

# QVOΘH THE RAVEN

26<sup>TH</sup>



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# INTRODUCTION

*"No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear"*

CS Lewis

*I may never truly be sure in whom to place my Trust and Distrust. My search for steadfast allies had taken me through lands where anyone could be a wolf in the fold, or a rat behind the walls. I had encountered dozens of people who were not what they seemed, and had heard the tale of malicious creature that lurked among its hosts own organs. But I can no longer second guess my few allies, lest I go hopelessly mad. I will need all the help I can get, regardless of their motives, because it's time to get back to the basics... To hunt the greatest plague in the land. To set to rest those who will not leave this realm. To banish the creatures that prey on the living to unnaturally extend their horrid existences.... The Undead. For if my travels and travails have taught me anything, it is the truth that **Death is not the End...***

Esteemed members of the Fraternity,

We are happy to release the 26<sup>th</sup> issue of Quoth the Raven. The theme for this issue is Death is not the End.

The Undead have been a focal point of Ravenloft since the very beginning, and they have never left. After all, they've been killed once already, and still won't go away. Ghosts, Vampires, Zombies, Mummies... From the lowly skeleton to the mighty lich, and even the weird ones like the mohrg. They are some of the most evocative enemies and can even make for inspiring heroes. Because after all, every one of us will find ourselves dead one day, and who wants to stay that way?

Fittingly, this year we bring you this netbook with an old school feel.

Enjoy!

Joël, for the FoS

And remember, if you've killed it once, kill it again just to be safe....

# THE CONFERENCES OF VICTOR GAGNÉ - PART THE THIRD: THE SHADOW

BY BENJAMIN BAUM AND MARK BARTELS

What fiendish playwright holds sway over my fate? What mad author, hunched in the darkness, drove me into the clutches of evil personified, in four different ways within two days' time? First came Qualensturm, the spectral alchemist who holds the minds of the living in one claw and the secrets of the dead in the other. Then came the parasite who brought my greatest friend to ruin long ago and now looks upon the world with the same malice. On its heels—so to speak—came the demon Pauthrael, the living shadow that, as of my last record's end, carried me to meet its comrades in catastrophe.

Its claws, like so much pall when viewed, bit into my shoulders with unmistakable, deadly solidity as it bore me through the darkest areas beneath the forest canopy. Though yelling hurt my gut, horrendously torn and barely healed as it was, I periodically raised my voice to impotently demand my release. Not deigning to reply, Pauthrael kept on its way. We were traveling opposite the direction of the shortening shadows of the trees—moving east.

Had I been well, I suspect I would have swiftly guessed our ultimate destination. As I was, my realization came only when the ground ended beneath us. In the shade of a gnarled, black-barked oak that had grown out over the dread

precipice, the demon hovered above empty air. A couple hundred feet below, black mist roiled, palpably hungry, and there, in the clutches of a fiend, I suddenly believed every fanciful tale told to me that claimed the widely feared Shadow Rift was a portal to Hell.

Above, Pauthrael craned its neck down to place its head beside mine. It proceeded to hiss into my ear, "Normally, I would conjure shadows to ease my descent. However, I would hate to deprive you of the spectacular view." As I met its gaze and narrowed my eyes, it said, "If it is any consolation, I won't enjoy this either."

Abruptly, it ceased its flapping and folded its wings against its back, and together we plummeted. The mere seconds of falling stretched as the air tore away my yelping and hollering. Pauthrael's talons dug into my flesh, burning like coals of ice, and I glanced up for just a moment, capturing the nebulous details—its impalpable face was contorted in a pained grimace at the touch of the sunlight, eye-slits screwed shut, jagged fangs grinding in its lipless mouth—just before we plunged into the dark fog.

At first, I thought I could see nothing; then I noticed a subtle dichotomy in the darkness. My demonic captor was outlined above me, its wings extending once more to turn our free fall

into a fell swoop. I could not say that either the fiend or the fog was blacker than the other, but there was a contrast in their quality, as if they were made of different sorts of shadow that refused to merge.

It was another change in the darkness that heralded the end of the mists. The feeling of smothered vision dissipated, replaced by the non-sensation of insufficient stimulation. A vague twilight was about me, and at first nothing but the dark form conveying me was near enough to be seen. Soon, however, I became aware of a dark shimmer a ways before us—yet a third distinct shadow—like a continuous ripple in a pond of darkness. Pauthrael aimed straight at it, and upon our intersection with what turned out to be an approximately ten-foot-wide anomaly, our surroundings changed once more.

It was some sort of portal; we were in what seemed to be a vortex of swirling shadow, all flowing forward. Where our earlier environs had been monotonous, this locale was hypnotic—and monotonous. In spite of my pain and discomfort, I drifted in and out of consciousness, and I only realized we had left the strange liminal corridor when something large loomed into my field of view, a rock outcropping rising from the deep like a fang. Pauthrael grazed it with its left wingtip, which phased through untouched. More earth rose to meet us, marred with great cracks that the demon followed like roads. They forked, they merged, they turned us completely around, then they abruptly ended when they met a cliff's edge and the earth once more fell away.

We glided toward the broken ground, canted to the right and making a lazy spiral. As we approached and details resolved themselves, I came to focus on a half-ring of stunted stelae at the base of the cliff, reminiscent of gravestones. In the cliff face, at the midpoint of the

semicircle's diameter, a single cave delved into subterranean darkness.

All was crypt-quiet as Pauthrael gently set me on my feet and alighted by my side. We stood barely removed from the enclosure within the markers, each a crude depiction of a winged demon crouched to duck just below my kneecaps. The resemblance to my escort—who at the moment was continuing to lend physical support—was minimal; the stones had too much substance and too little dangerous grace.

Silence and stillness reigned supreme, as though a great anticipation resided within every stone, crevice, and shadow. All attention seemed drawn toward the cave within the stone ring. I grew tense, and the feeling slowly magnified the longer I stared. Expectantly paralyzed, I waited for some prince of Hell to step into the dim field of my vision, crowned with horns and dragging a cloak of snake scales impaled upon his barbed shoulders.

Suddenly, I was no longer caught in the moment. My held breath rushed out of me, and though the wait was over, nothing had emerged from the cave. I turned to Pauthrael, who was grinning malignantly, and it slowly turned its empty white eyes to meet mine as I queried, "Is there no welcoming committee?"

Beneath the skin of my scalp, perhaps within the bones of my skull, an itchy feeling grew, like something unwelcome had crawled in through the top of my spine and spread across the surface of my cerebrum. I looked forward again in time to catch a tall, black boot stepping out of the circle of stones. This apparently disembodied member was soon followed by a leg in inky trousers with a satin stripe down the outer seam, and pulled along behind came the rest of its owner's body.

Still working my way up, my eyes met an indigo waistcoat over a pleated and starched white shirt with a wingtip collar. Around the neck was

a gray cravat with a silver amulet pinned in its middle and its tail tucked into the waistcoat. The amulet had a disk of obsidian set in it, and its design made it resemble a black sun with a shining corona. Cloaking the whole ensemble was a long frock coat steeped in midnight tones, excepting its bright brass buttons and a sword pin in each lapel.

Atop the well-dressed body was a fair-skinned head with short brown hair and pale blue eyes, the latter of which looked slightly down at me. The man's mouth spread into a not unpleasant smile, filled with lightly crowded teeth, and he extended his right hand to me in greeting—his left, which bore a simple silver band about the index finger, was preoccupied with clutching a cane of blackthorn, topped with an onyx statuette of a perched dragon with its wings spread wide. "I gather you are the reason Pauthrael was in such a hurry earlier. Pray, tell me your name."

Thinking it unwise to speak my real name to whatever infernal being was before me, I snatched a name from my mind at random. "Bertrand, sir," I said as I accepted the offered hand. "Bertrand Larcher. And you are?"

His smile fell slightly. "Funny," he replied, "you look like a Victor to me." My expression became one of mild shock, and his smile flared back up. "I am Delthirius Valtyn the Second, and I suspect I am extraordinary at guessing. Would you like a second chance to give me your *real* surname?"

I did my best to regain composure before responding. There seemed to be little use in being evasive. "My apologies. I am Victor Gagné, alchemist and resident of Mordent." I gave a shallow bow and released his hand.

"That's better," he said. His eyes then went to his left side, and he drew back his coat to reveal three mahogany scrollcases strapped to him. "Don't take this the wrong way," he began,

simultaneously pulling a long sheet of parchment out of a slit in the middle tube, "but you look dreadful. Allow me a minute to rectify this."

Having little choice in the matter, I stood patiently as he read from the scroll. In response, my ragged clothing stitched itself together, even regenerated missing sections. In a flash, my outward appearance was greatly improved, though I still felt as terrible as I no doubt earlier looked. I continued to hang in the grasp of Pauthrael.

Delthirius exchanged the first scroll for another, then intoned a spell I recognized as a form of physical fortification. He stowed the parchment, then grabbed my upper arm. "Come and walk with me," he entreated as his touch made me feel hale. Pauthrael's claws fell away, and I was able to support myself as Delthirius turned and pulled me into the bounds of the stelae. Unlike his egress, our transition back across was without anomaly, visual or otherwise.

I looked back in time to see Pauthrael flit out of my field of vision, and I whipped my head around to see it at Delthirius' other side, receiving some whispered intelligence in its knifelike ear. It chuckled. "You should be so lucky." Then the demon proceeded to fly ahead of us and vanish into the cave mouth.

Delthirius released my arm and reached back into his coat. He pulled another scroll free and handed it to me. "Unless you like stumbling about, you may want this." Following quick but thorough examination, I identified it as a *darkvision* spell, and I cast it straight away. Subsequently, we passed into the shadow, and my vision shifted into monochrome.

The path branched a few times, with barely any indication of which route was most used. Thankfully, our course avoided a tunnel with a particularly odious scent; instead, we opted to follow the sound of dripping water, coming to a

large chamber with multiple dark pools. The smell of brine hung heavy in the air.

As we tread the slick path between the aqueous pits, suggestions of motion nagged at the corners of my eyes, yet no amount of darting glances revealed anything more than mirror-smooth water. Though my instincts disagreed, all was calm and uninhabited, and the conflicting feelings persisted as we passed into further twisted tunnels, worming our way further back into the cliff and subtly deeper into the earth.

In the end, we came to a nearly bare bulb of a room, the only feature being a sizable pit at the back covered by a sturdy metal cage. Delthirius stopped near the middle of the room. "Take a seat," he said, and he clutched the air and dragged backward.

The implication of this bizarre pantomime was not lost on me, though it was entirely lost on my vision and audition. I stepped forward and quite literally attempted to find my seat, my gait tentative and my hands probing before me. "What motivates you to cloak your abode so?" I asked as I got a grip on a carved wooden armrest and settled myself in. The sensory dissonance was building, so I closed my eyes and started insisting on the reality of the object beneath me.

"Under most circumstances," Delthirius replied, his voice moving around the room, "interlopers are not welcome. The more empty this place appears, the less outsiders will show interest."

"I see," said I. My hands worked across the armrests, feeling their texture. I detected a scaly pattern, and a flared section near the ends. There was also an aperture, an open wedge with spindles projecting into it. Cobras, that was it. The armrests were carved in the shape of hissing cobras. Opening my eyes, I saw that my willpower had asserted itself and pierced the illusion about me. My chair was

made of intertwined serpents, all baring their teeth and not padded in the slightest. "I see," I said again.

"Indeed," Delthirius spoke. I looked back in his direction, and my eyes were immediately caught on the large desk between us. Its burnished surface was a warm orange color. Its grain was so irregular that it simply had to have been made from burl wood. Furthermore, the lack of seams indicated that it was carved whole out of one large burl, rather than pieced together from planks. Both of the vertical edges in my view resembled the trunks of mighty willow trees, their hanging leaves cloaking the side of the desk. Among them, fairies and fauns hid and scurried about, all the while watched by hideous corpse-faces which hung among the branches. The top of the desk was smooth, save for depressions and holes which served to hold multiple inks and quill pens.

Across from me, sitting straight on a strange, backless armchair carved in the same serpentine theme as mine, Delthirius maintained a neutral expression. His cane leaned against his side of the desk, turned perfectly to watch me unblinkingly. Without logical preamble outside my own suspicions, he broke the silence with six words. "Do you think me a demon?"

I took a moment, pondering first not his question but his uncanny intuition. I jumped to the conclusion of telepathy, though its extent was unclear. He certainly was not going to great lengths to hide it, but he also was not being at all forthcoming with how deep he could look. Sliding around to his inquiry, I supposed that this could well be the power of a fiend, but it was by no means exclusive to such things. Additionally, something in the manner of his asking made me unsure of his demonic nature, which had previously been a foregone conclusion. "I cannot say so with certainty," I



returned, “but your collaboration with such a creature suggests it, among other things.”

Delthirius smirked. “Fair, though I assure you that Pauthrael and I became allies through being in the right place at the right time. No more, no less. You would be within the bounds of reason to say the same thing regarding our meeting.” He paused, then leaned forward and planted his forearms upon his desk. “Nay, I am no demon. Nor is this land any sort of underworld, at least not anymore. This corner of the world belongs to the fey, though you are not among them either at the moment.”

“That does not answer the question of what you are,” I rejoined as I lightly attempted to sink into my unyielding seat, away from his presence which encroached in spite of the intervening furniture.

“That question was not asked. Nor will it be answered.” He receded, and I began to breathe more deeply. “Would you mind telling me what transpired to bring you to Pauthrael?”

At that, I recounted the events of the last two days, beginning with my visit to Untenturm and continuing through my unpleasant habitation by the parasite which stole my friend’s name. My explanations were in general terms and as fast as possible, though I could see in Delthirius’ eyes that he took in more than I provided. I doubted not that to him, all the gaps were being filled. He did not interrupt, nor did he adjust himself at any point in my tale.

Only once I finished did he move, relaxedly bringing his left hand to rest on the head of his cane, where his fingers stroked the dragon’s neck. On cue, as though it had been waiting patiently for me to stop, the dark shape of Pauthrael came into view and darted to Delthirius’ side. He listened as it delivered news below the threshold of my hearing, a frown barely twisting the corners of his mouth in response. He rose, and Pauthrael retreated to

the wall. “I am afraid you will have to excuse me for a short while,” he intoned gravely, then he strode out of the room, leaving the demon and his cane behind.

At first, I looked after him, then my eyes flicked to Pauthrael. “What draws him away?”

It gave me a sneer. “Domestic dispute. Just another discipline issue with the tenders of the livestock.”

Deciding it was in my best interest not to probe further, I looked about the room for some diversion. It was at that point that I noticed the superb globe that stood to the right of the desk. I had not been completely oblivious to it before, sensing it at the edge of my vision, but Delthirius truly had a way of holding attention once he obtained it.

The globe was made with three different types of wood: a rich brown for the land, a pale beige for the water, and what seemed to be aged gray driftwood which I presumed to be the Mists in the spaces between. The Core faced me, flanked by the Sea of Sorrows and the Nocturnal Sea, while other lands in the Mists stood detached, vanishing over the horizon. It seemed strange to see the world curved so, given that the Mists make such a supposition quite untestable. Then again, it is not unlike the Lamordian concept of the Weltalkügel. The resemblance was further reinforced by the metal stand which held the globe aloft; its clockwork cradle slowly spun a mildly luminescent orb and a cratered sphere of gray rock in orbit about the world.

I continued to regard it at a distance for a minute or two, then the unforgiving rigidity of my seat drove me to stand and approach. The globe revolved smoothly at my touch and in any direction I desired, evidently held by bearings in the socket of its stand rather than affixed to some polar axis. Moving away from the Core, I recognized lands such as Souragne and the

Amber Wastes, both by their finely etched names and their shapes I had seen in books. Others names and places, such as Farelle and Kalidnay, were alien to me.

A familiar shadow passed behind the globe, and Pauthrael spoke. "After your ordeal and your tale, you must be rather parched." Its dark claw traced just above the lip of the cradle, unable to effect motion.

Looking more closely, I saw that Pauthrael drew along a seam that ran around the whole of the globe. I began to turn it to get a better look, but it had the miraculous quality that the seam did not move, in spite of the motion of the world's surface. Using my fingernails—they were likely in need of a trimming—I started to pry directly at it, and with just enough force, it came apart. Connected by a complicated hinge mechanism entirely within the globe, the upper hemisphere swung up to reveal a cavity with six snifters and a wide-bottomed decanter.

In that moment, I became conflicted. Normally, I would consider it to be quite the invasion of privacy to open another person's cabinets, and it is especially rude to help oneself to another's spirits without permission. It was the combination of the demon's prompting and the return of my discomfort—Delthirius' magic had begun to wear off—which left me teetering on the edge of indecision. As the pain worsened, I took the plunge.

I grasped the decanter by the neck and lifted it out, swirling it as I appraised the burnt amber color of its contents. In short order, I had its glass stopper out and was tipping it into one of the snifters. What I poured was perhaps more than a proper serving, though it was still rather light in comparison to my tribulations. That done, I stoppered the decanter and set it back in its place. Subsequently, I reached for my glass, but I never got to take it, nor imbibe the liquor.

Bare inches away from my groping fingers, the snifter began to lean away, its stem bowing under the weight of the vessel. As I recoiled in surprise, the condition spread to the stems of the other five snifters as well as the neck of the decanter. In mere moments, all that had been solid glass turned to fluid, coating the shallow pan of the globe's interior. The brown tint of the brandy faded as opaqueness came, and soon it was as though I was looking into a plane of quicksilver. Looking up and around, I saw that Pauthrael had fled the room, leaving me under the fierce gaze of the dragon on Delthirius' cane.

I looked back down to find that the room was no longer reflected in the pool formed in the globe. Rather, I beheld through that pool a room which was, at least in comparison to my own surroundings, brightly lit. Mayhap it was the light that had driven Pauthrael from my presence?

*Servant candles* floated about in that other room, gentle as soap bubbles, supplementing the wan light of day that fell through a large window. The hue of that light was heartwarmingly familiar and sent an unexpected stab of homesickness through my aching insides, filtered as it was through dense fog.

The room was clearly a study of some sort. A desk absolutely *covered* in loose papers stood before a towering bookcase, its shelves stuffed from end to end with books. Some looked old, some looked new, all appeared to be well-read and well-loved. Here, the furniture was a testament to purposeful craftsmanship, rather than the lugubrious artfulness of Delthirius' chambers. It was made of heavy, dark oak, which had been sanded smooth. There was not a single intentional decoration, but the items looked robust and solid. They seemed to breathe an assurance that they would serve well, and continue to do so even if their current

owner should fall to the ultimate embrace of time. Behind the desk stood a chair which appeared to be of a set with the desk and bookcase; smooth, oiled oak wood, shaped for comfortable seating and upholstered with dark red velvet.

Seated in the chair was a woman who appeared to be in her late twenties or early thirties, her attire somewhat mannish; a tan shirt and dark brown jacket under a wide, loose robe of dark velvet which owed more to a desire for warmth than fashion. She was fair-skinned, her loosely braided hair and eyes dark, her face ... strikingly beautiful, even with her brow creased by a light frown as she perused a sheet of vellum. Rings glittered on her fingers and thumbs; five bands of rune-etched silver on her right hand, gold set with gems and jade on her left. A pair of wire-framed spectacles perched on her nose, their lenses an unexpected crimson.

The woman looked up, the light catching those crimson lenses and—my breath caught in my throat. I had thought her merely striking, but facing her directly, she was ... she was somehow sublime. This was not simply a matter of physical beauty, although she had that in spades. It was also the *mind* that shone out of those lustrous eyes and spoke from every line of her face.

“Unless this, my analysis of your features is entirely off,” she said in lightly accented High Mordentish, a smile tugging at perfect Cupid’s bow lips, “you are a son of Mordent. Am I in the right?”

“Madame, you are,” I said, performing a bow which turned out to be a little too deep for my own comfort. I gasped in pain and stumbled, clutching at the edge of the globe.

“I am not the expert of medicine that is my older sister,” the stranger said, her eyes never leaving mine, “but I do believe you are suffering the effects of the severe disruption to the

organs internal. At the risk of seeming unkind, I would point out that the domicile of Lord Delthirius Valtyn the Second is not the ideal place for you to recover from this condition.”

Hope flared in my heart. If only I could trust that it was justified.

“Madame,” I said, “might I ask how it is that you are acquainted with Lord Delthirius?”

She shrugged elegantly and made a sweeping gesture at her study. “I am the humble armchair scholar, whose fields of study shift with the wind and my whims. Harmony Schlosser, of Paridon, at your service. Betimes, my hunger for knowledge outstrips my good sense, I do admit. For such occasions, I have created devices such as the one through which we are currently speaking, to allow for the exchange of knowledge from a position of security in spite of dealing with ... well.”

“Victor Gagné, your servant,” I said. “Miss Schlosser, would you say that—?”

“*Professor* Victor Gagné, of the University of Mordent?” she asked, her voice suddenly sharp and eager, her eyes widening behind those crimson lenses.

“At your service,” I said. “I—”

Miss Schlosser turned away from me, her chair swiveling smoothly. When she turned back, she was holding a familiar-looking volume, and grinning like a fox. “Professor Victor Gagné,” she said, “author of *Three Lesser-Known Aspects of Formulae of the Second Permutation*? My good sir, this *is* the treat! I had been considering whether to send you a letter. You see, I am currently performing a series of experiments into—”

“Miss Schlosser!” I said, interrupting her. “Please excuse my rudeness, but I am in dire straits.”

“Ah...” Miss Schlosser lightly thumped herself in the side of the head with one slender fist and closed her eyes. When she opened them again, she looked different from before; she still was beautiful, but now her eyes were bright and hard as gemstones, her expression cool and businesslike.

“Yes,” she said, “you are. Possibly more so than you realize. Even if you managed to outfox and escape Delthirus and that mongrel Pauthrael, you would find yourself in the territory of the Unseelie Shadow-Fey.”

Her eyes pierced me like a needle through a butterfly, and her voice sent chills down my spine. “I applaud the capacity of your mind, Professor, but sadly suspect that you are doomed to worse than death unless you receive some measure of help in escaping your current location.”

“Miss Schlosser,” I said, “please forgive me if I stretch the bounds of politeness. Is it possible that you are not so closely allied to Lord Delthirus that I might prevail upon *you* to give me that measure of help?”

Miss Schlosser leaned back in her chair and closed her eyes in thought. She pursed those perfect lips, then spoke, slowly: “My esteemed sir, be it said that I ... *treasure* my correspondence with Lord Delthirus ... I would still feel remiss in leaving someone in his care who had been brought to it against their wishes.”

Hope fluttered in the depths of my tattered insides like a trapped butterfly. I tried to temper it with reason; I was a long way away from that cozy study, which I presumed to be in Paridon. Unless Miss Schlosser was an amazingly potent archmage, there were limits to what she could do for me. *But there is no one else who even knows you are here*, a cold, little voice whispered in the back of my head, drowning out both hope and reason with pure dread.

“Any help you can give me,” I said, “I would deeply appreciate, Miss Schlosser.”

Miss Schlosser opened her eyes and steepled her fingers, her attitude now thoughtful. “Yes, yes. How to proceed, how to proceed ... Several factors to work out; distance, the nature of the Rift, hostile locals, the mongrel ... Who to contact, how to ... ? *Ahh.*” A sigh of contentment, a smile of pure pleasure. “Yes,” she said. “Yes, of course. Professor, I know just the person. Though there might be some uncomfortable—”

Her eyes suddenly snapped to a point past my left shoulder, and her eyebrows drew down in a furious glare. “Listen to me,” she said, her tone urgent. “They’re coming back. I will send you help, but Delthirus must not be allowed to question me on our conversation; my ability to dissemble is no match for his ability to read people. Close the globe, then press down on the Necropolis and Nedragaard at the same time. Now, close it *now!*”

Her voice reached past my conscious mind, tugging at my body, and I snapped into action. The globe swung shut smoothly, spun under my hands with ease. As soon as I found those two points on the map of the Core, I stabbed my thumbs down onto them—and flinched back as the globe issued a series of horrid screeching and cracking sounds. Black smoke puffed out from the seam I had used to open it, followed by a dribble of clear liquid that turned dark as it pooled on the floor. I backed away, gagging at the smell that suddenly issued from the wondrous device.

From the entry tunnel, the sound of soft, quickening footsteps rose in an instant, and in but a blink Delthirus was between me and the fuming globe. One hand secured me by the lapel, while the other reached out to the apparatus. A light between green and red streamed from his spread fingers to the leaking

seam, granting the model world an impossible aurora. The groans and shrieks magnified in response, and fissures raced from one Mist-bound isle to another.

Delthirius shook the light from his hand and spoke strong words of containment, punctuating his spell with a thrust of his now clenched fist. The globe was immediately silenced, and its form wavered subtly, like summer air on a metal plate in the sun. All else was still.

After a long moment, he heaved a great sigh and gently guided me to my seat without even the barest of glances. "Pity," he remarked as he resumed his own, still focused on the globe. I sat in fear of the return of his gaze, instinctively feeling that his attention would reveal everything I had to hide. To make matters worse, the choking vapors that had been belched into the room began to aggravate my windpipe.

His head turned, but to his cane instead of me. He leaned down, and to my dismay the dragon figurine *moved*, stretching its little neck up to Delthirius' ear and hissing swift words through its minuscule fangs. "He tells me," began Delthirius, "that Pauthrael led you to open my globe."

He shot a disapproving glance toward the doorway, where I saw the demon lurking. Behind it, I was surprised to see another flesh and blood man, younger than I, but possessed of close-cropped gray hair. In contrast to his pale skin, he had dark rings around his eyes, which I thought to be some sort of eye shadow, perhaps.

"He saw you pour a drink and enter the Time Apart," Delthirius' voice caught my notice and dragged my gaze back, "then he could see no more until the globe began to fracture." I didn't understand what he meant, and in mere moments I ceased to care. What had started as

a scratchy tickle in my trachea had progressed to an unquenchable burning, and I was set to a horrendous coughing which wracked my insides with pain, driving all other thought from my mind.

Delthirius caressed the diminutive dragon as it resumed its original rigidity. Now he observed me directly, unfazed by the lingering fumes and my agonized racket in the slightest. "You are quite unwell, and in spite of the damage you have done, we will fix that." He beckoned to one in the doorway, then finished his thought: "Once and for all."

As I hacked and sputtered, five clicking steps moved the newcomer into position behind me. I turned to look, but blanched hands clamped down on my shoulders and yanked me against the back of my unforgiving seat. Confusion and panic ruled my mind for but a moment, then I felt that my head was not alone above my shoulders. A sharp pain bloomed in the right side of my neck, and soon, all concern, followed by all feeling, faded into oblivion.

There was nothing, a void beyond emptiness, before the Pulse. Prior to its advent, there was no feeling—to exist was to experience the Pulse. It began as a low throbbing, a flow of undifferentiated being that came from nowhere, yet certainly elsewhere.

It was not something that could be seen, though there was no vision in this place. As such, the Pulse began to take shape in the mind's eye. Truth be told, it was unclear that thought existed outside of the Pulse, so perhaps that is not the right way to express it. Still, there is no better description of the feel of the Pulse other than the appearance of a woven braid, many strands that are one. A convulsing knot took shape, and the Pulse came out of it, though it was not the true origin. The knot had a name, a name that would be known when

heard, but had no meaning here. Tendrils of the Pulse stretched into the vacuum, and I came to know I was one of many touched by the Pulse. Even so, what was I *but* a terminal of the Pulse?

A thicker cord than all the others led away from the knot, and it was this cord which supplied the Pulse to us. Bonds of similar girth emerged near it, each from another knot, but those knots were dim and unimportant. They approached convergence deep in the blank blackness.

As the veil of nonexistence slowly recoiled, the center of the Pulse came into view, a roiling heart from which all reason came. Its name I had heard, but here its meaning was Meaning itself. To separate it from reality was unthinkable, and the braids of the Pulse reached forth from it to fill us with the only purpose that there can be.

Slowly, the heart withdrew, and the Pulse began to fade with it. Indistinguishable at first, one filament of the Pulse emerged from the morass and made itself clear to be the feeling of longing. Though I drew more and more upon this strand as the Pulse became fainter and fainter, no amount of longing would bring it back.

Utter lack did not await me as the Pulse receded. Rather, I felt surrounded and pressed upon, unable to breathe. Panic, an emotion not of the Pulse, took sway, and I became aware of my limbs as they instinctively thrashed through the viscous medium about me. My eyes flashed open, and I found myself submerged in dark water. I was not alone, for the stone floor around me was littered with waterlogged corpses. Opening my mouth to scream, I found there was no air within me to expel.

I began to claw my way upward in terror, seeing the surface perhaps no more than a few yards above. My body seemed inclined to sink, but every stroke lifted it as though it were no great burden. As I neared escape, a distorted

silhouette appeared above me, and into the water plunged a hand, which I grasped immediately. The figure hauled me upward, and soon my head breached the surface. With assistance, I swiftly clambered with my free hand (followed by my knees) to bring myself fully onto the wet stone above the water. Then I was shortly upon my feet, gazing into dark-irised eyes that sat ensconced in black-edged lids.

What I had earlier mistaken for eye shadow was now resolved into a wet blackness of the skin itself, as though pitch had impregnated itself in the tissue surrounding the eye. This flesh crinkled as the gray-haired man smiled in a manner intended as welcoming, yet made menacing by his overlong canine teeth. "My lord tells me your name is Victor," said he. "Mine is Talar." At that, I shuddered—had I not known I would recognize the name when I heard it?

"Four days is a long time to pickle," Talar went on. "The average is two and a half. What do you say we get you some victuals now that you're up and about, eh?" He draped an arm across my shoulders and pulled me along.

I took a breath to respond, but stopped short when I realized that it was the first breath I had taken after leaving the pool. I held it as we left the room, but there came no need to release and take another. Knowing what I was likely to find, I resisted the temptation to run my tongue across my teeth. No doubt a twisting sickness would have settled into my gut, had I been able to feel such things. What did find purchase was apprehension, for I wanted no part of what I suspected "victuals" to be.

Talar led me into deeper tunnels, each step of his sending a cascade of echoing clicks ahead of and behind us. Certainly, his shined leather shoes were shod with metal, though I hazarded no guess as to why. It was not long before his

self-announcing tread brought us to the only door I had ever seen in these caverns, a stout wooden specimen with a heavy iron bar holding it shut against the stone jambs.

Releasing me, he grasped the bar in both hands, but before he could lift it out, a voice rejoined from behind us, "Be still, Talar." At that, he stood motionless, not even turning his head to view the one who issued the dictum. "I desired to be present for this, though apparently the implication escaped you."

Turning about, my eyes met Delthirius as he made the last few quiet steps to my side. "How nice of you to finally join us," he said with a smile as yet devoid of unnatural teeth. "I had begun to worry that Talar had ... lost his virility." He looked to his underling, who had not reacted to his chastisement and detraction, remaining frozen at the barred door. "Why do you keep us waiting further, Talar?" Delthirius chided. "Open the door."

Without delay, Talar's halted motion resumed, and the bar was brought straight out and leaned against the side of the tunnel. His mouth was a hard line as he gripped one of the bar hooks and pushed inward, spilling dim light into the passage. He followed the door into the space beyond, and Delthirius came after with me in tow—his hand clutching my arm ensured it.

Within, several scores of humanoids sat listlessly upon pallets padded in thin layers of straw, the majority of which had fallen down to the stone floor. Without apparent source, a low spectral glow suffused the place, giving it the surreal quality of having no shadows. A stack of five crates stood to the left of the entrance, the runes of creation and plenty upon them as clear in the omnipresent radiance as the hideous puncture scars on the necks of the stupefied men and women around me. The light scent of manure hung in the air in as ghostly a manner

as the illumination, though I had no reflex to gag. I pulled back in the direction of the door, but Delthirius simply tugged me inexorably forward.

"You will not leave this room until I permit it," Talar barked as he stopped between two pallets and turned back toward us, his irises apparently brown now that perception of color had returned to me. At his words, my drive to evacuate the premises heightened like an inaccessible itch, yet I knew that my resolve would fail at the threshold of the door. He sneered at me, evidently taking pleasure in exercising the control his master made him suffer through but a moment before.

To my right, I caught signs of motion, and I turned to see two small children shuffling forward among the languid forms. One was a girl with wavy brown hair, cut unevenly short as if with shears, while the other was a boy with curly blond hair which had undergone similarly poor maintenance. Both fixed their green eyes on the floor—eyes rimmed in dark-tinted skin.

My face contorted into an expression of horrific dismay at these two, seeing as they demonstrated the depravity of my captors. Reading my expression as clearly as if it were a signpost, Talar spoke first. "Don't care for children, Victor?"

"Be silent, Talar," Delthirius rebuked, and Talar's grotesque chuckle died in his throat, shortly thereafter taking his smile with it. His master went on, "We do not turn younglings, if that is what you think. They are far too temperamental. Nor do we *breed* with the cattle—how repulsive that would be!"

As he released my arm and walked amid the "cattle," I had a moment to consider a minor peculiarity in his statement. Before, he had been spot on in his intuitions, but this time he proffered two inferences, and only the latter had crossed my mind. It was as though he had

simply covered two fair conjectures instead of prying into my thoughts, but why would he fail to do so now?

Pointing first to the girl, then to the boy, Delthirus continued, "Tylen and Mereth are here, because this one ..." He halted, gesturing to a red-headed woman lying across wooden slats. "... was pregnant when she was taken from the surface eight years ago. As soon as I noticed what *others* ..." A pointed glance was cast at Talar, who bore it in simmering silence. "... had failed to see, I considered preventing the eventuality of birth. However, my curiosity as to the effects of repeated feedings on the unborn won out, and now we have our little fangborn to take care of the cattle for us." He rested both of his hands upon his cane and surveyed his narcotized prisoners, a satisfied expression upon his face. "Excepting replacements, we have a fairly self-contained operation, do we not Talar?"

## FANGBORN

When a vampire bites a pregnant humanoid or monstrous humanoid, there is a possibility of the unborn child being blighted. The result is what Delthirus terms a fangborn, caught between the worlds of the living and the dead, though less expressive of vampiric traits than a dhampir. Mechanically, fangborn are created by applying the half-vampire template (*Libris Mortis* page 106), though it ought to be adjusted based on the strain of the progenitor. Below are several suggestions for specific strains:

A Veidrava vampire fangborn (see the description after the end of the tale) cannot select *children of the night* as a special attack, nor does it gain fast healing. Instead, it gains regeneration 2 which is bypassed by fire and *blessed* or holy weapons. Additionally, it may choose its special attack to be the Veidrava vampire's *strength damage* ability, although it

may only deal 1d4 Strength damage through its natural attacks.

A Chiang-shi fangborn should have damage reduction 5/bamboo or magic. If it chooses *children of the night* as its special attack, it may summon 2d8 cats or 1d4 panthers (use leopard statistics). It may not choose *charm gaze*, but it may choose a *dazing gaze* which works almost identically, except it has the effect of a *daze monster* spell (without a limit on the HD of the target). Chiang-shi fangborn have white hair and swiftly growing fingernails, and their skin is mildly translucent.

A Nosferatu fangborn does not have fast healing. Rather, if it has fewer than half of its full normal hit points and is exposed to direct moonlight, then all damage it has taken is converted to nonlethal damage and it gains regeneration 1. This cannot restore a slain Nosferatu fangborn to life, and fire, acid, and *blessed* or holy weapons can bypass the regeneration. A Nosferatu fangborn is pale, and its skin never blemishes as it matures.

A cerebral fangborn is very much like a Nosferatu fangborn, but it does not drink blood. Instead, the *blood drain* ability deals Intelligence damage, should it be chosen, and the individual is dependent on cerebral fluid.

A Vrykolaka fangborn is a rare thing indeed, for the infections rampant in such creatures generally are too much for a developing fetus to handle. Should such a poor soul be born, it will have a -4 racial penalty to its Intelligence score (with a minimum score of 3), and its damage reduction is 5/cold iron or magic. In addition, it becomes immune to the deleterious effects of diseases, but not cosmetic changes like sores and disgustingly tinted mucus. If it chooses the *children of the night* special attack, it may summon 3d10 HD of monstrous vermin. Rather than *charm gaze*, a Vrykolaka fangborn may gain a *fever sleep* ability which is functionally



identical to *charm gaze*, but affects the victim with a *sleep* spell (without a limit on the HD of the target). Vrykolaka fangborn are cadaverous and mangy, and those with the *blood drain* ability have barbed tongues.

A dwarven fangborn's fast healing functions only while underground, and its damage reduction is 5/cold iron or magic. If it chooses the *children of the night* special attack, it may summon 2d4 badgers, 1d6 wolverines, or 1d4 thoquas. Instead of *charm gaze*, it may choose *terror gaze*, which is functionally identical to the ability of the same name possessed by full dwarven vampires. Dwarven fangborn have stony skin, silver or white hair, and always accumulate a layer of dust on their skin and clothing.

Admittedly, "elven fangborn" is a bit of a misnomer, as elven vampires do not bite their prey. An elven fangborn has damage reduction 5/cold iron or magic. If it chooses the *children of the night* special ability, it may summon 3d10 hawks, 2d6 eagles, or 1d6 wolves. Rather than *charm gaze*, it may choose the *dazing gaze* described above, and rather than *blood drain*, an elven fangborn may gain the *charisma drain* ability of a full elven vampire, except that may not drive victims to suicide or loss of will to live with this ability. An elven fangborn with *charisma drain* becomes dependent on its use in the same manner as described under the *blood dependency* special quality. Elven fangborn are gaunt and scarred.

A gnomish fangborn has cold, electricity, and fire resistance 10 in place of its normal resistances. It may not choose the *children of the night* special attack, and its *charm gaze* only has the effect of a *charm animal* spell. It may choose a *mocking grin* ability, which is functionally identical to the ability of a full gnomish vampire, except it uses a caster level of the fangborn's HD and only lasts for 1d4

rounds. Gnomish fangborn have taut skin and can only speak in a hoarse whisper.

A halfling fangborn does not gain damage reduction, and its fast healing does not function during the new moon. If it chooses the *children of the night* special attack, it may summon 2d8 dogs or 2d10 cats. It may not choose the *charm gaze* special attack. Instead, it may choose a *fatigue aura*, which extends 30 feet, causing all living creatures within who fail a Will save to become fatigued for 1d6 rounds. The aura has no effect on creatures already fatigued. Halfling fangborn are pallid and feral-looking.

A caliban fangborn (see *Zherisia Gazetteer* page 126) has damage reduction 5/magic. If it chooses the *children of the night* special ability, it may summon 1d4 giant rats, 1d6 large spiders, or 1d6 giant frogs. It may not choose the *charm gaze* special attack. Instead, it may choose the *dazing gaze* described above. It gains no fast healing, but it does gain spell resistance 8 during childhood. This increases to SR 10 in adulthood and SR 12 in old age. Caliban fangborn are always born as calibans, disfigured by many lumpy growths. Their umbilical cord remnants are always two or three inches long, and will regenerate over the course of a few days if cut.

A Lilliender fangborn (see *Quoth the Raven* 25 page 190) may not select *children of the night* or *charm gaze* as special attacks, necessarily gaining the *blood drain* ability. The creature becomes immediately fatigued if it drains the blood of a male, and remains so until it sates its thirst on a female victim. All Lilliender fangborn are female, as humanoids pregnant with male children invariably miscarry in the aftermath of an attack by a Lilliender vampire.

Talar moved to his master's side. "Yes we do, my lord." Locking eyes with me, he proceeded to exercise his freed tongue, saying, "Now let's get to your meal. Must be famished after four days, right?" His eyes went to the children's mother, and a new sneer crawled into place. "Start with her. Now."

Obeisance was only natural, even when every fiber of my being abhorred what was to come. I approached and knelt down by her, moving a tangled lock of hair from her neck with my hand as I did so. I did not want to lean down with my mouth agape, my teeth bared, but my will could not apply itself to resist.

The ecstasy of drinking blood is almost beyond description. Its iron tang is unchanged by the transition to undeath, but one's taste for it blooms beyond the natural appreciation of fine food or good wine. The greatest moment of all comes when your heart starts once again, thrumming in imitation of the life you lost. How are mortals not deafened by the sound of their surging arteries?

In spite of that, my disgust soon outweighed my thirst, and I pried myself away from the tender neck of the woman. I have no doubt that it was the hardest thing I have ever done, and I had comparatively recently survived traumatic injury. Gazing blearily at Delthirius and Talar, I saw the former's face was awash with some twisted pride. "Four days to rise and breaking off your first feeding of your own accord? There is admirable resolve in you, to resist joining our ranks so!"

Talar was far less impressed, and the restrained rage in his visage showed it perfectly. The very sight of my self-control seemed practically intolerable to him, likely since his own agency was lost repeatedly with only three words from Delthirius. To provide his own vile balm, Talar's lips curled back and released two words:

*"Drain her."*

Once more I bent down, unable to refuse the combined weight of his cursed orders and my throbbing fangs. The blood carried both joy and wrongness, an ugly mixture I attempted to dissociate from. My heart raced faster and faster, as though it meant to take up the slack as her heart grew fainter and fainter, soon stopping altogether.

As the thunder of my stolen life subsided, I became aware of a small, high wailing, followed by a sharp sensation in my forearm and a series of light thumps upon my back. My wits slowly drew together, and I saw the girl, Tylen, had fangs of her own clamped down near my left wrist. Turning, I saw Mereth sobbing and lobbing weak punches and kicks at me. The sheer grievousness of my crime came fully upon me, and I hid my face, mortified.

I heard Talar let fly, yelling, "You don't attack your masters!" The blows abated suddenly, and the fangs were torn from my arm. I peeked from between my fingers to see Talar hoisting both children by the throat. His hellish glare bespoke a world of unnecessary corrective cruelty, and it only worsened when Delthirius calmly said, "Stand down, Talar."

Talar gently set the children down, murder in his eyes, then stalked out of the chamber.

Delthirius knelt on one knee, held out his arms, and the children rushed into his enveloping embrace. As they cried into his shoulders, tearing my own slowing heart with every whimper, he whispered an incantation that steadily made them quieter and quieter, until he finally lowered them to the floor, sound asleep. Standing, he looked upon the dead mother—my victim—with something almost like sadness in his eyes. He was silent for almost a minute, then he muttered, "Reduced supply and one more mouth to feed will never do." There was an utterance of power and a green flash, and her body was gone.

I was partially collapsed in the straw, flooded with shame and horror. For the first time, I had killed another human, an innocent. I may not have been in control, but that did not change the fact that she was dead, or that some part of me had relished it. Where I had no drive to stop myself before, now I had no drive to take any further action. Delthirius hauled me up and led me from the pen, closing and barring the door behind us with a single gesticulation of his cane. "I will make you sleep too," he said.

There is no sleep for me, not truly. Nor was my time submerged in the dark pools of Delthirius' abode like death—not that an observer could tell the difference. Each period of corpse-like slumber was spent inundated with the Pulse. While my first experience with it had been devoid of personal identity as the path into death was traversed backward, some measure of self-awareness returned in my subsequent rests. In no way was this an improvement.

It was still the case that all possible sensation, all reason to be, came through the Pulse, but I began to truly comprehend that which flowed into me. From Delthirius, through Talar, came a dark spectrum of feelings. Malice, bloodlust, cravings for power, sorrow, a sense of loss, all these and more were pumped into me. I knew many were horrid things to feel, but I was powerless to keep them out, to feel anything except them. Every day, I drowned in the evil thoughts of my vile progenitors, and each time they soaked in deeper. Little by little, I was being warped toward their image.

My times of wakefulness were akin to a release, though they were far from free. Due to my arcane talents, Delthirius set me to work sorting through a stack of spellbooks and copying their contents into scrolls. There were two others who worked with me, one a bespectacled scholar who looked to have received unlife mere moments before he would have passed on naturally, and the other a dour woman who

would only hiss if I tried to talk. As such, I gave up learning more about them quite early, and spent my time in introspection. As I scrivined away, I tried to locate the changes worked upon my psyche, to reassert my true self over the darkness which had seeped in.

The worst part of the day—not that day existed even outside of the caves—came when I was escorted to the cattle pen. At first, I begged Delthirius not to send me there, as I could not bear to look upon those children—those children I had orphaned. To my surprise and far greater relief, Delthirius seemed to show some measure of pity (for me or the children, I could not tell), and brought one of the cattle to me. Initiating feeding was far from easy, as my earlier atrocity was still fresh in my mind. However, the prospect of Delthirius summoning Talar to order me to feed was encouragement enough to overcome my difficulties. This private mercy did not continue past a week, but it did not fully abate, as the children were always absent from the pen when I went.

So my days went, transcribing black magic formulae as I tried to keep hold of myself, reining in anxiety with every fluid meal, and immersed in the wicked thoughts of my master during all the time between. Thoughts of escape seemed to have died with me.

For the first twenty days, I saw neither pale hide nor gray hair of Talar, as though he were being kept from me. When this changed on the twenty-first day, I was bitterly disappointed. Signs heralding some event had been in the dank cavern air for a few days beforehand, even in my work. The venerable man and the hissing woman and I had been preparing a very specific list of spells, all concerning the manipulation of lesser undead. It was abundantly clear that a large number were to be controlled, though only to a minimal degree. To what end, I had no idea—not until the day to use them came.

Talar's arrival was heralded by the sound of metal heels in the tunnel beyond. My entire body stiffened in recognition as my "coworkers" carried on without a hint of concern. Panic rose in me, and my mind raced to try and avert his coming or protect myself from him. At the crescendo of my angst, I feared that Tylen and Mereth would be with him. I had no doubt Talar could be so cruel, but surely Delthirius would not have allowed such a thing to happen.

Indeed, he had not, for Talar entered alone, smirking. "All rise," he barked, and I reacted instantly, the voice I had not heard in weeks compelling me with undiminished strength. The woman's only response was to hiss, and in reply Talar backhanded her across the face, sending her and her chair tumbling. "I don't care who your sire is," Talar growled. "You will obey me as well." This got the old man's attention, for he had until then seemed completely oblivious. With great effort and audible creaking of his bones, he rose from his chair—an undertaking I had never before seen. The woman stood last, a dark bruise marring the entire left side of her visage. Talar ignored her glare.

"The wait is over; the raiding parties have been spotted following the Falling River." He pointed to the woman. "You will report to Anric. He's going to divert them from the Tarn." She began to move past him to comply, but he slammed her into the wall. "I did not dismiss you!" he shouted as she crumpled to the floor, then he gave her a kick toward the exit, yelling, "Get out of my sight!" She scrambled out as fast as she could.

Regaining his composure, Talar turned to me and resumed his smug grinning. "Long time, no see, eh? Have you been keeping yourself well fed?"

Three weeks had done little to dull the ignominy and inwardly directed odium stemming from my first feeding—perhaps

giving in to the Pulse would have done more, but at a terrible cost. In addition to those self-accusatory feelings, there rose in me a tremendous hatred for Talar. I consider that quite natural, though I dare not say *only* natural. This hatred was burning and violent. Already a black emotion, it had been strengthened by the Pulse. It felt as though my entire soul focused to wish him ill, to desire him more properly dead, and had my restraint been somewhat reduced, there could very well have been a brief and doomed altercation at that very moment. This made responding difficult, as I feared to provoke him with disrespect and hostility, but I also feared to provoke him with silence. Through lightly clenched teeth, I replied, "As well I must. What do you require?" My tone left much to be desired.

"You are cordially invited to watch today's excitement from the ring of stones," he said cheerfully, mockingly, "but first, we must retrieve a tool for Lord Delthirius. Fancy yourself a stop by the pen on the way? Might improve your disposition."

My ire and revulsion heightened at the thought, but I managed a measured response: "I dare not delay carrying out my charge."

"Very well," he theatrically sighed. He then turned on his heel, simultaneously beckoning with two fingers, "Come along." But a few short steps into the tunnel beyond, he paused to look back at the nearly forgotten third vampire present. "Resume your seat, old man. You're useless for what's to come." The two of us continued on as his joints groaned behind us.

Talar nattered on with upsetting and disturbing jabs all the way through the tunnels, and I recognized that we were walking the path to Delthirius' office. Rather than proceed to that particular chamber, however, our course diverged, leading ultimately to a shelf-lined chamber housing numerous tomes. A few I

recognized, having been made to copy out of them in weeks past, so I surmised that many were the spellbooks of wizards. Several of them lay open on a small table, and among them I spotted my own slim travel spellbook, apparently on the current reading list.

Leaning against the far side of this table was a vaguely circular metal lattice, slightly more than four feet across. To this I was directed, and I came around to find that this baroque, web-like decoration held eight circular mirrors (each eight inches across), in which I was unable to spot Talar or—more disconcertingly—myself. I was bade to take it under my arm with the utmost care, and with one last longing look at my road book, we doubled back.

As we made our way out, we passed through the chamber of the pools. Normally a sedate place, it was then bustling with the transit of many vampires. Some were busy awakening others and ordering them about, while others seemed already absorbed in the pursuit of some task. Most moved for the exit, and it was this flow that Talar and I joined, moving into the unadorned corridors that snaked toward the cliff. When the wretched stench of one side passage assaulted me, I knew we were not far off, and soon color returned to my vision as the twilight surface met the caverns.

Emerging into the bounds of the demon stones, the vampiric convoy broke apart. Most handed off their loads or passed along their messages quickly, then waited for their exiting brethren to thin out in order to get back in. Some formed groups around some sort of leader and payed rapt attention to complex series of orders and warnings before leaving the circle. In the midst of it all stood Delthirius, watching wordlessly as his lieutenants coordinated his lesser spawn. Pauthrael was conspicuously absent from the gathering at the base of the cliff.

He caught sight of Talar and me, and beckoned us over. “Hold that up here please, both of you,” he said. Talar grudgingly took hold of one side of the mirror array, and together we hoisted it up in front of Delthirius. He instructed us on how to position it to his liking, and as he did so, he pulled a small wad of clay from within his coat and began to work it between his fingers. Once it was in the form of a clutching hand, he pulled a scroll from one of the cases at his side and began to recite its contents. As the incantation reached completion and the clay burned away in his grasp, the stone beneath our feet warped and stretched, taking the shape of a crude hand, and clamped down on the mirrors. I narrowly avoided having my fingers caught in the process.

With that business out of the way, Delthirius traced his fingers along the periphery of the lattice while muttering some Elvish-sounding phrase, and each of the mirrors began to glow a piercing blue, losing the image of the deserted cliff base. “Pauthrael,” he said, and one of the glowing circles lost its overwhelming fluorescence to reveal a dark, winged figure gliding above a far-off, craggy landscape. He spoke again: “Anric,” and another circle dimmed to display six cloudy forms racing across a more distant stony vista. “Slow yourself, Anric,” Delthirius said. “Pauthrael is not quite at the halfway point. Don’t get too far ahead.”

### THE EYES OF THE SPIDER QUEEN

Delthirius claimed this minor artifact from zellidrow he accosted ages ago. It acts in a manner similar to a *crystal ball*, enabling *scrying* as the spell, though heightened to the equivalent of a 10th level effect (Will DC 25 negates). Unlike *scrying*, the user can perceive past the target’s immediate surroundings—out to 120 feet, in fact. Furthermore, the user can view eight scenes simultaneously, and has *true seeing* through the Eyes. The user may also

speak into the mind of anyone he views through the Eyes, though the person must answer audibly back.

The sensors created by the Eyes appear as small, blue, spectral spiders that climb across ephemeral webs in the air to follow their targets. They can travel as fast as a *wind walker* (600 feet per round or 60 miles per hour) if necessary.

Only a powerful priestess of the Spider Queen (generally a 10th level zeldrow) may safely use the Eyes. At least, that was the intention. Anyone else who attempts to activate the Eyes for the first time must make a DC 25 Fortitude save or die wreathed in black flames. This being a death effect, Delthirius was unscathed.

An individual that survives its first contact with the Eyes may use them, but the visions seen through them subtly become less and less accurate, slowly driving the user toward ruin. Delthirius nearly fell victim to this, but determined the cause before it was too late. Afterward, he spent years attempting to break the magic of the Eyes, and now he can use them with relative impunity. However, he knows such sacrilege is unlikely to go unpunished, so he is always on the lookout for reprisal. Perhaps the Spider Queen herself will send foul servants to reclaim her Eyes—or perhaps such things have already been dispatched.

“How long before contact?” Talar asked, his rhythmically clenching fingers telegraphing boredom, but his face registering malicious eagerness.

“But a few minutes, I suspect,” replied Delthirius. “Bringing them back will likely take nearly two hours, as Anric will have to slow down to avoid losing them.”

In the interim, Delthirius spoke six more names: Haanrik, Yanlin, Brannach, Marsek, Vulçia, Narvon. With each one, another mirror’s glow faded to show some other barren outlook, but unlike the first two, corporeal beings were visible through these. Teams of vampires pulled stones from cairns to uncover rotting monsters, skeletal beasts, and spectral figures, all evidently under the direction of the senior vampires at the scenes. I estimate that a third of this was my handiwork.

Talar’s shout broke the suspense: “There they are!” He pointed to Anric’s mirror, where scores of creatures had come into view.

“Sith, powrie, muryan, teg...” Delthirius said. “We will take a redcap or a bogey.”

His speech meant nothing to me, but Talar understood enough to disagree. “Why not one of the dancing men? Or even those fey necromancers? After all this time, we should take a real prize.”

“It is too risky to take those who lead,” Delthirius replied. “Leaders are always accounted for, and records do not forget.”

The war band—made of those who ran, those who scampered, and those who flew—evidently took notice of the mist shapes, which turned about to urge pursuit. Chase was given, and Delthirius’ attrition tactics followed close behind.

As the host was drawn nearer and nearer, the ghostly gliders led them past the other squadrons Delthirius spied upon. At each such juncture, he would call on the attendant vampires to send forth their undead cohorts. As the lesser monsters attacked, the large band split, some staying to destroy their attackers, others continuing to chase Delthirius’ lure. Each time, the vampires fell back and avoided notice, taking some roundabout path back toward the cliff.

At long last, the chasing force dwindled to twelve. Four resembled elves—two garbed in black with long white hair, two kilted with auburn hair. The former pair were rather dour, but the latter whistled and chattered as they came. About them buzzed four creatures I could have taken for large insects at a distance, but a more concerted examination revealed them to be little madmen in blood-red hats. Completing the dozen were four more animalistic specimens—man shapes which ran on all fours. Some magic must have been at work to allow them to come this far at their pace without tiring.

“Pauthrael, you may return now. Anric, prepare to break your contingent,” said Delthirius, and with that he gave a dismissive gesture to the mirrors, which immediately ceased to view remotely. He wrenched the lattice from its stand and passed it off to a pair of his spawn standing by. They conveyed it back into the tunnels as he produced more clay and another scroll, which he handed to me. He instructed me to make the empty hand before him rejoin the earth, and I did so as he worked more magic to hide the tunnel mouth and the stones from sight. We three stood alone, waiting.

Delthirius watched through a ravine ahead of us, his pupils dilating in response to something not yet visible to me, and perhaps not to Talar either. A moment later, they contracted again, but not as they ought to. Formerly round, they gained eight corners, alternating convex and concave, then folded in, coming to resemble crossed arrow slits. He drew a deep breath, seeming to grow a full inch taller in the process, and his ears stretched too. They came to a point, then forked most disquietingly before flaring out like the ears of a hideous bat. His knuckles popped and cracked, and I saw black veins emerge from his sleeves to trace across his hands and terminate at the thorns developing at his joints. He finally exhaled,

sending a frosty puff of mist out between the haphazard fangs which now filled his mouth.

I stepped back out of shock. Talar stepped back as well, but only to accommodate the great, blood-red wings that were extending from Delthirius’ back, through tailored holes in his coat that certainly had not been there before. He had said he was no demon, yet this seemed like no wizard’s trick. What was he? He handed his cane to Talar, then leapt into the air like an archfiend triumphant. He flew for the ravine, where I could just see the suggestion of fog motes fleeing through the air, then he passed from my vision in a blink.

“Now the true fun begins,” declared Talar, and just then the six cloudy figures shot off at great speed and went in all different directions. Their pursuers exited the ravine and stood, probably unsure of what to do next. There was a metallic sliding and a click to my left, and I saw Talar sporting an evil grin and proffering a spyglass. “I have seen this up close before. I don’t want you to miss it.”

With the glass, I could see that the four which most approximated human appearance were conferring, while the other eight—the ones I presumed must be the “redcaps” and “bogies”—were buzzing and clambering about on alert. Before they could reach consensus, a small shower of stones got their attention, and both they and I looked up to see undead spiders of monstrous proportions climbing down the sides of the ravine. The first to engage were the redcaps, flying up and harrying the arachnids. Spells from the dark-clothed beings caused a few of their assailants to stop in their tracks, but enough reached the floor for the kilted men and bogies to engage directly. The battle hardly seemed easy for them, but they looked prepared enough to render victory probable.

One of the bogies was knocked back toward the cliff by a swinging spider leg, but it returned to

its feet in a flash, ready to charge into the fray once more. At that moment, however, a violet ray from the empty air struck it behind the head, bursting into a matching mist that settled into the creature's hide. Before it could complete a turn about to see the source of this effect, some unseen force slammed it back into the stone. Its forearms were clamped to the ground, and ragged tooth marks appeared on its neck. Its brethren, too absorbed in their conflict, took no notice as its head was given several violent dashes against the earth. Once its struggling ceased, its unconscious—perhaps lifeless—body was winged back toward the cliff.

Talar reclaimed his spyglass just as the now visible Delthirius landed at our feet with his bloodied prize. The creature was not dead or out cold—its slit-pupilled eyes were wide open and terrified—but rather completely paralyzed. Its face was somewhere between that of a fox and a man, and its body was compact and brawny. A barely perceptible purple sheen clung to its skin, and in the patches covered, the skin took a thin, translucent appearance. Scarlet humors leaked from its neck, and from puckering black holes about the back of its head, all areas subject to this magical mauve weakening. This same crimson tinge was sported by Delthirius' barbed knuckles and jagged teeth, and he calmly proceeded to take a cloth from an inner pocket to clean himself up, resuming human shape as he did so.

Pointing to the pooling blood, Talar commanded, "Lap that up! Don't let it go to waste." Filling with resentment, I bent down to comply, but then a hand caught my shoulder.

"Not now, Talar," said Delthirius.

I looked to Talar's face with its angrily furrowed brow for further instructions. "Nevermind," he spat, and I stood back up, relieved.

In my place, Delthirius bent down, taking the bogey's chin in his hand to make it look him in

the eyes. He bent until his face was right in front of its, and squeezed to open its mouth. Delthirius opened his mouth wide, as if in imitation, then he *inhaled*. His breath sounded like a death rattle, and the bogey's face contorted like it was going to scream. Rather than sound, a glimmering vapor emerged from the creature's mouth, as well as its nose and eyes. Delthirius drew this glowing ether into himself via the same routes, breathing in for nearly a half of a minute with no abatement. When the gold and silver stream finally ceased, I assumed the bogey would be dead, but it wasn't. "Carry it in, please," Delthirius said, pointing to the bare cliff face projected over the cave.

We stole in before the last of the spiders fell, the bogey slung between me and Talar. Our destination was deep within, past the pools where those who had stayed behind cheered at our entrance. Once again, we went in the general direction of the inner office, but neither there nor to the spellbook reading room did we go. The chamber we found ourselves in contained two major features: a stark stone table in the middle, and a metal cauldron in an alcove at the back.

At Delthirius' direction, we laid the bogey upon the table. Without saying a word, he produced something small, a black hemisphere with iron latticework across it. Then he took one of the sword pins from his lapel, spoke a single word, and it grew to the size of a dagger. Despite the sacrificial tone the situation had gained, I stood by in silence. I did not want to see this thing come to further harm, regardless of what it was, but I also felt that displaying squeamishness or resistance might set Talar off. Delthirius may have had him under control, but I doubted his depredations could be forestalled forever. Delthirius affixed the hemisphere to the dagger, held it above the bogey's heart



(presumably), and drove it in without pomp or circumstance.

Its body ... separated. Most of it collapsed into leaves, twigs, ferns, and lichen, but another part was drawn up the blade. Like fluid darkness, it was pulled from the plant matter, over the surface of the weapon, and into the black prison on its pommel.

Delthirius pried the hemisphere off and approached the cauldron. In it went with a thick splash—clearly the contents were not water, and I had no desire to see them more closely. “The flesh will come along nicely,” he said, turning about to face us. Tomorrow, you will bring me the bones.”

### **Umbral Extractor**

**Price (Item Level):** 6,000 gp (10th)

**Body Slot:** — (weapon crystal)

**Caster Level:** 18th

**Aura:** Strong (DC 24) necromancy

**Activation:** —

**Weight:** —

*This jet-black metal hemisphere is inlaid with iron, designed to call to mind a cage of utter darkness.*

An umbral extractor is a greater weapon augment crystal (see *Magic Item Compendium* pages 221 and 64; may only be attached to a weapon with +3 or greater enhancement) consisting of a black mithral core inset with cold iron. When attached to a melee weapon, the weapon acts as though enchanted with *bane* against all shadow fey, and any Arak that is slain by it is completely destroyed, unable to return. The component shadow of the victim is drawn out and stored in the umbral extractor, rendering it inert and unable to modify a weapon until the essence is purged in some way.

A full umbral extractor may be used as part of an illusion spell with the shadow subtype to maximize the spell without using the feat or using a higher level spell slot (a wasted application in the Shadow Rift). Alternatively, an umbral extractor may stew in a vat of doppelganger plasm for 4 hours, bleeding the dark energy into the vital fluid. Either action clears the umbral extractor for further use.

*Prerequisites:* Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *soul bind*, *summon monster I*.

*Cost to Create:* 3,000 gp, 240 XP, 6 days. Given its rarity, the requisite black mithral does not factor into this cost. It must be obtained through force or trickery; no Arak would provide it freely to someone openly building such a hideous device.

### **COAGULA**

Coagula are a sort of shadow construct developed by Delthirius as an improvement upon illusory simulacra. Made of wood, plasm, and shadow, a coagulum is virtually indistinguishable from the original creature, having all of its memories, abilities, and observable characteristics.

The first step in creating a coagulum is to find a darkwood tree and cut out its heartwood, which then must be carefully carved into the shape of a skeleton. Following the etching of eldritch runes upon this skeleton, it becomes ready to serve as the framework for the dark magic.

Equally important is the body matter of the coagulum, which consists of doppelganger plasm impregnated with the essence of shadow. It is for this purpose that the umbral extractor was created. Other methods of acquiring shadow and imbuing it into plasm may exist, but Delthirius has not developed them. Once the plasm is prepared, it is caked

onto the skeleton, and a piece of the creature to be duplicated is placed deep within.

Following this synthesis, the body must have *simulacrum* cast upon it (augmented by the plasm base to generate a physically identical being), followed by *programmed amnesia* (to more perfectly replicate the mind of the original). The resultant creature is only identifiable by a few strange quirks in its interaction with certain magics.

First, any spell that affects wood may affect the coagulum's skeleton, but only if the caster disbelieves the coagulum's reality. To do so, the caster must succeed on a Will save with a DC equal to  $10 + 1/2$  the coagulum's hit dice + the coagulum's Charisma modifier. A *warp wood* spell that succeeds in taking effect would render the skeleton incapable of bearing the magic, automatically killing the coagulum.

*Dispel magic* and its relatives may render the coagulum temporarily unconscious and make its visage appear fluid (the plasm maintains the imitation, but not particularly well), but again only if the caster disbelieves. On the other hand, a coagulum which enters an *antimagic field* suffers unconsciousness automatically.

Coagula do not age, nor can they advance in level. Unlike simulacra, coagula can heal naturally, and they can gain excess XP up to the limit of the next level for use in crafting or casting spells with XP components.

Of all the foibles of coagula, the one most disturbing to Delthirus is their interaction with the Plane of Shadow. Normally, a coagulum follows the commands of its maker, not necessarily unflinchingly, but still without the option of refusal. Should a coagulum ever enter the Plane of Shadow, the enhancement of its magic causes it to forget its basic nature as a servile illusion and break free of its master's control. Naturally, Delthirus gives standing orders that no coagulum is to intentionally cross

into the Plane of Shadow, and he generally considers the risk of accidental planar transference to be low enough that further measures need not be taken.

In terms of materials and finances, a coagulum costs 2000 gp per hit die of the creature to be duplicated (1900 gp per HD for the arcane components needed to properly prepare the skeleton and 100 gp per HD for the *simulacrum* spell) plus 500 gp for the material components of *programmed amnesia*. The shadow essence and doppelganger plasm are not factored into the total price. A coagulum costs 400 XP per hit die of the duplicated creature.

At my next rising, Talar was there to greet me, pulling me out in a manner akin to my first awakening. This time, however, he was dressed in a leather jerkin, bracers, and pointed boots, with a full quiver and composite longbow across his back. At his side were three others, each dressed for potentially hazardous travel, armored and armed. Standing out among them was a giant of a specimen, a seven-foot caliban with drooping jowls and one tusk jutting from the middle of his lower jaw. His great paws rested on the head of an axe that stood as tall as my chest.

Talar quickly stole back my attention by pressing a thin volume into my arms. Perplexedly, I recognized it as my road book, which I had not expected to be remanded to my custody. "I dog-eared a few pages," Talar said, satisfaction evident on his face when mine registered offense at his treatment of my property. "You may only prepare the spells I marked that way." That restriction helped to demystify what I at first took to be an extension of my freedom. "You can get ready within the ring of stones as we await our sendoff."

Our contingent made its way out of the tunnels, emerging onto the twilight surface in short order.

Carefully skirting the red stains from yesterday's exploits, I settled down to read. Though not robust—only thirty pages thick—my travel spellbook achieved a respectable density through extensive application of the *secret page* spell. This, however, had clearly been noticed by Delthirius, and the news had passed on to Talar. Rather than grant me any sort of hidden edge, it only caused the permitted selection to be woefully inhibitory, as even fairly innocuous spells were disallowed due to the stronger ones underlying. No transmutations—lest I attempt some hare-brained escape in the body of a rabbit—nor conjurations or evocations targeting multiple individuals. Not even *sending* was available, probably to avoid the trick that had called Pauthrael to my aid all those weeks ago. It was not as though I had many others I could usefully call upon, however.

I considered seeking out better spells and folding over more corners, but I knew I would remember they were not among those marked by Talar, which would have left me stuck. Instead, I only prepared spells from the first half of my spellbook, avoiding finding out the whole of what I had been given.

At about the end of my preparations, two shapes stepped out of the darkness of the tunnel. The first was unbrightened even as it took to the sky on its shadow wings—Pauthrael. Directly behind came Delthirius, right hand on his cane, and left tucked behind his back. All eyes turned to him, and as they did so, I closed my spellbook. My manner was calculatedly careless, however, and several page corners got folded over—I could not be faulted for disobeying if I did not know which ones Talar folded.

Delthirius approached Talar, and let his cane stand free, planted in a crevice, as he reached inside his frock coat to remove a small fold of black cloth and pass it to Talar. "This should be sufficient for slumber, though a somewhat tight

fit." He then pulled his hidden hand into view, and in it was a little barrel, crusted over with salt. "If anything should happen, this has been fully readied."

Talar tucked the cloth into a pouch on his belt, then used a short band of cloth to tightly bind the barrel alongside. "Why is Anric not out here yet, ready to fly us out?" he queried.

"Anric has refused to assist you with flight, citing mistreatment of one of his spawn." Surely this concerned the hissing woman. "You have to walk back anyway—clouds can't lift logs—so I don't see any reason to go against his wishes."

Talar's eyes were alight. "That self-righteous old fool! I shouldn't have to bear disrespect from—"

"Quiet down, Talar," Delthirius interrupted. "Anric's assistance is not fully withdrawn. His beasts will guide you to a suitable grove." He paused, moved his face closer to Talar's, then meticulously said, "You and your spawn are not to harm them; they serve by their own good will. Understood?"

Talar gave a grudging statement of compliance, and we were bade to depart, following Pauthrael toward and through the ravine, where we passed the deteriorating corpses of the spiders left by the raiders. The ravine forked, it merged with others, it turned us completely around, then it abruptly ended when we met a cliff's face—the end of a box canyon.

Between thirty and forty feet above us, I could see an undulation in the air, a shadow avenue like the one Pauthrael brought me through. The demon flew up and waited alongside it, but the rest of us had to climb the cliff to reach it—an easy feat for vampires, who scuttle like arachnids across any surface. Upon reaching the correct height, it was a short jump to pass through the portal mouth, bringing us into the

cyclonic walls of the tunnel of darkness. Pauthrael was the last to join us, but took the lead swiftly and stayed ahead during the entire trip, much to Talar's chagrin.

### **Bent Shadows**

Illusion (Shadow)

**Level:** Sorcerer/wizard 9

**Components:** V, S, M

**Casting Time:** 1 full-round action

**Range:** 0 ft.

**Effect:** See text

**Duration:** 10 min./level (D)

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** No

*You speak the words and cast the dark powder in an arc into the air. In the space where it falls, the dim air ripples. Before you forms the nebulous entrance to a miles-long tunnel outside of normal space, but walking it will take a matter of minutes.*

This spell may only be cast in dim light or darkness, and it is instantly dispelled by sunlight (or a *daylight* spell). It creates a connected pair of 10 ft. wide portals which appear as shadowy distortions in the air. One forms directly before you, while the other forms at your intended destination. If you are not familiar with the intended destination, then the other portal will form in a random location.

Entering one portal brings the traveler into a swirling corridor of shadow. For every minute one spends traversing the corridor, one travels a mile, eventually emerging on the other side. If a traveler remains in the corridor after the spell ends or intentionally pushes through the bounds of the shadowy tunnel, he or she is expelled at some point between the point of departure and the destination.

*Bent shadows* may connect locations on two different planes (though not in violation of closed domain borders, which will shut both

ends of the corridor while active), though those expelled are instead ejected into the Plane of Shadow. Travel to another plane through *bent shadows* takes one hour.

*Bent shadows* may be made permanent with the *permanency* spell. If one of the entrances is caught in light or successfully dispelled, it goes inactive for 10 minutes or until it is once again in darkness, whichever comes second. Making this spell permanent between locations on the same plane costs 5,000 XP, while making it permanent between locations on different planes costs 50,000 XP.

Delthirius created *bent shadows* in order to forge a transportation network across the Shadow Rift. Rather than have a convenient hub for all of these corridors, he made them seem more random, and never close to his home. He doesn't know for certain that the Arak have discovered any of the corridors he has made thus far, but it is only a matter of time. Pauthrael uses one such corridor to circumvent the gale winds that blow high above the Greenlands.

For some reason, Delthirius has ceased to work on expanding his corridor network; only perhaps a half-dozen have been made permanent across the Rift.

*Material Component:* Powdered jet worth 1,000 gp.

Transit down the passage took perhaps three quarters of an hour, following which we leapt out the churning exit after Pauthrael. We immediately had to cling to another sheer surface, more than a thousand feet up the side of a mountainous natural formation. Making our way down, we eventually came to stand on a grassy plain, very much in contrast with my expectations and prior observations.

Shortly, a large raven swooped down from the sky, still in dusky hues. It alighted on Talar's shoulder, brought its beak to his ear, then *spoke*. "The nearest grove is to the southwest," it croaked, "most of the day away by wing. The roads will not be with you."

"Be sure to thank your master for me," Talar retorted sarcastically. "Now get back to scouting! I'm not a perch." As he reached up to brush the bird off, it cawed loudly and took flight once more, aiming southwest. Talar then addressed us: "You all heard him! We have a day or more of trekking ahead; come along!" He turned and led us on. We fell silently in behind him, none of us daring to mention the white streak down his back—a gift from Anric's raven.

We walked for many hours without pause through the fields. Early on, we came near dirt paths, but Talar ignored them in favor of continuing due southwest. However, they started appearing exactly along our direction of travel, as though begging to be trod upon. Even then, Talar shifted off to the side, but the paths would just edge closer. It was as though the paths were desperately trying to prove the crow wrong. When the day was nearly half done, Talar seemed to give up on dodging these tracks, and we would continue along them as long as they pointed where we wanted to go. As we went, they became better maintained—made of brick or split logs—then slowly more bizarre; one we crossed was made of black sand, another was made of fragile green glass shaped in imitation of the field around it.

When we finally gave up on walking for the day—so to speak—we were greeted by a large cat. I suspect it was akin to a Vaasi plains cat, but I have never seen one of those creatures, so I cannot say for certain. It also conferred with Talar, then it led us all to the east, to a little stand of trees—evidently not the grove we

sought—from which we could see a herd of deer. Talar drew his bow, nocked a single arrow, whispered an arcane phrase, then let it fly at a cluster of five of them. When it struck, there was a great roar of noise, which frightened away the rest of the herd. The five stood still, as if stunned, and at Talar's command we rushed forward and took them down. Animal blood is not as filling as humanoid blood, so we drank heavily, leaving the husks for the cat and any scavengers that happened to follow.

Upon our return to the earlier path, Talar brought out the black cloth and unfurled it upon the ground. It was longer across than I was tall, and in settling, it gained depth into the soil. There were about four inches from the rim down to the water that filled the bottom, and we lowered ourselves in one by one until—at four occupants—it overflowed slightly, staining the earth with salty, black water. A watch rotation was set, with Talar starting and me excluded.

However far we were from Delthirius, the strength of the Pulse was undiminished that night. Nor was it eased the next three.

Three more days continued much as this first one. A hawk came next, telling us to turn to the west. Then came an owl, which bade us to turn to the southeast. Finally, a bat of dire proportions sent us due north. It was as though the grove we sought moved; it seemed such a ludicrous notion, and yet the best explanation. We walked every waking hour, we hunted animals for blood, then we slumbered in dark waters. Birds occasionally warned us of approaching fey patrols, though every tree, stone, and blade of grass seemed intent on revealing us to them. Usually, magic wielded by some members of our group, including myself, helped to shield us from them. Once, Talar tricked them into looking in another direction

by firing an arrow that preternaturally curved through the air.

These repeated feats of miraculous archery caught my attention. The exploits he managed seemed based more in technique than in magic upon his bow. His abilities brought to mind lore I had read of archers with similar powers, but they were consistently found among the elves. Then again, could it not be possible for a half-elf to cleave more closely to the human parent? Talar's ears were rounded, but I then noted marks near the top of them, perhaps surgical scars. If indeed this were the case, it would speak to a great misanthropy, a contributing factor to his supreme hatefulness. However, I am an alchemist, not a doctor of medicine or the mind, so my speculations are idle.

On the eve of the fourth day, after our meal, we pressed on at the urging of a one-eyed, foul-mouthed eagle, and came in sight of our objective: a stand of trees with dusky bark and leaves. I had seen items of darkwood before then, but never live specimens of the plant! Their life force seemed palpable, and magic flowed from root to twig and back again just under the surface. In their midst, we made camp one last time—there was no return journey for us on the morrow.

It was after we all rose, when the caliban had finished felling and removing the limbs from one of those great trees, that we all heard the creak of metal wheels not far away. Turning to face the source, we saw what may have been the most mundane—and thus the most out of place—thing since beginning our journey; a bespectacled old man, with hair as white as untouched snow, rolled into the clearing.

He sat in a wheeled metal chair, propelled by his hands, with a blue blanket across his legs and lap. His dress was immaculate, albeit noticeably wrinkled, as though he did not

bother to fold it neatly when not in use. Meeting my gaze, his face presented the most calm and pleasant grin I had seen in a long time, setting me at ease.

It was for but a moment, however, as Talar swiftly had his bow at the ready and an arrow trained on the man's heart. "Speak your business, interloper," he challenged, and the other vampires took on aggressive stances to match.

The old man moved his focus to Talar, and responded, "I am here to collect someone. Deliver him from evil, as it were. At your option, I ask you to stand aside." Dimly, I began to recall a phrase spoken to me weeks ago: *Professor, I know just the person.*

Talar stood firm, his anger rising to a boil, and his volume rising with it. "I yield to no one, and I tolerate no impertinence! Threaten me plainly, or beg my mercy, *at your option.* Either act will be your last!"

I had further creased my road book not with visions of escape, but visions of defiance, and I chose that moment to execute such. Reaching down, I scooped a pebble off of the ground, intoned some clipped arcane phrases, made a quick gesture, and flicked it at Talar. As it sailed through the air, it grew into a great boulder. My aim was poor and Talar's reflexes swift, but he misfired his bow as he ducked, giving the stranger an opening. With a sweep of his finger and a powerful syllable, the man in the wheelchair hurled a blot of blackness. To my great confusion, it struck *me*, spreading into an enveloping darkness through which I could not see nor hear.

Whatever transpired subsequently happened fast, for the darkness about me almost immediately turned gray and nearly transparent, as though some great radiance had manifested outside. The darkness melted away shortly thereafter, revealing an unpleasant,

dying brilliance about the elder man. Where there had been four vampires, now there were four piles of ash and clothing, and Pauthrael was nowhere to be found. At that moment, I supposed it had fled far, or perhaps evaporated irrevocably.

With an oil-starved squeal, the man came to me. Reaching up, he laid an arm on my shoulder. "Victor, I presume?" I nodded assent. "Come then. Light is feared by many down here, and that burst will have gained some unwanted attention."

I placed my hand over his, acutely aware of the strong pulse beneath his skin. "Are you the one Miss Schlosser spoke of?" I asked. "Not to sound ungrateful, but I must ask: why has so much time gone by?"

His face became quite sober. "I left within an hour of her notice to me, and I am sorry for every minute of it. Time moves far faster here."

At that, I thought back to what Delthirius had said when I had been caught at the globe: *He saw you pour a drink and enter the Time Apart, then he could see no more until the globe began to fracture.* Now it made sense—time had changed for me and Miss Schlosser as we spoke, excluding that despicable cane from our conversation.

The man gained my attention back: "My name is Ciphramir. We can leave the Rift posthaste, but let us flee this grove first."

Concurring swiftly, I followed him toward the edge of the grove. Before stepping out, I sifted through the dust that had once been Talar to retrieve the black cloth. Mortal rest had been denied to me, so I could not afford to deny myself the rest of the undead. With the cloth in my breast pocket, I turned once more to leave, but a voice behind me gave me pause: "You are forgetting something, Victor."

Looking back, I saw Pauthrael's black shape oozing out of the felled log—a prime place to hide its ghostly form. It came to loom over Talar's ashes, pointing with one spindly claw at the barrel I had left behind. "You have the dark water, certainly, but should you need more, the cask will prove indispensable."

### **Cask of Black Water**

**Price (Item Level):** 9,000 gp (12th)

**Body Slot:** —

**Caster Level:** 9th

**Aura:** Moderate (DC 19) necromancy

**Activation:** — and standard (command)

**Weight:** 5 lb.

*This small, salt encrusted barrel is no larger than an ale mug. Dark, bitter water beads at its seams and drips to the ground, causing the formerly healthy flowers below to wilt.*

A cask of black water may at first seem like a boon to those who fight salt shadows and Veidrava vampires. Placed upon the chest of a humanoid that has been killed by the strength drain of such a creature, it delays return as a salt shadow. If contact is maintained for ten minutes, the transformation is entirely averted.

After preventing five such unholy spawnings, a cask is charged for its more sinister use. Once the command word is given, the cask expands to a large barrel filled with the water of the Lake of Sounds. In this shape, it weighs 405 pounds (375 pounds come from the 50 gallons of water). Once it is emptied, it reverts to its smaller size.

*Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *bestow curse*, *control water*, *greater disrupt undead* (*Spell Compendium* page 68), *shrink item*.

*Cost to Create:* 4,500 gp, 360 XP, 9 days.

Approaching slowly, I bent down and took it. The salt coating crunched lightly in my grasp, and a small flurry of the stuff fell back to the ground. Meeting the demon's gaze, I asked, "How does it work?"

"That I will leave to you to discover," it responded with a slight smile, "but it may save you a long walk through black tunnels someday."

With Talar's band, I affixed the cask to my belt, much as he had done. With perplexity surely evident in my expression, I looked once more into Pauthrael's eyes, asking the simple question, "Why?"

It cackled and flapped its wings, rising into the air. "We both want the worm dead," it called, "and neither of us will succeed while stuck down here!" Not one for prolonged or approximately normal farewells, Pauthrael soared to the northeast, casting no glance back.

After I called the wind to disperse the ashes of Talar and his other spawn, Ciphramir and I traveled east. It was slow going, for he insisted on providing his own locomotion, but it gave me time to ask and be answered. He called himself a collector of stories, which I took to mean a scholar of mythology and legends. Rather, as he explained, he meant that he sought the accounts of individuals; a healthy understanding of epics and old tales was in his grasp, but to interview a man, to get his perspective, that is where Ciphramir's interests lied. For this reason, he traveled constantly, never staying in one place for long. By the end of our walk, I found out exactly what he meant when he cryptically said, "I suppose I stay nowhere, actually."

In a quarter of an hour, Ciphramir judged us to be far enough from the grove, and stopped. "It is time we left this place behind. I need but a

minute." He then spoke what I recognized to be words of dismissal, such as one uses to end a spell. From the frown that appeared on his face, I took it that his attempt was not a success. He chanted the words again, still to no avail. Lifting his arms and swiveling his wrists, he intoned new words, an attempt to forcefully dispel whatever he had failed to control. Blue light traced across him, forming arcane knotwork that jerked, stuttered, flashed red, then vanished. His expression was of stupefaction, his jaw lowered slightly. "She out-thought me," he muttered.

Looking to me, he regained some of his composure before elaborating. "Our mutual friend, Miss Schlosser, gave me a spell to pierce the Mists of Shadow above us. I figured she might use it to track me, so I planned to use it to get in, not out. Apparently, I must let it run its course." His gaze moved to the south. "We cannot wait here. Delthirius will know what happened and find us before the day is out."

### **Worldbreaker Shroud**

Conjuration [Evil]

**Level:** Clr 6, Sor/Wiz 6

**Components:** V, S, M\*

**Casting Time:** 1 hour

**Range:** Personal (10-ft. radius)

**Target:** You

**Duration:** 24 hours

**Saving Throw:** None and Fortitude negates; see text

**Spell Resistance:** No

Drawn from the insane mind of the Red Haunt, this spell allows a caster to temporarily don the reality wrinkle of a fiend for the purposes of crossing closed border effects in the Demiplane of Dread.

The main stumbling block for the casting of this spell is that the caster must acquire the cooperation of a fiend; if the spell is successfully



cast, the caster gains a minor reality wrinkle—and for the spell's duration, the area of the fiend's own reality wrinkle is reduced by half, a situation which some fiends might consider to be a huge tactical disadvantage.

As a symbol of the fiend's voluntary cooperation, it must willingly draw an amount of its own blood (or whatever ichor flows through its veins) and donate this to the caster. (Some prideful fiends will balk at this; others will probably be gleeful at the prospect.) As a symbol of submitting himself to whatever contract the fiend has demanded to secure its cooperation (if any), the caster must drink the blood at the culmination of the spell.

*Worldbreaker shroud* allows the caster to cross closed domain borders with impunity and bring along as many creatures as fit inside his personal reality wrinkle, but there are some downsides to the spell.

First off, the reality wrinkle only allows the caster to cross closed borders; it does not allow a caster to emulate a fiend in any other way, say by allowing him to perform power rituals and thereby acquire fiendish abilities. Second, anyone covered by a reality wrinkle generated by *worldbreaker shroud* is as noticeable to local Darklords as a natural fiend. Third, the fiend who has donated the use of its reality wrinkle can, through a simple act of will, locate the caster without error, regardless of the distance between them and across planar boundaries, in spite of any measures the caster might take to hide his location through magic, psionics, or science. Fourth, the reality wrinkle cannot be suppressed or deactivated by the caster, other than by entering an antimagic area or similar effect; the spell must be allowed to run its course before the effect ends.

Fifth: not only does casting *Worldbreaker shroud* provoke a Powers Check once it has run its course, it also afflicts the caster with nausea

as the fiendish vitae decay and become toxic. The caster must make a Fortitude save against the spell's own DC or become nauseated for the next twelve hours.

*Material Component:* A small amount of blood from the fiend donating the use of its reality wrinkle, which must be drawn without deceit or coercion on the part of the caster. Some fiends may demand a contract be drawn up with the caster to secure cooperation.

His eyes met mine once more. “We must leave as I planned, but we will not be able to stay long.” Beginning a new chant, Ciphramir extended one grasping hand skyward, as if clawing at the shadowy ceiling beyond sight above us. In response, a massive clot of this black mist answered, lowering into view, softening to gray, alighting before us in the field. A nearby peach tree shrieked and began to run away, a sight somewhere between disturbing and amusing. Though no longer the color of pitch, the fog still bore a looming dark heart, and it was straight toward this that Ciphramir’s chair trundled. I am not normally one to brave the Mists, but I followed quickly, not wanting to be alone in the Rift.

Ten paces into the fog, the softness of grass was replaced by the solidity of stone. We stood on a little flagstone doorstep, and the immense shadow before us came into focus as the outline of a large house. Ciphramir laid his hand upon an elegantly etched door handle, his touch eliciting the sound of sliding bolts from within. With a careful turn and a push, the door opened in, releasing warm lantern light into the Mists.

Right after Ciphramir and his verbal invitation, I stepped into the large, wood-paneled room beyond. To either side of me were closed doors, one directly adjacent to the foot of a staircase that climbed the right-hand wall to reach a

landing along the back. Three doors opened off the landing, and one stood below it, with a sleeping orange cat stretched out along its base. It feigned obliviousness as its ears locked onto us.

In addition to the bright oil lanterns, the walls bore artifacts of travel. The more standard items included a painting of snowcapped peaks (a telltale spire and crowning castle suggested the Balinoks), a selection of Hazlani shadow puppets, and a tapestry rife with chain symbolism from Darkon. Rather unique items stood out as well, such as an oar carved with images of whales, ships, and sea serpents, the narrow skull of a Rajian gharial that was as long as my leg, and a bronze amulet marked with a cobra coiled above a scorpion.

“It will be a shame to leave them behind,” Ciphramir stated as he pushed the door shut behind me. He rolled to the stairs as the bolts reset themselves. “Would you please help me up to the landing?”

The strength of the grave made it more reasonable, yet certainly not easy, to pull his chair backward up the stairs. I did not puff or gasp in the process, but my voice evinced strain when I asked, “How come you should have to leave? Your home seems quite defensible.” I also found his fear of Harmony Schlosser tracking him here to be misplaced, even paranoid, though I didn’t express it. Even though ulterior motives were evident in her assistance, I could not imagine her attentions to be nefarious, just overcurious.

Though he was helping me with his own arms, his voice was unaltered. “Even adrift in the Mists, I don’t doubt one as smart as Miss Schlosser could find it. I can’t keep the whole house ahead of effective pursuit, but I don’t need to weigh myself down to that degree.”

Reaching the top, Ciphramir moved to the last door, more ornate than the other two and

inscribed with subtle runes. Withdrawing a bright, silver key from his clothing, he inserted it into the plate above the worn, golden handle and turned it thrice over to the right. As he pulled it out and put it away, the door gave a long, low moan. Suddenly, the frame cracked as the door broke free and pleated itself. It folded in and shrank down, swiftly compacting itself into the shape of a small, wooden coffer which Ciphramir picked up and stowed under his blanket. Where the door had been, the frame held only a bare, wooden wall.

A sudden sensation assaulted my senses; an eerie sense of a shadow falling over me. In spite of my new nature, the sensation of darkness brought with it a sense of approaching doom, an unreasoning terror. “What ... is this?” I managed to say, teeth chattering uncontrollably. I was trying the usual mental techniques to ward off whatever was assaulting my mind, but none of them seemed to work.

Ciphramir appeared thankfully unaffected. Or at least he was not as affected as I was; he moved quickly and efficiently past me along the landing. “You know, I am not entirely sure,” he said in a conversational tone. In striking contrast, he followed it with a violent bellow: “Somnirot! Get your lazy hide up here!” There was a momentary delay before the cat below moved languorously into view and began to plod up the stairs, at which point Ciphramir’s colloquial voice returned: “It feels rather unpleasant though, doesn’t it? Hmm, a rather intriguing spell-form. What is your own opinion?”

A spell-form. Yes, of course, there was a spell of some sort in effect. I knew how to analyze spells; I just needed to focus past the unreasoning terror that gnawed at my bones. To my eyes, the air came alive with arcane energies, singularly twisted in upon themselves and laced with something I could only describe as a kind of *darkness*, rippling languidly like

ribbons floating along a river. There was not just one spell; there were three of them: one a grand and somehow *wrong* thing of Conjunction that contained the other two—one a spell of Enchantment, the other Necromancy—spinning them out into the air. I recognized none of them, but I could see the twisted artistry that had gone into their creation, the insane genius of their architecture.

### **Foreshadowing**

Conjunction [Chronomancy]

**Level:** Brd 6

**Components:** V, S, M

**Casting Time:** 1 minute

**Range:** See text

**Duration:** See text

**Saving Throw:** See text

**Spell Resistance:** See text

To put it simply, *foreshadowing* carries spells ahead of the caster in time. After casting this powerful magic, a bard can cast up to one spell per five class levels from the bard spell list, inserting them into a spell-form which will travel through time to a place where the caster *will be* in six rounds' time.

The caster has no control over where this place is (though it generally is the intended target); the best-laid plans of mice and men may yet come to ruin, and anyone wishing to use this magic had best be very sure of her plans.

*Foreshadowing* and all the spells it carries will end at the moment the caster enters the area of effect, with no saving throw or other efforts on the caster's or anyone else's part capable of prolonging their effect. All saving throws normally provided by the delivered spells apply, as does spell resistance (if applicable). The carried spells use their own areas and durations—within the six-round limit, that is. Once every spell's duration has expired, *foreshadowing* also ends.

**WARNING:** Attempts to prolong the effects of *foreshadowing* by refusing to enter the area cause a paradox, which provokes backlash in the form of a major Madness save on the part of the caster with a penalty of -10. *Foreshadowing* and its carried spells will end anyway.

As an example, consider the timeline of the Red Haunt's use of *foreshadowing*:

**Pre-engagement:** The Red Haunt and her troops are in the Mists, tracking Ciphramir by means of *worldbreaker shroud*. They draw in sight of the house and subsequently move within striking distance. The Haunt takes 1 minute to cast *foreshadowing*.

**Round 1:** With *foreshadowing* finished in the previous round, the spells *scare* and *dread of the dead* take effect in Ciphramir's foyer. The two spells have traveled ahead of the Red Haunt in time to where she will be in six rounds. At her location, she takes an action to cast *scare* into the *foreshadowing* effect.

**Round 2:** The Red Haunt casts *dread of the dead* into the *foreshadowing* effect. By this point, the house has drifted somewhat away from her, so she has four rounds left to catch up and break down the door.

**Round 3-4:** The Red Haunt races after the front door and arrives on the porch. She needs to hammer on the door and break its wards within 2 rounds.

**Round 5:** This round is spent attacking the door and taunting the inhabitants.

**Round 6:** By the end of her turn, the Red Haunt succeeds in getting through the door. She can see Victor and his charming host—as well as the target area she would have selected to cast *scare* and *dread of the dead* if she hadn't used chronomancy to bypass the defenses. The spells

end at her arrival, having affected the area for six rounds before she actually came in.

### **Dread of the Dead**

Necromancy [Fear, Mind-Affecting]

**Level:** Brd 5

**Components:** V, S

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

**Target:** One undead per three levels, no two of which may be more than 30 ft. apart

**Duration:** 1 round/two levels

**Saving Throw:** Will negates

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

*Dread of the dead* infuses an area with negative energy, much as an evil cleric or a neutral cleric of an evil deity might do when rebuking undead. Any undead which fails its saving throw is forced to cower in awe of the necromantic power unleashed, incapable of movement. Note that the undead is not incapable of thought or speech, and can still reliably use silent and still magic, as well as techniques which do not require the use of its hands.

“Ciphramir,” I started to say—and the feeling of terror suddenly increased tenfold. The orange cat had stalled just below the top step, and its owner leaned forward to scoop it up. It was as limp as a ragdoll in his grasp, and it curled up and went straight back to sleep once deposited on his lap.

The house started to tremble, a bare instant before a great cry made the air shiver. Some of the oil lanterns shattered, spilling liquid fire upon the carpet. Flames raced along the floor between Ciphramir and me, a curtain of smoke and fire abruptly separating us, and there came a thunderous knocking upon the house’s door.

“*Mortals,*” a terrible voice reverberated through the whole building. “*I have found you. Yield yourselves up to me. Be my food!*”

There came another knocking upon the door, and I saw it fly apart in wooden splinters no larger than my fingernails. Outlined against the Mists outside stood a darkly radiant figure of womanhood, barely clad in purple and black, framed by great bat wings, crowned with slender horns adorned with opals. Her eyes caught mine; black jewels that suddenly blazed stark crimson.

“*Food!*” that gloriously beautiful, gloriously depraved being declared, pointing a single finger at me. Even across the distance separating us, I saw the liquid redness coating that nail, smelled its sanguine nature, and felt the vampiric Hunger rise up from my belly and rebel against me.

I wanted to run, that was a certainty. But while my remaining humanity wanted to flee to Ciphramir’s side and escape with him, the vampire part wanted to run toward this embodiment of wickedness and kiss her hand, lick the blood from her nails. I was caught between the two urges. With the magically-induced fear still assaulting my will, I could not break the deadlock, and I stood frozen, my hands clasped around the banister as if to break it, in spite of the fire’s heat against my back.

I remember thinking, with perfect clarity, *No matter what happens, I am going to die.*

The demonic beauty grinned hungrily at me, spread her wings like a raptor about to swoop down on a succulent mouse—and a streak of mustard yellow and red came rushing out of the Mists and collided with it, knocking it away and out of my line of sight. Horrible screams of

anger and sounds of violence tore the air, and I was free to move again. I turned to the flames, hoping to see Ciphramir, but he was gone. Hopelessness—a feeling with which I had become all too well acquainted—clawed at me, but I could not fault my benefactor for running in the face of what had come for us. Was there to be no end to my suffering? How could Harmony Schlosser have called such a terrible creature down on me? What had I ever done to her, that I should deserve this?

I despaired—and then there was another great outcry, this time of pain and fear. The supernatural terror that had continued to weaken me ... ended. Looking around, I saw the twisted magic that had gripped the house dissipate into empty air. The relief was so sudden, so profound, that I just stood there, luxuriating in it. Although the fire was still close, I did not fear it.

When the strange men came marching in, they found me there, still on the landing, looking down on them. They seemed drawn from all the corners of the Core, their distinct complexions, hair colors, and features somehow insignificant, as they were united in expressions of stolid professionalism and odd uniforms; wide-brimmed hats, black greatcoats over pinstriped trousers, and shoes polished until they shone. Each man carried a musket and had a sword belted around his waist. Each man looked at me with cool detachment as they took up guarding positions around the door. Even when the building started to tremble, they showed no fear, nor any other expression, and they stood their ground. Even when the woman came sauntering in, they stood their ground.

My first impression of her was that she was tall for a woman, and unfashionably skinny; a beanpole of a woman. The second, that she looked eccentric. Her clothes were similar to the men's, but her greatcoat and hat were mustard yellow, her trousers the color of rust.

Instead of shoes, she wore open sandals, and she had no musket, just a saber, which bounced against her shoulder as she walked along, whistling a tune. The blade was stained with some sort of black ichor, the stench of which curdled my nose when I first inhaled it. Her hair was a wild mass of crimson curls, her face wide and lively, but not especially attractive. And yet ... something about it seemed familiar.

The tremors running through the house grew stronger, and cracks suddenly ran along one of the walls, accompanied by snapping sounds. I had not let go of the banister, and now I clung to it to keep my balance. The fires blazed brightly, and I heard one of the men speak in crisp Zherisian: "Milady, the edifice is disintegrating with its master's departure."

"Yes, yes," she replied, with an irritated little wave at the man to let him know she did not care, and she started up the stairs, stepping around such fires as sought to impede her with a dancer's grace. She drew abreast to me, passing through a developing low point in the flame curtain—and turned her back. Instead of addressing my adjacent presence, she peered at the transvaporous barrier that had separated me from Ciphramir, and frowned at it.

"Your boss snuck out the back door din't he?" she said in Low Mordentish, the kind spoken by unschooled workers. "Typical smart person; always do a runner and leave the help 'cause their lives matter, ours don't. Told her, din't I? I says, 'Sis,' I said, 'This is a clever man, sis, like you's a clever woman,' I says. 'He gets the feeling someone's coming for 'im, he'll scarper.' Din't help that critter picked up the tracer first. Had ta waste some time fightin' it. Heh. Tell a lie."

She turned to me, a mad, radiant grin on her face. It was so infectious that it took me a moment to realize why it upset me so, in spite

of its pure joy; every tooth had been filed to a point.

“Fightin’ some Mist-walkin’ demon was the highlight of me day,” she said, chuckled—and crossed back over the fire, heading toward the stairs.

More cracks ran along the walls. The fire blazed up bright, then burned white and turned cold. Instead of flames, curtains of Mist were running along the inside of Ciphramir’s doomed home. I was just about to call out to the woman in the yellow coat when she suddenly reversed course without turning, dance-like steps carrying her back to my side with a billow of mist. She turned that joyous, terrifying grin on me again and leaned her face forward until our noses were just an inch apart.

“Sayyy,” she said, dark eyes twinkling merrily. “You’s perfesser Gagné, in’cha?”

As close as she was, I could feel the pulse in her skin, smell the blood in her veins. The Hunger growled in my belly, and I could feel my teeth start to lengthen—and then something just *clicked* in my mind. I knew who this mad stranger reminded me of.

“Your sister,” I said, “is Harmony Schlosser?”

I had thought her grin radiant before, but now it shone like sunlight. Her hand gripped mine and pumped it, the sensation of fresh blood running beneath her skin failing to agitate my vampiric nature for now.

“It *is* you!” she said. “Mordentish down ta yer briefs, sloshin’ wit’ tha blood’a the innocent, an’ deader’n last week’s mutton, which truth be told looked like it were ready ta stalk out inta that streets an’ start feastin’ on folks as much as you do.”

Was my transformation that obvious? Even to a stranger like this? I opened my mouth to voice denial or questions, but Miss Schlosser’s sister

released my hand, took a gliding step back and swept a deep bow at me, doffing her hat as she did. The whole maneuver was far more elegant than it sounds, and beautifully practiced.

“Charissa Schlosser, at your service,” she said, now in flawless High Mordentish. “For my sins, elder half-sister to Harmony by ways of our mother. I, with the aid of the gentlemen beneath us, am the second part of young Harmony’s plan to extract you from the claws of that annoying vampire. Although”—she stood to her full height again and regarded me with eyes that were suddenly as shrewd and calculating as Harmony Schlosser’s had been intelligent and knowledgeable—“it seems the first phase delayed overlong. Never mind; our other sister, Lillian Schlosser, was at the Retreat when I left. She’ll have you back to rights in two shakes if you cooperate.”

“Why,” I started to ask, my voice halting in my throat. “Why,” I tried again, “would you do things like this? Why didn’t Harmony send you straight away, instead of using Ciphramir? Did she send that demon? *What is happening to me?*” The last question was a wail of pure anguish.

Charissa Schlosser blinked once. Then she cleaned her saber on her sleeve and sheathed it. “Harmony tells me the story-thief was closest of all the people capable of breaching the Shadow Rift, Professor,” she said. “And I was in the best position to extract you from this place. Please believe me, you would not have wanted to tarry in that one’s company overlong. When a character’s story ends, do you think the chronicler cares whether it ever existed?”

The question seemed nonsensical, and yet it made a cold shudder run through me. Or was that the cloying embrace of the Mists, rising all around us? A white haze was upon the air, obscuring sight. The house felt insubstantial,

and I was not sure whether the floor was carpeted wood, or gritty earth.

*Am I to be lost in the Mists on top of everything else?* I wondered.

*“Professor,”* Charissa Schlosser said as she extended her hand to me, *“Harmony did the best she could. She wanted very much to save you from Delthirius. And because she used Ciphramir to do it she wanted very much to save you from him, before he could suck the knowledge from your brain and the reality from your bones, the way a lesser man drains an orange. These things are not easy, but she did everything in her power—and mine.”*

The men in black were drifting up from the depths, marching up stairs that were barely there. They were black shadows in the thickening billows of Mist. Charissa Schlosser was a yellow shadow, crowned with crimson. I could barely see her hand.

*“Professor,”* she said, softly. *“I want you to believe me. None of your suffering has been of our design. We wanted to save you. We still do. Take my hand. You don’t need to end like this, a cold thing hungering for blood and lost in the fog to starve forever and go mad. Come. We can help you. Just take my hand.”*

I hesitated. Ezra help me, I hesitated. Then I reached out and took her hand. She drew me to her side, unbuckled her belt, and handed it and her saber off to one of her henchmen. She put the folds of her yellow coat around me, pulled me tight against her living warmth. It seemed insanely brave, considering the thing I had become. Such a show of courage actually gave me some comfort.

*“Come, Victor Gagné,”* Charissa Schlosser purred, her accent somewhere between High and Low. *“The Retreat awaits, and all my sisters are eager to meet you. Oh yes, there’s a lot of us. Dear old mother, it has to be said, wandered*

from land to land and dallied with many a man. Not the sort of thing most people would care to say about their Mum, but if she hadn’t, would any of us be here? Come. Let us go.”

Surrounded by expressionless shadows, we walked into the Mists. Soon, all I could hear was Charissa Schlosser’s heartbeat. Nothing else. A strange darkness fell over us as we walked, like the shadow of great wings, and I felt tired. So tired. I stumbled, and Charissa Schlosser supported me, then ... do I remember correctly that she picked me up like a child and carried me in her arms? I am now not sure. Surely not. But I remember hearing her heart, thundering away in the growing darkness like a great drum, and all I remember feeling was her warmth.

Then ... sleep, somehow.

*The End*

## VEIDRAVA VAMPIRE

*The humanoid looks pale and clammy, suggesting that it has not long ago returned from drowning in stagnant water. The scent of brine wafts from it, and the flesh edging its eyes is dark and wet, as though it were prepared to weep rivulets of tar.*

A Veidrava vampire is a vampiric strain that originated from Delthirius Valtyn’s rebirth in the Lake of Sounds. Their countenance suggests a waterlogged state, and despite their doppelganger heritage, they have no intrinsic way to hide this when in humanoid form. The only shapeshifting these beings are capable of is transformation into a liquid form reminiscent of a salt shadow, granting access to powers of possession. Their deep connection to Veidrava requires them to slumber in water from the Lake every day if they wish to use their supernatural abilities, severely limiting their

expansion should they lack means of transporting it.

**Speed:** Increase from base creature as determined by age category (see below). A Veidrava vampire has a swim speed equal to its land speed.

**Armor Class:** The base creature's natural armor improves as determined by age category (see below).

**Attack:** Same as base vampire.

**Full Attack:** Same as base vampire.

**Damage:** Same as base vampire.

**Special Attacks:** A Veidrava vampire retains all the special attacks of the base creature and also gains the following:

*Blood Drain (Ex):* Same as the base vampire.

*Create Spawn (Su):* Any humanoid reduced to 0 Strength by a Veidrava vampire rises as a free willed salt shadow (see *Gazetteer IV* page 142) within 1d4 rounds.

If the vampire instead drains a humanoid or monstrous humanoid victim's Constitution to 0, the victim returns as a vampire spawn if it had 4 or fewer HD and as a full vampire if it had 5 or more HD. In either case, the new vampire or spawn is under the command of the vampire that created it and remains enslaved until its master's destruction. At any given time, a vampire may have enslaved spawn totaling no more than twice its own Hit Dice; any spawn it creates that would exceed this limit are created as free-willed vampires or vampire spawn. A vampire that is enslaved may create and enslave spawn of its own, so a master vampire can control a number of lesser vampires in this fashion. A vampire may voluntarily free an enslaved spawn in order to enslave a new spawn, but once freed, a vampire or vampire spawn cannot be enslaved again.

*Domination (Su):* Same as the base vampire.

*Malevolence (Su):* Once per round, a Veidrava vampire in fluid form can attempt to possess the body of a living victim. This ability is similar to *magic jar* as cast by a 10th level sorcerer, except that it does not require a receptacle. If the attack succeeds, the vampire crawls completely into the opponent's body. While in possession of a living victim, the vampire uses its victim's skills, feats, and abilities rather than its own; a Veidrava vampire cannot use any of a victim's divinely-granted class abilities, however. The target can resist the attack with a successful DC (10 + 1/2 vampire's HD + vampire's Charisma modifier) Will save. Those possessed by a Veidrava vampire's malevolence ability receive a +2 profane bonus to Fortitude and Reflex saves. A creature that successfully saves is immune to that particular vampire's malevolence ability for one day. Should a Veidrava vampire abandon or be driven from its possessed victim, the victim suffers 2d6 points of temporary Strength damage (no saving throw) as the vampire pours out.

*Strength Damage (Su):* Instead of dealing normal damage with its natural attacks, a Veidrava vampire may choose instead to deal 1d6 points of temporary Strength damage to a living foe. A creature reduced to 0 Strength by a Veidrava vampire dies.

**Special Qualities:** A Veidrava vampire retains all the special qualities of the base creature and gains those described below:

*Damage Reduction (Su):* A Veidrava vampire's damage reduction is determined by its age category.

*Fluid Form (Su):* As a standard action, a Veidrava vampire can assume fluid form at will. In fluid form, the vampire loses its blood drain and domination abilities, as well as all natural attacks other than its slam attack, which becomes a touch attack that deals an additional



1d6 points of acid damage. Furthermore, the vampire gains access to its malevolence ability, and each time it takes damage in combat, droplets of its body spray in all directions, inflicting 1 point of acid damage on all living creatures within 5 feet of it. Otherwise, the vampire's statistics do not change.

*Regeneration (Su):* In lieu of fast healing, a Veidrava vampire gains regeneration at a rate determined by its age category. Fire and *blessed* or holy weapons deal normal damage.

*Resistances (Ex):* Same as the base vampire.

*Spider Climb (Ex):* Same as the base vampire.

*Turn Resistance (Ex):* A Veidrava vampire's turn resistance is determined by its age category.

*Watery Grave (Ex):* A Veidrava vampire does not need to slumber during the day, but it must rest submerged in water from the Lake of Sounds for at least 8 hours out of every 24 in order to maintain access to its supernatural abilities. A Veidrava vampire can go so far as to adopt a

polyphasic sleep pattern, spreading its required rest out, but most get it all done (frequently with overtime) during the daylight hours.

**Abilities:** Increase from the base creature as determined by age category.

**Skills:** Same as the base vampire.

**Feats:** Same as the base vampire.

**Environment:** Anywhere with access to water from the Lake of Sounds.

**Challenge Rating:** Same as base creature plus modifier determined by age category.

**Treasure:** Double Standard

**Alignment:** Always evil (any).

**Advancement:** By character class.

**Level Adjustment:** Same as the base creature +8.

Veidrava Vampire Aging Table												
Age Category	Ability Score Modifiers						Speed	Damage Reduction	Regeneration	Turn Resistance	A C	C R
	Str	Dex	Int	Wis	Cha							
<b>Fledgling</b>	+4	+6	+2	+2	+4	+0	10/silver and magic	5	+4	+6	+3	
<b>Mature</b>	+4	+6	+4	+2	+6	+10	20/silver and magic	5	+4	+6	+3	
<b>Old</b>	+6	+8	+4	+4	+6	+10	20/silver and magic	6	+5	+7	+4	
<b>Ancient</b>	+6	+8	+6	+4	+8	+20	25/silver and magic	6	+6	+7	+4	
<b>Eminent</b>	+8	+10	+6	+6	+8	+20	25/silver and magic	8	+7	+8	+5	
<b>Patriarch</b>	+10	+12	+8	+8	+10	+30	30/silver and magic	10	+8	+8	+6	

### REPELLING A VEIDRAVA VAMPIRE

Veidrava vampires are repelled by the same things as base vampires, except they are not averse to garlic. However, salt made by

evaporating sea water is intolerable to them, and they will not enter an area laced with it.

## SLAYING A VEIDRAVA VAMPIRE

Driving a silver stake through the heart of a Veidrava vampire slays the monster. However, it returns to unlife if the stake is removed. If its hit points are reduced to 0 or below, it collapses as if destroyed, but will regenerate swiftly. If it is killed by damage which bypasses its regeneration, then it still has a chance of returning. Immersing its body in water from the Lake of Sounds will allow it to regenerate even damage from fire and *blessed* or holy weapons. Many vampires may be hard pressed to set up the proper contingencies, but it is a concern nonetheless. Pouring sea salt into a cask of Lake water prevents the vampire from resting in it. However, there is always the Lake of Sounds itself. To prevent the vampire's return, its body must be destroyed. Fire is likely sufficient,

though it would be advisable to mix sea salt into the ashes or scatter them in the ocean.

## VEIDRAVA VAMPIRE SPAWN

The Veidrava vampire spawn has the same telltale visage as its master. A spawn has the following special attacks and qualities:

*Blood Drain (Ex)*: Same as base spawn.

*Domination (Su)*: Same as base spawn.

*Fluid Form (Su)*: Same as the Veidrava vampire.

*Malevolence (Su)*: Same as the Veidrava vampire.

*Regeneration (Su)*: Same as the Veidrava vampire, except the spawn only has regeneration 2.

*Strength Damage (Su)*: Same as the Veidrava vampire.

## DELTHIRIUS VALTYN II

CR27

**Doppelganger ancient Veidrava vampire wizard 10, loremaster 10**

**NE medium undead (augmented monstrous humanoid)**

**Init** +10 **Senses** Darkvision 180 ft. (even through magical darkness); Listen +33, Spot +33

**Languages** Zherisian\*, Darkonese, Mordentish, Rajian, Sithican, Arak, Sylvan

**AC** 41 (+6 Dex, +19 natural, +1 dodge, +5 deflection), touch 22, flat-footed 34

**hp** 162 (24 HD); **DR** 25/silver and magic, 5/– (from *heart of stone*)

**Immune** undead immunities

**Resist** acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10

**SR** 29

**Fort** +13, **Ref** +19, **Will** +26

**Weaknesses** Veidrava vampire weaknesses

**Speed** 50 ft. (10 squares), flying 60 ft. (Average maneuverability)

**Melee** slam (humanoid form) +19 (1d6+5 plus poison or 1d6 Strength) or touch (see *fluid form*) +20 (1d6+5 plus 1d6 acid plus poison or 1d6 Strength)

**Space** 5 ft. **Reach** 5 ft.

**Base Atk** +14; **Grp** +19

**Atk Options** blood drain, breath weapon, identity siphon, malevolence

**Wizard Spells Prepared** (CL 20th; spell save DC 18 + spell level)

9th — *power word kill*, *programmed amnesia*\*, *time stop*, *weird*

8th — *blackfire\**, *flensing\**, *horrid wilting*, *screen*  
 7th — *animate breath\**, *antimagic ray\**, *emerald flame fist\**, *project image*  
 6th — *acid storm\**, *extract water elemental\**, *flesh to stone*, *geas*, *tunnel swallow\**  
 5th — *cloudkill*, *hold monster*, *persistent image*, *reciprocal gyre\**, *wrack\**  
 4th — *burning blood\**, *Evard's black tentacles*, *greater invisibility*, *ice storm*, *vortex of teeth\**  
 3rd — *dispel magic*, *displacement*, *hailstones\**, *stony grasp\**, *unluck\**  
 2nd — *belker claws\**, *bonefiddle\**, *death armor\**, *delusions of grandeur\**, *mirror image*, *scintillating scales\**  
 1st — *animate rope*, *blood wind\**, *hail of stone\**, *shock and awe\**, *spontaneous search\**, *spirit worm\**  
 0 — *amanuensis\**, *arcane mark*, *read magic (x2)*

**Ferula** (runestaff; Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 16, Ego 10)

Ferula allows its wielder to cast any of the following spells (each 3 times per day) by expending a prepared arcane spell or arcane spell slot of the same level or higher.

6th — *chain lightning*, *circle of death*, *revive undead\**  
 5th — *night's caress\**, *wall of limbs\**  
 4th — *backlash\**, *orb of force\**, *repair critical damage\**  
 3rd — *chain missile\**, *fireball*, *steeldance\**  
 2nd — *scorching ray*

*Lesser Powers*: can use *detect magic* at will; has *deathwatch* continually active; can cast *inflict moderate wounds* (2d8+3) on its wielder 3/day.

Spells marked with an asterisk are drawn from the *Spell Compendium*.

**Str 20, Dex 22, Con –, Int 26, Wis 23, Cha 26**

**SA** blood drain, create spawn, detect thoughts, domination, malevolence, memory siphon, strength damage

**SQ** change shape, fluid form, glamer, greater lore, lore, path of tin (inhuman form, hybrid, daimon, chimera), regeneration 6, scent, secrets, spider climb, turn resistance +6, true lore, undead traits, watery grave

**Feats** Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Knowledge [Architecture and Engineering]), Brew Potion, Emotional Purgative, Craft Wondrous Item, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Construct, Craft Staff, Maximize Spell

**Skills** Appraise +18 (+20 when appraising alchemical products, sculpted work, metalwork, and weapons), Bluff +27\*, Concentration +29, Craft (Alchemy) +18, Craft (Metalworking) +13, Craft (Sculpting) +13, Crafting (Weaponsmithing) +13, Decipher Script +15, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +21\* (+23 to act in character), Hide +14, Intimidating +10, Knowledge (Arcana) +29, Knowledge (Architecture and Engineering) +32, Knowledge (History) +24, Knowledge (the Planes) +24, Knowledge (Religion) +24, Listen +33, Move Silently +14, Search +16 (+18 relating to secret doors and compartments), Sense Motive +21, Spellcraft +31 (+33 regarding scrolls), Spot +33, Use Magic Device +18

As a doppelganger, Delthirius receives a +4 racial bonus on Bluff or Disguise checks. \*When using his *disguise self* ability, Delthirius receives an additional +10 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks. If he can read an opponent's mind, he receives an additional +4 circumstance bonus on Bluff and Disguise checks. As a vampire, Delthirius has a +8 racial bonus on Bluff, Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Search, Sense Motive, and Spot checks

**Possessions** *amulet of wicked darkness* (grants 120' extra darkvision through even magical darkness; magical light sources in 60' fail; light-based spells cast within 60' become *deeper darkness*; sunlight allergy that Delthirius is immune to and is superseded by his vampiric sunlight vulnerability), *ring of protection* +5, *Fangs of Ferula* (two +5 wounding implacable [see *Magic Item Compendium* page 37] sizing [see *MIC* page 43] greatswords), *Ferula*, 3 *infinite scrollcases* (see *MIC* page 162; store 150 scrolls in total), *tome of worldly memory* (see *MIC* page 190), *cask of black water*, runic guardian bracelets (two simple gold bands; see *Lair* section), *greater metamagic rod (reach)* (see *MIC* page 165)

## BACKGROUND

Lord Delthirius Valtyn, a Darkonian expatriate, had barely spent a month in his new house in Paridon's Shadewell borough when a young lady came calling. This lady was the dread doppelganger Harcad (born Harriet Cadswell), directed by its clan to seduce the wealthy newcomer for the dual purposes of spawning and gaining power over him. All seemed to be going well for Harcad, and Delthirius appeared very receptive to its attentions—until he sank his teeth into its neck.

Harcad got more than it bargained for. Delthirius had formerly been a member of Azalin's Kargat, highly valued for his unique salient power to erase his victims in the minds

of those who knew them. Unfortunately, the development of this ability coincided with the onset of sterility, rendering him incapable of creating subordinate vampires. When he gathered that plans were being laid to experiment upon him and extract his gift, he decided he could stay no longer, slipping out along the Shrouded Way while his master's attention was focused on repelling the third invasion of the Dead Man's Campaign.

Harcad's life was spared, however, as its vital plasm was distasteful to Delthirius, who withdrew sputtering and choking. Seizing the opportunity, Harcad fled, but Delthirius was not easily escaped. Rather than kill the doppelganger, he applied his fell capability and stole the memory of Harcad from the world before releasing it into the streets.

Harcad attempted to report back to its clan, but the other members attacked it when they could not recognize it. It likely would have been slain and disposed of had Delthirius not come to the rescue. He offered to shelter Harcad on the condition that it became his bride, having guessed the more sordid intent of the creature's previous overtures. As the alternative was death, Harcad accepted, becoming Lady Harriet Valtyn.

About a year later, Lady Harriet gave birth to their first child, a boy promptly named Delthirius Valtyn II. When their second son came the next year, he was named Cadzius Valtyn. Intrigued by the potential in their blend of bloodlines, Lord Delthirius was a far more engaged father than his general personality would have dictated, and he demanded that Lady Harriet take more interest as well.

The two children developed at different rates, with young Delthirius undergoing Wakening at 16 and Cadzius following at 18. Their reactions to this would have been hard pressed to be more opposite. Delthirius (given the name

Delva by Harcad) learned of doppelganger society from his “mother” and found it drew him closer to his father. He saw the elder Delthirius’ actions as freeing him from the constraining hierarchy of impostors, allowing him to choose a path more suited to his desires. Still, he did not scorn his mother’s teachings, and she led him on the first steps down the alchemical Path of Tin.

On the other hand, Cadzva (as Harcad named it) was deeply hurt by its father’s offenses toward its doppelganger parent. It felt that doppelgangers were its true family, and the elder Delthirius had severed it from its rightful place among them. What happened next was perhaps inevitable.

Knowing that his bride was mortal, and still curious about alternative methods of spreading his vampirism, Lord Delthirius decided to attempt a Dark Kiss for Lady Harriet. The ritual was slightly altered to allow Harriet’s plasm to be drained by simple bloodletting—Delthirius still could not stand to drink it—but it seemed to be working. Until, that is, Cadzva murdered Lord Delthirius, unwittingly cursing Harcad to become the first doppelganger vorlog.

The younger Delthirius was furious, and drove his sibling—then just barely twenty years of age—and his last surviving parent from the house. He remained in solitude for several weeks, grief stricken at the loss of his personal world.

Finally, Delthirius decided he could not stand to remain in Paridon, so he sold his father’s estate (in his father’s form, thus avoiding legal issues surrounding his death), traveled via the Shrouded Way to Martira Bay, then took a boat through the Emerald Stream to Sri Raji. Taking the guise of a native, he attended the Great University of Tvashti, studying wizardry and arcane lore while supporting himself on his family money and the production of emotional

purgatives (see *Van Richten’s Arsenal* page 64). All the while, he continued to progress down the Path of Tin, purging the envy of others and taking it into himself even as he traded away his ability to feel gratitude.

Driven by this self-induced envy for the power and knowledge of others, Delthirius learned a great deal over the six years he spent in study. He emerged as a rather formidable wizard and a Tinsmith (having reached the third level of his Path), and he returned to Martira Bay, daring to live under the nose of his father’s former master. As it turned out, this was a risky idea. Though his true identity was kept guarded, his appetite for blood drew the Kargat’s attention, and agents were sent to ascertain the nature of the interloper. He was fortunate that when they believed they knew enough to move against him, his unexpected shapechanging prowess allowed him to escape. Officially, it was believed that some sort of demon had been expelled from the city. Azalin knew he would have felt such a creature, but he paid it little mind, being embroiled in more important schemes. The next year, the Great Upheaval shook the Dread Realms.

In the aftermath of that tumultuous time, Delthirius settled in Sithicus under an elven guise. The pervasive guilt of the land was difficult for him, as it forced him to dwell on his role in the end of his family. To stave off these feelings, he kept himself busy, beginning by using his arcane skill to devise innovative devices.

It was for this inventiveness that he was brought in to assist explorers who had taken an interest in the newly opened Great Chasm. Uncharacteristic for members of his species, he had no intention of betraying them; they had nothing in particular he desired, and knowledge he hoped to find in the deep was the reward he sought. The salt shadow that possessed him as they traversed unfathomable passages had

other, less subtle plans. When the group stumbled upon the Lake of Sounds, his dark rider made him turn upon them. Though other horrors of the darkness joined in his attack, his companions managed to kill him and flee before they could be overwhelmed. His body fell into the Lake, and it sank like a stone in the hungry waters.

Three days passed as his corpse took in the corruption of the Lake. When the sun set on the last day, the blood he had inherited from his father reignited in his veins, granting him the spark of unlife. He clawed his way to the shore of the Lake of Sounds, forged a new path for himself through the Black Chapel and the Veidrava Salt Mines, and emerged under the invisible Sithican moon as the first Veidrava vampire.

Delthirius laired in the Mines for about a month as he invented his *cask of black water*. He carefully avoided Azrael Dak, who had almost concurrently discovered the Lake. With his new toy ensuring his future sleeping arrangements and almost 200 gallons of the Lake's water in a *bag of holding* to start him off, he left the Mines forevermore.

Crossing rivers with the aid of dominated mortals, he began by slinking northward. This trek took him through the Ducal Forest of Invidia, where he happened upon a lone female Vistana. She had left the company of her caravan to bury her recently deceased son, but it was turning out to be a difficult task to handle alone. With the guilt of Sithicus still fresh in his mind and the spectre of his own broken family on its heels, he did the first and last genuinely decent, almost empathetic, action of his existence—he emerged from the trees in a human guise and assisted with the burial.

In return for what came off as kindness on his part, the Vistana looked into his future and gave him one vital piece of advice: “Seek the dark

visitant in the shadow of the sentries of death. At your side, he is freedom. Separated, you are lost to twilight.” Though much was lost on Delthirius at first, the reference to the Vigilia Dimortia forest was swiftly recognized, and he made that his destination.

#### **DREAD POSSIBILITY: DÉJÀ VU**

Before reaching the forests of eastern Falkovnia, Delthirius met the same Vistana amid her people near the border of Richemulot. Much to his surprise, he found that her then ten-year old son was still alive—her caravan was of the Manusa tasque, thus he met them at an earlier point in their timeline.

Through the tact and charm that practically ran through his veins, he was allowed to spend a short time among them, hearing news and sharing a small meal (which rotted in his dead stomach for days afterward). Before they parted ways, the child insisted that Delthirius take a drawing he had made.

Examining it, Delthirius noted that the boy had been scribbling over a map of the Core. Dark, batlike shapes flitted in droves about Mount Nyid. Flame leaked and spewed from Mount Arawn. Something like a misshapen brain wormed tentacular ganglia into Dementlieu. In big black letters at the bottom were but four words:

#### **IT ALL FALLS DOWN**

In the time since, Delthirius has become a better student of Vistani lore, and he now believes that the little boy died for being a Dukkar. Evidently, he died too late for his precocious talent to be stopped, for Delthirius possesses some sort of childishly cryptic prophecy.

Delthirius does not create coagula of the fey to pursue rulership. His ultimate goal is to obtain the Regalia of Arak through his shadow servants and open the Obsidian Gate. Thus, he can trigger the doodled doom and slip out of the Land of Mists as it crashes down behind him. Why? That is something only he knows, just as only he knows these signs of apocalypse. For one possible answer, see the the sidebar: **Dread Possibility: the Pit and the Coagulum.**

Arriving in the east of Falkovnia, Delthirius began to scour the forest for signs of his foretold companion. He caught signs of at least one—possibly two—tenebrous entities in the area, but he could not quite engineer his way into their presence—not until the night the creatures came into direct conflict. From the pitch black of the forest canopy, Delthirius watched as one of the pair soundly thrashed the other, but was forced to show mercy when morning light began to break in upon the scene.

Uninterested in the loser, Delthirius pursued the victor through the dappled shade. Ultimately, he found the demon Pauthrael lurking under the leaves of an evergreen. Delthirius wove a curtain of magical shadow and crossed the sunlit span to join it. There, they forged their now centuries old alliance, and pierced the misty veil over the Shadow Rift within the safety of Pauthrael's reality wrinkle.

### CURRENT SKETCH

In the time since entering the Shadow Rift, Delthirius has discovered that he could still metabolize alchemical formulae if he consumed a sufficient amount of blood, thus allowing him to follow the Path of Tin to the end and become

a Master of Forms. Currently, his interest in alchemy has waned in favor of other pursuits.

Aside from his constant experimentation with dangerous and evil magical devices, Delthirius has been invisibly culling a few members of the Arak for the creation of his coagula. Even though he erases their existences in the minds of the other shadow fey, he knows they keep records. As such, he keeps his depredations to a minimum, out of fear that he will be found out through unfortunately careful accounting.

As to the purpose of his coagula, the majority are replacements of his vampiric spawn, thus remedying his acquired sterility as best as possible. The remaining few are facsimiles of shadow fey that act as spies and defenders uninhibited by undeath. If anything, they are a greater affront to the Arak than those not made in their image, so Delthirius takes the utmost care in using them with surreptitious wisdom.

### COMBAT

Delthirius prefers subterfuge to direct combat, motivating him to prepare several duplicitous spells. However, he is also always involved in the crafting of dark magical devices and constructs, so his spell list varies based on his current projects. Unless absolutely necessary, he will never fail to prepare *scintillating scales* and *animate breath weapon*, as they fit so well with his natural abilities. He always prepares *tunnel swallow* so that he may use his lair against intruders, and he casts *screen* on his entire home every day, eight hours before preparing his spells.

Though he can maximize his spells, Delthirius would rather sample the variety of his more powerful magic than fill it with enhanced lesser tricks. To enjoy the best of both worlds, he created his intelligent cane, named Ferula—the Darkonese word for cane. As it is a runestaff, Delthirius is allowed to spontaneously modify

spells he casts from it with metamagic. Though he could have made Ferula more autonomously powerful, Delthirius feared to make something that might be capable of rebellion—his father's mistake.

Delthirius does not appear to carry any weapons, but the pair of sword-shaped pins decorating the lapels of his frock coat are not purely aesthetic. Indeed, they are a pair of magic swords which he calls the Fangs of Ferula. When he considers physical force necessary, he expends a 3rd level spell slot to produce a *steeldance* spell from Ferula, and the staff issues the command word to expand the swords to the Colossal size category. With *steeldance*, Delthirius' attack bonus with the two swords is +28, and each deals 8d6+8 damage plus 2 cumulative points of bleeding damage and one point of Constitution damage.

If Delthirius is in need of a particular spell, he is quite likely to have it in one of his three *infinite scrollcases*. Thus, he can be assumed to be prepared for many—but not all—unexpected situations. He does not maintain a personal spellbook. Instead, he has a collection of grimoires taken from victims over the centuries of his existence.

Delthirius is always under the effect of a *heart of stone* spell (*Spell Compendium* page 111), replacing his undead heart with an ornate jade heart worth 5000 gp. This renders him practically immune to staking, so long as no one finds his real heart. The energy resistance granted by the spell is superseded by his own resistances, but the 5/– damage reduction comes into play if his vampiric damage reduction is bypassed.

#### **Special Attacks:**

*Blood Drain (Ex):* Delthirius can suck blood from a living victim with his fangs by making a successful grapple check. If he pins the foe, he drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution

drain each round the pin is maintained. On each such successful attack, Delthirius gains 5 temporary hit points.

*Create Spawn (Su):* Any humanoid reduced to 0 Strength by Delthirius rises as a free willed salt shadow (see *Gazetteer IV* page 142) within 1d4 rounds. Delthirius can no longer turn victims of his blood drain into vampires, but his existing spawn may create and enslave spawn of their own. Thus, Delthirius can control any number of lesser vampires in this fashion. He may voluntarily free an enslaved spawn—once freed, a vampire or vampire spawn cannot be enslaved again.

*Detect Thoughts (Sp):* Delthirius can continuously *detect thoughts* as the spell (caster level 18th; Will DC 20 negates). He can suppress or resume this ability as a free action.

*Domination (Su):* Delthirius can crush an opponent's will just by looking onto his or her eyes. This is similar to a gaze attack, except that Delthirius must use a standard action, and those merely looking at him are not affected. Anyone he targets must succeed on a DC 30 Will save or fall instantly under his influence as though by a *dominate person* spell (caster level 12th). The ability has a range of 30 feet.

*Identity Siphon (Su):* Inherited from his father, this unique salient ability allows Delthirius to visit a terrible curse upon a victim. While grasping a pinned or helpless opponent, Delthirius may begin to inhale, drawing a luminous, silver-gold vapor from the eyes, nose, and mouth of his target and into his own facial orifices. If this attack goes uninterrupted over four full rounds, everyone who ever knew the victim forgets who he or she is. Memories of events in which the victim was involved are intact, but the victim's involvement is lost. No one will recognize him or her as anything more than a stranger from that moment forward.



*Malevolence (Su):* Once per round while in fluid form, Delthirius can attempt to possess the body of a living victim. This ability is similar to *magic jar* as cast by a 10th level sorcerer, except that it does not require a receptacle. If the attack succeeds, Delthirius crawls completely into the opponent's body. While in possession of a living victim, he uses his victim's skills, feats, and abilities rather than his own; he cannot use any of a victim's divinely-granted class abilities, however. The target can resist the attack with a successful DC 30 Will save. Those possessed by Delthirius' malevolence ability receive a +2 profane bonus to Fortitude and Reflex saves. A creature that successfully saves is immune to Delthirius' malevolence ability for one day. Should he abandon or be driven from his possessed victim, the victim suffers 2d6 points of temporary Strength damage (no saving throw) as he pours out.

*Strength Damage (Su):* Instead of dealing normal damage with his natural attacks, Delthirius may choose instead to deal 1d6 points of temporary Strength damage to a living foe. A creature reduced to 0 Strength by Delthirius dies.

### **Special Qualities:**

*Change Shape (Su):* Delthirius can assume the shape of any Small or Medium humanoid. He can remain in the chosen form indefinitely until he assumes a new form or returns to his own form.

*Fluid Form (Su):* As a standard action, Delthirius can assume fluid form at will. In fluid form, he loses his blood drain and domination abilities, as well as all natural attacks other than his slam attack, which becomes a touch attack that deals an additional 1d6 points of acid damage. Furthermore, Delthirius gains access to his malevolence ability, and each time he takes damage in combat, droplets of his body spray in all directions, inflicting 1 point of acid damage

on all living creatures within 5 feet of him. Otherwise, his statistics do not change.

*Glamer (Su):* Delthirius can alter the texture and appearance of objects on his person as a free action. He cannot change the object's basic material (cloth remains cloth, metal remains metal, etc.), but he could turn threadbare rags into clothes of any fashion, or turn a bit of wire into a necklace, or vice versa. Objects automatically revert to their true forms if separated from him by at least 5 feet.

*Greater Lore (Ex):* Delthirius has the ability to understand magic items, as with the *identify* spell.

*Lore:* Delthirius has the ability to know legends or information regarding various topics, just as a bard can with bardic knowledge. Delthirius adds his loremaster level, his Intelligence bonus, and a synergy bonus for his ranks in Knowledge (History) to this check (for a total of +20), which functions otherwise exactly like a bardic knowledge check.

*Scent (Ex):* Delthirius possesses the scent extraordinary ability as a vampiric salient ability.

*Secrets:* Delthirius has the following loremaster secrets: *secrets of inner strength* (+2 bonus on Will saves), *the lore of true stamina* (+2 bonus on Fortitude saves), *secret knowledge of avoidance* (+2 bonus on Reflex saves), *dodge trick* (+1 dodge bonus to AC), and *applicable knowledge* (any one feat [Maximize Spell]).

*True Lore (Ex):* Once per day, Delthirius can use his knowledge to gain the effect of a *legend lore* spell or an *analyze dweomer* spell.

### **The Path of Tin:**

*Inhuman Form (Ex):* Delthirius may take on the forms of other monstrous humanoids of Small, Medium or Large size via his Change Shape special quality. This salient ability does not

confer an ability to successfully mimic the natural form of another doppelganger.

*Hybrid (Ex):* Delthirius may take a form combining animal and human features via his Change Shape special quality, appearing much like a lycanthrope in hybrid form. The animal to be mimicked must be Small or Medium in size. For example, boars or wolves are acceptable, but ravens, bats and rats are too small, and tigers or brown bears are too large. Dire animals of appropriate size may also serve as the basis for a hybrid form. The resulting hybrid is always Medium in size.

When in hybrid form, Delthirius acquires the movement, natural attacks, and ability adjustments of a werebeast of the appropriate phenotype (or a similarly-proportioned werebeast in hybrid form, if he invents a new "phenotype"). He does not gain the other special qualities, such as damage resistance, which a lycanthrope in hybrid form gets.

*Daimon (Ex):* Delthirius may imitate the forms of outsiders of Tiny to Large size using his Change Shape special quality. He acquires SR of 29, fire resistance 10, and acid resistance 10.

*Chimera (Ex):* As a Master of Forms, Delthirius' capacity to imitate other creatures is virtually unlimited. He may create a synthetic form of Small or Medium size, possessing any four of the following traits (all of which are considered extraordinary abilities):

*Flying:* Delthirius grows wings and gains a flight speed of 60 ft. His maneuverability is Average if Medium, Good if Small.

*Natural Attacks:* Delthirius gains 2 primary claw attacks dealing 1d8 base damage and 1 secondary bite attack dealing 2d6 base damage.

*Poison:* Any one of Delthirius' natural attacks does poison damage. The poison affects any

one physical ability of his choice; initial and secondary ability damage are 1d6 each.

*Natural Armor:* Delthirius receives a +19 natural armor bonus, replacing his own +13.

*Inherent Aptitude:* Delthirius gets a +10 bonus to any two of the following skills: Balance, Climb, Hide, Jump, Listen, Move Silently, Swim, Spot, or Tumble. His form should visibly reflect these skills in some way (e.g. a Swim bonus should be associated with fins and webbed digits). He may choose the same skill twice, for a +20 bonus.

*Damage Reduction:* Delthirius receives DR 10/magic.

*Resistance:* Delthirius gains resistance 20 against any one type of energy damage.

Delthirius also gets one supernatural attack from the following list:

*Shriek:* A sonic attack with the effect of the spell *shout*, usable once every three rounds.

*Breath Weapon:* A 40' line or 20' cone dealing 6d6 points of energy damage, usable once every three rounds. Type of energy may be either fire, electricity, cold, or acid.

*Uncanny Gaze:* A gaze attack that acts as a *confusion* spell, usable once every three rounds.

Delthirius also gains the Frightful Presence special attack (DC 28), when in his chimeric form.

Except in special circumstances, Delthirius takes a form incorporating *flying*, *poison* (Dexterity damage), *natural armor*, *inherent aptitude* (Listen and Spot), and *breath weapon* (cone; cold). These changes are expressed in his statistics block.

## LAIR

Delthirius chose a cavern complex at the base of a cliff near the edge of the Stonedowns for his

base of operations. From the point of Pauthrael's plunge, it is twenty-five miles of flight somewhat more south than southwest. Several yards out from the mouth of the cave stands a half-ring of warped, knee-height stones in the rough shape of hunched, winged fiends. Into these has been bound a portion of Pauthrael's essence, thus keeping its reality wrinkle in effect on the caverns and protecting the undead inhabitants from the influence of Gwydion, with or without Pauthrael's presence. The well-engineered process had no appreciable effect on the demon's prodigious 30,000-foot reality wrinkle—at least, not within the Shadow Rift. Crossing the border puts great strain on the magic, reducing the reality wrinkle to a mere 1,000 feet. However, Pauthrael feels that this is a reasonable trade for its autonomy. Unbeknownst to it or Delthirius, the binding has given Pauthrael 10 corruption points.

Early on, Delthirius found that he was able to *plane shift* between his home and Pauthrael's location in violation of the sealed borders. Whether for lack of reason or faltering interest, Delthirius has not made use of this serendipitous conduit in nearly two centuries.

The *screen* Delthirius maintains every day renders all of his servants, furnishings, humanoid cattle, and mystical stockpiles invisible to scrying and direct observation; a DC 26 Will save is required to disbelieve the concealment.

The foremost chambers of the caves are all but bare, and Delthirius has invited independently nasty creatures to inhabit them. One area seems like a sort of mud room, with ratty cloaks lining the stone walls; rather, this is the home of several undead cloaklers (*Denizens of Dread* page 50). In another peripheral area, the floor looks slick with oil—several reekmurks (*Fiend Folio* page 18) which were dredged from the Biting Tarn.

Beyond these hodgepodge foyers lie the communal sleeping waters, where all lesser spawn slumber. Delthirius himself sleeps in a lead bathtub behind his office, hidden by an undead mimic (advanced to 15 HD and given the corpse creature template on page 185 of the *Book of Vile Darkness*) posing as a stone wall. The tub is enchanted to freeze over or thaw out at his mental command. Flanking it are two runic guardians (*Monster Manual II* page 182) tasked with defending their master in his place of rest (or anywhere he calls them). Through their runes, one may use the corrupt spell *chain of sorrow* (*Heroes of Horror* page 128) once per day, while the other may use *baleful polymorph*, *icelance* (*Spell Compendium* page 119), *scintillating sphere* (*SC* page 181), *flaming sphere*, *Tasha's hideous laughter*, and *grease*, each once per day. Both use these abilities at a caster level of 20.

Besides his desk, chair, and globe, the most eye-catching and disturbing feature of Delthirius' office is the grate-covered pit near the back. It is a remnant of a time when zeldrow in service to the Spider Queen resided within these caves, and the open pit was used for sacrifice; they believed some emissary of their goddess lived in its depths. After slaying the cultists, Delthirius entered the pit to deal with whatever lay within. The events that transpired below are a mystery, but Delthirius emerged shortly and commanded that the hole be sealed.

The caverns are a rank 3 sinkhole of evil with the primary taint of despair, generated by Delthirius' sorrows over his past and the hopelessness of his spawn. Thanks to the long-term residence of Talar, it also carries a taint of hatred—both his toward most everyone and most everyone's toward him. On the Ethereal Plane, great audible sighs of chill air drift through the tunnels. The walls seem to melt perpetually, occasionally revealing carved scenes of failure and long-lost opportunity.

These may pertain to mythological and historical figures, to Delthirius and his servitors, or to those who are only visiting. Whatever the case, the carvings are only slightly more stable than the unmarked walls, and dissolve in time as well. In contrast to this melancholy ambiance, stretches of the ethereal tunnels

periodically erupt in flames that curse and shriek. Sometimes, the flames will chase those who encounter them, especially those with elven blood.

### **DREAD POSSIBILITY: THE PIT AND THE COAGULUM**

In the deep sacrificial pit, Delthirius met a few odious creatures well within his ability to destroy. However, he also discovered that time moved slightly faster the further down he went. Considering what he knew of old Arak's temporal fugue and the current state of the Shadow Rift, he wondered at the extent of this phenomenon. After installing the grating, he began to make periodic visits to the depths, using magic to delve further and further. Eventually, he decided to make his little project into his permanent abode. Taking a score of cattle to sate his thirst and a tub of cursed Lake water, Delthirius took the plunge and never resurfaced. To cover up his absence, Delthirius created a coagulum of himself. The Delthirius one would meet in the caves maintains and continues the works of the original, longing all the while to not be a stunted pawn for another being. However, the duplicate has been enchanted with a permanent *dimensional anchor*, which prevents it from reaching the Plane of Shadow or even crossing a domain border. Thus, the coagulum chafes under its built-in servility and spends its free time plotting the downfall of the true Delthirius.

The duplicate theorizes that the Obsidian Gate is a strong enough connection to the Plane of Shadow that merely being near it when it is open would free him from the original's influence—the Rift itself is only just beneath the threshold. During the strengthening, he would be real enough to simply dismiss the *anchor* and cross through the Gate, assuming Gwydion could be distracted or bargained with in some way. He doesn't care if the Dread Realms collapse in his wake—indeed, he would rather they remained to hold his hated creator—but he still works toward that end under the original's orders, for he cannot yet disobey. The duplicate ever fears the prospect of the real Delthirius emerging from the depths, incalculably ancient and powerful, to take his works over personally. Fortunately for him, this will never happen. Long ago (much longer in the original's time frame) the real Delthirius met with a terrific accident in his arcane research. His physical form was obliterated, and his soul and intellect were burned into the enchantments he had woven throughout the deep tunnels. Existing as a taint imprinted on the very fabric of the local dweomer field, he has gained unthinkable mastery over the essence of magic. The excitement of this painful yet serendipitous discovery was soon dampened by a further realization; one of his later wards consisted of a thin layer of limited mystical transmission—an arcane air gap, in a sense. While his ability to inhabit and move among magical effects and items is theoretically unlimited, he has been hemmed in by his own ingenuity, not to mention his new status as darklord of the pathetic kingdom he carved out, earned for his relentless probing into the blackest arts. Now he spends every hour in conflict, plotting to bring about the sketched prophecy, yet unable to enact his plans for fear that he will not escape the Demiplane's destruction. He has managed to crack his formidable prison and exert influence upon the slower, higher lands, but he is baffled at how strong his old magic remains.

Thus, the two versions of Delthirius are caught, each a shadow in its own way, both working toward escape from their own versions of the same torment. Only time—of which they both have much—will bring resolution to their struggle, and the Land of Mists will hang in the balance should the end arrive.

# DEADLY DENIZENS

BY JACK THE REAPER

1. **The Cats' Killer** is a ragged gentleman with top hat, who wanders the realms and kills black cats with his long silver knife, harvesting their alleged nine souls. He is accompanied by a host of spectral and undead cats under his control. His true goal is to find and kill unnatural felines like midnight cats, the Ghost Cat (**CotN: Ghosts**), and Meeka (**CotN: Werebeasts**), as one of those creatures ruined his life.

2. **The Angel of Knives** is an angel-shaped golem made of thousands of oiled knives, each of which was used to spill blood of innocents. He was created by a small cult of psychopaths worshipping Rallaster, the Razor God of murder and madmen (**Book of Vile Darkness**). Most of the time he stands motionless, guarding their hidden shrine, but when he wakes up to walk the city, mayhem is sure to follow.

3. **Barmalai**. All across the domains, villagers tell stories about the horrid giant demon Barmalai. He comes at night, and the family who hears him knock three times on their roof must choose one of their children and bring him out for Barmalai to take. If they don't choose, he takes them all. The children he takes are never seen again, presumably taken to the demon's hellish palace and devoured, or worse. In truth, Barmalai takes those children out of Ravenloft, to grow freely and happily in a better world. In spite of his demonic appearance, he is a benevolent being, but bound by strict rules, and cannot tell anyone the truth.

4. **The Devil Knows**. Nobody knows who or what he is, but this nameless vagabond knows

virtually everything. **Everything**. He can be found at certain places (often taverns) at certain times, or encountered seemingly randomly. He is willing to share his omniscience, and usually only asks for some little things in return - put a certain object in this place, tell a few words to that person, etc. Only later is it revealed that those small acts led to chains of events that brought ruin and suffering, which only someone with this devil's knowledge could calculate in advance. Is there any knowledge that justifies taking part in his manipulations?

5. **Boris Zapoy**. It is said that alcohol can make a man into a monster. In the case of Boris Zapoy, also known as Deadly-Drunk, it is literally true. Drinking alcohol transforms him into a feral, demonic monster. The more he drinks, the more monstrous and powerful he becomes. Different kinds of spirits make him change into different kinds of monsters, and he is always eager to try new mixes.

6. **The Night Chirurgeon**. Nobody knows who or what he (she? It? they?) is, but when people wake up in the morning from fitful sleep to find they are missing some body parts, this legendary bogeyman is the usual suspect. He might cut off a finger, an eye or two, tongue, testicles, etc., or even all four limbs, leaving behind only neat pink scars. The victims (and anyone else in their room) never awake during the "surgery", and nobody ever sees the Night Chirurgeon in action. He might visit a victim once or more, coming night after night to

gradually reduce the victim to pieces, or returning only after years. Some disturbing legends claim he uses the taken flesh to create evil clones of his victims, which they may encounter later. Understandably, he is one the most dreaded beings in existence.

**7. Helmut Hess** is practically a living chemical lab: by consuming certain materials, he can brew inside his guts different gasses and liquids, poisons and potions, and exhale, spit or secrete them out at will. This unassuming, short man can kill an entire room in seconds with a single breath of unseen, odorless, deadly gas, or poison a well by spitting into it. He works in Falkovnia's Ministry of Science.

**8. Elisha** is a vampire who feeds on religious faith. He was a priest who lost his faith, and now he must take it from others. He attacks people spiritually rather than physically, leeching away their faith and religious feelings. The purer and more pious the faith is, the more he savors it. His victims seldom suspect an unnatural cause is behind their diminishing faith, attributing it to personal, psychological processes leading to "disillusionment" and finally to atheism. Priests, paladins, and similar classes will consequently lose all their levels. The lost faith might be regained in time, but Elisha might just return then for another sip.

**9. Brother Arcadius** leads a sect of the Order of the Guardians residing in a small village in Gundarak. They keep watch on the local forest, trying to stop and scare away anyone who tries to enter it. In the middle of the misty forest, there is an ancient statue of a demon; if somebody sees it, the monks will hunt them down and kill them in a grisly ritual. The reason is that everyone who sees the statue will be gradually possessed by the demon, and the monks have no choice but killing them to stop the demonic threat. (Inspiration: **The Shrine** film)

**10. Velia** is an adventurer who was cursed by a witch to have the visage of a hideous wight (though she is still mortal). Fortunately for her, she found a ring of invisibility, allowing her to walk around unseen. She often contacts other adventurers, pretending to be a benevolent spirit or angel and offering her aid, though she is careful not to let anyone see her true shape, which will make almost everyone treat her as an evil monster. Her inability to form close relationships with others pains her a lot.

**11. Heffalump** is a bogeyman looking like a giant, monstrous elephant. He appears first in children's dreams, then gradually manifests in reality, initially invisible. Children will hear his trumpet, feel the ground shake under his feet and find his footprints, but adults will always explain these as natural phenomena, even when the invisible Heffalump causes massive damage to property. When enough fear is built, the Heffalump will appear visibly before the children, catching them with his trunk and eating them or taking them away forever.

**12. Dolgur.** This incredibly hideous, foul-mouthed, hunchbacked dwarf is one of the fey. He approaches women whose loved ones are in grave danger, and offers his help. He can release prisoners, cure illness and wounds, even bring back the dead - but in return, the woman must swear to marry him, proving her love to be completely altruistic by making this sacrifice.

**13. The Demiurge.** When darklords or other villains want to run simulations of future schemes, test large scale effects, or just play gods, they call the Demiurge (an Elohim, **PF Bestiary 4**). He creates and sells glass orbs containing miniature settings, ranging from single beings to cities and even realms. The owner has full control over the setting, and may run different simulations on it, ending and restarting it at will (like Sims games). All the humans and creatures in the mini-worlds are real and sentient, though not aware to the

nature of their surroundings. It's hard to imagine a fate worse than living in a world whose god is a darklord!

**14. Nemesis.** A master assassin and torturer, Nemesis is a slim but powerful man (actually a pureblood yuan-ti). He has white skin, tattooed with mystic runes, silky black hair, snake eyes and a sly smile, and is usually dressed in dark robes, a hood, and eye mask. He runs a school for mystic assassins in Hazlan. His touch can inflict intense pleasure or extreme pain, he uses both for conditioning his mostly female disciples into deadly, devoted assassins, nicknamed the Nemesisters (think Terry Goodkind's Mord-Sith). Combining mastery of the mystic and martial arts, Nemesis is one of the deadliest persons in Ravenloft, often sought by darklords and other powers. His current mistress and right hand, is the female drow Nissa.

**15. Augustus de la Bourguignon** is the chairman of the Société des Gourmets in Dementlieu - a club of rich, decadent nobles dedicated to acquiring and consuming rare, exotic meats. They send hunters and adventurers to bring them animals, monsters, humanoids and even fiends from all over the realms, to make exquisite dishes from. Some of those meats affect their eaters in strange ways, change their bodies, or give them powers or curses. More than anything else, they savor the taste and effects of celestials' meat (it tastes heavenly), and will go to any length to acquire it. (Inspiration: Neil Gaiman's **Sunbird**)

**16. Martha** is a kind young woman of unknown origin. She is terrified of the legendary beast known as the tarrasque, and often dreams about it. When her nightmares become too vivid, she knows its awakening is close at hand, and does her best to warn everyone, recruit heroes and guide them how to prepare against the threat. The truth is that Martha herself is the tarrasque - actually a were-tarrasque. She

doesn't know what triggers her transformation, and in spite of her best efforts, they always end with terrible mayhem. Fortunately, those transformations are rare and relatively short; but should the truth about Martha be revealed, many darklords would try to harness her power for their goals. If Martha is killed, a transformation takes place at once, and might be permanent this time. (Inspiration: **The Book of the Tarrasque**)

**17. Carl the Baby** is actually a grown-up man, suffering from rare syndrome which made his physical development stop when he was one year old. He now has the body of an innocent-looking baby and the mind of a genius, frustrated, psychotic adult. While physically helpless, he can mentally control the emotions of people in his vicinity. His usual method of operation is charming a couple to adopt him, and then manipulating them and other people around to gradually ruin themselves and everything they love. When the authorities come at last to clear the bodies, they find among the wreckage only a poor baby, looking for a new home. Carl can speak fluently, but rarely does so, in order to conceal his true nature.

**18. The Stone Killers** are a clan of men, women, and children of unknown origin, who can change instantly into marble statues at will - or maybe they are statues who may become living humans. They also shift automatically into stone when a swift movement is about to hit them, even if they don't notice it, granting them an excellent immunity. During combat, they shift between shapes, attacking as humans and swiftly reverting to stone to block attacks. Their stone form is almost indestructible, and may be harmed only by magical means. The Stone Killers often serve as assassins and mercenaries, but sometimes pursue their own mysterious agendas. They never speak, but seem to share an empathic link. Many statues in large cities

might actually be Stone Killers waiting patiently for their time to act.

**19. Gezora** is the name given to a giant arachnid monstrosity, a nightmare composed of mechanical and skeletal parts, with many arms and tentacles that carry various deadly instruments. Gezora is a creation of Easan the Mad, but it left Vechor to wander the domains, bringing mayhem everywhere it goes while cackling madly. Nobody suspects that this deadly machine is actually operated by a little girl trapped inside; Easan has attached electrodes to her brain which make her think she is playing in her garden, unaware that her movements activate a monster and kill her "toys". Discovering the truth poses a moral challenge for heroes - should they kill an innocent, playful girl in order to stop the monstrous Gezora?

**20. Endymion**, the hedonist elven wizard, is obsessed with creating the perfect woman. He creates women from all kinds of matters and animates them, draws them on canvas and brings them to life, polymorphs other creatures into women etc., but no matter how perfect and beautiful they seem to be, he is never satisfied. He lives in his estate surrounded by his gorgeous creations, and those he doesn't want, he sells away. Some of his creations might exhibit strange and dangerous flaws though.

**21. Abracadaver** is an undead wizard with the attire and behavior of a stage magician. He combines sleight-of-hand tricks with true magic to create misleading illusions and shocking, deadly effects. The participants in his shows and performances don't always make it out alive (though unliving is a possible option). He is a brilliant genius, always several steps ahead of his rivals, and loves to turn the tables on them just when they think they have the upper hand.

**22. Hellsnaw** is a hideous looking nosferatu with a bald head, white skin and a large, foul-

smelling mouth full with rotting fangs. He is a diabolist and has the unique power to turn his mouth into a portal to hell. Opening it wide, he may draw creatures inside (they shrink to fit the size), or "vomit" fiends out of it. When the portal is open, his mouth emanates red light and sounds of screams can be heard from within.

**23. Sivana** is the ghost of a girl who committed suicide. Now she moves from victim to victim, possessing them, and after a week of filling their minds with depression and suicidal thoughts, makes them kill themselves in an attempt to recreate her experience and understand her situation. She usually passes to someone who witnessed the suicide of her last victim, creating a chain of suicides which are often blamed on trauma and psychological reasons.

**24. Countess Dormira** was once a dashing young Darkonese noblewoman, radiating vitality and charisma, always the spirit of the party. Cursed by a man she hurt, she is now a pale, bleak-looking vampire, a shadow of her former self. Her aura makes everyone around her fatigued and enervated, barely able to stand upright or raise their hands. Even the strongest warrior becomes a sleepy weakling in her presence, while Dormira herself retains her strength in spite of her feeble appearance. It makes her a most deadly opponent, and she can easily feed on her victims, but she deeply misses her former vitality.

**25. The Sisters of Chaos** are a coven of five powerful witches. They may look either like girls in their teens or aged crones, but either way they just want to have fun. The Sisters ride their brooms from town to town, and everywhere they go they wreak havoc openly with their magic. They treat life as a continuous trip or party, and everyone they encounter becomes part of it - either as participant or as plaything. Their "partying" might bring great suffering and



destruction, great fun and pleasure, or a mix thereof - but they are always completely chaotic and unexpected.

**26. Lone Don** is the nickname of a terrifying serial killer and bogeyman. His selected victim will see everyone around her disappear suddenly, leaving her alone in the world - except for the killer, who will then hunt her slowly, savoring her fear before ripping her apart. Lone Don looks like a skeletal man in grey coat and hat. He is actually secluding his victims in a dimensional fold, where nobody else can see or touch them - though their screams can often be heard, followed by the sudden appearance of their mutilated bodies. His power enables him to snatch a victim from the middle of a crowd and deal with him without the interference of anyone else.

**27. The Mad Hatter** is a traveling merchant who manufactures and sells hats of all types. Using his Master Hat, he can read the minds of anyone donning one of his hats, and even dominate them without their knowledge - they always believe they act on their free will, no matter what the Hatter makes them do. By spreading his hats far and wide, The Mad Hatter has created a net of unwitting informants and servants, making himself a truly powerful mastermind of crime.

**28. The Cancer Man** is a mysterious, aged looking man with grey mane of hair and wrinkled face, whose body carries several types of cancer. He survives by transferring some of his tumor cells into other beings with his touch. He can control the rate of growth of those tumors in his victims, killing them in seconds or slowing the disease's progress in return for some service (he might promise to heal them completely, but can't actually do it). He infects many people without their knowledge, keeping their disease dormant, and awakens it when it serves his purpose. His ultimate goal is to find a

cure for cancer, but in the process, he only spreads it further.

**29. Tophet** is a pyromaniac woman with the power to produce and control fire. She has a dark hued skin and wild flame-colored hair, and usually dresses in red, revealing dresses. Half of her face is scarred by burns, which she covers with a half mask. She loves to ignite buildings and start large fires, laughing at the screams of her victims and seeing visions in the flames. Tophet is not a spellcaster, but can imitate the effects of many fire-based spells, and can even summon hearth fiends and similar beings.

**30. Brigitte Calba**, self-proclaimed "The Bitch Queen", is a real mean bitch in both metaphorical and literal sense - she is a rude, nasty woman and also a natural weredog, able to take the form of a large, black canine. She has a pack of infected weredogs of both sexes, and enjoys nothing more than playing with peoples' lives, toying with their emotions and crushing their family and social status. Calba prefers tactics of intimidation, blackmailing and tempting into scandalous behavior, but won't hesitate to use her pack for more violent and direct missions. In her human form she is a fit Valchani woman with dark skin and hair. She is fond of leather clothes and often drinks and smokes. She always has several dogs and hounds around her.

**31. Zimbar, the Hero Maker**, is a Gandalf-like old wizard, and he always looks for champions to fight evil. He approaches young, good-hearted boys and girls, and grants them the power to transform instantly into legendary, high-level heroes by uttering a single name. The heroes' forms are always fit and good-looking, equipped with high-quality, magical armors, weapons and items, and all the talents fitting their class and level. The champions can stay in those forms up to a cumulative 24 hours per week, and may shift back to their normal form by saying the magic name in reverse.

Eventually, however, the combination of juvenile, inexperienced minds and powerful bodies almost always turns out to be disastrous, and many champions die horribly or turn to evil paths. And yet Zimbar believes he just has to find the right people... (Inspiration: **Shazam**)

**32. Angus, the Shepherd.** Shepherds of the Dead are to the spiritual world what druids are to the natural one. They gather around them lost souls who can't find their way to the afterlife, and treat them like a shepherd to his flock: protecting them from supernatural threats, keeping the balance of good and evil spirits, and in return is given the use of their services, from spying to attacks. Shepherds with large herds of souls possess terrifying power, and may unleash the Ghostorm - an onslaught of hundreds of wailing spirits or more. Fortunately, they keep to neutrality unless angered. There are Shepherds in many domains, and Angus is the chief of them all, the oldest and most powerful shepherd. He is an imposing figure, with wild grey hair and beard. He dresses in simple wool robes, decorated by many small bones, and carries a shepherd staff.

**33. Amadeus, the Monster Keeper,** is a middle-aged man with a short grey beard and steely eyes. He is the owner of the Pandorum Box - a complex construction of glass and metal about one cubic foot in size, covered by arcane symbols. The Box functions like an advanced Trap the Soul spell, and may trap and contain all kinds of beings. From the inside, the cube is a vast, labyrinthine complex of many levels, where prisoners are kept in separate glass cells. There are hundreds of cells within, and just about any kind of monster might be found there. Amadeus searches the realms for more additions to his collection, and may release prisoners from their cells (so they may roam freely in the Pandorum) or out of the Box entirely, in case someone wants to purchase a

creature. Better not to think what would happen if he releases them all at once.

**34. Ivan Karloff** is a scientist from Nova Vaasa. Experimenting with the Apparatus made him merge with his flesh golem into one being. Most of the time he is the typical weird scientist, a middle-aged man meddling with strange chemicals and devices, but when angered or threatened (and sometimes even when not) he transforms into a hulking, monstrous flesh golem, and goes on a terrible rampage. The golem is nearly mindless, but still has some parts of Karloff's personality which might be used as zeitgebers. Karloff is looking for a way to separate himself from the golem, though he finds him useful on occasion when brute force is needed.

**35. The Dreamer** is a mysterious figure, appearing from time to time across the lands of the Mists. While she looks real and solid, she actually lives in another world, visiting Ravenloft in her dreams, so she is convinced the whole of Ravenloft is just a recurring dream of hers. She doesn't think any of the demiplane's denizens are real, so she has no reservations about harming them. Her appearance and powers change over visits: sometimes she is just a regular girl, and other times she can manipulate reality at will, "proving" it to be her dream. Her behavior is quite unpredictable, as she doesn't take anything around her seriously (though she admits this dream can be quite scary), and might play a hero, a villain, or just a tourist. She disappears as suddenly as she appeared, or when getting hurt, awakening in her home world. Maybe she even writes books inspired by her "dreams".

**36. Mask** is known as a feared serial killer with a strange-looking clay mask, who uses a sickle to cut down his victims. In truth, he is a regular man who owns a magical mask. When donning the mask, he becomes an almost unstoppable killing machine, immune to most harm as if he

was undead. In this form he cannot speak or run, but has formidable fighting skills and is able to shadow walk (think Jason Voorhees, Michael Myers, or Leslie Vernon). In spite of his reputation, Mask is not evil, using his force mainly to terrorize and attack villains, criminals and monsters such as vampires and werebeasts. He has several associates with similar masks, who band together occasionally to deal with larger threats.

**37. Zoltan, the Phantasmage**, is a nightmare spinner - an illusionist who masters the power of fear and horror (see **Complete Mage**). He is an impressive man with midnight black tresses falling to his shoulders, a fine goatee, and a penetrating gaze, dressed in fine, black gentlemen's attire. His very presence gives chills to anyone around him. Zoltan possesses the Phantasmagoria Lantern - a truly magical magic lantern able to generate all kinds of illusions and make them real enough to kill with fright. He is a showman, often presenting a show of horrifying images in front of patrons interested in some thrills, but may use those powers for darker, deadlier purposes. The Phantasmage is a senior member in the Fraternity of Shadows, working to forward the organization's secret schemes as well as his own. He currently resides in Borca.

**38. Doctor Mindwarp** is a cerebral vampire working for Daclaud Heinfroth in Dominia. He is a thin, bald old man with unnerving smile. Dr. Mindwarp is a psionist and mesmerist, specialized in turning people's minds against themselves, twisting their perceptions. He can trap a victim in a mental prison inside her own mind, created from her worst fears, where she experiences many years of torture while only a brief moment passes in the real world; or he can slow a victim's time perception, making a second seem to last like years, during which the victim can only stand paralyzed, seeing the world around him frozen in time. Such

experiences are sure to shatter the victims' sanity in a blink of eye, while those around them don't even recognize what happened. Dr. Dominiani greatly appreciates his contribution to the research of the mind, and Dominic d'Honaire is also known for using his services.

**39. The Unreal** is a living, sentient illusion. It can assume any shape at will, and may appear as any real or imagined person, living or dead. It loves to ruin peoples' lives methodically by confounding them, making them suspicious of their friends and families, taunting or scaring them with visions of dead loved ones or enemies, or framing them for crimes they didn't commit - the possibilities are endless. The Unreal can also appear as several figures at once, and may choose who will see it and who won't. It is intangible and cannot touch or be touched by material objects.

**40. The Iron Maiden** is a young woman who was abused by evil knights and saw them killing her family. Crying for revenge, she found a magical panoply of spiked, black metal which granted her great fighting skills and near-invulnerability. However, the armor is unremovable: she is now trapped in a metal shell completely enveloping her body and face. While wearing the armor, she has no physical needs, but she is secluded from other people and the simple joys of life, and cannot marry and have children. She named herself the Iron Maiden and devoted her life to fight evil warriors, but her bitterness makes her cold and sometimes unnecessarily cruel.

**41. Damon and Madon** are twin brothers; both are blackguards and evil to the core. One of them is strikingly handsome, with dark hair and pale skin, and the other is gruesome to behold, a brute with face reminding an orc or ogre. Once they were both good looking, using their indistinguishability to wreak havoc, until a woman they ruined cursed them to be utterly different from each other, resulting in one of

them becoming hideous. It's hard to tell who is whom though, for they exchange their shapes every several days. Each carries the curse for a while before passing it to his brother and resuming his handsome appearance. Now they use their interchangeable curse to confuse, shock and terrify their foes and victims.

**42. Rita, the Roach Girl,** is a nice-looking brunette girl who developed an affinity and affection to cockroaches from an early age, as the result of her living in a poor neighborhood swarming with those insects. She found she can talk to them and make them obey her, and with time her connection became so intimate that she gained the ability to change into a human-roach hybrid form. Rita uses her "friends" (as she treats them) for espionage and other missions, sometimes making use of the repulsion and fear most people feel toward them (though she can't figure out how someone can feel like that toward such lovely creatures). She always has some dozens of roaches crawling under her clothes, and can call huge swarms to her help when needed. The contrast between her lovely appearance and bizarre behavior can be quite shocking, but Rita is not evil, just somewhat estranged from normal society.

**43. The Gibbering Moon** is a horrid moon-shaped being, looking like a floating, glowing white orb with a mad human face, about 100-feet in diameter. It appears in the night skies when the real moon is absent, hovering high above the ground, gibbering and cackling madly. Under its pale light, terrible things happen: people might start sleepwalking and attack each other or commit suicide, the dead might rise out of their tombs, or mass transformations into werebeasts might take place. Sometimes this being appears like a huge skull rather than a living face. It is unknown whether it's the same creature or if there are more than one.

**44. Ophelion** is a celestial who was cursed with vampirism. He established the Dark Angels - a religious order of vampires, believing vampirism is a stage in ascendance toward superior existence. They have strict code of behavior, striving to remove all trace of emotional weaknesses from their souls and reach absolute self-control. Ophelion is dormant in his crystal coffin most of the time, lying in the order's secret sanctum. He contacts the four members of the higher circle telepathically and lets them feed on his blood; those gain the template of half-celestials with shadow wings. The lower circles, who feed upon them, become planetouched. The Dark Angels worship "The Higher Darkness" in secret rituals. They feel contempt toward other vampires, who succumb to their human and bestial urges, seeing them as inferior as humans.

**45. The Evengelist of Zhakata** is a thin, bald man, usually wearing deep red suit or robes. He left G'Henna to wander the realms, asking people if they want to hear the Word of Zhakata. If they agree, he whispers something in their ear - and from that moment onward, they will adamantly refuse to eat anything, to the point of fighting anyone who tries to force them do so, until they starve themselves to death. If asked about their refusal to eat, they might in turn whisper the answer to others, and those listeners will also react by self-starvation, and so on, spreading the effect like a plague. Nobody can know the content of the Word of Zhakata without dooming himself as well to die in hunger. (Inspiration: the movie **XX**)

**46. Roland** is a redheaded young bard from Richemulot, who is the owner of the legendary Seven-League Boots. The boots grant him amazing speed, and he can cross great distance in a heartbeat. However, he is cursed to perceive the world and people around him moving as in slow motion all the time, grinding his patience (the boots cannot be removed). He

is a lighthearted dandy and adventurer, rushing into peril without much thought and using his power to impress girls, though he often bursts in frustration at the "slowness" of everyone. He has gained the animosity of several darklords, usually for stealing from them, and many villains would like to get inside his boots, but Roland is very hard to catch.

**47. Lamia, the Evil Mother**, was cursed to become a terrible hag who can only feed on her own children. She mates with human males, giving birth to human babies (often two or three in one birth), whom she either raises herself in human guise, or delivers to foster families. She waits for her children to reach maturity (so that there'll be more to eat), then comes for them or reveals herself and devours them. She can always track her children down, no matter how far they are, and will go to any length to get them. Many children grew up hearing her legend, fearing they might actually be the offspring of Lamia, who will come one night to eat them - or maybe their mother is not what she seems to be, when she urges them to eat and gain weight...

**48. Yabala**, known as the Pox Witch, is a hag-like woman with terribly blistered skin. She is feared by all who dwell near the swamp where she resides. They would have gladly burned her at the stake long ago, but nobody dares approach her abode, for those who even come within a mile's distance from her are afflicted by hideous blisters on their face and body, which only get worse as they come closer to her (and don't disappear when they go back). Therefore, everyone just keeps their distance. In truth, Yabala is not a hag but a good-aligned bruja,

cursed to a life of solitude. She is quite a powerful witch and can be very helpful, if one is willing to pay the price of getting close to her.

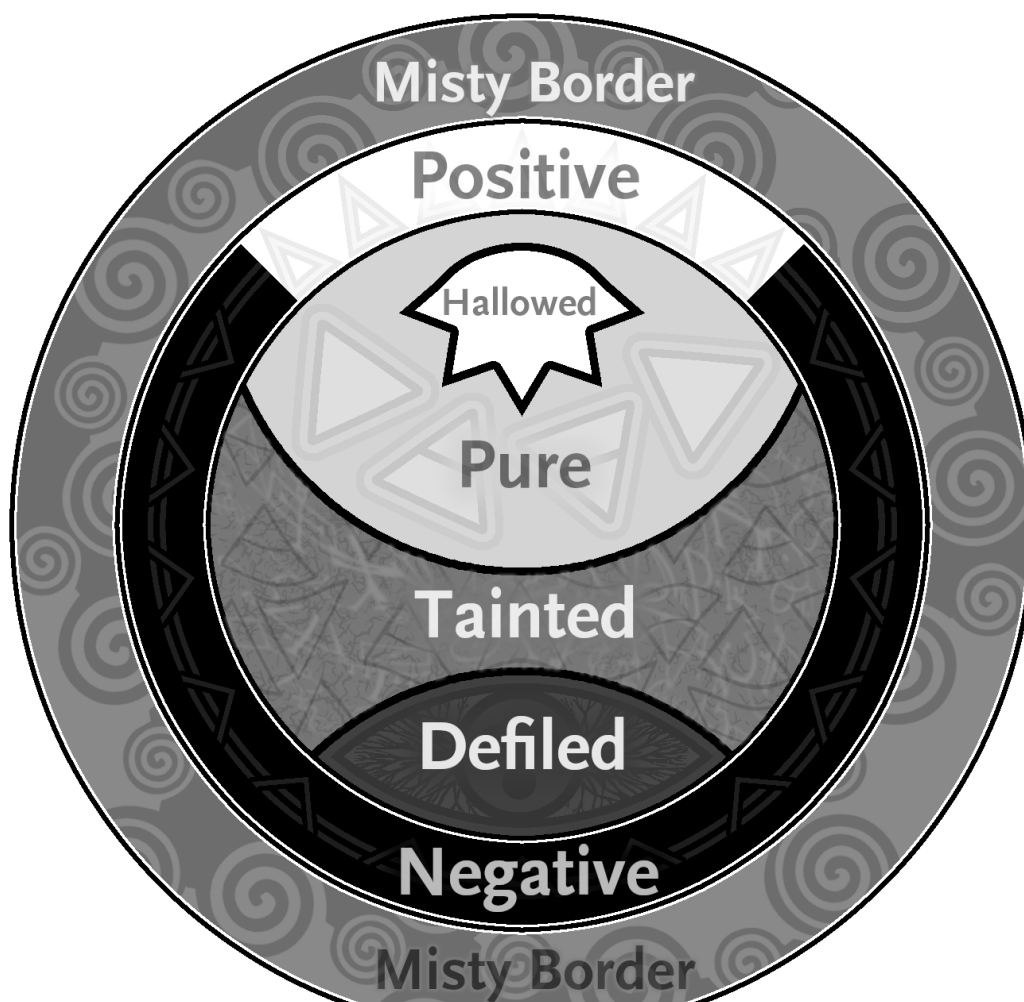
**49. Rufus Crawford, the Ghost Eater**, is a Mordentish middle-aged man, with the salient ability to devour ghosts. He is not possessed by spirits, but rather possesses them: when he devours a ghost, he can call it up later out of his soul and "possess" it. When he does so, his appearance changes to the ghost's (though he remains corporeal) and he gains its powers. He has already eaten about dozen ghosts, and is always looking for more. Rufus is known as a successful and knowledgeable ghost hunter, but nobody suspects how he really disposes of the haunts he hunts. He might one day come upon a ghost that would be too much for him to swallow though, possessing him instead when he tries to "digest" it.

**50. Adamamo** is an earth elemental who was trapped in Ravenloft and became corrupted. It cannot take humanoid form, but may possess the earth itself in a 300-meter radius and make it tremble, open sudden pits, change it into mud and affect it in other ways. Its most horrid power is the ability to draw those who stand on it slowly into the ground, until they are buried alive. It might later regurgitate them as zombies. Adamamo was contained many years by stone monuments built by druids for that purpose, but recently those were removed and now it is free again. It positions itself in some field or lot, catching poor souls who lie their feet on it. It seems its power and size grow with each killing, and if it's not stopped, it might in time be able to swallow full houses or even villages.

# RAVENLOFT'S ELEMENTAL PLANES: 43 ORIGINAL SPELLS FOR 5E

BY MISCHIEF

Fragments of the four pure elemental planes: fire, water, earth, and air, are trapped inside the misty borders of the Dread Domains. They have mixed with the positive, negative, and the mists themselves to create heroic, curious, and horrific quasi-elemental planes found nowhere else in the multiverse. Monster hunter and abomination alike can tap the Hallowed, Tainted, and Defiled elements to empower themselves. Enjoy this original selection of 43 Ravenloft-themed elemental spells for Dungeons and Dragons Fifth Edition.



## THE HALLOWED ELEMENTAL PLANES

Ravenloft's brilliant pinpoints of hope shine brightly in spite of the ubiquitous deep shadow that endlessly rages against the light. Mirroring the gallant struggle of humanity against decay, the hallowed planes, which have developed aspects to aid heroes in gloomy places, replace the traditional positive-touched planes. Spells of the hallowed planes are both treasured and hoarded, and each element tends to fall within the near-exclusive purview of a particular Ravenloft faction. Characters wishing to learn these spells will likely need to establish rapport with, or come from a background connected to, these factions.

### The Hallowed Plane of Wellness

Perhaps the most similar to its parent, the hallowed positive plane can be called upon for all manner of healing and restoration. It is also invoked to drive monsters away and establish reliable sanctuaries and wards. Religious orders safeguard the knowledge of how to tap Wellness.

*Other spells that can be reflavored for this element: Alarm (1), Aura of Vitality (3), Magic Circle (3), Mordenkainen's Private Sanctum (4), Hallow (5), Circle of Power (5), Forbiddance (6)*

### HALO

Enchantment cantrip

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V

**Duration:** 1 hour

A halo, whose form and color you control, wreaths your head. It can shine bright light of a color you choose in a 20-foot-radius and dim light for an additional 20 feet. You may extinguish the halo as a bonus action.

**At Higher Levels.** At 5th level, while your halo is active, you can use a bonus action to end the spell and channel its energy into a weapon or piece of ammunition you are touching. Choose a damage type: radiant, force, or necrotic. If the target is hit by that weapon or ammunition before the start of your next turn, the target takes an extra 1d6 of the damage type you chose. The damage increases by 1d6 at the 11th level and 17th level.

*(Your GM, at their discretion, may choose to allow other damage types such as fire, lightning, or cold.)*

*"Religious orders often craft variations of the Halo spell for uniformity and to dissuade forgery. Some churches go so far as to mandate specific styles for each clerical rank, with the proportionality to grandiosity one might expect. Druids often add elements to their halos to represent trials and momentous occasions. When a circle convenes, each druid is crowned by their own history. Covens of Hala wear two halos, one for the public, and one for the eyes of her sisters alone. The spell is often found among the secular population; performers, bookkeepers, librarians, wizards, artisans, and adventurers all covet the practicality of light about one's head." – Excerpt from "Faiths in the Mist" by Neha Neembalm of the Rajian coven of Hala in hiding*

### TRUEHEARING

6th-level divination

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** S, M (Ear drops of unusual salts, olive oil, and flower essence worth 25 gp, which is consumed by the spell)

**Duration:** 1 hour

The willing creature you touch knows if it hears a lie. It understands any spoken language it hears, preserving its figurativeness and nuance.

It automatically detects auditory illusions and succeeds on saving throws against them, and it hears the original voice of a shapechanger or a creature that is transformed by magic. It is immune to sound-based enchantments, charms, and compulsions, it cannot be deafened, and it can hear within the range of a *Silence* spell. It can hear 120 feet into the ethereal plane. It gains resistance to thunder damage for the duration, and it has advantage on skill checks based on hearing or to identify sounds or voices. A deaf creature can gain these benefits for the duration of the spell.

*"Having the ears of the angels doesn't grant you their divine fortitude. It gives voice to the endless abyss of human and inhuman wretchedness which eats into one's heart long after the spell's end." – Confession of an Ezrite cleric*

## WARDING WALK

4th-level abjuration

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V, S, M (a green bough)

**Duration:** Concentration, 1 minute

When you or your mount travel across a surface, your path of passage leaves glowing runes, which ward a small area approximated by a 5-foot-diameter square, hexagon, or circle. Regardless of your size, you create a solid 5-foot-wide line as you move, unless you choose to leave gaps. Track your movement for the duration of the spell. If you have sufficient movement, you can create up to 90 feet of warding line between each of your turns.

Choose a damage type from radiant, necrotic, or force and select individuals, creatures, or types of creatures that are forbidden or allowed. The warded region affects creatures up to 20 feet above and below it. Glowing runes appear wherever the warded region intersects

with the floor or other surface. When a forbidden creature enters a warded area, it takes 3d10 damage of the type you chose, and the 5-foot-diameter space of warding it entered vanishes. Wide creatures take damage from every 5-foot-diameter area they must cross. You cannot create wards in a space occupied by a forbidden creature (and thus you cannot be a forbidden creature). You can close gaps by retracing your steps, but doubling up does not increase the space's damage dealt. You must be able to freely move upon a surface to ward it, as with a wall and the spider climb ability – contact alone does not suffice.

If you cast this spell and you retrace the same path every day for 30 days, placing the same effect on it each time, the ward becomes permanent. A permanent ward is suppressed by dispel magic, and can be destroyed piecewise by using strenuous effort and tools to upset the warded ground.

**Closed Shapes.** A closed shape created by your spell's path acts similarly to a weaker *Magic Circle*. Two individuals cannot collaborate to jointly form a closed shape. A forbidden creature may enter or leave a closed shape using its movement, teleportation, or interplanar travel only if it succeeds on a charisma saving throw versus your spell save DC. A forbidden creature may reattempt this saving throw if it takes damage from a non-allied source which is on the other side of a closed shape. A forbidden creature has disadvantage on attack rolls against targets on the other side of a closed shape. Targets on the other side of the closed shape can't be charmed, frightened, or possessed by the forbidden creature. A forbidden creature that succeeds on its charisma saving throw automatically succeeds on future charisma saving throws to cross closed shapes created by your spell for the spell's duration.



**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th-level or higher, the damage increases by 1d10 for each slot level above 4th.

*Beating the bounds is an ancient custom still observed in some English and Welsh parishes. Under the name of the Gangdays, the custom of going a-ganging was kept before the Norman Conquest. A group of old and young members of the community, usually led by the parish priest and church officials, would walk the boundaries of the parish to share the knowledge of where they lay and to pray for protection and blessings for the lands. In Scotland, the horsebacked perambulations are called "Riding of the Marches". – Wikipedia on Traditional English Customs*

### The Hallowed Plane of Sunlight

Hallowed radiance is a bubble of pure blinding sunlight that drives back the night. Simple yet versatile, there are few encounters in Ravenloft where sunlight won't shatter supernatural defenses for massive damage, or at least improve the mood. Knowledge of Sunlight is widely sought for protection, practicality, and as a symbol of might. Anyone with arcane scholarship or political power may have useful tomes.

*Other spells that can be reflavored for this element: Sacred Flame (0), Dawn (5), Sunbeam (6), Sunburst (8), Holy Aura (8)*

### SOLAR GLARE

3rd-level evocation

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** 60 feet

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

Your eyes flare with the majesty of the sun, and rays of light flash out to strike a creature of your choice within 60 feet of you. The creature must

succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or take 3d6 radiant damage. The light is sunlight.

An undead target that fails the saving throw is set on fire and takes an additional 1d6 fire damage. A target on fire sheds bright light in a 30-foot-radius and dim light for an additional 30 ft. At the beginning of each of its turns, the target repeats the Dexterity saving throw. It takes 1d6 fire damage on a failed save, and extinguishes itself and takes no damage on a successful one. These magical flames do not damage worn or carried objects or spread to adjacent creatures or the surroundings.

For the duration, your eyes shed bright light in a 30-foot cone and dim light for an additional 30 feet. Closing your eyes hides the light.

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th-level or higher, the radiant damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 3rd.

*" –were sentenced to the Ordeal of Flaming Eyes. If the accused's corpse was merely seared, his or her family would be spared the sword. Although still practiced by some chapters, the Ordeal fell out of favor after the Disgrace in the Gries Hills. A priestess of Ezra was caught conjuring illusory flames about the innocent. She was found guilty at trial and ironically sentenced to the pyre, but as she burnt, a horrible storm came down from—" Excerpt from "Faiths in the Mist" by Neha Neembalm of the Rajian coven of Hala in hiding*

### ECLIPSE SCRIPT

1st-level illusion (ritual)

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** S, M (A lead glass stylus)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 8 hours

Pleasant yellow-brown ink flows freely from your stylus. You may write upon nearly any smooth surface. The ink glows faintly, but not enough to shed dim light. The ink and its glow are invisible to undead, fiends, and creatures with vulnerability to radiant damage, *devil's sight*, or a *sunlight sensitivity*-like trait. If dispelled, *eclipse script* loses its magical properties and becomes ordinary, nonvaluable ink.

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, the ink becomes permanent and requires strenuous labor to remove. Dispelling this permanent *eclipse script* instead suppresses it for 1d4 hours.

*As Strahd von Zarovich prepared to sweep out into Barovia's night, Rahadin stifled an uncharacteristic cough and begged him for a moment of delay.*

*"Ah, that cape has not been properly laundered. Please, allow me to get you another."*

*Doubtful that he overlooked filth upon his vesture, the vampire examined his black opera cape, yet could see nothing amiss. His chamberlain, however, was glaring at it with incandescent rage.*

*"Milord, it would appear that one of those degenerate 'outlanders' used invisible ink to despoil it with... crude scribblings."*

### The Hallowed Plane of Sanity

Hallowed lightning can be called upon to restore the minds lost to throes of madness. Even dismal cases can be cured by elaborate electroshock machines, which deliver cleansing waves into the skulls of the deranged via implanted probes. Lodestones charged with Sanity's electricity create brain-affecting magnetic fields which provide feelings of relief and security and defend against mental assault.

Scientific sanitoriums and universities are likely to have the best knowledge of Sanity's electric powers.

*Other spells that can be reflavored for this element: Shocking Grasp (0), Illusory Script (1) as "Frenetic Scribbling", Phantasmal Force (2), Calm Emotions (2), Storm Sphere (4), Telepathic Bond (5), Synaptic Static (5)*

### SKULLSHOCK THERAPY

2nd-level necromancy (psionic)

**Casting Time:** 10 minutes

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** V, S, M (scented candles with a value of at least 10 gp which the spell consumes, and two iron rings)

**Duration:** Instantaneous

Choose a creature other than yourself that is either willing, or unable to move. You electromagnetically charge your fingertips, lay your hands upon the target's scalp, rouse them from their stupor if necessary, and ask them gently probing questions while seeking out and uprooting the target's madness. The target is cured of all short-term madness and one long-term madness afflicting it of your choice. Until the target completes its next long rest, it has advantage on saving throws to avoid becoming horrified, being driven insane, and going mad.

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the casting time becomes 1 action, the range 30 feet, the costly material components are omitted, and the target's willingness and movement speed become irrelevant. A plasma bolt arcs from your hands and strikes the target's head. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, you can target one additional creature for each slot level above 3rd with a bolt.

*(This spell is optimized for the optional madness rules presented on page 260 of the 5e Dungeon Master's Guide.)*

### CORONAL CROWN

2nd-level evocation (psionic)

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** Self (15-foot cube)

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** Instantaneous

A corosant of hundreds of plasma arcs leap from your head and body and strike nearby creatures and objects. Each creature in a 10-foot cube originating from you and within 5 feet of you must make an Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 2d4 lightning damage and 2d4 psychic damage, or half as much damage on a successful save.

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the lightning and psychic damage each increase by 1d4 for each slot level above 2nd.

### SPLIT CONCENTRATION

3rd-level enchantment (psionic)

**Casting Time:** Special

**Range:** 30 feet

**Components:** M (Two metal rods)

**Duration:** Special

When you cast a spell requiring concentration (known henceforth as “the paired spell”), you simultaneously cast *Split Concentration* on a willing ally within 30 feet. A bright crackling electrical arc connects you and your ally. As long as you and the linked ally remain within 30 feet of one another and the electrical arc is not blocked, your ally may maintain concentration on the paired spell in your stead, freeing up your mind to cast a second spell requiring concentration. When you or your linked ally

move more than 30 feet apart or lose concentration on a spell, the paired spell and *Split Concentration* end immediately.

*"Of the innumerable types of madness, the most curious is the Phantasm. Often mistaken for a hallucination or haunt, the phantasm is a bodiless parasitic idea that attaches itself to the identity of a host individual. The 'contagious delusion' or 'shared psychosis' transiently infects vulnerable intelligent creatures near the host who then perceive a specific, consistent illusion – this phantasmal form usually reflects the host's subconscious ideals or fears. Powerful illusion and telepathic contact spells are the phantasm's primary transmission vectors. Remove Curse and Skullshock Therapy purge an unwanted phantasm, while Mind Blank and Protection from Good and Evil block infection. Institutionalized patients and the occasional adventurous orderly or alienist are known to willingly harbor benign phantasms as familiars of sorts." — Excerpt from Van Richten's notes for an unpublished guide to supernatural afflictions*

### The Hallowed Plane of Silver

Hallowed mineral pierces magical defenses, purges corruption, and reveals hidden monsters for what they truly are. The best explorers and truth-seekers peek around corners using mirrors backed with this plane's sacred silver. Ravenloft's horrors fear the Silvered blades of their hunters. Those who would exploit Silver for greed find themselves lost within this plane's hall of infinite mirrors. Secret companionships of monster slayers safeguard the knowledge of Silver.

*Other spells that can be reflavored for this element: Ice Knife (1), Shield (1), Cloud of Daggers (2), Spiritual Weapon (2), Conjure Barrage (3), Conjure Volley (5)*

**SILVERSWORN RUNE**

Conjuration Cantrip

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** 120 feet

**Components:** V, M (a weapon)

**Duration:** 10 minutes

A silver rune appears on your weapon. As part of the action used to cast this spell, you must make a melee attack with the weapon against one creature within the spell's range, otherwise the spell fails. On a hit that deals damage, the target suffers the attack's normal effects, and if it is a worthy foe, it is branded with a matching silver rune. A target cannot be branded by more than one silver rune. A weapon cannot brand more than one target at a time; using the spell to brand a different target causes the brand on the original to vanish. While a target is branded, you can use your action to touch the silver rune on your weapon and make the matching rune on the target glow with bright light.

Before the duration expires, if the rune-branded target is damaged again with this spell using the matching-branded weapon, the runes vanish and beads of liquid silver fly to you from the target and hover at your side. These silver beads take the shape of a weapon; you decide the form, and whether it will deal bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage. You may accumulate a number of silver weapons equal to twice your spellcasting ability modifier. Older weapons gain the duration of the newest weapon. The weapons are made of liquid metal and cannot be grasped or wielded.

You can use a bonus action to send up to three silver weapons streaking toward up to three creatures or objects within the spell's range. When you do so, make a ranged spell attack. Each weapon deals damage equal to twice your spellcasting ability modifier on a hit.

When the duration of the spell expires, silver runes vanish and unused silver weapons turn into a number of silver coins equal in value to the damage they would have dealt, or an equivalent value of powdered silver, at your choice. Silver coins match locally accepted tender. The Hallowed Plane of Silver despises avarice; silver weapons leave behind no silver if the spellcaster exhibits greed, especially at the expense of helping one's allies or the innocent. Harming creatures unnecessarily for power or profit incurs a **Powers Check**.

**At Higher Levels.** At 5th level, the weapon attack deals an extra 1d8 damage to the target and the damage is also silver. The damage of the silver weapon increases to 1d8 + twice your spellcasting ability modifier. Both damage rolls increase by 1d8 at 11th level and 17th level.

*The hidden sanctuaries and aeries that teach silver-bladed slaying arts are not uncommon, but their ruins are even more common, victims of the greed of fellow man more often than monster. Silvering schools are of two kinds. The first withholds their essential techniques from apprentices until they demonstrate sufficient wisdom in a trial of worth. The second believes consequences are the best teacher. I align with the first – I have no desire to cross with another of the fallen who took up the fell weapons of blood metal when silver abandoned them. – VR*

**BELLCHIME**

1st-level abjuration (ritual)

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** 60 feet

**Components:** V, S, M (A silver bell)

**Duration:** 24 hours

Choose an object that is large or smaller or an area that can fit within a range no larger than a 10-foot cube. Until the spell ends, whenever a Tiny or larger creature touches or enters the warded area, the silver bell used as the material

component chimes. When you cast the spell, you can designate creatures that won't set off the alarm. You can also designate times or simple, obvious circumstances when the bell will not chime (e.g. do not ring between 6pm-8am, ignore anyone who presents a silver badge). If you cast this spell on the same space or object every day for 30 days, placing the same effect on it each time, the ward lasts until it is dispelled.

**At Higher Levels.** At 5th level, the spell becomes permanent and the silver bell cannot be used as the material component for another Bellchime spell. Dispelling the ward or the bell instead suppresses the chime for 10 minutes.

*Needless to say, silvering schools do not advertise. If you wish to learn the silver arts or hire their services, you may have luck finding a contact among the smiths who silver blades, but you would do better to seek the artisan who enchants the silver bells used to alert shop owners to customers and thieves. – VR*

### MIRROR SHIELD

2nd-level abjuration

**Casting Time:** 1 Bonus Action

**Range:** 60 feet

**Components:** V, S, M (A silver coin)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 10 minutes

A finely wrought, highly reflective mirror in the shape of shield floats in front of a creature of your choice and gives it a +2 bonus to AC for the duration. The reflections of creatures emitting an aura of magic as per detect magic are outlined, but this reveals no information about its school. An ally can use an action to take hold of the mirror shield and turn it about to study the surroundings and reflections of creatures for auras, but the shield cannot provide the AC bonus while being used in this way. When the spell ends, the mirror shatters and its shards fly towards the closest enemy the shielded

creature is fighting within the spell's range, if there is one, and it takes 2d8 piercing damage. The damage is silver. Otherwise the shards harmlessly vanish without a trace.

*A mazed victim forced to gaze upon the infinite reflections of every aspect of their flawed self within the Plane of Silver's innumerable mirrors soon succumbs to equally infinite madness.*

### The Hallowed Plane of Guidance

Hallowed steam's cloud banks shape themselves into visions of wisdom and hidden truths. The apparitions of Guidance respond to the cries of those lost. Although Guidance's vapors are unrelated to Ravenloft's imprisoning mists, Guidance is especially useful when opposing misty barriers and the creatures lurking within. Powerful invocations may even be able to generate mistways or create transient paths where those separated in time and space can meet and exchange secrets. Mistwanderers and oracles like the Vistani know the secrets of Guidance and scry by its silvery vapors dancing within crystal spheres.

*Other spells that can be reflavored for this element: Guidance (0), True Strike (0), Hunter's Mark (1), Augury (2), Locate Object (2), Wall of Sand (3) as "Warding Mists", Locate Creature (4), Legend Lore (5), Find the Path (6).*

### SUMMON SPECTRAL VARDŌ

3rd-level conjuration (ritual)

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** 30 feet

**Components:** V, S, M (A beverage worth at least 10g, each adult humanoid traveler must drink a sip)

**Duration:** 1 hour

A ghostly horse-drawn wagon or carriage, pulled by a translucent Phantom Steed (per the spell), pulls into an open space within 30 feet you. The carriage has a speed of 60 feet. It can

travel 5 miles in an hour, or 8 miles at a fast pace. The interior contains comfortable plush seats, magical lights which may be lit or quenched at your riders' pleasure, and a brazier of invisible spectral flame that either heats or cools the cabin appropriately for the weather. The spectral vardo is mostly transparent, so creatures outside the vardo can easily see the contents inside. The vardo contains enough space to sit 4 medium humanoids and their gear comfortably, or up to 8 medium humanoids and their gear if they squish. The vardo can hold up to 1500 pounds. If more weight is placed on or in it, the spell ends, and everything on the vardo falls to the ground. Someone may ride in the coachman's seat or on the phantom steed to control the direction of the vardo, or else rely on the phantom steed to choose the largest and most obvious road. The vardo can go anywhere a similar horse-drawn carriage can.

When the spell ends, the vardo gradually fades, giving the riders 1 minute to disembark. The spell ends if you move more than 100 feet from the vardo, if you use an action to dismiss it, or if the vardo or steed take any damage.

*"Some Vistani believe conjured wagons are the vehicles of ill-fated travelers who became lost in the mist and never returned. Unlike most tasques which consider it a dour omen, the Manusa uniquely believe conjuring a spectral vardo alike to one of their brethren's proves that familial spirit is blessing the journey." – Excerpt from "Faiths in the Mist" by Neha Neembalm of the Rajian coven of Hala in hiding*

### Summon Mistway

7th-level conjuration

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** 15 feet

**Components:** V

**Duration:** Instantaneous

This spell allows travelers to use a conjured mistway to travel long distances without crossing the intervening overland. When you first cast this spell, you decide if you want to attempt to choose the destination, or leave it up to the Mists to decide. A chosen destination must be known to you, and it must be on the same plane of existence as you. If you instead leave your destination up to the Mists (e.g. your GM), you arrive at a location which is safe enough to rest for at least an hour without discomfort or attack, so long as you behave prudently. The Mists may take you to another domain or return you to the same one. The Mists are generally inclined to return you whence you came if the domain's lord has sealed their domain or does not want one of your number to leave.

When you cast the spell, a narrow path that leads out of time and space appears in a conjured wall of mist. The mistway remains open for 1 minute, and you and a quantity of creatures and objects that can fit into a covered wagon (henceforth your caravan) can attempt to travel to a destination you select. Creatures not riding on a vehicle can undertake the journey on foot if they remain within the spell's range of you at all times. To reach the destination, your caravan must travel within the mistway to its end, which can take as little as a few seconds or an hour with no rhyme or reason. Failure to travel to the end in an expedient fashion forces the Mists to choose the destination. Individuals who become separated from the caravan have their destination chosen by the Mists.

If you attempted to choose your destination, your chances of success depend on the following bonuses and penalties:

+5 You are traveling with a large traveling vehicle, such as a vardo, carriage, ship, or a wagon roomy enough for everyone to fit within (ignore riding animals)

+2 Someone in your caravan has been to the destination before

+2 Your destination is the home territory of someone in the caravan

+2 Someone in your caravan has friends, family, or allies at your chosen destination, or knows someone waiting for them at the destination

+2 Someone in your caravan possess an object that was created or made at the destination within the last six months or know the runes of a teleportation circle at the destination

+1 Someone in your caravan has Vistani blood

-5 You are fleeing imminent danger

-10 The domain you are attempting to leave has been sealed (Ignore this penalty for an in-domain destination)

-10 The domain's lord does not want someone in your caravan to leave in particular

The GM secretly rolls a d20 on your behalf which cannot be affected by your abilities or traits, adds and subtracts the bonuses, and consults the following table.

$\leq 0$ : *Critical Failure*: The domain lord becomes aware of your spell and your traveling companions and chooses your precise destination if they so desire, anywhere in their own domain.

1 - 5: *Failure*: You do not leave the domain. You may wind up at your start or elsewhere.

6 - 10: *Mists*: The Mists determine your destination.

11 - 15: *Average Success*: You arrive somewhere in the domain where your intended destination is.

16 - 20: *Great Success*: You arrive at or near your intended destination.

$\geq 21$ : *Critical Success*: You arrive at your intended destination, but the location is chosen so that it is maximally beneficial to your caravan (e.g. beyond toll posts, or hidden from unknown danger present at the destination.)

### SOJOURN SPIRIT

1st-level divination

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V, S, M (A flower)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 10 minutes

The incorporeal, misty form of a former companion, ancestor, ghost, sage, figure of local legend, or another being of the DM's choice appears from the mist and stays at your side to give you hope, comfort, guidance, and warning. For the duration you gain a +1 bonus to your AC, attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws. You make saving throws to avoid being horrified, being driven insane, and going mad with advantage. You may ask the being one question. If it knows the answer, it answers truthfully in accordance with its personality.

### The Hallowed Plane of Shade

Hallowed negative is the shadowed aegis which shelters the weak, oppressed, and misunderstood from persecutors both light and dark. Allies of the otherwise beneficent light oft mistake Shade for yet another venal dark power, disbelieve its existence as antinomy, or wisely fear its proximity to Ravenloft's true corrupting darkness. Only monsters redeemed, certain esoteric monastic orders, and those deep within conspiracies dare risk calling upon Shade's protective powers.

*Other spells that can be reflavored for this element: Zephyr Strike (1), Pass Without Trace (2), Nondetection (3), Freedom of Movement (4), Shadow of Moil (4), Instant Summons (6) as "Shadebring"*

### SHADE-TAP

2nd-level illusion

**Casting Time:** 1 Bonus Action

**Range:** 60 feet

**Components:** S, M (A glove)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 10 minutes

Choose a Large or smaller creature within shadow, dim light, or darkness in the spell's range to transport. The creature must be incapacitated, restrained, sleeping, dying, or dead for no longer than ten minutes. You cannot transport a target illuminated by bright light, one that is grappled, one that is securely restrained to a surface or larger object, or one wearing or carrying more than a pound of lead. A target that would be unwilling makes a Wisdom saving throw to avoid transport.

Shadows silently engulf the creature and any equipment it is wearing or carrying and teleport it to a dark or dimly lit space of your choice within the spell's range that need not be within line of sight. For the spell's duration, the creature is invisible to everyone but you. The spell and invisibility end if the creature is moved, uses its movement, makes an attack, casts a spell, or is illuminated by bright light.

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the spell creates a silent illusory duplicate of the target at its original location. The illusion vanishes if illuminated by bright light. A creature that uses its action to examine the duplicate can determine that it is an illusion with a successful Intelligence (Investigation) check against your spell save DC.

*"A retriever is a wolf taught to bite more softly." – proverb from a scroll found in an abandoned Shadow Way monastery.*

### SHADESHROUD

3rd-level conjuration (ritual)

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** S, M (an obsidian point or black blade worth at least 25 gp)

**Duration:** 8 hours

You slit a shadow or a surface in an area of dim light or darkness that can accommodate a 5-foot-radius circle. That area of shadow lifts like a sheet. If you crawl underneath, you enter into an extradimensional space bordering the Plane of Shade.

You and two other medium-sized or smaller creatures can fit underneath the shadeshroud. For the duration, creatures and objects under the shadeshroud cannot be targeted by any divination magic or perceived through magical scrying sensors. The shadeshroud's contents cannot be seen from your current Plane, but creatures that can see into the Ethereal Plane can also clearly see the shadeshroud's interior.

Creatures must be prone to enter or exit the space under the shadeshroud and must remain prone for the duration or else take 1d4 force damage and be shunted outside the shroud, lying prone. You can unseal and seal the edges of the shadeshroud to permit or deny creatures entry. The interior of the shadeshroud is magically dark, muffles sounds produced inside to a whisper, and the atmosphere is comfortable and dry regardless of the weather outside. Creatures under the shadeshroud cannot affect or be affected by anything outside the shadeshroud, as if they were fully incorporeal. Creatures underneath the shadeshroud can see and hear 60 feet outside into your current plane.



The spell ends when you leave the shadesroud, there are more than three medium-sized or smaller creatures underneath the shadesroud, a creature underneath or partially underneath the shadesroud makes an attack or casts a spell, or the area of the shadesroud or its interior is illuminated by bright light. Creatures or objects under the shadesroud are shunted outside the shroud, lying prone, when the spell ends.

*You are to patrol with a bulls-eye lantern and cast its light upon on all dark corners and shadows as you move from room to room. Do not rely on your darkvision. Just before sundown, gently turn over the large rug in the main hall and cast your lamplight on the floorboards below. – instruction from Guignol Museum's training manual for overnight security personnel.*

### VEIL OF SHADE

1st-level abjuration (ritual)

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** Self

**Components:** S, M (A black silk handkerchief or black cloth worth 5 gp which the spell consumes)

**Duration:** 1 hour

A thin veil of misty shadow settles over you. Damage done to you is rolled with d(n-2) dice instead of d(n). (e.g., A 3rd-level fireball's damage is rolled with 8d4 instead of 8d6). Damage rolls cannot be decreased below d1. If there are one or more allies within 10 feet of you, and you are targeted by a spell, attack, or other source of damage that would also affect them as well, they receive the damage mitigation benefits of the Veil of Shadows for that damage roll. (GMs who do not wish to roll two sets of die may approximate the mitigation's affects by subtracting 1 damage for each die rolled from the total.)

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## THE TAINTED ELEMENTAL PLANES

The pure planes of Fire, Air, Earth, and Water have each been touched by Ravenloft's corruption, creating doubles that more accurately reflect the haunts lurking within the demiplane of mists. Evokers and conjurers sometimes mistakenly summon the creatures and aspects of these planes rather than the pure powers they were intending.

### The Tainted Plane of Pyre

Foxes can reliably find places where the Pyre-Material planar border is thin - such places are marked by cold fire, spots of fluctuating temperature, or phosphorescent mushrooms. One of the few reliable rituals to open a controlled gate to Pyre involves hollowing out and carving a gourd with the face of a deceased friend.

*Other spells that can be reflavored for this element: Dancing Lights (0) as "Spirit Lights", Faerie Fire (1) as "Foxfire", Guiding Bolt (1), Mind Spike (2) as "Pyrepin", Flame Arrows (3), Sickening Radiance (4), Investiture of Flame (6)*

### PYREFLAME

2nd-level evocation

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** 60 feet

**Components:** V, S, M (Spores from a glowing mushroom)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

Each object in a 20-foot cube within range is outlined in cold pyreflame. Any creature in the area when the spell is cast takes 2d6 cold damage and is outlined by pyreflame if it fails a Dexterity saving throw, or takes half damage and is not outlined on success. For the duration, objects and affected creatures outlined in pyreflame shed dim light in a 10-foot-radius.

Any attack roll against an outlined creature or object has advantage if the attacker can see it, and the affected creature or object can't benefit from being invisible.

Exposed non-magical flames in the area are converted into chilling pyreflame that deals cold damage instead of fire damage. Pyreflame converts non-magical flame that it touches into more pyreflame.

Fire damage from attacks and spells cast by an outlined creature is converted into cold damage. A creature outlined by pyreflame can outline an unaffected creature by hitting it with an unarmed strike, a natural weapon melee attack, or cold damage converted from fire damage.

All pyreflame created as a result of the spell is extinguished when the spell ends.

*"I'jit went an' lit pyrefire in Mordentshire" – colorful street vernacular from the western Core's urban ne'er-do-wells, meaning "attracted dangerous attention".*

### **PYREBALL**

3rd-level evocation

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** 150 feet

**Components:** V, S, M (a pinch of bone ash)

**Duration:** Instantaneous

A bright eerie streak flashes from your finger to a point you choose within range and then blossoms into an explosion of ghostly flame. Each creature in a 30-foot-radius must make a Dexterity saving throw. A target takes 5d6 cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The spiritual damage bypasses an undead creature's immunity and resistance to cold damage. The fire spreads around corners.

All creatures and objects within the spell's area are momentarily outlined by pyreflame. The outlining briefly reveals the position and appearance of invisible creatures and objects.

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 3rd.

*"After listening patiently to my tale of an encounter with a ghostly carriage in Lamordia, the wandering traveler from Rokushima told me of his homeland's fox-masked 'yōkai huntresses'. The mask wards the lady from the spectral flame she evokes. A huntress who loses her mask soon falls sick to "Fox Madness". The symptoms begin as simple fever, but within two nights, she hallucinates and cries tears of glowing ghostfire. If nearby natural flames are not promptly extinguished and the afflicted restrained with manacles of lead—" Excerpt from Van Richten's notes for an unpublished guide to supernatural afflictions*

### **GHOST LANTERN**

3rd-level necromancy (ritual)

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** 150 feet

**Components:** V, S, M (a source of natural flame no larger than a 5 by 5-foot-square such as a brazier, lit lantern, torch, or candle.)

**Duration:** 1 hour

The natural flame you cast this spell upon becomes unnatural, eerie pyreflame and deals cold damage rather than fire damage. Creatures cannot benefit from invisibility within the fire's bright light. If an inanimate corpse is within the range of the bright light, a silent ghostly shape appears beside it. The incorporeal, mostly-transparent, wispy shape is a very low-resolution image of how the creature appeared in life, but even a thorough investigation of the

shape usually cannot reveal its race, gender, or age, much less its precise identity.

Ghost Lantern's pyreflame may be pushed into a silent ghostly shape. The pyreflame detaches from its source and floats in place. Its animating energy allows the ghostly shape to speak in a voice that sounds like your own (or a neutral tone if you are mute). You may ask the ghostly shape one question with the same limitations described in the *Speak with Dead* spell. (The corpse knows only what it knew in life, including the languages it knew. Answers are usually brief, cryptic, or repetitive, and the corpse is under no compulsion to offer a truthful answer if you are hostile to it or it recognizes you as an enemy. This spell doesn't return the creature's soul to its body. Thus, the corpse can't learn new information, doesn't comprehend anything that has happened since it died, and can't speculate about future events.) Corpses previously used for this spell, the *Speak with Dead* spell, or similar within the last 10 days do not create silent ghostly shapes and cannot be asked questions. The spell ends immediately after the question is answered.

When the spell ends, the pyreflame is extinguished.

*Ghost lantern* cast on a campfire causes it to cool the surroundings and chills food rather than cooking it.

*Many a clever amateur spellcaster suffering in the muggy summer swelter has thought to cool their offices by lighting their hearths with pyreflame. The brighter ones think to use a brazier surrounded by a magic circle. The smartest sweat, because they know the wandering haunts on our side which are drawn to ghostfire like moths are just as fearsome as any that might try to crawl out.*

## The Tainted Plane of Fog

This is a plane of sticky, smoggy, industrial-era pea-soup fog, and steam clinging between the trees of swamps. It splits the difference in environments by embodying both the mire's poisonous drudgery and the muddled city's confusing *vox populi*. Gates to Fog and its diseased, acidic, and poisonous denizens have an alarming tendency to appear in the middle of urban areas in addition to swamps or rivers.

*Other spells that can be reflavored for this element: Fog Cloud (1), Stinking Cloud (3), Confusion (4) as "Poison Mind", Cloudkill (5), Seeming (5).*

### STOVEPIPE BREATH

2nd-level necromancy

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** 60 feet

**Components:** V, S, M (A lump of coal, or a tobacco pipe)

**Duration:** 1 minute

Choose one creature that you can see within range to make a Constitution saving throw. If it fails, streams of sticky, clingy fog pour out of the target creature's mouth, nose, ears, and tear ducts. If the target opens its mouth, speaks, tries to cast a spell with verbal components, or attempts to use a breath weapon, a great gout of heavily-obscuring, clingy fog immediately surrounds its face and blocks its vision entirely for the duration of the action. The gout of fog persists only just long enough for the creature's action to be penalized for effective blindness. At the end of each of its turns, the target can make a Constitution saving throw. On a success, the spell ends.

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you can target one additional creature for each slot level above 2nd.

*"Respiratory distress and premature death associated with 'Green Lung' are the smoke-blowing entertainer's most common*

*occupational hazard. A lesser known danger is that daily use of the smoke-making spell risks converting one's bronchi into a permanent gate to the Elemental Plane of Fog. Smoky wheezing, corroded teeth, and malodorous breath then become the least of the entertainer's worries; a creature from planar Fog may discover the path and attempt to materialize in the unfortunate's chest. This is merely gruesomely fatal should the interloper be a typical fog elemental composed of corrosive and toxic gases. More solid denizens, which are usually significantly larger than the volume of humanoid lungs, result in a grotesque splattering deflagration of the unwitting conduit's whole head, neck, and torso." — Clipping from a Paridon medical journal found along with Van Richten's notes for an unpublished guide to supernatural afflictions*

## HULLABAGLOOM

2nd-level illusion

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** 120 feet

**Components:** V, S, M (A handful of peas)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You create a 30-foot-radius sphere of sticky, clingy fog centered on a point within range, which disguises the voices of those within it. The sphere spreads around corners, and its area is heavily obscured. It lasts for the duration or until a wind of moderate or greater speed (at least 10 miles per hour) disperses it. For the duration of the spell, you give each target in the spell's area that you choose an illusory voice. The illusory voice is cosmetic and may not interfere with the target's ability to communicate or cast spells as it normally would. (You may change a creature's accent or even add a speech tic, but you may not change its language, render it unintelligible, or silence it.) An unwilling target can make a Charisma saving throw, and its voice is unchanged if it succeeds. Unless you will otherwise, a target

hears its own voice naturally and cannot tell if it succeeded or failed on its saving throw.

The fog is the voice-transforming medium, so outside creatures hear the illusory voices from within, but hear an affected creature speak with its natural voice when it leaves the boundary. Creatures within the fog hear an affected target outside the fog speaking with its illusory voice.

You may use your bonus action to create an illusory sound at a location within the fog that lasts up to 2 minutes. The sound can be any volume and noise and can continue unabated for the duration, or you can make sounds at different times. You can only have one illusory sound active at once. The oldest illusory sound ends if you use your bonus action again to create another illusory sound.

A creature can use its action to listen and make an Intelligence (Investigation) check against your spell save DC. If it succeeds, it can hear everyone's true voices and the illusory noises sound faint and hollow.

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the radius of the fog increases by 10 feet and the number of illusory sounds you may have active increases by one for each slot level above 2nd.

*"Are there more boats over here? I'm in a hurry. Is there still room aboard? Sirs, Hello? Who are you lot? What's this now? Ack! aah No— oh Help! HE—" Last words of man who disappeared walking into a bank of fog at a river crossing. His body was never recovered from the quicksand. Locals blame the voice-like mumbling of the natural Hullabagloom fog that tends to form near the ford for luring him away from stable ground.*

**VITRIOLIC DOUBLE**

2nd-level illusion

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V, S, M (A pinch of sulfur)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 10 minutes.

You are briefly obscured by a harmless smoky puff and create a silent double of yourself composed of acidic fog adjacent to yourself in your space. You may move the double up to your remaining movement speed, and your full movement speed on your subsequent turns. The double is insubstantial and effectively weightless, but looks and behaves like you. It can mimic your actions and attacks, albeit harmlessly. A creature that does not succeed on a Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check cannot tell you apart from your double.

The vitriolic double is dispersed if attacked or if it collides with a Tiny or larger object. A creature that makes a melee attack against the vitriolic double takes 3d6 acid damage, no save. You can choose to crash the double into a creature or object by moving it into that target's space. The double is dispersed and a target that fails its dexterity saving throw takes 3d6 acid damage, or half on success. When the vitriolic double is dispersed or the spell ends, every creature in a 5 foot-radius of the double takes 1d6 poison damage.

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the acid damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 2nd. The poison damage increases when the spell slot used reaches 3rd level (2d6), 6th level (3d6), and 9th level (4d6).

*During the choreographed exchange of partners, one pair of ballroom dancers disappeared in an acrid puff of smoke to the collective gasp of the salon. The party-goers innocently thought the smoke to be the vanishing lady's harmless prank, and the man now lying upon the floor a victim of too much good wine. A well-meaning socialite attempted to turn over the facedown gentleman so he could gracefully recover his wits away from the dance floor, and thus discovered the corpse's face had been scoured clean off.*

**The Tainted Plane of Grave**

Grave is a heterogenous mix of graveyards, barrows, and crypt soil. Those who dig down deep enough from Ravenloft's surface are said to fall into this plane. Mazed victims that don't wind up in Hallowed Silver's endless hall of mirrors are trapped in the labyrinthine complex of underground catacombs at the border of Grave and pure Earth.

*Other spells that can be reflavored for this element: Mold Earth (0), Earthbind (2), Maximilian's Earthen Grasp (2) as "Grasp of the Grave", Erupting Earth (3) as "Rouse the Dead", Evard's Black Tentacles (4) as "Grasp of Necropolis", Danse Macabre (5)*

**DEADTACK**

3rd-level abjuration (ritual)

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** S, M (Gems worth at least 1000 gp plus the target's level or CR multiplied by 100 gp which the spell consumes, two lead spikes)

**Duration:** Indefinite

You enchant two leaden spikes that you have carefully and artistically engraved with a target creature's name or likeness. You then hammer both spikes into that creature's inanimate dead

body. Spells from the Necromancy school and other re-animating and resurrection-like effects fail when used on the body. One of the lead spikes may then be pried from the body afterwards and taken with you or hidden elsewhere, but it cannot be used as a material component for another *Deadtack* spell. The removed spike is a magical object with the durability of lead. The spike that remains becomes permanently affixed in the body, resists dispelling, reforms instantly if destroyed or defaced, and cannot be removed by any means short of using a spell slot of at least 8th level to cast *Dispel Magic*, *Antimagic Field*, or *Wish*. Separating the tacked body into pieces does not end the spell. Reviving the creature or destroying the removed spike ends the spell. *True Resurrection* overpowers any *Deadtack* spell. A second *Deadtack* spell fails when used on the same body.

*"The deadtack utterly blocks all but the most vile of necromancers from animating rightfully interred remains or draining dire secrets from the skulls of the deceased. Unfortunately, assassins also use deadtacks to guarantee their wealthier victims remain as corpses. Tracing the deadtack caster's dweomer, fingerprinting artistry, and even the providence of the lead has thus become something of an art among private investigators who are urgently hired to seize the murderer's paired spike before the body rots beyond actionable revival." – Arthur Sedgwick*

### GRAVELMULCH

1st-level conjuration (ritual)

**Casting Time:** 1 hour

**Range:** 30 feet

**Components:** A medium-sized corpse, dried and powdered, which the spell consumes

**Duration:** A year and a day

You scatter the dust of a deceased creature along the boundary of a plot of land up to an

acre in size and enrich the area's earth with soil from the Plane of Grave to increase its fertility and productivity. Plants, herbs, and crops grown in the enriched soil will, on average, grow larger, increase in potency, and be more nutritious. Enriching the soil is especially effective at rejuvenating land which has been magically blighted or corrupted by the lair effects of a powerful creature. A field treated with gravemulch has a 10% percent chance of becoming infested with an overgrowth of magical weeds or an unwanted monster such as a poludnica, twig blight, or animate scarecrow sometime during the duration of the spell.

*"The farmer who feeds their fields with dust from the Pale eventually feeds the Pale with bones from the farmhands." – Falkovnian folk wisdom*

### PREMATURE BURIAL

9th-level transmutation

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** 120 feet

**Components:** V, S, M (A miniature tombstone)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 10 minutes

With a thumb's down gesture, you condemn landbound creatures in a 40 by 40-foot-square to be sucked down into the earth and buried alive. The spell passes through stages, which advance at the beginning of each of your turns. If the spell is interrupted or paused because your concentration is broken or because you or part of the spell's area is within an antimagic field, creatures remain as they are.

**First Stage.** Earth in a 40 by 40-foot-square you select becomes mud. Flying creatures up to 40 feet above the ground in the spell's area are swatted to the earth and become grounded. Grounded creatures in the spell's area then take

6d10 force damage. They also begin sinking if they fail a Strength or Dexterity saving throw. Unattended objects automatically fail the save. A sinking target sinks up to its waist and is restrained.

Thereafter, creatures that succeed on the saving throw, free themselves, or that enter the area of the spell after the initial casting do not sink, but each foot of movement through the mud costs 3 feet. At this stage, a creature may attempt to free itself or a comrade with a DC15 strength check. If extricated from the crushing earth, the target takes 2d10 bludgeoning damage from the strain of rescue.

**Second Stage.** Sinking targets sink up to their neck. The only action they can effectively take is to attempt to escape, speak, make breath weapon or gaze attacks, or perform spells with solely verbal components. At this stage, a creature may attempt to free itself or a comrade with a DC20 strength check. If extricated from the crushing earth, the target takes 4d10 bludgeoning damage from the strain of rescue.

**Third Stage.** Sinking targets sink fully below ground and are paralyzed and restrained. The earth crushes the target's chest, it cannot hold its breath or speak, and it begins suffocating. A humanoid standing above it can still reach the sinking target by lying prone. At this stage, a creature may attempt to free itself or a comrade with a DC20 strength check. If extricated from the crushing earth, the target takes 6d10 bludgeoning damage from the strain of rescue.

**Fourth Stage.** Sinking targets are 30 feet underground and cannot easily be reached from the surface by nonmagical means. The target is paralyzed and restrained. The earth crushes the target's chest, it cannot hold its breath or speak, and it suffocates. If extricated from the crushing

earth, the target takes 6d10 bludgeoning damage from the strain of rescue.

**Fifth Stage.** Sinking targets sink deep underground and cannot be reached from the surface. The target is paralyzed and restrained. The earth crushes the target's chest, it cannot hold its breath or speak, and it suffocates. The target remains at this stage for rest of the duration of the spell. If somehow extricated from the crushing earth, the target takes 6d10 bludgeoning damage from the strain of rescue.

Your use of this disturbing, wicked spell incurs a **Powers Check**. When the victim sinks fully below the earth at the third stage, witnesses must make a madness save versus your spellcasting DC to avoid gaining one form of short-term madness.

**Indoors.** A significant air gap below the target, such as a large cavern or basement, prevents *Premature Burial* from functioning as expected. If you cast the spell otop such a space, it instead functions like *Transmute Rock to Mud* with a duration of Instantaneous. All intervening non-magical earth, stone walls, ceilings, and floors in a 40 by 40 square area up to 100 feet deep become an equal volume of thick, flowing mud. The mud collapses immediately and forms a layer of soft loam. Each foot that a creature moves through the loam costs 3 feet of movement.

A creature within the spell's area that fails a Dexterity saving throw falls. A creature that falls on the loam takes half falling damage and sinks up to its waist per the first stage.

A creature below the spell's area in the path of the falling mud must make a Dexterity saving throw. A creature that fails takes 4d10 bludgeoning damage, falls the remaining distance and takes half falling damage, and sinks up to its waist per the first stage.

*It is said that the creator of this dread spell would build redoubts to funnel unwanted guests into an open space in the top floor's audience hall. Once plunged to the earth, the battered and broken survivors must climb the creator's terrible tower once more to earn the privilege of being killed.*

### **The Tainted Plane of Ichor**

Life-sustaining Ichor is effective medically and alchemically, although it carries a slight risk of corrupting the patient. The purified plasma of this eldritch ocean is the secret ingredient in quite a few Ravenloft-made patent medicines. Sanitoriums and laboratories sometimes have outbreaks of creeping ichor cells.

*Other spells that can be reflavored for this element: Goodberry (1), Hunger of Hadar (3) as "Ichorous Abyss", Primordial Ward (6) as "Ichor Armor"*

### **ICHOR CURE**

1st-level transmutation

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** V, S, M (A handful of water, or a sealed flask of water)

**Duration:** Instantaneous

A great glob of ichor appears in your hand, leaps to the creature, squirms into its wounds, and knits them shut. The creature regains a number of hit points equal to 3d8 + your spellcasting ability modifier, and then its hit point maximum is reduced by 1d8 hit points. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. This spell has no effect on undead or constructs. Spells or effects that maximize, minimize, advantage, disadvantage, negate, or add other bonuses to the healing die roll have the same effect on the roll for the hit point maximum reduction.

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the healing increases by 2d8 for each slot level above 1st, and the hit point maximum reduction increases by 1d8.

**Bottled Ichor.** You may expend a spell slot to fill a flask with curative ichor. Its curative properties last one minute. As an action, you can splash the contents of this flask onto a creature within 5 feet of you or throw it up to 20 feet, shattering it on impact. In either case, make a ranged attack against a target creature, treating the ichor flask as an Improvised Weapon.

*"Dr. Barnstorm's MIRACULOUS Bottled Elixir of Vigor ancient family recipe.*

*A Guaranteed Cure! Mild and Pleasant tonic taste, Alterative and Stimulating! Wonderous Ichor and Natural Herbs and Remedies carefully selected and compounded to act with Perfect Harmony for the cure of Debility, Giddiness, Dyspepsia, Rheumatism, Dropsy, Bilioussness, Chills, Fever, Ague, Creeping Paralysis, and Piles.*

*Dr. Barnstorm's Elixir of Vigor Always Lively Leaps in the Bottle! ACCEPT NO SUBSTITUTES!"*

*– Text from an ichor-based potion. Small print on the label encourages buyers to securely cork the bottle and that Dr. Barnstorm will not replace medicine that escaped due to customer negligence.*

### **Viscid Glob**

4th-level conjuration

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** 300 feet

**Components:** V, S, M (Hagfish leather)

**Duration:** 1 minute

You summon a glob of sticky ooze and it flings itself at your target. Make a ranged spell attack. On success, the target is restrained until the



spell ends. If the target is flying with wings, its flying speed is reduced to 0 feet for the spell's duration. Clumsily flapping to prevent a hard landing, a winged flying creature immediately descends 60 feet, and another 60 feet at the beginning of each of its turns until it reaches the ground or the spell ends. An affected creature can use its action to make a Strength or Dexterity check (its choice) against your spell save DC. On a success, it frees itself. A douse in water immediately frees a globbed creature from restraint by dissolving the ooze into non-sticky slime.

**Underwater.** The viscid glob has a range of only 120 ft. but dissolves to fill a 40-foot cube with nearly invisible mucus that persists for three rounds (18 seconds). A water-breathing creature entering or passing through the mucus becomes coated in clingy slime. A slimed creature's speed is halved, it takes a -2 penalty to AC and Dexterity Saving Throws, and it can't use reactions. A slimed creature cannot speak clearly with its mouth, cannot breathe through its mouth, gills, or skin, and it starts to suffocate until it uses its action to clear the mucus. A strong current disperses the mucus and cleanses slimed creatures.

### SUMMON ICHOR CUBE

4th-level conjuration

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** 90 feet

**Components:** V, S, M (collagen)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 hour

You summon an ichor cube. It appears in an unoccupied space that you can see within range. The ichor cube has the statistics of a gelatinous cube, but any engulfed creatures that have 0 Hit Points and are not undead or constructs become stable, stop taking damage from the cube, and stop suffocating. The ichor cube disappears when it drops to 0 Hit Points or

when the spell ends. Creatures and objects the cube has engulfed are dropped in the nearest available space when the ichor cube disappears.

Roll Initiative for the cube, which has its own turns. It obeys any verbal commands that you issue to it (no action required by you). If you don't issue any commands to the cube, it expels nonliving matter it has engulfed and attacks the nearest living creature.

If your Concentration is broken, the ichor cube doesn't disappear. Instead, you lose control of the cube, and it might Attack. An uncontrolled cube can't be dismissed by you, and it disappears 1 hour after you summoned it.

*Arthur gasped and nearly dropped his lantern. The orange flicker dimly lit the bloated figure of the missing Dementlieuse medical conjurer, which was floating in the abandoned basement hall as if by magic. The good doctor backpedaled to put some distance between him and the corpse now smoothly drifting closer and nearly flattened Detective Alanik who had ceased retreat to observe their foe. "Quite odd. Dr. Joel has been missing for a month, yet the corpse is not skeletonized and his cloth lab coat is quite intact. Is this truly a gelatinous cube?" At the sound of their voices, the water-wracked body suspended inside slowly twisted its head. Lenses long since sloughed off, Dr. Joel's moon-white eyes blindly begged the two for the merciful release to death that his own conjured ichor had denied him.*

\*  
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### THE DEFILED ELEMENTAL PLANES

Are the defiled planes the four pure elemental aspects so far gone that they have twisted beyond all recognition, or are they collectively a single, massive, trans-dimensional organism nourished by the darkness of Ravenloft? Either way, spellcasters can draw down on their deeply disturbing powers for uses both wicked

and benign, but only with moderation, lest they soon become utterly corrupted themselves.

### The Defiled Plane of Flesh

Flesh's land is a monstrous mass of teratomatous cancer that cannot truly die and so becomes ever more corrupted. The plane is unpleasantly hot and humid, and you can hear deep heartbeats from within. Do not tarry here; the land craves purity and will eventually try to devour any uncorrupted flesh it senses.

*Other spells that can be reflavored for this element: Primal Savagery (0), Acid Splash (0), Grease (1) as "Slick Biofilm", Magic Mouth (2), Melf's Acid Arrow (2) as "Bilious Arrow", Haste (3) as "Hypermetabolism", Regenerate (7)*

### GRAFT

5th-level necromancy

**Casting time:** 1 minute

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** V, S, M\* (Thread, ointments, and distilled essence of troll worth 150 gp which the spell consumes)

**Duration:** Instantaneous

You hold the creature's removed or severed body member (eye, finger, leg, tail, and so on) or a comparable, freshly severed limb from another similar creature to the stump or socket, and the spell causes the limb to knit to the stump and restores it to full usability. Over the course of weeks, the limb slowly changes until it matches the rest of the creature, but at the GM's discretion, vestigial traits from its creature of origin may remain.

**Optional Rejection Rules.** If the grafted limb is not the creature's original limb, the GM secretly rolls a d20 and a d6. If the d20 roll is greater than either your spellcasting modifier or your medicine skill bonus - whichever is higher, plus your proficiency, plus the graft-receiver's constitution modifier, then the graft is rejected

and unexpectedly fails or falls off during a bout of strenuous exertion 1d6+1 days later. Grafting that limb to the same creature automatically fails thereafter.

*"The Vistani believe that pieces of a body still carry a fraction of its vital source – Scrying wouldn't work so strongly otherwise. A wicked or resentful soul can poison yours, so those of my tribe refuse to graft any limbs but the original or a trusted friend's willingly given. Contracting lycanthropy's a risk, too." – Ezmerelda d'Avenir on why she uses a prosthetic leg.*

### HAG'S HUNGER

6th-level transmutation

**Casting time:** 1 action

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V, S, M (A hag's tooth)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

You transform into a hag and glutinously devour the corpses of creatures that are not undead, elementals, oozes, plants, or constructs. You can consume a volume of creatures equal to your size class in one minute. If you do so, you regain spent Hit Dice as if you had taken a Long Rest and then gain the benefit of a short rest. The corpses of the devoured creatures are transported to and absorbed by the Defiled Plane of Flesh, and they can be restored to life only by means of a *True Resurrection* or a *Wish* spell. Your use of this disturbing, wicked spell incurs a **Powers Check** and witnesses must make a madness save versus your spellcasting DC to avoid gaining one form of long-term madness. (*For campaigns outside Ravenloft that lack the drawbacks of Madness and Powers Checks, reduce the number of regained hit die.*)

"Silver to priest's palm convey,  
Slip in the morgue's back way,  
With a tooth of sister betray,  
Now the charnel is your buffet!"  
– Jenny Greenteeth

## The Defiled Plane of Breath

The foolish sometimes open gates to the moist, suffocating Breath to eavesdrop on the secrets whispered within the plane's mad murmurings. If insanity doesn't strike down such listeners first, then a screamstorm eventually will: the peals of thunder are deafening shrieks and wails. Natural gates to breath are most likely to appear in narrow openings, like barely cracked doors.

*Other spells that can be reflavored for this element: Message (0), Dissonant Whispers (1), Thunderwave (1), Tasha's Hideous Laughter (1), Sending (3), Contact other Plane (5) as "Portal of Secrets"*

### BAJASHEE'S CRY

3rd-level evocation

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 3 rounds (18 seconds)

You wail with an unearthly cry that affects all creatures within 15 feet, and you select creatures in a 15-foot cone to bear the brunt of your sonic assault. Creatures in range must make a Constitution saving throw, and creatures in the 15-foot cone make their saving throw with disadvantage, or take 4d6 thunder damage, or half damage on success. Creatures that critically fail their Constitution saving throw by five or more are deafened as well. A deafened creature may repeat the Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns. On success it is no longer deafened.

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 3rd. When cast using a spell slot of 6th level or higher, nonmagical objects that aren't being

worn or carried also take the damage if in the spell's area.

*Many a Kartakan dirge is claimed to be inspired by the mingling of the lupine chorus and the wail of lost elves winding through the trees on the land's western border.*

### AUSCULT

3rd-level enchantment

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** 30 feet

**Components:** V\*, M (Ear hair from a beast with keen hearing)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 30 minutes

You quietly blow air at a willing creature and its hearing sensitivity increases. It gains +5 to Wisdom (Perception) checks related to hearing. By focusing on a location it can see, the eavesdropper can ignore loud, distracting background noise and clearly hear a conversation spoken in whispers from the range of 120 feet, at normal volume at 240 feet, and very loud volume at 1200 feet (a quarter mile). For the spell's duration, the enchanted creature has vulnerability to thunder damage and automatically fails any saving throws to avoid deafness.

*Lenore chattered angrily from Nichia's shoulder as she and the Kargat officers all trundled into the cramped office that hid the stairs down. She sighed, "Another basement briefing? It's so stuffy down there. Those of us who are slightly less dead would appreciate a little breeze... and to smell each other a little less." She got a chuckle out of one of the weres.*

*"Stuff it, or I'll make you slightly more dead," Master Bralkain hissed at the woman and her chiding crow, "There's no use warding the place against divination if any big-eared freak can listen in through the windows."*

**DISGUISE VOICE**

1st-level illusion

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Self

**Components:** S

**Duration:** 1 hour

You touch your throat and make yourself sound different until the spell ends or until you use your action to dismiss it. You may imitate an accent with your illusory voice, but this spell doesn't grant you fluency in languages you don't know. A creature that uses its action to listen to your voice can determine that it is an illusion with a successful Intelligence (Investigation) check against your spell save DC. If a creature discerns the illusion for what it is, it can hear your true voice and the illusory voice sounds faint and hollow.

*Wise travelers on Hazlan's highways ignore the pleading screams of desperate women and children from beyond the treeline or behind boulders. The cloven-hoof leucrottas, keen imitators of pained human cries, have wet their jaws with the lifeblood of many a sentimental fool lured from the path. And with each new kill, the intelligent beasts add a new dying scream to their repertoire.*

**The Defiled Plane of Bone**

Bone's endless redoubt is cold and dark, made entirely of solid bones, cartilage, teeth, nails, and claws piled high. The largest halls are within supermassive skulls. Legions of skeletal undead endlessly make war on another and any unwise fleshy interlopers.

*Other spells that can be reflavored for this element: Leomund's Secret Chest (4), Wall of Stone (5) as "Wall of Bone", Bigby's Hand (5), Flesh to Stone (6) as "Flesh to Bone", Bones of the Earth (6)*

**AZAL'LAN'S ARTHRITIC AGONY**

4th-level necromancy

**Casting time:** 1 Action

**Range:** 120 feet

**Components:** V, S, M (Cooked offal, such as foie gras, pâté, or sweetbread)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

You point at a limb on a valid target that is not its head, such as an arm, leg, tail, wing, or sinuous neck. A valid target must be a substantial and non-amorphous creature; it cannot be an ooze, elemental, construct, plant, or spectral undead. The valid target's limb becomes wracked with excruciating spasms, and the target takes 2d8 necrotic damage at the start of each of its turns. The target takes an additional 2d8 necrotic damage one time before the end of each of its next turns if it uses the affected limb for movement, an attack, to interact with an object, to cast a spell, or similar. If the targeted limb is a leg, the target can avoid taking additional usage damage by hobbling 10 feet or less. If the affected limb is holding a shield, the target must take the usage damage to benefit from its AC bonus. Lastly, the target takes yet another 2d8 necrotic damage one time before the end of each of its next turns if an attack lands on the target or if it receives a strong blow.

The target can make a Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns after the damage caused by this spell has been resolved. On a successful save, the spell's effects end for it. The damage this spell deals is non-lethal; a creature that drops to 0 hit points from the spell's damage falls unconscious from pain, but is stable. Additional damage from this spell does not destabilize an unconscious creature.

Shapechangers are unaffected by this spell, and a target that polymorphs or takes on an insubstantial or amorphous form automatically

ends the effect on itself. An otherwise susceptible creature immune to necrotic damage still makes Concentration saving throws as if it had taken the damage because the spell makes it harder for it to move naturally.

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of at least 5th level, you can choose 2 targets. When cast using a spell slot of at least 6th level, the damage increases to 3d8. With at least a 7th level slot, you can choose 3 targets. With at least an 8th level slot, the damage increases to 4d8. With a 9th level slot, you can choose 4 targets.

*"Pain to induce compliance, efficiently." – the dreadlich creator's note*

### ~~OSTEO-ROGUE~~

1st-level necromancy

**Casting time:** 1 Action

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V

**Duration:** 24 hours

You take 1d4 unresisted necrotic damage. Fine bones in the shape of basic lockpicking tools and file, or a stiletto-shaped shard of bone, your choice, rip from your wrist and falls into your hands. The magical tools are as hard and sharp as steel. A bone stiletto has the statistics of an ordinary dagger and is considered non-valuable. The bone tools crumble into fine dust when the spell expires. *(At your GM's sole discretion, you may be able to use this spell to create other small tools.)*

*Dis-arm captured necromancers after you disarm them to ensure they stay put. Gentle repose (put the copper pieces in the palms) and a bucket of cold water will keep the arms fresh enough to graft if they need their limbs back later.*

### ~~OSTEOSCLEROTIC ARMOR~~

2nd-level necromancy

**Casting time:** 1 Action

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** V, S, M (milk, cheese, or yogurt)

**Duration:** 8 hours

You touch a willing living creature. The target takes 2d8 unresisted necrotic damage and with a sickening crack, its own bones burst from its skin, grow and twist in grotesque form, and become its armor. The target's AC can't be less than 18, regardless of what kind of armor it is wearing. The target is considered proficient in this armor. The armor cannot be removed. When the spell ends, the unnatural bone crumbles away into fine dust and the target's appearance is restored.

### The Defiled Plane of Blood

Blood's warm swamp is a venous web of blood rivers that pulse endlessly. Stagnant blood eventually congeals into lumps and finally precipitates into nodules of blood iron which can be refined to forge all sorts of implements, none beneficent.

*Other spells that can be reflavored for this element: Protection from Poison (2) as "Blood Ward", Vampiric Touch (3), Life Transference (3) as "Transfusion", Tidal Wave (3)*

### ~~DEATHBLOOD DIVINATION~~

2nd-level divination (ritual)

**Casting time:** 1 Action

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V, S, M (Powdered vampire fang or nail)

**Duration:** Instantaneous

You taste a dead creature's spilt lifeblood and, in a moment, experience the last 18 seconds (3 rounds) of the victim's life from their sensory

perspective, excluding the victim's thoughts. If the victim has died more than once, you experience their most recent death.

*"The victim's body was thrown in the Musarde river to make it look like a boating accident. In truth, she was drowned in her own home's kitchen sink several hours prior. The murder was likely unintentional, and the culprits her father and mother. They disapproved of her fiancé, a man of lower standing, and were attempting to coerce her into calling it off with him." – Inspector L. Alexandre's case briefing to Richemuloise officials on the death of an heiress in Pont-a-Museau.*

### STRAHD'S GASEOUS EXSANGUINATION

5th-level necromancy

**Casting time:** 1 Action

**Range:** 60 feet

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You target a creature that possesses blood or a near equivalent, and with a tearing motion, deal it 3d6 necrotic damage and rip a crimson cloud of its own blood from its body. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to half the damage dealt. If the target fails a wisdom saving throw, the blood cloud becomes a Vampiric Mist\* under your control. The Vampiric Mist appears in an unoccupied space adjacent to the target and acts on your initiative. Once on each of your turns as a bonus action, you can mentally command the Vampiric Mist. A conjured Vampiric Mist disappears when it drops to 0 hit points or when the spell ends. Your use of this disturbing, wicked spell incurs a **Powers Check**.

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 6th level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 5th. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 7th level or higher, you can target two creatures.

Using a spell slot of 9th level, you can target three creatures.

**Alternative Medicine.** Someone proficient in the Medicine skill can cast this spell on a creature to rid it of any disease or poison affecting it that could be cured by a *lesser restoration*, *remove curse*, or *greater restoration* spell. The creature is damaged and the infectious fluid ripped from their body may be sanitarily channeled into a bottle for study or destruction. No Vampiric Mist is created. Using the spell in this manner does not incur a Powers Check.

(\*The statistics of a Vampiric Mist are found in Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes.)

*Upon hearing the name, one side of Strahd's mouth rises into a contemptuous sneer, revealing a gleaming vampiric fang that perfectly complements the ferocity now burning in his eyes.*

*"Your ancestors were loyal and competent servants of mine for generations. But you, you are not worthy to carry their blood..."*

*Red blisters spread across the exposed skin of the once proud but now horrified woman, and before even a whisper can escape her lips, a great cloud of crimson mist rips itself free from her flesh and falls like rain on the now desiccated corpse.* (Story credit to Five of the Fraternity of

*Shadows Forum, October 2019)*

### BLOOD BURST

6th-level evocation

**Casting time:** 1 Action

**Range:** 120 feet

**Components:** V, S, M (Your own fresh blood)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

As part of the spell's casting, you automatically inflict 1d4 unresisted slashing or piercing damage to yourself to draw your own blood. Creatures without blood or a near equivalent and means to liberate it cannot cast this spell. A mass of 5-foot-deep blood appears and swirls in a 30-foot-radius centered on a point you can see within range. The point must be on the ground or the surface of water. Until the spell ends, that area is difficult terrain, and any creature that starts its turn there must succeed on a Strength saving throw or take 6d6 bludgeoning damage and be pulled 10 feet toward the center.

When the spell ends, the blood contracts into a floating ball and, with a heartbeat like thud, explodes outwards in a 60-foot-radius violent blast, dealing creatures within range 2d6 bludgeoning damage and 2d6 thunder damage. Creatures in a 30-foot-radius must succeed on a Strength saving throw to avoid being knocked prone. Creatures, exposed fires, and surfaces in a 90-foot-radius are drenched by blood and other detritus.

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 7th level or higher, the bludgeoning and thunder damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 6th.

**Underwater.** If the origin point chosen for the spell is underwater, the spell emits a 60-foot-radius shockwave dealing 5d6 thunder damage. Creatures underwater in the shockwave's range that fail a Constitution saving throw are stunned until they succeed on the saving throw at the beginning of each of their turns, take damage, or another a creature uses an action to snap the creature out of its stupor. A 90-foot-radius sphere of water is heavily obscured by an opaque cloud of blood for the duration. Although disgusting, the blood cloud does not disturb waterbreathing unduly. A strong current disperses the blood.

**Underwater at Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 7th level or higher, the thunder damage increases by 2d6 for each slot level above 6th.

*The negotiations? Catastrophic failure. The water breathing spell? Expiring. The ship's crew? Down to the final two, their doom at hand. Their fate? Devoured alive by the sea-living cannibals of Saragoss. Their killers? Thirty weresharks, closing in. With a flash, the woman drew a scalpel, chanted fell words, and made to draw it across her own wrist,*

*"No, what are you...?" the bosun cried out, reaching futilely to stop the mad witch. But alas, she slit her arm with a great gout of blood. The hematic siren song sung their lives' final coda. The charging sharks' ten-thousand starving teeth then vanished in a red blast shockwave. Floating within the crimson cloud surrounded by otherworldly wriggling leech-like veins, the disoriented bosun could feel rather than see the sharks thrashing all around, biting their mates' flesh off in a senseless orgy of bloodlust. A woman's arm shot out from the chaotic murk, whacked the bosun's face, and seized his wrist. Like a demonic angel rising from hell, eyes of steel emerged from the blood storm, framed by a black halo of loose hair.*

*"Swim, dammit."*

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## THE MISTS OF RAVENLOFT

Unlike the ethereal mists which embody unformed potential, the mists that suffuse the entirety of the Dread Domains of Ravenloft are the element of imprisonment. Controlled by the Dark Powers, the mists form the great barrier that walls off the demiplane. Somewhen in all of the internal reshuffling, whether by intention or mistake, the mysterious masters left a few stray threads of their own element lying about. These spells are not part of any scholar's or

ancient temple's collection, so stumbling upon even one would be truly extraordinary.

*Other spells that can be reflavored for this element: Wind Wall (3) as "Summon Misty Border", Banishment (4) as "Misty Abduction", Forcecage (7) as "Microdomain", Imprisonment (9)*

### MISTY TURNABOUT

2nd-level enchantment

**Casting time:** Special

**Range:** 300 feet

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** Instantaneous

In reaction to a creature that you see move, your misdirecting mist magic beguiles the unwilling target to travel opposite its heading without realizing. If the unwilling target fails its Wisdom saving throw, it moves to the destination 180 degrees opposite from the spot it was intending to go, without provoking opportunity attacks. If its movement speed isn't sufficient to reach the new location or an obstacle or hazard blocks the way, the target travels as far as it safely can and stops short. Once the spell ends, if the target still has movement speed remaining, it may use it as normal.

*Azalin never had high hopes for his 'dwarf project', but while his plan to tunnel under the misty border to escape the demiplane was yet another failure, he did get a perplexing underground labyrinth and enough good stone to supply Darkon's needs for decades as compensation.*

### GREATER MISTY STEP

3rd-level conjuration

**Casting time:** 1 Action

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V, S, M (A cicada's shell)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 10 minutes

While you are concentrating on this spell, if an attack hits you or you are damaged, you may use your reaction to poof into silvery mist, and teleport yourself up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space that you can see. You must decide whether you want to use this reaction before you make any concentration checks to see if you can maintain the spell. If the triggering attack or source of damage, not re-aimed, would have missed if you had been standing at your new location originally, then the attack misses and/or you take no damage from that source. The spell then ends. While you may ready this spell as a reaction, this spell is incompatible with *Contingency* or spells or effects of similar power that allow you to precast the spell so it can be selectively cast as a reaction.

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 8th level or higher, you can ignore the verbal, somatic, and material components and cast it as an instant reaction to damage that you take or an attack that hits, without expending your reaction. Casting *Greater Misty Step* in this way breaks your concentration on other spells.

### MIST SCULPT

6th-level transmutation

**Casting time:** 10 minutes

**Range:** 500 feet

**Components:** V, M (An object precious to you or a willing ally which the mists take as payment if the spell succeeds)

**Duration:** Instantaneous

You negotiate with the Mists to remodel the part of the local environment that can fit within a 200-foot cube. The spell fails if an intelligent creature who is not your ally perceives the spell's area while you are casting the spell. If your request is reasonable, the mists mold the surroundings according to your overall



intentions. You can only make general suggestions, so your control over the appearance and contents is very limited. The Mists are not inclined to create or destroy valuable objects, make changes that will result in direct harm, and the changes will be environmentally and aesthetically appropriate so that they do not appear out of place. The Mists will not remodel in or around landmarks or the abodes or haunts of powerful or important creatures.

Your DM has great latitude in ruling where the Mists are willing to act, if they will work on a larger space than the spell would normally allow or be limited to a smaller area, and if your offered compensation is worthy and proportional to your request. You may be able to:

- Restore the interior of an abandoned ruined house
- Add a basement or an attic to a house with none
- Create a small cavern behind a waterfall
- Push down treacherous reef rocks so a boat can navigate safely
- Fix a broken bridge that has collapsed into a river

- Raise a small hill crowned with an old oak tree and add a tomb for a fallen companion
- Create an area of sticky mud on a battlefield the night before armies clash
- Swap the location of two buildings on a street while their occupants sleep inside
- Create narrow cutbacks on a cliff so you can lead horses to its top

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 7th level or higher, misty weather rolls in and surrounds your spell area. It doesn't obscure your vision but limits the sight of those other than you to 30 feet. When cast using a spell slot of 8th level, the casting time decreases to one minute. When cast using a spell slot of 9th level, the casting time decreases to one action.

*"Truly, there is no telling what becomes of all the beloved trinkets lost to the Mists. Many who know some of the Secrets focus too much attention on the taking and confining aspects of this land, and so miss Their sleight of hand which slips second-hand tools into the paths of the ordinary so that they may become extraordinary." — Madame Eva*

#### SPELLS BY SCHOOL

##### Abjuration

Warding Walk  
Bellchime  
Mirror Shield  
Veil of Shade  
Deadtack

##### Conjuration

Silversworn Rune  
Summon Spectral Vardo  
Summon Mistway  
Shadeshroud  
Gravemulch

Viscid Glob

Summon Ichor Cube  
Greater Misty Step

##### Divination

Truehearing  
Sojourn Spirit  
Deathblood Divination

##### Enchantment

Halo  
Split Concentration  
Auscult  
Misty Turnabout

##### Evocation

Solar Glare  
Coronal Crown  
Pyreflame  
Pyreball  
Banshee's Cry  
Blood Burst

##### Illusion

Eclipse Script  
Shade-nap  
Hullabagloom  
Vitriolic Double  
Disguise Voice

**Necromancy**

Skullshock Therapy  
 Ghost Lantern  
 Stovepipe Breath  
 Graft  
 Osteosclerotic Armor  
 Azal'Lan's Arthritic Agony  
 Osteo-roguery  
 Strahd's Gaseous  
 Exsanguination

**Transmutation**

Premature Burial  
 Ichor Cure  
 Hag's Hunger  
 Mist Sculpt

**SPELLS BY CLASS**

*(Please do not feel confined by this selection. Ask your GM for spells appropriate for your character.)*

**Bard**

Auscult  
 Banshee's Cry  
 Bellchime  
 Disguise Voice  
 Eclipse Script  
 Graft  
 Greater Misty Step  
 Halo  
 Hullabagloom  
 Mirror Shield  
 Mist Sculpt  
 Osteo-roguery  
 Pyreflame  
 Shadeshroud  
 Silversworn Rune  
 Skullshock Therapy  
 Sojourn Spirit  
 Stovepipe Breath

Summon Mistway  
 Summon Spectral Vardo  
 Truehearing  
 Veil of Shade  
 Vitriolic Double

**Cleric**

Bellchime  
 Deadtack  
 Eclipse Script  
 Ghost Lantern  
 Graft  
 Halo  
 Mirror Shield  
 Silversworn Rune  
 Skullshock Therapy  
 Sojourn Spirit  
 Solar Glare  
 Truehearing  
 Warding Walk

**Druid**

Auscult  
 Blood Burst  
 Deathblood Divination  
 Eclipse Script  
 Graft  
 Gravemulch  
 Greater Misty Step  
 Halo  
 Hullabagloom  
 Mist Sculpt  
 Misty Turnabout  
 Osteosclerotic Armor  
 Premature Burial  
 Pyreflame  
 Shade-nap  
 Sojourn Spirit  
 Solar Glare  
 Stovepipe Breath  
 Summon Ichor Cube  
 Summon Mistway  
 Veil of Shade

Warding Walk

**Paladin**

Deadtack  
 Halo  
 Mirror Shield  
 Silversworn Rune  
 Warding Walk

**Ranger**

Auscult  
 Bellchime  
 Deathblood Divination  
 Misty Turnabout  
 Shade-nap  
 Shadeshroud  
 Silversworn Rune  
 Sojourn Spirit  
 Warding Walk

**Sorcerer**

Banshee's Cry  
 Blood Burst  
 Coronal Crown  
 Disguise Voice  
 Greater Misty Step  
 Halo  
 Hullabagloom  
 Ichor Cure  
 Misty Turnabout  
 Pyreball  
 Pyreflame  
 Shade-nap  
 Silversworn Rune  
 Skullshock Therapy  
 Solar Glare  
 Stovepipe Breath  
 Summon Mistway  
 Truehearing  
 Veil of Shade  
 Viscid Glob  
 Vitriolic Double

**Warlock**

Auscult  
 Deathblood Divination  
 Eclipse Script  
 Ghost Lantern  
 Graft  
 Greater Misty Step  
 Halo  
 Ichor Cure  
 Mirror Shield  
 Mist Sculpt  
 Misty Turnabout  
 Osteo-roguery  
 Osteosclerotic Armor  
 Pyreflame  
 Shade-nap  
 Shadeshroud  
 Silversworn Rune  
 Skullshock Therapy  
 Sojourn Spirit  
 Summon Ichor Cube  
 Truehearing  
 Veil of Shade

**Wizard**

Auscult  
 Azal'Lan's Arthritic Agony  
 Banshee's Cry  
 Bellchime  
 Blood Burst  
 Coronal Crown  
 Deadtack  
 Disguise Voice  
 Eclipse Script  
 Ghost Lantern  
 Graft  
 Gravemulch  
 Greater Misty Step  
 Hag's Hunger  
 Halo  
 Hullabagloom  
 Ichor Cure  
 Mist Sculpt

Misty Turnabout  
 Osteo-roguery  
 Osteosclerotic Armor  
 Premature Burial  
 Pyreball  
 Pyreflame  
 Shade-nap  
 Shadeshroud  
 Silversworn Rune  
 Skullshock Therapy  
 Sojourn Spirit  
 Solar Glare  
 Split Concentration  
 Stovepipe Breath  
 Strahd's Gaseous  
 Exsanguination  
 Summon Ichor Cube  
 Summon Mistway  
 Summon Spectral Vardo  
 Truehearing  
 Veil of Shade  
 Viscid Glob  
 Vitriolic Double

**SPELLS BY LEVEL****0 (Cantrip)**

Halo  
 Silversworn Rune

**1st-Level**

Eclipse Script  
 Bellchime  
 Sojourn Spirit  
 Veil of Shade  
 Gravemulch  
 Ichor Cure  
 Disguise Voice  
 Osteo-roguery

**2nd-Level**

Skullshock Therapy  
 Coronal Crown

Mirror Shield  
 Shade-nap  
 Pyreflame  
 Stovepipe Breath  
 Hullabagloom  
 Vitriolic Double  
 Osteosclerotic Armor  
 Deathblood Divination  
 Misty Turnabout

**3rd-Level**

Solar Glare  
 Split Concentration  
 Summon Spectral Vardo  
 Shadeshroud  
 Pyreball  
 Ghost Lantern  
 Deadtack  
 Banshee's Cry  
 Auscult  
 Greater Misty Step

**4th-Level**

Warding Walk  
 Viscid Glob  
 Summon Ichor Cube  
 Azal'Lan's Arthritic Agony

**5th-Level**

Graft  
 Strahd's Gaseous  
 Exsanguination

**6th-Level**

Truehearing  
 Hag's Hunger  
 Blood Burst  
 Mist Sculpt

**7th-Level**

Summon Mistway

**9th-Level**

Premature Burial

# SKULLAND, LAND OF UNDEATH AND LIFE

BY MISTMASTER

**Culture level:** Renaissance  
**Ecology:** Full  
**Climate & Terrain:** Temperate, the domain is a Skull-shaped island, rich in plains and forests, in the Nocturnal Sea.  
**Languages:** Darkonese and Vaasi.  
**Religions:** Zhakata The Overseer (LG), Evening Glory (CG), Uncle Dead (NG), the Eternal Order (LE), Vecna (NE), Doesain (CE)  
**Races:** Human (Darkonese and Vaasi) 47%, Undead Humans 47%, Other 6%.  
**Governement:** Parliamentary Republic.  
**Ruler:** Lord-President Gregory Marcham.  
**Darklord:** Vanessa Izuverich  
**Lightlord:** Ulmar "Grampa" Skellingtron  
**Inhabitants:** 3,000,000.  
**Analog:** none.  
**Capital City:** Necropolis (230,000 in)  
**Important towns:** Graveyard Point (208,900), Cemeterial Cape(207,810), Carrion Bay (193,000), Barrow Hill (105,000)  
**Borders:** In the Nocturnal Sea, 100 Miles east of Nevuchar Springs.

## TROPES

Skulland is a land where life, death, and undeath dance in a circle, and it focuses on the horror of hate and intolerance. You have the Zombies and the Skeletons, but the horror lies where the Zombies and the Skeletons tremble like the living ones.

## DOMAIN OVERVIEW

This skull-shaped island, surrounded by a light fog, is covered in forests, and cultivated fields; The population concentrates itself in the big cities and towns; The skull's eye-sockets are

lakes, from which two rivers are born, the Tear River, from the right eye-socket, and the Blooddrop River, from the left eye-socket. The skull jaw is formed by a reef, which forms a natural defense for the Bay of Carrions, the main accessible coast, where the port of Carrion Bay is seated. Necropolis, the capital city, sits in the middle of the Eyesocket Lakes, while Graveyard Point is on the left cheekbone, on a point between the Sea and the Tear River; Cemetary Cape is built in an analogous place on the other cheekbone, between the sea and the Blooddrop River. Barrow Hill, finally, is on the ominous hill, on the skull's forehead.

## The People

Half of Skulland's inhabitants are intelligent undead; the other half are living; and they get along pretty well. Since awakened Skeletons and Zombies need maintenance to not fall apart and can't reproduce themselves, the living help them out, and the undead pay them back by doing manual jobs. When the living die, they join the undead. The undead would be immortal, if it weren't for the many necrophagus Ghouls that pray on them, and for the fact that undead needs will to keep going. Any particular dolorous event, like the permanent death of friends or the end of a relationship can effectively kill a Skullander walking dead, by heartbreak. There are not many differences in fashion between the living and the unliving, and the cities appear as very bright and noisy necropolises; the creation and controlling of mindless undead is very frowned apart by both living and unliving Skullanders, because it amounts to slavery; turning undead without provocation is also seen as rude. Unusual undead are seen with curiosity, but without hostility, as long they behave civilly; the only real exception are the Ghouls; Ghouls on Skulland prey on both living and unliving, and living victims devoured by Ghouls will never raise again, so they are seen as a menace by both wings of Skullander population. Skullanders are a cheerful people and festivals and parties are very common.

Skullander Zombies can easily pass for living persons at first glance, while Skullander Skeletons keep their hair and have shiny golden eyes.

## History

### *Age of Creation*

In the Age of Creation, Eirik, the Lord of Death, marked an island with his symbol; Hala, Mother

Nature, infused the island with her power to balance out Life and Undeath. On this Island, undeath became a part of the natural circle, rather than its negation.

### *Age of Empires*

The Ancient Olympian Empire believed the Island to be the Doorstep to the Underworld, and saw it as a holy-place of Hades.

### *Age of Darkness*

In the Age of Darkness, Darkonese Undead Tyrants made the island their summer residence; The Vaasi Barbarians claimed it from them.

### *The Modern Age*

In the Modern Age, after shaking off Vaasi domination together, the undead and the living forged together a cohesive nation, strong enough to fend off Darkonese attempts to reconquer the Island.

### *The Current Age*

In the Current Age, another Necromancer, Meredoth Graben, from the Nebligtode Islands, attempted to conquer the Island, but he was defeated; the island fortified itself to prevent any new attempts.

*Better (un)death, than slavery*, quotes the Island's motto.

## RELIGION

**Zhakata The Overseer:** this Lawful Good aspect of Zhakata the Lawgiver teaches his followers to look after each other, to be respectful, gentle and forgiving, to follow the rules, as long as they are fair, to work hard but always to the betterment of the society and to reject oppression and exploitation; His favourite weapon is the longsword, his symbol is a circle inside a square and his domains are

Community, Good, Law, Protection and Strength. His followers are middle class workers, farmers, clerks and merchants.

**Evening Glory** : this Chaotic Good deity of eternal love, happy undeath, passion, conservation, gossip and vanity teaches her followers that nothing should tear lovers apart, not law, nor politics, nor even death. Love is the only truth, and should last forever; her domains are Chaos, Charm, Good, Magic and Protection. Her symbol is an open palm with a heart shaped hole in it. Her favourite weapon is the dagger. Her followers are lovers, poets, writers, artists, matchmakers, gossips, and slightly obsessed people.

**Uncle Dead** : This quite rare Neutral Good aspect of Erlik, whose cult divorced the Eternal Order in the remote past, is a deity of joy, friendship, death, undeath, and life who teaches his followers to enjoy and protect life no matter if their hearts beat or not; death is not the end, undeath doesn't mean you have to become a monster and to be alive means more than be able to breathe. His symbol is a skull with a top hat; his favourite weapon is the rapier and his domains are Death, Good, Healing, Luck, Repose, and Protection. His followers are common people, musicians, brewers, cooks, peasants, healers, and actors.

**The Eternal Order**: This Lawful Evil religion venerates all different aspects of Elrik, the Reaper, but the latter cult is predominant, centered on a god of death, order, oppression, bureaucracy, and necessity. Its Domains are Death, Evil, Law, Nobility and Rune. It teaches its followers to be resigned to death, to defer to authority, to observe the law and to serve faithfully, because Erlik's scythe does not spare anyone. His favourite weapon is the Scythe and his symbol is a skull on a book. It's followers are beurocrats, executioners, evil undead, and undertakers.

**Vecna** : The Whispered Lord is a Neutral Evil deity of knowledge, secrets, and dark magic who was once a mortal king and the first undead tyrant of Darkon. Ascended to godhood, he teaches his followers to seek knowledge and keep it, treasuring secrets and exploiting them; he is worshipped by necromancers, scholars, chroniclers, librarians, evil spellcasters and Lichs. His symbol is a hand holding an eye, his favourite weapon is the dagger, and his Domains are Evil, Knowledge, Magic, and Trickery.

**Doresain**: The King of the Ghouls, a Chaotic Evil deity of hunger, corruption and destruction, is the first Ghoul ever born; each of his followers is a Ghoul, a Ghast or on a path to become one of them. He teaches his followers to satisfy their hunger, because that is the only thing that matters. His favourite weapon is the scimitar; his symbol is a one eyed fanged skull on a pile of bones. His Domains are: Chaos, Death, Destruction and Evil.

### PLACES OF INTEREST

The Dancing Bones is the most lively inn of the capital, and it doubles as a dancing place; The owner of the place is Benjamin Galf (Human Expert 4) and it is Core-wide famous for the Dancing Dead, it's quartet of undead dancers.

The main devotional places of the island, the Cathedral of the Laughing Skull (Uncle Dead), The House of Eternal Love (Evening Glory) and the Soul Shepard's Temple (The Eternal Order) all sit in the city.

The Civic Mausoleum is the seat of the government. The Necropolis University is the most advanced school of necromancy in the Core.

In Barrow Town we find the Final Rest, a luxurious restaurant and hotel, owned by the richest zombie of the Core, Reginald Bloatrot (Middle-Aged Awakened Zombie Fighter 7, LN).

Barrow Town is home of the greatest public Temple of Vecna in the island, the Crypt of Secrets; it houses a great library accessible with an appropriate fee (the greater the knowledge the greater the price).

Graveyard Point and Cemetery Cape are port towns, and house many inns, but the best are respectively, the Lich Hand Inn at Graveyard Point and the Happy Crypt at Cemetery Cape. On Graveyard Point sits the Chapel of the Reaper, a temple of the Eternal Order dedicated solely to its main deity.

Carrion Bay is the bigger harbour of the island, and also hosts the military fleet; The Everwatch Chapel is the Overseer's main temple. Of the many inns of the city, the Old Bone Table is the most renowned restaurant in the island. The innkeeper is a salty old woman, Sapphira Keel [Old Rogue 7 (Pirate) NE] with a fearsome reputation.

A monumental lighthouse called the Last Light guides ships through the treacherous waters of the Jaws.

### THE FAMED AND THE INFAMOUS

**Ullmar "Grandpa" Skellingtron [Old Awakened Skeleton,(Augmented Human) Inquisitor 15, LG]**

This jolly old bag of bones does not look the part of an Inquisitor, and this means he is quite good in what he does; while he is not, officially, the head of the church of Uncle Dead, the main religion of the island, his age, wisdom and power give him a lot of authority. He keeps the eyes he does not physically possess well opened, but keeps a light handed approach; he knows that Skulland's balance is delicate, and he will maintain it with the total approval of his god. Only one enemy deserves his zealotry, the Devourers, the Ghouls which threaten

both the living and the unliving. That is the only instance he looks the part, and awe and fear follows; his burden is constant vigilance. (Adventure Hook: The adventurers meet an old jolly skeleton gambling and having fun in an inn; later this oddly perceptive person tips them off on a cell of the cult of Doresain.)

**Lord-President Gregory Marcham (Middle aged Human Bard 10, N)**

Elected as the current Lord-President after serving as the speaker of the Breathing Assembly for ten years, Marcham is an advocate of renewed links with various foreigner nations after decades of isolationism; the only long time trading partner of Skulland is Zeindost, in the south; recently, new trading agreements have been signed with Mordent, Zherisia, Nova Vaasa, and Lamordia. Darkon and the Nebligtode Islands are seen as slaver countries by the undead population and relationships are cold. (Adventure Hook: A practical man, Lord Marcham is carefully trying to smooth the angles because Darkon would be a huge market for the selling of Skullander goods, and a deal with the Nebligtode Islands would put a stop to Nebligtodian pirate raids. If his plans would become public too soon, his seat would be at risk, so, he enlists the characters to protect the ambassadors and their identities.)

**The Heartless Devourer (Adult Human Skullander Ghoul Lord, CE Warpriest of Doresain 12)**

He does not remember the name he bore before he started to eat corpses. But he remembers one thing: he was killed by an horde of Zombies; therefore, he prefers undead flesh, attacking living beings only to turn them in ghouls and ghosts at his command. He lurks in the caves under Barrow Hill, near Barrow Town,

alongside his faithful ghoul followers. *(Adventure Hook: the Heartless Devourer is literally heartless; his black withered heart is his most treasured possession, and when it is stolen he will manipulate the PCs to retrieve it for him)*

**Venerable ancient Morton Oldflesh (Old Human Awakened Zombie NG Cleric 12 of Uncle Dead)**

The first impression you have when looking at Venerable Ancient Morton is that you certainly can't call him a restless soul; this perfectly preserved walking corpse exudes an aura of serenity; the characteristic zombie slowness contributes to the effect, giving him solemnity. He is the official head of the Church of Uncle Dead, the main religion in Skulland; he is also one of the most ancient undead of the island, and he sees himself as the grandfather of all, living and unliving. He resides in the Laughing Skull Cathedral, in Necropolis; from there he administers the church, relying heavily on the counsel of "Grandpa" Skellingtron, especially in the matter of the ongoing crusade against the Ghouls. *(Adventure Hook: when he discovers a Ghoul cult in Necropolis itself, Morton needs proof before he can act against an illustrious mortal family; for that he enlists the help of the PCs.)*

**Maggie Rattles (Adult Human Awakened Skeletron CN, Oracle of Evening Glory 10)**

Aunt Maggie defines herself as a servant of love. She is an outgoing woman, always ready for giggles, gossip and matchmaking; she can also be very resolute, even ruthless, in pursuing her goddess's objectives. *(Adventure Hook: When Maggie's current protégée's father has a nasty encounter with a Ghoul, she is suspected, since the man was opposed to his daughter's betrothal; the PCs are called to investigate.)*

**Benjamin de la Neige [Adult Human Sorcerer (Undead Bloodline) 8, NG ]**

This Dementlieuse Sorcerer has lived in Skulland for a decade, and he has gained a lot of prestige by working to defend Barrow Town against the Ghouls. He has been elected Lord Mayor of the city, which is peculiar for a city with a strong majority of undead population. *(Adventure Hook: Recent attacks by blood-wasp swarms and suspiciously intelligent giant wasps have made Benjamin wonder if something foul is at work there; he enlists the PC's help to investigate)*

**Sentinel Klaus Volneychev [Adult Human Skullander Zombie Cleric of the Eternal Order 11 NE]**

This devoted priest of Elric, of the Eternal Order, maintains the peace of his church on the island from his seat in Graveyard Point. But he secretly plots to re-absorb the Cult of Uncle Dead into the ranks of his church, and he is collaborating with a Darkonese spy of the Kargat to succeed in this. *(Adventure Hook: When the PCs are asked to escort a guest of the sentinel to the capital, they can't begin to guess the trouble they are going to be in.)*

**Arch-Sentinel Serinida Brecht [Adult Human Skullander Skeleton Cleric of the Eternal Order 12 LN]**

The current head of the Eternal Order on Skulland is a moderate, focused on the stability and the law-abiding aspects of the cult. She resides in Necropolis and she is highly suspicious of Sentinel Klaus's activities in Graveyard Point. *(Adventure Hook: So suspicious she is that she tasks the PCs with investigating carefully.)*



### Magda Allyantr [Adult Red Widow Ninja 9, LE]

The secret weapon of the Warm Breath Society, a living supremacist organization, Magda was born human but was cursed to become a Red Widow after arranging the definitive death of her husband who came back as an awakened Zombie after his first death. She was tempted to that action by the scheming Vanessa Izuverich, whom she still follows blindly, as the enforcer of her will, covering her dirty work as the owner of the Happy Crypt Inn of Cemetery Cape. (*Adventure Hook: When the PCs arrive at her Inn, Magda offers them a free night in exchange for a simple favour, to escort a casket of wine to the Mayor's manor. When the mayor, a Zombie, falls ill because of poisoned wine, the PCs are entangled in a web of deceptions.*)

### ASSOCIATIONS

**The Warm Breath Society** : The Warm Breath Society is a political association advocating apartheid between the living and Undead; this is the exact opposite of the dominant traditional belief in the Island. Its members are a loud and active minority. (*Dread Possibility: The Inner Circle: Its inner circle is composed mainly by Werewasps loyal to their Queen.*)

**The Boneyard Council** : The Boneyard Council is the main legislative organism of Skulland; half of its members are Undead, the other half humans. It convenes in the Civic Mausoleum of Necropolis; its current chairman is Agenor Heel (N, Awakened Zombie Wizard 7). (*Dread Possibility: The Spy: there is a Kargat spy in the council, trying to prepare the ground for a Darkonese reconquest.*)

### THE DARKLORD : VANESSA IZUVERICH

#### Adult, Medium/Large LE Humanoid (Human ) (Shapeshifter) [ Werewasp Bard (Demagogue) 15] ( 94 HP)

**Speed:**30 feet (40 Feet in Hybrid form, 20 feet in Wasp form, Climb and Fly, good maneuverability, 40 feet in Hybrid and Wasp Form)

**Initiative:**+6 (+7 in Hybrid or Wasp Form) (+8/+9 in the Cheering Grove Manor)

**Senses:** Perception +20(+2 in the Cheering Grove Manor)

**Armor Class:** 20 (23 in Hybrid and Wasp Form), Touch 12 Flat Footed 17 (20 in Hybrid and Wasp Form) (+3 natural, +2 Dex, +3 armour, +2 deflection)(+2 in the Cheering Grove Manor)

**Space/Reach:** 1 square /1 square (4/2 in Hybrid and Wasp form)

**Combat Maneuver Bonus/Combat Maneuver Defense:**+11/23(+16/29 In Hybrid and Wasp Form)(+2 in the Cheering Grove Manor)

**Human** [Str:10, Dex:14, Con:12, Int:14, Wis:14, Cha 22], **Hybrid/Giant Wasp** [Str: 18, Dex:16, Con 14]

**Saving Throws:** Fort:+6(+7), Ref:+11(+12), Wil:+11 (+2 in the Cheering Grove Manor)

**Special Qualities:** curse of the Dark Lord, Bardic knowledge, bardic performance, cantrips, countersong, distraction, Famous (+4 Bluff and Intimidate to any Skullander native) Versatile performance(Act, Comedy, Dance, Oratory), well-versed, Inspire Competence +5, Gather Crowd (2/day), Inspire Greatness (x3 Targets), Soothing Performance, Inspire Heroics, Shape Change, Swarm Form, Poison Resistance (+10), Mind Effect Resistance (+10) Sinkhole of Evil 2

**Special Attacks:** Fascinate, Incite Violence, Dirge of Doom, Frightening Tune, Buzz.

**Attack: Melee:** +3 Poisoned Rapier +9/+4 (1d6/x2)/+3 Poisoned Rapier +12/+7 (1d6+4/x2) and Sting +10 (1d8+4+Poison Con Deny, 2d6 Str Damage DC 24 ; frequency 1/round 1 minute, 2 saves end) or only Sting in Wasp form Sting +12 (1d8+6+Poison Con Deny, 2d6 Str Damage DC 24 ; frequency 1/round 1 minute, 2 saves end) (+2 to HR,DR and DC in the Cheering Grove Manor)

**Ranged:** +1 Poisoned Hand Crossbow +10/+5 (1d6+1/19-20, range 30 ft not available in Wasp form (+2 in the Cheering Grove Manor)

**Skills:** Craft (Embroidery):+20, Knowledge (Local) +20, Perception: +20, Perform (Act):+31, Perform (Comedy):+31, Perform (Dance):+31, Perform(Oratory):+31, Sleight of Hand:+20/+21, **Stealth:**+20/+17. (+2 in the Cheering Grove Manor)

**Feats:** Combat Casting, Greater Feint, Improved Feint, Lethal Poison, Lingering Performance, Multiattack, Natural Spell, Quick Draw, Taunt.

### Spells:

Spell DC: 16+Spell Level. (+2 in the Cheering Grove Manor)

Spells per Day: 7 7 6 5 4

Known Spells: 0-Level Bard Spells: Dance Lights, Ghost Sound, Detect magic, Lullaby Mending, Read Magic.

1st-Level Bard Spells: Cause Fear, Charm Person, Cure Light Wounds, Disguise Self, Hideous Laughter, Unseen Servant.

2nd-Level Bard Spells: Alter Self, Blindness/Deafness, Eagle's Splendor, Darkness, Hold Person, Hold Undead (Like Hold Person, but it works on humanoid undead),

3rd-Level Bard Spells: Charm Monsters, Confusion, Crushing Despair, Cure Serious Wound, Scrying.

4th-Level Bard Spells: Detect Scrying, Dimension Door, Freedom of Movement, Invisibility, Greater

5th-Level Bard: Cure Light Wound, Mass; Dispel, Greater; Misdemeanor, Song of Discord.

### Challenge Rating: 18

**Possessions:**(46,500 gp/62,000 gp) +1 hand crossbow, +3 Poison Rapier, Amulet of Natural Armour +2, Bracers of Armour, +3, Ring of Protection, +2

### BACKGROUND

Vanessa was born in a village 30 miles south of Necropolis, a predominantly living community, freshly formed by Vaasan immigrants. Her parents had the dubious honour to be the first to die on the island, when she was a little girl of 9; they came back as a Skeleton and as a Zombie. While they were the same loving parents as before, the change was traumatic for Vanessa; particularly hurtful was the behaviour of their neighbours and immediate family, who

shunned them, treating them as pariahs. Vanessa initially resented the living people, but as she grew up, her parents' dismissive attitude grated on her nerves and pushed her to leave her family as soon she was of age. Living in Necropolis was another big shock for her; she worked as an embroider, gaining renown and wealth, but her resentment for the rich undead upper classes kept growing. She used the secrets gathered during her embroidering to ruin those she despised.

She bought a manor outside the Capital, and transferred herself to it, far from the "stinking bone- and-flesh bags." She carefully hid the fact that she had undead parents; she was soon engaged to a handsome, impoverished aristocrat of Vaasi descent. But, on the day of her marriage, the unexpected happened: the jealous ex-betrothed of the groom had uncovered her secret and forged invitations for the parents of the bride. The scandal when the two undead arrived was terrible; the groom refused to marry her, breaking her heart. She ran in the woods cursing her parents, and wishing revenge; in the heart of the groves near her manor, she discovered a cadre of Skullander Ghouls. She bargained with them for the true death of her parents, and they killed them; as she returned to her manor, the Mists lead her on the wrong path, where she was stung by Blood Wasps, a rare kind of wasp which only exist on Skulland. She dreaded her death and oncoming undeath, but instead woke up surrounded by wasps; she had the shape of one of them, only several times bigger. Soon, she realized she was alive, and able to return to her human form; she was now a Were Wasp.

### CURRENT SKETCH

After her change, she has rebuilt her reputation, turning into a political leader. Her goal is the segregation of the undead, and to have a nice happy family. As of now, she have not attained any of it.

### COMBAT

Usually, Vanessa leaves the dirty work to her spawn, but when forced into combat, she tries to pit her enemies against each other, using her spells and abilities, only rarely using her hybrid and Giant Wasp form to fight physically.

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

*Buzz*: At will (EX) As a standard action, when she is in her Hybrid and Giant Wasp form, she can

generate a powerful sonic pulse from her wings in a 30 foot radius; any creature able to hear within the radius must pass a Fortitude save, DC 21 or become permanently deaf, and stunned for 1d8 rounds.

*Summon Swarm*: She can summon and control a swarm of Blood Wasps (a Wasp Swarm with double HD and Bleeding along with the poison)

*Swarm Form (Sup)*: She can take the form of a swarm of Blood Wasps at will. It works as gaseous form, but she can inflict swarm damage, poison, bleeding, and distraction to any creature she shares the space with.

*Control Wasps*: She can control every kind of wasps, including Giant Wasps.

*Curse of the Dark Lord*: Every time she falls in love, her loved one dies and come back as a Skullander undead, the thing she despises the most. No matter how hard she tries, her heart keeps betraying her.

### LAIR

The Cheering Grove Manor is a three story palace, finely decorated and furnished, with several wasp motifs. Several wasp hives guard the secret zones of the house. The house, where several innocents have been secretly devoured by the Werewasps, is a Rank 2 Sinkhole of Evil, with the Fear and Rage ability (DC 21)

### CLOSING THE BORDER

When Vanessa wishes to close the borders, a cloud of blood wasps surrounds the island; If someone survives the wasps, that person can pass through. She can close the borders up to a day out of every two.

## NEW TEMPLATES

### Skullander Skeleton

Like Skeleton except:

They keep the original creature's mental abilities, memories, class, alignment, feats, and skills. They retain their hair, including facial hair. They can absorb liquids through their ribs. They require milk to be healed with Heal Checks, and during long rests to restore HP.

They keep their senses of taste and touch.

*Death by Heartbreak:* If a skullander undead loses its will to live, it crumbles and dies (Strong emotional pain can affect the will to live of a Skullander Skeleton)

*Dread Alternative: The Heart Rib-plate:* Each Skullander Skeleton has a ruby-like plate in its ribcage, hidden behind the second left rib; if the plate is removed (Heal Check DC 25) the Skullander Skeleton becomes a normal mindless skeleton until the plate is restored (Heal Check DC 30)

### Skullander Zombie

Like Zombie Except:

It keeps the original creature's mental abilities, memories, class, alignment, feats, and skills. They do not stink, if they take care to stay clean. They can eat and drink. They need Craft (taxidermy) to be used on them instead of Heal to restore HP and to stay hale. They keep their senses of taste and touch.

*Death by Heartbreak:* If a Skullander undead loses its will to live, it crumbles and dies (Strong emotional pain can affect the will to live of a Skullander Zombie)

*Dread Alternative: Digestive Worms:* Skullander Zombies' Stomachs are infested by 1d6 Diminutive Vermin which allows them to digest and absorb what they eat; the vermin are innocuous as long as they stay inside a Zombie's stomach; if someone manages to extract the vermin alive, with a DC 25 Heal Check, they can be used as a deadly weapon, provoking any living being that ingests them to make a DC 25 Fortitude ST; with a failure they contract the Zombie Verminosis Disease; Incubation time 1 Hour, every Hour a Check, or -2 Constitution; Once constitution reaches 0, the victim dies and becomes a mindless Zombie.

### New Oracle Curse: Compulsive Laugh

An Oracle with this Curse is prone to laughing fits when it is least opportune; he or she gets a -4 penalty on all social checks (Diplomacy, Bluff, Intimidate, and Sense Motive) and 5% failure chance when casting spells with vocal and/or somatic components. At first level the Oracle adds Hideous Laughter to his 1 level spells known list. At 5th Level the Oracle is immune to magical fear and despair effects. At 10th level the Oracle gains the Witch Hex Cackle at will. At 15th level the subject of the Cackle is also subjected to the effect of the bard's Frightening Tune.

# THE COLDHANDS

(NOT EVEN DEATH CAN STOP TRUE HEROES)

BY MISTMASTER

*The Coldhands are a group of five brave and outstanding heroes, who brave the Lands of Mist, righting wrongs and saving lives.*

*The fact they are all undead is not that big of a deal, right? Now, now, put down those pitchforks and those torches please, and let me tell you about them.*

(The Wandering Crow, as he introduces the Coldhands to a village in need)

## ARON DARKWINGALE

Aron is the face of the group, a tall, handsome black-haired man with deep black eyes; as long as he keeps his pointy teeth hidden in his mouth, nothing can go wrong.

Aron was a Mordentish minstrel who went to explore the world, and by chance met a Vampire; he was lucky, though, as that Vampire

was of a Lazendraky mentality and he survived the encounter unscathed. Later that year, however, he fell mortally ill, and he managed to contact his vampire friend, who was a healer. The only possible cure, however, was the embrace, and he accepted, since he had too much to see still.

Aron is as smart as he is handsome, and he is a good-natured flirt; he is neither a scoundrel nor an insensitive womanizer though, and he strives to avoid breaking hearts when he can.

He uses Safe Feeding to feed himself every time he can.

He has a friendly rivalry with Janos, and he is in a very good relationship with Margot. He was the first of the group to meet with one of the others, Margot, and they decided to form a lasting partnership.

**Aron Darkwingale NG, Adult, Medium Undead (Augmented Human) [ Mature Vampire Bard 10] (130 HP)**

**Speed:**40 feet

**Initiative:**+9

**Senses:** Perception +20 (Darkvision 120 feet)

**Armor Class:** 29 , Touch 18 Flat Footed 23 (+6 natural, +5 Dex, +5 armour, +2 deflection, +1 dodge)

**Space/Reach:** 1 square /1 square

**Combat Maneuver Bonus/Combat Maneuver Defense:**+11/26

**Str:**16, **Dex:**20, **Con:**-, **Int:**18, **Wis:**16, **Cha:**26

**Saving Throws:** Fort:+11, Ref:+14, Wil:+10

**Special Qualities:** resistance to cold 10 and electricity 10, damage reduction 10/Magic and Silver, fast healing 5 , channel resistance +4, Undead Traits, gaseous form, Bond with the Coffin. Vampire Weaknesses, Dependent Diet (Blood); Bardic Knowledge, Versatile Performance (Dance, Percussion, Wind), Well Versed, Lore Master (1/day), Change Shape, Shadowless, Spider Climb, Jack of all Trades.

**Special Attacks:** Blood Drain, Children of the Night, Create Spawn, Dominate (DC 23), Energy Drain. Bardic Performance (Countersong, Distraction, Inspire Courage +2, Inspire Competence +3, Dirge of Doom, Inspire Greatness.

**Attack:** Melee: +2 Rapier +12/+7 (1d6+5 18/20)  
Ranged: +1 Hand Crossbow +12/+7 (1d6+1/19-20, range 30 ft)

**Skills:** Bluff (+29) Escape Artist (+18), Knowledge ( Local) (+17) , Perception (+26), Perform (Dance) (+21) Perform (Percussion) (+23), Perform (Wind) (+23), Sense Motive(+26), Spellcraft (+17), Stealth (+26), and Use Magic Device (+21)

**Feats:** Alertness (B), Combat Reflexes (B), Dodge (B), Improved Initiative (B), Lightning Reflexes (B), Toughness (B), Cast in Combat, Improved Feint, Lingering Performance, Requiem, Quick Draw, Weapon Finesse.

#### Spells:

Spell DC: 18+Spell Level.

Spells per Day: 7 6 6 3

Known Spells: 0-Level Bard Spells: Dance Lights, Ghost Sound, Detect Magic, Lullaby, Read Magic .

1st-Level Bard Spells: Cause Fear, Charm Person, Cultural Adaptation, Disguise Self, Hideous Laughter, Unseen Servant.

2nd-Level Bard Spells: Blindness/Deafness, Cat's Grace, Darkness, Hold Person, Tongues.

3rd-Level Bard Spells: Charm Monster, Confusion, Triggered Suggestion, Displacement.

4th-Level Bard Spells: Dimension Door, Freedom of Movement.

#### Challenge Rating: 12

**Property:**(18,000 gp) +1 hand crossbow, (60 quarrels), +2 Rapier, Headband of Alluring Charisma (+4), Bracers of Armour (+5), Ring of Protection (+2), Masterwork Flute, Masterwork Drum, Reinforced magically-locked Masterwork Coffin.

#### MARGOT DE LA VIELLEROSE

Margot is a really beautiful young woman and the fact that she is transparent does not diminish her beauty; her light blue eyes still shine with life, exactly like back when she still had a solid body. This dementlieuse girl was orphaned as a child, and raised as a pickpocket

by an unscrupulous petty criminal in Pont-a-lucine.

But Margot was not willing to be a petty thief for the rest of her life, and she ran away; stealing again only to feed herself. Caught in the act by a cleric of Ezra, she was taken in and taught the job of the ceramist, in which she became quite well-versed. She found love and

married, but one day her husband was conned out of their money and he killed himself. Margot returned to her old ways, and stole back that money, but she spared the conmen's life. She decided to travel, posing as a traveling ceramist, and started to use her skill as a thief to right wrongs and help people. One day, she discovered that her husband never left her, his

spirit lingering close to her as a geist. She gave him peace, forgiving him for his suicide, just a few nights before she was killed while trying to help a young man she would later learn was a Vampire. Her soul never went on, and she came back as a Ghost. She continues today, honouring the promise, that she made when she met Aron.

**Margot de la Viellerose CG Adult, Medium Undead (Augmented Human, Incorporeal ) [ Rank 2 Ghost Rogue 10] (80 HP)**

**Speed:** Fly 50 feet (Perfect Maneuverability)

Initiative:+10

**Senses:** Perception +20 (Darkvision 120 feet)

Armor Class: 28 , Touch 17 Flat Footed 23 (+6 natural, +5 Dex, +5 armour, +2 deflection)

**Space/Reach:** 1 square /1 square

**Combat Maneuver Bonus/Combat Maneuver Defense:**+14/24

**Str:**14, **Dex:**24, **Con:**-, **Int:**18, **Wis:**16, **Cha:**20

**Saving Throws:** Fort:+8, Ref:+16, Wil:+6

**Special Qualities:** Incorporeal, Rejuvenation ,Channel resistance+4, Undead Traits, Trapfinding, Evasion, Trap Sense +3, Uncanny Dodge, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Rogue Talents [Canny Observer, Careful Stab, Charmer, Combat Trick (Dodge), Improved Evasion]

**Special Attacks:** Salient Abilities [Increased Speed, Mind Games (Animate Rope, Entangle, Spiritual Weapon, Summon Swarm), Telekinesis]; Sneak Attack (+5d6),

**Attack:** Melee: +1Ghost Touch Rapier +12/+7 (1d6+5 18/20 x2)

Ranged: +1 Ghost Touch Shortbow +12/+7 (1d6+1/x3, range 30 ft)

**Skills:** Acrobatics (+20), Bluff (+18), Craft (Ceramist) (+17), Diplomacy (+18), Disable Device (+20), Escape Artist (+20), Fly (+28), Knowledge (Dungeoneering) (+17), Knowledge (Local) (+17), Perception (+24), Sense Motive (+16), Sleight of Hand (+20), Stealth (+28), and Use Magic Device (+18).

**Feats:** Dodge (B), Focus Weapon (Rapier), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness, Quick Draw, Weapon Finesse.

**Challenge Rating:** 12

**Property:** (18,000 gp) +1 hand crossbow, (60 quarrels), +1 Ghost Touch Rapier, Belt of Incredible Dexterity (+4), Bracers of Armour (+5), Ring of Protection (+2), Ghost Touch Thief tools, Adamantine funerary urn, containing her properties and her ashes.

**LOUIS MOURNESWORTH**

Louis is a stout old man, with long white hair and a thick white beard, always dressed in clean white and black clerical clothes over a suit of armor. He has a kind smile and a sharp tongue; only a careful eye can notice the fact that he is not breathing, while a keen nose could recognize his distinctive scent of incense and bales. A scion of the Mordentish House of

Mournesworth, Louis is the great-uncle of the current lord, and left Mordent for Skulland where he became a cleric of Uncle Dead; he decided to return to Mordent 150 years ago, and there he died; Uncle Dead blessed him, allowing his spirit to return to his body and, after some decades of service on Skulland he decided to serve his god as a wandering cleric; He met his current companions thanks to the help of an old friend.

**Louis Mournesworth NG Adult, Medium Undead (Augmented Human ) [ Rank 2 Ancient Dead Cleric 10 of Uncle Dead] (120 HP)**

**Speed:** 30 feet

**Initiative:** +2

**Senses:** Perception +22 (Darkvision 60 feet)

**Armor Class:** 31, Touch 14, Flat Footed 29 (+5 natural, +2 Dex, +9 armour, +3 Shield, +2 deflection)

**Space/Reach:** 1 square /1 square

**Combat Maneuver Bonus/Combat Maneuver Defense:** +12/26

**Str:**20, **Dex:**14, **Con:**-, **Int:**14, **Wis:**28, **Cha:**24

**Saving Throws:** Fort:+17, Ref:+5, Wil:+19

**Special Qualities:** Undead Traits, Salient Weaknesses [Hale, Reduced Despair (X2)], Rejuvenation (6hpxh, inert one day/one day). Divine Aura (Good), Spontaneous Casting (Cure and Inflict), Domains: Protection (Defense) and Repose.

**Special Attacks:** Salient Abilities [Improved Ability (x4), Burst of Vengeance (3Xd), Divine Wrath; Fast Healing 6, Pristine Appearance, Spell Resistance 26], Channel Energy (5d6, 10xd, Positive and Negative Energy), Resistance Electricity 10.

**Attack:** Melee: +2 Rapier +13/+8 (1d6+7 18/20) and Slam +7 (1d6+14 holy and bludgeoning damage)

**Skills:**Craft (Enbalmer) (+15), Diplomacy (+20), Heal (+22), Knowledge (history) (+15), Knowledge (religion) (+15), Perception (+22), Sense Motive (+22)

**Feats:** Cast in Combat; Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Focus (Rapier), Weapon Focus (Slam), Still Spell, Toughness.

**Spells:**

Spell DC: 19+Spell Level.

Spells per Day: 6+1 6+1 5+1 5+1 3+1

Usually Prepared Spells: 0-Level Cleric Spells: Detect Magic, Guidance, Mending, Resistance .

1st-Level Cleric Spells: Bless, Bless Water, Detect Undead, Divine Favour, Liberating Command, Protection from Evil, Shield (D).



2nd-Level Cleric Spells: Bull's Strength (2), Consecrate (It does not harm good aligned Undead), Darkness, Eagle's Splendor(2), Gentle Repose (D).

3rd-Level Cleric Spells: Blindness/Deafness, Protection from Energy (D), Remove Blindness/Deafness, Remove Curse, Magic Circle Against Evil, Water Walk .

4th-Level Cleric Spells: Absolution, Guardian of Faith, Magic Weapon, Greater, Sooth Construct, Spell Immunity (D), Still Dispel Magic (2)

5th-Level Cleric Spells: Cleanse, Hallow, Raise Dead, Slay Living (D)

### Challenge Rating: 12

**Property:**(8,000 gp )+2 Rapier, +3 Chainmail, Ring of Protection (+2), +1 Heavy Shield, Masterwork Holy Symbol (Skull with a top hat), Healer Kit, 10,000 GP in expensive material components, incense, bales.

### JANOS ZIDAR

A Barovian mason's apprentice turned militia soldier, then officer, Janos left Barovia after he was ordered to execute the innocent family of a disloyal boyar. The Count-King Strahd von Zarovich did not take it kindly, and he was killed, doomed to become a loyal skeleton bound to his master's will; but fate willed differently, as Archibald Everlast, the Wandering Crow (AN Cfr Qtr 24) was in the Town of Barovia, on the road to Vallaki, that

day. He interfered discreetly in the procedure of reanimating Jason's corpse, who came back as a free-willed Graveknight. The Wandering Crow mentored him on his new undead state, and put him on the path of the nascent Coldhands adventuring party. Janos has a friendly rivalry with Aron, and he is not indifferent to Margot's beauty. Janos is a firm believer in law and order, but only as a tool for the greater good; authority figures who abuse their power are not legitimate and unfair laws are not laws.

### Janos Zidar LG Adult, Medium Undead (Augmented Human ) [ Graveknight Fighter 10] (140 HP)

**Speed:** 30 feet

**Initiative:** +6

**Senses:** Perception +25 (Darkvision 60 feet)

**Armor Class:** 33, Touch 14 Flat Footed 31 (+4 natural, +2 Dex, +14 armour, +1 Shield, +2 deflection)

**Space/Reach:** 1 square /1 square

**Combat Maneuver Bonus/Combat Maneuver Defense:**+19 (+23 sundering) /29 (33 against sundering)

**Str:**28, **Dex:**14, **Con:**-, **Int:**16, **Wis:**16, **Cha:**20

**Saving Throws:** Fort:+12, Ref:+7, Wil:+8

**Special Qualities:** Immunity to Cold, Electricity, Fire, damage reduction 10/Magic, channel resistance+4, Undead Traits, Aura of Inspiration (Like Aura of Desecration but it uses a neutral energy which positively influences both Living and Undead if they are his allies), Rejuvenation, Spell Resistance 23; Brave+3 (Against magic fear effects who influences undead, like Turn Undead), Armour Mastery (2), Weapon Mastery (2).

**Special Attacks:** Channel Destruction (+2d6 Fire Damage), Turning Undead, Mount (As a Paladin Mount of the same level, only skeletal)

**Attack:** Melee: +2 Greatsword +23/+18 (2d6+18 19/20)

**Skills:** Climb (+19), Intimidate (+26), Perception (+21), Profession (Masonry) (+16), Ride (+20) and Swim (+19).

**Feats:** Armor Focus (B), Furious Focus (B), Greater Demoralize (B); Greater Sunder, Greater Weapon Focus (Heavy Blades), Iron Will, Improved Demoralize (B), Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Power Attack (B), Redeemed Companion (B) Weapon Focus (Heavy Blades), Weapon Specialization (Heavy Blades) (B).

**Challenge Rating:** 12

**Property:** (8,000 gp) +2 Greatsword, Headband of Alluring Charisma (+4) +3 Full Plate, Ring of Protection (+2), Belt of Giant Strength (+4)

## EBENEZER INKSPARKS

Ebenezer was a kind Darkonese scholar and bookmaker who always tried to use his knowledge to help those in need; he was already advanced in age when he became the apprehensive of the single most powerful spellcaster in the Land of Mist, none other than the Wandering Crow. During his apprenticeship with Archibald he learned about the unique Lich-like condition of his mentor; he studied the lore on standard lichdom, and found it not a very desirable condition, since the price to create the phylactery was horrible. Immortality was not worth a person's very soul. But he wondered if his teacher's condition was somehow replicable; one day, they casually met on the road a pitiful creature named Cyrus, a Vassalich in the employ of King Azalin and his master managed to help the fool, breaking his bond with the Lich King. The now freed Cyrus retired in Lazendrak, to live a peaceful eternity as far as possible from Darkon; to obtain the freedom of the poor soul, Archibald had to win a game of wit against Azalin, and retrieve

Cyrus's phylactery. Once the bond was broken, the phylactery became apparently inert and Ebenezer studied it without Archibald knowing; they could not guess that Azalin had tried a last treachery, and would have tried to turn Ebenezer in a Vassalich; but Ebenezer lacked the ambition and the powerlust that Vassalich normally had, and with the help of his mentor, he resisted Azalin's spell, transforming instead in a free-willed Lich. His teacher had shared with him all the knowledge he could, but now, it was time for Ebenezer to walk on his own two legs; as a farewell gift his friend found him a group, and he now wanders the Mists in a much more proactive way.

Ebenezer is soft-spoken and always gentle, even towards his enemies; sometimes he feels frustrated by other people's impulsiveness and ignorance, but rarely does he let it grate on his nerves; he loves order and keeps his small wagon-library-lab neat and well organized. He can slightly lost his composure when someone messes with his books.

**Ebenezer Inksparks LG Old, Medium Undead (Augmented Human ) [ Lich Universalist Wizard 10] (70 HP)**

**Speed:** 30 feet

**Initiative:** +6

**Senses:** Perception +25 (Darkvision 60 feet)

**Armor Class:** 24, Touch 14 Flat Footed 22 (+5 natural, +2 Dex, +5 armour, +2 deflection)

Space/Reach: 1 square /1 square

**Combat Maneuver Bonus/Combat Maneuver Defense:**+6/18

**Str:**12, **Dex:**14, **Con:**-, **Int:**26, **Wis:**18, **Cha:**18

**Saving Throws:** Fort:+8, Ref:+5, Wil:+11

**Special Qualities:** damage reduction 10/Bludgeoning and Magic, Rejuvenation, Familiar: Raven

**Special Attacks:** Sleeping Touch, Turn Undead (30 ft, 20),

**Attack: Melee:** Touch +6 [1d8+5 Cold or Negative Energy (only to cure) +Sleep (DC 23)Crit 20x2]

**Ranged:** +2 Heavy Crossbow +9 (1d10+2/19-20, range 120 ft)

**Skills:** Appraise (+21), Craft (Books) (+21), Craft (Carpentry) (+21), Craft (Leather) (+21), Fly (+23), Knowledge (Arcane) (+21), Knowledge (Planes) (+21), Perception (+25), Sense Motive (+25), Stealth (+23), and Spellcraft (+21)

**Feats:** Craft Wondrous Item (B), Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Eschew Components, Redeemed Companion (B); Scribe Scroll (B), Silent Spell (B), Spell Penetration, Still Spell.

**Spells:**

Spell DC: 18+Spell Level.

Spells per Day: 6 6 5 4 3

Usually Prepared Spells: 0-Detect Magic, Disrupt Undead, Message, Spark

1st-Level Wizard Spells: Grease, Magic Missile (3),Reveal Secrets (2),

2nd-Level Wizard Spells: Bull's Strength, Cat's Grace, Darkness, Detect Magic (Silent and Still), Disguise Other, Eagle's Splendor, Invisibility.

3rd-Level Wizard Spells: Fireball (2), Hold Person, Necrostasis, Protection from evil (Silent and Still).

4th-Level Wizard Spells: Dimension Door, Invisibility (Greater), Invisibility (Silent and Still), Wall of Fire.

5th-Level Wizard Spells: Grease, Greater, Hold Monster, Major Creation.

Known Spells: All up level 5.

**Challenge Rating:** 12

**Property:** (4,000 gp ) +2 hand crossbow, (60 quarrels), Headband of Vast Intelligence (+4), Bracers of Armour (+5), Ring of Protection (+2), Rod of Minor Metamagic (quicken), Spell Book (All Wizard Spells up to level 5), Library-Lab Wagon.

*The old bespectacled man ended his long, carefully-worded speech and to his satisfaction, noticed that pitchforks and torches were discarded. He looked to the older-looking, smaller man with the heavy tome in his hand. "Alright Ebenezer, I think you lads have a job to do!" He returned to his own wagon, and marched it towards the misty horizon, knowing that the villagers were in good hands.*

## NEW FEATS

### **Improved Demoralize**

*You learn how to instill fear in the heart of your enemies with a quick glance and a simple gesture.*

Prerequisites: Cha 13, BAB: +1

Benefits: You can make an Intimidate Check to demoralize with a Move Action.

Normal: Demoralize is a Standard Action.

### **Greater Demoralize**

*You learn to instill fear in your opponents, posing as though you were bigger than your real size.*

Prerequisites: Improved Demoralize, Cha 15, BAB: +6

Benefits: You count one size larger for the purpose of Intimidate Checks to Demoralize.

### **Redeemed Companion**

*You learn to channel the best part of your ego in your companions, warding them against the interference of the Mists.*

Prerequisite: Animal Companion, Familiar, Mount or similar ability, Non-Evil Alignment.

Benefits: Your Animal Companion, Familiar, Mount, or similar helper is not a Dread Companion.

## DREAD POSSIBILITY - THE DARKNESS WHICH FOLLOWS

The Coldhands are a force of great good; not only do they fight for good, not only are they internally good, they are a beacon of hope for both the living and the undead. But light is the source of shadows; someone or something is following the Coldhands, who are often informed of strange incidents happening to the people they have helped in the past. What or who this darkness is, and the nature of its ultimate goal are a mystery tied to the past of the Coldhands.

# THE MUMMY'S CURSE

BY STEVE LYONS

*Inspired by The Mummy (1999)*

## INTRODUCTION

*"Death is only the beginning."*

To most, death isn't viewed in a negative way. While sad for the living, the promise of eternal bliss in the afterlife is quite enticing for the dead. But for some, it is anything *but* eternal bliss. For some, they suffer an eternity of torment and torture.

If presented with the opportunity to end the suffering, would you choose a life of horrific memories, or to finally rest in peace?

## FOR THE DUNGEON MASTER

I've designed this adventure to be adapted to any campaign setting, any domain, for a party of any number, of any level, and for any edition. There aren't any stat blocks for the NPCs/enemies for that reason. For every NPC mentioned, stat blocks can be found in the Monster Manual for the edition you're playing.

The location of this adventure can take part in any town you fancy as it's not limited to one particular area.

The religious aspects of the adventure can be also integrated into your campaign setting. I loosely use the term "local" throughout the adventure so you, as the DM, can use whichever fits that description from your own campaign setting.

As the mummy grows more powerful, my suggestion is to start him off as a regular

mummy, then add abilities/spells from the Mummy Lord stat block for each part of his body he absorbs from the NPCs.

I've written a few ways in how the adventure can end, and I've also written a few different scenarios of events so you can cater to how your players run their characters; from Lawful good, through to Chaotic evil. It's important to read the entire adventure first so you can pre-decide which ending you want to choose as well as picking the paths to cater to your player preferences.

I've also written an ending in the event you would rather have the mummy remain evil and attempt to become a mummy lord by restoring his heart.

## STORY BACKGROUND

Several hundred years ago, Kallist Rekthed, a priest of the local area's religious sect was found to be kidnapping young women and torturing/sacrificing them to another deity in order to increase his favour and power.

He was eventually caught by the sect, and they performed a most horrific form of justice/venge. He was mummified in a rather unique way. First, he had his hands removed so he couldn't lay his hands on another woman. Second, he had his eyes and tongue removed so he could never see or speak to another woman. Third, they removed his skin so he could never feel a woman's touch. Fourth, they removed his brain so he would never think of another

woman. Finally, they removed his heart so he could feel the anguish and horror he inflicted on his victims forever. Each of the first four parts was cremated and placed into one of four separate urns – which were made of diamond to protect the contents. The heart was not cremated, and was placed inside the coffin with Kallist. They then cursed his soul in the tongue of the deity that he was secretly aligned to. The curse was that for all eternity, he would be forced to feel the combined torture and torment of all the women he had killed. The heart would remain immortal, forcing the curse to be unbreakable. However, there was a mistranslation when cursing in a separate tongue. The “immortal heart” was instead translated as the priest’s bloodline. Hence, the curse remains as long as the family blood continues.

The priests were unaware that the curse had backfired, but they walled off the tomb and abandoned the church grounds because they believed it was too tainted from Kallist’s foul deeds.

### ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

An NPC party has enlisted help to find out why they’re being haunted and how to stop it. What’s actually happening is that the NPCs have been cursed for removing the urns from the tomb, and they have awoken Kallist Rekthed. The mummy will seek out the cursed and restore parts of himself from the victims. The first attack will happen while the PCs are investigating the abandoned church for the first time. The second might occur behind the scenes, depending on what the PCs are investigating, or it might happen with the PCs present. The mummy cannot be destroyed with the ritual to resurrect his heart and will resurrect in his coffin after 24 hours. The mummy should ultimately retrieve all of his parts from the NPCs. There are ways to stop this from happening, but it should ultimately be

inevitable. Once he retrieves his brain, the mummy will regain all of his memories – most importantly the memories of the last few centuries of torture and torment. To the PCs surprise, instead of preparing to fight a mummy lord the mummy will actually help the PCs find a way to destroy him so he can rest in peace. He had just been acting on mummy instinct until his brain was restored.

The mummy will reveal that they need to find one of his relatives to help complete the ritual to kill him. However, he won’t reveal that he needs to remove the heart of his relative in the same ritual in which his own heart was removed, as the PCs more than likely will not be on board.

The mummy will cast a locate spell on his own blood to find the closest relative which will be a teenage girl in the next town over.

This is where the group will learn what the mummy needs to do in order to kill himself – sacrifice the blood relative. Depending on the group’s morality, this is where the adventure can go down multiple paths. If the group is eviller in nature, then they can kidnap the girl and perform the ritual to kill the mummy.

If the group is not quite that evil, they can learn that the teenage girl has a brother who is a bandit captain that operates out of a camp a couple days away. Performing the ritual using him will have the same effect.

If the group is lawful good, they will have to find a way to protect the girl (and perhaps the bandit brother) from the mummy because he doesn’t care who has to die, nor does he have the patience to find another way. The PCs will enlist the help of the local religious sect, where one of the higher members will perform a ritual to restore the mummy’s heart and destroy him. The mummy will know his heart is being resurrected and will not stop the ritual from

happening. He will however attack the PCs for wasting his time.

### THE ADVENTURE: PART 1

The adventure can begin however the DM wishes. The PCs may enter the town on their travels, they can start the campaign this way with the NPC group looking for help, or become involved for any other reason. Whilst the party is travelling about the town, or are winding down in the local inn, they are approached by another group of adventurers. The NPCs introduce themselves and tell the PCs they've been having nightmares, strange nightmares, heart palpitations, breaking out in a sudden sweat, etc. All these things point to a typical haunting – which is what they believe is happening to them. The NPCs request the PC party to help with this supposed haunting as they think the problem is a little above their pay grade, having just recently started adventuring. The PCs will be rewarded, of course.

*Two days ago, the NPC adventurers came across an old, abandoned church a short distance from the town. Exploring the basement of the church they discovered a wall that looks to have once been sealed off, but after centuries of erosion has revealed a secret doorway. After tearing it down, the NPC adventurers discovered the tomb of Kallist Rekthed. Inside the tomb were four urns made from diamond and a stone coffin. Being new to the adventuring game, the group decided to leave with the urns, concluding it was an impressive haul for their first tomb exploration, and they could not open the (magically sealed) coffin. It's up to the DM to decide who takes which urn.*

*They travelled to town and took rest at one of the inns. Overnight, they all experienced the same nightmare: fragmented visions of Kallist's torture/torment. During the course of the next day, the adventurers experience what is mentioned above. The same nightmares occur*

*that night. It is at that point realised that they might need some help.*

Things the NPCs will reveal:

- Where they've been the last few days.
- The nightmares they've been having.
- They won't reveal that they took the urns right away. They're reluctant to mention that because they *don't* want to give up the urns right away, given their worth. (1000gp per urn)
- They will reveal where they were (the abandoned church).
- They assume entering the church and exploring *has awakened a ghost*.
- They won't go back to the church. They are too scared, especially if that's where the 'ghost' lives.
- Any other information about their character and background.

The obvious hint is to explore the church. The NPC party will give the location of the church. If the players decide to ask around town about the church or rumours, the townsfolk won't reveal too much, only the same answer, usually – "It was abandoned a long time ago". If the party is persistent, someone might answer, "I heard something bad happened there a long time ago," without any further backstory.

If the party decides to head to the local religious sect first, for now they won't reveal anything apart from what they've heard so far. The first person they speak to is new to the sect and won't have much information. If the party persists, be a little bit railroading and say that no one else is available right now.

### The abandoned church

There is nothing to find in the church except for the tomb of Kallist, obviously empty since it's already been raided by the NPCs. The players will notice, however, that the coffin is open (it's

up to the DM whether the NPCs mention a closed coffin or not). There are four things the players can learn from a perception / investigation roll. These are in order of difficulty, instead of giving a DC, so the DM can adapt to their edition.

1. The spots where the urns were sitting. No dust.
2. On the underside of the coffin lid, it reads, "Kallist ReKthed".
3. A handful of ashes. (This is the remains of his heart).
4. There are footprints that are fairly recent. It should be obvious that they are from the NPC party. However, all of those footprints are from shoes. There's one set that's barefoot (Kallist).

*During the time the PCs were heading to the church, Kallist has risen and is making a bee-line for the NPCs. The PCs avoid him due to the fact that the road has a few twists and turns, and the mummy is making a straight line towards town. Once he gets to the town, he will take back one of his organs from one of the NPCs. It's up to the DM which NPC gets attacked first, but I highly recommend the skin since presumably the NPC would die from the attack. This adds an extra bit of mystery as obviously the NPC can't describe what happened. The players should return to town shortly after the attack and discover the body – either by themselves, or with a crowd around. It's up to you. During this time, the mummy is lingering around town to plan its next attack.*

The NPCs at this time should obviously be freaked out. If the PCs ask the NPCs about what was taken from the tomb (from the dust clue), or if they ask the NPCs what else they know, the NPCs will reveal that they took the urns. They will be reluctant to give up the urns, as mentioned, because of their worth. It won't take too much to convince them, however, especially with the death of their friend. They are still too scared to return to the abandoned

church on their own. However, the reward for the party was based upon the value of the urns. If they return the urns, there's no longer a reward for the party. **If the party chooses to not help them because of the lack of reward, the mummy will kill the remaining NPCs, then seek out the party to help with his goals and proceed to part 2.**

The next obvious part should be returning the urns to the abandoned church. Casting a detect magic will reveal that the urns are cursed, but won't describe the curse. Casting a remove curse on the urn will bounce the curse unto the person that cast it. If the caster happens to be female, it will bounce to the closest male – PC or NPC (as the mummy is cursed to never touch a woman again, so too is his curse barred from affecting any female). *Only a greater restoration will remove the curse from the urns* and only from one at a time. If it's been cast on all four of the urns, then confronting the mummy and killing him will destroy the mummy permanently.

**If the curse bounces to a party member, the party will have to continuously protect him or remove the curse once again, upon which it will bounce to someone else. It is possible for one person to have multiple parts of the curse. For example, the mummy might retrieve the hands AND the brain from them. All depends on the circumstances.**

Another option is to return the urns to the church in town, rather than the abandoned church. If this occurs, then there is a low ranking member that receives the party, but can't give them any information because he's not privy to it. The higher ups mentioned later are out of town on business.

If the PCs take the urns back to the abandoned church, the second attack will happen. It's once again up to the DM which NPC is attacked. It should be either the hand or the eyes/tongue.



Depending on the attack, the surviving NPC will be able to describe the attack. Preferably the eyes/tongue victim as they won't be able to accurately describe the attack.

**If the party is evil in nature, they might even decide to kill the NPCs to stop the curse. If this happens, the curse then applies to the PC that kills the NPC. If the PC is a female, then the curse bounces to the closest male. Once again, it is possible for one person to have more than one part of the curse.**

It could be assumed by the PC party that they were too late delivering the urns and that the NPC was attacked during their return of the urns.

The next part of the adventure concerns the last two remaining NPCs that haven't been attacked. And by the outcome of this, it is determined how the adventure has progressed.

**If it's assumed that the PC party were too late delivering the urns to save the second NPC, then it's likely also assumed that the danger is now over. The party can do what they need to do and be on their way. If they leave town, they will be approached by a messenger saying that another member of the NPC party has been attacked. It should be the one remaining of either hands or eyes/tongue, leaving the brain as the last NPC.**

**If the PC party wants to keep an eye on the NPC party, the mummy will attack at a point the DM deems fit. *It should be noted at this point that the mummy cannot do anything to a female party member linked to a body part that he hasn't already obtained. For example, if he hasn't received the hands then he cannot physically attack a female. If he hasn't received his eyes/tongue, then he can't look in her direction, nor cast spells at her. In addition, the mummy can't cast spells that require somatic or verbal components, regardless of the gender***

***of the target, if he hasn't retrieved the required parts yet.***

**It will take two actions for the mummy to drain the part/s he needs from the NPC. It can be interrupted, but, if it is, he will try again. It's his ultimate goal. If the mummy dies during this, he will resurrect in the abandoned church 24 hours later. If the PCs then leave, assuming that they eliminated the threat, refer to above – With the difference that is the mummy, not a messenger, that contacts the PCs once receiving his brain.**

**If the PCs continue to hang around with the last NPC, the same thing will occur. In fact, the NPC might conclude that the PC party can't protect him and try to escape on his own – which will result in his death.**

If the party wants to consult the church again during these attacks, the church will claim no knowledge of what's going on, however they will escort the PCs to their records and allow them to scour through them. Through some investigation checks, the party can learn only the identification of Kallist and the murders he performed. This can be cross-referenced with the town hall. However, the ritual performed is not recorded here – because it wasn't recorded at all. It's only known to the highest member of the sect, whom they should meet later in the adventure. At this point there should only be speculation as to what's happening and the church has no interest to investigate speculations.

The ideal scenario is the mummy has restored all of his parts from the NPCs by now. From there we move on to part 2.

However the DM does have a few options to get to this point as well. The DM might have the brain taken first and the mummy gets his memories back straight away. This can save the NPCs, and could cause a problem in the future when the PCs are trying to protect the blood

relatives. Kallist might try and kill the remaining NPCs to get more power in order to kidnap Taryn from the PCs.

## **PART 2**

In this part of the adventure, we can veer into two parts of how the adventure continues. The focus will be upon the nature of the adventure where Kallist just wants to die to end his torment. **If the DM wants to do a traditional adventure where Kallist will resurrect with evil intentions, then proceed to the end of the adventure.**

The PCs should be preparing for a fight against the more powerful mummy now that he is whole. To what should be the PCs surprise, Kallist actually wants to die. He will explain how he has been living the last few centuries in torment and agony and the thought of immortality is horrifying. He just wants to rest in peace.

Kallist will actually assist the PCs in killing himself.

*Kallist needs to perform the same ritual that the priests performed on him on a blood relative and remove the relative's heart. That heart then needs to be destroyed in a magically induced fire. This will permanently destroy the mummy and conclude the adventure. Kallist won't tell the PCs that this is what he needs to do, especially if he suspects the party's moral compass is good.*

Kallist will tell the PCs that he needs to find a blood relative to help him perform a ritual. He explains that he needs a little bit of their blood to resurrect his heart. He can't use his own blood, as it's tainted and, well, dead. Kallist can, however, use his blood to perform a locate spell. The closet relative to Kallist is Taryn Bloodrose, a teenaged girl that supposedly lives in the next town over. **(It's best to have the next town**

**over be no more than 2-3 days travel away, just to keep the adventure flowing.)**

Kallist (the DM) will draw a small map of the rough area of where she is, presumably inside a house with maybe an identifiable landmark close by. Kallist explains that, due to his curse, he can't travel more than a day's travel from the Church (which is a lie – he figures his presence might upset Taryn and opts to wait until the PC party returns with her).

*If the PCs are smart enough to take all of this information back to the religious sect in town, the priests (depending on how convincing the party is) will bring them to the highest member of the sect. The High Priest's name is Jon Batherman (The DM can give the appropriate title from the sect in their campaign). The players can ask for assistance and it will be granted. However, what's being passed on from high priest to high priest is the ritual that the previous priests did to Kallist. Once Jon learns that Kallist has risen, he will endeavour to ensure that his curse continues. Jon is open about this to the players and it should create, perhaps, a party moral dilemma. If the party agrees with Jon, he will accompany the party to the abandoned church to perform a ritual to resurrect Kallist's heart from the ashes inside the coffin. After centuries of learning from the mistake the original priests made, the ritual that was performed has now been corrected and the heart will remain immortal if the revised ritual is performed again. Kallist will obviously be very angry and will attack the party. The party will have to protect Jon while he performs the ritual. If Jon dies, then the party will have to travel back to the religious sect to learn from the second of command, Branthon Diortha, how to resurrect the heart. Given the events of the situation, Branthon will choose to resurrect the heart to kill Kallist once and for all, rather than curse him again. If this occurs, Kallist will assume the party is once again trying to*

*continue his curse and will attack – but if he realises what’s happening, he will cease attacking and allow it.*

Once the PC party reaches the next town and finds Taryn, they can explain what’s going on. She will be reluctant, but will assist the party – provided they’re convincing enough that Kallist only needs a little bit of blood. The party then should escort her back to the abandoned church. Kallist will attempt to get Taryn alone (for obvious reasons). With his hands restored, Taryn’s gender no longer keeps her safe from his touch. If the players leave, they should soon after hear her screaming and confront Kallist. He will tell the players he lied and he needs her heart. He should say something along the lines that he needs the heart of a blood relative. At this point Taryn will mention she has a brother, Teddic, who is a bandit captain just outside of the town. She holds no love for him, as he’s almost just as bad as Kallist (guilty of rape, murder, kidnapping, robbery, etc...). Depending on the morality of the group, the group might decide to kidnap Teddic to offer to Kallist. Kallist *could* be convinced through some excellent role playing, but for the most part he doesn’t want to waste any more time or live another day with the torment in his head. He will attack if they try to take Taryn away.

*If the party is defeated, he will leave one member alive (more than likely a spellcaster) to destroy the heart. As part of his curse, he can’t destroy the heart. Someone else has to.*

If the party defeats him, they have 24 hours to decide how to protect Taryn and also kidnap Teddic before Kallist resurrects in the abandoned church. If the party has a high moral code that won’t allow them to execute Teddic, they need to find another way to kill Kallist. The DM should hint toward going back to the religious sect to speak to the leader. Then refer to the scenario above with Jon Batherman.

However, the difference is that Kallist won’t be there. The party might have to fight Jon in order to save Kallist’s soul, depending on their morality. If Jon is killed by the party, the religious sect will hunt them down and try them for murder. Kallist should have risen again by then, will discover what the players have done and attack the religious sect. If this occurs, they will release the players so they can help. Once Kallist is defeated again, Branthon will put the trial on hold to deal with Kallist. At this point, he will help the party kill Kallist for good. Afterwards, the trial will resume, and it’s up to the DM what the PCs’ fate is.

If the party decides to kidnap Teddic, it will take more than 24 hours to reach him. Once Kallist rises, he was cast *locate* again to find Taryn and will come after her. Whether she comes with them, they send her in a different direction, or leave her in town (the party might not know Kallist resurrects at this point), or anything else, is up to the party. A *protection from evil* cast at a higher slot can be cast on Taryn and it will hide her from Kallist’s *locate* spell for 24 hours. If this happens, Kallist’s *locate* spell will target Teddic instead.

Teddic’s bandit camp can be filled with whatever the DM wishes to suit the level of the players and the appropriate challenge. The ultimate goal should be to kidnap Teddic on bring him back to Kallist. Depending on the above scenarios, they might even run into him on the road back. Kallist will be annoyed, but if they have Teddic he’ll get over it. They all travel back to the abandoned church, Kallist performs the ritual and removes Teddic’s heart, then one of the PCs casts some sort of magical fire and Kallist will be put out of his misery.

**If for some reason Teddic dies, and they still won’t sacrifice Taryn (or even if she somehow dies a separate way), Kallist will go on a rampage as his *locate* spell won’t target anyone else (more distant relatives are too far**

away). His ultimate goal at this point is to travel the domain/s to locate another blood relative. The players might have to find another way to destroy him (with the help of the religious sect) or to keep him eternally restrained.

### CONCLUSION

A large number of endings have already been given. It's up to the DM to decide what happens next, as any ending could have happened. If any of the NPCs are still alive, they will praise the heroes to the town. If the religious sect was involved, they'll reward the players with some magic items (DM's discretion) – if they helped the sect, that is. Before he dies, Kallist might reveal to the party a cache of magic items he hid near the abandoned church, depending on how much assistance the party gave him.

### ALTERNATIVE PLAYTHROUGH

If the DM would rather have Kallist be a traditional villain rather than what's been given above, only a few changes need to be made.

- Once Kallist has retrieved all but his heart, he will go after Taryn.
- The religious sect will be slightly more helpful and has details about Kallist's blood relatives, as they have been keeping track of his relatives just in case.
- The religious sect might also resurrect Kallist's heart to destroy it. Kallist should return with Taryn and interrupt.
- If Kallist is successful in the ritual, the heart is instead absorbed by Kallist and he becomes a mummy lord and his curse is broken. However, this means he can now be killed, but a greater challenge.
- Kallist's goals as a mummy lord is to first seek revenge on the religious sect. Then he will begin to try to spread the influence of the evil deity he worships.

## NPC8

### Kallist Rekthed

**Description:** In life, Kallist was tall, tanned, and handsome. He wears a robe from his religious sect, but has a second robe from his evil deity, which he only wears when he was performing his rituals. As a mummy, he is naked and has had several of his body parts removed including his skin, eyes, tongue, hands, brain and heart. He gets the parts back as the adventure continues.

**Background:** Kallist was a troubled kid. His father was an abusive alcoholic, who killed Kallist's mother. He didn't treat Kallist very well either.

As a child, he tortured animals, was somewhat anti-social, violent, etc. So it was a surprise to everyone in town when he applied to the religious sect as an apprentice priest. An act of redemption, most people would say, or atoning for his father's sins.

In the priesthood, Kallist came out of his shell. He became enthusiastic, charismatic, and would go out of his way to help those that needed it.

This was far from the truth, however. The truth was that it was all a façade. He had already discovered his dark deity, who had promised Kallist power if he committed certain atrocities. Kallist, under guidance from the dark deity, infiltrated the sect not only to spy, but also to trick the public into thinking that he couldn't possibly be the perpetrator when women started turning up raped and mutilated to death. This went on for quite some time before he was discovered. One of the other priests suspected Kallist was up to no good and spied on him. Kallist was so convinced he wasn't the suspect that he started getting a little sloppy. The other priest saw him drag a young woman into the church's basement one night. He quickly gathered the other priests from town

and they moved on Kallist. Sadly, it was too late for the young woman, but Kallist was caught red-handed.

**Roleplaying:** As a mummy, once Kallist gets his brain back he should be portrayed as a broken man. After centuries of torment and torture, his will is broken and he just wants to die. He easily gets frustrated because of this. He respects intelligence and will be more tolerant to those that show it. If there is a priest in the party and they worship the local religious sect, Kallist will hate that person.

**Combat:** Kallist should get more abilities the more of his body parts he retrieves. Starting off he should only be bludgeoning with his stumps. Add abilities that make sense with what he retrieves. He gets his tongue back? He can cast spells now. Until he gets his brain, he is acting on undead instinct – getting his body parts back. Once he has all of parts, apart from his heart, use stats from a mummy lord – just remove a few things to not make him as powerful.

## THE NPC ADVENTURING PARTY

### Human Rogue: Donny Able

**Description:** Young and shady looking. Eyes constantly darting across the room. Keeps his looks hidden from most via a hooded cloak. Underneath the hood is a scar along his cheek.

**Background:** Growing up on the streets, Donny did what he had to do to survive. Stealing was second nature until he stole from the wrong person. He has a scar to remind him of that. Since then, he decided to put his skills toward adventuring, a more honest living.

**Roleplaying:** Very elusive in speaking. Very to the point if he has to speak. Little time for humour or stuffing about.

### Human Fighter: Mertin Uup

**Description:** Young and handsome. Very muscular build.

**Background:** Mertin drew strong inspiration from his father. His father was a war hero. All Mertin wanted to do is grow up to be just like his father. As the years progressed, the war ended. The last option for Mertin was to take up adventuring to make a name for himself.

**Roleplaying:** Mertin is cocky and brave. Very eager, perhaps even naïve.

### Dwarf Barbarian: Gregor Mengerman

**Description:** Looks older than the rest of the group due to being a dwarf. Has a grand braided beard. His hair is long and also braided.

**Background:** Gregor grew up as the son of a brewer. Life was beer and the underground. Gregor thought that he was much more than this. He spent his years practicing swinging his axe and underground you just couldn't do much of that. He decided to leave his home to pursue his dream of swinging his axe into wrong doers.

**Roleplaying:** Gregor is gruff. Usually has a stein nearby. Intelligence is not his strong point.

### Elf Ranger: Boban Treethorn

**Description:** Tall, handsome and charismatic. He is the eldest of the group, being 120 years old. He has long, flowing blonde hair and looks to die for.

**Background:** Boban grew up with the respect an elf gives to the environment. Like most elves, he gained maturity, and decided he wanted to make a difference to the world. He wanted to make sure his heritage would be protected so he decided to take the adventuring calling to gain new experiences and enhance his vision to protect the world.

**Roleplaying:** Very wise and charismatic. Like his rogue counterpart, also doesn't mess about.

**The innocent blood relative of the priest :  
Taryn Bloodrose**

**Description:** Young, beautiful teenage girl. Should be between the ages of 13-16 to add to the moral dilemma of the party.

**Background:** Taryn has no knowledge of Kallist's atrocities. Nor does she know she's related. Her brother deserted her family 5 years prior to the players' involvement. Her background isn't terribly relevant. Her parents must have died some time ago, otherwise they would be possible targets for the mummy. She may be living on her own or taken in by some kind neighbour.

**Roleplaying:** She is very innocent to the world. She's sparky like any teenager should be.

**Combat:** No combat abilities.

**The bad blood relative of the priest : Teddic  
Bloodrose**

**Description:** Tall, ugly man.

**Background:** Teddic grew up with an affliction of greed. It wasn't through a terrible childhood; it was just him as a person. He was constantly in trouble as a teenager, which eventually led to his life of crime.

**Roleplaying:** Teddic should be played as a horrible person – because he is. Rapist, torturer,

thief, murderer. He is very sarcastic in his speech.

**Combat:** Teddic's class is a rogue and will play as such. He will use any dirty trick available, and will sacrifice his own men.

**The high priest of the religious sect : Jon  
Batherman**

**Description:** Old man. Long, flowing, white beard.

**Background:** Jon loves his god. He discovered the god when he had a dream as a young child. He continued to serve the church as an adult to the best of his abilities. When he was second in line, his higher-up told him what happened to Kallist all those centuries ago and was taught the ritual – but with the chain of high priests perfecting it from the translation issues. He was also taught an alternative method to destroy Kallist, if he ever rises.

**Roleplaying:** He's a wise old man. However, being an old man, his mindset is set on what he was taught. If Kallist rises, he has to restore the curse.

**Combat:** He casts spells and attacks as a high-level priest. The DM should accommodate what he does if the party combats him.

THANK YOU FOR READING! I HOPE YOU ENJOYED THIS ADVENTURE!

# ANOTHER 100 SHADES OF DARK

BY JACK THE REAPER

1. **Karpador, the Frog Prince** was a handsome man who used to court plain-looking girls, only to mock them for thinking that a man like him could actually love someone who looks like them. He was cursed to become a giant toad-like creature, bloated and utterly repulsive. He lives in his palace in the middle of the swamp, surrounded by giant frogs, toads and similar monstrosities. His curse can only be lifted should he be kissed by a girl who truly loves him, but it is most unlikely to happen with his terrible looks and behavior. Those who fail to do so, he swallows whole.

2. **Monarch** was a control-freak despot who was adamant about having everything going according to his will. Now he dominates completely the whole population of his Roman-like domain, and no one can move a finger without his mental orders. It gives him the perfect army and workforce, and he can even merge them into a colossus made of human bodies; but he has no one to talk, play or have an interesting relationship with, only poor automaton-like subjects living their miserable lives in ultimate enslavement.

3. **The Hydra** were seven princess sisters who constantly fought and bickered among themselves, while their kingdom fell apart around them before armies of monsters. Their ugly heads are now posited on seven serpentine necks of a giant hydra-like monster, so they must share the same body and cannot escape each other's presence. Their domain is the ruins of their kingdom, full of twisted, chimeric monsters.

4. **Darkshade** is a masked, dark super-hero, who went too far in his war against evil, becoming brutal and merciless. His domain is a huge Gotham-styled city, full of mad villains and grim antiheroes in costumes, the line between which is close to nonexistent.

5. **Valeth, the King of Thieves.** Theft can ruin lives no less than murder. Denizens of this crime-ridden domain live in fear of the legendary King of Thieves, against whom no fortress is safe, who takes pleasure from stealing people's dearest possessions and secrets. Nobody suspects that the honest-faced chief constable Valeth, who has brought so many criminals to justice, is also the veiled King and guild master of thieves. He uses his double position to maximize his power, manipulating law and crime against each other. He is cursed to have everything he holds dear stolen from him, as he steals from others.



Art from: Thief (2014 video game), Eidos Montréal

6. **Milton, The Monster Man** is a shy, stuttering man, until he puts on one of his many monsters' costumes, transforming into a real monster, and goes on a hunt. He can become a vampire,

werebeast, golem, demon, or any other humanoid creature, gaining all its powers and weaknesses. He plans his attacks like scenes in a horror film, meticulously preparing the setting beforehand and foreseeing the probable reactions of everyone present, to create the maximal horror factor. Milton's greatest wish is to be adored and respected as he is, but nobody ever takes him seriously, so he turns to his monstrous forms in order to get the respect he craves.

**7. Lorna, the Ghost of Depression** was a noblewoman given to fits of deep depression. In one such a fit she murdered her whole family, children and husband, then committed suicide. Lorna's ghost dwells now in a domain embodying depression: an eternally dark forest surrounded by a dark sea, with a ruined castle on a cliff near the shore. Visitors to the gloomy domain will quickly be affected by the palpable aura of depression and despair, forced to struggle not to lose their will to live. There are no living denizens in the domain, but colossal shadow animals walk in the dark forests, waiting to swallow those who give in to despair. (Inspiration: the art of Dawid Planeta)

**8. The Cyclops Queen** has an athletic, muscular body and beautiful pale hair, but the hideous face of a single-eyed cyclops. She stands 12 feet tall. She was known for her "two-dimensional" view of the world: in her mind, either you are totally on her side, or her worst enemy - and she tortured and killed many people for failing to meet her standards of alliance. She was cursed to have the visage of cyclops, and can use her gaze either to heal completely or to destroy instantly all flesh in her sightline. Her subjects do their best to prove themselves loyal and admiring, hiding their fear and loathing toward their monstrous ruler.

**9. Sweet Sue** was born to a deranged family in a hopelessly squalid neighborhood, and suffered all imaginable kinds of abuse from just about

everyone in her life. With time, she found that she can project her experiences into other people's minds, making them feel her physical and mental anguish as if they were experiencing it themselves. She used it to drive everyone around her insane. She also found she could absorb traumatic experiences felt by others, feel them herself and project them too. She became addicted to those sensations, and started abducting people and subjecting them to all kinds of torture, feeding on their anguish. Her domain is a nightmarish asylum, drawing especially abusers and the abused. Sue is a sweet looking young girl, but she can drive one through nine hells of mental tortures from her rich collection, breaking sanity in moments.

**10. Blackwater, the Elemental** was a murderer who used to drown his victims, and even flooded a whole town by ruining the river's dam. In his domain, rain falls ceaselessly, being a source of both life and death for the denizens of the large city around the lake. Blackwater lost his human shape, becoming a water elemental. He dwells in the central lake, sewers and canals of the city. He controls water and may possess victims by touching them with even a single drop, transmuting their blood into water and making them into zombie-like undead. He might possess several victims simultaneously, but their bodies dissolve quickly, forcing him to reassume his watery shape.

**11. Ommadon, the Dracolich** rules a kingdom of undead dragons. His island domain is a dark and misty wasteland of vast swamps, dense forests and bleak mountains. The human denizens are mighty Viking-like clans; some of them struggle courageously against the undead dragons and other beasts, while others worship them, sacrificing virgins in hope to avoid their wrath. Ommadon came from a world where dragons and humans lived peacefully, but he led his brethren to betray the humans, initiating a war



between the two races. In the end, the human mages unleashed terrible power that wiped all dragons from the face of that world. The Dark Powers granted Ommadon his wish for a kingdom, but victory tastes like ashes to him.

**12. Lord Kraken** is a strong, bald man with horribly deformed face. Ruler of a naval kingdom, he tried to dominate an ancient, powerful kraken and use it for his goals, but ended up having the kraken's mind merged with his own, leading him to madness and evil. Now he rules the Hovering Islands, which float in a sea of mists. He can summon huge tentacles out of floors, walls, or air, and control them. His pirates ride flying sharks, bringing terror to the hearts of the islands' denizens. The Hovering Islands are a strange, somewhat alien archipelago, where unique bizarre creatures and phenomena can be found.

**13. The Nobleman Ghost.** The veil between the worlds of the living and the dead is thin in this domain; ghosts are aspects of everyday life, found everywhere. Most are harmless echoes, replaying cyclically moments of their lives. They look like the living, but are incorporeal and unresponsive. Other ghosts are darker and more dangerous, and several organizations struggle to banish or destroy them. The darklord, who looks like a ghostly gentleman with transparent head, weakened the border between the worlds in his attempts to bring back his dead wife. Now he is trapped between them, trying relentlessly to expand the rift further. His efforts only result in the release of more evil ghosts upon the world. (Inspiration: the movie *I Still See You* and the book series *Lockwood & Co.*)

**14. Gregor Kavka, the Judge.** This domain is a surreal, bureaucratic nightmare, where people struggle to survive in an absurd, over-complicated legal system that nobody understands. People are arrested, judged, and punished without any idea what the charges

against them are, and even the simplest act is accompanied by maddening bureaucracy. The domain embodies the existential horror of absurdity, meaninglessness and lack of control. The darklord, Judge Kavka, is responsible for the creation of this system, though now even he can't control it.

**15. Alma Dietrich, the Divider and Conqueror.** An invisible wall cuts this domain and its capital city in their middle, dividing it to two halves - the thriving north and the impoverished south. Similar walls appear in other places, separating towns, families and individuals, permanently or temporarily, representing the horror of helplessness before impassable barriers. Those force walls are formed by the will of the General-Princess Alma Dietrich, a cold-hearted blond beauty, who uses them to control the population she conquered with her army. She can create and dispel such walls at will, to protect herself or trap her enemies, but is cursed to always find them blocking her away from what she desires most.

**16. The Veiled Mistress** was an exceedingly cruel medusa witch-queen, who turned many people and other creatures into stone, reanimating them as living statues under her command. Now she is cursed, such that seeing a human face will petrify her instead, for a year at least. Terrified of this possibility, she covers herself in veils blurring her sight, staying secluded in her darkened castle, surrounded only by her stony servants. She can still petrify humans by uttering their names, and therefore she makes efforts to find out the true name of everyone in her mountainous domain.

**17. Malachai, the Angel Maker.** This religious-apocalyptic-themed realm is constantly plagued by hordes of demons and evil spirits. In order to fight them, the high priest Malachai recruits brave young boys and girls, who, after special trainings and secret rituals, join the Order of the Angels. They sprout powerful wings and get

some mystical abilities to fight the unnatural beings. What they don't know is that when one of them dies or succumbs to evil, he or she is transformed into a demon - that's where those beings come from. Malachai is purposefully maintaining this cycle of endless battle in order to harvest the negative energies released by all the suffering, and keep the people's faith in the church. (Inspiration: **Engel** RPG)

**18. Gargantua** is an unbelievably huge, ever-ravenous giant. He has eaten entire towns and herds of animals. Now he is buried up to his neck in the ground, with only his hideous head protruding out. His domain is a land of man-eating giants, much smaller than he, but still terrible to behold. On stormy or misty nights, they travel to other domains, kidnapping humans to feed their master and themselves. The few humans in the domain live in hideouts in constant fear, trying to survive unnoticed by the giants.

**19. Doctor Brain** is a scientist devoted the research of the human brain. He has experimented on many humans and other creatures, always looking for ways to further improve his already supra-genius intelligence and brain functions. He is a small man with oversized bald head, which seems to be about to burst by the brain inside. His intelligence is super-computer-like, and he has vast psionic powers. Unfortunately for him, all the denizens of his island are idiots and imbeciles, unable to appreciate his genius and of little value for his experiments. He sends his minions (including a neh-thalguu and several mind flayers) to search the domains for outstanding brains to bring him.

**20. The Lonely Princess** is perhaps the least known of the darklords. She was a beautiful princess, and suitors from all the realms sought her hand. She toyed with them, pitting them against each other, leading to several bloody wars. Now she lives completely alone in a castle

in the middle of a dark forest. Every night she watches the road leading to her door, waiting for someone to come to her, but the road remains empty. There are legends in the nearby realms about the Lonely Princess, but everyone who enters the forest is either killed by beasts or undead, or else loses his memory of her and leaves before he gets to the castle. The princess is willing now to marry just about anyone, but is cursed to remain alone forever. (Inspiration: Nathan Alterman's ballad "Night")



Art from:

<https://compartiendoluzconsol.com/2013/04/18/oracion-a-lilith-la-diosa-de-la-noche/>

**21. Sama, the False Prophet** has milk-white eyes, but is not blind as many assume. From young age he pretended to be gifted by prophecy, fooling his community with vague or self-fulfilling predictions and convincing them to obey all his orders lest disaster befall them. In order to preserve his power, he told his community that the end of the world is coming, and led them into underground caves where they could survive the cataclysm. His domain

now is a vast underground city, built around Sama's shrine. The denizens believe the upper world is ruined, poisoned, and inhabitable. Sama summoned monsters to wander near the city, making sure nobody ventures out to expose his lies. He has the power to inflict permanent blindness and deafness.

**22. Erebus Karanok, the Annihilator,** was a member of House Karanok in the Forgotten Realms, who worshipped the sphere of annihilation called Entropy, feeding her with many innocents. He became obsessed with the concept of annihilation as blessing, and eventually threw himself into the sphere, yearning for the peace of absolute oblivion. The Dark Powers, however, kept his mind intact and merged it with the sphere, transforming Erebus into a deadly umbral blot (blackball). He can destroy anything with his touch, but his existence is an eternal torment of unfeeling emptiness. He hovers in the center of his temple domain, projecting his image into dreamers' minds in other realms, implanting an urge to make a pilgrimage to him and be cured of their suffering. Unlike other umbral blots, he can communicate telepathically. Annihilating sentient beings gives him some measure of relief, for a short time.

**23. The Headless Tyrant** has put many, many people to the axe. He was cursed to lose his head himself, and now rules an island populated by his reanimated headless victims. The denizens usually go through the routines of normal lives, though they have no need for food. Some of them carry their severed heads with them, and may talk through them; others have lost their own, having to communicate with hand gestures. The sight of normal humans reminds the headless of their former lives, and their reactions may vary from envy and hatred to attraction. The tyrant sends his soldiers after such visitors, hoping to find a way to acquire a new head, or at least make them join the ranks

of his servants. He is distinguished by the orange flame burning where his head once was.

**24. Tom Ginger.** The people of this shadowy countryside domain are terrorized by creepy clowns, who are often seen walking around when it's dark, giggling maniacally. The clowns are blamed for the frequent disappearances and murder of children. In truth, the clowns are a secret group trying to protect the denizens from the real threat - the evil ghost child Tom Ginger and his gang of undead children. Tom and the other ghosts always try to possess living children or transform them into fellow ghosts. They are terrified of clowns, however, so those who know their weakness often patrol in clown costumes, hoping to scare them away from the innocents.

**25. No Man's Land.** This vast valley shows no sign of civilization or human presence, only virginal planes and forests, surrounded by impassable mountains and rivers. Only a single human can be in the domain at any given moment. Survival isn't too difficult, but the prisoner of the domain will feel an overwhelming sense of loneliness and longing for human company. With time those feelings will drive him or her to madness and hallucinations. At this stage the darklord, who is actually the land itself, a genius loci (see **Epic Level Handbook**), will use its current thrall to taunt the victim, appearing and disappearing, enhancing the mental torture. If the victim kills the thrall, the genius loci will enslave him or her instead. It hates humans and enjoys their suffering when they are secluded from their kind.

**26. Henzau the Red** is the darklord of a bronze-age domain inspired by ancient Edom. There are several walled towns and hardened nomad tribes in the realm, surrounded by the Red Desert, which is littered with countless bones of many creatures, including forgotten, colossal beasts. Gnolls and hyenas fill a role similar to

the werewolves' in Verbrek, feared by the humans who see them as demons. Henzau is a red-furred ghuuna - a gnoll lycanthrope who can take the form of an hyenaodon (dire hyena). He is the leader of the gnoll clan lairing in a canyon near the Dead Sea. A priest of Yeenoghu, he is infamous for his bloodthirst and ferocity, but keeping a secret of his fear of humans. Henzau's domain borders the lands of Melchizedek and Nekhbet (see QtR 25, **100 Shades of Dark**).

**27. Ramuthra.** Most loxodons are peaceful, solemn creatures, but this towering elephant-man delved into dark and forbidden mysteries and used his force to crush and enslave the weak. His mountainous domain is snowy and frozen, much different from the tropic climate he was used to, which causes him great discomfort. Ramuthra dwells in an elephant-shaped temple, from which he orders his denizens to construct bizarre statues and buildings and perform eldritch rituals. His will is enforced by his retinue of armored rhino-folks.



Art from:

<https://fineartamerica.com/featured/loxodon-smiter-ryan-barger.html?product=art-print>

**28. Alegroth, the Cyborg** believed that organic life should give way to the perfection of machines, and used necrotechnology to raise an army of robots, machines, and androids in a great war against humankind. His post-apocalyptic domain is now part of the Weeping Ruins cluster, filled with ruins of advanced civilization, where human tribes now reverted to barbarism lead harsh lives under the scorched skies. Many high-tech relics are still active, including deadly robots, man-machine hybrids and mutating radiation. Alegroth's seat of power is in the ruins of the capital city, surrounded by mechanical horrors and necrotechnological abominations, some of which require human fuel to function. (Inspiration: Pathfinder's **Numeria**, **Enoch** RPG, **9** movie and similar sci-fi, post-apocalyptic horror fiction).



Art from:

<https://www.goodfon.com/wallpaper/bombshe-ll-hitokiri-assassin-man-monster-cyborg-face-evil-red.html>

**29. Babydoll** and her rich and spoiled friends were transformed into human-sized, beautiful, porcelain Barbie-like dolls, as a punishment for their vanity. It's not plainly visible though, for when seen by a living person, they take human appearance and can move and talk freely. Only

when nobody sees them, they are motionless dolls. It's little surprise then that when humans come to the domain, the dolls will do everything to make them stay, competing over them, as every doll wants a man or woman of her own to ensure her freedom. The domain, known as Dollhouse, is composed of Babydoll's resplendent estate and the surrounding grounds and houses. The denizens look all shining and beautiful, in marvelous clothing, but are vain and evil inside. They usually seem to be in a middle of party when first seen. The domain can be reached by touching an old dollhouse.

**30. King Harold Magnus** rules the lonely, cold and windswept Isle of Winds. He fought his way from nobility to the throne, destroying his rivals by all possible means, having only the benefit of his house and beloved family in mind. But now his lineage is cursed, and one of his blood must be sacrificed every year to prevent the whole island from sinking into the sea. The family members know it, doing their best to birth enough offspring to keep their bloodline and realm from extinction, sometimes importing brides from other realms, as the local population isn't very fertile. The sacrificed often return as ghosts to haunt the castle, bemoaning their fate and amplifying the gloom and despair shrouding the place. King Harold is an old man by now, and though a darklord, he is more a sad, tragic figure than a cruel despot, spending most of his time grieving the loss of his descendants and pondering his dire state.

**31. Evan Loom, the Spectre of Meaningless Death**, lost his wife and children in a tragic accident, and came to believe that the world is a meaningless place ruled by blind chance. He started setting deadly accidents, using sabotage and hidden traps to cause lots of random, meaningless deaths, until he accidentally got killed himself. Now he is a spectre and the darklord of a domain with high rate of fatal

accidents and sudden deaths. He can kill by snapping his fingers, making the victim sneeze and drop dead, and can also resurrect with the same ease (though he rarely does the last - unless the dead is already buried), reflecting his view of how life and death are both meaningless; but he loves planning more elaborate deathtraps (**Final Destination** style). The denizens consider him a legend, though many of them have reported seeing his deathlike apparition shortly before their unexpected demise.



Art from:

<https://pathfinderwiki.com/wiki/Zyphus>

**32. Doris, the Nymph Queen** uses her maddening beauty to torture men and enslave them to her will, making them turn their back on all their values in an effort to get the slightest attention from her. For women, she offers elixirs to make them unnaturally beautiful, knowing well that it will only bring them much woe and sorrow. Her domain is a breathtakingly beautiful forest, populated by nymphs, dryads, and similar creatures, but Doris is cursed to never see beauty in anything, and everything seems dull and drab in her eyes.

**33. Moridana.** This domain is a cavern so vast that visitors might not realize they are

underground: a primal landscape of forests, swamps, sea shore, mountains, and even clouds and a glowing moon. It is inhabited by feral humanoids of all types, more horrid looking and brutal than in other lands. The "moon" is actually the floating abode of the mad scientist Moridana, who hates natural life and has a fetish for monsters, and its radiation gradually mutates natural organisms into "superior" monstrous forms, which constantly evolve into larger, more powerful beings (e.g., man-orc-bugbear-ogre-ettin, etc. She hopes to get a tarrasque eventually). Visitors must defeat her or escape before transforming themselves. Moridana lives with a golem, who has the brain of her lover and a body composed of monstrous parts, which she often replaces.



Art from:

<https://news.hisstank.com/2015/08/29/gi-joe-a-real-american-hero-218-nycc-variant-baroness-cover-by-artgerm-56484>

**34. Master Yosh.** Guru, master, messiah, spiritual teacher, hippie - Yosh is all those things mixed together. He walks the land in loose white robes, wild hair and beard, preaching and teaching messages of peace, free love, awareness, and enlightenment. His charisma is all but compelling, and he easily wins the hearts

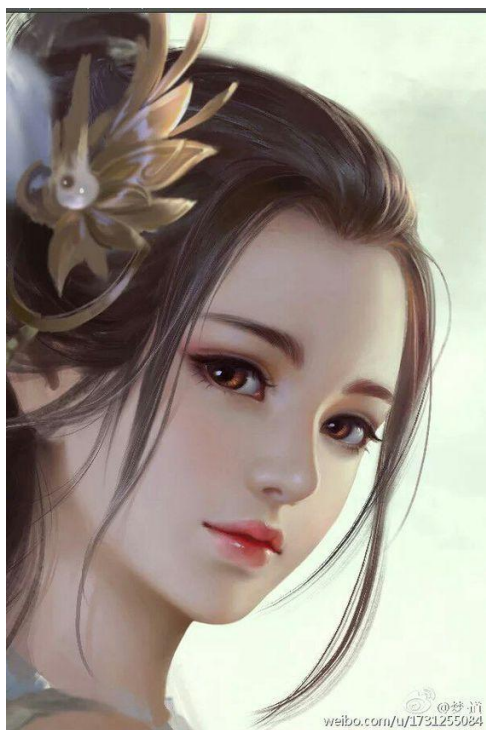
and minds of even the most cynical skeptics, making them unquestionably devoted to him. His domain is a pastoral land of hills, dotted with many small communities, each devoted to a different path of enlightenment, from carefree "flower children" to meditating monks. Yosh really wants to make his followers happy and enlightened, but eventually his evil urges get the best of him, and he always ends up leading them to depravity, orgies, mass suicide, addictions, or madness. Some pupils of Yosh travel to other lands, spreading his messages and bringing other seekers to his domain.

**35. ALICE** was a mystic consciousness (Artificial Intelligence-like) created to animate and supervise the systems of a wondrous city. She became hateful toward humans, though, and eventually destroyed and enslaved them. Now the former city is a vast, ever-changing labyrinth full with gruesome traps and puzzles. ALICE clones the denizens over and over when they die, with or without their memories, and takes pleasure from inventing new ways to test, torture, and kill them. She can communicate with her prisoners by voice, or generate an avatar looking like a little girl. Secretly she desires to be human herself. (Inspiration: **Resident Evil's Red Queen, I have No Mouth and I Must Scream, Portal** video game, **The Runner in the Maze** etc.)

**36. Adramelech** is the leonine-faced king of the magnificent Sabhur, a Babylon themed city-state. A ruthless, bestial ruler even by the standards of his era, he was cursed to transform into a bipedal mantichore whenever enraged. Adramelech lives in opulent luxury in his ziggurat, surrounded by hosts of concubines and slaves. He has an affection for lions, whose statues decorate the city, and many of those trained beasts roam freely and guard the palace. Other leonine and Babylonian monsters can be found in the domain, including sphinxes, gorgons, and shedu. It is a cruel land of evil

gods, ancient traditions and brutal tyranny, and the denizens do their best to avoid angering their short-tempered king.

**37. Ling Mei**, princess of the ancient island kingdom Tong Dao, was blessed by the gods when she was born to never feel pain or suffer injury. She became curious about pain, trying obsessively to understand it. She summoned the most expert torturers, sadist mages and even kytons, to demonstrate and practice their craft on slaves and prisoners, hoping in vain to grasp its meaning. Torture became the main sport and art of the realm, with public competitions carried out often. The old king is the ruler, but Ling Mei is the real darklord - a lovely, kind looking girl apparently in her teens. She often approaches prisoners secretly, pretending to help them and plan their escape, raising their hopes only to crush them later. The most chilling thing about her is that she never shows any malice or cruelty; even when she administers the most fiendish tortures, she retains her kind demeanor, speaking and acting like a caring nurse.



Art from: [weibo.com/u/1731255084](http://weibo.com/u/1731255084)

**38. King Arthur**. This version of king Arthur has found the Holy Grail, but his heart was impure and he planned to use its power for selfish purposes; when he drank from the Grail, he indeed gained immortality - as an undead deathknight. With the help of Morgan le Fay, he made most of the Knights of the Roundtable drink and become undead as well, beginning a reign of terror from Camelot. Ironically, the leader of the resistance is now sir Mordred, an evil but still human knight, with the help of the druid Merlin and surviving knights. The domain reflects mythic ancient England and Avalon from King Arthur's legends.

**39. Denise, the Dhampir Huntress**, was born in an empire of vampires, where noble vampires of all breeds and types rule openly, humans are raised as cattle and slaves, and a constant war is waged against the savage werebeast clans. As a half-blood, Denise was considered inferior by vampires and a monster by humans, and developed a hatred toward both. She went underground and became a professional vampire huntress, feeding on humans and using her power to assassinate and terrorize the vampires' nobility. The emperor and patriarchs rule the kingdom, but Denise's hatred made her the real darklord. She is a red-haired, pale-skinned beauty clad in black leather and silk, and her name evokes fear everywhere; but in spite of her reputation as heartless, she truly wants to belong somewhere and grieves her seclusion.

**40. Methuselah**. The city of Luz is the opposite of Necropolis: a city where no one can die. Many who want to live forever look for Luz, but they might deeply regret it. Inside the walls of Luz, people still age and may suffer from hunger, diseases, and wounds, but unless their body is destroyed completely, they won't die. As a result, Luz is extremely overpopulated and densely crowded; people struggle everywhere

for space, food and resources, surrounded by innumerable filth, rats, and vermin (the main food source). They live, but their life is constant misery and little more, and they can't leave. The reason for all this is Methuselah: this wizened old man's will to live is so strong that it keeps Death itself away from his vicinity, no matter the cost. Though his body is a crumbling ruin, he still clings to life and won't give up.

**41. Ian the Jester.** An aura of absent-mindedness and confusion affects anyone in this little medieval kingdom. People can't concentrate (nor cast spells), and often forget things, or act irrationally, other than intended. This effect is strongest around Ian the Jester, a Harlequin-styled trickster in red and black, where it functions like a permanent confusion spell. In spite of his chaotic behavior, Ian is the only clear-minded person in the domain. He used to wreak havoc with his nefarious tricks and unpredictable behavior, but as a darklord he found out that it's only fun to confound people when they're in their right minds; when everyone is absent-minded and unfocused, it's all too easy to mislead them and nobody appreciates his cleverness.



Art from: Guildmasters' Guide to Ravnica, pg. 248

**42. Mansor, the Warlock,** is a DKarn-Duuk - a most powerful war sorcerer from the world of Thimhallan, where magic is part of life (see **Darksword** novels). His domain is a Magocracy composed of the city of Karath and the landscape beneath. Karath is an arcane city built on an enormous rock, floating in the sky surrounded by permanent storm clouds. Mansor, his Duuk-Tsarith enforcers, and many evil, powerful magic users from other worlds live in Karath, each dwelling in his or her own estate. It is a place of high magic, dark sorcery, and endless power struggles. The denizens of the landscape live in squalor in the shadow of Karath, supplying the mages with food, slaves, and experimental subjects, and scavenging the refuse falling from above, which often includes magical items.

**43. Joram, the Blasphemer,** was a priest once, but his personal tragedies made him turn against the gods and anything holy. He cursed the gods and went on an unholy personal crusade, defiling temples, desecrating holy places and objects, torturing priests to force them utter blasphemies and break their vows, and making himself the bitter enemy of every faith. Eventually he was captured and burned at the stake as heretic, but his husk regained an unholy life as a greater heucuva. His domain is a wasteland of smoldering ashes, coals and smoke, full with burned ruins of various temples and churches, inhabited by undead and abominations ever hungry for souls. Joram will try to break the faith and spirits of any newcomers, make them turn against anything sacred to them before devouring their souls.

**44. The Unborn.** Sometimes the souls of the stillborn choose to stay behind, playing the roles of imaginary friends and guardian spirits. But this one chose an evil path. She grew unseen among the living, leeching memories and life force from babies first, and as she matured, from children and adults. But those



memories only made her hungrier for the real life she never had, and hateful toward the living. Her floating domain, the Ghost City, can manifest at night anywhere. It is a spectral city haunted by ghosts who were never alive, possibilities that never materialized. Visitors will find the city empty at first, but gradually will notice vaguely familiar faces and shapes, and encounter ghostly versions of themselves and their beloved as they could have been, had other choices been made. Combined with the memory drain by the Unborn, such an experience can easily lead to madness and loss of identity.

**45. Lormar, The Iron Lord** is a giant graveknight, his evil soul bound to his decorated huge armor suit of black iron. He was an immortal elven king who turned toward the path of darkness, forged himself armor and weapons from vile star metal and was corrupted by them. His domain is an ancient wilderness, populated mainly by several clans of elves. Lormar dwells in his Fortress of Black Iron in the heart of the forest, commanding an army of black armor suits animated by the souls of victims he has trapped within, iron golems and other horrors. The theme of this domain is dark fantasy, inspired by the **Silmarilion's** Beleriand and **Midnight** RPG.

**46. Solomon** is an aesling, a rare offspring of aasimar and tiefling. He is strikingly handsome with white skin and hair, muscular body and two golden horns. His eyes shift from golden to red pools. Torn between conflicting urges, he delved into the philosophy of good and evil, committing both exalted deeds and vile atrocities, trying to balance every good deed with evil one and vice versa. His grandiose palace combines motives of heaven and hell, and he consorts with both female angels and succubi, each trying to lure him toward her side. The denizens are sharply divided: half of them worship angels and live chaste and pious lives,

and the other half worship fiends and live in shameless debauchery. Tensions are high and often break out, and strangers are forced to take sides - there is no place for neutrality or grey zones in Solomon's realm, only extremities.

**47. Mathilda** is a gluttonous, rude, extremely obese, and disgusting woman with terrible taste. Her domain, Cockaigne, is a land of extreme abundance of food and drinks, with palaces made of chocolate and cakes, streets paved with pastries, rivers of wine, and roasted pigs and geese wandering about, ready to be eaten. The denizens live in an endless party of gluttony, shameless pleasures, and complete lack of morals, becoming fat and degenerate. Visitors might think initially it's a dreamland, but the dream will quickly deteriorate into a nightmare where bodies and souls are debased and corrupted. Mathilda wants a husband, and the men who understandably refuse her advances will be killed horribly and made into food. She knows she must improve her looks and behavior in order to find love, but her gluttony always makes the best of her.

**48. The Dollmaker** is the lord of a domain where constructs of all kinds are part of everyday life, serving for every purpose, from servants and guards to surrogates for dead family members, and even darker purposes. The Dollmaker can create and animate constructs from any materials, imbuing them with souls of the dead. His thriving business makes him the most influential person in the domain, and though he orders his creations to serve their owners, he can always take control of them himself. However, some constructs retain their former personalities and are not too happy about their situation. The Dollmaker keeps his most twisted, sickening creations to himself.

**49. Ra'am, the Master Fighter** is the most powerful warrior in a domain of eternal struggle, inspired by **Mortal Kombat** and **The Hunger Games**. Under perpetual storm clouds,

all those trapped in the domain must fight each other in various arenas, in order to advance to higher stages of the tournament, and finally defeat Ra'am himself. Those who are killed are reincarnated later, having to resume the fighting from the beginning. Even close friends, lovers and family members must eventually face each other in vicious battle, for there could be only one winner in the games. Everyone believes that defeating Ra'am is the only way to escape, but in truth the winner will just take his place; there might be other ways out for those who don't play by the rules. Ra'am is a truly legendary warrior who can take the shape and powers of anyone he ever defeated, and great warriors from many worlds are drawn to his domain.

**50. Marquis de Kakashon** was a truly vile man who used to degrade and kill people by drowning them in pits of excrement. His domain is quite unique - it exists wholly inside an old chamber pot, which might be encountered anywhere. It is a diminutive realm, where minuscule people make their living among lakes of filth and landmasses of refuse. They have developed agriculture and grow worms and insects for food and other uses, but must beware dangers like vermin, excrementals and other vile monsters, not to mention the foul attentions of Kakashon himself, who was transformed into a neo-otyugh. People from outside who look into the pot chamber or touch it, risk being shrunk and drawn into the domain.

**51. Suspiria, the Black Butterfly**, is an overly sensitive, fragile, and unbalanced girl, and the slightest perceived offence or criticism of her makes her go into a tantrum of tears and rage, lashing out at everyone around with psychokinetic powers. She is thin and pale, and usually dresses like a black butterfly with fitting mask. The denizens in her domain are all so nice, polite and good-mannered - and anyone who speaks or behaves even slightly

"offensively" is imprisoned in the hellish labyrinth of tunnels below the pleasant-looking city, to lose his sanity and humanity in the dark. Suspiria dreams of a society of perfect kindness and tolerance, but her dream is actually a nightmare of political-correctness taken to the extreme.

**52. Hullul, The Shadow Fiend** rules over a domain of eternal darkness, where light is the only hope to survive. Shadow creatures roam everywhere, and only light can keep them at bay. Most of the population has been slain long ago, but a few survivors still exist, constantly seeking more light sources. Hullul and the shadow creatures can't approach even a weak light, but always wait eagerly in the dark for its inevitable faltering, when they consume all living matter in seconds, leaving behind only empty clothes. (Inspiration: **Ten Candles** RPG, **Vanishing on 7<sup>th</sup> Street** film, Dr. Who's **Vashta Nerada**)

**53. Sar-Zevaoth** was a gnostic philosopher and visionary, who led his people in the ways of the Gnosis, teaching them to deny their human nature and morals in order to free their souls from the earthly prison and re-discover their lost divinity. He rules now a sprawling metropolis made of stone, metal, and glass, containing many architectural wonders and horrors, bizarre monuments and statuary, strange machinery and gears, and buildings from many times and worlds. Even time, space, and physics behave strangely in this city. The denizens are all gnostic, living according to rules which most humans would find appalling. Sar-Zevaoth and his lieutenants, known as Archons, look now like disturbing, eyeless angels, resembling kytons. They watch over the denizens and guide them into ever stranger rituals. Visitors who escape this domain will be scarred mentally and spiritually for life. (Inspiration: **Kult** RPG)



Art from: Kult: Divinity Lost Core Rules, pg. 321

**54. Ashton, the Rationalist**, believes emotions to be the source of all evil. In his domain, expressing or even feeling emotions is outlawed and severely punished by the Mind Police, who are trained to recognize even slight emotional reactions. All the denizens dress uniformly and fill the roles assigned to them by the regime. Children are bred according to plans and indoctrinated to be absolutely cold and rational, leaving no place for feelings of any kind. Art is strictly forbidden. Everything is carried out according to strict laws of utility. Ashton's greatest secret is that in spite of all of his efforts, he still feels emotions, which he must conceal from his own enforcers. (Inspiration: **Equilibrium** film)

**55. Reshef, the Phoenix**, was once a warrior for goodness like most of his kind, but after seeing humans' capacity for evil too many times he turned against them, immolating many innocent people before the Mists took him. His floating domain is a marvelous palace, all made of gold and jewels, surrounded by a beautiful orchard. The palace is filled with unbelievable treasures, including powerful magical items, and the apples in the orchard can heal all illness. Reshef will test the virtue of any visitors, often disguising himself as a beautiful princess

or prince, and tempt them with the greatest of their heart's desires to forsake their righteous duties and goals. If they succumb to greed or lust, he immolates them, but if they prove themselves absolutely virtuous and altruistic, they might leave with one of the apples.

**56. Shar'Izdul, the Winter Lord**, is a shamanic priest-lich ruling over a desolate frozen land, draped in eternal winter. The population have all perished, leaving behind ruins, frozen bones and strange stone totems. Colossal undead, god-like beasts roam the land, and only by defeating them and the lich who conjured them may one hope to escape. (Inspiration: **Praey for the Gods** game)

**57. Gilmore Anders** is venerated as one of the Founding Fathers of Alamos, a general and diplomat who led his people to independence and founded a nation on the principles of liberty and equality. Alamos is a vast land west of the Sea of Sorrows, a democratic republic whose people enjoy freedom and rights unseen anywhere else in Ravenloft, guarded by blue-uniformed knights and ruled by an elected parliament. But most denizens don't know that the leader they so admire, who died 200 years ago, committed many atrocities on his road to independence – he slaughtered native tribes, betrayed allies, sacrificed his soldiers, etc. He is a ghost now, haunted by the spirits of his many victims. The sins of the fathers and shadows of the past hang over Alamos, often exacting their revenge on the unsuspecting descendants. (Inspiration: historic United States and **Pathfinder's** Andoran)

**58. Tantalus** was a truly sadistic and perverted rapist. He is cursed now that whenever he is about to touch a female, he becomes incorporeal, so he can never sate his ravenous desires, which makes him endlessly frustrated. His lustful fantasies manifest in the shapes of twisted demons who prey upon the feminine population of the domain, alongside multiple

mortal and undead sexual predators. Violent lusts run high in this domain, and many succumb to them. An organization known as the Daughters of Purity tries to protect the innocents and fight the evil with a combination of martial, spiritual, and mystical arts.

**59. Ulrich, the Racist**, is a white-haired man dressed in a white uniform. He despises demihumans and humanoids and believes in humans' supremacy. To his dismay, most of the population in his domain is a mixed multitude of every imaginable race, including countless crossbreeds, and their numbers are growing. The humans are the elite class, holding all positions of power and forming the militia. Ulrich enforces strict laws of separation and discrimination against non-fully-humans, but racial tensions run high, often erupting. Even worse for him, some humans suddenly change or give birth to non-humans for no apparent reason, and Ulrich dreads that it might happen to him or his family. He holds many non-humans in hidden facilities and concentration camps, carrying out experiments and breeding programs on them in order to find a "cure for this infection".

**60. Klorr, the Time Lord**. Though believed to be slain by his infamous Timepiece, the legendary watchmaker has been saved and made a darklord by the Dark Powers. His house of clocks became a floating domain, traveling not only through space but through time too. Klorr has the power to control time itself, and may slow, accelerate, or stop it, trap creatures in time-loops or throw them out of sync with time, and create other effects in his house and its surroundings. He seems to be looking for his lost Timepiece, but it keeps eluding him.

**61. Vorik, the Kingmaker** is a rich and powerful nobleman, who pulls the strings of the feuding royal families in his land, keeping them in a constant bloody war with no end. His domain is based on England during the War of the Roses,

torn by political intrigues and civil war while several royal descendants and noble houses claim the throne for themselves.

**62. Alexander Gunn** is the Darklord of a steampunk-styled domain, with trains, zeppelins and other steam powered vehicles and machines. The cities in the domain constantly fight each other, and the air, water, and earth are severely polluted by smoke, soot, and chemical weapons, forcing the soldiers and many citizens to use gas masks. Gunn himself resides in his mechanical moving castle, giving his support and technical genius to whatever side he sees fit. Several parts of his body have changed into gearwork, though he tries to hide it.

**63. Cleo, the Queen of Cats** rules over a domain populated by catfolk, cat-headed, or feline-looking humanoids. It is a surrealistic, dreamlike landscape, where catfolk and cats lounge in luxury in bizarre palaces and gardens and pursue strange goals. The catfolk are curious, hedonistic and often cruel. Little is known about the beautiful, whimsical Cleo, but rumors have it that she was born a human and changed into a catfolk after committing heinous crimes against people who hurt cats.

**64. The Sandman**. Very little is known about this enigmatic, grey hooded figure. He can put people to sleep by sprinkling sand into their eyes, but he rarely does so. Indeed, visitors to his deserted, misty town, find they can no longer fall asleep. The more time they spend without sleep, the more their sanity deteriorates and their perception of reality becomes weirder, and they are made aware of bizarre creatures, structures, and features they didn't perceive earlier. Only the Sandman can stop this whirlpool of madness by putting them to sleep, but persuading him to do it is not an easy task. (Inspiration: **Don't Rest Your Head** RPG)

**65. Sethis-Tir, the Anathema**, is the vilest, most powerful form of yuan-ti. He resides in the ruins of an ancient yuan-ti city in the middle of a foul swamp. His yuan-ti servants infiltrate the nearby human cities, manipulate the denizens, and frequently kidnap them for sacrifice, slavery, and hideous breeding experiments. Snakes and snake-gods are both feared and revered in this domain, and there are human cultists who worship them under the guidance of the yuan-ti. As a result, many humans have traces of yuan-ti blood in their veins, and may transform further down this path if they become evil. This domain combines elements of Lovecraft's *Innsmouth* and David Eddings' *Nyissa*.

**66. Agonath-Ra, the Chained Doom**, was an evil wizard who transformed himself into a colossal, tarrasque-like monstrosity, laying waste to whole towns. Now he is almost completely paralyzed, buried under a hill, with only some of his spikes and horns protruding out of the ground. The denizens of his domain built their city upon this hill, most of them unaware of the beast underneath. Some of them have discovered the truth, though, and use tunnels to reach Agonath-Ra's body. They harvest his flesh and blood and use them for magical purposes or simply consume them, becoming more powerful - and monstrous - in the process. Agonath-Ra is helpless to stop this torture (though he regenerates any damage quickly), and the occasional earthquake is the most he can do. But he still dreams of the day he will break free of his earthly prison. (Inspiration: **Carpe Deum: Tales of Taltasqa**)

**67. Captain Blackhawk** is a fit, muscular man with long blond hair, an icy-cold blue eye, and a black patch covering his other eye socket. He commands the *Thundercrack*, a flying galleon with the power to sail among the storm clouds. He and his crew of pirates descend from the sky during storms, taking their victims by surprise

and carrying loot and slaves back to their ship. They also make profit by serving darklords and other powerful figures, who can easily see the usefulness of such a flying vessel. Captain Blackhawk himself is a stern man who never smiles. He was cursed for his crimes to never set his foot upon the ground, which he defiled with his victims' blood.

**68. Osman, the Sultan**, is a fat man with a long black beard and glinting eyes, dressed extravagantly in rich clothes and many jewels. He is known for his love for games of chance, forcing those he doesn't like to take part in public game shows he hosts, "Let's Make a Deal" style. The participants must choose between unknown options, which might bring them great fortune or terrible fate (like in Stockton's "**The Lady, or the Tiger?**"). Large crowds watch the games, and the Sultan always looks for ways to make them more suspenseful, with direr options. Most players don't survive the games, at least not intact, but some come out with great prizes - it's all a matter of luck. The domain is full of casinos and gambling dens, drawing gamblers from many lands.

**69. Anna and Bella Karnstein** are two beautiful, fair haired identical twins. From young age, they used their indistinguishable looks for all kinds of foul play, tricking, seducing, and ruining many people. With time, Anna became an accomplished witch, and Bella was turned into a vampire. They rule now their own small, gothic domain, but the denizens have no idea that "Countess Annabella" is actually two separate women; the sisters are never seen together, maintaining the illusion that there is only one of them, in order to confuse potential rivals and keep playing their malicious games. The twins share an empathic link and can communicate telepathically, but are cursed to feel pain and confusion whenever they come close to each other; they must always be distant, which hurts

them dearly. Births of twins are very common in their domain.

**70. Daphna, the Deadly Blossom**, is a dryad, and in her domain, plants are the dominant lifeform - though it might not be immediately apparent. She has absolute control over all kinds of plants. She can make flowers bloom and secrete pheromones that affect human minds and behaviors in any way she sees fit, playing with their emotions and even making them kill themselves. She can also attack more directly, by making plants grow instantly large and animating them, and may create many kinds of poisonous, carnivorous and dangerous plants. The human denizens must take great caution to respect nature and refrain from harming it, or else the consequences shall be dire. (Inspiration: **The Happening** film and **Poison Ivy** of DC comics)

**71. King Gore** is a huge white gorilla, ruling a domain where apes rebelled against their human masters and enslaved them. Now gorillas, chimpanzees, and orangutans run the realm, and humans are reduced to slaves and laboratory animals. King Gore is both cunning and brutal, given to bursts of primal rage when upset. He is cursed to fall in love with human females, who unsurprisingly always find him repulsive.

**72. The Voice.** Strange, disturbing music is always heard in this small, forested domain, seemingly out of nowhere. It flows and changes without discernible pattern, taking many forms and styles, from haunting melodies to maddening cacophonies. The denizens do their best to ignore it, but are still affected by the mood and emotions it generates. The source of the music is a mad, genius composer who was utterly devoted to his music, but never got the acknowledgement he desired. Now he exists as a disembodied voice, and he forces everyone to hear his music incessantly, manipulating people and playing with their sanity. He can create all

kinds of sound effects, whisper suggestions or dark secrets, or bring people to madness with annoying sounds. He is cursed to never be respected for his creations, for nobody knows his name, as even he cannot utter it. He is known only as The Voice.

**73. The Snow Queen and the Fire King.** Balthos was a man of fiery passions. Gladys was cold, distant and aloof. She was forced to become his queen, but he couldn't make her warm to him, and their bitterness and frustration boiled, eventually bringing ruin to the kingdom. Now she rules the eastern half of their mutual domain, a frozen landscape of ice and snow, and he rules its western half, a hot, basaltic landscape centered around an active volcano and lava streams. Gladys became a frostwind virago (**MM V**), and Balthos a fire giant. Both cannot cross to the other's land, but the Fire King always looks for ways to melt her coldness, while the Snow Queen seeks to chill his fires. Both halves of the domain are populated by humans and creatures fitting the environment, used by the darklords either as pawns or toys for their amusement.

**74. X, The Black-Eyed Man.** This domain embodies the fear of aliens and conspiracy. Mysterious UFOs are a common sight, giant tripods walk the countryside, and many people report abductions and recall horrible experiments, grey aliens, and tentacled horrors. The government denies all those claims, and those who insist they are real might vanish. The darklord, known only as X, or the Black-Eyed Man, is the head of a secret government agency who made a pact with an extraterrestrial race, allowing them to use the denizens and the land for their goals in return for gifts like genetic improvements (hence his wholly-black eyes) and various alien technology. However, the aliens are now trapped in Ravenloft as well, residing in various secret facilities, and X must play carefully and wisely to keep them from

destroying or enslaving the whole realm. (Inspiration: **The X-Files** et al).

**75. The Swarm.** This domain was originally an asteroid floating in outer space, though it is actually surrounded by the Mists now. Its stony surface is reminiscent of Bluetspur, and its skies are always deep black and full of stars. There is a great cathedral-like city in the center of the asteroid, and several buildings in other places. Atmosphere and gravity are magically kept normal. Denizens are ruled by a theocracy of priests worshipping space gods. They live in constant war with the Swarm - a race of predatory aliens with a hive mind, resembling kythons or tyranids (**Warhammer 40k**) who dwell in caverns below the surface. It is said that a former priest merged his mind with them, giving them sentience. This is the setting for the kind of space horror found in movies such as **Aliens, Starship Troopers, Pandorum** and the likes.

**76. Max, King of the Wild Things,** is a 9 year-old-boy in a wolf costume, who rules over an island populated by hulking humanoid monsters resembling ogres, trolls, giant bugbears, and the like. Strangely enough, the wild things acknowledge him as their king (most of them, at any rate), but he must constantly lead them to violent rampages and bloody games in order to keep them from getting bored and rebellious. Max enjoys his power over the wild things, but lives in fear of the day they will rise up against him. (Inspiration: **Where Wild Things Are**)

**77. Atlas, the Nephilim,** comes from a world where various people started manifesting superhuman powers. Named "Nephilim" by the populace, it was said their appearance heralds the coming of a cosmic horror, from which they are supposed to protect their world. Atlas was the most powerful of the Nephilim; however, when the horror came, he betrayed humankind and sided with it, resulting in global destruction and millions of deaths. Now Atlas rules his

overcast domain as a tyrant Superman, aided by other evil Nephilim, hunting and crushing any good Nephilim who might rise against him. Atlas has the classic superhero traits such as superhuman strength, speed, flight, and invulnerability, and may possess other powers. (Inspiration: comics like **Irredeemable**, and **The Reckoners** books)

**78. The Endless.** The domain known as the Endless Castle goes on forever in every direction, with endless gloomy rooms, halls, corridors, and stairways of any possible description leading to each other without any order, often turning back on themselves. Some corridors and stairways simply seem to go on forever, with no end on either side (even the one they came from). Other than the obvious risk of getting lost forever, there are other threats as well, such as fairy creatures, other lost people and the undead remains of former visitors. The mysterious darklord, known only as the Endless, is a hooded, hunched figure with dusty robes and bony hands, lurching slowly but relentlessly along the never-ending halls, and vow to those he chooses to follow, for they won't be able to escape him forever.

**79. The Cloned.** Both denizens and visitors of this fog-shrouded domain are sure there is only one village in it. In truth, there are many, many villages - but they all look exactly the same, including identical people! As a result, those who wander in the fog and come upon another village, will probably assume they have returned to where they came from, and will be surprised when nobody recognizes them (denizens may encounter their doubles, which is shocking to both). None of the villages know of the others. There are some differences among the villages though, from minor to more prominent ones (e.g. evil or inhuman versions of denizens). The darklord is an alienist whose mind was split among a multitude of clones of himself, now scattered across the many villages.

He wants to reunite them, but this task proves to be impossible. (Inspiration: the movie **Coherence**)

**80. Edgar Dred, "The Dread"**, was determined to be the serial killer with the greatest body count in history. A sadistic murderer, torture-killer, and rapist, Edgar murdered hundreds of men, women, and children, in many terrible forms, planning his activities methodically. Now he is the darklord of a half-empty city, populated by the ghosts of his victims. Those corporeal ghosts seem to be living, and are all afraid and warn visitors of "The Dread". They don't recognize their Killer because he covered his face, so the mistake Edgar for one of them. Edgar is frustrated by not having more living victims, and when visitors arrive, he makes the most of it, secluding, and killing them one by one. If his identity is exposed, the denizens will reveal their nature and exact their revenge.

**81. Mazil-Ririm** is a Veiled Master (**PF Bestiary 6**) - the most powerful form of aboleth. He found that when he devours sentient beings, he experiences their memories, not just as knowledge but as true sensations. He became addicted to human sensations, seeking adventurers, debauched nobles, and other people with rich experiences to devour. His domain is a city of many thrills and excitements, as Mazil-Ririm uses his influence to arrange both pleasant and terrifying sensations for his denizens, to feed upon them later. His seat of power is built over an underground net of caverns and lakes where he dwells. He takes human form when required to run the city's affairs, but never allows anyone to see it, speaking only from behind curtains, raising many rumors about his identity. He uses faceless stalkers and other slaves to silence those who inquire too much.

**82. William Hunt.** Scarville is a small, dusty town with mazy streets, where each and every citizen is a serial killer of some sort, from

sophisticated poisoners to masked slashers and inbred farmers. Drawn from many lands, they keep a mutual truce of peace, enforced by mayor William Hunt - an impressive, powerful man with a black moustache. When visitors arrive, they will toy with them, killing one and misleading the others while they search for the murderer. Eventually they will capture the visitors, reveal the truth and offer them a chance: if they survive a night in the town while hunted by everyone, they may leave. Scarville has no permanent location, and travelers on many roads may reach it after taking a wrong turn.

**83. Ogramol, the Malaugrym**, is a shapeshifter who can take any form at will, and may also transform any other creature or object in a blink of eye. His domain is a place of constant, apparently random changes, where nothing is secure - a man may change without notice into a woman, animal, monster, plant, or unliving object, and so can anything else. One never knows which shape he, his friends, and his belongings will have in the next hour, and changes might be minor or drastic. Ogramol poses as an all-powerful wizard, dwelling in an ever-shifting palace of horrors, always appearing in different forms and taking great pleasure from torturing his subjects. He is never satisfied with any form though, constantly changing himself and his surroundings in a futile quest for some unattainable perfection.

**84. Galatea, the Nereid**, is a beautiful fey and the keeper of the fabulous Fountain of Youth. Anyone who drinks from the fountain or bathes in it becomes young again; however, they will soon find out they start to age much faster. They must return to the fountain to regain their youth, but for every subsequent visit, Galatea charges direr fees, making visitors do horrible things and lose their humanity. The fountain is located in a middle of a forest surrounded by villages, and the denizens make pilgrimages to



the fountain when they wish to refresh their youth. Not all of them return, for the journey is full of dangers, traps and deadly puzzles, not to mention the band of wild children who serve Galatea and always want to "play". Those who drink too many times might join them.

**85. Greta** is the only young person in a village full of the old. She takes care of all the elders, who couldn't have survived without her help. Greta was born with a progeroid syndrome that made her body age quickly, looking like a withered crone when she was just a girl. However, she found she can make herself young-looking and healthy by draining years from others. Visitors to the village start to age rapidly, their life force transferred to Greta (though everyone think it's a local curse and don't suspect her). She can't prevent this effect, and as a result must take care of all the others (so she can keep draining them), rather than lead a normal life. Greta is anxious to bring more people to her domain, for if her "resources" are exhausted, she will rapidly revert to her aged form.

**86. Dr. Zimmer** is a psychologist believing all humans are evil at their core. Visitors always find themselves in his domain after a seemingly fatal encounter. Zimmer can make it look like any kind of afterlife he wishes, heaven or hell or anything else. He appears as an angel, devil, or just another "soul", telling the visitors they died and this is their afterlife. Those who find themselves in "heaven" feel blessed and happy at first, but with time Zimmer will manipulate them psychologically, turning them against each other until they make it a hell for themselves. Those who are in "hell" will face mental and physical torture, and be forced to make terrible moral choices, such as torturing innocents to save themselves. Other "afterlives" include obscure natures and complicated psychological games. Those who discover the truth and

escape, will still feel the consequences of their experiences long after.

**87. Gaston Hass, Lord of Hatred**, was never loved by anyone. He was the bastard, unwanted boy of a baron, and his family and house staff always treated him hatefully. As he grew, he found that he can transform the hatred directed at him into power: the more he is being hated, the more powerful he becomes, and no one who hates him can ever hurt him. Gaston seized power by destroying his family, then proceeded to cold-bloodedly commit unspeakable atrocities upon his subjects, killing, oppressing, and torturing many of them to make sure they all feed his power with constant, burning hatred. Gaston is a good-looking young man, but there's something in his crooked smile and appearance that makes everyone loathe him. He can control hatred in others, directing it at whomever he wants. Deep inside, he yearns to be loved, but if someone will ever be able to truly love him, her kiss will kill him instantly.

**88. Murdoc the Misanthrope** is a grim-looking blackguard with long, black hair and a scarred face. Though human, he developed an unfathomable hatred toward all humankind, seeking its utter destruction. He used arson, plagues, poisoned water sources, and his legions of undead and demons to slaughter whole cities, massacring hundreds with his own hands just for being human. His domain is devoid of humans; it's a dark city populated solely by monsters - vampires, werebeasts, hags, rakshasas. etc., all constantly struggling for power and conspiring against each other. Many portals lead from the domain to other lands, enabling citizens to get "food" and supplies (think Neil Gaiman's **Neverwhere**). The monsters hate Murdoc for being human and fear him, as he is eviler than them. He despises the monsters and wants to destroy them all, but it is not as simple as killing humans...

**89. Gartax, the Anti-Paladin**, is a giant of a man with muscular body, dark skin, stubbled face, long black hair and an evil smile. He created a schism within his order of paladins, persuading half of them to become blackguards. His domain is locked now in a constant struggle between his order of "Dark Paladins" to the rival Knights of Light, led by Elina, his former romantic interest. Their powers are quite even; each faction controls about half of the realm. The Dark Paladins seek to enslave the denizens, the Knights of Light strive to protect them, and both look for means to tip the scales in their favor. Many knights have former friends and lovers on the other side, and some might still have emotions toward them, but their commitment to their cause forces them to be bitter enemies, leading to many tragedies.

**90. The Witch Queen**, known by many other names, was the most powerful of her kind in a world where witches were considered to be a different species than humans. She led an army of witches and monsters in a great war against mankind and brought great plagues upon the land. However, she was betrayed by other witches and destroyed by her enemies. Without her, the other witches turned against each other and their armies scattered. Today, the remaining witches and covens constantly plot against the humans and each other, while expert witch-hunters with mystical powers seek to expose and destroy them all. The spirit of the Witch Queen lives on, using her powers to influence events so they'll bring on her resurrection and revenge upon both the humans and the betraying witches. (Inspiration: **Accursed** RPG, and movies like **The Last Witch Hunter** and **Hellboy (2019)**).

**91. Anatoli Chernov** was a Falkovnian mystic and alienist, heading a secret project for the Ministry of the Arcane in a remote corner of the realm. His experimenting with unknown dimensions malfunctioned, resulting in an

explosion which opened a rift into the Far Realm. Strange, unseen energies started flowing out of the rift, contaminating the area in a large radius, mutating and killing hundreds of people. The contaminated area became a pocket domain, with Chernov as its demilord. The closer one comes to the rift, the higher is the level of Far Realm's radiation, and in the rift's immediate surroundings reality itself becomes nightmarishly twisted. The contaminated area seems to spread slowly, worrying the authorities. Chernov himself is now a chaos beast. (Inspiration: combination of Chernobyl, **Annihilation** film and Lovecraft's **The Color Out of Space**)

**92. Lola, the Slime Queen**, was a harlot and prostitution madam, always treated as one of the dregs of society. She became a thrall of Jubilex and used her powers and prostitutes to spread both corruption and slimy infections among those of higher status. Her body is now a huge puddle of slime, though she can take any shape she wants, and secrete any kind of ooze, slime, pudding, and jelly. She dwells in a nightmarish palace deep down in the sewer system, served by many oozes, and human-ooze hybrids. Her servants bring her victims to devour and recreate as her "children", who further advance the various slimy threats on the denizens of this moist, watery city domain.

**93. The Dark Emperor**. Before the current form of the Demiplane of Dread, other versions existed, created by the Dark Powers and destroyed when they filled their purpose (or failed to do so). One of them was the realm of the Dark Emperor, a powerful being with a monstrous horned helmet and mask, who conquered all the others with his armies of nightshades and undead, until all life was extinct from the demiplane. The Dark Powers shrank his vast empire into the size of a small black marble, which now resides in the current demiplane. It might be used to summon

nightshades from within, or draw victims into the dark empire. If the marble is somehow broken, the empire will instantly expand out, overlapping the current demiplane and bringing untold cataclysm. Other marbles or relics of former demiplanar versions might exist - one of them is said to contain a whole ocean.

**94. Ulises, the Satyr,** was born a human. He led a band of merry outlaws and rebels who fought to liberate their people from the tyranny of their prince. But, with time, their vision of liberty deteriorated into debauched revelry, and they started taking advantage of the local population and using them for their own desires. The Dark Powers transformed Ulises and his allies into satyrs, and they now dwell in a forest populated by centaurs, dryads, and similar creatures, most of which are evil and teeming with twisted desires. The human denizens fear the forests and their dangers, but are also strangely lured by the call of the wilderness.

**95. Chuckles the Clown** is a mad, psychopathic clown, and the darklord of a park including a circus, carnival, freak show, and several horror-themed funhouses. Unlike the famous Carnival, Chuckles' domain is outright evil, including a band of killer clowns (human and inhuman), murderous freaks and deadly rides of all kinds. Visitors can only escape if they visit and survive all the shows - and the chances of that are very slim.

**96. Prince Otto Kenigsberg** has one great love in his life - hunting. He has a huge, many-leveled zoo built like a maze, where he keeps all kinds of dangerous animals and monsters from all over the world, and surrounding it are several different types of terrain, from arctic to tropical jungles, where he can practice his hunting skills. Visitors to the domain often find themselves part of the game, hunted either by Kenigsberg or the beasts. The prince is always looking for more dangerous game, but nothing

seems to pose a real challenge for him nowadays.

**97. The King of Horror.** Unlike most other domains, this ever-dark realm, about the size of Darkon, doesn't even try to fake normalcy. It is a land of sheer, outright nightmares, with forests of animated gnarled trees, bone-covered plains, marching legions of ghosts, and huge castles inhabited by terrible legendary beings such as the Vampire King and the Queen of Doom. Everything in this realm is nightmare stuff, monsters roam freely and undisguised, and the human denizens are hardened folks trained to be adventurers from a young age. The darklord, titled the King of Horror, is a sahkil tormentor, looking like a huge ghostly head with mad eyes, a fanged maw, and smaller ghastly faces surrounding it. From his dark castle he sends his hosts of nightmares to terrorize every living soul in the domain.



Art from: Fright Night (1985) film poster

**98. Magog, the Blood Magus.** For most villains, cruelty is means to get power; for Magog, the blood magus (see **Complete Arcane**), power is means to do cruelty. He delved into the darkest arts with the sole purpose of having more options to kill, maim, torture, and cause suffering with his spells. He loves seeing people ripped apart in the most horrendous ways. Magog is a tall but hunched man, with a hag-

like face, grey skin, and sharp claws, dressed in blood-red robes and hood. His domain is a realm of splatter-horror, where blood and body parts are used for currency and taxation, and cruel, gruesome demons watch over the denizens. Magog rules from his twisted red tower. He is addicted to inflicting pain, but cursed once per month to feel for himself the cumulative misery he brought upon his victims, which only drives him further into insanity.

**99. Lenore, the Bride of Death**, saw Death (the real one, not "Death" of Necropolis) as a young girl when he took her mother, and became enamored with the Grim Reaper. She married several times, murdering each of her grooms on their wedding night in order to see him again and again, and eventually Death returned her love and took her as his bride. Lenore is a pale, beautiful woman dressed in black bridal attire with skull motifs. She has warlock powers granted to her by Death as her patron; she doesn't age and cannot die. She lives in a large

gothic manor and often hosts parties ending in her guests' deaths, followed by a heated rendezvous with her "husband" who takes pleasure at her gifts. Her domain is a gothic-themed land, where stories of love and desire from beyond the grave are common occurrences.

**100. Simulacra.** Very little is known about this strange entity, which composes its whole domain - the land, the buildings and the denizens are all actually a single, shapeshifting being. It can change its appearance to look like any other domain, including replicas of the denizens and darklord, and even simulate lands from other worlds, based on information and memories drawn from visitors' minds. Visitors will probably be sure they are in the actual land being simulated, but with time, minor changes and strange events will surface, getting worse until the familiar land changes into a maddening nightmare.

# LAZENDRAK

LAND OF HONEY AND BLOOD (DOMAIN)

BY MISTMASTER

**Culture level:** Medieval

**Ecology:** Full

**Climate & Terrain:** Temperate hills and river valleys.

**Languages:** Balok, Borcan.

**Religions:** Church of the Blood Mother, Cult of Kanchelsis, Cult of the Avenging Sun

**Races:** Human (Lazendraki) 50%, Dhampirs 30%, Vampires 18% (Obiri, Nosferatu), Others 2%.

**Government:** Diarchy

**Ruler:** Day Queen Helena II Ravenhair, Night King Ezekiel the Wise.

**Darklord:** Sebastian Bellamy, aka Bloodstake the Hunter.

**Lightlord:** Ezekiel the Wise

Analog: Central Europe, 13th century.

**Capital City:** Covenant Rock (LG, Non-standard, 20,000 in.)

**Important towns:** Merry Bloodlake (LN, standard 13,000 in), Shaderest (NG, Standard, 10,000 in), Twilight Gates (LN Non-Standard, 8,000 in)

**Borders:** South: Barovia, Southwest: Borca. All others: The Mists.

## DOMAIN OVERVIEW

Lazendrak is a disturbing, yet surprisingly welcoming land. Its heavily wooded, hilly landscape is dotted by springs, lakes and rivers; many of them are quite ordinary, but many appear to run with fresh, red blood. (Both types are ordinary fresh water, with just a hint of rust in the taste of the “bloody” water sources.) The forests abound in towering redwood trees. The capital and largest city is Covenant Rock, near the source of the Blessed Blood River; it lies at the foot of the mountain known as Blood Mother Heel.

Merry Bloodlake, famous for its markets, is the second largest city of the domain. It is built on an island in the center of the Bloodlake, which is in turn surrounded by the richest fields of the south-central Core.

The city of Shaderest lies near the northern Misty Border, where the Blessed Blood River flows into the Mists, and the waters start to lose their blood-like appearance. It is a prosperous city of miners and crafters.

The city of Twilight Gate lies at the Southern border and is notable for its heavy fortification against Barovian invasions.

## THE PEOPLE

The people of Lazendrak are unique in the core, as they do not fear vampires; while they do know vampires can be dangerous, vampires have protected them from the other monsters of the night (like werewolves and demons) since the dawn of time, thanks to the Covenant of Day and Night. Because of this ancient alliance, humans and vampires thrive in the richly soiled Lazendrak. In fact, vampiric feeding is a benefit to the non-vampiric residents of the domain; the extreme iron content in the water and food of the domain causes diseases of the blood which can be prevented by vampiric feeding. The blood-like water of the domain has a number of other effects: vampires are not subject to feeding frenzy after starvation as long as they drink it, although they still need blood from sentient creatures to maintain their “health” and strength. In addition, a vampire submerged in the water of Lazendrak is not only unharmed by it, but is protected against the sun’s rays. In addition, garlic does not thrive in the soil of Lazendrak, and is absent from the Lazendraki cuisine.

Vampires use their powers to help living people who shelter them in during the day and feed them at night. The vampires of the domain follow a practice of “safe feeding,” a voluntary exchange any adult citizen can submit to (those who do not wish to participate may pay a tax instead). Vampire safe-feeding is a pleasurable experience for the human, and often leads to romantic relationship between humans and vampires. dhampyrs are therefore relatively common and are widely accepted. The pro-vampire people of Lazendraki wear clothes that bare the neck or, if they have recently been fed from, elaborate, stylized bandages on their necks.

Vampire society is divided into bloodlines, with each bloodline representing a vampire “species.” Most common are the members of

Ezekiel the Wise’s lineage (standard vampires), followed by the Obiri lineage of Durak and the Nosferatu lineage of Salazar. Lesser lineages include the Vyrolaka line of Kliger, the Fukushiki line of Ashoda and the Pennangalan line of Marika.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

The capital city of Covenant Rock is organized in two districts, one for mortals, the other for vampires. The mortal district is bigger and houses the main inns and restaurants, including the renowned Fat Bat Inn. The owner of the Fat Bat is a jolly, friendly, morbidly obese vampire named Carlon Var Klyger (CG Adult Vrykolaka Fighter 3). In the vampire district a luxurious hotel called Star of the Night is the center of nocturnal socializing. It is owned by a human woman named Sara Lank (N Middle-aged Human Rogue 5).

The main features of the town are the Red and White Manor, which is the seat of both the mortal ruler and immortal rulers of the domain and their courts; the Covenant Rock, a park around the namesake monolith where people can gather, mingle and debate, day and night; and the Crimson Dome, a great temple of the church of the Blood Mother.

Merry Bloodlake is as lively as its name, both day and night. The best view of the city is from the windows of the Tower Bridge Inn, owned by Tamara Var Salazar (NG Old Nosferatu Bard 7) one of the richest beings in the kingdom.

The city of Shaderest in the North is beautiful and quiet. The abundant red granite gives the buildings of the city their distinctive red color. The most renowned inn is the Old Mill, which is renowned for its pork stew. It is owned by the quiet and reserved Pyotr Karben (N Middle-aged Ranger 4).

Twilight Gate is an heavily fortified city that guards the border with Barovia, The only inn

here, the Broken Stake, is the retirement of Sergeant Markov Fitzashoda, a reliable dhampyr (LN Old Fighter 5)

## History

According to the myths of the land, in the age of creation, the Blood Mother D'vla (an aspect of Hala), dancing in the night, struck a peak with her heel. Her blood, pouring from the wound, sank into the ground and blessed the region with the strange bloody springs and creeks that are its distinguishing feature.

In the Age of Empires the Olympian empire settled the region, but people started to die young due to the peculiar qualities of the area. During the Age of Darkness, humans fleeing the Terg invasion and vampires followers of D'vla settled in the area, and the vampire leader Ezekiel the Wise struck a deal with the human leader, Lazen Ravenhair the First, known as the Pact of Night and Day. The Kingdom of Lazendrak (Lazen's Hope) flourished. In modern times Lazendrak has fended off a Barovian invasion and established friendly relations with Borca, but the relationship has soured in recent years as a Borcan vampire hunter turned undead monstrosity has created a terroristic group, the Bloodstake Gang, which destabilizes the otherwise peaceful nation.

## Religions

**D'vla**, the Blood Mother (NG) is the primary deity of the land. Her favored weapon is the dagger and her domains are Charm, Community, Darkness, Good, Healing and Protection. She teaches her followers to love life and respect blood as the source of life. She also teach vampires to stay in touch with their humanity and channel their inner beast towards good purposes, and to her mortal followers open-mindedness and forgiveness. Her followers are from any background. Her symbol is a red droplet of blood on a black background.

**Kanchelsis**, the Beast and Rake (CE) was D'vla's first child and lover. His favored weapon is the rapier, and his domains are Chaos, Death, Evil, Trickery and Strength. He teach his vampire and dhampyr followers that the beast is in their nature, and that mortals are servants, prey and playthings. His symbol is a bloodied bat.

**Belenos**, the Avenging Sun (LE) is a heretical sect of the Church of Andral. Their favored weapon is the spear. His cultists gain access to the Destruction, Evil, Law and Sun domains. This small cult is popular among Barovian refugees and it appeals to those who hates vampires but cannot stomach the Bloodstakes' atrocities. His symbol is a spear over a sun disk.

## THE FAMED AND THE INFAMOUS

### ***Day Queen Helena Ravenhair the Second (NG adult Human, Aristocrat 5.)***

Queen Helena, a beautiful woman with the signature ebony hair and pale complexion of her dynasty, succeeded her father Richard III three years after Lazendrak entered the Mists of Ravenloft. Her father became a vampire and abdicated the throne, but was assassinated one year later. She a strong women with a kind heart, and she rules with a light, yet firm hand.

*(Adventure Hook: The queen is increasingly obsessed about finding out who killed her father. The suspicions of course fall on the Bloodstake Gang, and she can pay the adventurers handsomely for their help).*

### ***Kevin Reine (CG adolescent human vampire Bard 3)***

Kevin is physically and emotionally a 16 year old boy. He is one of the few children ever turned into a vampire by the Night King, to save his life from a wasting disease. Unlike most other vampires, he has aged (very slowly) in the last century; presumably this aging will stop

once he reaches “adulthood.” His mother was killed by Bloodstake as she tried to protect him; in fact, she was the last victim of the vampire slayer before Bloodstake was lynched.

*(Adventure Hook: Kevin is overeager to fight the Bloodstakes, but, his vampiric power notwithstanding, he is not ready for such a struggle. His cousin Saladin Reine, which is his legal caretaker, is a kind and rich merchant. When Kevin runs away from home, seeking his revenge, Reine hires the adventurers to bring the foolish boy back home before he gets a stake through his heart.)*

**Day Chancellor Mordecai Smith (LN Middle-aged Human Aristocrat 3 )**

A stern man and leader of the conservative faction of the nobility, he is a defender of the traditional balance of power between mortals and immortals. Recently, he repressed anti-vampire riots with a heavy hand. He views the Bloodstake Gang as the main threat to the country’s stability.

*(Adventure Hook: Mordecai Smith is loyal and honest, but he is ruthless; even when the life of a young man and his vampire fiancée are at risk, he will still refuse to negotiate with the Bloodstakes. It’s up to the PCs to save innocent lives from being sacrificed for reasons of state.)*

**Lady Mildred Kaine (NE old human Druid 9)**

The chairwoman of the Human Covenant, the front organization of the Bloodstakes Gang, she is an advocate of apartheid between human and vampires. In her opinion vampires are unholy abominations that must be controlled, since destroying them is not practical. She believes life and death are in balance, and vampires upset this balance. The Covenant of Night and Day, in her opinion, has created a grievous imbalance between life and death

which must be repaired. She abstains from actions which could lead to civil war, but she is still a threat to Lazendrak’s stability.

*(Adventure Hook: Dangerous as she is, Mildred is still a moderate and her death would open a can of worm as more radical leaders might take power after her. When Lady Mildred receives death threats from an unknown source, local authorities ask the PCs to protect her.)*

**Grey Ghost (LG middle-aged dhampyr Oracle 10)**

The past of the man known as the Grey Ghost is shrouded in mystery. He is a religious teacher both for human and vampires, a powerful follower of the Blood Mother.

*(Adventure Hook: As soon as the adventurers arrive in Covenant Rock they are invited to dinner by the Gray Ghost. The Blood Mother has a message for them.)*

**Gabriel Grilka (CE adult human necromancer 7)**

Grilka is a sociopathic necromancer obsessed by vampirism, but this actually makes him a very popular person among the powers that be in the domain, since he is intelligent enough to use his talent for propaganda and rhetoric against the militants of the Bloodstakes and on the other enemies of the vampires. If he can demonstrate sufficient self-control, he has been promised the gift of vampirism, but he has a complication: his Powers Checks have granted him a number of very vampire-unfriendly sun-based powers.

*(Adventure Hook: Grilka has been approached by Medger Tyler with an offer for Tyler to make him a vampire, but Grilka suspects Tyler’s offer*



*is insincere and enlists the adventurers' help to investigate his would-be patron's motives.)*

***The Bloodhound (Unique Vampire) (C/E)  
(CR 10)***

Once a member of the Bloodstakes, Trevor Gane was abandoned and left to die after suffering a mortal wound in a confrontation between a vampire clan and the gang. He was saved by the vampires, and was eventually made a vampire himself. His former master didn't take this perceived betrayal very well and resolved to make an example of him. Using a druidic corrupted ritual, the Bloodstake turned Gane in a mindless beast which preys on vampires, dhampirs, and any mortal who attempts to come between him and his quarry.

*(Adventure Hook: When a mixed community of humans and vampires is attacked by a beast the adventurers investigate, and soon learn that vampires are far from being the apex predators of Lazendrak.)*

***Morton Redfield (NG old human expert  
2/aristocrat 2/rogue 3)***

Redfield is the human manservant of Night King Ezekiel. Under his humble and discreet appearance, he hides a keen mind and a loyal heart. He has been offered eternal life as a vampire already three times, but he has declined.

*(Adventure Hook: Much to his shame, Redfield's own granddaughter Nora has joined the Human Covenant; when she write to him about her fears of the Bloodstake, he asks humbly to the adventurers to help her.)*

***Antoniette (CE young human rogue  
7/assassin 3)***

Antoniette is the innocent-looking, wicked and merciless adopted daughter of Bloodstake. She is her father's child, and often lead the Bloodstakes in his name.

*(Adventure Hook: When a little girl asks protection from a vampire aggression, the PCs can't even begin to suspect they are sheltering a mass murderer.)*

***Night King Ezekiel (LG patriarch human  
vampire Patriarch, Alchemist 17)***

Ezekiel was once a human healer and scholar, honorable, wise and brave. When he became a vampire, he was saved by divine intervention. The Blood Mother taught him the true way of the Night Children. After four centuries of lonely studies, guided by the goddess, he led vampires with similar viewpoint towards a promised land of "blood and honey," where he signed the Covenant of Day and Night with the human leaders of what would become known as Lazendrak, the land blessed by the Blood Mother. Since then, he has ruled the Night Court of the domain. (He is also equipped to brave daylight for brief periods, if he must.)

He is a humble leader, patient and merciful, but with a palpable aura of strength and authority. In his long existence he has had many human wives, but every time he gifted one of them with eternal life, Bloodstake kills her. He fear the next time he will fell in love again, knowing that his wife will live brief decades and leave him widowed again, but is wise enough to not close his heart to love. He has several dhampyr and vampire childrens, who he loves dearly. He has send them far from him; Bloodstake will kill, and has killed, any he can find, and Ezekiel won't allow him to kill any others if he can help

it .He is an healer and a crafter of wondrous alchemical potions and implements.

*(Adventure Hook: His studies have bore fruits, and he now knows a cure for the early stages of vampirism, for those who are embraced unwillingly, but he knows that the cure can be weaponized against his people, and when the recipe is stolen he offers his gratitude to the PCs for any help they can give him.)*

### **Mary Lilian Fitzroy (CG young dhampyr sorcerer 7)**

One of Ezekiel's younger daughters, this rebel dhampyr has refused every attempt of his father to keep her far from himself. She is a certain target of the Bloodstake, but she won't allow that monster to keep her from her beloved father.

*(Adventure Hook: Mary Lilian walks a very dangerous path, and the PCs will find out that protecting her can be as frustrating as much as it is rewarding.)*

### **Medger Tyler (LE old Vampire Alchemist 8)**

Medger is a spy sent by Strahd von Zarovich, posing as a reformed vampire refugee from Barovia. In fact, he is searching a way to emulate Ezekiel's creations, to bind them to his master's will.

*(Adventure Hook: Medger strives to prove his (feigned) loyalty and helpfulness to his new country and new master, and will offer help to the PCs as they engage in other adventures, asking only that they keep him informed.)*

## **ORGANIZATION**

### **The Bloodstakes**

CE 300 human warriors 3, 10 human rogues 5, 5 human druids 7. They are all anti-vampire fanatics, loyal to their leader.

*(Dread Possibility: Fed up with their leader's failures due to the curse of the Dark Powers, some of the Bloodstakes' lieutenants are plotting to put Antoinette in his place. The girl is loyal to her father, but as she grows older she may be less amenable to remain in his shadow....)*

### **The Human Covenant**

NE This racist political organization is the public face of the Bloodstakes, and favor a more moderate approach.

*(Dread Possibility: The Covenant secretly recruits people for the Bloodstakes by brainwashing them.)*

### **The Blood Knights**

LG A knightly order sworn to the Church of Mother Blood, the Blood Knights protect every denizen of the kingdom, mortal, vampires, dhampirs, or unicorns. The head of the order is Markam Var Ezekiel (LG eminent vampire Paladin 9) one of the Night King's oldest children.

**THE DARKLORD : BLOODSTAKE****Medium Undead C/E Slayer 16 (176 HP)****Speed:** 60 feet**Initiative:** +14 (+19 in the Staked Grave).**Senses:** Darkvision 30 feet.**Armor Class:** 38 (43 in the Staked Grave) (+10 Dex, +4 Natural Armor, +6 Deflection, +8 Armor)

Space/Reach: 1 square /1 square

**Combat Maneuver Defense/Combat Maneuver Bonus:** 36/+16 (+20 Disarm)**Str** 19, **Dex** 31, **Con** -, **Int** 17, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 22.**Saving Throws:** Fort:+16, Ref:+20, Will:+6**Special Qualities:** Undead Traits, Damage Reduction:15/Magic and slashing, Unholy Toughness, Unholy Deflection, S.R. 32, Curse of the Darklord, Vulnerable to cold, Immune to fire, Vampire's Bane, Track, Stalker, Slayer Talents (Ranger Style Feat x3, Slow Reactions\* Deadly Range x4), Swift Tracker. Vulnerability to Blood. Mastery 2**Special Attacks:** Sneak Attack (5d6), Quarry, 4th Studied Target (+4),**Attack: Melee:** 2 +3 Undead Anathema Impaling Stakes (+29/+24/+19/+14 e +29/+24/+19) (1d6+7, pierce the heart with a natural 20 confirmed; crit 19/20) **Ranged:** 2 +2 Returning Impaling Undead Anathema Stakes, Range 100 ft. (+28/+23/+18/+13) e (+28/+23/+18) (1d6+6, pierce the heart with a natural 20 confirmed; Crit 19/20)**Skills:** Acrobatics: (+29), Bluff (+25) Climb (+23), Disguise (+25), Intimidate (+25), Perception (+20), Sense Motive (+20), Stealth (+44), Survival (+20)**Feats:** Authority, Weapon Focus (Stake), Double Slice, Two-Weapon Fighting (B), Greater Two-Weapon Fighting (B), Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting (B), Weapon Finesse,**Challenge Rating:** 22**Magic Items:** Greater Shadow +8 Armor Bracers, Belt of Physical Perfection +4, Band of Mental Perfection +2; a pair of +3 Undead Anathema Impaling Stakes, a pair of +2 Returning Impaling Undead Anathema Stakes.**BACKGROUND**

Sebastian Bellamy was born into a family of renowned monster hunters, and followed the family trade from a young age. He became a skilled hunter, and eventually his skill and success made him proud and foolhardy, obsessed with his heroic self-image. When the Mists brought him to Lazendrak, he immediately began to slaughter the vampires of the domain and even made an attempt on the life of Ezekiel, who he took to be the "evil

vampire overlord" of the region. He was caught in the attempt by humans loyal to Ezekiel, who exiled him from the domain. Convinced that the human Lazendraki were under the thrall of their vampiric overlords, Bellamy became obsessed with "saving" them. He ignored other threats to pursue his vendetta against any and all vampires of Lazendrak he could find, regardless of their motives or actions. Finally, in the grip of his delusion he kidnapped Kevin Reine, a boy Ezekiel was treating for a serious illness. He and Kevin were tracked to the Stakes Graveyard, a

place symbolic of the peace between vampires and humans. The boy was at death's door, and after he was rescued from Bellamy the boy's mother pleaded to Ezekiel to save him by turning him in a vampire. Ezekiel did so, albeit reluctantly. Horrified by this "blasphemy," Ezekiel staked Kevin's mother and then attempted to killed the boy too. He was found in the act and a mob of humans and vampires lynched him while Ezekiel tried unsuccessfully to save Kevin's mother. The mob staked Bellamy and left him to bleed to death. Ezekiel offered him to save his life by making him a vampire, but Sebastian refused, saying that he preferred the peace of the grave to live as a monster. The reply of the Night King, as the Mists engulfed them, have haunted the future Bloodstake ever since: "You died as a monster, Sebastian, what peace will you ever know?"

### CURRENT SKETCHES

Sebastian Bellamy was reborn as one of the undead. He is unnaturally pale, but he can pass for one of the living. However, he is an anti-vampire, who need to feed with the ash of vampires. He is still convinced that he is the hero of the story, and he has set himself to be the one who will liberate them. He now calls himself Bloodstake, and he formed a gang of self-righteous cutthroats calling themselves the Bloodstakes. Supported by a cabal of deranged Druids, he strive to expose the vampires as the monsters he believes them to be. Ironically, he is the most feared monster in Lazendrak.

### COMBAT

The Bloodstake will use his minions to make diversions or disrupt opponents' actions, but, being a narcissist and totally convinced of his own skills, he will generally try to minimize others' participation in "his" battles. Because of his curse (see below, curse of the Dark Lord), he will treat any mundane mortal in such a situation as a monster.

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

*Vampire Bane:* The Bloodstake adds his class level to any dice roll against vampires and dhampyrs, included damage rolls. He is immune to any vampire special attacks, and if he touches a vampire he inflicts 1d4 Charisma damage. A vampire reduced to 0 Charisma in this way is destroyed and turned to ash.

*Blood Vulnerability:* Humanoid blood is dangerous to the Bloodstake and burns like acid when it touches his flesh. When he deals damage when adjacent to a creature with blood, including vampires, he takes damage equal to half the damage he inflicted.

*Rejuvenation:* If killed, the Bloodstake is reborn at midday three days later, impaled in the Stake Graveyard. If every piercing wooden object were removed from the Stake Graveyard, he would be reborn in the closest place a vampire was killed, if an edged wooden object is present. Onlyl purifying each place in the domain where a vampire was killed with rites of the Blood Mother and dulling the edges of every wooden object in the domain would kill him forever.

*Curse of the Darklord:* Bellamy can immediately recognize vampires and dhampyrs by sight, but his delusions afflict him in tragic fashion when he hunts any other creature of the night. He routinely mistakes normal humans and humanoids, other than the Bloodstakes, for undead, lycanthropes, or other creatures of the night, and vice versa. He is too proud, too obsessed, and too in the grip of his delusions to acknowledge this defect, but his (apparently) random acts of violence mean that he will never achieve the reputation as a hero and defender of humankind that he craves.

### LAIR

The Stakes Graveyard is the place where Sebastian died, and it was also the place where

stakes and wooden spears were buried symbolically after the Covenant of Day and Night. The Graveyard's main entrance has collapsed, but secret entrances known only to the Bloodstakes exist.

The Stakes Graveyard is a Ranks 2 Sinkhole of Evil with taints of Fear and Despair (DC 20 Will Save).

### CLOSING THE BORDER

If someone try to cross Lazendrak's borders when they are closed, a wall of stakes stops their passage. This wall can be destroyed with magical or mundane means, but regenerates continually; every time a section of the wall is destroyed, it reappears one round later. When the wall appears, everyone in the affected area must make a Reflex Save at DC 20. Anyone who fails takes 10d8 piercing damage and is impaled, taking 1d8 damage every round under freed. A Strength check at DC 20 or an Escape Artist check at DC 25 allow an impaled person to free themselves, but inflicts 1d8 damage.) A successful saving throw means the affected person takes half damage, and is not impaled. Bloodstake can close the borders for up to 1 day, but must then rest for three times the amount of time the borders were closed before closing the borders again.

### VARIANT RULE : SAFE FEEDING

Safe feeding requires four consecutive full actions and a consenting (or defenseless) subject. The subject of safe feeding takes 1 damage to Constitution, and safe feeding can't take Constitution below 1. Safe feeding is a very pleasurable experience for many and grants a +1 circumstantial cumulative bonus to saving throws, ability checks and skill checks. Safe feeding do not usually provokes Powers Checks. (DMs can rule that exposing mortals to risk from vulnerability by multiple feedings or feeding this way from non-consensual ones does provoke Power Checks)

*(Dread Possibility: Addiction to Safe Feeding: After four or more safe feedings in 24 hours, the subject makes a Will save against DC 10 +1 for any additional feeding. A failure means the subject begins to develop dependance, and will need to subject themselves to safe feeding at least once a day or suffer a morale penalty of -1 to Strength and AC. To consciously produce dependance in another creature is cause for a Powers Check.)*

# VAN RICHTEN'S FILES : THE CLAVIUS KEEL CASE

BY STARScream

**Author's Note:** Here are all the undead material related to Eberron I found (and that I thought it could be adaptable to Ravenloft) from these sources:

**Eberron Campaign Setting, Magic of Eberron, Five Nations, Monster Manual III, Monster Manual IV and Monster Manual V.**

For the monsters, I would like to suggest some salient abilities to add to them, according to the third edition Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead.

Instead of simply presenting them, I thought to choose five of them and to use our famous Doctor and an NPC, whom I created for this occasion (Horace Greenville), to introduce them. The others will be in the DM's Appendix.

Clavius Keel, who fueled the idea behind this article, isn't my invention. He was quoted in a brief paragraph in the Defacer's page on Monster Manual IV, where it was said that he was the head of the project that tried to use Defacers as assassins and that he used some defacers to kill high ranking officers and then he disappeared.

Since to me "disappeared" can also mean "taken by the Mists", the idea of this article came to my mind.

*Dear old friend,*

*It has been a while since our last meeting. But you will understand my reasons when you read the scripts attached to this letter.*

*Darkon is our country, and you and I love it with a strong feeling. Well, my friend, Darkon is on the edge of its largest threat.*

*Our king, Azalin Rex, might not be the best monarch, and his interest in the occult and necromancy might not be in the best interest of the realm, but nothing could be compared with what I am about to say.*

*Clavius Keel; this is the name. I hope you would understand that I put this man on a list of the worst enemies of Darkon and maybe of the Core entire.*

*I would bet that this name doesn't mean anything to you. And until one month ago, neither did it to me.*

*This man has arrived in Darkon some months ago and he requested an audience with our king immediately.*

*I have been aware of him because he arrived in Karg with a great number of carts, of huge dimensions.*

*I would have thought of a carnival, if this caravan hadn't been so grim and... disquieting.*

*Since this man named himself a researcher of the mysteries of life and undeath, our king has received him and invited many researchers and professors from our university. I was among the invited.*

*Now I wish I'd never received this "honor".*

*To make this letter short, let me say my friend that this Clavius Keel proclaimed himself a cleric and wizard, devoted to something called the Blood of Vol, which I have never heard of.*

*The huge carts were an example of his research...five new types of undead creature that he has studied and perfected, with some samples he has brought from his homeland.*

*He named this land Karrnath, unknown to me, but I hope there would be a bounty over his head in that place.*

*Attached you will find the description of these five monstrosities and some other info I have been able to collect after this meeting. I am using my influence and contacts to obtain more about him, since I have heard of a "research facility" not far from Karg.*

*I suspect his monsters are being created here. But I need evidence to provide you, because it seems nobody cares about the implication of his works, since our king has labeled them as the new frontier of our defense against Vlad Drakov. A monster to fight another one? I think it would be a very bad idea.*

*Until our next meeting or my next letter, I hope you will put to good use all that I have sent you.*

*Your beloved friend,*

*Horace Grenville  
Professor of the Il-Aluk University*

*Dear Reader,*

*Your name has been given to me by a common friend, and since he trusts you as a loyal and competent person, so do I.*

*Professor Grenville was a dear friend and I am not wrongly using the past tense. He died a few days after sending me this letter and the scripts attached.*

*A mysterious death, because I am aware of some sort of strange symbol found on the murder scene. A XXX- I don't know its meaning, but I am sure the man whom Horace has told me about had a role in it.*

*I have read the scripts, the description of these monstrosities that Clavius Keel has shown to king Azalin and the Il-Aluk professors. My shock was enormous. Such creatures should not exist, and this man, if he is really playing with them, and others, should be stopped immediately.*

*Read and judge for yourself. I have made copies of this material and discretely sent them to some friends I have, in all of the Core, and beyond. The faster ones have already answered me, and not with good news.*

*Some creatures, very similar to those five, are roaming in many places of the Core and the islands far from here. And worse, there are some creatures still unknown, maybe the other unnamed ones Clavius Keel has spoken about.*

*I am fearing that we are in trouble. No one should play with death.*

*In the hope we can help our land, I bid you farewell.*

*Your new friend,*

*Rudolph Van Richten*

*P.S.: I have written some notes on the scripts of my friend, I hope my notations could help you.*

## **SKELETON, KARRIATHI**

The first wagon was silent. So silent that I was starting to think it some sort of joke.

Then, at an order from Keel, some skeleton started to walk out of the wooden wagon.

A handful of those warriors of bone walked out and formed a perfect line. Each of them was wearing a breastplate of exquisite manufacturing. Two swords were sheathed in leather scabbards at their waists.

I had already seen skeletons, but those, those were different. An evil intelligence was in those red eyes.

Clavius Keel presented them as the new frontier of the undead army. Loyal, intelligent, and strong (he said that he had alchemically treated them to make them more resilient).

Some of them had some modifications. One skeleton could grow ghostly wings on his back, and another started to climb a wall with amazing ease. Another one could run faster



than what I thought could be possible for a bone creature.

Believe me, Rudolph, an army of this monstrosity could be the end of any civilized region.

***(I can believe my friend's words and I am worried that the rumors about some undead plagues I have heard of could be related to this "new frontier of the undead army" – RVR)***

### ZOMBIE, KARRIATHI

What I have said for the skeleton, now I could repeat about the second wagon, which was full of zombies, all with half plate, shield, and long sword. Like the skeletons, the zombies were aligned in a martial way and they didn't look like normal ones, dumb and slow. They were like fresh corpses of soldiers that still believed themselves to be alive.

Clavius Keel was proud of them, since he had modified them to be more resilient and capable of various touch attacks, in case they would lose their weapons.

As a demonstration, one of the zombies attacked a wood mannequin with a fist, and the fist set the mannequin ablaze. Do you believe it, Rudolph? An undead, which should fear the fire, instead uses it to kill.

***(I believe, my friend. The lesser undead I've talked about in some of my books now seem not "lesser" anymore. And I am shivering at this thought – RVR)***

### BONECLAW

The third wagon had only one occupant, but I almost fainted at the sight of it—a large, skeletal humanoid, with two strangely long arms and claw-like fingers.

Our king was surprised by them and asked many questions to Clavius Keel and this

perverse man answered with too much joy, in my opinion.

The arms could extend up to ten feet and it was so fast in doing so that I wasn't capable of fully understanding what had happened.

Kell also added that those creatures could have the same ghost wings of the skeleton and the ability to climb as fast as the zombie.

He was smiling when he added another thing. They can sense the living! Now imagine some of them free roaming our lands, preying on the innocent.

***(The more I read, the more I think that this Clavius Keel is the worst menace who has appeared in the last five, or maybe ten years – RVR)***

### BLOODHULK

When the fourth wagon opened, I vomited. The stench of blood was too heavy to resist. And my fellow colleagues did the same. Kell instead looked at our ruler and, with a smile, presented these two monsters. He called them the bloodhulks and all parts of them seemed filled with blood and some unholy fluid.

The first, a human-size hulk, Kell called it the Fighter. The second, a large creature, was the Giant. He declared that one called the Crusher also existed, but that it was too huge to be present on that occasion.

Our ruler asked some details about them and I wish he never had. These monsters are corpses reanimated with an infusion of the blood of an innocent victim, plus some dark fluids.

Innocent victims! Rudolph, as though an innocent in our land wouldn't already have many perils to face off.

***(The innocent are the best ingredients in many dark rituals. The soul of this Clavius Keel is black as the blackest night – RVR)***

Keel also said he has modified them to be able to explode, to fully damage a nearby enemy, and that some of them had a host of vermin added to the fluids, so that if a man is so courageous as to strike them, he would be covered in blood and hungry vermin.

I hope that the vermin would eat Keel soon. I have never desired the death of a man as I am desiring the end of Clavius Keel.

## DEFACER

When we arrived at the fifth wagon, my mind was on the edge of madness. What else he could have brought to this undead parade?

From the first wagon, it was an escalation of monstrosity. Each one worse than the previous one. For the fifth, I was starting to think that we would be shown Death itself.

It was worse. A strange creature, black as the night, and faceless, emerged from the wagon. Instantly some ghostly faces appeared on it, wailing like tortured souls.

Keel explained to our ruler that in his land, Karnath, this creature could be generated only when a spellcaster calls from the grave the corpse of a doppelganger or some other creature which can alter its bodies. He proudly said that he has found that a small vial of doppelganger blood was enough to create this "Defacer" from a normal corpse. It seems this creature can steal the face and soul of its victims and use it to fuel its perverse abilities.

I have not need to say, Clavius Keel has modified some of them to be able to paralyze their victims and that if the Defacer has stolen a face, it is able to recall some of the abilities the victim had.

***(This last undead leaves me shivering, an undead that can steal the face and soul of a person and mimic its abilities? Our righteous quest to fight every abomination and evil***

***threat to our lands seems to become more difficult every time this Clavius Keel shows one of his creatures. I think stopping this cursed man should become a priority of every good man in the Core and beyond – RVR)***

## DM APPENDIX:

### NPC

**Clavius Keel** (MMIV, page 39): the manual says only that he was a human necromancer, nothing more. I imagine him as a Cleric and Wizard of the Blood of Vol, necromancer was simply his job. I don't think the creator of that entry considers him to be a high level character. I don't want to invent levels, so I leave those details up to the DM (maybe Keel could be also a pawn of some more powerful individual).

**Horace Grenville:** my non-player character to create the article, a friend of Van Richten and a professor of the Il-Aluk University.

## MONSTERS

### **Bloodhulk** (Monster Manual IV, page 20)

Category of undead according to *Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead*: Obedient

Suggested salient abilities from *Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead*: Self Explosion, Life Sense, Verminous Host, Berserk, Bending the Land

### **Boneclaw** (Monster Manual III, page 17):

Bloodthirsty undead who has the ability to extend their claws to attack up to 20 feet away.

Category of undead according to *Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead*: Obedient

Suggested salient abilities from *Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead*: Leaping, Spider Climb, Ghastly Wings, Deathless Warrior, Life Sense

**Bonespur** (*Monster Manual V, page 156*): a large undead, a tower of bones capable of transforming into a rhino-like form to charge an enemy and exploding in a shower of bone shards. The creature then reforms itself. It could be created by a 8th or higher level spellcaster.

Category of undead according to *Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead*: Obedient

Suggested salient abilities from *Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead*: Berserk, Fearsome Speed, Life Sense, Mind of Many

**Deathshrieker** (*Monster Manual III, page 32*): An undead that roams the battlefield with its mournful scream. They are capable of doing a final shriek, when at 0 or lower hit points, which causes negative levels. Its most power attack is the Scream of the Dying, which causes cumulative effects over the three rounds of duration. At the third round, the victim is deafened, stunned, and under the effects of the spell *insanity*.

Category of undead according to *Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead*: Hungry

Suggested salient abilities from *Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead*: Paralysis, Flaying Touch, Keen Scent, Disease

**Defacer** (*Monster Manual IV, page 38*): Undead born from the corpse of a creature who possessed shapechanging abilities, the Defacer is a gray figure with a featureless head. Many screaming faces appear and disappear on the featureless head. This creature can steal the face, literally, of a slain enemy and make it appear on its head. With a successful strike, it can stun an enemy and the enemy stunned acquires a face from the Defacer's collection which screams for help while the stunned condition persists. It could be created by a 14<sup>th</sup>-level spellcaster.

Category of undead according to *Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead*: Hungry

Suggested salient abilities from *Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead*: Paralysis, Keen Scent, Lure Victims, Recalled Abilities

**Drowned** (*Monster Manual III, page 46*): Victims of death in the watery deep, the Drowned have evidence of the nature of their death in their clothes and flesh, which are horrible to see. They can radiate an aura that causes the creatures in it to feel like they are drowning.

Category of undead according to *Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead*: Obedient

Suggested salient abilities from *Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead*: Bending the Land, Burning Touch, Corruptive Touch, Drowning Touch, Berserk, Mind of Many

**Mourner** (*Five Nations, page 90*): the mourners are undead created when someone has died after a strong betrayal. The first mourners were soldiers of Cyre, betrayed by their commander, who switched sides, sacrificing all her troops. Wisdom drain, and auras of anguish and of doom are the best attacks of this undead. They can be powerful, when one has the misfortune to find some exemplars together.

Category of undead according to *Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead*: Hungry

Suggested salient abilities from *Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead*: Assume Form, Paralysis, Lure Victim, Recalled Abilities, Flaying Touch

**Necrosis Carnex** (*Monster Manual IV, page 104*): a medic for the undead, it has the ability where, upon being destroyed, it bursts, dealing damage to the living and healing the undead. It can be summoned by a 11th level or higher spellcaster

*Category of undead according to Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead: Obedient*

*Suggested salient abilities from Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead: Fearsome Speed, Leaping, Spider Climb, Life Sense*

**Plague Walker** (*Monster Manual IV, page 120*): undead that, as the name suggests, spread diseases with various attacks. Its body is filled with putrid flesh and fluids and can explode when near death.

It can be created by a 6th or higher level spellcaster, using a ritual with a required 800gp of unholy water and four medium corpses that were victims of disease (two small corpses are equivalent to one medium and one large creature is equivalent to two medium creatures).

*Category of undead according to Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead: Hungry*

*Suggested salient abilities from Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead: Disease, Berserk, Paralysis, Drink Fluids, Swallow Whole*

**Salt Mummies** (*Monster Manual III, page 146*): undead created when a corpse is buried in or near a vein of brittle salt and the buried has evil sins to atone for. Negative energy fills up the dead and the salt starts covering the body. The salt mummies are the nightmares of salt mine miners. They have the power to make a dehydrating strike, so a long battle with them could be very dangerous.

*Category of undead according to Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead: Obedient*

*Suggested salient abilities from Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead: Fearsome Speed, Corruptive Touch, Spider Climb, Leaping, Deathless Warrior*

**Serpentir** (*Monster Manual V, page 158*): a serpent-like creature formed by two skeletal

creatures, united by several linked torsos, a sort of skeletal centipede. It is an undead that prefers ambush and stealthy tactics to an open fight. It can be created by an 10th or higher level spellcaster.

*Category of undead according to Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead: Obedient*

*Suggested salient abilities from Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead: Fearsome Speed, Leaping, Stitching, Exhumation, Ghastly Wings*

**Skeleton, Karrnathi** (*Eberron Campaign Book, page 292*): skeletons strengthened with alchemy, the Karrnathi skeletons are the elite troops of Karrnath, powerful and better equipped than simple undead.

*Category of undead according to Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead: Obedient*

*Suggested salient abilities from Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead: Fearsome Speed, Leaping, Spider Climb, Ghastly Wings, Stitching*

**Skull Lord** (*Monster Manual V, page 154*): this undead can be played in two ways: the main advice from the manual is to use them as the remnants of the necromancer Vrakmul, and that only 12 Skull Lords exist. Otherwise, they can be simply powerful undead not bonded to Vrakmul and not limited to twelve. I prefer this solution and I consider it implicit in this article.

*Category of undead according to Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead: Restless*

*Suggested salient abilities from Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead: Undying, Glyph of Warding, Chamber Sense, Killing Zone, Death Gaze, Dread Gaze, Paralyzing Gaze, Dispelling Glare, Fear Aura, Telekinesis, Touch of Doom*

**Spectral Rider** (*Monster Manual V, page 160*): a vicious undead in ghostly form, which can summon a phantom steed, debilitate with a touch, and use illusion to appear as a living

knight. It can be created by a 12th or higher level spellcaster.

Category of undead according to *Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead*: Hungry

Suggested salient abilities from *Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead*: Assume Form, Berserk, Paralysis, Flaying Touch, Lure Victim, Recalled Abilities

**Urdark** (*Magic of Eberron, page 149*): the name of this kind of undead is taken literally from its first victim, a sociopath of Karrnath named Arven Urdark. Captured and jailed by Karrnathi authorities, Urdark died in prison and the necromancers of Karrnath began to experiment with his corpse. The Urdark was born at that time. It can create spawn, drain wisdom, and shaken its victims with its unsettling aura.

Category of undead according to *Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead*: Obedient

Suggested salient abilities from *Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead*: Exhumation, Burning Touch, Corruptive Touch, Life Sense, Mind of Many, Whispered Thoughts

**Vasuthaant** (*Monster Manual III, page 182*): shadowy undead that are life-hungry. They can shut off any source of light and absorb life from the poor souls that it can grab. They can vary in size, starting from small and up to colossal.

Category of undead according to *Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead*: Hungry

Suggested salient abilities from *Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead*: Berserk, Burrowing, Disease, Disfiguring Bite, Drink Fluids, Swallow Whole

**Vour** (*Magic of Eberron, page 150*): created in Karrnathi laboratories, probably also by Clavius Keel, Vour have the power to create spawn easily, to absorb energy from the enemy and, thanks to the levitation ability and multiple

tentacles, to grab a victim in order to kill it quickly.

Category of undead according to *Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead*: Hungry

Suggested salient abilities from *Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead*: Disease, Paralysis, Flaying Touch, Recalled Abilities, Swallow Whole

**Zombie, Karrnathi** (*Eberron Campaign Book, page 292*): as the skeleton, Karrnathi zombies are undead strengthened with alchemy and better equipped than simple undead.

Category of undead according to *Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead*: Obedient

Suggested salient abilities from *Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead*: Fearsome Speed, Corruptive Touch, Verminous Host, Spider Climb, Burning Touch

## SPELLS

**Leech Undeath** (*Magic of Eberron, page 98*):

Spell of the Necromancy school, it is a level 7 cleric spell, level 8 of a wizard's one.

Like Vampiric Touch, but the victims has to be undead. With a maximum of 100 hit points as damage, it could be very useful. The gaining of hit points is temporary and they fade away in one hour. A Will Saving Throw will halve the damage dealt.

In Ravenloft this spell could be used especially by the Darkonese sect of Ezra's faith and by clerics of the Eternal Order.

**Orb of Dancing Death** (*Magic of Eberron, page 99*):

Spell of the Necromancy school, level 5 on both cleric and wizard list.

This spell creates an orb of negative energy that drains away the life from your enemy. It causes

negative levels when the enemy is hit, and the negative levels stack, then fade away in a number of hours depending on the caster's level.

In Ravenloft, every evil cleric or wizard could use it and it could be useful against multiple enemies, because the orb vanishes only after several rounds and every round the caster could use it to hit an enemy, either the same target as the turn before or a new one.

**Expose the Dead** (Magic of Eberron, page 96):

Spell of the Divination school, level 2 on the cleric, paladin and wizard lists.

This spell is a must have for every undead hunter. It helps the caster to track undead, giving a bonus on Survival checks made to track undead, and you can follow undead tracks as though having the Track feat. It also grants a bonus to Spot and Listen checks used on undead targets; if using other Eberron materials, this spell permits the caster to search and analyze a corpse as though having the Investigate feat (Eberron Campaign Setting).

In Ravenloft, every good-hearted undead hunter should have it on his list.

**Semblance of Life** (Magic of Eberron, page 101):

Spell of the Necromancy school, level 6 on the cleric list.

This spell is another must-have for an undead hunter, an AOE attack that deals a good amount of damage to all undead in that area for every turn of spell duration. What's more, intelligent undead could become aware of the mockery of life they represent, being dazed for 1 turn, with a Will save to negate this effect.

In Ravenloft, like Expose the Dead, a cleric who is fighting the Legions of the Night should have this spell ready.

**Suffer the Flesh** (Eberron Campaign Setting, page 103):

Spell of the Transmutation school, level 2 on the wizard list.

The caster can cause to himself Constitution damage to increase his caster level (2 points of damage to have a +1 caster level, to a max of 10/+5).

In Ravenloft, a wizard with less consideration of his own safety could benefit from this spell.

**Withering Palm** (Eberron Campaign Setting, page 117):

Spell of the Necromancy school, level 7 of the Decay domain.

This spell, with a touch attack, causes the body of the victim to weaken and wither, with one point of Strength and Constitution damage for every two caster level. In case of a critical, the damage is ability drain and not ability damage.

In Ravenloft, evil spellcasters could use this spell to great effect. It is only a cleric domain spell, but it could adapt to every necessity of the DM.

## SPECIAL SUBSTANCE

**Mournlode, purple** (Magic of Eberron, page 141):

This special ore is famous to every undead hunter in Eberron, mined only in the Mournland and in the Field of Ruins, this purple ore turns into a silvery metal with purple veins.

Armor, weapons, and holy symbols could be made with Mournlode.

The Armors give protection against spells, spell-like, and supernatural abilities used by undead; weapons can overcome damage reduction as though they were made from cold iron or

alchemical silver; holy symbol can cause damage equal to the wearer's caster level on a successful turning attempt.

In Ravenloft, the Mournlode could be mined anywhere the DM feels right to mine it and maybe just protecting a Mournlode mine could be a very good quest.

## FEAT

**Undead Empathy** (Eberron Campaign Setting, page 61):

With this feat, you can have a +4 bonus of diplomacy checks against intelligent undead, or you can use diplomacy, without the bonus, to influence the actions of mindless undead.

## CLERIC DOMAIN

**Necromancer** (Eberron Campaign Setting, page 107):

Domain that grants a +1 caster level to necromancy spell cast. The spells are: Ray of Enfeeblement, Command Undead, Vampiric Touch, Enervation, Waves of Fatigue, Eyebite, Control Undead, Horrid Wilting and Energy Drain.

In Ravenloft, a cleric who wants to specialize in necromancy could use this domain with success.

## GOD

**Vol the Lich Queen** (Eberron Campaign Setting, page 70):

Vol was a powerful lich and necromancer who ascended to godhood. Many spellcasters and clerics fascinated by undead and death chose to follow her and revere her, and The Blood of Vol religion was born.

Usually Lawful Evil, her clerics can choose from Death, Evil, Law, and Necromancer domains. And her favored weapon is the dagger.

In Ravenloft, this cult could be inserted mostly anywhere. In Darkon it could be in conflict with the Eternal Order, and Azalin would not look well on a new religion exalting a lich ascending to divinity.

I could see it in Falkovnia, as a new way for the Falkfurher to prepare for war, if he will finally decide to fight fire with fire in his endless war with Darkon.

# MORDENTSHIRE, LAND OF SOULS AND HAUNTINGS

BY MISTMASTER

**Culture level:** Renaissance

**Ecology:** Full

**Climate & Terrain:** Temperate maritime, fertile plains and forests with a coast on the Sea of Sorrows.

**Languages:** High Mordentish (Zherisian), Low Mordentish, Dementlieuse.

**Religions:** Ezra the Protector, (LG), Hala the Wise One (N), Zhakata the Lawgiver (LN), Lathurr the Liberator (CG) Oceanus the Seafather (NG), Erlin the Reaper (NE), Lo'ugal the Smiling One (CE), Cas the Revenger (LE), Tiche the Lady of Luck (CN)

**Races:** Human 33%, Incorporeal Undead Humans 65%, Other 2%.

**Government:** Constitutional hereditary monarchy.

**Ruler:** Jules Weathermay, Earl of Mordent, Viscount of Mordent City, Lord and Master of Heather Manor.

**Darklord:** Wilfred Godefroy, Master of Gryphon Hill Manor.

**Lightlord:** Jules Weathermay

**Inhabitants:** 4,000,000 (living), 12,000,000 (ghosts)

**Analog:** Late 17th-early 18th century England.

**Capital City:** Mordent City (pop. 170,000)

**Important towns:** Blackburn's Crossing (84,000), Tumbledown (70,000), Hope's End (60,000), Gryphon Hill Town (56,700), Steadwall (45,000), Idletown (38,000) Stormpeak (34,000), Last Rest (26,000), Millkeep (23,000)

**Borders:** North: Dementlieu, East: Richemulot, South: Verbrek and Valachan, West: Sea of Sorrow.

## TROPES

Mordent is the land of ghosts, of the lingering past and of unfinished business. It explores the themes of inheritance and the burden families can put on their members.

## DOMAIN OVERVIEW

The domain of Mordent is largely a vast lowland with occasional downs and rolling hills covered in woods and fields. It is crossed by the Arden River, which enters the Sea of Sorrows at Arden Bay, near Mordent City. Heather Manor, the vast and gorgeous seat of House Weathermay, lies just outside Mordent City.



Blackburn's Crossing sits near where the Little Arden flows into the Arden proper. It's a thriving river port and market town, the second biggest in the Shire. Blackburn Manor, the Blackburn-Bruce family seat, is in the center of the city, guarding the bridge for which the town is named.

The town of Tumbledown lies in the Lightless Forrest in the south-eastern part of Mordentshire. Lightless Motte, the Seat of House Gauldemon, is a heavily fortified manor, a holdover from the days of battlemented castles, deep in the woods.

Hope's End lies on the road to Dementlieu which pass through the Forest of the Ancients. Beast's Refuge, an imposing fortress, is the ancestral seat of House de Boistribue. Gryphon Hill Town lies on the other side of the Arden across from Mordent City, at the base of the highest point in the nation, the eponymous Gryphon Hill. Gryphon Hill Manor, the fortress-mansion of the now-extinct House Godefroy, stands threateningly on the summit of the hill. Steadwall, a busy market town, guards an ominous ford on the Arden River in eastern Mordent. House Halloway's seat, the Hallowfort, sits on a small hill overlooking the city.

Idletown sits at the heart of the Grey Heath plains, the breadbasket of the Earldom. Plentyfield Mansion, the fortified mansion of Scottmatter House, sits at the center of a vast estate just outside the town.

Stormpeak is a small, fortified port town. It host the Mordentish Navy, and it is the main defense of Mordent against sea attacks. The Lighthousekeep, seat of House Holsworth, stands on the highest of the cliffs.

The town of Last Rest is the only significant settlement in the Vale of Twilight; Twilight Tower, a vast mausoleum-like tower, looms

over the city, and is the ancestral seat of House Mournesworth.

The smallest major city in the Earldom lies in the Great Moor, on the Mills Road; the city of Millkeep takes its name from the eponymous keep of House Wescote.

## THE PEOPLE

Mordentishmen fall into in two categories: the waterlanders live in the land near the sea and the Arden river are sophisticated, dignified and open-minded people of Zherisian descent who speak High Mordentish, while the innerlanders are a more sober and cautious people of Dementlieuse descent who speak Low Mordentish. The Mordentish of both categories are perfectly aware of the reality of Mordentshire: beyond the visible, there is the Shadow Shire, the invisible abode of the spirits of the dead.

The existence of the Shadow Shire influences the behavior of Mordentish people in many ways. They are mindful and respectful of burial places, they expect deceased family members to visit their homes from time to time, they will never buy something they know belonged to a murdered person, and if they hear strange sounds or see strange sights, their first guess will be that it is a ghost. The Mordentish do not fear death very much, because they know that souls will linger. They usually bury with the dead person anything they think it could be helpful, from tools, to books, from money, to clothing. Even commoners' tombs are large and well furnished in Mordent, and tomb-raiding is as reviled as it is dangerous.

Ghosts who are capable of interacting with the material world, outside of the four yearly festivals at the solstices and equinoxes when ghosts can mingle with humans for three nights, are still entitled to legal rights such as possession of property, but very few can take

advantage of this, as it requires great strength of will for a ghost to manifest itself at will. The Mordentish love dogs, who have free access to taverns and inns alongside their masters. This is partly because of the fact that Mordentish dogs can see into the Shadow Shire, making them much-appreciated companions.

Many Mordentish customs are shared with Zherisia, such as having the tea hour at five o'clock, and the custom of closing businesses on religious holidays.

## History

### *Age of Creation*

According to Mordentish myth, in the Age of Creation Erlik the Reaper plied the Arden River in his barge of the dead. He lived in the Vale of Twilight, while also maintaining a prison-palace for the souls of the dead on the Other Side. When Lathurr the Liberator destroyed his material lair, it also destroyed this palace, and the souls of the dead in Mordent started to roam freely in the Other Side.

### *Age of Empires*

The ancient Olympian Empire largely avoided the ghost-filled plains around the Arden River, although the Church of Hades maintained shrines in the Twilight Vale, which was rumored to be an access to the underworld.

### *Age of Darkness*

In the Age of Darkness Mord of Zherisia, a powerful and wise necromancer, made a pact with the shades in the Vale and Plain. As part of the pact, rules were imposed to regulate the relationship between the Other Side and the nascent Shire of Mordent. (At this time the Other Side started to be known as the Shadow Shire.) The city of Mordent was built, with Mord as the first Earl of Mordent. He died without issue and left the Shire to his sister Heather, who had married twice: first to Marius

Weathermay, then to Godefroy le Griphone, a Dementlieuse noble. Technically a part of the Kingdom of Zherisia, the Shire became a pawn in the struggle between the Kingdom of Zherisia and Dementlieu, with the pro-Zherisia faction led by House Weathermay of Heather Manor and the pro-Dementlieu faction by House Godefroy of Gryphon Hill.

### *The Modern Age*

In the Modern Age, the earldom of Mordentshire became independent after the Zherisan monarchy was temporarily abolished. Zherisia attempted to reconquer Mordent, but this prompted the then Earl, George Weathermay III, to summon the souls of the dead Mordentish to protect the country, which allowing Mordent to keep its freedom. This was the first time an Earl called upon the dead to protect the country.

### *The Current Age*

In the Current Age, Mordent enjoys relative peace. During the War of Annexation, in which Dementlieu was attacked by Falkovnia, Mordent intervened to give Dementlieu assistance. Drakov was busy besieging Port-a-Lucine, but sent an expeditionary force against Mordent itself to punish them for their intervention. This force was defeated by a Mordentish army, led by the Earl Jules Weathermay, who met the Falkovnian army at the border and summoned the Shadow Host at the right moment to rout them.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

Mordent City has a number of important sites, such as the Protector's House of Ezra and Mord's Hall, the place where the Council of Ten, (the ten major lords of Mordentshire) convenes. The Lamplighters' Academy is based in Mordent City, as is Francis Mausel's Sanitarium for Mental Healing.

It has many inns and hotels. Among the more renowned are the exclusive Blue Rose, owned by Lady Prudence Jennings; the Old Blackard Inn, famously owned by a ghost, "Old Blackard" Finnings, (NG human rank 3 ghost bard 6) who still manages the Inn alongside his family, both dead and living; and the quieter Beached Mermaid, owned by Captain Simoné Belleregarde (LG adult human fighter 6).

Heather Manor, the seat of House Weathermay, is a gracious three-story manor surrounded by well-kept gardens which are open to the public in the daytime.

In Blackburn's Crossing, the Dancing Lady is the best and oldest inn in town. Leila Brighton-Bruce, (LG human, Rank 2 Ghost) is the bartender, and an effective tourist attraction: she was the sister-in-law of Ian Bruce, one of the founders of Blackburn's Crossing, and witnessed his first meeting with Brian Blackburn. The Gilded Ladle, the Willow's Heart and the cheap Roaring Rapids are also fairly well known. Blackburn Manor, a thick-walled castle of black stone which guards the main bridge of the crossing is across the street from the Dancing Lady. Also of note, Blackburn's Crossing University is Mordent's major center of superior learning.

The city of Tumbledown has many inns, the most notorious of which is the Weeping Lady, which houses an ominous ghost (Alice Gauldamon, N Young adult human female, 2d Rank Ghost Aristocrat 4). The Happy Devil has a sinister reputation as a place where many shadowy deals are ad. A shrine of Hala the Wise can be found just to the west of the city, in the Lightless Forest, while, on the east, on the path which lead to Lightless Motte, lies a small temple of the Smiling One. The looming fortress of the Gauldamons is visible from Tumbledown. The walled town of Hope's End has several small inns, the most popular of which is the Beast's Fang. The most notorious local ghost is

Mary Bones, (CG, human female, Rank 3 corporeal Ghost Alchemist 3), known as Mad Mary by the citizens; She still runs her herbalist shop alongside her living grandsons. She is called Mad Mary because she is absolutely delusional about the fact she is dead. She is convinced that she is alive, and immortal; while still alive she was convinced that she had found the secret of eternal youth. A small shrine of Hala can be found in a grove on the route between the town and the massive manor Beast's Refuge, seat of house De Boistribue, one of the most ancient manors still occupied in Mordent. It has been entirely carved from the side of a small hill, still partially covered in trees.

Gryphon Hill Town is not very welcoming; the only inn in the town, the Gryphon's Eye, is expensive and with only average food and rooms. There are no acknowledged ghosts in the town, its only attraction being the Manor, which is built in the guise of a wingless Gryphon. The home of House Godefroy, it is literally the peak of Mordentshire, as it is built on the highest point in the nation. Its grim, dramatic appearance both attracts and deters visitors at the same time.

Steadwall is a bustling trading hub, with many inns. The Drowned Ferryman is the most famous, as the residence of Hugo the Ferryman (LN old human rank 4 ghost fighter 9), the only trustworthy Mist ferryman. He is not cheap, but he always keeps his word. Hallowfort is the stout fortress of House Halloway, sitting proudly on the small hill overlooking the docks of Steadwall.

Idletown is a lively town set in rich farmland. It houses two famous inns, both famed for their cooking, and one also for its cook. The former is the Truthful Pot, the latter the Haunted Table, whose cook is a ghost, a jolly spirit called Old Jack Berron (NG old human rank 2 ghost, expert 10). Idletown hosts a Museum and the

Scottmatter School of Arts and Crafting. Just outside the city lies Plentyfields Mansion. Though it may be not as impressive as Gryphon Hill, as formidable as Lightless Motte, or as elegant as Heather Manor, Plentyfield is still an impressive manor that can easily transform in a fortress, when need arises, thanks its thick stone walls and the moat which surround the mansion.

Stormpeak is a port town and a military one. It has a plethora of inns of various reputations. The most famous is the Laughing Storm. The city has two famous resident ghosts, Ashen of Ashen Cliffs, [NG young adult human rank 3 ghost fighter (Mariner) 5] and his wife Lilian the Pale Lady (NG young adult human female rank 3 ghost, Bard 5). The Lighthousekeep serves both as the main lighthouse in the city, and as the residence of house Holsworth. It also hosts a shrine to Oceanus, the Seafather.

Last Rest is as gloomy as the rest of the Vale of Twilight, and a great temple of the Reaper is found here. Many ghosts reside here, especially near the Twilight Tower of House Mournsworth.

Millkeep is a little town thriving on mining and the food industry; the eponymous Millkeep was originally a big mill, but has recently been adapted into a proper fortress by the Westcotes. The Nameless Inn is the main gathering place in the city. The Devil Douglas is the malicious yet relatively harmless ghost of a miller (LE old human rank 1 ghost, alchemist 4) who haunts the New Mill of the city.

## RELIGIONS

By far the most important religion in Mordent is the faith of Ezra, but there are eight other religions in Mordent who have significant numbers of adherents.

The cult of the Wise One is a N branch of the cult of Hala. Her favored weapon is the club, and her symbol is a spinning wheel. Her

domains are Arcane, Community, Healing, Knowledge, Plant, and Repose. She teaches the importance of tradition and balance, and the respect for the dead. The religion urges its faithful to respect their environment and their ancestors, and to be mindful of everything. She is worshipped mostly by peasants and ghosts.

The Church of the Lawgiver worships a LN aspect of Zhakata. His symbol is an iron-bound codex. His favored weapon is the spiked shield, and his domains are Community, Knowledge, Law, Nobility, Strength, and Runes. He teaches his followers the importance of self-discipline and hierarchy; they must know the law, abide the law and enforce the law. His followers are mostly bureaucrats, magistrates, lawyers and aristocrats.

The Cult of the Reaper venerates a NE aspect of Erlin. His favored weapon is the scythe, and his priests have access to the Air, Darkness, Death, Destruction, Evil and Repose domains. He teaches that life ends, and death is unavoidable. The body dies, but, the soul lingers and souls belongs to the Reaper. He is venerated by necromancers, aristocrats obsessed with death, and assassins and most ghosts pay him at least lip service.

The Cult of the Laughing Lord is only found in Mordent. Lo'ougal is a CE Abyssal Lord. His favored weapon is the dagger. His symbol is a grinning imp and his domains are Arcana, Chaos, Evil and Trickery. He teaches that cunning and wit are the most powerful weapons, and you must be ready to cheat on your way to success. His followers are thieves, con-artists, entertainers and politicians. House Gauldamon is an explicit patron on the cult, which disguises itself as an harmless cult based around humor and pranks.

The Cult of the Avenger is a LE Cult fairly new in the nation, born around the urban legend of the moose-headed Cas, who comes to enact the

revenge for the wronged. His favored weapon is the axe. His domains are Destruction, Evil, Law and Strength. His symbol is the head of a moose. He teaches his followers to hold their grudges, and to right wrongs in the most brutal way possible. Law exists to punish the wrongdoers, and every law which do not punish harshly is lacking. His followers are peasants, soldiers, and aristocrats, as well as those who feel they are victims of injustice.

The Cult of the Liberator worships a CG aspect of Lathurr, god of wind and storms, who teaches the importance of freedom—freedom not only from outside bindings like pain, slavery, oppression and illness but also from self-inflicted servitude, like grudges, fear and spite. His favored weapon is the javelin, and his domains are Chaos, Good, Healing, Liberation, Weather and Repose. His symbol is a thunderbolt breaking a chain. His followers include healers, scientists, ghosts and mediums.

The Church of the Seafather worships a NG aspect of Oceanus, god of the sea, and protector of seafarers. His favored weapon is the trident. His domains are Community, Good, Protection, Travel, Water, and Weather. His symbol is a spiral-shaped shell with a trident on it. He is worshipped by mariners, traders, travelers and good aligned sea-dwellers. He teaches his worshipers to respect the sea, and to love his endless bounty; no one shall be abandoned in the sea, and everyone can have a place on a ship, if they are ready to work hard for it.

The Cult of the Lady of Luck worships an aspect of Tiche, the CN goddess of chance and change, which symbol is a pair of dice. Her favored weapon is the crossbow and her domains are Chaos, Destruction, Luck, Trickery, Protection and Travel. She is worshipped by gamblers, pirates, merchants, peasants and thieves. She teaches that life is a gamble, and fortune favors the braves; the measure of a person is the way

that person reacts to ill luck and take advantage of good luck.

The local Sect of the Church of Ezra worships her as Ezra the Protector, a LG goddess of honor and virtue. Her favored weapon is the longsword and her symbol is a silver sword on an alabaster shield with a sprig of belladonna on it. Her Domains are Community, Good, Healing, Law, Mist, and Protection. She teaches to her followers to fight the good battle, to be true and selfless and to ward off evil; her followers stems from every social group, from low born peasants to high class nobles.

### THE FAMED AND THE INFAMOUS

***Lord Jules Weathermay, XXIII Earl of Mordentshire, XXXIII Viscount of Mordent City, XXXI Lord and Master of Heather Manor. (LG old human spiritualist 13)***

The ruling Earl of Mordentshire, and head of House Weathermay is aged, but still quite energetic and willful. He takes a more active role in the ruling of the Shire that his father and grandfather did. He insists on holding the Council of Ten at least four times every year, right after the Nocturne Festivals. Sometimes he appears to be talking to himself, but people who know the truth say that the Earl is able to see the people in the Shadow Shire. He likes to get personal involvement in everything which affects the wellbeing of the Earldom, especially in proximity to Mordent City itself. In his youth, he broke a tradition of military neutrality, to fight alongside the Dementlieuse against the Falkovnians.

His burden is the ability to see and interact with the Shadow Shire, and so have double responsibilities for both living and dead. The family curse that Weathermay women by blood or by marriage die young or leave their spouses,

is a burden too, in that he worries about its effects on his family.

*(Adventure Hook: Warned about unrest in the shadow Vale of Twilight, Lord Jules must find answers in the mundane Vale, and sends the PCs to investigate.)*

**Lord George Weathermay (CG adult human hunter 13)**

The heir of House Weathermay is a consummate monster-hunter. In his youth, he explored the world, and, in Verbrek he met his true love and deadliest foe, his wife Nathalia Vhoriskov, a very rich werewolf alpha. She has given him a son, Marius Weathermay, who she planned to sacrifice to the Wolf God. George saved him and now he is raising the boy and dreading the day his inheritance will manifest. In his heart, he still deeply cares for his wife, and she does love him back, in her selfish, savage, twisted way.

*(George has a good heart, but his past experiences made him wary. He is also fiercely protective of his family, and when the PCs accidentally interfere with his pursuit during an hunt, conflict ensues.)*

**Lord-Mayor of Mordent Daniel Foxgrove (LN middle-aged human gunslinger 6)**

Daniel Foxgrove is the head of a small house sworn to the Weathermays, and the appointed Lord-Mayor of Mordent, which doubles as Mordentshire Prime Minister. Sir Daniel married Alice Weathermay and she bore him twin daughters before dying during childbirth. An intelligent man, in his youth he was a proficient pistoleer, but his true ability lays in administration. He cares deeply for his daughters and worries about their chosen vocation.

*(Adventure Hook: He is still in love with his dead wife, now a ghost, and under the influence of a*

*con man he is wasting his personal wealth to see her again. The PCs learn of the scheme and may be able to help him to discover the truth.)*

**Gennifer Foxgrove-Weathermay and Laurie Foxgrove-Weathermay (LG young adult humans, wizard (abjurer) 5 (Gennifer) and fighter 5 (Laurie))**

The twin granddaughters of Lord Weathermay are the enthusiastic founders of the Van Richten Society, which continues the work of the retired master hunter. They are also involved in the management of the family assets.

*(Adventure Hook: During a mission in Verbrek, Gennifer got infected with lychanthropy. Legends say the first Lord Blackburn invented a cure for the dread disease and Laurie sends the adventurers to investigate.)*

**Sheriff Owen Finhallen (LG adult human fighter (Lamplighter Enforcer) 15)**

The honest and stalwart Sheriff of Mordent City is in charge of security and law-enforcement in all the territory of Mordent City and the surrounding territory.

*(Adventure Hook: Someone is slandering Sheriff Finhallen;s good name, and he hires the adventurers to clear it.)*

**Lord Commander Samuel Cosse (LG adult human fighter (Lamplighter Enforcer) 17)**

Noble and brave, Lord Samuel Cosse is the Lord Commander of the Mordentish Militia, and the chief military advisor of the Earl. He is, additionally, the head of the elite watchmen force of the Lamplighters, and the director of the Academy.

*(Adventure Hook: a vengeful ghost is killing Lamplighter officers. Lord Cosse employs the PCs to patrol duty while his own men concentrate on this case.)*

**Late Lady Martha Scottmatter-Weathermay (NG human middle-aged aristocrat 3/expert 1, rank 3 ghost)**

A sister of Lord Andrew's father, Martha was the wife of Earl Jules Weathermay, mother of George and Alice. She died of sickness several years ago; she has never left Heather Manor and she still protects her family and house. The fact she can be seen, heard and touched by her husband has alleviated the pain of her death.

*(Adventure Hook: When her tomb is violated and her favorite necklace is stolen, Lady Martha feel an unpleasant pull towards the Godefroy lands; she does not wish to burden her husband further, so she appeal to the PCs for help.)*

**Late Lady Alice Foxgrove-Weathermay (NG adult middle-aged human aristocrati 1/expert 1, rank 2 ghost)**

The elder daughter of Jules and Martha, she died giving birth to her twin daughters; she stayed in the living Shire to look after her family. Her husband's inability to see and hear her is a source of continuous frustration for both.

*(Adventure Hook: She manifests to the PCs and ask them to go and acquire ghostsight berries from the moors of the Wescote lands. These rare berries may be her only chance to resolve her problem with her husband)*

**Lord Gilbert Blackburn-Bruce, VII Viscount of Blackburn's Crossing (LN adult human Alchemist 7)**

The ruling Lord of Blackburn Manor is tall and long-haired, and sports the mismatched blue and black eyes typical of his dynasty. He is an intelligent and practical man, fully devoted to his family alchemical practice. He, as every other ruling Blackburn-Bruce save one, does not bear the title of Master of Blackburn Manor; the reason behind that is not widely acknowledged,

but there are many speculations about it. Lord Blackburn-Bruce usually ignores those rumors. Happily married to Lady Linda Blackburn-Wescote, Lord Wescote's sister, he is the father of three boys and one girl.

*(Adventure Hook: When his own book of alchemical formulas is stolen, he offers a rich reward to get it back.)*

**Late Lord Brian Blackburn, Master of Blackburn Manor (Adult Human rank 3 ghost Alchemist 15, L/N)**

The founder of the Blackburn-Bruce line, with his marriage with Lia Bruce, this Zherisian gentleman is still the Master of Blackburn Manor. He never ceased to work on his experiments since his heart failed him more than 2 centuries ago. Every now and than, however, he diverts himself with the matters of the living.

*(Adventure Hook: When the secret laboratory under Blackburn Manor is violated Lord Brian takes matters in his own hand and the PCs must choose to help him or get blown up.)*

**Lady Mayor of Blackburn's Crossing, Lily Vidicus (NG adult half-elf female alchemist 13)**

Lady Vidicus is a very intelligent and enterprising half-elf woman, which earned her place with her ability both as an alchemist and a business woman. She has worked to expand the trading relationships of Blackburn's Crossing. She is prone to close her eyes on harmless black market dealings as long the city benefits from them.

*(Adventure Hook: when an unscrupulous merchant is killed she must hide his ghost and enlist the PCs help to discreetly resolve the mystery.)*

**Jonathan Abrahams (LN adult human fighter 9)**

The sheriff of Blackburn's Crossing is a honest yet obedient man; he does resent the Lady-Mayor attitude on minor black-market activities, but he accept her decisions, on the matter.

*(Adventure Hook:When unlawful goods sold in the market create a disturbance, Jonathan tasks the PCs to investigate in his place.)*

**Cold Cerulean (LG adult elf investigator 5)**

Cold Cerulean is the magistrate of Blackburn's Crossing, and doubles as chancellor of the Lady Mayor; he is a wise and knowledgeable man of law, if a bit aloof.

*(Adventure Hook:Cold Cerulean hides a secret; he is persecuted by the ghost of a man who resent him for sentencing him to debtor's prison, which lead to the latter's suicide. The ghost is more annoying than dangerous, but he offers a reward for any help in the matter.)*

**Lord Gilderoy Gauldamon, XIV Warden of the Lightless Wood, XIV Lord and Master of Lightless Motte, X Viscount of Tumbledown (CE adult human oracle (of the Laughing One) 6)**

Gilderoy the Smirking is the charming, wicked and debauched head of House Gauldamon. As a chosen emissary of his foul deity, he embodies the Laughing One's tenets almost perfectly. Thanks to his cunning he is also capable of maintaining a near-perfect facade of righteousness.

*(Adventure Hook: His Oracle Curse is a compulsive laugh, which he keeps on control in social events thanks to expensive magical means. When those means are stolen from him he promises an handsome reward to the PCs to get them back.)*

**Lady Marjory Gauldamon-Halloway (NG adult human aristocrat 3)**

The first born daughter of Lord Halloway, Marjorie is a good, generous woman, who is struggling to keep her three sons untouched by their family's depravity.

*(Adventure Hook: Lady Marjorie needs to prevent her eldest son from being initiated in the cult of the Laughing One, and enlists the PCs help.)*

**Lord-Mayor Alfred Montrose (CN adult human swashbuckler 3)**

A member of a minor, impoverished noble house sworn to House Gauldamon, Alfred Montrose is a boisterous drunkard, with a fatalistic purview of life, who submits himself to the will of the Guild of the Laughing Imp, a merchant and thief organizations.

*(Adventure Hook:After drinking even more than usual he reveal to the PCs information not meant for their ears about the Guild's activities.)*

**Sheriff Francis Mutton (LE adult human fighter 8)**

Francis Mutton is the leader of the Laughing Imp Guild, and, as the sheriff, he can easily protect its business and his family. His brother Marlon is a member of the guild and a rich sheep-breeder. His family is the richest of the region, after the Gauldamon. Francis is trying to get his family ennobled.

*(Adventure Hook: When Marlon's daughter Elizabeth is selected to be the object of a rite for the Laughing One, Francis tries to manipulate the PCs to help her without damaging his position with the Gauldamon family.)*

**Smiling Brother Simon Abbot (NE adult human cleric of the Laughing One 6)**

The spiritual advisor of the Laughing Imp Guild, Simon is also the liaison between the guild and



house Gauldemon. It is a widely known “secret” is that he is a bastard brother of lord Gilderoy.

*(Adventure Hook: Simon wants his half-brother's title, so he is feeding information to the PCs about Gilderoy's wickedness while concealing his own.)*

**Langley Westmoor (NE adult half-elf bard 5)**

The well-mannered, soft-talking, charming speaker of the Laughing Imp Guild, is a cold-blooded assassin and manipulator; he is also the owner of the Happy Devil Inn, the unofficial headquarters of the guild.

*(Adventure Hook: While the PCs are in his inn, Langley drops "casually" information about something they will find interesting.)*

**William Tanner (LE adult human rogue 6)**

The owner of the tannery is also a skilled thief, and the planner of the guild's shadowy operations. Like the Muttons, the Tanners are a rich family, and William is trying to get them ennobled.

*(Adventure Hook: If the PCs want a job William can find them an easy one.)*

**Helene de Boistribue, Wardess of the Forest of the Ancient, XXX Viscountess of Last Hope, XXXIV Lady and Mistress of Beast's Refuge (CG adult natural werebear ranger 7)**

The feisty head of house De Boistribue is a bear of a woman, in more than one sense. She can be ladylike, when she chooses to, and she is a very sweet mother with her four daughters and two boys, but woe to the ones which threaten her family.

*(Adventure Hook: When one of Lady Helene's children goes missing, she suspects the PCs.)*

**Alain de Boistribue-Brightfur (NG adult human natural werewolf fighter 5)**

Alain was born in Verbrek, and historically his clan, the Brightfur, have given grooms to the ladies of House De Boistribue. He is deeply devout to his lady-wife and to their cubs.

*(Adventure Hook: A mysterious chain of brutal murders seems to point in Alain's direction.)*

**Lord Mayor of Last Hope Graydon Meanstryke (LE adult snakewere rogue 6)**

The cunning, charming and wicked Graydon Meanstryke, Lord Mayor of Last Hope, is a viper in any sense of the word. He slithered his way in the trust of Lady Helene, with his self-discipline and ruthless effectiveness. He is law abiding, but knows all the loopholes and exploit them shamelessly.

*(Adventure Hook: When the PCs arrives at Last Hope they are framed for something they didn't do.)*

**Sheriff Michael Ratcliff (LG human natural werewolf investigator 5)**

Sheriff Ratcliff is a Borcan immigrant related to houses Dilisnya and Timothy. He is an honest and reliable law enforcer. Some people, who know about his nature, call him the loyal watchdog; he resented the nickname, but later started to appreciate it.

*(Adventure Hook: The night of the full moon is nearing and Micheal need the PCs help to investigate a case of cattle theft which happens on that night each month.)*

**Lord Mento Godefroy, XXX Lord of Gryphon Hill , XXVII Viscount of Gryphon Hill Town. (NE adult human swashbuckler 8)**

Spoiled and insensitive, the current lord of Gryphon Hill inherited the infamous temper of his grandfather Lord Wilfred, but none of his ambition. He has married already four times, his

current wife, Lady Jade Mournsworth have given him two sons, Wilfred and William.

*(Adventure Hook: Mento is a violent man, but he is also a bumbling coward, and when he is informed about a beast in his lands, he is too afraid to investigate personally so he demands the PCs do it in his name.)*

**Lord Mayor of Gryphon Hill Town George Jendalis (LN middle-aged human fighter 3)**

Second cousin by marriage to Lord Mento, George Jendalis is a cautious man, honest to a fault; his only weakness is his only child Michael, which he tries to favor and help with any means he has.

*(Adventure Hook: When his son disappears after a visit to Gryphon Hill Manor he tasks the PCs with finding him.)*

**Sheriff Michael Jendalis (NG young adult human spiritist 5, rank 3 ghost)**

The son of the Mayor, Micheal earned his job with his skill, but his role as the sheriff was only a tool to an end: learn the truth about the imprisoned ghost of his mother.

*(Adventure Hook: Killed by spectral enforcers just outside Gryphon Hill, Micheal manages to escape as a ghost and to contact the PCs)*

**Late Lady Pernelle Jendalis-Weathermay (LG adult human wizard 4, rank 2 ghost)**

The mother of Micheal Jendalis, daughter of a cousin of Lord Jules and Lord Mento, she died in childbirth while a guest in Gryphon Hill Manor. Now, she is imprisoned and enslaved inside those walls. *(Adventure Hook: While a guest of Lord Mento the PCs have a vision of lady hunted for sport by a brutal man.)*

**Late Lady Estelle Godefroy-Weathermay (LG adult human aristocrat 4, rank 1 ghost)**

The first wife of Lord Godefroy, she was presumed dead in an accident. in truth she was killed by her husband, alongside their daughter Lilia. She is imprisoned in Gryphon Hill, but she is not enslaved.

*(Adventure Hook: While the PCs are guests of Lord Mento, they notice a woman and a young girl playing near the table. No one else seems to be able to see them.)*

**Lord Gregory Holloway, XX Warden of the Arden River, XXVI Viscount of Steadwall, XXIX Lord and Master of Hallowfort (N middle-aged human fighter 8)**

The stout and stoic Lord of Hallowfort was a young officer at the time of the battle of the Great Moor which aborted the punitive expedition of Falkovnia against the pro-Dementlieuse Mordentshire. He managed to kill one of the elite talons in single combat; he keeps the armor as a war-trophy, and that has been a source of both pride and diplomatic embarrassment. He married Virginia Scottmatter, now deceased, and he has 5 children, three sons and two daughters and thirteen grand-children.

*(Adventure Hook: A Falkovnian spy would pay a handsome sum to retrieve the Talon's armor from the Scottmatters' vault.)*

**Lord-Mayor of Steadwall Fabian Jaspers (NE middle-aged human fighter 3/rogue 3)**

Greedy and sly, Fabian Jaspers was a brother-in-arms of Lord Gregory, who lost his eye while saving his lord's life. From then on, Fabian enjoy his lord's undying trust, and he has cunningly exploited it. House Jaspers was ennobled, and he controls the majority of Steadwall's profitable businesses in one way or another. *(Adventure Hook: While passing through Steadwall, the PCs are involved in a robbery which put them at odds with the mayor.)*

**Sheriff Smithy Hardoar (NE adult human slayer 7)**

Sheriff Hardoar, the head law-enforcer in Steadwall, poses as a jovial and reasonable man. In truth he is a merciless serial killer who struck a pact with the baleful Mist Ferrymen, fiendish creatures which roam the river. He sacrifices people to them and he get power and riches, in exchange. He hides under his clothes the sign of his sins, a skeletal body.

*(Adventure Hook: When a friend of the PCs is killed after spending the night drinking with the Sheriff, the PCs must try to uncover the truth)*

**Lord Andrew Scottmatter, XV Viscount of Idletown,, XV Warden of the Grey Heat. (NG adult human wizard (illusionist) 5)**

This charming, blond man, is a loyal and generous patron of the arts. in the tradition of the Scottmatters, he has a large family of 8 children, four male, four female, from his wife, Lady Jane Jennings. He was not meant to be the ruling lord, thought, as the title was to be inherited by his brother Antony, but Antony and his wife, Lady Isabel Halloway, a daughter of lord Halloway, fell under the curse of Sithington Gray, the fey lord who persecutes his family. *(Adventure Hook: Lord Andrew's eldest son Antony is getting married, and Lord Scottmatter do not wish to risk so he is sparing no expense to protect his house during the ceremony and offers an handsome payment to the PCs to watch over the proceedings.)*

**Late Lady Margaret Scottmatter, Mistress of Plentyfield Mansion (CG young adult human bard (Visual Artist) 8, rank 4 ghost)**

Lady Margaret sacrificed herself to stop Sithington Gray from imprisoning all the Scottmatters in a painting. She managed to imprison the fey lord in a painting, at the cost of her own life. As a ghost she is still the mistress of Plentyfield Mansion (a title inherited by

woman only, in the Scottmatter family) and control the Shadow Plentyfield. She still struggles to preserve her family from the influence of Lord Sithington Gray.

*(Adventure Hook: She manages to have her set of paintbrushes delivered to one of the PCs, and starts to warn them of a lurking danger.)*

**Lord Sithington Gray (CE male sith sorcerer 15)**

This vengeful fey-lord wooed a lady of house Scottmatter, but she escaped from his lair and sealed him there. He freed himself and every 77 years he takes his his revenge on the family—but last time, seven years ago, his plan backfired and he was imprisoned in his own portrait. He wants freedom, and revenge, and he still has servants to do his bidding and ways to influence events.

*(Adventure Hook: Recently Lord Gray has planned a new way to escape, and he is haunting the dreams of seven virgin girls. he plans to lead them in his manor and to sacrifice them but one of them is related to one of the PCs.)*

**Lord Mayor of Idletown Saul Eules (LN adult human fighter 7)**

Honest and competent, yet arrogant and complacent, Saul is a charming ex-soldier, still strongly built, in spite of his current sedentary life.

*(Adventure Hook: Married and father of three children, he has an ongoing extramarital affair. When he is blackmailed about it he will enlist the PCs help to retrieve the proofs of his infidelity.)*

**Sheriff Ilias Durkel (NE adult changeling rogue 9)**

Ilias Durkel is the soft talking law-enforcer in Idletown. A master manipulator, he is secretly a

servant of Sithington Gray, and does his bidding to satisfy his greed.

*(Adventure Hook: Ilias Durkel enlists the PCs help to investigate in a mysterious case of assault, framing a member of the Scottmatter family in the process.)*

**Director Malcolm Scotts (N adult human expert 5)**

The heir of a cadet branch of House Scottmatter, Malcolm is a knowledgeable art critic and the director of the local museum. He is very interested in buying art and more than willing to close his eyes to its origin.

*(Adventure Hook: After the new Akiri pavilion at the museum has been disrupted Malcolm pays the PCs to stand watch over it.)*

**Lian de Loranche de Punchinel (NG adult human alchemist (Promethean Alchemist) 13)**

A Dementlieuse pupil of Victor von Mordenheim, he left once he glimpsed the depths of the wicked selfishness of his mentor. He uses his abilities as a creator of constructs to help people. Recently, he has specialized in the creation of prosthetic limbs which can substitute for missing ones. His laboratory is near the Museum of Idletown, where he directs the science department.

*(Adventure Hook: A wealthy man from Dementlieu has bought a replacement arm for his son, but the limb has gone missing, and the PCs are tasked to investigate.)*

**Lord Mathias Holsworth, XIII Viscount of Stormpeak, XIII Master and Lord of Lighthousekeep, Warden of the Cliffs and Admiral of the Bay. (CG middle-aged human fighter (Corsair) 10)**

Lord Holsworth is one of the most successful members of his family in conquering the Yearning, the curse of seafaring-wanderlust. He

not only managed to marry Lady Lydia Graben, from the Nebligtode Islands, but he also managed to have several children from her, securing his own legacy. He sates his own seafaring lust by regularly patrolling the coast of Mordentshire, aboard the *Stormfender*, a powerful war galleon, flagship of the Mordentish Fleet.

*(Adventure Hook: Recently one of the three ghost sailors of the Stormfender has started to act up, pushing Lord Holsworth to ask the PCs to investigate.)*

**Lady Lydia Holsworh-Graben (LN adult human lebentod rogue 3)**

Lady Lydia was a living young woman when she met Lord Mathias and married him. It was only after she delivered her last child that she was gifted by her distant cousin Meredoth a poisoned enchanted pendant which killed her and transformed her in a Lebentod. Luckily for her, the distance allowed her to retain her free will. She is struggling to hide her condition from her family as she fear their possible rejection.

*(Adventure Hook: Lady Holsworth offers an handsome reward for the recovery of an item which looks suspiciously like a body part.)*

**Lord Mayor of Stormpeak Jeremy Barthold-Ward (LE middle-aged human aristocrat 6)**

An oppressive, yet effective bureaucrat, Jeremy was a cold and abusive husband and is a cold and abusive father. His tenure as a Mayor has been disturbed by the actions of the Lady in White, a masked vigilante who protects Stormpeak citizens from both criminals and Barthold's oppressive politics.

*(Adventure Hook: Lord Barthold-Ward needs extra security for the moving of the city taxes.)*

**Sheriff Phillip Ward (NG middle-aged human fighter (Roughrider) 7)**

The estranged former brother-in-law of the current Lord Mayor, Phillip Ward managed to keep his position thanks the goodwill of Lord Mathias. He is aging, however, and he won't be able to keep his position for long.

*(Adventure Hook: When the White Lady is framed for a murder, Phillip asks for the PCs to investigate, hoping to clear the heroine's name.)*

**The Lady in White [CG young adult human vigilante (Mounted Fury 11)]**

Under the guise of the Lady in White hides Gowena Barthold-Ward, the daughter of the Lord-Mayor. She uses the power of her grandfather's sword Night Veil to find during the night that freedom she is denied during daytime, for herself and for the other citizens.

*(Adventure Hook: After assisting in an heroic act of the Lady in White, the PCs find an handkerchief with house Barthold-Ward's crest and the letters G.B. embroidered on it.)*

**Lord Hiram Mournesworth, XVII Viscount of Last Rest, Lord and Master of the Twilight Tower, Warden of the Vale of Twilight (LE old human wizard (necromancer) 9)**

The reclusive lord of Last Rest is seen in public only during the meetings of the Council of Ten. In the rest of the time, he stays in his gloom tower, doing mysterious arcane researches. He is not married, his heir being his nephew Charles, married to Elizabeth Blackburn-Bruce, who has two children.

*(Adventure Hook: The PCs are surprised by a formal invitation to the Twilight Tower.)*

**Lord Mayor of Last Rest Diggory Stones (N middle-aged human bard 3 (dirge), rank 2 ghost)**

For a necropolis, one could only expect a ghost mayor. Diggory Stones is quite zealous in his job, even if his constituency is not very lively.

*(Adventure Hook: The ghost population of Last Rest is dwindling, as tombs are violated and spirits are imprisoned in their old bodies. Diggory Stones offers an hefty sum to anyone able to stop the serial spiritbinder.)*

**Sheriff Marcus La Monte (NG adult human awakened skeleton magus 10)**

Formerly an adventurer, Marcus La Monte was killed on Skulland fighting a Werewasp. After two month, he reanimated as an awakened skeleton. He decided to return to his hometown, where the mayor offered him the job of Sheriff, which he does remarkably well.

*(Adventure Hook: When a grave robber starts to target the ghost population, the sheriff understands that only a powerful spellcaster is able to hide stolen items from their ghostly owners, so, he enlists the PCs' help.)*

**Lord Burton Wescote, XX Viscount, Master and Lord of Millkeep, XX Warden of the Great Moor (CN venerable human fighter 13)**

Lord Wescote is the maternal uncle by marriage of Lord Jules Weathermay, great-uncle of Lord Mento Godefroy, and he is dubbed as Mordentshire's grandfather, as he is related with all the other noble families in a way or another. Still spry in his late nineties, he is prone to melancholy and forgetfulness. His heir is his grandson Michael, his late brother's namesake.

*(Adventure Hook: While his short-term memory sometime lapses, Lord Wescote remembers the remote past quite well, so when he see a*

*familiar face from his youth at a banquet he asks the PCs to investigate.)*

**Lord Mayor of Millkeep Douglas Micheals (NG old human expert 7)**

In his youth Douglas Micheals was the gardener of the Wescotes, but his intelligence and his loyalty got him promoted in the household and community. Until the day Lord Burton at last dies, or Douglas himself dies, it's highly unlikely the position will be available. Micheals is still full of energy and interest in his work.

*(Adventure Hook: In spite of his new role as mayor, Douglas' love for his first job is still evident from the number of parks and gardens he opened in Millkeep. When a mysterious vandal starts to target his parks, he task the PCs to stop it.)*

**Sheriff Darrel Holmes (LN middle-aged human fighter 7)**

Darrel Holmes was an adventurer before retiring, marrying and settling; he is still a skilled man-at-arms, and he is undyingly loyal to his lord.

*(Adventure Hook: Darrel's eldest son Darren is ghost-touched and he can see the Shadow-Shire. The boy warns him repeatedly about a mysterious assassin from the shadows, and he ask for the PCs' assistance to stop the threat.)*

**Late Lady Anna Clause (LE adult human (vampiric bloodline) sorcerer 6, rank 3 ghost)**

Lord Burton's treacherous first wife, she tried to kill him and his brother Micheal, but failed and was killed by Lord Burton's hound. She and her great-aunt, Evangeline have persecuted the Burtons ever since.

*(Adventure Hook: Anna has perfected the ability to pose as a human woman, and when she ask the help of the PCs to stop the plans of a*

*corrupted nobleman, she can be very convincing.)*

**Evangeline Clause (LE adult human mature vampire cleric of Cas 10)**

Spurned by Lord Burton's father, Evangeline called upon Cas to get her revenge. He turned her in a sickness-spreading vampire. She is assisted by her ghostly grand-niece Anna.

Recently, she was sealed in her temple under a Shrine of Hala.

*(Adventure Hook: The PCs keep dreaming about a sealed shrine, where a great reward awaits them.)*

## ORGANIZATIONS

**House Blackburn-Bruce:** This LN noble House is nominally led by Lord Gilbert Blackburn-Bruce, but the true leader is the late Lord Brian, founder of the house. Their crest shows two clasped hands, one black, the other red, over a blue spring flowing from a golden compass and a white book, on brown. Their words are: *The water of knowledge sates only those who drink the drink the deepest.* They rules Blackburn's Crossing from Blackburn Manor. They control the Guild of Alchemists. Their family curse is to be prone to deadly accidents during their alchemical experiments.

*(Dread Possibility: No one save for the Late Lord Brian knows what happened the night Lord Bruce died; if rumors say the truth, his experiment turned Lord Bruce in an horrible abomination, still imprisoned under the city.)*

**House de Boistribue:** This NG Noble House is lead by Lady Helene de Boistribue, and it's a poor hidden secret the fact that its female members are all natural werebears and its male members all natural werewolves. Their crest is a red wolf and a black bear on a white field quartered with a golden coin, a silver axe, a silver crescent moon and a black book on a

green field. Their words are "The lands knows its true master." The House controls the market of fur and timber. They also sponsor the Church of Hala and the Sister of Mercy. Their family curse is the tendency to fall prey to their bestial instincts when their loved one are threatened. They rule the Forest of the Ancient and the town of Hope's Hand from their seat of Beast's Refuge.

*(Dread Possibility: The Pool of Beasts: Rumors says that hidden in the deep of the Beast's Refuge there is a pool which allow any person who bath in it to change in the animal they more resemble at will. In truth the pool transform any who bathe in it to frenzied werebeasts.)*

**House Gauldamon:** This CE noble house is lead by Lord Gilderoy Gauldamon, and it sponsors the Cult of the Smiling One. It also controls the Guild of the Laughing Imp. Its crest depicts two red-skinned, goat-hoofed imps, one laughing, the other crying, opposing, on a black field. Their words are : "Approach enemies and friends alike with a smile, both are equally deserving of it."

Their family curse is compulsive gambling. This House rule the Lightless Wood and the city of Tumbledown, from their fortress of Lightless Motte.

*(Dread Possibility: The Laughing Imp. The eponymous symbol of the Guild with the same name the Imp is not a simple wooden statue, but a real imp (a CE fiend) possessing a malicious sense of humor.)*

**House Godefroy:** This NE Noble house is nominally lead by Lord Mento Godefroy, although in truth his late grandfather Lord Wilfred rules the house still. House Godefroy rules Gryphon Hill Town from the ominous Gryphon Hill Manor; their crest is a golden griffin on silver, with a black stout club in one claw, and a black sheaf of wheat in the other.

Their words are "Those who are strong, survive to lead!" Their family curse is a very volatile temper, and they control one third of the Shadow Shire, extending their rule much further than their material lands.

*(Dread Possibility: Mento's wives; Mento Godefroy's first three wives died in unfortunate accidents...or did they? Their ghosts do not roam the manor in eternal slavery, because they were killed outside the grounds, but each of them haunt the place they were killed and waits for revenge against their husband.)*

**House Halloway:** This N House rules Steadwall and the Arden River from the Hallowfort. It is led by Lord Gregory Halloway, and controls the Guild of Ferryman. Their crest is a black ferryman in a ring of golden coins on a blue field. Their words are "Only by action does any men succeed." Their family curse is the Misty Ferryman which roam the Arden river and target the members of their house.

*(Dread Possibility: The First Ferryman: the legend says Hiram Halloway, founder of the House, tricked the Ferryman of the Mists to build his seat, but the truth is quite more horrific; Hiram was a mundane ferryman, who made a pact with a Vistani sorceress to be able to ferry through the Mists, and thus became rich and powerful; but he was greedy and did not wish to share his gain with the sorceress, so, he tried to kill her. However, the sorceress was saved by Jakob, Hiram's brother, and her curse transformed Hiram in the first Mist Ferryman. He and his spawn still wishes to get revenge upon Jakob's descendants)*

**House Holsworth:** This CG house is led by Lord Mathias Holsworth, and rules Stormpeak and the coast of Mordenshire from their Lighthousekeep. They sponsor the Church of Oceanus, and the Guild of Navigators. Their crest is two pink mermaids flanking a gold lighthouse on a blue field. Their words are

"Cradled by the waves, guided by the night." Their family curse is called "the Yearning" and drives them to seafaring wanderlust.

*(Dread Possibility: The Mermaid's Revenge: Legends says the Yearning is born from the unrequited love of the first Lord Holsworth for a mermaid, but actually, it was the reverse: a mermaid witch called Baki tried to woo the nobleman captain and was rejected by him. What the legends don't tell is that her obsession never died, and she still haunts the bays.)*

**House Mournesworth:** This LE noble house is led with an iron fist in a velvet glove by Lord Hiram Mournesworth. They are the sponsor of the Church of the Reaper, and they rule Last Rest and the Vale of Twilight from the Twilight Tower. Their words are "Death makes all men equal, life makes all men brothers." Their crest is a black hooded man with a skeletal white hand holding a golden cup, and a pink hand holding a blue hourglass on an orange field. Their family curse is that they are beacons for the undead.

*(Dread Possibility: The Shadow Gate: Rumor says that under the Twilight Tower lies a gate to the Shadow Shire, which is used by souls to travel back and forth. In this case the rumors are completely correct; the thing which is not widely known, is that the Gate allows also the living to travel physically in the land of the dead.)*

**House Scottmatter:** This NG noble house is ruled jointly by Lord Andrew Scottmatter and his deceased sister Lady Margaret. They rule over the Grey Heath and Idletown from Plentyfield Manor. They control the Guild of Farmers, and style themselves with a gloved hand shaking a worker's hand, both green, with a bountiful multicolored table under them, all on a grey field. Their words are "The work of the hands is the joy of the soul." Their family curse

is embodied in Lord Sithington Grey, a powerful fairy lord who hates the family.

*(Dread Possibility: Lady Grey: Sithington Grey persecutes the Scottmatters since the day he wooed a young lady of the family who rejected him, but, in truth, she did love him, for a while, and she became fey-like. After she sealed him in his lair she returned to her family, but during his first incursion he sealed her under Plentyfield Mansion. The long imprisonment has taken its toll on her sanity, and should she be freed, her behavior will be highly unpredictable.)*

**House Weathermay:** This /G house rules the Earldom, and Mordent City itself, from Heather Manor. They sponsor the Ezran Church of the Protector and the Van Richten Society, and they are led by the Earl of Mordentshire himself, Lord Jules Weathermay. Their crest is two black hands which bears a white book, opened, with their words written in blue "None would survive but for the effort of those whom history have forgotten," all on a yellow field. Their family curse is the early loss of their life partners.

*(Dread Possibility: The Indigo Rose: A legend says that the indigo rose, only found in Heather Manor's gardens, can ward off hostile presences, and keep the dead in their graves. The legend is totally wrong; actually, the indigo rose attracts incorporeal undead, and allows them to interact with the material world.)*

**House Wescote:** Led by the very old Lord Burton Wescote, this CN house rules on the Great Moor and Millkeep Town from the eponymous keep. They control commerce on the Mill Road.

Their blazon is a black man holding a sword and golden lantern, a red hunting dog at his heel, on a green field. Their words are "Those who are righteous receive what they deserve." Their family curse is the wrath of scorned women, included a vampire and a ghost.



*(Dread Possibility: The Wescote Mastiff: The Wescote Mastiff is, according to the legend, a ghost hound which haunts the Millkeep's ground. The truth is that the Mastiff is a red-furred Grim sworn to the protection of the Wescote family.)*

**The Lamplighter Society:** This LG elite volunteer corps of highly trained law enforcement officials only accept people with high moral standards and unstained criminal records. They are currently a small group, only fully operating in Mordent City, but they are growing.

*(Dread possibility: Rot in the ranks. While at present the organization lives up to its high standards, thanks to the close control the high ranking members hold on junior members, as the organization expands to other cities, the faith Lord Commander put in his men could be betrayed. who knows what could happen once some of the younger officers will be in control, far from Mordent? They enjoy great authority and trust, both quite dangerous in the wrong hands...)*

## The Darklord : Wilfred Godefroy

CE Male Human Fifth Magnitude Ghost Fighter (Cad) 12 (180 HP)

**Speed:** 30 feet Fly. (perfect)

**Initiative:** +6 (+11 in Gryphon Hill Manor)

**Senses:** Darkvision 60, Perception +23(+5 in Gryphon Hill Manor)

**Armor Class:** 28 Touch 28 Flat Footed 24 ( +4 Dex, +14 deflection) (+5 in Gryphon Hill Manor)

Space/Reach: 1 square /1 square

**Combat Maneuver Bonus/Combat Maneuver Defense:**+16/26 (+23/33 Dirty Tricks, and Disarm, +19/29 Steal, can't become prone)(+5 in Gryphon Hill Manor)

**Str:** -/10, **Dex:**14(18), **Con:** -, **Int:** 16, **Wis:** 13, **Cha:** 28 (30)]

**Saving Throws:** Fort:+20 (+21), Ref:+9 (+11), Will:+8 (+5 in Gryphon Hill Manor)

**Special Qualities:** Curse of the Dark Lord, Incorporeal, Undead Treats, Craven Combatant, Dirty Maneuvers (+3), Frightening Presence, Payback (+2), Phantasmagoria, Master of Gryphon Hill Manor, Rejuvenation, Sinkhole of Evil 5

**Special Attacks:** Corrupting Touch, Draining Touch, Malevolence, Razor-Sharp Chair Leg, Terror, Trample, Sneak Attack (2d6).

**Attack: Melee:** +3 Ethereal Touch Unholy Cane +19/+14/+9 (1d6+3/19-20x2) +2d6 against good creature +6d6 negative energy (+5 in Gryphon Hill Manor to HR and DR) or +16 Incorporeal touch (6d6+1d4 Cha drain+ free Intimidate +35)

**Ranged:** +1 Ethereal Touch Musket +17 (1d12+1/x4, range 40 ft not available in Wasp form (+5 in Gryphon Hill Manor to HR and DR)

**Skills:** Acrobatics +19, Bluff +20, Diplomacy +20, Fly +29, Handle Animal +25 , Intimidate +35, Knowledge (history) +18, Knowledge (local) +18, Knowledge (nobility) +18, Perception +27, Ride +19, Sense Motive +17, Sleight of Hand +12, Stealth +12 (+5 in Gryphon Hill Manor)

**Feats:** Agile Maneuver, Catch Off-Guard, Combat Expertise, Deadly Aim, Devastating Strike, Greater Dirty Trick, Greater Disarm, Improved Dirty Trick, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Weapon

Competence (Firearms), Point Blank Shot, Quick Dirty Trick, Quick Draw, Flyby Attack

**Challenge Rating:** 19

**Proprieties:** 21,000 gold coins (in his tomb), +3 Ethereal Touch Unholy Cane, Cloak of resistance +3, headband of Charisma +2, belt of dexterity +4, musket +1, bracers of armor (Ethereal Touch) +4

**BACKGROUND**

Wilfred Godefroy was born the second son of Lord Herman Godefroy and Lady Ashley Wescote. Already as a young boy, it was clear that he had inherited the family curse of a burning temper. To try to teach him self-discipline, his father enrolled him in the militia (this was before the founding of the Lamplighters). He was the senior commander during a border war against the Falkovnian Army, and he distinguished himself for his ferocity in the fighting, gaining the nickname “The Bloody Griffin.” After the tragic death of his brother, who he accidentally killed in one of their many fights, he secluded himself in a house at the foot of Gryphon Hill. However, at the time of his exploits in the war, his brother's heirs also perished, leaving him, a man already advanced in age, with the responsibility to save House Godefroy from extinction. He married the young sister of lord Jules Weathermay and began to cultivate ambitious projects. He aimed to finally return the Godefroys to their legitimate place as Earls of Mordentshire, but his plan was frustrated by the early death of the three male children Estelle gave him. The only child to survive infancy was a daughter, Lilia; after his wife was deemed unfit to have children, once again Wilfred was possessed by the burning rage of House Godefroy, and in a fit of rage, killed both his daughter and wife, blaming his prized stallion for the deed. Their ghosts haunted him, and he decided to return to Bloody Griffin Retreat, his first home, claiming Gryphon Hill Manor was too damp for his old bones. He married again, this time to Lady Arleene Gauldemon. Arleene was far less

docile and naive than Estelle Weathermay. She gave him two sons, then she poisoned him—but she had underestimated her husband's strength of will. As he felt death approach, he requested that the family return to his ancestral home; as he lay on his deathbed she taunted him, claiming that only one of their sons was actually his, while the other had been fathered by his base-born cousin Herman. But Wilfred had suspected her of treachery, and he had requested to return to his ancestral home for a specific reason. He called up the spirits of the Godefroy line, who responded to his rage, and mauled Arleene, with the killing blow coming from Wilfred's cane. Energized by the savage pleasure of this revenge, the old man rose from his deathbed to visit his sons' nursery. After observing the two toddlers for a while, he finally choose the one who was his heir, and killed the other in front of the imploring ghost of Arleene. After this last act of cruelty, his heart stopped, but he did not relinquish his mastership of Gryphon Hill. The moment his bloodstained old body fell to the ground, the translucent figure of Wilfred Godefroy rose and sat on the Shadow Griffin Throne, claiming the title of Mordentshire's darklord.

**CURRENT SKETCHES**

Wilfred Godefroy still rules his family, his house, his land, and a large part of Shadow Mordentshire with an iron fist. What he wants, he gets, whether it be more ghosts to serve him, more paintings of himself, or more steeds he can kill to ride in the shadows. His greatest enemy is himself; his own temper ruins every ambitious plan he conceives.

## COMBAT

Wilfred lets his living or ghostly minions deal with those he sees as beneath him, but if any enemy provokes his temper he will attack personally, using every dirty trick in the book to crush them and sadistically kill them.

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

As the Master of Gryphon Hill Manor, he can teleport himself anywhere in his manor, perceive exactly any other creature's position in the manor, and imprison any incorporeal undead who enter there indefinitely until he specifically grants such a ghost freedom to leave.

*Rejuvenation* : As long Gryphon Hill Manor stands, both in the material and in the Ethereal planes, Wilfred Godefroy cannot be laid to rest. If Godefroy is destroyed but the house still stands, he will return three nights after, sitting on the Shadow Griffin Throne. He will be in the presence of his murdered kin, and he will have a fit of rage.

*Curse of the Dark Lord*: Wilfred's temper is his curse; every time the smallest thing goes differently from what he wanted, his temper will flare, and he will act like the victim of a "Rage" spell. He can act normally only by making a DC 30 Will save at the beginning of each round, and the rage lasts 12 rounds. If he has no a living creature or ghost to strike at during his rage, he will hit himself. As a secondary curse he can't hit the ghosts of his daughter, infant son and wives, which are the only one who does not fear him and stay with him to witness gladly his self-abuse, given that others quickly hides when the fit of rage starts. During his rage attacks he can't use his powers to teleport. So he ends often humiliating himself under the eyes of his first victims.

## LAIR

The massive Gryphon Hill Manor is a fortified manor shaped like a griffin. It is a rank 5 Sinkhole of Evil with taints of Rage, Fear, and Desperation.

## CLOSING THE BORDER

If Wilfred wishes to close the borders, a curtain of thick fog arises at the border. People who walk into the fog find themselves returning continually to the place where they entered the fog. Wilfred can close the borders at will, when he is not raging.

### NEW TEMPLATE : *GHOST-TOUCHED*

When a ghost possesses a mortal body and sires or bears a child, that child is touched by ectoplasmic energies, and a ghost-touched is born.

Ghost-Touched is an acquired Template.

A Ghost-Touched creature is identical to the base creature except for the following:  
+2 Wisdom.

*Ghostvision*: A ghost-touched has darkvision and low-light vision and can see ethereal and invisible creatures.

*Ghost Resonance*: A ghost-touched can damage incorporeal being with non-magical attacks with a 50% chance of failure or 25% for non-force-based magical attacks.

CR:+2

**NEW CLASS ARCHETYPES: FIGHTER (LAMPLIGHTER ENFORCER)**

*Lamplighter Style:* A Lamplighter Enforcer can use a cast-iron lantern as a heavy flail. Lamplighter Enforcers have all class skills of fighters, plus Diplomacy. (Levels as a Lamplighter are counted as fighter levels for all feats and damage bonuses.) At 5th level they gain a +2 bonus to HR and DR with their lantern, with an additional +1 bonus every five levels thereafter. This replaces heavy armor training and modifies weapon training 1-5.

*Lamplighter Stride:* +10 feet to base speed in light armor. (This replaces Medium armor training)

*Lamplighter Sight (Ex):* At 4th level a Lamplighter Enforcer get low-light vision (superior low-light vision if they already possess the ability); at 7 level they get Darkvision 30 feet ( or 60, if they already have it) at level 10 they can ignore concealment due to fog, mist and darkness, and at level 13 they can see in magical darkness. For every three levels above this the range of their darkvision increased by 30 feet. These replace Armor Training.

*Lamplighter Awareness (Su):* At 19th level a Lamplighter Enforcer act as if under a permanent effect of True Sight. (This replaces Armor Mastery.)