

*Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons® Player's Handbook*



# VISIONS

Book Two

## Phantasmal Memories

*by Patrick Younts*

*Now it is the time of night  
That the graves, all gaping wide  
Every one lets forth his sprite,  
In the churchway paths to glide*

*– William Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night's Dream*

A whispered voice in the darkness, giggling, crying, speaking of people and places long forgotten. The sound of footsteps moving down an empty, cobweb-strewn hall. Rose petals falling like rain from the empty air. A sudden frost, a puff of white breath, and the flicker of candles as the dust is brushed from a picture frame. A chill hand touching, caressing, comforting... then squeezing the delicate throat.

subconscious dreads. Ghosts. They have many names, and many forms, and this book, **Phantasmal Memories - the Book of Spirits**, is dedicated to all of them. To the invisible, immortal phantoms who stroll the quiet hallways of our unconscious, to the ephemeral terrors who loom over us in the night, and to the cold, grim sirens who call to us from the gray veil beyond logic, beyond reason, beyond understanding... beyond death.

### VISIONS

Visions is Arcane Runes Press' new line of sourcebooks dealing with folklore, legend and myth. Each sourcebook in the series will present fresh new rules, spells, magic items, monsters or prestige classes dealing with the most compelling elements of real world mythology.

Phantasms, spectres, wraiths, shadows, restless spirits, suppressed memories, hidden fears, forgotten anxieties, fever dreams,

**Phantasmal Memories - the Book of Spirits** is a brand new sourcebook that expands the nature of incorporeal undead within the D20 system. Drawing up myth, legend, and popular fiction, it introduces three new templates – complete with example monsters drawn from folklore, and non-player characters inspired by the phantasms of gothic fiction – and a brand new category of spectral effect, the phantom memory. Using this book, you will be able to add whole new levels of gothic dread to your campaign world, and take your player's ghost-hunting adventurers to new heights of fear.

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## DREAD SPECTRE

*Like one, that on a lonesome road Doth walk in fear and dread,  
And having once turned round walks on,  
And turns no more his head;  
Because he knows, a frightful fiend Doth behind him tread.*

– Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The world is unfair, and uncaring, and the innocent are all too often made victim to the cruel whims of chance, and to the machinations of selfish and evil men. But fate has a way of balancing itself, of repaying cruelty with cruelty, violence with violence, and death with death.

Sometimes when a living dies as the result of horrific violence or unimaginable betrayal, if their anger is hot enough, and their hatred and lust for revenge strong enough, their spirits can shatter the bonds of mortality, and shrug off the weighty chains of death to rise again as a dread spectre, a malignant phantom black, cold, and cruel as a winter's night.

The dread spectre is the spirit of murder, a ghost made of the darkest emotions in men's souls: hatred, fear, cruelty, obsession, and lust for revenge. Dread spectres haunt the wildlands near their desiccated mortal shells, mindlessly seeking to right the wrong that lead to their deaths, but too blinded by their black passions to do anything but murder every unfortunate soul who crosses their path.

The dread spectre is the distillation of a type of evil spirit that is very common in world folklore: the angered, murderous soul hunting for vengeance. The dread spectre is very similar to a ghost, and many peasants, not knowing any better, will refer to them

as such. The spectre's powers, however, and interests are focused on stalking victims and gaining (fruitless) revenge, so where a ghost is often nothing more than the psychic remnants of a soul that does not know it is dead, the dread spectre is a malignant, cunning enemy that knows the truth of its demise all too well.

The most common dread spectres are formed from the spirits of highly intelligent living beings, such as humanoids, giants, and dragons. Occasionally, an animal or magical beast will become a dread spectre – in almost every instance, such dread spectres are the spirits of loyal pets of masters who were slain unjustly, still serving in death as they served in life.

A dread spectre can take many forms, depending on the creature it is birthed from. In all cases, however, the spectre resembles a living shadow in the outline of its living form, shot through with greasy yellow stars and outlined with a pallid white rime of light.

### *Dread Spectre Template*

The dread spectre is an acquired template that can be added to any animal, dragon, giant, humanoid, magical beast, or monstrous humanoid. The creature (referred to from now on as the base creature) must have at least a 6 Charisma.

**Size and Type:** The creature's type changes to undead. Do not recalculate the creature's base attack bonus, saves, or skill points. The dread spectre gains the incorporeal subtype. Size is unchanged.

**Hit Dice:** Change all current and future hit dice to d12s.

**Speed:** A dread spectre's base speed for all movement forms is increased by 10 feet per round. See Special Qualities for additional modifiers to the dread spectre's speed.

**Armor Class:** Natural armor is the same as the base creature, but applies only to ethereal encounters. When a dread spectre manifests on the material plane, its natural armor bonus is +0, but it gains a deflection bonus equal to its Charisma modifier +2, or a flat +2 bonus, whichever is higher.

**Attack:** A dread spectre retains all the attacks of the base creature, although those relying on physical contact do not affect creatures that are not ethereal.

**Full Attack:** A dread spectre retains all the attacks of the base creature, although those relying on physical contact do not affect creatures that are not ethereal.

**Damage:** Against ethereal creatures, a dread spectre uses the base creature's damage values, though those damage values are increased by one step, from 1d6 to 1d8 for example. Against non-ethereal beings, the dread spectre inflicts damage according to its special abilities only. Against its chosen target (see the malevolent bane special ability) it inflicts damage according to its dread strike (see below).

**Special Attacks:** A dread spectre has all the special attacks of the base creature, as well as those described below. The save DC against a special attack is equal to 10 + \_

the dread spectre's HD + its Charisma modifier.

**Malevolent Bane (Ex):** A dread spectre is a being of constant, near-blind rage. When a living being or group of beings enters its territory (see key to existence, below) it selects one to serve as the focus of its terrifying rage.

The dread spectre gains awful advantage over its chosen target, allowing it to hound and terrorize its hapless prey before swooping in for the kill. While it has a chosen target, the dread spectre gains the following:

- The dread spectre's speed is increased to an amount equal to the target's base speed + 10 feet per round.

- The DC of the dread spectre's special attacks is increased by +2, but only against its chosen target.

- The dread spectre's turn resistance increases to +6.

- The dread spectre gains a +4 profane bonus to Survival skill checks made to track its chosen prey.

A dread spectre can activate its malevolent bane ability as a free action. It can focus its malevolent bane ability on only one being at a time, and cannot change to a new target until the first has been slain, or has fled outside the range of its territory (as per key to existence).

**Dread Strike (Ex):** When attacking its chosen foe, the dread spectre's touch attack inflicts damage equal to its modified based damage (see above) + its Charisma modifier, and gains a bonus to attack rolls equal to its Charisma modifier, if any. In addition,

the attack forces the target to succeed at a Fort save or suffer 2 points of temporary Strength, Constitution, or Dexterity damage (dread spectre's choice).

If the dread spectre succeeds in draining ability score points from its target, then it heals itself an amount of hit point damage equal to its Charisma modifier, or 5 points (whichever is higher), up to its normal maximum hit points.

*Manifestation (Su):* All dread spectres have this ability. A dread spectre dwells on the Ethereal Plane and, as an ethereal creature, it cannot affect or be affected by anything in the material world. When it manifests, it sends a portion of its ectoplasmic spirit to the material plane and becomes visible, though it remains incorporeal. A manifested dread spectre can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, by magic weapons, or by spells, with a 50% chance of ignoring all damage from a corporeal source. A manifested dread spectre can pass through solid objects at will, and its own attacks ignore armor. A manifested dread spectre always moves silently, as a ghost does.

A manifested dread spectre can strike with touch attacks or with a ghost touch weapon. It remains partially on the Ethereal plane, where it is not incorporeal, so a manifested dread spectre can be attacked on both the Ethereal and Material plane normally.

When a spellcasting dread spectre is not manifested, its spells cannot affect beings on the Material plane, but they work normally against ethereal opponents. When a spellcasting dread spectre manifests, its spells continue to affect ethereal targets and can

also affect those on the Material plane. However, a manifested dread spectre's touch spells do not affect non-ethereal targets.

A dread spectre is considered a native of both the Ethereal and Material planes.

*Dreadful Terror (Su):* A dread spectre is a being of absolute, otherworldly malice, and its appearance is enough to send mortals into a frenzy of terror. The dread spectre's dreadful terror ability takes one of two forms, as decided by the Game Master when the spectre is created.

The dread spectre can radiate a field of utter terror. If this option is chosen, then all who come within 30 feet of the dread spectre are considered shaken. There is no save for this effect, and the condition lasts for as long as the being remains within the dreadful terror's radius of effect.

Alternately, the dread spectre can, as a standard action, unleash a terrifying howl like a bleak wind echoing from the dark lands beyond the grave. All living creatures within a 60-foot radius spread must succeed at a Will save or be panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic, necromantic, mind-affecting fear effect. Those who save cannot be affected by the same dread spectre's moan for one full day.

*Life Bane (Su):* A dread spectre that strikes a living being (other than its chosen target) with its incorporeal touch attack inflicts 1d6 points of damage and forces the target to succeed at a Fort save or suffer 1 point of temporary Constitution damage. Against ethereal opponents, it adds its Strength bonus to attack and damage rolls, while it adds its Dexterity bonus to attack rolls (only) against corporeal opponents.



If the dread spectre succeeds in draining Constitution points from its target, then it heals itself an amount of hit point damage equal to its Charisma modifier, or 5 points (whichever is higher), up to its normal maximum hit points.

**Special Qualities:** A dread spectre has all the special qualities of the base creature, as well as those described below.

*Black Rebirth (Su):* A dread spectre cannot be destroyed through combat alone, and will restore itself automatically to unlife within 1d6 days of beings reduced to 0 hit points, or otherwise “slain”. The only way to permanently lay a dread spectre to rest is

to first determine the key to its existence (see below) and remove or destroy that key. Once that is done, the dread spectre is instantly, and permanently laid to rest.

*Turn Resistance (Ex):* A dread spectre has +4 turn resistance.

*Key to Existence (Ex):* Every dread spectre is tied to a specific place or to a deceased person. In the former case, the location is somewhere where some great, tragic act of malice resulted in the destruction of an innocent soul, or multiple innocent souls. In the latter case, the dread spectre is tied to a slain person who believed him or herself, truly or falsely, to have been

wronged in some grievous fashion – the wronged person need not be a ghost or other incorporeal undead, but must have truly believed, at the moment of their death, that they were the victims of some great wrong that had not been resolved. In order to permanently destroy a dread spectre, its key to existence must be laid to rest. Doing so requires the righting of the real, or perceived wrong that eventually gave birth to the dread spectre.

Ectoplasmic and psychic chains tie a dread spectre to the key to its existence, and it cannot break them, even if it wished to. In fact, the more powerful a dread spectre, the more tightly it is bound to its key. A dread spectre cannot travel more than 25 – its hit dice in miles from the location of its existence key, even when in pursuit of its chosen target. In addition, a dread spectre is instantly aware of any beings who come within a radius of 1 mile of its existence key, and will immediately begin moving at maximum speed, and with hostile intent, towards those who dare approach “its property”.

**Abilities:** Increase from the base creature as follows: Wis +2, Cha +4. As an undead, a dread spectre has no Constitution score.

**Skills:** Dread spectres have a +8 racial bonus to Hide, Intimidate, Listen, Search, Spot, and Survival (tracking only) skill checks. Otherwise, their skills are the same as the base creature.

**Feats:** The dread spectre gains the Track feat for free. If it already possessed the Track feat, then it gains a +4 profane bonus to all Survival skill checks made to track, a bonus that stacks with its racial bonus to Survival checks.

**Environment:** Any, usually as base creature, owing to the nature of their creation.

**Organization:** Solitary, or pack (2 – 4).

**Challenge Rating:** Same as the base creature +2.

**Treasure:** None.

**Alignment:** Always Neutral Evil.

**Level Adjustment:** -

### *The Black Dog*

The black dog is a well-known spirit from the folklore of the British Isles. An enormous, ferocious hound that glows with a spectral light and waylays travelers on the lonely, misty roads of the low country, the black dog is among the most feared of undead spirits, and the sound of its howl echoing through the hills is enough to send peasants scurrying for their beds.

The black dog presented below is just one real-world mythological example of a dread spectre, and is a very typical for its type. For this reason, the black dog should be considered just as much a type of static monster (as a wight is) as it is a template-based monster (as a ghost is).

## ***Dread Spectre Riding Dog***

**Medium Undead (augmented animal)**  
**(Incorporeal)**

**Hit Dice:** 2d12 (13 hp)

**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)

**Speed:** 50 ft.

**Armor Class:** 14 (+2 Dex, +2 deflection)  
or 16 ethereal (+2 Dex, +4 natural),  
touch 14 or 12(ethereal), flatfooted 12  
or 14 (ethereal).

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +1/+3

**Attack:** Touch attack +3 (1d6), or bite +3  
(1d6+3)

**Full Attack:** Touch attack +3 (1d6), or bite  
+3 (1d6+3)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Malevolent bane, dread  
strike, manifestation, dreadful terror,  
life bane.

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal traits, black rebirth, +4 turn resistance, key to existence, undead traits.

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 15, Con -, Dex 15, Int 2, Wis  
14, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Jump +8, Listen +13, Spot +13,  
Swim +3, Survival +1\*

**Feats:** Alertness, Track

**Environment:** Temperate plains (the normal habitat for a riding dog)

**Organization:** Solitary, or pack (2 – 4)

**Challenge Rating:** 3

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral Evil

**Advancement:** -

**Level Adjustment:** -

\* The black dog gains a +4 bonus to Survival rolls when tracking by scent, which is superceded by the dread spectre's +8 racial bonus to Survival checks made to track. They also gain another and another +4 profane bonus for already possessing the Track feat. This grants a total bonus of +12 to Survival skill checks made to Track prey.

## **HARBINGER SPIRIT**

*An aged desolation,  
She sits by old Shannon's flowing,  
A mother of many children,  
Of children exil'd and dead,  
In her home, with bent head, homeless  
Clasping her knees she sits,  
Keening, keening!*

– John Todhunter, *The Banshee*

The harbinger spirit is a messenger of bad tidings, and the spirit of fast approaching doom. It lurks near populated areas, and appears outside the homes of those whose time on this earth is fast drawing to a close.

The harbinger spirit is a form of phantom that is common to many cultures, though its exact appearance and method of foretelling doom varies from place to place. To some, the harbinger spirit appears as a

spectral crow, perching on church steeples and cawing a mournful cry. In other places, it is said to be a spectral coachman, driving a team of spirit-horses through the streets at sunset. But whatever its form, the harbinger spirit is much feared.

### ***Harbinger Spirit Template***

The harbinger spirit is an acquired template that can be added to any animal, fey, humanoid, magical beast or monstrous humanoid. The creature (referred to from now on as the base creature) must have at least a 6 Charisma.

**Size and Type:** The creature's type changes to undead. Do not recalculate the creature's base attack bonus, saves, or skill points. The harbinger spirit gains the incorporeal subtype. Size is unchanged.

**Hit Dice:** Change all current and future hit dice to d12s.

**Speed:** Increase the harbinger spirit's speed for all forms of movement by 10 feet. If the base creature can fly, it also gains perfect maneuverability.

**Armor Class:** Natural armor is the same as the base creature, but applies only to ethereal encounters. When a harbinger spirit manifests on the material plane, its natural armor bonus is +0, but it gains a deflection bonus equal to its Charisma modifier, or a +1 bonus, whichever is higher.

**Attack:** A harbinger spirit retains all the attacks of the base creature, although those relying on physical contact do not affect creatures that are not ethereal.

**Full Attack:** A harbinger spirit retains all the attacks of the base creature, although those relying on physical contact do not affect creatures that are not ethereal.

**Damage:** Against ethereal creatures, a harbinger spirit uses the base creature's damage values. Against non-ethereal beings, the harbinger spirit inflicts damage according to its special abilities only.

**Special Attacks:** A harbinger spirit has all the special attacks of the base creature, as well as those described below. The save DC against a special attack is equal to 10 + \_ the harbinger spirit's HD + its Charisma modifier.

*Woe Bringer (Sp):* The harbinger spirit's most feared, and potent ability. Once every three rounds, the harbinger spirit can affect all within a 30-foot radius with a dreadful curse, as though by the spell *bestow curse* (caster level 12, or equal to the harbinger spirit's HD, whichever is higher). The exact nature of the curse bestowed depends upon the harbinger spirit's history – for example, a harbinger spirit who was originally a powerful warrior might possess a curse which imposed a –4 penalty to the victim's attack and damage rolls, armor class and saving throws, while a harbinger spirit owl (linked in folklore to wise thought) might impose a –6 penalty to the victim's Wisdom score. In all cases, a harbinger spirit's curse is one that can, and will bring permanent injury or death to the victim if it is not broken. For this reason, a curse that forces the victim to babble constantly or one which inflicts him with incurable warts and rashes is not appropriate, while one which causes all animals to be automatically hostile towards him would be.

A harbinger spirit's curse can be removed by *break enchantment*, *limited wish*, *wish* or *miracle*. A *remove curse* spell can also destroy the curse, but only if the

caster has a caster level equal to, or greater than the total of the harbinger spirit's caster level + its Charisma modifier. Alternately, a harbinger spirit's curse can be ended by permanently laying the spirit to rest, as per the eternal suffering special quality, below.

A being who has successfully saved against a harbinger spirit's curse cannot be affected by that same harbinger spirit's woe bringer ability for a full day.

*Painful Reckoning (Su):* A harbinger spirit's touch attack inflicts 1d6 points of damage. Against ethereal opponents, it adds its Strength modifier to attack and damage rolls, while against corporeal opponents it adds its Dexterity modifier to attack rolls alone.

*Manifestation (Su):* All harbinger spirits have this ability. A harbinger spirit dwells on the Ethereal Plane and, as an ethereal creature, it cannot affect or be affected by anything in the material world. When it manifests, it sends a portion of its ectoplasmic spirit to the material plane and becomes visible, though it remains incorporeal. A manifested harbinger spirit can only be harmed by incorporeal creatures, by magic weapons, or by spells, with a 50% chance of ignoring all damage from a corporeal source. A manifested harbinger spirit can pass through solid objects at will, and its own attacks ignore armor. A manifested harbinger spirit always moves silently, as a ghost does.

A manifested harbinger spirit can strike with touch attacks or with a ghost touch weapon. It remains partially on the Ethereal plane, where it is not incorporeal, so a manifested harbinger spirit can be attacked on

both the Ethereal and Material planes normally.

When a spellcasting harbinger spirit is not manifested, its spells cannot affect beings on the Material plane, but they work normally against ethereal opponents. When a spellcasting harbinger spirit manifests, its spells continue to affect ethereal targets and can also affect those on the Material plane. However, a manifested harbinger spirit's touch spells do not affect non-ethereal targets.

A harbinger spirit is considered a native of both the Ethereal and Material planes.

**Special Qualities:** A harbinger spirit has all the special qualities of the base creature, as well as those described below.

*Eternal Suffering (Su):* A harbinger spirit cannot be destroyed through combat alone, and will restore itself automatically to unlife within 1d6 days of beings reduced to 0 hit points, or otherwise "slain". The only way to permanently lay a harbinger spirit to rest is to first determine the reason for its existence, and then set right what prevents it from settling into its eternal slumber. Once that is done, the harbinger spirit is instantly, and permanently laid to rest.

*Greater Detect Thoughts (Sp):* A harbinger spirit can detect thoughts at will and as a free action, in a manner similar to the spell *detect thoughts* (caster level 12 or equal to the harbinger spirit's HD, whichever is higher), though the effect operates in a 60-foot radius circle, rather than in a cone shaped emanation. The power of the har-

## *Modifying the Harbinger Spirit*

Folklore and legend are rife with creatures that are best represented by the harbinger spirit template. But just as ghosts take many forms in fiction, and in the legends of different cultures, so too are harbinger spirits unique to each culture. When creating a harbinger spirit modeled after a real world phantom, you should never be afraid to add an additional supernatural, extraordinary or spell-like power to it, to better represent its inspiration. What follows are two examples of a modified harbinger spirit, both based on legendary spirits of the British Isles. In each case, the base harbinger spirit template has been applied, and then a new power has been added to better model the abilities the creature possesses in folklore. Use the new abilities as examples and guidelines for creating new, unique abilities of your own. Always remember that adding a new, powerful ability should raise the challenge rating of the harbinger spirit, as shown below.

binge spirit is such that it can read surface thoughts after only one round instead of after three, and can read the surface thoughts of all within the radius of effect simultaneously. All targets within range still gain a Will save to resist the effect, but must attempt new saves each round they remain within 60 feet of the harbinger spirit.

*Hangman's Duty (Ex):* A harbinger spirit can only use its special attacks on beings who have committed an evil or selfish act within the previous day's time – a harbinger spirit cannot even attempt to use its abilities on one whom has not committed such an act. Should innocent beings accompanying those who have committed evil or selfish be caught within the area of effect of the harbinger's woe bringer ability, they need not attempt to save against it – for the purposes of the ability, it is as though it were never used upon them.

*Turn Resistance:* The harbinger spirit gains +4 turn resistance.

**Abilities:** A harbinger spirit's Charisma is increased by +4.

**Skills:** A harbinger spirit gains a +8 racial bonus to all Hide, Intimidate, Listen, Sense Motive and Spot skill checks.

**Environment:** Any, though always near a populated area.

**Organization:** Always solitary.

**Challenge Rating:** As base creature +1.

**Treasure:** None.

**Alignment:** Always Neutral or Neutral Evil.

**Level Adjustment:** -

## *Sample Harbinger Spirit – The Bean Nighe (Washer Woman)*

The Bean Nighe, or washer woman as it is commonly known, is a fearsome spirit of Scottish legend, a murderous beast eternally cursed to be the bringer of bad omens to those who have lived selfish, evil lives.

Bean nighe are always encountered near the fords of secluded streams, and when first seen they appear as nothing more than non-descript, old peasant women, industriously scrubbing white linen sheets in the cold water. To an innocent soul, the spirit will never appear as anything else. When a selfish or evil being draws close, however, the bean nighe's true form is revealed to be that of a hideous, wild eyed corpse clutching a blood-stained grave shroud in its clawed, crimson hands.

*Designer's Note:* In legend, the bean nighe is always a woman, and almost always an old peasant. For this reason, the sample washer woman presented below should be considered very representative of most bean nighe – in this way, the bean nighe is as much a type of static monster (like a wight is) as it is a template-based monster. Of course, it is the hero's lot to encounter those things far beyond the usual, so the Game Master should feel free to use a far more powerful being as the base creature when creating a bean nighe. It is highly recommended, however, that only humanoid beings be used as the base creature for a harbinger bean nighe.

### Harbinger Spirit 2<sup>nd</sup> Level Human Commoner

**Medium Undead (augmented Humanoid) (Incorporeal)**

**Hit Dice:** 2d12 (13 hit points)

**Initiative:** +0

**Speed:** 40 ft.

**Armor Class:** 12 (+2 deflection) or 10 (ethereal)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +1/+1

**Attack:** Touch attack +1 (1d6)

**Full Attack:** Touch attack +1 (1d6)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Woe bringer, manifestation, choke, painful reckoning.

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal qualities, eternal suffering, +4 turn resistance, hangman's duty, undead qualities.

**Saves:** Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +2.

**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 11, Con -, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 15.

**Skills:** Listen +16, Spot +16

**Feats:** Skill Focus (Listen), Skill Focus (Spot)

**Environment:** Any, near populated area

**Organization:** Solitary

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral Evil

*Choke (Su):* Once per round, a bean nighe can attempt to choke the life from a living being who has succumbed to its woe bringer ability, or who has attempted to attack it with spells, with weapons or with other attack forms.

In order to use its choke ability, the washer woman must move into the target's space; moving into the target's space to use the choke ability does not provoke attacks of opportunity. Once in the target's space, the bean nighe must successfully strike with a touch attack. If it succeeds in its attack, then it can make an opposed grapple check as a free action.

If the washer woman's grapple check succeeds, then on the following round it must pin the target with another grapple check. If the second check is successful, then the target must immediately succeed at

a Fort save against a DC equal to 10 + \_ the bean nighe's hit die + its Charisma bonus or immediately begin to suffocate. In the first round of suffocation, the victim immediately falls unconscious (0 hit points), in the second round he drops to -1 hit points, and in the third round he suffocates.

When engaging a grapple, and when suffocating a victim, the washer woman fully manifests in the Material world – it is no longer considered incorporeal, it loses its deflection bonus to armor class (but gains its natural armor bonus, if any), and cannot affect or be affected by Ethereal beings.

Because a bean nighe with the choke ability is more dangerous than a standard harbinger spirit, the challenge rating is increased by +2, rather than +1.

## ***Bean Sidhe (Banshee)***

The banshee is perhaps the most famous spirit of Irish folklore, a harbinger of woe whose appearance foretells danger and imminent death. Legends disagree on the exact nature of the banshee – some stories say the banshee is the spirit of a slain woman, while others believe it to be a member of the Sidhe, a fairy in other words. In fact, the name bean sidhe means woman fairy. According to folklore, the banshee wails only for the members of five great families, but there is no reason why your campaign must hold to this idea (though it can make for an interesting game world background).

Two things all the legends agree on are the banshee's appearance, and her powers. The bean sidhe is always a woman, though she may appear young or old as she

wishes, is almost always dressed in a gray linen dress and matching hooded cloak or grave shroud, and is always, always seen giving voice to her boundless grief as a keening, endless howl. Beneath her hood, her eyes are mournful and her expression somber, save when she unleashes the full power of her mournful cry; in those moments her eyes are crazed and staring, her silver-white hair whips about her head as though tossed by storm winds, and her face becomes transparent, revealing the earth-stained skull beneath.

*Designer's Note:* As with the bean nighe, the bean sidhe is as much a standard monster as it is a templated spirit. As such, the Game Master should not be afraid to use the statistics presented below as a typical example of a banshee, restricting more unique base creatures for particularly powerful bean sidhe. Another interesting option, and one that hews closely with mythology, is to apply the harbinger spirit template, and the banshee's keening cry, to a creature of the fey type – adding the banshee abilities to a nymph, for example, would create a monster that is as compelling as it is outrageously deadly.

**Harbinger Spirit 2<sup>nd</sup> Level Human Commoner**

**Medium Undead (augmented Humanoid) (Incorporeal)**

**Hit Dice:** 2d12 (13 hit points)

**Initiative:** +0

**Speed:** 40 ft.

**Armor Class:** 12 (+2 deflection) or 10 (ethereal)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +1/+1

**Attack:** Touch attack +1 (1d6)

**Full Attack:** Touch attack +1 (1d6)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Woe bringer, keening cry, manifestation, painful reckoning.

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal qualities, eternal suffering, +4 turn resistance, hangman's duty, undead qualities.

**Saves:** Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +2.

**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 11, Con -, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 15.

**Skills:** Listen +16, Spot +16

**Feats:** Skill Focus (Listen), Skill Focus (Spot)

**Environment:** Any, near populated area

**Organization:** Solitary

**Challenge Rating:** 5

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

*Keening Cry (Su):* The banshee's most famous, and most feared power is its keening cry, a primal scream of such dreadful power that it can instantly slay the weak of heart, and crush the spirit of those who are

courageous enough to resist its killing power.

A banshee can unleash a keening cry as a standard action once every three rounds. The death cry erupts as a cone shaped burst 60 feet in length that requires all living beings within range who hear it to succeed at first a Will save, and then a Fortitude save or instantly perish. Those who succeed at only their Will save suffer 1d4 points of both temporary Strength and Constitution damage, while those who succeed at only their Fort save suffer 1d4 points of both Intelligence and Wisdom damage.

A keening cry is a sonic, necromantic fear effect that can affect one living being per HD the banshee possesses. A being that successfully saves against both the death and aging effects of the death scream cannot be affected by the same banshee's death cry for a full day's time.

Because a harbinger spirit with the keening cry ability is far more dangerous than a standard harbinger spirit, the challenge rating is increased by +3, rather than +1.

## PHANTASMAL MEMORY

*The leaves of memory seemed to make*

*A mournful rustling in the dark*

— Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

There are some memories so perfect, some emotions so powerful, and some events so tragic and horrific that their presence lingers long after those who experienced them have passed on from the world. These ephemeral thoughts, these phantom remembrances, whether they be beautiful, melancholy or agonizing, haunt the quiet

corners of the world, eternal memories woven into the tapestry of reality which serve as a reminder that the past does not fade away, even if it is forgotten.

A phantasmal memory is a weak manifestation of ectoplasmic energy, one that contains an imprint of an emotional response or the memory of a living being or

group of living beings. A phantasmal memory is a completely non-intelligent phenomenon, reacting to and empowered by the psychic energies of intelligent living beings who come within its area of effect.

There are three general categories of phantasmal memories, all using the same mechanics, but each with its own specific origin, and each with its own peculiar effects.

**Ghostly Residue:** Not even a ghost is eternal. As long decades turn into centuries, the passionate emotions that sustain an undead spirit fade, and with them goes the primal, ectoplasmic essence that makes up their form. In the end, all that remains is the dying echo of their form, a gray shadow locked in endless twilight.

Ghostly residues almost always manifest as whispered voices, as echoing footsteps or other soft sounds, or as a shifting, insubstantial image that strongly resembles a ghost, but lacks its power and sentience. A ghostly residue is almost never more than moderate in strength,

**Important Event:** Some events are so tragic or so wondrous that the memory of them lingers long after the event itself has been forgotten. A phantasmal memory based upon an important event comes in two forms, as outlined below.

A phantasmal memory can be a visual or aural recording. Memories of this sort are much like motion picture documentaries, or radio plays – they capture an impression of living beings, their images, their actions and perhaps their voices, but they have no sentience and do not react to external stimulus in any way.

A phantasmal memory can be a mental impression, a psychic tapestry which is felt in the minds of those who encounter it, but is not seen or heard. A weak mental impression is nothing more than a momentary emotional intrusion, akin to gaining a brief glimpse into another's surface thoughts, but a strong mental impression can actually seize control of those who experience it, flooding their minds with debilitating emotions or even forcing them to re-enact the event which created the phantasmal memory.

**Strong Emotion:** The mind rules the body, and emotions rule the mind. To say that emotions are powerful is to enormously underestimate their importance, not only to those who feel them, but also to the world as a whole. A phantasmal memory based off an emotion is powerful, and perhaps the most dangerous of all such manifestations, for it infects the spirits of all who encounter it, forcing them to relive over and over again the most exquisitely intense emotional turmoil. Even phantasmal memories created by pleasant or pleasurable emotions are dangerous, for they are highly addictive; more than one poor soul has starved to death or been devoured by a ravenous beast when his mind was locked into a fugue state by a pleasurable spectral emotion.

### *Phantasmal Memory Components*

A phantasmal memory is composed of four components, which combine to create a spectral encounter you can use in your game. The four components are origin, trigger, strength, and manifestation effects.

**Origin:** The most important step in creating a compelling phantasmal memory is deciding its origin. A phantasmal memory's origin not only determines its appearance, and how it plays out during an encounter, but also influences both its trigger and its effects. The three categories of origins are explained above, so to create a phantasmal memory you should first re-read and select an origin appropriate to the kind of encounter you wish to create. No matter its strength, a phantasmal memory has only one origin.

Since a phantasmal memory's origin restricts the type of trigger that can activate it, and also its available powers, the other components listed below include notes on which properties are appropriate for which origin.

**Strength:** Phantasmal memories are not created equal. Just as some memories, and some emotions are stronger than others, so to do phantasmal memories vary in strength. There are three levels of strength a phantasmal memory can possess:

*Faint Manifestation:* Ghostly footsteps, a faint shadow that appears and disappears in an attic window, or a brief flicker of despair and fear when the door to the cupboard under the stairs are opened, all these things are examples of a faint manifestation. Faint manifestations are best used to add mood and flavor to an adventure or campaign, as moments of otherworldliness that reinforce feelings of unease and dread.

A faint manifestation can possess a maximum of two weak manifestation effects, both of which must be selected from the sensory effects list.

*Moderate Manifestation:* The smoky illusion of a young girl that appears beneath the light of the full moon and walks forth and back along a hallway, the eternal echo of a murdered king's last conversation with his wife, or an overwhelming feeling of lust and rage that comes upon all who enter a strangled courtesan's boudoir, all these are examples of moderate strength manifestations. Phantasmal memories of this strength are best used as either minor encounters within an adventurer (perhaps one revolving around a haunted house), or as the springboard to an adventure – for example, the ghostly echo of conversation between a slain king and his wife could, centuries later, lead a party of adventurers to investigate the legitimacy of the kingdom's current ruling family.

A moderate strength manifestation always possesses at least one moderate sensory manifestation effect or two weak manifestation effects, and can have up to two moderate sensory manifestations or three weak manifestations. Should you wish, you can mix and match the two levels of manifestation effects, to create a more compelling encounter – for example, the phantom memory of the young girl might include both a moderate effect (the smoky illusion of the girl) and two weak effects (the faint sounds of both footsteps and sniffling tears).

In addition to sensory effects, a moderate strength manifestation can possess either a single, moderate haunting effect, or two weak haunting effects, as you choose.

*Strong Manifestation:* A spectral company of actors who appear on stage and complete the last act of a play for whomev-

er sits in the front row of “their” theater, a vision of the beheading of a wronged man, or a feeling of despair so overwhelming that it forces all who experience it to weep uncontrollably, all are examples of strong manifestations. A strong manifestation is best used as the centerpiece of an adventure, with the heroes attempting to solve the mystery of the phantasmal memory, or at least find a way to destroy it.

A strong manifestation always possesses at least two moderate sensory manifestation effects, or one moderate and two weak manifestation effects. There is no real upper limit on the number of sensory effects a strong manifestation can possess, though it is highly recommended that it possess no more than one sensory effect per each of the five senses: sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. The reason for this is simple – the more sensory effects included in a phantasmal memory, the more over the top it will seem, the more difficult it will be to describe, the less attention players will give to each effect, and the more diluted each effect becomes.

**Manifestation Effects:** While the types of sensory and haunting effects a manifestation can possess are defined by its origin, the choice of the exact effects a phantasmal memory possesses is up to you. When determining the types of effects and their strength, it is extremely important that you always keep in mind the mood you are trying to establish by using a phantasmal memory in your game. After all, it is the effects that a phantasmal memory creates that will most directly affect the player’s characters, so it is the effects that the players will remember most – long after the

beautifully crafted story of the hanged lovers is forgotten, your players will still remember “the time when the phantoms forced the dwarf and elf to embrace and profess their undying passion.” In other words, the proper selection of effects will make all the difference between a memorable encounter, and a bit of filler space.

There are two general categories of effects a phantasmal memory can possess, sense effects, and haunting effects. Each category is broken down by strength of effect first, and then further subdivided into more specific types. Each type of effect contains suggested spells, as well as ideas for other effects that are not covered by any spell list. These latter effects have no specific definitions– this is intentional, as a more freeform approach allows you the freedom to customize the appearance of the effects to each phantasmal memory. Each spell or non-spell effect counts as separate for the purposes of assigning manifestation effects to a phantasmal memory.

All manifestation effects are activated as free actions, are considered to be spell-like abilities, and during an encounter, manifest before initiative checks. Unless otherwise noted, all manifestation effects simultaneously affect all beings that come within range. All manifestation effects are considered to have a sphere area of effect, with a maximum radius of 20 feet for faint effects, 30 feet for moderate strength effects, and 60 feet for strong effects.

Generally a phantasmal muse can use each haunting manifestation effect once per each encounter, and if manifestation effect requires a saving throw, those who succeed at their save are rendered immune to that affect for a full day – but only in regards to

that specific phantasmal memory. A phantasmal memory can use sensory effects an unlimited number of times per encounter, unless that effect requires a saving throw, in which case the single use rule applies.

Manifestation effects have a caster level that varies depending on the strength of the effect. The caster level is listed with each effect category. For the purposes of determining a saving throw DC, the manifestation effect is cast by as by a caster with an ability score bonus of +1 in the case of faint effects, a +2 bonus in the case of moderate strength effects, and a +3 bonus in the case of strong effects.

Manifestation effects form the core of a phantasmal memory encounter, and their activation is keyed to specific triggers – the nature and use of triggers is discussed later.

**Sensory Effects:** Sensory effects are those that directly affect the five senses: sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. These are perhaps the most classic haunting effects, for who is not familiar with stories of ghostly footsteps, and spectres of ancient days who appear and disappear from sight in the space of a single breath? All phantasmal memories include at least one sensory effect, and some include many. The list below is far from exhaustive, and the Game Master should feel free to add new effects, by modifying those provided here.

Sensory effects can only be of faint or moderate strength – phantom memories strongly based on the senses should be given haunting effects, such as *hypnotic pattern*, that directly affect the viewer's senses in detrimental ways.

**Faint:** For the purposes of dispelling, all faint sensory effects are cast as by a 3<sup>rd</sup> level caster.

**Sight:** The memory can manifest *dancing lights* or *silent image*. The memory can manifest only a single *silent image*; in the case of a ghostly remnant memory, this image usually resembles the ghost in its original form. Alternately, particularly in the case of a strong emotion, the *silent image* might take the form of a precious or much beloved object, such as a toy sailing ship.

**Hearing:** The memory can manifest *ghost sound*, or *ventriloquism*. The memory manifests the same sounds each time, almost always related to the event or person who gave it “life”. So, for example, the phantasmal memory of the last moments of a famous troubadour might manifest as a snippet of his most famous song.

**Taste:** When the memory manifests, it can cause strange, non-harmful tastes to assault those within its area of influence. Harmless in and of itself, this ability is best used as flavor (pardon the pun) for an encounter, to establish a creepy or whimsical mood.

**Touch:** The memory can manifest *mage hand*, though only to touch those who witness it or move items directly in their possession. The memory often uses this in unexpected ways:

caressing the cheek of those who come within its range, or snuffing the candle the witness holds, or tugging at their hair or cloak. At this level of strength, the phantasmal memory can only use *mage hand* against one object or being at a time.

**Smell:** The memory can manifest unusual smells. This harmless ability is best used, like manifested tastes, to establish mood. A good Game Master can get a lot of mileage out of the manifested smell of baking bread, to say nothing of the stench of rotting or burning flesh.

**Moderate:** For the purposes of dispelling, all moderate sensory effects are cast as by a 6<sup>th</sup> level caster.

**Sight:** The memory can manifest *silent image* or *alter self*. In the former case, the memory can now create any *image* it wishes, though it is always related in some way to its nature, while in the latter case, the memory can *alter* the forms of those who witness it, magically changing them to resemble the participants who created the memory.

**Hearing:** The memory can manifest *ventriloquism*, and can now speak more than one phrase or sound. Under no circumstance, however, can the memory communicate in any fashion; every sound it makes is random, and keyed to its origin. If the memory possesses both hearing and

sight based sensory manifestation effects, they are often used in combination, to re-enact events from the past; effectively, these abilities work in combination as though by a *minor image* with a larger range of vocal effects.

**Taste:** The memory can manifest tastes that are so strong as to be actually harmful. All within the phantasm's range risk being affected as by the *ghoul touch* spell.

**Touch:** The memory can manifest *mage hand*, though only to touch those who witness it or move items directly in their possession. At this level of strength, the phantasmal memory can use its touch manifestation against all beings or objects within range simultaneously.

**Smell:** The memory can manifest smells strong enough to cause actual discomfort, as though by the *stinking cloud* spell. These smells need not be unpleasant, as even attractive scents can be made overpowering to the point of causing nausea. Alternately, if the memory has hearing, sight and smell based sensory manifestations, it can create scenes related to its past, as by the *major image* spell.

**Haunting Effects:** Haunting effects are a catchall category for those ectoplasmic abilities possessed by more powerful phantasmal memories. Things like temporary possession, the ability to raise and lower

temperatures, and the ability to move or break objects are considered haunting effects.

Haunting effects are split into three general types, physical, mental, and environmental effects. Physical and mental effects directly affect those who come within range of the phantasmal memory, while environmental effects are those that are activated by the presence of objects or living beings, but which do not interact with them directly; instead, environmental effects alter the fundamental nature of reality within the phantasmal memory's zone of power. As a general rule, physical effects are appropriate to both event-based, and ghostly residue memories, but are not appropriate for those based on strong emotion. Mental effects, conversely, are most appropriate for phantasmal memories that originated with a strong emotion. Environmental effects are appropriate for memories of all origins, though special care should be taken when linking them to strong emotions, so they do not appear arbitrary. For example, a strong emotion of suicidal depression can be thematically linked to an environmental effect which drastically lowers temperatures or snuffs ambient light, but should not normally be linked to an effect that causes *webs* to choke the ground – unless, of course, the *webs* are altered to appear as nooses...

Most phantasmal memories have one to two haunting effects at most, as these sorts of effects are more powerful than those that rely on tricking the senses. As with sensory effects, this list is far from exhaustive, but should serve as a good springboard for inventing other effects.

### *A Note on Mental Effects*

Many of the haunting effects listed below allow a phantasmal memory to control the emotions or the actions of those who encounter it. But a phantasmal memory has no guiding intelligence. So how can it control anyone?

The answer is, the memory does not consciously give commands to those whose minds it seizes. Instead it imprints upon their psyches the last thoughts of those unfortunate souls who birthed the memory. So, for example, the event-based phantasmal memory of a ranger being torn apart by a noble's dogs does not consciously choose to *dominate* a wolf companion and set it against its master. Instead, the ranger's psychic terror reverberates through reality unheard and unnoticed, until appropriate hosts appear, at which time it imprints itself upon their mind, unstoppable and malice free as the tide, and forces them to relive the tragic past.

A phantasmal memory with mental domination effects is like one of those old autohypnosis records that talks you down into sleep; it replays the words, but does not understand what they mean, and cannot change them.

**Faint:** For the purposes of dispelling, all faint haunting effects are cast as by a 5<sup>th</sup> level caster.

*Physical:* The phantasmal memory can manifest *touch of fatigue, flare, chill touch, ray of enfeeblement, sleep, or ray of frost*. Physical effects should always be tied to the nature of the phantasmal memory, lest they be perceived as simply “wandering damage”. So, for example, the ghostly residue of a wet nurse might put viewers to *sleep*, while an event-based memory of a slave worked unto his death might manifest *touch of fatigue*.

*Mental:* The phantasmal memory can manifest *daze, hypnotism, or cause fear*. In all cases, the flavor of the spell should be modified by linking it to the phantasmal memory’s nature. This is especially easy to do with the *cause fear* spell – simply tying the manifestation to a horrific sight or sound generated by the memory will disguise the fact that the effect is spell based. Alternately, in the case of strong emotion-based memories, you can instead describe the effect as “A slow creeping dread with no discernable cause, that scritch and scratches at the back of your mind like a rat clawing at the cellar door.”

*Environmental:* The phantasmal memory can manifest *mage hand, open/close, prestidigitation, grease, obscuring mist, or animate rope*. Unlike with the sensory effect of touch, the phantom memory can use *mage hand* to affect

the environment, by causing candelabras to float or scrawling writing on the wall, or other, similar effects.

At this level of power, the phantasmal memory can also affect the environment in very minor ways that are not covered by any spell. For example, the phantasmal memory could cause rain to turn red as blood, raise or lower the temperature by 10 degrees, or make a room dim as twilight or bright as noon.

**Moderate:** For the purposes of dispelling, all moderate haunting effects are cast as by a 10<sup>th</sup> level caster.

*Physical:* The phantasmal memory can manifest *invisibility* (usable on unwilling beings), *blindness/deafness* (which lasts only so long as those affected remain within the memory’s range, and for 10 hours afterwards), or *levitate* (usable against others and controlled by the phantom memory).

At this level of power, the phantasmal memory can also affect living bodies in other ways. It can cause those within range to break out in pus-filled boils, or cause them to exude black breath. It can cause their hair to grow uncontrollably or impede their movement (by up to 10 feet a round) by making them feel as though they are attempting to slog through marshy water. In all cases, these effects end when the targets move out of the memory’s range, and in no case can they cause permanent harm.

**Mental:** The phantasmal memory can manifest *daze monster, enthrall, hideous laughter, touch of idiocy, scare, or hypnotic pattern*. Mental effects of this level should always be carefully tied to the nature of the phantasmal memory, so as to disguise the spell-based nature of the effect. This will create an encounter that is much more disturbing for the characters, and their players – after all, it is one thing to be affected by the spell *hideous laughter* when you recognize it for what it is, and quite another to begin laughing uncontrollably at the sight of a spectral, severed head impaled on a battlement. The first makes you the victim of sorcery.. the second makes you think yourself mad.

At this level, the phantasmal memory can also affect the mind in other ways, flooding their minds with unbidden, uncontrollable emotions. At moderate strength the memory cannot do anything more than force the viewer to feel the usually unwelcome emotion, though this can be disturbing in and of itself.

**Environmental:** The phantasmal memory can manifest *gust of wind, pyrotechnics, summon swarm, web, darkness, shatter, chill metal, heat metal, or soften earth and stone*.

In addition, environmental effects of this strength can affect the environment in other, more esoteric ways: lowering or raising the temperature

by up to 20 degrees, causing the ground to throb as though it were a beating heart, turning grass into strips of flayed flesh, or causing the air to weep actual blood.

**Strong:** For the purposes of dispelling, all strong haunting effects are cast as by a 15<sup>th</sup> level caster.

**Physical:** The phantasmal memory can manifest *poison, contagion, blight, dispel magic, rusting grasp, warp wood, hold person, deep slumber, slow, or ray of exhaustion*.

At this level of power, the phantasmal memory can also affect beings and objects in other ways: slowing their movement by up to 20 feet a round, or magically aging them by one age category until they leave the area of affect, for example.

**Mental:** The phantasmal memory can manifest *calm emotions, dominate animal, rage, fear, suggestion, confusion, crushing despair, or modify memory*.

At this level of power, the *suggestion* spell becomes especially dangerous for event-based memories, for the phantasmal memory will invariably force its victims to re-enact the event that caused its creation. On rare occasions, this will result in pleasure or at least happiness for those duped into acting out the memory's desires, but far more often, the victims will emerge

scarred and shaken by the experience... if they emerge at all. It is especially critical at this level of power that you always tie the mental manifestation effect to the nature of the phantasmal memory, lest an encounter you intend to play out as a tragedy become an annoying, potentially deadly farce.

**Environmental:** The phantasmal memory can manifest *call lightning, quench, spike growth, plant growth, control water, or solid fog*.

As before, an environmental effect can also affect the environment in other, less easily defined ways. It can raise or lower the temperature in the vicinity by up to 30 degrees, transform the soil into heaps of grave ash, or cause maggots to fall from the sky. It can also fully transform a room to resemble the ancient past; at this level, this is not an illusory change, but rather one involving the actual, physical transformation of non-magical objects like furniture, decorations, windows and doors.

**Trigger:** The trigger is the action or event that causes the ectoplasm storing a phantasmal memory to quicken to life, and to unleash its spectral powers. A trigger can take one of several forms, with each phantasmal memory having only one trigger.

The nature of a trigger is independent of its strength, and of its effects, but should be directly tied to its origin. There are no hard and fast rules for tying an origin to a trigger type, so the Game Master should rely on his

common sense, and his understanding of theme when selecting a trigger. To assist the Game Master, each trigger includes several examples of appropriate origins.

**Proximity:** The phantasmal memory is triggered when a living being or specific object comes near. Typically, the memory is triggered only when people or the specific object come within the radius of effect of the memory's primary manifestation effect, or within range of all its primary effects. In some case, however, a memory may be activated at a greater distance, or may require witnesses to be much closer than that, perhaps within 10 feet. In the case of a phantasmal memory that is contained within an enclosed space, such as room that contains the dying memories of a sick child, or a hallway prowled by the image of a phantom cat, the effects are activated as soon as a living being enters the enclosed space.

If a phantasmal memory is keyed to an object, the Game Master should ensure the object is common enough or important enough to the adventure for there to be a reasonable chance of the condition being met. So, for example, the proximity of a weapon as a required object is a good choice, while the proximity of a flute in a party without a bard is not, unless a flute has already been placed and highlighted in the adventure.

**Ghostly Residue Example:** When a naked blade is brought into the courtyard of Cavanaugh castle, the spectral image of a king's champion of old appears, charges the blade's wielder, and then fades away with a scream.

**Event Example:** When a male dwarf steps inside a hidden chamber in the dwarven mine of Azak-Dhal, flickering shadows on the walls depict the burial of the first high priest of the mountain god.

**Strong Emotion:** When a woman of any race enters the sacred grove of the nymph Goldenshadow, she is overcome by fear of all men near her, and must strike out at them violently.

*Action:* A specific action is required to cause the memory to manifest. This can be anything from opening a book, to reading a specific phrase from the book, to sitting upon a throne or strumming a harp set in a dusty corner. Until the moment the action is performed, the phantom memory will not manifest. Action triggers are most often tied to ghostly residues and, especially, strong emotions.

As an alternative, a specific action could be required to end a phantasmal memory manifestation, or to avoid it. For example: the ghostly remnants of a spectral jester affect all who view it as by the spell *hideous laughter* within one round of its appearance, unless one among the viewers applauds the jester's image and praises its dignity.

**Ghostly Residue Example:** When the wheeled, wooden dragon is rolled across the floor, footsteps and the laughter of a child can be heard.

**Event Example:** When the harp in the parlor is strummed, the ghosts of the lord and lady of the manor appear.

They embrace and dance; at the conclusion of the dance, the lord falls over and clutches his chest, and the lady rushes towards a painting, fading away as she reaches it. If the painting is removed, a secret compartment containing a vial of dried poison is revealed.

**Strong Emotion:** When the children's book in the tower bedroom is opened, the reader is filled with a feeling of love so overpowering they break down in tears, inconsolable.

*Timed:* The phantasmal memory manifests at a specific time or on a specific day. Phantasmal memories that originated with an event are most commonly tied to this trigger, and are usually tied to a specific day, almost always the day the event occurred in history – especially powerful event-based memories are often tied to both a specific day, and a specific time. Ghostly residues are, conversely, generally tied to a specific time of day, occurring each day at sunset, for example. A timed trigger almost never activates a phantasmal memory originating with a strong emotion.

**Ghostly Residue Example:** Each morning at sunrise, the faint image of a lady in waiting appears at the foot of the queen's throne.

**Event Example:** Those who dare enter the torture chamber at sunset on All Hallows Eve can witness the beheading of the high druid, though they risk being forced to re-enact the execution.

### *Phantasmal Memories, Turning, and Necromantic Spells*

A phantasmal memory, no matter its origin, is completely non-sentient and so cannot be communicated with in any fashion. This means that spells such as *speak with dead* will not work on a phantasmal memory at all.

A phantasmal memory can be turned, as though it were an undead with HD equal to the caster level of its highest strength manifestation effect. It cannot, however, be permanently destroyed through turning; instead, it is quieted for a full day, or in the case of a timed trigger, until it would next manifest, whichever is longer.

A phantasmal memory has no hit points, and so cannot be destroyed by any spell or form of attack. Likewise, because it is not a true undead, but rather a manifestation of ectoplasmic energy that has retained a psychic impression, it cannot be controlled through the use of any spell.

Spells or abilities that detect the presence of negative energy or undead, such as *detect undead*, spell do identify an area under the influence of a phantasmal memory – no matter its strength, it never radiates more than a weak aura, however.

True undead are strengthened by the presence of a phantasmal memory, gaining a +2 profane bonus to their turn resistance while within its radius of influence.

**Strong Emotion:** Living beings that enter the gardens of Selblaunt manor between the hours of noon and sunset are overcome with lust, and must flee the garden or give in to their most primal urges.

It is possible to key each of a phantasmal memory's manifestation effects to a different trigger, or to group several effects to one key while attaching the rest to another. In this way you could, for example, create a phantasmal memory of a young child that haunts a hallway. When a living being steps into the hall they always hear soft footsteps (proximity trigger, keyed to a

faint sensory effect), but if they bring a rag doll with them, in addition to the footsteps, they are confronted by a faint image of the child at the far end of the hall (a second proximity trigger, keyed to a second sensory effect). Should they choose to lay the rag doll in the spot where the image waits, then nothing happens, but if they attempt to leave the hallway while still in possession of the doll, they are affected as by the spell *cause fear* (an action trigger keyed to a haunting effect). Keying effects to different triggers requires a bit more work, but creates more authentic, and more unsettling encounters.

## PHANTASMAL MUSE

*...Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest as long as I am living! You said I killed you—haunt me, then! The murdered do haunt their murderers. I believe—I know that ghosts have wandered on earth. Be with me always—take any form—drive me mad! Only do not leave me in this abyss, where I cannot find you! Oh God! it is unutterable! I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul!*

– Emily Bronte, *Wuthering Heights*

Emotions are the spark that quickens the creation of a ghost, and all consuming passion to create, and to drink in beauty, which births the phantasmal muse. A phantasmal muse is the spirit of a man or woman who was, in life, obsessed with the creation or the appreciation of art and beauty, and who died before their .

### *Phantasmal Muse Template*

*Obsession is the ghost of need best forgotten,*

*That cannot be forgotten*

– Anonymous

The phantasmal muse is an acquired template that can be added to any humanoid or monstrous humanoid being. The being (referred to from now on as the base creature) must have at least a 12 Charisma.

**Size and Type:** The creature's type changes to undead. Do not recalculate the creature's base attack bonus, saves, or skill points. The phantasmal muse gains the incorporeal subtype. Size is unchanged.

**Hit Dice:** Change all current and future hit dice to d12s.

**Speed:** A phantasmal muse gains flight at a speed equal to its Charisma modifier x 10 feet. It also gains perfect maneuverability.

**Armor Class:** Natural armor is the same as the base creature, but applies only to ethereal encounters. When a phantasmal muse manifests on the material plane, its natural armor bonus is +0, but it gains a deflection bonus equal to its Charisma modifier.

**Attack:** A phantasmal muse retains all the attacks of the base creature, although those relying on physical contact do not affect creatures that are not ethereal.

**Full Attack:** A phantasmal muse retains all the attacks of the base creature, although those relying on physical contact do not affect creatures that are not ethereal.

**Damage:** Against ethereal creatures, a phantasmal muse uses the base creature's damage values. Against non-ethereal beings, the phantasmal muse inflicts damage according to its special abilities only.

**Special Attacks:** A phantasmal muse has all the special attacks of the base creature, as well as those described below. The save DC against a special attack is equal to 10 + \_ the phantasmal muse's HD + its Charisma modifier.

*Deathless Inspiration (Su):* A phantasmal muse can use its grace and otherworldly beauty to inspire mortals to achieve undreamt of heights of perfection in all

their endeavors. In order to use this ability, the muse must establish a deep connection with their chosen prey's spirit, a process that requires considerable time.

To establish the connection, the phantasmal muse must first successfully *charm* its intended subject, use the Diplomacy skill to change the subject's attitude to helpful, or more rarely, find a completely willing subject. Once this condition has been met, the phantasmal muse must spend a full eight hours in uninterrupted communion with the subject – any interruption during this time ends the communion, requiring the muse to wait another full day before attempting to establish another. This communion need not occur while the subject is awake, and most phantom muses choose to commune with their victim during the night, appearing to them in their dreams or their subconscious thoughts (in the case of elves and other beings who do not sleep). Once the communion is complete, the phantasmal muse has established patronage with its subject.

Patronage transforms the subject in the following ways, two of which are beneficial, and two of which represent a slow, sure death sentence:

*Brilliance:* The subject gains a profane bonus to all Perform and Craft skill checks equal to the muse's Charisma modifier.

*Tireless:* The subject gains a profane bonus to all checks to resist fatigue, exhaustion, starvation and thirst equal to the muse's Charisma modifier. In addition, the subject need only make Constitution checks to

resist damage from thirst once each day, instead of once every hour after a day has passed. While under a muse's patronage, the subject will not acknowledge the dangers of starvation, exhaustion or dehydration, and does not gain a saving throw to overcome the deathless inspiration's hold over him, even when he begins suffering damage.

*Obsession:* The subject becomes obsessed with crafting or performing great works for the phantasmal muse, and will tirelessly work to complete them – and thus please the muse – without thought of sleep or seeking nourishment. Once a work has been completed, the subject will immediately begin the creation of another. In the case of Perform checks, the subject will attempt one performance every four hours.

*Champion of Art:* The subject cannot conceive of abandoning the muse or his "calling", and cannot willingly travel more than one mile from the muse's home. He will violently resist any attempts to free him from the muse's control, and will refuse any action that will take him away from the completion of his next work. If forcibly removed from the muse's presence, he will seek to escape as soon as possible, and return to the spirit's location.

The hold a muse's deathless inspiration has over a subject can be broken, though it is not an easy thing to do. *Dispel magic*

cannot break the effect, nor can a *remove curse* spell. A *break enchantment* spell cast on the subject can defeat deathless inspiration, but even if the caster check succeeds, the victim must succeed at a Will save to shake off the effect; if the save is failed, then the *break enchantment* spell has no effect. A *miracle* or *wish* spell can overcome deathless inspiration, and do not require the subject to succeed at a Will save to fully overcome the effect. If the phantom muse is slain without fulfilling the condition required to grant it eternal rest (see eternal suffering, below), then the victim is allowed a Will save to overcome the effect; if the save fails, the hold remains, and the victim will continue to obey its obsession.

Deathless inspiration is a mind affecting, charm effect. A phantasmal muse can be patron to only one subject at a time, and cannot abandon a subject while he or she still lives. A being under the effects of a *lesser geas* or *geas* cannot be affected by deathless inspiration, unless the

*Terrible Beauty (Su):* The phantasmal muse's beauty can destroy as easily as it can inspire. When sorely pressed, or when greatly angered (such as when the being who it has chosen to inspire has inevitably begun to succumb to the ravages of exhaustion and starvation) the phantasmal muse can unleash the full power of its indescribable glory and passion. As a free action, the phantasmal muse can force all within 30 feet to attempt a Will save to resist being overwhelmed by its terrible beauty. Those who succeed are merely stunned for one round, while those who fail their initial save must succeed at a Fortitude save or be slain instantly. Even those who succeed at their

second save suffer 3d6 points of damage, and are confused for a number of rounds equal to the phantasmal muse's Charisma modifier.

*Spell-Like Abilities (Sp):* At will – *charm person, daze monster, hypnotism, silent image*. 3/day – *hideous laughter, minor image, suggestion, touch of idiocy*. A phantasmal muse's spell-like abilities are all based off Charisma, and all revolve around the spirit using its incredible grace and ability to conjure dreams to inspire madness, compel service or paint reality to match the creative spark and love of beauty that sustains them. A phantasmal muse's spells are cast either at 12<sup>th</sup> level, or at a caster level equal to the muse's HD, whichever is higher.

*Caress (Su):* A phantasmal muse's touch attack inflicts 1d4 points of damage, and requires the target to succeed at a Will save or suffer 1d2 points of temporary Charisma damage.

*Manifestation (Su):* All phantasmal muses have this ability. A phantasmal muse dwells on the Ethereal Plane and, as an ethereal creature, it cannot affect or be affected by anything in the material world. When it manifests, it sends a portion of its ectoplasmic spirit to the material plane and becomes visible, though it remains incorporeal. A manifested phantasmal muse can only be harmed by incorporeal creatures, by magic weapons, or by spells, with a 50% chance of ignoring all damage from a corporeal source. A manifested phantasmal muse can pass through solid objects at will, its attacks ignore armor, and it always moves silently, as a ghost does.

A phantasmal muse that has chosen to manifest can strike with touch attacks or with a ghost touch weapon. It remains partially on the Ethereal plane, where it is not incorporeal, so a manifested phantasmal muse can be attacked on both the Ethereal and Material planes normally.

When a spellcasting phantasmal muse is not manifested, its spells cannot affect beings on the Material plane, but they work normally against ethereal opponents. When a spellcasting phantasmal muse manifests, its spells continue to affect ethereal targets and can also affect those on the Material plane. However, a manifested phantasmal muse's touch spells do not affect non-ethereal targets.

A phantasmal muse is considered a native of both the Ethereal and Material planes.

**Special Qualities:** A phantasmal muse has all the special qualities of the base creature, as well as those described below.

*Eternal Suffering (Su):* A phantasmal muse cannot be destroyed through combat alone, and will restore itself automatically to unlife within 1d6 days of beings reduced to 0 hit points, or otherwise "slain". The only way to permanently lay a phantasmal muse to rest is to. Once that is done, the phantasmal muse is instantly, and permanently laid to rest.

*Deathless Grace (Ex):* When a phantasmal muse has become a patron (see deathless inspiration), it adds its Charisma bonus to all saving throws.

*Turn Resistance:* The phantasmal muse gains turn resistance equal to its Charisma bonus, or +4, whichever is higher.

**Abilities:** A phantasmal muse's Charisma is increased by +6.

**Skills:** A phantasmal muse gains a +8 racial bonus to all Hide, Listen, Sense Motive and Spot skill checks.

**Environment:** Any, though always near a populated area.

**Organization:** Always solitary.

**Challenge Rating:** As base creature +2.

**Treasure:** None.

**Alignment:** Always Chaotic Neutral.

**Level Adjustment:** -

### *Lady Katarina Vought and Genevieve Dumont, The Black Duchess*

*A thing of beauty is a joy forever: Its loveliness increases; it will never pass into nothingness.*

— John Keats

Two women, close as sisters, kindred spirits in passion, in beauty and thought, as different as sunlight and rain.

In life, the Lady Katarina Vought and Genevieve Dumont, the Black Duchess, were famed for their beauty, and their grace. They were tireless patrons of the arts, and their palace, Stonerose Manor, was known far and wide as the kingdom's cultural heart; the most famous artists, poets, thinkers, writers and troubadours of the age wandered its halls and its grounds, putting brush to easel on the palace steps, composing sonnets in the dappled shadows beneath

the weeping willows, or contemplating in the quiet corners of the manor's vast rose-hedge mazes.

But beauty cannot last forever, and all the cultivated graces in the world cannot protect you from the ravages of uncaring fate. The plague came with the first days of summer, a silent, invisible breath that silenced the voices of the poets and singers, stilled the hands of the artists and the sculptors, and quieted the minds of the thinkers and the dreamers.

But the disease did not take Katarina and Genevieve. When they felt its fingers upon their alabaster cheeks, they shared one last meal together and then retired to their chambers; the Black Duchess hung herself with a rope made from harp strings, and the Lady threw herself from her tower window to the rose hedge below, where her flesh was pierced by the thorns.

Today, the castle Stonerose is a silent, shadowy tomb; the bodies of courtiers and artists lay where they died, and the rose hedges grow wild, thick, and free. And the spirits of the Lady Katarina Vought, and the Black Duchess Genevieve Dumont still linger, together, waiting for the return of the artists who inspired them, and whom they so inspired.

### ***Lady Katarina Vought***

*Whence are thy beams, O sun!*

*Thy everlasting light?*

*Thou comest forth, in thy awful beauty;*

*The stars hide themselves in the sky;*

*The moon, cold and pale, sinks in the  
western waves.*

*But thou, thyself, movest alone.*

*— James Macpherson*

The Lady Katarina Vought is as the sunrise cresting a rose covered hill; crimson light, warm and inviting, but distant, untouchable. In life, she was graceful and fair, and the sight of her hips swaying beneath her gowns of obsidian lace sent poets scurrying for their quills. In death, she is even more exquisite; her skin shines with a cold light, her eyes blaze green like flawless emeralds, and her waist length hair flows and twists, a crimson cloud stirred by an unseen wind.

Katarina is moody, and prone to bouts of both intense melancholy, and heady joy. She favors poets and thinkers, and has an instinctive understanding of the craft. Katarina feels emotions deeply, they resonate within her, a relentless tide she cannot control, but she holds them deep inside, just as she holds even those she favors at a distance.

Katarina revels in her eternal beauty, even when depression has taken hold, and prefers to walk the halls of Stonerose while visible. When she manifests, a subtle scent of rose and clove fills the air, and when she fades away, rose petals mark her passing.

### ***Genevieve Dumont, the Black Duchess***

*When day is done, and clouds are low*

*And flowers are honeydew*

*And Hesper's lamp begins to glow*

*Along the western blue;*

*And homeward wing the turtledoves,*

*Then comes the hour the poet loves*

*— George Croly*

Genevieve Dumont, the Black Duchess, is as the moon reflected in a midnight ocean; a bright jewel, ever changing, alone

in a cool, obsidian sea. In life, she was radiant and lovely, and when she sang, her voice could shame songbirds. In death, she is more radiant still; her body is lush, her movements languid and enticing, and her hair is a dark river spilling down over shoulders alabaster and perfect as new fallen snow.

When she was alive, Genevieve was friendly and cheerful, always supportive, and always ready with a kind word. Since her death, she has given herself over to melancholy, and does not smile easily. Genevieve favors singers and dancers, and delights in their ability to evoke profound emotion through sound and movement.

Much like her spiritual sister Katarina, Genevieve enjoys the beauty her undeath has wrought, and prefers to walk the halls of Stonebridge in her manifested form, but she grieves for all that she has lost: the feel of air filling her as she draws in breath to sing, the warmth of her skin, the simple, exquisite pleasures of taste and touch. When Genevieve manifests, a subtle scent of jasmine and clove fills the air, and when she fades away, sparkling motes of light, twisting and flaring like snapdragons, mark her passing.

**Phantasmal Muses** 5<sup>th</sup> Level Human Aristocrats

**Medium Undead (augmented Humanoid) (Incorporeal)**

**Hit Dice:** 5d12 (33 hp)

**Initiative:** +2 (+2 Dex)

**Speed:** Flight 70 ft., perfect maneuverability

**Armor Class:** 19 (+2 Dex, +7 deflection) or 12 ethereal (+2 Dex), touch 19, or flatfooted 17.

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +3/+3

**Attack:** +5 (1d4) or +3 ethereal (1d4)

**Full Attack:** +5 (1d4) or +3 ethereal (1d4)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Deathless inspiration, manifestation, terrible beauty, spell-like abilities.

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal qualities, eternal suffering, deathless grace, +7 turn resistance, undead qualities.

**Saves:** Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +6

**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 12, Con -, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 24

**Skills:** Appraise +10, Diplomacy +18, Knowledge (nobles and nobility) +10, Perform (dance [Katarina]) (opera [Genevieve]) +18, Sense Motive +18, Spot +18.

**Feats:** Negotiator, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Skill Focus (Perform: dance [Katarina], opera [Genevieve])

**Environment:** Any (Stonerose castle)

**Organization:** Pair

**Challenge Rating:** 7

**Treasure:** Double Art

**Alignment:** Chaotic Neutral

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