character, these tables are for you. (They are also handy in a pinch if you need a quick name for an unexpected NPC.)

Male Names

| | |
|-------|-----------|
| 01-02 | Abel |
| 03-04 | Abraham |
| 05-06 | Adamus |
| 07-08 | Aleister |
| 09-10 | Ambrosio |
| 11-12 | Armand |
| 13-14 | Arthur |
| 15-16 | Augustus |
| 17-18 | Bertram |
| 19-20 | Bram |
| 21-22 | Caleb |
| 23-24 | Cesare |
| 25-26 | Charles |
| 27-28 | Conrad |
| 29-30 | David |
| 31-32 | Edgar |
| 33-34 | Edward |
| 35-36 | Frederick |
| 37-38 | George |
| 39-40 | Giovanni |
| 41-42 | Heinrich |
| 43-44 | Henry |
| 45-46 | Howard |
| 47-48 | James |
| 49-50 | Johann |
| 51-52 | Jonathan |
| 53-54 | Jonas |
| 55-56 | Lorenzo |
| 57-58 | Malachi |

| | |
|--------|-----------|
| 59-60 | Manfred |
| 61-62 | Mircea |
| 63-64 | Montague |
| 65-66 | Nathaniel |
| 67-68 | Nicholas |
| 69-70 | Ormond |
| 71-72 | Oscar |
| 73-74 | Percy |
| 75-76 | Quincy |
| 77-78 | Radu |
| 79-80 | Richard |
| 81-82 | Robert |
| 83-84 | Roderick |
| 85-86 | Samuel |
| 87-88 | Siegfried |
| 89-90 | Silas |
| 91-92 | Theodore |
| 93-94 | Victor |
| 95-96 | Vincent |
| 97-98 | Vladimir |
| 99-100 | William |

Female Names

| | |
|-------|------------|
| 01-02 | Abigail |
| 03-04 | Adeline |
| 05-06 | Agnes |
| 07-08 | Anna |
| 09-10 | Antonia |
| 11-12 | Arabella |
| 13-14 | Berenice |
| 15-16 | Bertha |
| 17-18 | Caroline |
| 19-20 | Charlotte |
| 21-22 | Christabel |

| | |
|-------|------------|
| 23-24 | Christine |
| 25-26 | Clara |
| 27-28 | Daphne |
| 29-30 | Elanor |
| 31-32 | Elena |
| 33-34 | Elizabeth |
| 35-36 | Elvira |
| 37-38 | Emily |
| 39-40 | Erzbet |
| 41-42 | Evelina |
| 43-44 | Hester |
| 45-46 | Isabella |
| 47-48 | Jane |
| 49-50 | Joanna |
| 51-52 | Julia |
| 53-54 | Justine |
| 55-56 | Katherine |
| 57-58 | Laura |
| 59-60 | Leonella |
| 61-62 | Lenore |
| 63-64 | Lucretia |
| 65-66 | Louise |
| 67-68 | Lucy |
| 69-70 | Lydia |
| 71-72 | Marguerite |
| 73-74 | Marilyn |
| 75-76 | Mary |
| 77-78 | Matilda |
| 79-80 | Mina |
| 81-82 | Minerva |
| 83-84 | Radolpha |
| 85-86 | Rebecca |
| 87-88 | Rhea |
| 89-90 | Rosalind |

| | |
|--------|----------|
| 91-92 | Sophia |
| 93-94 | Sybil |
| 95-96 | Victoria |
| 97-98 | Violetta |
| 99-100 | Virginia |

MAGIC ITEMS OF THE WORLD BETWEEN

Warpaint of the Kamikaze Kobolds — This enchanted warpaint is used by the suicidal warriors of an obscure tribe of kobolds who dwell within the Scavenger Lands. 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 kobold, so they don the warpaint without expecting to survive its use.

Multitool of the Dwarf Artificers — In its “inert” form, this item appears to be no more than a rod of smelted iron. However, when held aloft the wielder can utter “Praise be to ...” and name a specific dwarven saint. The item then transforms into a particular tool depending on the saint invoked: Narfi the Forger (hammer), Gnackli the Carver (chisel), Morgli the Bender (crowbar), Restnar the Splinterer (axe), Lorla the Mender (scissors), Terlak the Miner (pick). When not held the item reverts to its inert form.

Cup of the Oath Breaker — Anyone who drinks from this enchanted goblet once owned by the Betrayer Prince of Scarabae 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. This sword was said to have been forged for a champion of Merrihel who fought against the undead legions of Morgath.

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 Her Dreaming Majesty – These enchanted arrows are said to have been blessed by Her Dreaming Majesty of the River Ophelium; 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 Her Dreaming Majesty 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 two-handed sword 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 mutation due to the strange mutational aura given off by the blade.

Leaden Amulet of Mutational Protection – The lesser version of this dull gray amulet gives the wearer a +3 bonus to all Saving Throws made against the effects of magical radiation and other mutational effects. The greater version of this dull gray amulet makes the wearer immune to magical radiation and other mutational effects.

The Doom Axe of Malrodian – This viciously-serrated hand axe was wielded by the legendary fomorian warrior Malrodian, but may be used as a two-handed weapon by creatures of human size. 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 Shae Chieftains – These golden, jeweled collars were given to the great clan chieftains of the Shae Isle by the archfey. 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 Matakhan – These highly-ornate daggers are said to have been blessed by Matakhan, and are thus prized by the cultists who serve the Demon Queen of Assassins. 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.

Slurgian Death's Head – These desiccated and gruesome items are trophies made from the decapitated heads of enemies of the cult of Slurge. 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 lasts 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 killed and transformed a foe, the arrow loses all of its enchantment.

Woodrot armor – This armor functions as +2 leather armor with the following additional properties: whenever a wooden weapon—such as a club or staff—hits the wearer it immediately crumbles into dust; furthermore, any plant-based monster that hits the wearer takes 2d6 points of damage.

Shadowcloak – Shadowcloaks are tenebrous garments created by the drow of the Neverwhere. 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 conceal one hand weapon within its folds of impenetrable darkness; this weapon will remain hidden even if the wearer is searched.

Scepter of the Phoenix Prince – These ornate, dragon-shaped scepters were originally gifts to the most trusted vassals of the Phoenix Prince of the Island of Jade Mysteries. When discovered as part of a treasure hoard a scepter usually has 1d10 charges. A charge may be expended to emulate the effects of a *Fire Ball*, *Pyrotechnics*, or *Protection from Fire* spell. All spell-like effects from the scepter operate as if they had been cast by a 5th level caster.

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 rite dedicated to the Lamenting Mother once per year; if they fail to attend, they will again die—but this death is final and there is no hope of future resurrection.

Twin Puzzle Boxes of Calim Yor – 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 baroquely-styled 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.

Mask of the Blunt Myrmidon – This cursed mask causes any bladed weapon wielded by the wearer to take a -2 penalty to damage rolls. The wearer will refuse to take the mask off until a *Remove Curse* or *Dispel Magic* spell is cast upon them.

Casket of Seraph-Luun – This stone sarcophagus from Mord-Stavian 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.

A GOTHIC FANTASY APPENDIX N

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 the initial works in the Gothic mode. (By the time *Dracula* was published the Gothic had already been in existence for well over a hundred years!) 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," "The Pit and the Pendulum," "The Tell-Tale Heart," and "The Black Cat"

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"

Charlotte Perkins Stetson – "The Yellow Wall-paper"

Vernon Lee – "Dionea"

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

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," "Herbert West: Reanimator," 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*
William Peter Blatty – *The Exorcist*
Ira Levin – *Rosemary's Baby*
Stephen King – *The Shining*, *Eye of the Dragon*, and *The Dark Half*
Clive Barker – *The Books of Blood*, *Weaveworld*, *Imajica*
Tanith Lee – *Dark Dance*
Caitlin R. Kiernan – *Threshold*
Kathe Koja – *Extremities*
Poppy Z. Brite – *Lost Souls* and *Drawing Blood*
Toni Morrison – *Beloved*
Koji Suzuki – *Ringu*
Iain Banks – *The Wasp Factory*
Angela Carter – "The Bloody Chamber" and "The Company of Wolves"*
Patrick McGrath – *The Grotesque* and *Asylum*
Mark Z. Danielewski – *House of Leaves*
James Hynes – *The Lecturer's Tale*
Jack Yeovil – *Drachenfels*

Films

The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari
The Cat and the Canary
The Bride of Frankenstein
Gaslight
Black Sunday
Psycho
The Abominable Dr. Phibes
Carnival of Souls
Spider Baby
The Wicker Man
The Blood on Satan's Claw
Nightmare Castle

The Horror of Dracula
The Gorgon
The Vampire Lovers
The Hills Have Eyes
Texas Chain Saw Massacre
The Prophecy
A Nightmare on Elm Street
Evil Dead
Army of Darkness
The Mouth of Madness
The Black Plague
The Woman in Black

13 FLAVORS OF GOTHICISM: 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 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," Cristophe 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 D&D and the like 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

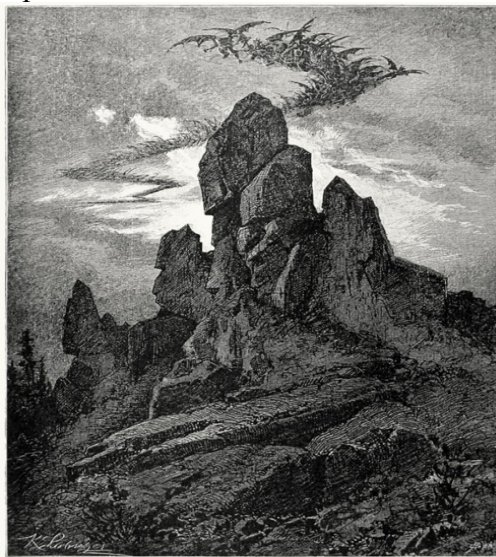
“During the winter of 1627-28 officials of the Federal government made a strange and secret investigation of certain conditions in the ancient Massachusetts seaport of Innsmouth. The public first learned of it in February, when a vast series of raids and arrests occurred, followed by the deliberate burning 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 bared 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 outbreking 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 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-dowells 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. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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 cruelest 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.

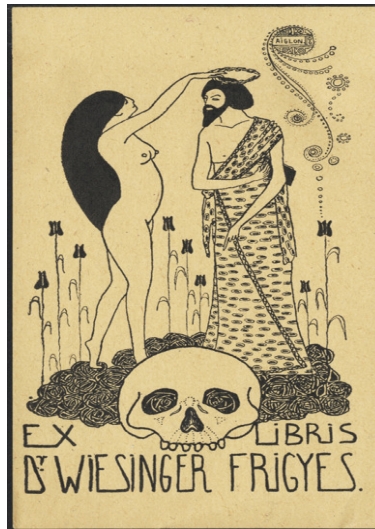
12. THE PIT STOP IN HELL

“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.

13. 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 yours 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 the 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. Burrough'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*, *Talislanda*, *The Zorceror of Zo*.

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

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.

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