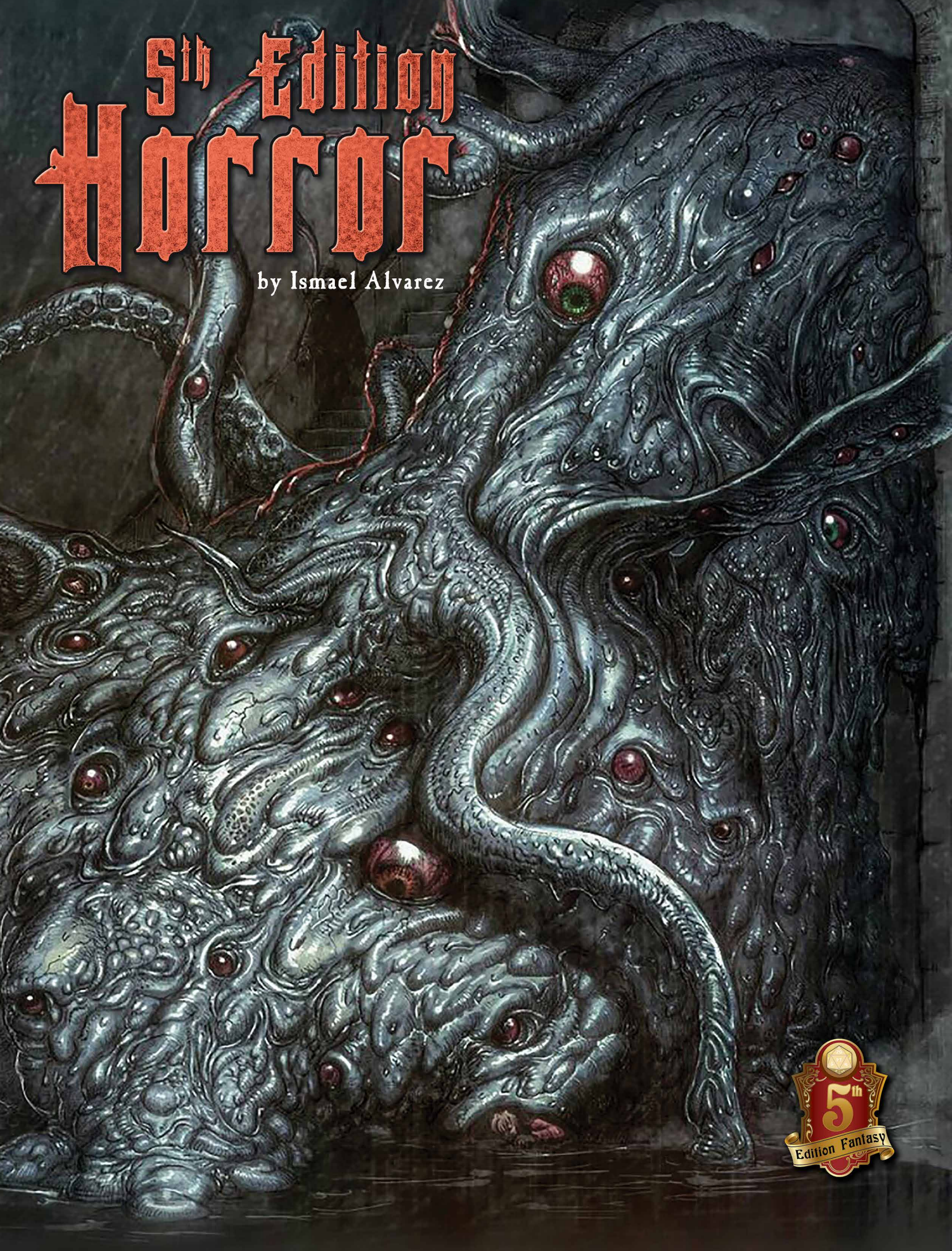


5th Edition Horror

by Ismael Alvarez





5th Edition Horror

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ABOUT FAT GOBLIN GAMES

Based in South Carolina, USA, Fat Goblin Games was founded in 2011 to create Pathfinder Roleplaying Game compatible products. With a focus on high quality production values and providing a creative environment for our team of freelancers (*The Fat Goblin Hoarde*), Fat Goblin Games has quickly become a recognized force in the world of Third Party Publishers of not just the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game and 5th Edition Fantasy, but also supporting the vs. M Engine and releasing official products for Castle Falkenstein, originally published by R. Talsorian Games. With hundreds of support books, visual aids, campaign settings, and quality stock art, Fat Goblin Games continues to provide exciting content and fantastic worlds in which gamers can immerse themselves.

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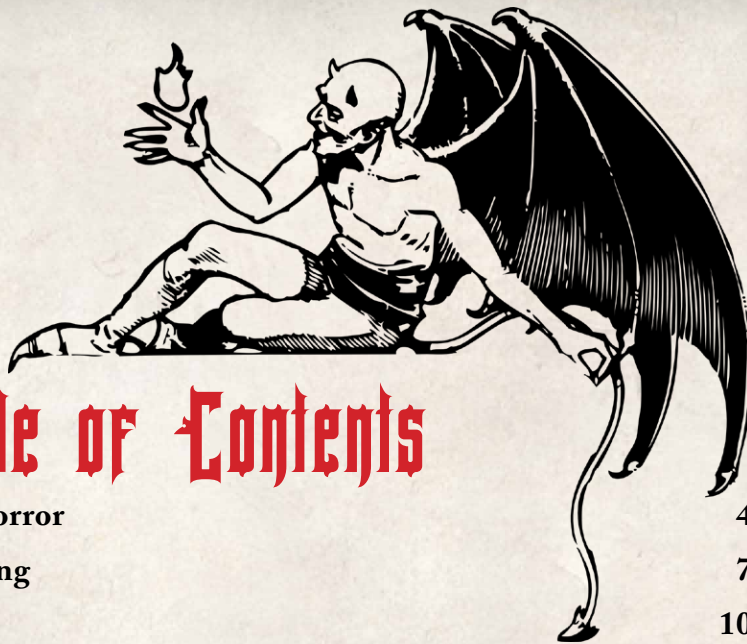


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Introduction to 5th Edition Horror

It is a strange facet of the creative mind that seeks out the things that frighten it. We sometimes wish to give a name to the little fears that crawl in the recesses of our thoughts, either to marginalize them or to explore them in fullness to understand ourselves through the mirror of fright.

Roleplaying games, being a very self-reflective pastime, is especially given to the study of horror and fear by exploring odd topics like reanimation or body horror, as well as existential fears that defy succinct examples.

The purpose of this book is not to guide you through the world of fear, but to provide a template through which to view it. Whether you use the odd and horrible monsters within, consider the toolkits that set a tone for the fight against the darkness, or simply take inspiration from the dour tone of this book's writing, you should come away from it shaken and intrigued.

While some of the ideas presented are not new, but the subject of fear predates archetypal storytelling and has its roots deep within our collective memory. Even when we present you with time-honored fears, we intend to do so by peeling back the skin of the subject matter to create something fresh and compelling.

And while there are better mediums to inspire the notions of horror, primarily in fiction and film, the secondary purpose of this book is to facilitate those stories within this system, so that you as gamers can focus on the scares and not on the rules, as it is imperative that the mood in a horror game not be broken.

Remember that the feeling of horror cannot start with a shock, but must begin with a slow creep. The tension should build subtly, punctuated by great tragedy, loss, or the inspiration of great fear. The better you can build your setting, and the more you can allow your players to invest in their characters, the better the horror will be when it happens.

The most terrifying thing to happen to your character may not be death, or even insanity, but the wholesale extinction or reshaping of all life in existence. And perhaps those events end in your death or insanity after you have lost everything that you have ever held dear in a succession of unfathomable events.

-Ismael Alvarez

This volume is broken down into chapters so as to make it easier to navigate. As with most third-party publishers, we want to present options for your game, not concrete rules that you must abide by. With that in mind the chapters presented are:

Ch. 1 - Horror Roleplaying

Horror, as we already discussed, is not something you just throw your players into. You must build it gradually. How you build it depends on the type of horror that you choose, and dear reader, there are many to choose from. This chapter discusses the various types of frightening roleplaying experiences there are, and presents you with various options as to how to integrate them into your existing adventures.

Ch. 2 - The Races of Horror

Dwarves scare just as easily as humans do, yet why stop there? Presented in this chapter are player character races far beyond what you are used to. The broken Caliban who lumbers through the streets in search of wrongs to right? Perhaps the cold, barely living Graveborn looking for a reason to go on unliving. Slinking through the alleys, is the dark and mysterious Shadeling more to your liking? These unique races await you in Races of Horror.

Ch 3 - Classes of Horror

Just as the races were sure to scare, the creepy classes of horror await the unsuspecting player. Not content with the natural order of things, the Apothecary twists the scientific and the occult to his liking, creating things that heal and harm as only a mad scientist can do. Beyond this dabbler are 12 archetypes blending classic concepts with just enough of a twist of the macabre to make them perfect for your horror campaign.

Ch. 4 - Character Backgrounds

You may have found the perfect race and the perfect class, but without a story to drive them, they are empty shells. Fill them with these fascinating histories before your character starts adventuring. Surely their life before the adventure shaped them into the person that now walks these mysterious trails? The

proper background allows you to flesh the character out before their flesh is rendered of course...

Ch. 5 - Skills and Feats

Not everyone is the pious cleric flinging holy might or the crazed wizard who blasts from afar. Some adventurers must rely on their wits, cunning, natural talent, and learned skills, in order to survive the terrible lands that they travel through. With the Monster Lore skill, your class defines the types of monsters you have knowledge of. Feats like Bestial Girth, Evil Brand, Marked by Darkness and more allow you to give your character the advantage they will need. Not that it will do them any good.

Ch. 6 - Horror Equipment

The nine-foot tall, slime-covered *helgoloth* in front of you is not nearly as intimidating when it is twisting its stomach around 21 inches of silvered steel you are holding. The right gear means the difference between victory, defeat, or coming back as one of the living dead you are so fond of killing.

Ch. 7 - Magic and Mysteries

Not even magic is unscathed in horror. The spells that sometimes bring life to the lucky bring death to many and trusted enchantments often turn into the most diabolical of evils. This chapter looks deep into the abyss of magical spells. Everything from the hazardous Bone Storm raining femurs from the sky to the classic Séance, giving you a glimpse into the eyes of evil itself. If that was not enough there are items which hold enchantments as well. For weal or woe? Typically it depends on who is wielding them... correct?

Ch. 8 - GM's Corner

What's life (or unlife) without challenges? These twisted hazards are common and uncommon horror tropes. Everything from terrible traps that will bedevil your player characters, to twisted diseases that eat away at far more than just flesh. Not content to stop there we delve into Haunting environments that will make players hearts thump in their chest even as their beloved characters hearts stop.

Ch. 9 - Fear and Madness

Fear is such a central element to a horror game. Your characters might be fighting against monsters and horrors, but if the element of fear is absent, then it is just another flavor of fantasy gaming. Hand in hand with fear, madness plays an element in all stories. The unknown, the incomprehensible, and the unapproachable all claw at the mind, causing mental harm. This can sometimes manifest as a madness. This chapter seeks to expand on the two concepts as they could pertain to your horror campaign.

Ch. 10 - Designing a Horror Adventure

There are countless books, magazines, blogs and more that will tell you how to design an adventure,

so we are not going to tread on those particular paths in this volume. Instead, we are going to talk about what makes a horror adventure “tick”. What really makes a horror adventure a memorable, scary event that will be talked about for years to come. Are you up to the challenge?

Ch. 11 - Monsters and Cults

What could possibly be more “horror” than monsters? Almost all of the great horror stories revolve around some monstrous beast, be it a true monster, or just a person who does monstrous things? Presented herein are monsters for your perusal. Some are merely annoying, while others are truly horrific. Additionally, we are going to provide you with templates that you can add to existing creatures that will certainly rank them up a notch on the horror ladder.



Chapter 01 – Horror Roleplaying

What is Horror?

Simply put, horror here is meant as a feeling. Fear is one of the most primal of emotions. To be scared, worried, confused and disoriented, shocked, and perhaps even excited. Fear chokes our thoughts while we sleep, and are the specter that hangs over us in our darkest times. Fear taints our thoughts when we are alone, or uncertain of our future or our surroundings. We run from it, hide from it, distract ourselves from it, but most of all, we wallow in it.

The most human of behaviors is to indulge our fears, whether it is to engage in stories around a fire, read a musty book of macabre tales, or watch violent theatrics meant to stimulate our hindbrains into a simulated fright. Many animals are able to ignore their fear in various ways, as humans sometimes can, but no other animal seeks to be thrilled as we do, to feel the stress of adrenaline and tense muscles that come from the act of being afraid.

So this is horror. The indulgence of fear. It is the cloud of emotion that we chase to exercise the act of being afraid. So it is natural that a game of imaginative drama would be the fertile ground for horror's innate indulgences.

How to Horror

Horror roleplaying is a very distinct and singular experience that is apart from many other aspects of role-playing. While it can be adventurous, or perhaps silly, horror seeks to tug at the strings of fear within your mind in a way that most other games cannot.

There have been other very successful games that do this exactly, either by leveraging the horror of the unknown or the alien and set a mood for games that can touch upon the primal emotions of fear and anxiety.

To this end, the most important element of the horror game is a proper mindset. You cannot walk into a game hoping to “win” or even succeed so much as experience the narrative. Sit back, take in the ambient details of the dark and drafty mansion or the cold wet walls of an alien hallway. Through this acceptance that you are a passenger to the narrative more than a driver, you allow yourself to feel the subtle cues, the creepy sensations, and the thick anticipation that are the hallmarks of horror.

But as distinct as the horror gaming genre is, there is room for variation.

Horror Adventure

Some horrors can be fought, but that does not make the victory any more attainable.

For example, a zombie horror game can be about fighting back the hordes as much as it is overcoming the horrid dregs of power-hungry living humans that threaten the lives and wellbeing of moral survivors. The goals can be within sight or never-ending, depending on the length of the campaign, or the nature of the story arc. There might be an end in sight where a safe haven exists for the survivors, or the reality could slowly set in that every day is a hard fought battle for survival that won't end until all the survivors succumb to some terrible fate.

But the key to all of that is the story. As a group, you might fight harder knowing that there is a goal in place. As a group of individuals, you may fragment as you realize that death is a languid and patient threat, picking off your loved ones, preying on your weaknesses, sticking to your mind like a fine dust.

Both of these experiences are valid for play, and can fit into an “adventure”, but are two wholly different paradigms of horror gaming. And though there is hope in the former example, that hope

makes failure all the more painful, sowing desperation and despair with each loss.

Horror Investigation

Perhaps the most prominent of horror game types, the investigation is about seeking what others refuse to unearth. To find the terror hidden by unseen forces, and attempt to reveal it for better or worse. Perhaps you are a group of investigators trying to solve murders that take a supernatural turn, or you are hired to explore ancient ruins for an invaluable bauble that carries with it a deadly curse.

Whatever the motivation, you dare where others do not, and either suffer or succeed in big ways. Some revelations cause you to succumb to madness, while others end in deadly encounters with savage creatures, or even more savage human cultists. In this style of play, it is all the more important to receive the narrative, as you are by nature giving yourself into the unknown, sacrificing your well-being for the human need for exploration at all costs.

War Horror

Though war can be horror in and of itself, horror within war can be a unique and interesting avenue for horror games.

That is to say, there is an interesting aspect of fighting against the armies of darkness, waging a war that is more existentially hinged on the survival of the righteous against the triumph of evil. Here horror comes from the despair at the overwhelming forces, the underhanded tactics, and tainted magics that only the forces of darkness are able to wield.

There is somewhat more hope in such games, and the horror is somewhat muted against a backdrop that highlights glory in battle over the despair of impending doom, but there is room for dread when the armies of darkness close in like a vise, sapping the hope and glory of victory from the heroes with little effort.

Such games revel in the exploration for an answer that is beyond merely combating the evil armies, but instead searching for ancient clues

to solutions that may or may not hold back the tides of darkness. The difference between a happy ending and an uncertain one lies in the nature of the solution, whether its side effects are arguably worse than the problem, or if they serve as a corrupting force that causes the heroes to become the darkness they were destined to defeat.

Small Horror

A protracted style of the game meant for shorter campaigns, the small horror focuses on a small group and an unknown force that harries and toys with the victims. Whether this is a group of travelers being stalked by some evil being, or a remote soiree run afoul of some mortal but cunning murderer, these games focus on the little terrors that can arouse selfish notions of self-preservation at all cost.

These games are usually meant to grant very little agency to the players in terms of how to “solve” the problem of the evil that haunts the group, and focuses instead on moment to moment survival that builds and expands the tension of anticipated fear, using metered beats to maximize the fear of impending death. In this style of game, death is far more likely, as some find the fun in trying to be the last person standing, even if they are merely the last victim.

Horror Epic

While most horror is based on small fears and immediate survival, some horror stories can be about the struggle of the underdog against a great evil. Similar to the horror adventure style, the horror epic may represent a change of scope in which the players struggle with an evil force of extraordinary magnitude. Though the idea is that victory should be possible, it should always come at great cost.

When an epic campaign concludes, the result should always be one that reflects loss, sacrifice, and noble actions. The great evil's defeat will be measured in lives lost and the deep impact of emotions on any survivors.

If this sounds like the aftermath of a war horror, it is no coincidence. This style of play could be

employed for a titanic struggle between two mortal factions that evokes a horror of large-scale conflict and mass killings. It can also reflect the sealing or destruction of a great evil entity, like a vampire lord or an alien super intelligence.

Regardless of the source, this play style will play heavily on psychological themes, and the players must be invested enough to care about the consequences of their actions. When and if the players win, it may well be that some or all of the character choose the hard option of laying their lives down to complete the objective that saves the world at large from the evil that threatens existence. More than a few non-horror campaigns have ended this way, and the noble actions that emerged from such games are the thing of legend.

The Role of Creatures and Enemies in Horror

Though most game styles will include creatures that can be fought and defeated, most creatures are at their best when they can creep in the shadows, and threaten the margins of civilization. How do you fight a creature that strikes at night and drags innocents into the forest? Do you chase it into its home and risk the dangers of that wait in its den?

Similarly, humanoid antagonists are equally scary when they are beyond the reach of the group. They may reach the scene of a murder just minutes late each time as a depraved killer taunts them with its next “work of art”, or a sociopathic pillar of the community hides behind his prestige as the group attempts to tear down his reputation to stop his sadistic rampage.

Horror does not lend itself to a progression of fights against the evils that claw from the darkness. With each clear-cut fight, the mood of the horror diminishes, as the tension is consumed by rote dice rolls and simple combat. Each fight must be meaningful in some way, whether it is against a formless mass of evil that threatens to crush the group against a cavern wall before eating them, or a climactic battle with a serial killer inside of a crumbling clock tower. Additionally, these combats should come at a great personal cost to the group, as each fight could

result in dire consequences, whether it be the loss of a beloved ally, or losing favor with a group that perceives the character’s actions as selfish or wrong.

Monsters of all sorts must occupy a balanced place within your games if you wish to convey a proper mood of horror, each creature carefully placed and introduced into the menagerie of foul beings that slowly chip away at the group’s resources or sanity before being laid low. Each combat should have a component of woe sown into its fabric, revealing a harvest of despair even with the advent of victory over darkness. Horror is overwhelmingly about loss, and that should be no different in a game of horror.



Chapter 02 – Races of Horror

In a contrast to most standard fantasy settings, the premise of horror runs against the grain of the fantasy genre. Some of the starkest differences exist within the fantasy races inherent in most fantasy settings. Some can be altered or adapted; gnomes and elves can be expressed as alien and strange, while humans and dwarves are the stolid survivors of the daily terror that occupies their reality. However, some races aren't as adaptable, and other gaps exist that can't be filled with these mainstay races.

Here we hope to offer some alternatives and options, both to replace and reinforce the blending of horror and fantasy. Whether or not you choose to switch around the roster of races within your campaign is up to you, but please feel free to use the many races provided to help customize your horror campaign to your specifications.

Caliban

Caliban are unfortunate creatures that share less with their parents than they do with the monstrosities that stalk the night. Often born from a normal pregnancy, Caliban are the result of a dark corruption that suffuses the land. From the highest aristocrat to the lowest peasant, the birth of a caliban is feared and reviled. Such children are often exposed to die in the wilderness, but their cursed birth often finds them struggling to make a living, whether they succeed at thriving in the wilderness, or they are helped by darker forces. There are stories of caliban being raised in seclusion by nobles, often with disastrous results.

Despite these cautionary tales, Caliban are uniquely suited to survive in the dark recesses of a horrible landscape. They are hardy, thick-skinned

(at times literally), and are inured to otherwise maddening realities of a dangerous world full of monsters and doom. As adventurers, Caliban actually prefer a life of travel and excitement, as it prevents them from settling into an area where their strange appearance and uncouth ways would attract unruly mobs and worse.



Ability Score Increase. Your Strength score increases by 2, and your Constitution score increases by 1.

Age. Though disfigured, you are hearty and relatively long-lived. Caliban lifespans are the same as that of humans.

Alignment. Having been born outcasts and rejects, Caliban tends towards neutral or chaotic alignments.

Size. Caliban, though misshapen, are the same rough size as humans. Your size is medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed of 30 feet.

Darkvision. You see what others do not, or should not. The darkness is your friend, for in it you can hide from prying eyes. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern colors, only shades of grey.

Menacing. You gain proficiency in the Intimidation skill.

Relentless Endurance. When you are reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, you can drop to 1 hit point instead. You can't use this feature again until you finish a long rest.

Savage Attacks. When you score a critical hit with a melee weapon attack, you can roll one of the weapon's damage dice one additional time and add it to the extra damage of the critical hit.

Inspire Disgust. You are abhorred by nearly any who lay eyes on you. When dealing with humanoids that are not monstrous, you have disadvantage on any charisma checks.

Languages. You speak two common languages.

a handful of unscrupulous changelings may act out the fears of others is all the proof that others need to condemn an entire race for the actions of a few.

Though a changeling can appear as nearly any medium-sized humanoid, their natural appearance is that of a featureless humanoid, with pale skin and a face nearly bereft of characteristics. Their noses are short, their ears are small and flat against their skulls, and their head shapes tend towards smooth and ovoid. Their black eyes lack pupils, adding to their alien countenance.

The same ability that makes changelings reviled among most societies also allows them to adapt and thrive in secret, but it keeps the shapechangers similarly paranoid. Any changeling that is found out is likely to be lynched without question or delay. Even storied heroes who are found to be changelings are often thought to be imposters. Thus, a successful changeling is one that must hold up the ruse of being anything but a changeling. One must not forget that while horror can be a slathering fanged monster, so too can it be a disquieting meditation on the nature of identity and acceptance.



Changeling

Feared and misunderstood by nearly every non-changeling, these shapeshifting humanoids are mistrusted for their natural ability to appear as others. Naturally, they awaken insecurities about identity, safety, and even accomplishment; what good is it to live a good life if some creature could kill you and take it for themselves? Changelings are not by nature bad, but the paranoia that fuels their discrimination is fierce and unyielding. That

Ability Score Increase. Your Charisma score increases by 2, and your Dexterity score increases by 1.

Age. Changelings reach adulthood at the age of 16. Their fey heritage allows them to live much longer than humans, up to 200 years.

Alignment. Changelings can be of any alignment, and have no tendencies based solely on race, despite the biased perception of others.

Size. Changelings are limited to imitating humanoids of a medium size and appear as thin featureless humanoids in their natural form. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You cannot discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Fey Ancestry. You have advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put you to sleep.

Shapeshifter. As an action, you assume the physical shape of any Medium humanoid you have seen in the past. Your equipment remains the same, and none of your ability scores change. When disguised as a specific person, you gain advantage on all checks related to maintaining the ruse. Returning to your natural form requires a bonus action. You automatically revert to your true form if you are ever incapacitated for more than a minute.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and another language of your choice.

that they have different needs and desires born from an existence of unlife. In fact, that they are generated from the remains of all the other races, they retain some glimpses and memories of a warm-blooded life.

The graveborn race, once seen as a blight on the land to be exterminated, is now a thriving society unto itself, tolerated with contempt by those who reluctantly concede to their talents and resourcefulness. The graveborn resist the horrors that stalk the land as ably and readily as any other race and have sometimes even come to the aid of other races. This does not mean that graveborn are universally accepted, but it has stopped the genocidal plans that other races once held for these sentient undead.



Graveborn

From strange shadows and dark recesses of the world lurk the graveborn, a grim mockery of life wound into a strange and somehow prevalent race of undead creatures. It is said that they form entire cities in the places that the living fear to visit, but sometimes these dead creatures spill out into the world, pressed on by curiosity and caprice.

Though not alive in the usual sense, a graveborn is given to the usual vicissitudes of life, excepting

Ability Score Improvement. Your Constitution score improves by 2.

Age. Graveborn live an indeterminate amount of time. Many are killed, and those who are long-lived are very secretive. Graveborn can live at least 100 years, and they do not age appreciably.

Alignment. Graveborn tend to retain the alignment they had in life, while others violently move towards some extreme.

Size. Your size is determined by your Humanoid Heritage (see below).

Speed. Your base walking speed is determined by your Humanoid Heritage (see below).

Type. You are of the humanoid (graveborn) type.

Darkvision. You can see in dim light within 60 feet as though it were bright light and in darkness or bright light as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness or bright light, only shades of gray.

Natural Weapons. Your body realigns itself to adjust to undeath and the hunger that racks your existence. You gain a bite attack that deals 1d6 piercing damage.

Humanoid Heritage. Graveborn gain traits from their normal race, retaining traces of their time as living creatures. Choose one humanoid heritage from the table and apply the listed traits.

Hunger for Flesh. You must consume a meal of raw meat each day or suffer the effects of starvation. If you go 24 hours without such a meal, you gain one level of exhaustion (this is an exception to the graveborn's immunity). You cannot stave this off with half rations. While you have any levels of exhaustion, you cannot regain hit points or remove levels of exhaustion until you spend 1 hour consuming an amount of raw meat equal to a Small creature (about 30 pounds).

Sunlight Sensitivity. When you, the target of your attack, or anything you try to perceive is in direct sunlight, you have disadvantage on attack rolls and Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Undead Vitality. You are infused with the dark energy of undeath, which frees you from some frailties that plague living creatures. You have resistance to necrotic damage and immunity to poison damage. You are immune to exhaustion and to the charmed and poisoned conditions. If you die, you cannot be returned to life by revivify, raise dead, or reincarnate; resurrection and true resurrection return you to life as your original race. A create undead spell cast so that it targets only your corpse affects you as a raise dead spell affects the corpse of a once-living creature. You don't need to drink or breathe. You don't sleep the way living creatures do, but during long rests, you enter a dormant state resembling death; during that time, you have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write common and one language of your choice.

HUMANOID HERITAGES

Heritage	Ability Score Increase	Size	Base Walking Speed	Extra Language
Dwarf	Wisdom +1	Medium	25 feet (not slowed by heavy armor)	Dwarvish
Elf	Dexterity +1	Medium	30 feet	Elvish
Gnome	Intelligence +1	Small	25 feet	Gnomish
Halfling	Charisma +1	Small	25 feet	Halfling
Human	Any (Not Constitution) +1	Medium	30 feet	Choose One
Ravenfolk	Dexterity +1	Medium 30 feet Choose one	30 feet	Choose One
Tiefling	Charisma +1	Medium	30 feet	Infernal

Ravenfolk

Standing as a human would, these dark feathered creatures straddle the natural and supernatural worlds. The ravenfolk origin is shrouded in mystery, yet when the tales of their origins are told there is almost always a curse involved in the telling.

Though some consider ravenfolk harbingers of bad luck, they are actually very social creatures and can be found among most large population centers, usually as vagrants and purveyors of skullduggery. Your ravenfolk character has certain characteristics in common with all other ravenfolk.



Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity score increases by 2 and your Charisma score increases by 1.

Age. Ravenfolk reach adulthood at 10 years old and can live to be 110.

Alignment. Ravenfolk tend toward chaos thanks to their capriciousness and insatiable curiosity. Greed overwhelms some ravenfolk, drawing them toward evil.

Size. Ravenfolk are slight and shorter than humans. They range from 4 feet to just shy of 6 feet tall. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Sudden Attack. You have advantage on attack rolls against a surprised creature.

Mimicry. Ravenfolk can mimic any sound they've heard. Make a Charisma (Deception) check against the passive Wisdom (Insight) of any listeners. Success indicates they believe the sound you created was real.

Trickster. You have proficiency in the Deception and Stealth skills.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and one language of choice.

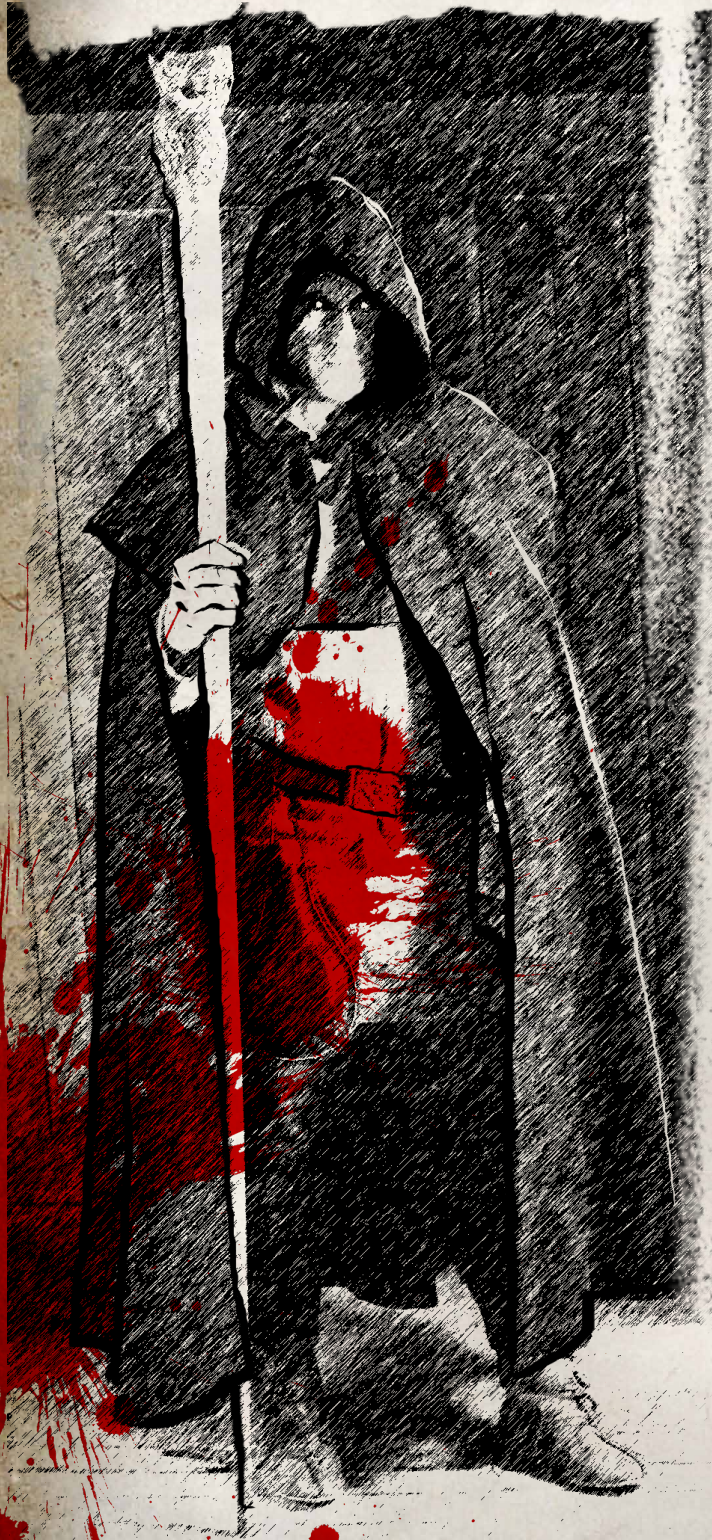
Shadeling

Shadelings are born in the shadows, either literally, figuratively, or metaphysically. Through heritage or bad luck, their bodies and minds are at ease in the dark. This does not render shadelings to be bad people, but it does affect the company that they keep. Secrets and silence are a shadeling's bread and water. Their teachers are the creatures of the night, be they beast or monster.

Shadelings blend in well with others who revel in the night time and have a strong tendency towards occupations that others find indignant or illegal. They may have a skewed ethical view but are as likely to be good or bad, even if their viewpoint of such concepts are strangely skewed.

Shadelings are sometimes born as a result of some misfortune related to dark shadow magic or creatures of the shadows (for instance, a pregnant mother being stricken by a shadow creature). Such births are highly inauspicious, but even an inauspicious life is too fleeting and fragile to throw away lightly.

A given shadeling is not antisocial by default, and they actually rather enjoy adventure and daring. What they may despise is the daytime activity, but that can be fixed with thick cloaks and covered wagons. Though you may technically belong to another race, your traits are as follows:



Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity score increases by 2, and your Intelligence score increases by 1.

Age. Shadelings mature at the same rate humans do and reach adulthood at the age of 20.

Alignment. Shadelings tend away from any lawful alignments but are otherwise likely to be of any alignment.

Size. Shadelings run the gamut of body types. They range from 5 to 6 feet tall. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision. Naturally, you can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You cannot discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Dance of Shadows. When in darkness, dim light, or a shadow large enough to cover your body, you can cast the misty step spell. You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1), and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this spell.

Friend of Shadows. You have proficiency in the Stealth skill.

Stuart of Darkness. You learn the *minor illusion* cantrip, though it can only be used to manipulate an area of dim light or darker. At 3rd level, you gain the ability to cast *sanctuary* once on a target that is in dim light or darker and regain the ability to use it after a long rest. At 5th level, you gain the ability to cast *darkness* once with this trait and can regain the ability to use it after a long rest. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for these spells.

Sunlight Sensitivity. You have disadvantage on attack rolls and on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight when you, the target of your attack, or whatever you are trying to perceive is in bright sunlight.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and another language of your choice.

Were-kin

Where lycanthropy exists, the curse may linger. Whether born to cursed lands or descended from degenerate tribes of were-creatures, the were-kin are blessed and cursed by virtue of their existence, fated to live as creatures tainted with a bestial nature.

These were-kin exhibit many unsubtle traits that render them apart from family and society. Though some may congregate in closed and paranoid communities, most eke out an existence on the fringes of civilization as freaks and outcasts. At times they find a home in communities of creatures that are more accepting, such as fey villages or gnoll tribes, but even there they are met with distrust and disdain. Some still find greater acceptance within actual lycanthrope clans, but finding those clans is often difficult.

This dichotomy has led to many were-kin simply seeking a life of open adventure, as many travelers already enjoy the aspersions and suspicion of civilized folk. As such, were-kin trackers and guides are among the most trusted in circles that have grown to see past the strange bestial folk and recognize their abilities.

The only other place that were-kin seem to fit in is in the slums of a major city, where people can often blend in, and the strange is grudgingly accepted. Many criminal organizations actively recruit were-kin for their toughness or agility, and entire street gangs can sometimes be composed of these cursed souls.

Sometimes, the were-kin trait passes through multiple generations in a family without manifesting its standard characteristics. For decades, the curse may remain dormant as it passes from parent to child. Sometimes, whether due to luck or dark forces, a member of one of these quiescent families manifests as a were-kin from birth.

Though were-kin are mostly bestial and not true shapechangers, they nevertheless have a potential to unlock the abilities of a lycanthrope through intent or accident, sometimes mastering their bodies to better match their strange heritage.

Were-kin lycanthropes have the following features:

Note: Caliban, Changeling, Grave Born, Ravenfolk, Shadelings and Wretched cannot be born as were-kin.



Ability Score Increase. You gain an ability score increase based on the type of were-kin you are, as well as your base race. See beast type table below, as well as the base race table below that.

Age. A were-kin lives as long as its base race, though many die violent deaths long before reaching old age.

Alignment. Were-kin are not inherently evil, but they have a difficult time relating to lawful alignments.

Size. Though you may have a bulk or svelt nature resembling your beast type, your size is the same as your base race.

Speed. Your base walking speed of 30 feet. This speed supersedes that of your base race.

Darkvision. You see what others do not, or should not. The darkness is your friend, for in it you can hide from prying eyes. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern colors, only shades of grey.

Inspire Disgust. You are abhorred by nearly any who lay eyes on you. When dealing with humanoids that are not monstrous, you have disadvantage on any charisma checks.

Bestial Empathy. You have affinity with animals of your beast type and gain advantage on all checks made to influence animals of your beast type. At level 3, you also gain the ability to communicate simple ideas to animals of your beast type.

Immunity to Lycanthropy. You have enough were blood in you that you cannot contract any lycanthropic curse. At 5th level, you also gain advantage on rolls to resist all curses.

Shapechanger. You are considered a shapechanger in addition to your normal type.

Languages. You speak two common languages.

Beast	Ability Score Bonus
Bear	+2 Strength, +1 Constitution
Boar	+2 Constitution, +1 Strength
Rat	+2 Dexterity, +1 Intelligence
Tiger	+2 Intelligence, +1 Strength
Wolf	+2 Dexterity, +1 Strength

Natural lycanthropes have less exposure to their humanoid ancestors' native cultures. As a result, they only receive limited benefits from their base race as noted below.

- † **Humans:** Increase one ability score not already increased by your Beast Type.
- † **Dwarves:** You retain your Dwarven Resilience and Tool Proficiency traits.
- † **Elves:** You retain your Keen Senses and Fey Ancestry traits.
- † **Gnomes:** You retain your Gnome Cunning feature.
- † **Half-Elf:** You gain one skill proficiency of your choice. Alternately, you can retain your Fey Ancestry and increase your Charisma score by 1.
- † **Half-Orc:** You retain your Menacing and Relentless traits.
- † **Halflings:** You retain your Brave and Lucky traits.
- † **Dragonborn:** You retain your Draconic Heritage and Draconic Resistance traits.
- † **Tiefling:** You retain your Hellish resistance and increase your Charisma attribute by 1.

Wretched

Some undead are created by chance; dark energies conspire with fate to wrest unfortunate souls into a dreary unlife. Yet some undead are crafted by mortal hands. These unfortunates are usually imperfect beasts, sewn together and given the spark of life by either focused magics or strange science. The result of these unholy efforts are known as wretched.

Wretched are often “born” into either a life of servitude or abandoned by their creators, set loose on an existence both incomprehensible and unforgiving. When terrors stalk the streets daily, wretched may fit in, though they are rarely regarded with kindness or familiarity.



Ability Score Increase. Your Strength score increases by 1, and your Constitution score increases by 2.

Age. A wretched might have lived a variable amount of time (not counting varied component limbs), but from the time of their creation, they tend to survive for an average of 60 years, though could live indefinitely if they were maintained by an expert in corpse science.

Alignment. Wretched tend to mimic the alignment they held in life, or neutral, given the strange circumstances of their existence. Non-neutral wretched can sometimes tend to the extremes of their moral ranges.

Size. The wretched are most often made from plentiful humanoid corpses. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 25 feet.

Living Construct. You occupy a place in the natural order that is hazy at best. You are immune to disease. You do not need to eat or breathe, but you can ingest food and drink to gain the benefits of doing so. Instead of sleeping, you enter a state of suspended animation for 4 hours each day, looking dead and limp. You do not dream in this state; you are fully aware of your surrounding and notice approaching enemies and other events as normal.

Relentless Endurance. When you are reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, you can drop to 1 hit point instead. You can't use this feature again until you finish a long rest.

Reviled. Wretched can never be proficient in the skills of animal handling or persuasion.

Unnatural Resilience. You have advantage on saving throws against being poisoned, charmed, and gaining levels of exhaustion. You also have resistance against poison damage.

Languish in Darkness. You are vulnerable to radiant damage but are immune to necrotic damage. As a reaction, you can heal hit points equal to the necrotic damage caused by any one attack. Healing in such a way can only be done once per long rest.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and one other language of your creator's choice.

Chapter 03 – Horror Classes

New Class:

The Apothecary

The Apothecary is a curious result of the times, seen by many a dabbler in arts both scientific and occult. The strange science into which these alchemists delve is at once beneficial and dangerous, representing a frontier of exploration that stands to advance the healing arts as well as more deadly ones.

Hinging on ambient magic and the strange properties of the world, apothecaries work a little magic into their potions, whether they believe it or not, and so the effects they produce are half-magic and half-science, bound into various different forms that distill this stray magic into a chemical form.

But that doesn't diminish the extreme discipline and deadly art of the Apothecary; they are well studied as wizards, learning and employing their art to affect the world around them. Many are seen as wandering healers, dispensing medicine to those in need, while others still are considered dangerously violent madmen waiting to dispense their poisons and chemicals on any who cross their path. Whatever the truth, people tend to see them as a wild card in a world beset by horror; scientists able to transcend the dangers that hide in the shadows, whether for good or ill.

Science in Application

Apothecaries represent a strange new technology that eludes even the most learned men of science. Through the dangerous practice of alchemy, they work on the edge of accepted science and suffer from setbacks as equally as they bask in its success. An Apothecary tends to wander, lest their eccentric nature and experimental runoff turn a community against the new science.

While apothecaries are effectively walking chemical factories, they often can only create admixtures that last for short whiles. As such, they are sought after by various factions for their secrets and abilities. Men of the cloth can sometimes replicate the miracles of an alchemical brew, but the apothecary does so without the pretense of divinity or moral guidelines. While this can make them valuable allies and assets, the same trait renders them less likely to cleave to an ethical compass that might stay their hand from potentially dangerous chemical discoveries.

Disciplined Alchemists

Despite their reputation as unpredictable mad scientists, alchemists are scientists first, organized and predisposed to the methodology. Their failings are not in being random but in the pursuit of science above all else. Some eschew the safety of others and themselves in search of answers and discoveries but rarely do they ply their art without a logical rationale. Those that are rendered mad are made so by the ambient sanity draining horrors, and not by their trade. In fact, some have noticed that apothecaries are exceptionally stable, though personal prejudices may outshine this distinction.

In truth, the real danger of the apothecary is that they are far too logical, and have a tendency to view all situations in extreme abstract. A true danger and perhaps special form of madness unique to the apothecary is the logical extremes with which they view the world. Steeped in the science of reality, they may find no issue with sacrificing one group for another based on a seemingly arbitrary judgment of their worth. While the practice of the apothecary is relatively young, at least one story has surfaced of stoic alchemists matching the base deeds of the most power-hungry wizard in horror and scope.

Quick Build

You can make a pharmacist quickly by following these suggestions. First, Wisdom should be your highest ability score, unless you take the Surgical specialization, in which case you will want your Dexterity to be your highest ability score. Your second highest ability score should be Intelligence, Constitution, or Dexterity. Second, choose the guild artisan background. Third choose the *poisonous censer* and *friend dart* byproducts, along with the following 1st-level philters to add to your guild book: healing potion, and sleep.

Class Features

As a Pharmacist, you gain the following class features.

Hit Points

Hit Dice: 1d8 per Pharmacist level

Hit Points at 1st Level: 8 + your Constitution modifier

Hit Points at Higher Levels: 1d8 (or 5) + your Constitution modifier per Pharmacist level after 1st

Proficiencies

Armor: Light armor, shields

Weapons: Simple weapons, hand crossbow

Tools: Poisoner's Kit, Medical Kit, Herbalism Kit, Alchemy lab.

Saving Throws: Constitution, Wisdom

Skills: Choose two from Deception, Medicine, Nature, Perception, Sleight of Hand, and Survival

Equipment

You start with the following equipment, in addition to the equipment granted by your background:

- † (a) a crossbow, or a (b) a mace or (c) a dagger
- † (a) studded leather armor, or (b) padded leather armor and a shield
- † (a) a scholar's pack or (b) an explorer's pack
- † A manual
- † An alchemy lab

Philter Distillation

Through careful arcane distillation, an Apothecary can create various distinct philters that have different delivery methods. As an apothecary, you use materials similar to a wizard's material component pouch to concoct philters for later use. To maintain the various different chemical configurations necessary for your philters, you maintain a manual containing the ingredients and measurements that create specific philters. These philters use the same rules as spellcasting except when noted. See Chapter 10 in the Player's Handbook for the general rules. Replace any usage of the word "spell" with "philter", "cantrip" with "byproduct", and "spellcasting" with "employing a philter", save for the following differences.

Philter can be created by using an alchemy lab. Each philter can be made into one of four forms. The apothecary's philter list is annotated to show the forms that each can take. For example, philters that affect an area can only be made into smoke bombs, and oils must be applied topically can only be made into potions. Any philter effect requiring concentration still requires concentration. Philters for spells requiring somatic or verbal components instead require "special admixture" and a "formula reading" respectively, and these philters are in all respects treated the same as the spells they mimic.

- † Doses take the form of a glass vial that allows a philter to be thrown, and to hit another creature(s) within 5 feet of the target. Philters for spells with a range further than touch can be thrown. The maximum range for such a philter is 100 feet.
- † Drams must be swallowed, and require either a willing or incapacitated target to be ingested. Alternately, they may be poured on objects.
- † Smoke Bombs encompass the area of a given philter. Unless the philter effect causes poor visibility, the smoke bomb does not otherwise obscure anything, and merely appears as a light mist or just an invisible scent. Certain philter effects are delivered by smoke bombs but are not dependent on targets remaining inside of the smoke bomb for the effect to persist.

Apothecary Class Features

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features	Byproducts Known
1	+2	Philter Distillation, Resistance	2
2	+2	Potion Brewing	2
3	+2	Field of Specialty	2
4	+2	Ability Score Improvement	3
5	+3	Resistance Improvement	3
6	+3	Field Feature	3
7	+3	--	3
8	+3	Ability Score Improvement	3
9	+4	Resistance Improvement	3
10	+4	Field Feature	4
11	+4	--	4
12	+4	Ability Score Improvement	4
13	+5	Resistance Improvement	4
14	+5	Field Feature	4
15	+5	Paradoxical Reaction	5
16	+5	Ability Score Improvement	5
17	+6	Resistance Improvement	5
18	+6	--	5
19	+6	Ability Score Improvement, Resistance Improvement	5
20	+6	Reckless Abandon	5

† Oils require blood contact and can coat a weapon. An apothecary can prepare an oil and coat a weapon as a bonus action. Certain oils can be delivered by touch (as noted below) and require only skin contact and can be delivered subtly with a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. Unless otherwise stated, a coating of oil loses its potency 1 minute after coating a weapon. Oil Philters with a range of touch can only be placed on melee weapons.

Byproducts

When combining numerous chemicals and unguents, an apothecary has so much leftover material that it creates chemical waste. An apothecary specializes in using these castoff materials to fashion weak but plentiful reagents and generally has a near unlimited supply of these odd concoctions. At 1st level, you know 2 byproducts of your choice from the Pharmacist philter list. You learn additional Pharmacist byproducts of your choice at higher levels as shown in the “Byproducts Known” column of the Pharmacist table. Byproducts otherwise work in the same manner as cantrips.

Manual

At 1st level, you have a manual containing two 1st level philters of your choice. This book contains all your known philters and must be referenced in order to construct an item based on a philter.

The Pharmacist table shows how many philter slots you have to use your philters of 1st level and higher. To use one of these philters you must expend a slot of the philter’s level or higher. You regain all expended philter slots when you finish a long rest. Like spells, philters can be made and used with a higher level philter slot than required and can give an increased effect as per the same spell effect.

You prepare the list of pharmacist philters that are available for you to use. You choose a number of philters from your manual equal to your Wisdom modifier + your Apothecary level (minimum of 1 philter). The philter must be of a level for which you have philter slots.

You can change your list of prepared philters when you finish a long rest. Preparing a new list of philters requires time spent studying your manual and memorizing the ratios, ingredients, and timing you must make to create an item from the philter: at least 1 minute per philter level for each philter on your list.

Philter Using Ability

Wisdom is your “Philter using ability”, which is the equivalent of a “spellcasting ability” for your Philters. You are able to use your careful study and experience to recreate various liquid distillations of potent force. You use your Wisdom whenever a philter refers to your “philter using ability”, or a spell refers to your “spellcasting ability”. In addition, you use your Wisdom modifier when setting the saving throw DC for philters you can use, and when making an attack roll with one.

Philter save DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier

Philter attack modifier = your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier.

Learning Philters of 1st Level and Higher

Each time you gain an apothecary level, you can add two philters of your choice to your manual. Each of those philters must be of a level for which you have philter slots, as shown on the Pharmacist table. On your adventures, you might find other philters or spells. You are able to convert any found spell scroll to a philter if that spell is also found on the apothecary’s philter list.

Resistance

At level 1, your studies as a pharmacist have granted you resistance to poison damage. At level 5, you become immune to the poisoned condition. At levels 9 and 13, you gain an additional resistance to a damage type; choose between Thunder, Psychic, Radiant or Necrotic. At level 17, your damage resistance to poison becomes immunity to poison damage.

Field of Specialty

When you reach 3rd level, you choose a specialization, shaping your usage of philters throughout your career. You gain an additional feature at levels 6, 10, and 14. Some of the possible specializations are the Chemist, the Forensic Specialist, and the Internal Doctor.

Preserve Dram

When you reach 3rd level, you gain the ability to preserve drams for philters that are designated as drams that are on your philter list. These drams have similar guidelines to those of scrolls and their



value (see the Magic Items- Spell Scroll). To craft a preserved dram, you must expend resources equal to the dram's level, as described in the following table. You make 50 gp worth of progress each day. Preserved drams for levels 6 through 9 cannot be crafted through this ability, and usually require specific formulae, rare components that are in addition to those required by the spell, and are usually prohibitively expensive in terms of the time and resources needed. Preserved drams are always treated as having the effect of the lowest spell slot at which the philter can be created.

Spell Level	Resources Expended
1st	50 gp
2nd	100 gp
3rd	300 gp
4th	600 gp
5th	1000 gp

Ability Score Improvement

When you reach 4th level, and again at 8th, 12th, 16th, and 19th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

Paradoxical Reaction

At level 15, you gain the ability to radically change the effect of a philter, usually in a paradoxical way. You can create a philter that has an opposite effect. For example, a philter that normally confers a specific condition can instead cure it. Some effects have no clear opposite and may have a random effect (as per the *wand of wonder*). Byproducts cannot be affected in this way. You can use this ability as many times as your Wisdom ability score bonus, and regain those uses after a long rest.

Reckless Abandon

At level 20, you can choose to use two or three philters on yourself, or a willing or unconscious target. If you do so, the target receives the effects of the philters and must roll a D20. Consult the following table for the result.

- 1: The target receives the effects of a harm spell in addition to all of the philter effects.
- 2-5: One of the philters does not work (roll a d6 to determine it randomly)
- 6-10: Roll on the *wand of wonder* table. The target of the philters is considered the target of the wand.
- 11-15: The target receives the effects of an *eyebite* (roll a d6 to determine which of the eyebite effects afflicts the target).
- 16-19: The target suffers no negative consequences.
- 20: The target receives the benefits of a *heal* spell in addition to all of the philter effects.

Fields

Field of Chemistry

All Apothecaries are well versed in chemical admixtures and effects, but only those specialized in the field of Chemistry are able to delve into the secrets and discoveries that separate dabblers from visionaries. This field offers many advantages that focus on the unknown combinations and undiscovered formulae that raise the Apothecary's craft to new heights.

Common Philters. At 3rd level, you begin to learn new methodologies that change your approach to philter creation. You can employ the effects of philters with the "common" tag without using up a philter slot, but your efforts do not create a philter; rather, you simply concoct the effects and deliver them as a dram. This process adds 10 minutes to the time it would normally take to employ the prepared philter. Common philter effects cannot be altered by any ability that changes the range or targets of a philter. Common philters are always made at the lowest required philter slot level.

Chemical Combinations. At 6th level, your specialization in the admixture of chemicals has helped you realize new and interesting combinations. Once per day, you are able to create a specialty philter that defies the normal rules; you can make any philter into either an oil, a dose, a dram, or a smoke bomb. Philters created in this way work slightly differently, as follows. At 8th level, you can create an additional specialty philter

Preparing and Using Philters

Apothecary Level	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
1	2	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2	3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
3	4	2	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
4	4	3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
5	4	3	2	--	--	--	--	--	--
6	4	3	3	--	--	--	--	--	--
7	4	3	3	1	--	--	--	--	--
8	4	3	3	2	--	--	--	--	--
9	4	3	3	3	1	--	--	--	--
10	4	3	3	3	2	--	--	--	--
11	4	3	3	3	2	1	--	--	--
12	4	3	3	3	2	1	--	--	--
13	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	--	--
14	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	--	--
15	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	--
16	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	--
17	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	1
18	4	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1
19	4	3	3	3	3	2	1	1	1
20	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	1

- † A dram created in this way confers disadvantage on saving throws to avoid its effects. Some creatures can be fooled into drinking it, though you could also deliver this dram to an incapacitated foe.
- † A dose created this way gains a range of 60 feet if the philter effect did not already have a range greater than “self”. You must make a spell attack roll even if the original effect does not call for one; spell attacks made to grant allies a beneficial effect are made with advantage.
- † An oil created in this way works as normal but can be integrated into an attack. This oil can also be delivered by touch, requiring only skin contact to work. Oils made through this ability have advantage on Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks made to subtly deliver the philter’s effects. Applying such an oil in combat is considered an action.
- † A smoke bomb created in this way grants a spell a 10-foot radius effect. Spells with a duration greater than instantaneous now require concentration if they did not already require concentration.

Potent Philters. At level 10, you can concentrate your philters to deliver amazing effects. You can choose an effect from the following list but must use a philter slot at least one level higher than normal. These changes can be applied when you employ a philter’s effects. If a philter has an effect when used with a higher philter slot, you combine that effect with one of the following effects. Byproducts cannot be affected by the potent philter ability.

- † **Extend Philter.** A philter lasts twice as long as normal.
- † **Quickened Philter.** You can employ a philter as a bonus action if that philter can normally be employed in 1 action. You cannot apply this effect to a philter that is also an oil.
- † **Subtle Philter.** Philters with somatic or verbal components no longer have them. By quickly sprinkling the contents of a philter on a person, you may subtly deliver the effect without them realizing that you were responsible. Your GM may require a Dexterity (Sleight of Hands) roll contested against the targets Wisdom (Perception).

† **Jagged Philter.** This effect can only work on doses. When delivered, a philter shatters and deals an extra 1d6 piercing damage. This damage increases to 2d6 when you reach 5th level, 3d6 at 11th level, and 4d6 at 11th level.

Recombinant Chemistry. At level 14, you can combine two philters into one, provided they are of the same delivery type (e.g. two doses, two smoke bombs). One of the philters must be of level 1 or 2, but the second philter can be of any level philter that you can employ. This effect only uses up a philter slot equal to the highest effect that is employed; it does not use two separate slots. The target or targets are affected by both philters at once but can make multiple saves against disparate negative effects. The combined philter is employed using the longest “casting time” of either philter but otherwise takes no longer to employ than normal. You can use this ability once, and regain the use of this ability after a long rest.

Field of Forensics

Some Apothecaries specialize in the field of forensics, wanting to turn their craft to the efforts of quelling the murders and crimes that can plague the disquiet of urban centers. While many such specialists eke out a living through analysis of criminal activity, others are self-styled troubleshooters that relish in the challenge of fighting crime with their wits and abilities.

Analyze Scene. When you gain this field of specialty at 3rd level, you can use your alchemy lab to determine information relating to the scene of a crime, particularly related to the death or injury of others. By expending a 1st level philter slot as an action, you gain advantage on Wisdom (Medicine), Wisdom (Insight), or Intelligence (Investigation) rolls. You can use this ability as often as you are willing to expend philter slots. In addition, you can spend 10 minutes using your alchemy lab to recreate the effects of the *detect poison* as per the spell.

Bonus Proficiency. Also at 3rd level, you gain proficiency in the Insight and Investigation skills.

Forensic Mark. At 6th level, you gain the ability to place a special alchemical mark on an opponent. By expending a 1st level philter slot, you can use a spell attack roll to throw a dose-like philter on a creature. For the first 1d4 rounds of combat after a creature is marked, you receive advantage on attacks against that creature. Additionally, the mark creates an aura on the creature that only you can sense through a special alchemical lense meant for such purposes. Removing the mark requires either an alchemical solvent or a *remove curse* spell. You gain advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Intelligence (Investigation) rolls to find and identify a marked creature. This ability can be used once, and you regain the ability to do so after finishing a long rest.

Embalmer. At 10th level, you gain the ability to infuse your weapon strikes with poison. Once on each of your turns when you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can cause the attack to deal an extra 2d6 poison damage to the target. When you reach 14th level, the extra damage increases to 3d6.

Forensic Expert. At 14th level, you can blend your forensic abilities with your philters. You can add your Forensic Mark ability to any 3rd level or lower philter that targets one creature. You can also use your Forensic Mark a total of three times before needing to take a long rest. In addition, your Analyze Scene ability now no longer requires an expenditure of a philter slot.

Field of Internal Medicine

Some Apothecaries have seen the potential synergy between alchemy and medicine and decided to put them to the test. Alchemical medicine is at best an untested field, but at worst a series of trial and error experiments that can do more harm than good to the test subjects. All the same, the dedication of those in this field is admirable; many such Apothecaries will test numerous medicines on themselves.

Experimental Medicine. At 3rd level, you gain the ability to experiment with various philter effects. Whenever you grant a beneficial philter ability to an ally, you can confer the effects of the *lesser restoration* spell, but doing so grants the

target a level of exhaustion. Levels of exhaustion granted by this ability cannot be removed with this ability. At 10th level, this ability can instead act as a *greater restoration* spell. At 15th level, this ability no longer confers a level of exhaustion on its intended target.

Questionable Dosage. At 6th level, you can confer beneficial philters with alacrity. You can combine two philters when employing them on an ally. One philter must heal damage, and one philter must grant a benefit with a duration (i.e. *healing word* and *enhance ability*). You only expend a philter slot for the highest level philter that is part of the effect, and you can combine two philters effects that require concentration. Combining philters in this way confers a level of exhaustion on the target. If you are the target of this special philter, your exhaustion level is removed after 1d4 rounds.

Internal Balance. At level 10, you are able to use a creature's own natural healing abilities to restore their internal balance, curing your allies of wounds or maladies. By expending 3 of your own hit dice and a 1st level philter slot during a short rest, you can maximize the amount of hit dice healing for one ally when they spend their own hit dice to heal themselves. You can also use an action and expend a 2nd level philter slot to allow an ally to expend 5 of their own hit dice and heal a negative condition on themselves. If the condition is the result of a curse or powerful spell of 5th level or higher, the ally must make a new saving throw, ending the effect on a success. You can use this ability as often as you can afford to do so, but you can only affect an ally with one of these effects per short rest. You cannot benefit from either of these effects.

Critical Care. At 14th level, your ability to deliver healing is maximized. Whenever you employ a philter that requires a roll to deliver healing, you instead use the highest number possible for each dice. For example, if your philter would normally heal 2d4 damage, it heals 8 instead. Additionally, any time you employ a philter that removes a condition, it now removes an additional condition as well. This applies to philters modified by your Experimental Medicine ability.

Apothecary Philters

*Common Philters only apply to Chemist Apothecaries

**Spell found in this book

BYPRODUCTS (0 LEVEL)

Acid Splash (Dose)
Bellow of the Grave (Dram)**
Chill Touch (Dose)
Guidance (Dram)
Poison Spray (Dose)
Produce Flame (Dram)
Resistance (Dram)
Spare the Dying (Dram)
Vicious Mockery (Dose)

1ST LEVEL

Charm Person (Oil, can be delivered by touch)
Color Spray (Smoke Bomb)
Command (Dose)
Comprehend Languages (Dram) Common
Cure Wounds (Dram)
Detect Evil and Good (Dram)
Detect Poison and Disease (Dram) Common
Expeditious Retreat (Dram)
False Life (Dram)
Feather Fall (Dose)
Fog Cloud (Smoke Bomb)
Healing Word (Dose)
Heroism (Dram)
Hideous Laughter (Dose)
Inflict Wounds (Dose, Oil)
Jump (Dram)
Purify Food and Drink (Dram) Common
Ray of Sickness (dose)
Sleep (Smoke Bomb)

2ND LEVEL

Aid (Dram)
Augury (Dram) Common
Barkskin (Dose)
Blindness/Deafness (Dose, Oil)
Darkvision (Dose)
Enhance Ability (Dram, Dose)

Gentle Repose (Dram) Common
Prayer of Healing (Dose)
Protection from Poison (Dram, Dose)
Ray of Enfeeblement (Dose)
See Invisibility (Dram)
Spider Climb (Dose) Common
Suggestion (Dose, Oil- can be delivered by touch)
Zone of Truth (Dose, Smoke Bomb) Common

3RD LEVEL

Animate Dead (Dram)
Deathly Form (Dram)**
Fear (Dose, Smoke Bomb)
Feign Death (Dram) Common
Haste (Dram, Dose)
Hypnotic Pattern (Smoke Bomb)
Howl of the Beast (Dram)
Mass Healing Word (Smoke Bomb)
Protection From Energy (Dose)
Revivify (Dram)
Slow (Dose)
Speak with Dead (Dram) Common
Stinking cloud (Smoke Bomb)
Tongues (Dram, Dose) Common
Vampiric Touch (Oil)
Water Breathing (Smoke Bomb) Common

4TH LEVEL

Blight (Dose)
Compulsion (Dose, Oil- can be delivered by touch)
Confusion (Smoke Bomb)
Death Ward (Dram)
Divination (Dram) Common
Plague Touch (Oil)**
Stoneskin (Dose)

5TH LEVEL

Awaken (Dram) Common
Cloudkill (Smoke Bomb)
Commune (Dram) Common
Contagion (Dose, Oil)
Dominate Person (Dose)
Dream (Dram) Common

Greater Restoration (Dram)
Mass Cure Wounds (Smoke Bomb)
Modify Memory (Dose, Oil)
Raise Dead (Dram)

6TH LEVEL

Flesh to Stone (Dose, Oil)
Harm (Dose)
Heal (Dose)
Hero's Feast (Dram- created 12 drams)
Mass Suggestion (Smoke Bomb)
Mislead (Dram)
True Seeing (Dram)

7TH LEVEL

Delayed Blast Fireball (Dose)
Finger of Death (Dose, Oil)
Prismatic Spray (Smoke Bomb)
Regenerate (Dram)
Resurrection (Dram)
Simulacrum (Special- Dram that is poured over the material components)

8TH LEVEL

Dominate Monster (Dose)
Feeblemind (Dose)
Glibness (Dram)
Incendiary Cloud (Smoke Bomb)
Mind Blank (Dram)
Power Word Stun (Dose)

9TH LEVEL

Foresight (Dram)
Mass Heal (Smoke Bomb)
Power Word Kill (Dose)
True Resurrection (Dram)

New Items

Alchemy Lab (tool): An alchemy lab allows a pharmacist to concoct drams, doses, smoke bombs and oils. It is a small doctor's bag full to the brim with ingredients and small tools.

Archetypes of Horror

Though many of the current archetypes are suitable for play in horror games, the following archetypes have an element of corruption or darkness in them, making them more suitable for players that exist in worlds that are untouched by purity or hope, but instead, are tainted with darkness.



Primal Path:

Possessed Berserker

While many barbarians are simply powerful combatants that can focus their anger as a weapon, there are those poor souls that are possessed by strange forces that coerce them into anger and conflict. Many of these possessed are prone to forgetting their own monstrous acts, while some are unlucky enough to be aware of these acts while otherwise powerless to stop them. Sometimes it is a magical compulsion, at other times it is a sentient entity that takes of these cursed individuals. Whatever the source, the possessed berserker tends to seek danger, either in hopes that their frenzy finds a justified target, or perhaps that they meet their match in battle, as well as their own end.

Saving Throws. Some of your Possessed Berserker abilities will require a saving throw (either from you or your opponents). The DC is calculated as follows:

Ability save DC = 8 + proficiency bonus + Constitution modifier.

Possessed

At level 3, you begin to lose control of your rages, and can sometimes black out during a rage. Whenever you enter a rage, you can no longer elect to end it early. In addition, you must choose a supernatural affliction that defines your ability to rage. This decision does not change once you select it, and will determine the abilities of your primal path.

- † **Possessing Entity.** This entity, though mysterious, represents an otherworldly force that haunts you and influences your urges. Choose from aberration, fiend, or undead. The first time in a combat that you attempt to rage and are in the presence of a creature of this type you must make a Wisdom saving throw against your ability save DC. On a failure, you cannot initiate a rage for 1d4 rounds, after which you can rage normally without the need for a saving throw.
- † **Supernatural Curse.** A magical force is the source of your rage, whether initiated by a sentient malevolence or acquired from

a lingering negative ambiance. If there are no hostile combatants left during your rage, you must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, you act as if affected by the spell *confusion*. As per the spell, you can make a new saving throw at the end of each of your turns to end the effect.

- † **Unholy Lineage.** Some aspect of your bloodline is tainted and causes your erratic behavior. When you enter your rage, your appearance changes to resemble some manner of monster. Tales of your monstrous acts become a thing of rumor and disdain, and you are greeted with hostility and mistrust wherever you go. Your lifestyle is automatically Wretched, and you cannot pay to increase it. You are also at a disadvantage on Charisma checks, except on in respect to the Intimidate skill.

Supernatural Will

Also at level 3, your rage renders you more resistant to outside influences, thanks to the one already coercing your emotions. During your rage, you become immune to any possession attempts (such as from the spell *magic jar* or the special ability of a ghost). Additionally, you gain advantage on any saving throws against effects that would impart the following conditions; charmed, frightened, paralyzed, stunned. At level 8, the listed conditions are suspended for the duration of your rage, and you can rage even if one of those conditions would prevent you from doing so.

Otherworldly Influence

At level 6, you gain the ability to resist or benefit from your otherworldly powers as you start to master your situation. You gain the following feature based on the power of your rage.

- † **Possessing Entity.** For the duration of your rage, you gain advantage to attack the creature type you have chosen at level 3. Additionally, you may now rage in the presence of such creatures without the need to make a saving throw.
- † **Supernatural Curse.** Any time you would gain the effect of *confusion* as a result of your rage ending, you can choose one target upon which to cast the spell *bestow curse* (cast as if

from a 3rd level slot). You may explicitly target yourself with *bestow curse*. As long as you select a target, you to ignore the *confusion* effect.

- † **Unholy Lineage.** You can turn the opinions of others into an advantage. As you begin to master your rage, you can also shape the opinion of others. You may either be seen as a dark hero, beloved by the downtrodden, or as a dangerous conqueror, to be feared but also respected. In either case, you are no longer required to keep a wretched lifestyle, nor are you at a disadvantage on Charisma checks. In addition, you gain advantage on intimidate skill checks and may use Strength in place of Charisma.

Rage Manifest

At level 10, you gain the ability to resist and control the forces that exert their will upon you. You may now voluntarily end your rage, and doing so does not bestow any negative effects. In addition, any time your rage would end early, or you expend a use of your rage to cast *suggestion* spell, specifically worded to attack a specific target or group. Those that fail their saving throw and follow the compulsion also gain the benefits of a barbarian's rage, which ends when the *suggestion* ends. Similarly, the effect of *suggestion* ends if the rage ends. A *suggestion* spell cast in such a way does not have a material component and has a duration of 10 minutes or until it ends prematurely when the target of the rage reaches 0 hit points.

Chain the Master

At level 14, you have finally overcome the influence that once controlled your dark impulses. You gain the following feature based on the type of power behind your rage.

- † **Possessing Entity.** You gain the ability to summon creatures, assuming the role of master over the creatures that treated you as a puppet. When you rage, you also manifest a creature of the type that you selected at level 3, of a CR between 1 and 3 (e.g. bearded devil, gibbering moulder, wight). The summoned creature also gains the benefits of a barbarian's rage. The creature disappears when your rage ends. At level 18, the CR range becomes 3-5.
- † **Supernatural Curse.** You no longer suffer

from confusion as a result of your rage. In addition, when your rage begins, you can cast *bestow curse* (now using a 5th level slot) on one creature. You can no longer cast *bestow curse* when your rage ends.

- † **Unholy Lineage.** You are considered a scion among men, either because of your strange lineage or despite it. You gain advantage on all Charisma checks, and your lifestyle expenses are automatically comfortable without having to pay to maintain it. In addition, you gain a frightful presence when you rage. When you begin your rage, your monstrous appearance causes all hostile creatures that can see or hear you to make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, they gain the frightened condition for 1d4 rounds.

Bard Archetype: College of Tragedy

Many entertainers dwell in the realm of sorrow, delivering dirges and sorrowful sonnets that clench hearts even as they pull them. Some sing as harbingers of tragedy as morose spectators, or perhaps as knowing participants in the march of doom.



Bonus Proficiencies

When you join the college of tragedy at level 3, you gain proficiency in shields, and martial weapons, and the poisoner's kit.

Tragic Word

At level 3, you gain the ability to cast doom upon others with but a few words or notes. As a reaction, you can designate an enemy that has taken damage, and deal extra damage to them. By expending one of your uses of Bardic Inspiration to roll your Bardic Inspiration dice, adding the result as psychic damage. At level 8, you roll twice as many Bardic Inspiration dice for the purposes of this ability.

Dirge of Woe

At level 6, you can use your Countercharm to frighten foes. If you use your Countercharm to inspire fear, you and your allies gain advantage to all Charisma (Intimidation) checks. In addition, your allies are instead immune to the frightened condition for the duration of the song (but gain no benefit against charmed effects).

Friend of Despair

At level 14 you gain immunity to necrotic damage and poison damage. Additionally, you may expend a Bardic Inspiration when you target an enemy with a spell or effect that would cause the frightened condition. If you do so, that enemy has disadvantage on the roll to resist the condition.

Cleric Archetype: Entropic Domain

Priests can worship nearly anything, and broad concepts hold as much power as singular pantheistic deities. Among those concepts resides one that may eclipse all others; the inevitable march of entropy. The worship of doom and decay is perhaps older than

sentience, and the recognition of its inexorable might is evident in every facet of life. Followers of these abstract forces can either worship a powerful intermediary that represents entropy, or they can instead devote themselves to it directly. Though some of the devout are responsible worshippers, recognizing the natural order and the place that entropy occupies, others view themselves as nihilistic agents of the end times. In either case, entropists are given wide berth.

Level	Spells
1st	<i>bane, inflict wounds</i>
3rd	<i>ray of enfeeblement, shatter</i>
5th	<i>bestow curse, vampiric touch</i>
7th	<i>blight, phantasmal killer</i>
9th	<i>anti-life shell, cloudkill</i>

Bonus Proficiencies

When you choose this domain, you gain proficiency in the Deception and Intimidation skills.

Shared Loss

At level 1, you also gain the ability to inflict sympathetic harm on creatures near you. When you cast *inflict wounds*, you can choose to alter the spell to affect all creatures within 5 feet of you. At level 5, you can instead choose to alter *inflict wounds* to affect a 10 foot square at a range of 60 feet. Once you use this feature, you cannot use it again until you complete a long rest. When you alter the spell in such a way, you take 1d8 necrotic damage. This damage can be reduced or negated by resistance or immunity to necrotic damage. At level 15, you can use this ability again after finishing a short or long rest.

Channel Divinity: Shroud of Death

Starting at level 2, you can use your Channel Divinity to quicken the march of entropy by focusing the energies of death. When a creature dies within 30 feet of you, you can use your Channel Divinity as a reaction to regain spell slots equal to the creature's Constitution modifier (minimum 1). At level 2, you can regain only 1st level spell slots in this way. At level 10, you can regain 1st or 2nd level spell slots. You cannot regain more spell slots in this way than your normal maximum.

Entropic Force

At level 6, your spells are touched with dark energy. When you cast a spell that deals damage, you can spend your bonus action to modify the spell to treat any 1 on the damage dice as 2. When you modify a spell in this way, all of the damage becomes necrotic instead of its normal type. If the spell already dealt necrotic damage, you can instead treat any 1 or 2 on the damage dice as 3. Modifying a spell uses up your reaction for the round, but does not otherwise affect the casting time.

Staring into the Void

At level 8, you gain a resistance to necrotic damage. Additionally, once on each of your turns when you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can cause the attack to deal an additional 1d6 necrotic damage to the target. When you reach 14th level, the damage becomes 2d6.

Disciple of Oblivion

At level 17, you gain immunity to necrotic damage, as well as immunity to the frightened condition. Creatures have disadvantage when resisting your spells that deal necrotic damage or confer the frightened condition.

Druid Circle: Circle of Primordial Might

Just as there is beauty and tranquility in nature, so too is there fury and strength. Druids are often servants to both. Occasionally, a druid will steep himself in the destructive forces that define nature as unforgiving and deadly. Some aspects of nature are corrupting, violent, and decidedly evil. The Circle of Primordial Might is composed of these druids. From elemental gods that demand timely sacrifices to raw predatory hunger that drives wanton bloodshed, this circle is either a driving force or a decisive servant to the demands that nature imposes wantonly.

Primal Points

At level 2, you gain a number of Primal Points equal to your Druid level. These points are used to power various abilities that you gain through the Circle of Primordial Might. You regain expended points after finishing a long rest.

Force of Nature

At level 2, you begin to channel deadly primordial forces. When you wild shape, you can spend 2 primal points to add an elemental nature to the form that you take, appearing like an elemental beast. Use the following guidelines to alter the beast form that you take.

Air. You gain damage resistance to lightning or thunder (you choose when you assume the form). While in this form, you can use the dash or disengage action as a bonus action. At 8th level, your beast form gains a fly speed of 40 feet, even if it could not normally fly.

Earth. You gain damage resistance to acid. Your armor class cannot be lower than 14.

Fire. You gain damage resistance to fire. Your natural weapon attacks deal an additional 1d4 fire damage. This damage increases to 1d6 at level 8.

Water. You gain damage resistance to cold. You have advantage on all Strength (Athletics) and Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks and can squeeze through a space as narrow as 1 inch without squeezing. At 4th level, this ability also confers water breathing and a swim speed of 40 feet, even if the form you chose does not have those abilities.

Elementalist

When you reach level 6, you become better versed in the destructive elemental forces. Add to your spell list the following spells: *acid arrow*, *burning hands*, *fireball*, *lightning bolt*, *scorching ray*. While these spells are prepared, you can explicitly cast these spells while in wild shape without having to supply material or somatic components, but you must spend primal points equal to the spell's level each time you do so.

Elemental Wild Shape

At level 10, you can spend 5 primal points when using Wild Shape to transform into an **air elemental**, an **earth elemental**, a **fire elemental**, or a **water elemental**. You cannot gain any benefits from your Force of Nature ability when assuming an elemental shape. At level 20, the cost for this ability is reduced to 1 primal point.

Nature's Fury

Starting at level 14, your destructive powers grow to monstrous proportions. As an action, you can spend 5 primal points to summon 3 **shambling mounds**. This summoning explicitly requires your concentration. Each **shambling mound** appears on an unoccupied space within 30 feet of you and can act on your initiative on your next turn. The **shambling mounds** remain for 1 hour or until dispelled. If you should lose concentration on this effect, the creatures go berserk and attack everything in a random path of destruction. You can willingly dispel these creatures at any time as a bonus action by spending 1 primal point per shambling mound you wish to dispel.



Fighter Archetype: Undead Destroyer

Men at arms fight whatever threatens their existence, even if these threats take the form of undead horrors. Some fight their entire lives to push the risen dead back into the shadows, at times jumping into the darkness to slay these enemies once and for all. The Undead Destroyer does just that, and revels in the fight against such creatures, relishing in the extermination of the undead and has learned secrets that aid in the fight against the tides of these abominations, as well as any living allies that the undead may command.

Saving Throws. Some of your archetype abilities require your target make a saving throw to resist the ability's effects. The saving throw DC is calculated as follows:

Maneuver save DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength or Dexterity modifier (your choice)

Torch-wielder

At 3rd level, you are considered proficient with a torch. In your hands, it is a light finesse weapon that deals 1d6 fire damage. At level 8, you can use your expertise and 50 gold worth of materials to craft special torches that burn brighter and deal 1d8 fire damage. If you wield a magic weapon that deals fire damage, you may increase that damage by an amount equal to your proficiency bonus.

Against the Countless Dead

At 6th level, you gain the ability to fight with efficiency against the throngs of undead. If you miss an attack, you may use your reaction to attempt an attack on another adjacent undead creature. At level 9, this ability extends to all creature types.

Howl of Death

At level 10, your experience fighting the undead has granted you a preternatural ability to strike fear in others. As an action, you can attempt to in-

timidate nearby enemies with a bestial howl. Each creature within 10 feet of you must make a Wisdom saving throw. Those that fail are frightened. Undead that are immune to being frightened must still make a saving throw but do so with advantage. Once you have used this ability, you cannot use it again until you have benefited from a long rest.

Stillness in Death

At level 15, you gain the ability to hinder the movement of the undead. If you make an attack on an undead creature with a piercing weapon, you can attempt to pin the creature in place. If your attack hits, the creature must make a saving throw, becoming restrained on a failure. On its turn, the creature can use an action to pull the weapon out, taking 10 piercing damage in the process, and lose the restrained condition, but their speed is halved for 1d4 rounds. This ability does not work against creatures that have a damage resistance or immunity to piercing attacks. You cannot use the weapon again until it has been pulled free and you recover it. At the GM's suggestion, the weapon may be broken in the process of being pulled out.

Scourge of the Undead

At level 18, when you use your Second Wind, you can choose to end one of the following effects: poisoned, paralyzed, any one disease. You can also activate your Second Wind even if you are otherwise unable to take actions. Finally, you gain resistance to any weapon damage caused by undead creatures.

Monastic Tradition: Corrupt Contemplative

A corrupt contemplative monk has either gone mad by meditating on mind-bending horrors, or who has come to a cold enlightenment that leads to the end of all things. Such meditative warriors are cold-hearted killers that smell of blood and move with the grace of a predator. A death-centric monk that eschews compassion for the purity of thought and action.

Efficient Executioner

At level 3, you gain the ability to deal death swiftly, and fell opponents with as little movement as possible. When you hit a creature with a weapon attack, and their hit point total is less than your potential maximum damage, your unarmed attack deals maximum damage to that creature. At level 8, you can spend 2 ki points to deal maximum damage on all attacks for 1 round, regardless of a target's hit point total. This ability does not affect damage other than your unarmed attack, such as a paladin smite or a rogue sneak attack.

Thrill of the Kill

At level 6, you gain the ability to revel in the death of your enemies. When your attack causes a creature to die, you can use a reaction to regain ki points equal to that creature's Constitution modifier (minimum of 1). Once you use this feature, you cannot use it again until you finish a long rest.

Inimical to Life

When you reach level 11, your body becomes a poison factory, and your very touch can wither your opponents with a deadly venom. Once per turn, your unarmed attacks deal an additional 1d6 poison damage. This poison damage cannot be maximized by your Efficient Executioner ability. At level 15, you can spend a ki point as a reaction to make the poison linger, forcing a target that takes poison damage to also make a Constitution saving throw. On a failure, they gain the poisoned condition for 1 hour.

Touch of Death

At 17th level, you gain the ability to set up lethal vibrations in someone's body. When you hit a creature with an unarmed strike, you can spend 3 ki points to start these imperceptible vibrations, which last for a number of days equal to your monk level. The vibrations are harmless unless you use your action to end them. To do so, you and the target must be on the same plane of existence. When you use this action, the creature must make a Constitution saving throw. If it fails, it is re-

duced to 0 hit points. If it succeeds, it takes 10d10 necrotic damage.

You can have only one creature under the effect of a Touch of Death at a time. You can choose to end the vibrations harmlessly without using an action.

This ability is otherwise identical to the Quivering Palm technique for the Way of the Open Hand monastic tradition.

Paladin Oath: Oath of Light

The lightbringer paladins take an oath to the light, but they are not usually bound to a god of the sun. Rather, they represent the light that holds back the darkness, and each of those paladins embodies the efforts to beat back the shadows that threaten to swallow the world. The oath of light is one of dedication to the cause of fighting and defending, and while it is violent by nature, the tenets of this oath are of love and purity. They forge themselves into a weapon of light through the struggle with darkness, both within the hearts of people and of the unspeakable horrors that lurk within the edges of sight and sanity.

Tenets of Devotion

Though slightly different for each paladin, these basic truths underline the values and scruples of lightbringers.

Vigilance. Never rest in the face of adversity or peril if lives are at stake. Always be ready for the threat that looms.

Tenacity. Work to uncover the evil in the world, and stamp it out. That evil can take many forms.

Wisdom. Be the leader that tends the flocks. Show the compassion that the world sorely needs.

Discretion. Do not fight overwhelming odds. You save more lives by valuing your own.

Illumination. Without the combined light of all good folk, your own light is dim. Cultivate the light in others so that you do not stand alone against the terror.

Oath Spells

3rd *bless, sanctuary*

5th *lesser restoration, warding bond*

9th *beacon of hope, daylight*

13th *death ward, freedom of movement*

17th *dispel evil and good, hallow*

Channel Divinity

When you take this oath at level 3, you gain the following two Channel Divinity options.

- † **Consecrate Ground.** You can use your Channel Divinity ability to protect an area from the depredations of evil. As a bonus action, you can create a 10-foot radius aura around yourself that keeps fiends, aberrations, and undead out. If a fiend or undead wishes to enter the area or take an action against anyone within the radius of protection, they must make a saving throw against your paladin spell save DC. On a failure, they are unable to enter the aura or take an action against those within the aura for 1 minute, and they lose their action or movement for that round. Those who succeed can ignore the effect. This aura extends to 30 feet when you reach 18th level as a paladin.
- † **Bless the Flock.** Your *bless* spell now blesses more people when you use your Channel Divinity, doubling the amount that you can normally affect (6+2 for each slot level above 1st). Each recipient after the 4th must be of lower CR or level than your level.

Aura of Light

Starting at 7th level, you can use an action to shed bright light to a radius of 15 feet, and dim light to a radius of 15 feet beyond that. This light lasts for 1 minute. Ranged attacks made against you or any allies within the bright light radius are made at disadvantage. Outsiders and undead that enter the area of bright light for the first time in a turn must make a Wisdom saving throw, taking 3d6 radiant damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. At level 18, the radius and damage of this effect is doubled.

Rebuke Evil

At level 15, your smite is filled with a holy terror that drives evil back. Aberrations, fiends or undead that are damaged by your Divine Smite must make a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC. On a failure, that creature is turned for 1 minute, or until it takes damage.

A turned creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from you as it can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 30 feet of you, it also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action.

Angelic Blessings

At level 20, When you use your Channel Divinity to extend the effects of *bless* to more people, you may also affect all recipients as per the spell *holy aura*, disregarding the original radius of the spell. This effect does not require concentration and lasts for 1 minute.

Ranger Archetype: Stalker of Horrors

You specialize in the tracking and hunting of the terrible monsters that stalk the shadows. You excel at tracking, stalking and slaying these, and many know you to be the preeminent expert on the subject of monsters and their weaknesses.

Though you are looked up to by many as a savior, you are likely to be distrusted by authorities that might see you as a threat to their power, as well as by monsters who see you as a danger to their vile machinations. You may make unexpected enemies even as you save the innocent from the depredations of evil.

Macabre Specialist

When you choose this archetype at level 3, you begin to specialize your efforts towards a specific type of enemy. You gain a new favored enemy, and that favored enemy must be from the following list: aberration, fey, fiend, or undead. You forfeit

your next favored enemy choice at level 6. You may still select an additional favored enemy of any type at level 14.

Exploit Weakness

Also at level 3, You can choose to exploit the weakness of a particular monster. When you are fighting a creature that you have never encountered before, you can spend an action to study it. You must then make a Wisdom check with a DC equal to 8 + the monster's CR rating. If the monster is one of your favored enemies, you have advantage on this roll. If you succeed on this check, you gain insight into one of the creature's weaknesses. Whether or not the creature has a weakness, your weapon attacks deal an extra 1d8 damage once per turn for the next minute. Once you use this ability, you must finish a short or long rest before you can use it again.

Deny Advantage

At level 7, you learn how to exploit the strengths of a creature, denying it an otherwise mighty advantage. You can expend a spell slot as a reaction to deny a creature a legendary action, a lair action, a bonus action, or a reaction. You can also expend a spell slot to disrupt the casting of an innate spell. If you do so, the creature must make a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC, losing the action or spell on a failure. Lost actions or spells are expended as if they had been used successfully. If you use a 3rd or 4th level slot, the creature has disadvantage on the saving throw to resist losing its spell or action.

Dark Stalker

When you reach level 11, you strike fear into the hearts of the beasts that you hunt. When you use your Exploit Weakness ability on a creature that is a favored enemy, you now gain a preternatural ability to track and follow it. You magically are aware of the creature's general direction and distance in relation to you. In addition, if the creature does not attempt to confront you, it is considered frightened and must flee from you until you cease following it, or it confronts you. Though this

ability does not function if a creature is on another plane (i.e. the ethereal plane), it does reveal the creature's location as soon as it returns to the material plane. Once a creature is marked by this ability, it lasts for 1 week or until you dismiss the mark. While a creature is marked, you cannot use your Exploit Weakness ability.

Slayer of Horrors

When you achieve 15th level, your ability to stalk and slay horrors reaches a new nadir. You have advantage on attacks against your favored enemies.



Rogue Archetype: Detective

You have a knack for finding things that don't want to be found and getting involved in dangerous situations. You are still alive, which attests to your tenacity and skill, but you walk life on a razor's edge. There are things out there that shouldn't be known, and yet you intend to know them. There may be many reasons you seek the truth. Perhaps you are looking for something missing within you, or someone important to you. Whatever your motivation, it has honed your skills as a detective.

Know your Enemy

Starting at 3rd level, you learn the *true strike* cantrip.

Powers of Observation

Starting at 3rd level, you can use the bonus action granted by your Cunning Action to take the Search action. In addition, if not already proficient in Survival, you can add your proficiency bonus to Wisdom (survival) checks to follow tracks.

Study Opponent

Starting at 9th level, you can observe your enemies and learn about them through mannerisms and revealing tells. You must be within 50 feet of an enemy to be able to study them. For each minute you spend watching the creature, you learn one of the following characteristics:

- † An ability score
- † A skill
- † A saving throw
- † Total class levels (if any)
- † Rogue class levels (if any)

Most information is vague, rather than a numerical score (good, average, impressive, etc). At the DM's discretion, you might discover other information such as a special ability, vulnerability, or personality trait such as an ideal or bond.

Network of Contacts

By 9th level, you gain a number of informants and allies that can help you. They are restricted to a general area comprising of up to two of the following: a city, a rural area, a trade route, a group of transients (such as a circus or a nomadic tribe). When dealing in or around such an area or group, you gain advantage on Intelligence (Investigation) checks due to their ability to keep you informed.

When near your contacts, you may live a poor lifestyle without paying the daily lifestyle expenses, or provide a squalid one for yourself and up to 3 companions. You may also find safe haven with a contact who will keep you from danger for a short amount of time (a few hours or a day at most).

Words of Instruction

At 13th level, you are adept at aiding allies from afar, tutoring them with well-placed words. You can use your Cunning Action to grant an ally advantage on their next attack roll. This ability works out to a range of 15 feet. If the targeted ally does not make an attack by the end of their next turn, the ability lapses until you use it again.

Deconstruct Opponent

At 17th level, you gain advantage on checks and attacks against any enemy that you have studied for at least 1 minute in the last 24 hours.



Sorcerous Origins: Aberrant Bloodline

You are descendant from a foul creature, and its blood wreaks havoc in your family tree. Those in your House are rarely and seemingly at random born hideous, and with terrifying powers, and as such, generation after generation has committed infanticide on the abominations. You are one such monster, cursed at birth yet spared the knife by your mother, free to live out your miserable span of existence a freak divorced from society. Yet your power grows, as fearsome as your aspect and as dreadful as your glare.

Aberration Blood

People can either see or sense that you are stranger than most. At 1st level, you either have an awful appearance, or an unnerving presence that confers advantage on Intimidation checks, and a disadvantage on Persuasion checks.

In addition, your skin is rubbery or thick. Your armor class increases by 1 when you are wearing light or no armor. At 6th level, this bonus to armor class increases to 2 under the same conditions.

Finally, you gain darkvision, the ability to see in dim light within 30 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray. If you already have darkvision, your range increases by 30 feet.

Alien Corpus

At 1st level, you may automatically succeed on a saving throw against effects that give the blinded, poisoned, or paralyzed or any effect that would grant levels of exhaustion. You must use this ability instead of dice roll. You may use this ability once, and regain its use after finishing a short or long rest.

Non-Euclidian Limbs

At 6th level, your arms elongate to a hideously disproportionate length. In addition, you can bend them in strange and unnatural ways. Your reach increases by 5 feet. Your elongated arms also give you advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks made to climb.

Mind of their Own

At 6th level, you can spend 1 sorcery point and a bonus action to make one melee attack with your flailing arms. At level 11, you can make two attacks when you use this ability.

Chaotic Mind

At 14th level, your tainted form has altered the nature of your brain, making you resistant to psychic attacks, and more capable of inflicting them upon others. You gain resistance to psychic damage and have advantage on effects that cause the charmed and frightened conditions.

Additionally, you can emit a mind blast in a 60-foot cone as an action. Choose a number of sorcery points to expend, to a maximum of 6. Each creature in the cone must succeed on an Intelligence saving throw, taking 1d8 psychic damage for each sorcery point and gain a level of exhaustion on a failure, or take half as much damage and do not take a level of exhaustion on a success. You can use this ability twice, and regain spent uses after finishing a long rest.

Becoming the Monster

At 18th level, your type is aberration in addition to your normal type. You can use your action to magically assume the shape of an aberration of a CR of 4 or lower that you have seen before. This ability otherwise works as the *shapechange* spell. You can retain this shape for up to 10 minutes in a day and can dismiss it at will (this requires no action). Once you dismiss the ability, or 10 minutes elapse, you cannot use this ability again until you finish a long rest.



Warlock Pact: Undead Lord

You have been tainted by an undead creature of great power, whether it be a lich or a vampire or something else unfathomable and unliving. Whatever this creature's reason for granting you power, they are distant and aloof, nudging you through dark dreams and subtle whispers. Whether it means you are free to do as you please or are controlled by their imperceptible machinations is unknown to you. What is certain is that your power grows as your connection to a mortal life wanes.

Expanded Spell List

These spells are added to the warlock spell list for you.

Level	Spells
1st	<i>bane, false life</i>
2nd	<i>levitate, detect thoughts</i>
3rd	<i>animate dead, bestow curse</i>
4th	<i>dominate beast, phantasmal killer</i>
5th	<i>dominate person, telekinesis</i>

Spark of Death

At 1st level, you have been touched with the pall of death, and are marked by its cold hand. You no longer have to eat, drink, or even breathe; however, you do need to sleep. In addition, you gain advantage on rolls to resist gaining levels of exhaustion or becoming paralyzed or poisoned.

Superior Darkvision

At 1st level, you can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of grey. If you already possess darkvision, it extends to 120 feet.

Shapechanger

Starting at 6th level, you can *shapechange* (as per the spell) into a Tiny bat or a Medium wolf. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

Deaden Mind

Starting at 10th level, you have advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Dark Apotheosis

Starting at 14th level, you have resistance to cold, necrotic, poison and psychic damage. You also gain a vulnerability to radiant damage.



Arcane Tradition: Void Savant

This arcane tradition is dedicated to the study of things beyond the light of the stars. While some of their abilities align with the Necromantic tradition, many of them delve into the matters of sanity, the bending of reality, and the bridging of time and space to visit eldritch horrors upon the world.

Alternately, this tradition may even be the only hope for a world that has already known the touch of chaos incarnate and is the study of how to lock such things away.

Student of Madness

At level 2, you gain the ability to resist madness. You gain resistance to psychic damage. In addition, you ignore the effects written text or runes that would cause insanity, and you gain advantage on any other ability that can cause insanity.

Touch of the Void

Also at level 2, you begin to internalize the teachings of the space between the stars. Touch of the Void is a special cantrip that is available only to Void Savants, and those desperate enough to risk their sanity by researching the forbidden spell. The Touch of the Void cantrip functions as follow.

TOUCH OF THE VOID

Necromancy Cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet.

Components: S, M (a small glass container devoid of air)

Duration: 1 round

You cast an invisible bolt that withers the victim. Make a ranged spell attack against a creature. This roll is made with advantage against creatures afflicted with some form of madness. On a hit, the target takes 1d8 psychic damage and is exposed to madness. Creatures reduced to 0 hit points with this spell are not killed; instead, they are incapacitated, have 1 hp, and are afflicted with a permanent madness. A creature can only receive one such permanent madness from this spell.

This spell's damage increases by 1d8 when you reach 5th level (2d8), 11th level (3d8), and 17th level (4d8)

Hedging out the Madness

At level 6, you add the *magic circle* spell to your spellbook, if it is not there already. You are able to cause the spell to affect aberrations in addition to the types outlined in the spell. In addition, you can cast this spell once without needing to use a spell slot and can do so again after a long rest. At level 12, you can cast this spell without expending material components.

Understanding of Chaos

At level 10, you begin to learn the forbidden secrets that dance in the minds of creatures stranger than you can fathom. You can telepathically communicate with aberrations, undead, and fiends even if they do not normally have a language. These creatures have disadvantage when resisting your enchantment spells, and can be charmed by your magic regardless of their condition immunities. However, creatures that are normally immune get advantage on any relevant saving throws to avoid these conditions. Also, these creatures are prone to seek you out in the dream realm and whisper dark secrets to you. You are at a disadvantage to resist any madness or sanity effects originating from an aberration.

Strange Aeons

At level 14, you can risk the fabric of reality to bring the madness of the void into being. By performing a 1-minute ritual, you can gain one of the following benefits, granted by powers unknowable and unthinkable. You can have only one such benefit at any one time.

- ✦ **Form of Madness.** For the next hour, you gain the aberrant type in addition to your own. You are immune to the charmed, frightened, paralyzed and stunned conditions. Your strange new body grants you a reach of 10 feet, a Strength of 20, and 20 temporary hit points.
- ✦ **Might of Madness.** For the next hour, all of your spell slots from levels 1-2 are instead 5th level spell slots.

† **Touch of Madness.** For the next hour, you are considered protected as through by the *symbol* spell, using the effect of the glyph of insanity. The glyph activates when you are attacked, or when you will it to trigger. You can exclude up to 4 allies from the effect.

When any of these effects lapse, you must make a Wisdom saving throw against your own spell save DC. If you fail, you must perform a sacrifice of a sentient being to the Old Ones before the new moon. This is a magical effect that compels you to perform the sacrifice as per the *geas* spell, and can only be avoided by a *remove curse*, *greater restoration* or *wish* spell cast by another creature. Immunity to the charmed condition or to enchantment spells does not protect you from this compulsion.

If you succeed at the saving throw you can avoid the call of madness; you can benefit from this ability again after you have finished a long rest. Otherwise, you cannot benefit from this ability again until you perform the sacrifice. At level 18, the ritual necessary to gain these benefits can be performed in one action.

As important as a race or class, a character's background can speak volumes. In a horror setting, there are other circumstances that can define a person, and here we hope to present ones that are well suited for such a campaign. As always, remember that backgrounds represent a rough guideline and that the best background is the one that best suits your character concept.



Chapter 04 – Horror Backgrounds

Monster Hunter

To hunt monsters, you must have a strong moral compass and clearly understand that evil must be pursued and eliminated. You often risk life and limb to vanquish the plentiful threats that prey on innocents. Your work is never done, but you wonder what there could be for you if there was.

As an adventurer, you bring the fight to the monsters that threaten everything you love. You seek them in their caves and lairs, hoping to drive terror into them as they do to their prey. You may not necessarily want to drag others on your personal crusade against evil, but you gladly accompany them, as their goals often match yours.

Skill Proficiency. Arcana, Religion

Languages. Two of your choice.

Equipment. A monster-hunting kit, a vial of holy water, a set of darkly colored clothing, and a holy symbol.

Feature: Trusted Savior

As a monster hunter, you are often regarded well by those who are helpless against the beasts that roam the night. As such, many seek you out for help, but give what they can in return. Among the common people, you can live well, at the equivalent of poor without having to expend any of your own resources.

Many openly seek you for your ability to defeat monsters, and you are often offered employment, whether it is to rid the sewers of mutated rats, or saving a noble's son from hungry horrors. Completing these tasks often provide you with the trust and love of locals who have few other heroes to revere.

Suggested Characteristics

A monster hunter tends to be a strange and troubled individual. Whether their intentions are pure, selfish, or darker still, their personalities tend to be

exceedingly peculiar. Loved by many, it is this hero worship that both allows a monster hunter to continue his strange behavior, as well as compounding any personality quirks and flaws that are otherwise left unchecked.

D8	Personality Trait
1	I am hunting a specific monster that caused me great pain long ago.
2	I hunt monsters and any that suffer their presence. Traitors are not safe from my wrath!
3	My sleep is fleeting and unpredictable. My waking hours are tainted with waking dreams.
4	I am an ardent follower of a faith or belief and tie that practice into my hunting practices.
5	My drive to hunt is fueled by my loved ones. I want to make the world safe for them.
6	I enjoy killing things, but only by killing monsters am I venerated.
7	The darkness has a special appeal to me. I wish to study the things I kill and learn more.
8	Killing monsters is the only way I know how to make myself feel anything.

D6	Ideals
1	Fury. Monsters must be hunted with extreme prejudice. (Any)
2	Charity. The people of this beleaguered world need help. (Good)
3	Madness. Defeating evil is the only thing that quiets the voices. (Chaotic)
4	Faith. I am driven by higher forces to do my holy duty. (Lawful)

5 Revenge. I will not stop until the objects of my scorn are destroyed. (Any)

6 Balance. The world is swaying into an age of darkness unless I can stop it. (Any)

D6 Bonds

1 I owe my life to a mentor who has shown me how to combat the dark.

2 I search for a cure for my sister's disease, brought about by evil forces.

3 My duty is to the helpless innocents.

4 The darkness has taken something from me, and I plan to carve a repayment.

5 The encroaching darkness has taken from me a special person that I wish to honor.

6 I hope to inspire others to fight. The darkness cannot be combated alone.

D6 Flaws

1 My social skills are lacking.

2 I suspect treachery everywhere.

3 I can speak endlessly about monster lore.

4 I have no need for coin unless it can help me fight evil.

5 I'd rather kill monsters than help the wounded or needy.

6 I am as remorseless as the things I hunt.



The Investigator

Though you hold no special title or position, you are an inveterate seeker of truths. To this end, you find yourself compelled to search in dangerous locations, and are the first to broach understanding or gather clandestine pieces of information. These traits can bring you to intense danger, but they do not hinder their quest for knowledge.

You are likely to gather teams meant to explore the unknown, pushing them into action despite any of their natural misgivings. It is your bravado and ingenuity that keeps your team anchored and united against the darkness and its denizens. What you do not anticipate, however, is that your search for the truth may lead you to your own end, or worse.

Skill Proficiency. Survival, Investigation

Languages. Any Exotic

Equipment. Investigator's kit, traveling clothes, three days rations.

Feature: Trusted Source

People may see you as a madman seeking information that no one wishes to unearth, but they realize that you are likely to know more than most about the horrors that rampage across the countryside. You may, in fact, have a tidbit of information that may help fell a marauding beast or cure an obscure disease, poison or curse. But more than that, people see in you a hope against the helplessness that plagues their daily existence. As the days grow ever further towards the lip of oblivion, you will be among the few trusted to help the beleaguered, as long as they don't happen to think that you propagated these terrible events.

You are likely to be sought as a voice of reason and are even given information on various perils. A noble may trust you to keep his dark secrets, provided you can help rid him of a supernatural problem. A group of cloistered clerics may turn to you in their darkest hour when their monastery is beset by some unimaginable monster, and these people can become valuable allies and informants as you continue to seek new and mind-numbing truths.

Alternate Feature: Agent of the Crown

You are investigating directly under the auspice of some organizational sanction. You may or may not share this information with everyone, but your objectives are aligned with your benefactors. As such, you have a more focused and supportive network of contacts. While you may not garner sympathy or trust from others, you are backed by your organization, and can regularly expect to receive supplies and equipment as long as you are doing your duty, as well as safe houses and assistance from other agents that share your cause.

If you are in a large population center, you can make contact with a fellow agent within 1d12 hours, and receive a tangible resupply within 3d12 hours.

Suggested Characteristics

As an investigator, you do things that others wouldn't do and know things that others wouldn't think to consider. There are many traits that may exemplify an investigator, but normal would not be prominent among them.

D8	Personality Trait
1	I can't stop asking questions!
2	I have amazing powers of deduction, and I leave no clue uninspected.
3	I require silence to do my work. I detest noise.
4	My art is as important as my investigation, and I often paint what I find.
5	The truth does not come to those who wait. I must seek it regardless of the cost.
6	The darkness is my friend, and I feel lonely without it.
7	I am only at ease when investigating. Sitting still for too long is unsettling.
8	Investigation comes easy to me, and it bores me, but I am too good at it to stop.

D6	Ideals
1	Duty. The work of investigation is too important to abandon. (Lawful)
2	Revenge. Information is power, and it can bring enemies to their knees. (Any)
3	Charity. The truth is beautiful. The darkness can only be dispelled with light. (Good)
4	Anarchy. Oppressive forces cannot keep the truth from surfacing. (Chaotic)
5	Creativity. The compulsion to learn about the world is strong, and I cannot resist its call. (Chaotic)
6	Tradition. Obligation supersedes many things, including fear of the unknown. (Lawful)

D6	Bonds
1	I have a fellow investigator with whom I trade information. I seldom see them, but our bond is deep.
2	My family does not like my work, but they love me, and I, them.
3	My loyalty is to my kingdom, and my fealty drives me to discover things to help keep it safe.
4	I love my benefactor, and do everything for them, even if they were not of a higher station.
5	A lead is valuable, and I will chase it until I can crack it, or discern it as false.
6	My memories will outlive my descendants if I can live to complete them.

D6	Flaws
1	I dislike sleeping indoors.
2	I trust no one unless they have thoroughly proven themselves.
3	I speak in a strange affectation, sometimes peppering in odd phrases or exotic languages.
4	I dress and live like a peasant. I would never want to stand out.
5	I communicate through writing more often than speech, and I often use ciphers.
6	For me, no topic or knowledge is off limits.

The Innocent

The innocent is a rare creature in this world, as they have not felt the growth of evil or cynicism in their hearts. Hope still brims within them, and many spend entire lifetimes struggling to bring it into the life of others. Some may be loved ones or even complete strangers, but the intentions of the Innocent are pure, and their efforts awe-inspiring.

The innocent are unique in that they are largely ignorant (or tolerant) of the terror and strife that shackle the general populace. This trait does not give them any special protection against the depredations of the creatures that lurk in the shadows, nor does it protect them from the evils that exist in the hearts of mortal beings, for that matter. It does motivate them to work, as innocents tend to believe that a difference can be made; in rare instances, this belief can be realized by these otherwise naive individuals.

While innocents can sometimes be fooled into dangerous situations, or are easy prey for the boundless evils of this world, they are sometimes favored and protected by other heroes and benefactors, though this arrangement may be only marginally better than being thrown to the proverbial wolves.

Skill Proficiency. Insight, Persuasion

Languages. One standard language of your choice.

Equipment. Traveling clothes, a journal, 5 days worth of rations, and a holy symbol or trinket.

Feature: Witness of Fate.

Though many awful forces in the world revel in destroying innocence and purity, there are many more that simply ignore such objects, their thinking too alien or maligned to even recognize such a concept. A corrupt noble may not notice your presence as he flees from the scene of a murder, or a twisted monster may move past you and attack a target perceived as more dangerous. This cannot protect you when a creature or person has reason to specifically wish you harm, but you can often get by when you are simply a bystander. Not only are you safe from physical harm, but your non-threatening nature also affords you a great many secrets.

Suggested Characteristics

The innocent are a curious lot and come from many walks of life, but their unique viewpoint makes them stand out in against the tides of pessimism. That having been said, many of their characteristics run counter to that of other more weathered people.

D8	Personality Trait
1	I fight for justice, and I will change the world!
2	Evil is just another word for misunderstood.
3	What if you could make money by killing these monsters? I could be rich!
4	The world needs a healer, and I will take up the mantle.
5	I must see the world; the danger is just a distraction.
6	I am on a pilgrimage, and the road is my crucible.
7	Others must know what I know; they must see what I see.
8	Purity is an ideal to which I must strive, and I must be the example to others.

D6	Ideals
1	Charity. This world is dark enough without compassion. We must help everyone we can. (Good)
2	Faith. The only thing we have if the providence of the higher power. We must venerate it at all cost. (Lawful)
3	Tradition. The past is a thing of beauty and a strong beacon of hope. We must preserve it. (Lawful)
4	Beauty. I wish to bring peace and purity into this world, however, limited or fleeting it may be. (Good)
5	Friendship. I owe everything to my friends, and gladly repay them each and every day. (Any)
6	Against Evil. The shadows cannot swallow the light. I will fight so that the light can shine! (Good)

D6	Bonds
1	My village is my family, and I work to make their lives better.
2	I enjoy the company of like-minded people, and I hope for their well-being.
3	The church is a cause worthy of dying for.
4	I will one day map out these dangerous lands, and that will be my legacy.
5	I want to be recognized by those around me as something more than a simpleton.
6	Eventually, people will stop thinking that I am so innocent.

D6	Flaws
1	I will listen to anyone, and consider all points.
2	I am curious to a fault.
3	I will help the innocent whenever I can, no matter the danger to myself.
4	Books are my playground, and I seek them out and read at every available moment.
5	I am a terminal daydreamer.
6	I observe obsessive religious taboos and bans.

The Mad

You have experienced the horrors of the world and have come from the ordeal a little unhinged. You tend to meddle with these unknown forces, even pursuing them, drawn to their secrets. You tend to be less afraid of the concepts of horror, and even willing to stomach acts others might find deplorable. Many feel a combination of pity and contempt for you as you pass through this life with less cognizance of the horrors that pervade the world.

You must select a permanent madness or work with your GM to create a new permanent madness. This trait defines your interaction with others, and your ability to handle and cope with reality. You may be required to observe certain personal taboos to keep you sane enough to adventure, even if that requirement rankles your associates. It is likely that they abide it to avoid whatever consequences may result from your bouts of insanity.

Skill Proficiencies. Insight, Survival

Tool Proficiencies. One type of artisan tools (your choice).

Languages. Any Exotic.

Equipment. Crude charcoal writing tool, artisan tools (matching proficiency), a trinket that wards away bad feelings (roll on trinket table), a crude improvised weapon, a set of tattered but functional clothes, and a tin case holding 57 copper pieces and a dried eyeball.

Feature: Harmless Coof

People very often take pity on you, given your quixotic relationship with reality. This pity can take many forms, but most of them involve being ignored and patronized. This may or may not please you, but ultimately it has saved you from being questioned by constabularies, bothered by thugs, and even bandit attacks. Unless you are embroiled in a terrible circumstance, you are ignored to your benefit by any authorities or strangers that might otherwise accost or detain you. No prison would keep you out of a desire not to handle your mental state. You are considered so harmless that most simply boot you on your way out. You may even be pitied enough that you are given a few coppers and a meal, in the hopes that it will placate you enough to prolong your absence.

You have a shack somewhere in a remote location that people rarely visit, and where even beasts fear to tread. You are drawn to its natural energies which seem to harmonize with your own, and none other. This is a true safehouse for both your body and mind, remote and quiet enough for you to relate to the only person who really gets you.



Alternate Feature: Wizened Codger

You are considered a foremost expert in some subject, very likely to do with the local surroundings or some old local legends. You are sought out with some reluctance by people wishing to learn more about you and your information. You (and only you) enjoy a modest lifestyle in whatever settlement you reside. If you are in a new settlement that may wish to partake of your wisdom (GM discretion), you instead enjoy a poor lifestyle as you regale the locals with wild tales and your unique personality.

You may also trade information with others, no matter where you are and have an easier time finding those like you that are adept at gathering information.

It should be noted that you are still viewed with a curious concern by those who deal with you, and some may even take issue with your strange ways, but your knowledge is appreciated enough to keep you from being openly despised.

Suggested Characteristics

A man is afflicted by a pervading madness that will color their personality and perspective. Moreover, they are not loners but are often hedged into the outskirts of a settlement, away from people who may take offense at their antics. As such, their madness often has time to ferment.

D8	Personality Trait
1	I only differentiate people by voice and refrain from identifying someone until I hear them speak.
2	Every stranger is a friend I haven't met.
3	I talk to myself as often as possible, stopping only if it is brought to my attention, at which time I deny having talked to myself at all.
4	Maintaining eye contact is an issue for me (either too intense or none at all).
5	I invented a silly walk.
6	I like to talk myself through my mental logic and invite others to take part.

7	I suffer from bouts of amnesia.
8	Delusion. I am a master tradesman.

D6	Ideal
1	Self. I abhor the things that try to change who I am. (Any)
2	Knowledge. I have a secret, but I need to share it with the right people. (Any)
3	Charity. I see the madness in others, and I want to help them. (Good)
4	Tranquility. We must live at peace with others when possible, so as not to foment more pain. (Any)
5	Preservation. The monsters of the world must be wiped out (and that includes monsters in human form). (Any)
6	Change. Everyone else is crazy, and I need to make them see the light. (Chaotic)

D6	Bond
1	I must recover the corpse of my mother.
2	A childhood friend misses me, and I need to let them know that I'm ok.
3	I want to be normal again before I forget what it's like.
4	I used to be normal. Something did this to me, and I want revenge!
5	Somewhere there exists the source of all madness, and I will find it!
6	The meaning of life laps at the shores of my mind. Somewhere I can find the missing pieces.

D6	Flaw
1	I believe that someone close to me is an imposter, replaced by some sinister force.
2	I relive a past life in times of extreme stress, embodying my former self.
3	Certain bright colors elicit extreme emotional responses. This may be one or more colors or one or more emotions related to those colors.
4	I lack empathy.
5	I want a dangerous monster as a pet.
6	Night Terrors.

The Survivor

You are a survivor. Your life has been altered by the terror and hardships of the world, and you are inexorably changed by the experience. Your sanity may be diminished, but you are hardy and ready to continue struggling for the next dawn. It is your wisdom and knowledge that will see you through another day, but that doesn't necessarily endear you to others. You may have a soft spot for those who were once like you, less inured to the world and its challenges, so you may occasionally find compassion for them. You do not, however, suffer fools.

Skill Proficiencies: Perception, Survival

Tool Proficiencies: One type of artisan's tools (your choice)

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A simple weapon, a tent, a knife, a set of traveler's clothes, and two days worth of rations.

Feature: Not on My Watch!

You are so paranoid that you regularly set simple traps before you sleep. Anyone trying to sneak up on you while you sleep does so at a disadvantage. If they succeed, you can act during the surprise round with disadvantage on all of your attack rolls. Additionally, you are considered awake for half of the 8 hours while you are asleep, as you have trained yourself to rest with your eyes open, and at times even while standing!

This feature does not work if you are inebriated when you go to sleep, or if you have another person sleeping next to you.

Suggested Characteristics

Survivors have experienced a great deal of emotional trauma, which makes it difficult for them to form emotional attachments. They can be suspicious, possibly to the point of paranoia. Some survivors have difficulty thinking about the future, dwelling on the past and their regrets. Other survivors plan for any contingency, hoping to avoid future tragedies.

d8	Personality Trait
1	I cannot betray my emotions until I am alone.
2	I am a realist, and the worst is something to expect.
3	Be ready for life, because it certainly is ready for you.
4	Laughter can unnerve your enemies. A quick wit even more.
5	I don't know how to turn off the instincts of a warrior.
6	Logic is my god, and I worship him with my words and actions.
7	Plans are my area of expertise.
8	Sadness and anger are the cups from which I drink.

d6	Ideal
1	Aspiration. Only my efforts can mitigate disaster. (Any)
2	Power. Control is the only comfort I know, and the only guarantee of success. (Evil)
3	Vengeance. The best revenge is a well-laid trap. (Evil)
4	Live and Let Live. Don't bother me. Conflict only attracts danger. (Neutral)
5	Anarchy. Rules and law have failed. Only chaos can survive. (Chaotic)
6	Community. Only by watching each other's backs can we hope to fight back. (Lawful)

d6	Bond
1	Those around me keep me calm. Solitude is maddening.
2	I failed to help others once. Never again.
3	I'm running from something, and I don't like talking about it.
4	My mentor taught me everything I know.
5	My family is safe somewhere. I just need to find the tools to make them safer.
6	Killing makes the world better if you kill the right things.

d6

Flaw

- 1 I only myself and one other person, and that person is dead.
- 2 Death fascinates me.
- 3 Strangers are trouble waiting to happen.
- 4 The trauma of my past causes me to have flashbacks at bad times.
- 5 My life is unimportant if I can take my enemies down with me.
- 6 People call me eccentric when I let them talk.



Chapter 05 – Skills & Feats

Magical spells and weapons, silvered bullets, wooden stakes and more are not enough in a horror campaign. Protagonists must possess the inherent skills and abilities to take out the horrific foes that assail them. These skills are often born of madness, desperation, or even the occult. They can also be born of mortal ingenuity, from those who tire of the depredations of the evils that stalk the night. These skills and talents are often focused toward decidedly evil creatures, but more often than not, their use can transcend the fight against evil horrors.

New Skill: Monster Lore

The shambling figure that is coming up the road toward your party should be recognizable as a ghoul to just about everyone in your party. The current rules for 5th Edition, however, don't take into account the all-important knowledge skill of monster identification.

The core concept behind Monster Lore is that each class knows a little about monsters that the class deals with on a regular basis. As such, each class can use their proficiency bonus when trying to identify and learn more about the creatures that they encounter. In addition, as the character gains power and experience, they should also gain knowledge and insight regarding creatures that they have faced before. We are exploring both of these concepts in the Monster Lore derived skill.



Derived Skills

Below is a system for using a derived skill called Monster Lore. First though, let's discuss what a derived skill is. This type of skill is one that comes from existing skills but encompasses more than just one of the focuses of that skill. Monster Lore is more than just Investigation. It is more than just Arcana. Based on the type of creature that you are attempting to get information about, it could be any of the five skill focuses that fall under the Intelligence ability score.

Table: Monster Lore Affinities

Type	Focus	Affinity
Aberrations	Arcana	Monk
Beasts	Nature	Barbarian
Celestials	Religion	None
Constructs	Investigation	Bard
Dragons	Arcana	Sorcerer
Elementals	Arcana	Warlock
Fey	Nature	Wizard
Fiends	Religion	Paladin
Giants	History	Fighter
Humanoids	History	Rogue
Monstrosities	Investigation	Ranger
Oozes	Investigation	None
Plants	Nature	Druid
Undead	Religion	Cleric

Affinity

Every character class in 5th Edition has certain natural tendencies that they lean toward when working out their class skills. You could say it is as simple as fighters fight, druids do forest stuff and the like. But if you look at the classes closely each of them have an affinity to do certain things. When creating the Monster Lore rules, we carefully looked at each class and tried to figure out how they would match up to our chart in regards to what monsters they should specialize in.

Let's take a look at each of our classes and see why they have an affinity for certain monster types.

Barbarian – Encountered frequently in the wilds, beasts are the natural enemy of those that roam the steppes, plains, and less traveled roads. The children of barbarian tribes are brought up listening to the stories of these creatures and how their legendary heroes defeated them.

Bard – Steeped in lore as part of their tradition, young bards are often regaled with stories regarding the strange and unusual creations of arcane and divine casters. Golems, animated items, and other constructs fit prominently into these tales and so a fair bit of knowledge is transferred in the telling.

Cleric – Clerics of both weal and woe know undead creatures all too well. Those of weal seek to drive them off and destroy these menaces to their goodly communities while those of woe control these powerful creatures to do their bidding.

Druid – Attuned in a spiritual way to the world around them it is appropriate that druids have an affinity for Nature and the natural creatures that inhabit their territories.

Fighter – Brought out to fight the largest of humanoid monsters, fighters (especially dwarves) have an affinity for taking down the biggest of bullies, the giants.

Monk – Finding weaknesses in their enemies is one of the specialties of these fearsome hand-to-hand warriors. Despite aberrations sometimes-unique physiology it is only a matter of time before the monk will find their weakness.

Paladin – Whereas their clerical partners understand undead, paladins have a particular knowledge of the most evil of creatures, fiends. Their affinity runs as deep as their hatred for these foul creatures from the nether regions.

Ranger – Rangers are attuned to their environment and when foul monstrosities stalk the land, the rangers will no doubt be stalking them. Their affinity for these creatures comes from experience just as much as folklore.

Rogue – When the rogue goes looking for that perfect place to strike, it helps to know that no matter the size or shape, a humanoid is a humanoid and just about all of them have hearts, lungs, and other soft parts usually in the same places.

Sorcerer – The special link that many sorcerers share with dragons gives these mages a special affinity for the scaled giants; knowing their strengths, weaknesses, and lore.

Warlock – In tune with the primal forces that shape the universe, warlocks understand the ties that bind elementals not only to this plane but to their very existence as an almost instinctive feeling.

Wizard – Fey and their natural affinity for magic have always fascinated those who study the arcane arts. Many of them dream of one day being able to cast spells with the ease and grace of these unusual and secretive creatures.

Monster Lore Rules

The standard DC for any Monster Lore check is 12. INT is the primary ability score for Monster Lore so any bonus to the characters INT score will reduce this base number.

All creature types line up to a focus on an Intelligence skill as outlined below. This becomes important as certain class features allow for proficiency bonuses to be doubled when working with certain aspects/focuses of an ability score.

The Difficulty Class of 12 is modified by Challenge Rating and Class affinity as follows:

- † **Monster Challenge Rating**– The creature's challenge rating is a measure of its power and in this case, its notoriety. As such, add the challenge rating to the base DC for the Monster

Lore check. The eight-legged basilisk has a challenge rating of 3, so the base DC to know information about the creature would be 15.

- † **Class Affinity** – Each class has a certain affinity for a monster type. This affinity is based on how often the class would normally have contact and or interact with that particular creature type. For example, clerics would have more contact and deal with undead than any other class, therefore they have an affinity with that monster type. If the character class has an affinity, then they can add their proficiency bonus to their Monster Lore check. In the case of our basilisk, rangers are often called out to deal with unnatural monstrosities and so a ranger would gain their Proficiency Bonus when trying to remember information about the deadly beast.

Once you have a Difficulty Class, the player will roll. Based on how well that roll went they can gain information about the creature. For every two points above the minimum roll required, the player gains a bit more information about the creature as outlined in the Monster Lore Information Table.

MONSTER LORE INFORMATION	
Roll	Information Given
+0	Name, Type, Challenge Level*
+2	History **
+4	Special Ability/Defense
+6	Weakness/Vulnerability
+8	Additional information of the Game Master's choice

*Challenge Level – This is a gauge that weighs how powerful the creature is versus how powerful the character is. The scale ranges from Poor, Weak, Balanced, Dangerous, Overpowered. For instance, a 4th level cleric who correctly identifies a deva would also be told that they were a celestial and that the challenge would be Overpowered.

** History – This gives you, the Game Master, some leeway in regards to what you want to tell the players. You can give them a bit of interesting lore regarding the creature or possibly a story that might give them a hint as to how to defeat it.

Working Example

Let's take a look at some examples and see how they would work in your game.

Our ranger is 6th level and has an Intelligence score of 14 (+2 bonus). Her base DC for Monster Lore is 10 (base 12 - 2 for Intelligence bonus). If she encounters a monster with the monstrosity descriptor, then she gains a +3 proficiency bonus due to a class affinity for that particular creature type, reducing the DC to a 7.

Farmers have been complaining about their livestock turning to statues and our ranger is charged to investigate. Through careful tracking, she finally finds the horrible beast, a basilisk (monstrosity) roaming through the woods. Wanting to know more about the creature before she dives headfirst into battle the player asks for a Monster Lore check and rolls a 15. Let's see what that 15 gets her.

The ranger's DC for monstrosities is a 7 and the roll is 8 above it. She would gain the following information about the beast from the Game Master:

- 0 - Basilisk, Monstrosity, Challenge 3
- +2 – Basilisks are eight-legged beasts normally encountered in subterranean lairs. The beasts act as guardians for treasure troves although they are terribly difficult to control.
- +4 – Their gaze will turn you to stone. If you avert your eyes you have a chance of avoiding this fate, however, it is not certain.
- +6 – Fortunately basilisks are not known for their intelligence and they can be tricked into attacking their own reflections with their deadly gaze.



Feats

Many acquired and innate talents can spell the difference between success and failure. These potent traits can help someone survive, or to fight against the endless horrors. The feats presented here are geared towards horror campaigns but can be easily adapted or used without modification in nearly any other campaign setting. As always, these feats, and the use of feats in your game are entirely optional.

ARTISAN

Prerequisite: *Proficiency in a set of Artisan's Tools*

You have mastered the artistry of your chosen trade and receive the following benefits:

- ✦ Increase your Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- ✦ You pay only ¼ of the material costs for crafting rather than 1/2, and make 10 gp worth of progress with each day of crafting rather than 5 gp.
- ✦ If you are in a population center where your work is appreciated, you either benefit from the poor lifestyle for free or pay half as much for a better lifestyle expense not including aristocratic.

BRAVE

Prerequisite: *Wisdom 13+*

You are fearless and profoundly strong of heart. You gain the following benefits:

- ✦ Gain advantage on saving throws to avoid becoming frightened.
- ✦ Gain advantage on contests in which the Intimidation skill is being used against you.
- ✦ You can use your action to ignore a magical fear for a number of rounds equal to your proficiency bonus. You can use this once and regain the ability to do so after finishing a long rest.

CORRUPT SPELL

Prerequisite: *Any evil alignment.*

Your spells are infused with evil energies. When you gain this feat, you may alter your spells that deal damage so that the type becomes necrotic. If you use this ability to alter a spell that deals necrotic damage, it is considered to be cast at one spell slot higher than the slot you actually

used (maximum of 9th level). You can alter two spells in this way and must finish a short or long rest to regain these uses. You can explicitly use this ability to alter innate spells as well as spells gained from being a spellcaster.

DEVIL'S EYE

Prerequisite: *Wisdom 13+*

You have either drilled a hole in her forehead trying to add a third eye or have supernaturally scarred one of your regular eyes. You gain the following benefits.

- ✦ As a bonus action, you may activate your vision so that you may see invisible creatures for up to 1 minute. You must finish a short or long rest before you can use this ability again.
- ✦ You can choose to have advantage on an initiative roll. If you do so at the start of a surprise round, you may act as normal during that round. You must finish a long rest before you can use this ability again.

EXPERT CAMOUFLAGE

Prerequisite: *Proficiency in Stealth.*

You have learned techniques to enhance your stealth abilities, gaining the following benefits:

- ✦ You double your proficiency bonus in Dexterity (Stealth) checks. This does not stack with other similar effects.
- ✦ In a natural environment, you can spend 10 minutes gathering natural materials to prepare camouflage, giving you advantage on all Dexterity (Stealth) checks while in camouflage within that environment. Doing this also masks your scent, imposing disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks to perceive you. This benefit lasts for 5 hours, or until you remove it. At the discretion of your GM, you may have disadvantage on Charisma checks while you are covered in your natural camouflage.
- ✦ When you are hidden from a creature that you miss with a ranged weapon attack, making that attack does not reveal your position.

FRIEND OF THE DEAD

Through some predilection or twist of fate, you have found yourself amidst the walking dead, and they accept you as your own. You gain the following benefits:

- † Undead creatures are indifferent towards you unless they are magically compelled to be hostile.
- † Choose one of the following conditions: charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned. You have advantage on saves to avoid that condition.
- † You have resistance to necrotic damage.

GAMBLING

Prerequisite: *Proficiency with a gaming set.*

You have the ability to locate games of chance in any reasonably populated area. You are also practiced in the art of gambling and calculation of odds. You gain the following benefits:

- † Increase your Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- † You double your proficiency bonus in gaming set checks, as well as any Intelligence or Wisdom checks related to gambling. This does not stack with other similar effects.
- † You can spend a day of downtime gambling. Pick either 2d10 and 1d20, and roll both. If the one you picked is higher, you gain the difference in gold pieces. If the one you picked is lower, you lose half that amount in gold pieces. If you don't have enough to pay, you have a debt hanging over your head and may have to answer to the criminal element. As this is not strictly a gaming set check, you cannot gain advantage or apply the above benefits, nor do you add your proficiency bonus to this check.

GROTESQUE

Prerequisite: *Charisma of 8 or lower*

Because of intentional self-mutilation, you have a hideous face, granting the following bonuses (and penalties):

- † Charisma (Persuasion) checks you make have disadvantage unless your face is hidden or obscured.
- † You become proficient with the Intimidation skill. If you are already proficient in the Intimidation skill, you can distort your face and double your proficiency bonus as long as you are in bright light.

- † Any penalty to your Charisma is instead a bonus when making Charisma (Intimidation) checks. Your penalty is considered 0 when making Charisma (Deception) checks.
- † As an action, you may attempt to cause a target to become afraid of you. They must make a Wisdom saving throw, with the DC equal to (8+ proficiency bonus + your Charisma score penalty). If they fail, they become frightened. You can do this once, and regain the ability to do so after finishing a long rest.

INSECT INURED

Prerequisite: *Cha 13+*

Insects regard you better than they would normally. You gain the following benefits:

- † Insects refuse to attack you unless magically compelled; compelled creatures have disadvantage when attacking you.
- † Swarms will avoid sharing a space with you unless there is no other space to occupy.
- † You may attempt to influence insects using a Charisma check, in a manner similar to the Animal Handling skill. You add your proficiency bonus to all such checks.

LORE OF THE MONSTER HUNTER

Prerequisite: *Wisdom 13+, Proficiency in the Survival skill*

When you gain this feat, choose one of the following creature types to be your chosen prey:

- † aberrations, constructs, fey, fiends, monstrosities, or undead.
- † You are skilled at hunting creatures of the night, and gain the following benefits:
 - † While using Wisdom (Survival) to track a creature, you treat d20 rolls of 9 or lower as a 10.
 - † When you roll damage for your attacks against your chosen prey, you can treat any 1 on a damage die as a 2.
- † You can make an Intelligence check to recall information about a creature you might have researched, such as a weaknesses, special power, method of hunting, preferred prey, etc. The DM determines the DC of the check based on how common the monster is and if you have encountered similar creatures. Once you have used this feature, you must spend one downtime day researching monsters before you can use it again.

MARKED BY DARKNESS

Through some dark pact, you can twist probability to your whim. On your turn as an action, you may impart a luck curse on an target that you can see within 30 feet. That opponent is considered to fail the next attack roll or ability check that they make. If they have advantage on the roll, they instead roll normally, and may potentially succeed. You may do this three times, and regain spent uses after finishing long rest. No target may be affected by this curse more than once in a 24 hour period.

MASTER OF BEASTS

Prerequisite: *Proficiency in Animal Handling*

You have an affinity with beasts and can gather them together whether they are docile or not. You gain the following benefits:

- † Increase your Wisdom score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- † You double your proficiency bonus in Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks. This does not stack with other similar effects.
- † The ability to gain a friendly beast of CR ½ or lower for every 3 days spent doing so during downtime. You may gather as many creatures at once equal to your Wisdom score bonus. You may not sell these animals, as they only listen to your commands.
- † Advantage on all Wisdom checks pertaining to an individual animal under your care.

Work with your DM to establish what breeds of animals are available in your campaign setting.

MASTER THIEF

Prerequisite: *Proficiency in Sleight of Hand*

You are practiced in the art of freeing yourself from all non-magical bindings, and receive the following benefits:

- † Increase your Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- † You double your proficiency bonus in Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks. This does not stack with other similar effects.
- † Using Thieves' Tools on locks you cannot see does not incur disadvantage as long
- † as you can touch them with both hands.
- † You can use your reaction to make a Charisma (Deception) check if you get caught sneaking,

stealing, or otherwise performing acts of larceny. Witnesses must roll a Wisdom (Insight) check opposing your check. If you win, they are fooled by your explanation and let you get away. If you win the contest by 5 points or more, you can even return to your larcenous activity.

POISON IMMUNITY

Prerequisites: *Constitution or Dexterity 13+*

After prolonged exposure to various toxins, you are rendered resistant to poisons. You gain the following benefits.

- † You are resistant to poison damage.
- † You have advantage on any saving throws to avoid gaining the poisoned condition.
- † You cannot accidentally poison yourself when handling and applying poisons.

RALLY THE FAITHFUL

Prerequisite: *Proficiency in Religion, good or neutral alignment.*

Whenever an ally dies within 60 feet of you, you can spend your reaction to inspire up to 6 allies within 30 feet of you (including yourself). This announcement inspires the affected creatures to avenge their fallen comrade. As a reaction, every affected creature is allowed to spend hit dice to heal as if they had taken a short rest. Also, each ally removes one deleterious condition or 1 level of exhaustion, at their choice.

TALONS

Prerequisite: *Strength 13+*

Because of intentional self-mutilation or some other supernatural event, the character has deformed arms and hands ending in sharp claws, which impart the following benefits:

- † You gain a +1 bonus to AC if you are not holding anything in either hand.
- † Your hands are considered weapons with the light and finesse qualities, and deal 1d6 slashing damage.
- † When you use an attack action with a light weapon, you can use your bonus action to attack with a claw attack as long as you have one hand free.

At your GM's discretion, you may or may not be able to retract your claws.

TOUCHED BY HORROR

Prerequisite: *Wisdom 13+*

You have been affected by the horrors that lurk in the darkness. You are stronger for it, but you also bear the trauma of darkness that stains your dreams with terror. You gain the following benefits and penalties.

- † Increase your Wisdom score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- † You have advantage on rolls to resist being charmed, frightened, or paralyzed.
- † You can take a Dash or Dodge action as a bonus action if you are within 10 feet of a monstrosity, aberration or undead.

UNDERDOG

You are at your best when things are at their worst. You become stronger when the odds are against you, and when your allies need you the most. You gain the following benefits if you are either within 5 feet of two or more opponents, or your hit points are below half.

- † Add your proficiency score bonus to damage once per turn when you are outnumbered.
- † Increase your armor class by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- † You must only succeed twice on death saving throws to become stabilized.



Chapter 06 – Equipment

The horror genre is interesting in that it pits you against the forces of evil, often either requiring unique items to win the day or forcing victims to make use of anything as a weapon. The following section details the use of improvised weapons, as well as some equipment that may fit well in a horror campaign.

Tools as Weapons

A trope of many horror stories is that the characters (both protagonists and antagonists) often rely on improvised weaponry to defend themselves or wreak mayhem. The list below can help you to adjudicate the use of such tools as weapons. Unless noted otherwise, the items below are not suited for long-term use, and are prone to breakage, potentially as a result of one or more rolls of a natural 1 when using the tool in combat. Some especially well-made tools may be the exception and can be used without fear of breakage.

TOOLS AS WEAPONS	
Tool	Weapon Equivalent
Barrel Lid	Improvised Shield
Broken Bottle	Dagger
Crowbar	Mace, light
Hatchet	Handaxe
Hoe	Quarterstaff
Carving Knife	Dagger
Chain	Club
Machete	Scimitar
Pitchfork	Trident
Poker, Fireplace	Shortspear
Saw	Sickle
Shovel	Quarterstaff
Skillet	Club
Sledge Mallet	Mace, heavy

Weapon Notes: Some tools require slight variations to their rules when being used as weapons.

Barrel Lid. A barrel lid can be used as an improvised shield in a pinch, granting +1 to Armor Class, but breaks one minute after being used to deflect attacks.

Cleaver. Treat as hand axe without the thrown property.

Machete. Treat as a scimitar. This item is made sturdy, and not prone to breakage.

Meat Hook. Treat as a short sword that deals piercing damage. Special: You can initiate a grapple on the same turn that you attack with this weapon, but the weapon cannot be used as long as the grapple is maintained.

Garrote. This tool can be used to initiate a grapple and deals damage as a club.

Skillet. This tool is especially tough and is not prone to breakage. Also, there is a 10% chance per skillet that it is constructed from pure iron. Such a skillet is able to bypass the damage resistance of fey creatures even if the creature's resistance is normally bypassed by other materials.

Horror Equipment Packs

HORROR EQUIPMENT PACKS	
Kit	Price
Apothecary Kit	65 gp
Cultist's Kit	13 gp
Fortune Teller's Kit	48 gp
Ghost Hunter's Kit	85 gp
Grave Digger's Kit	35 gp
Impoverished Agitant Kit	5 gp
Monster Hunter Kit	13 gp
Preacher's Pack	19 gp
Seance Kit	9 gp

Soldier's Kit	63 gp
Survival Kit	58 gp
Vampire Hunter Kit	62 gp
Werewolf Hunter's Kit	313 gp

Apothecary kit (65 gp, 42 lbs). An Apothecary's kit holds all the strange but necessary components and tools needed to work their bizarre craft. This kit contains an alchemy lab, a backpack, a bedroll, a belt pouch, ink, an ink pen, flasks (2), a mess kit, a tinderbox, torches (2), trail rations (5 days), and a waterskin.

Cultist kit (13 gp, 20 lbs). A strange necessity among various cultures, this kit provides all the necessities for preparing and carrying out a sacrifice. The only things this kit does not provide are strange and explicit reagents or religious requirements for sacrifices, such as expensive components or foci. As such, it contains one athame (or knife of choice), a bowl for collecting various fluids, common incense, candles, rope, a small altar or statue of relevant significance, and appropriate clothing (usually robes).

Fortune Teller's Kit (48 gp, 88 lbs*). This pack contains the bare essentials for a fortune-teller to ply their trade at home or abroad. This kit contains a backpack, a bedroll, 10 candles, a cart*, quality fortune-teller's deck, ink, an ink pen, a hooded lantern, a small mirror, three traveler's outfit, one entertainer's outfit, an iron pot, a pouch belt, a tinderbox, 2 days of trail rations, 50 ft of rope, an empty sack, a tent, and a waterskin.

*The weight of the cart is not included.

Ghost Hunter's Kit (85 gp, 14 lbs). This sturdy satchel is the quintessential toolkit for detecting ghosts and sending them to their final slumber. This kit includes 10 candles, three flasks of holy water, a crowbar, a shovel, and holy symbol.

Gravedigger's Kit (35 gp, 28 lbs). This kit provides all the tools necessary to seal a coffin or other burial container and ensure that it stays closed. It includes 20 feet of chain, a good lock, 1 dose of glue, a shovel, 10 nails, and a leather-bound copy of the Book of the Lore: Undead*.



Impoverished Agitant Kit (5 gp, 11 lbs). Not so much a kit as a grouping of items that a peasant might have in the event of a riot. Some leaders may potentially keep caches of these items in case they want to incite riots or help keep districts defended from various danger. Items include an improvised weapon, an improvised shield (see barrel lid above), a small pouch of feathers, five flasks of oil, 2 torches, tar.

Monster Hunter Pack (13 gp, 13 lbs). Some mercenaries fancy themselves monster hunters. While this line of work has many cowards and charlatans, many merchants sell such kits to monster hunters both genuine and otherwise. Such items include a book of lore (for a specific creature type), 10 cloves of garlic, a flask of oil, a hammer, 5 iron spikes, rope, 2 pounds of salt, a tinderbox, a pouch of wolfsbane petals*, and 5 wooden stakes. Though the effectiveness of this pack may be questionable, the sale of this pack is lucrative and ubiquitous.

Preacher Kit (19 gp, 25 lbs). This pack contains everything that a traveling preacher may need to tend his various flocks and spread the good word. Items include a backpack, a blanket, 10 candles, a censer, a container of incense, a lock box, preacher's clothing, 2 days of rations, tinderbox, and a waterskin. Given the dangerous nature of travel, a preacher may opt to request equipment that helps in the defense against various monsters.

Seance Kit (9 gp, 9 lbs). This stained mahogany box contains tools that aid in contacting supernatural beings either as part of an act or a genuine ritual. This kit includes 10 candles, 10 candlesticks, one entertainer's outfit, a planchette set*, one tarot deck, 10 sticks of incense*.

Soldier's Kit (17 gp, 63 lbs). Essential for a marching soldier, this kit contains everything needed to maintain a baseline of operational readiness in the battlefield. Included in the kit are a backpack, a bedroll, a compass, a hatchet, an iron pot, a large spade, a woolen mantle*, 2 days of trail rations, 50 ft of rope, an empty sack, a tent, a tinderbox, a waterskin, and a whetstone.

Survival Kit (10 gp, 58 lbs). Some people wish to live away from the decadent cities and the dangers of a crowded metropolis. These people try their luck in the wilderness and sometimes excel at avoiding the dangers that lurk in the shadows away from civilization. These items are typical of a survival kit: A backpack, a bedroll, a mess kit, 10 days of rations, 50 feet of hempen rope, 10 torches, and a waterskin.

Vampire Hunter's Kit (62 gp, 10 lbs). This small, latched wooden case contains numerous tools and devices used in hunting and slaying vampires. It contains 10 cloves of garlic, ten wooden stakes, a hammer, a silvered mirror, 2 vials of holy water, and a holy symbol.

Werecreature Hunter's Kit (313 gp, 28 lbs). This leathery sack has numerous items that are vital in dealing with a were-creature infestation. It contains one silvered hatchet, one silvered hunting trap, a silvered dagger, and 10 wolfsbane petals. Were creatures have disadvantage on saving throws and ability checks related to the silvered hunting trap.



New Items

NEW ITEMS		
Item	Price	Weight
Book of Lore	10 gp	2 lbs
Door	variable	variable
Fortune Teller's Deck	2 gp	—
Furniture	variable	variable
Incense	1 sp	—
Neck Guard	10 gp	2 lbs
Plaguemask	15 gp	1 lb
Plaguemask herbs	2 sp	2 lbs
Planchette Set	1 gp	1 lb
Skull Mask	5 gp	1 lb
Wooden Stake	1 cp	¼ lb
Woolen Mantle	1 gp	5 lbs
Wolfsbane Petals	1 sp	—

Book of Lore (10 gp, 2 lbs). This book details a specific kind of creature (fiend, undead, etc). However, it is usually sought after by cultists, minions, and other unsavory creatures. Owning this book can grant knowledge about a specific subject. Depending on the thoroughness of the book's contents, the price for such a tome can be much higher, as would be the risk of owning it.

Door (variable). This portal into a given location serves to promote privacy and safety. Forcing open a common locked door is a DC 13 Strength check. A door is an object with the following statistics (AC 13, 15 hp, damage threshold of 4).

Fortune Teller's Deck (2 gp, —). Use arcana or proficiency in fortune teller deck.

Furniture (variable). This item, likely made from wood, is a perfect object for wedging against a door. Forcing a door open that is braced with furniture is a DC 16 Strength check, often requiring the destruction of the door to gain entry. Furniture can often be used as one or multiple

improvised weapons and is an object with the following statistics (AC 11, 8 hp).

Incense (1 sp, —). Coming in various forms, a bit of incense can both help sooth anxieties or put one in the frame of mind for a religious ceremony. Incense comes in bundles of 10 sticks for 1 silver piece, or in small pouches to be used in censers.

Neck Guard (10 gp, 2 lbs). Made from hardened leather reinforced with a band of metal, this collar protects the wearer against vampire bites when worn around the throat. It provides a +1 armor bonus to AC against vampire bites or similar attacks that specifically target the wearer's throat. Unlike most armor bonuses, the neck guard's +1 bonus stacks with the armor bonus of light or medium armor, but it provides no additional bonus when worn with heavy armor.

Plague mask (15 gp, 2 lbs). City healers often use plague masks when battling outbreaks of disease, but others may also find them useful when breathing the foul air of plague or dealing with the rotted air of an aberration cave. A plague mask is a close-fitting leather hood fitted with a long, conical "nose," making the wearer look like raven or crow. The wearer sees through large eyeholes covered in thick red glass. The plague mask is stuffed with aromatic and medicinal herbs, which shield the wearer from contaminated vapors and foul smells. These fresh herbs must be replaced each day.

A plague mask provides the wearer with advantage to Constitution saving throws to resist inhaled diseases and poisons, as well as effects caused by foul odors (such as a ghost's stench). The wearer suffers disadvantage to passive Perception checks related to smells and sight.

Planchette Set (1 gp, 1 lb). This strange board is constructed with alleged symbols that call upon the voices of the dead. There is much debate among scholars as to the authenticity of a given planchette set, but it can be agreed that the majority of such sets are mere replicas. What a genuine

planchette set would look like and how it would work are so far undocumented. The listed price for this set assumes a planchette set that is not functional for anything other than entertainment.

Skull Mask (10 gp, 1 lb). Similar to a skull helmet, the skull has part of the cheekbones and the jawbone removed and part of the cranium scraped away so that the skull can fit over the wearer's face. A wearer can look either through the skull's own eyeholes or a set perforated into the bone. There are often motifs and designs adorning the skull mask, granting it an even more terrible appearance. When wearing a skull mask, you can make a Charisma (Intimidation) check as a bonus action during the first round of combat.

Wooden Stake (1 cp, 1/4 lb). This weapon deals 1 damage, but against vampires, it deals 1d8 damage when the heart is targeted. Against an incapacitated or grappled vampire, the stake can paralyze the vampire until it is removed (see **Vampire** and **Vampire Spawn**).

Woolen Mantle (1 gp, 5 lbs). This is a thick cloak meant to be worn in harsh weather. It can be standard issue to help soldiers keep warm and dry, but in practice, it is worn more often by officers, as well as adventurers and travelers. This mantle is meant to protect gear from getting wet and can be very handy for anyone carrying gunpowder.

Wolfsbane Petals (1 sp, —). These petals are thought to have some property that wards against werewolves. Though this property can be created with alchemy, many superstitious people keep wolfsbane petals in hopes of preventing a werewolf encounter.

Magic is as much a tool for good as a means of evil. Some settings make magic ultimately be only from evil sources, potentially causing magic users to constantly question their own abilities and actions. Other settings make magic into dangerous and destructive forces, no matter the purpose behind its use.

Whatever the case, magic tends to have a fairly solid place in stories of horror. Sometimes it is the only salvation of the innocent, or perhaps the cause of oppressive evil. The spells and magic items in this chapter serve either to work for settings in which the players are heroes and saviors, or the evil and the damned.



Chapter 07 – Magic & Mysteries

Spells

The following spells are intended for horror campaigns, and can alternately serve as plot elements, as weapons of the enemy, or as protection from evil, depending on the spell. It is ultimately up to the GM and players how they wish to use these horror-themed spells.

BELLOW OF THE GRAVE

Necromancy cantrip

Classes: Cleric, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, M (grave dirt)

Duration: Instantaneous

You bellow with a craven voice that haunts your enemies. Choose one creature within range.

That creature must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or take 1d8 necrotic damage. If they fail their saving throw by 5 or more, they are frightened until the end of their next turn.

This spell's damage increases by 1d8 when you reach 5th level (2d8), 11th level (3d8), and 17th level (4d8).

BONE STORM

3rd-level conjuration

Classes: Cleric, Sorcerer, Warlock

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self (30-foot cone)

Components: S, M (bone shards)

Duration: Instantaneous

You blow on a small pile of bone shards in your hand, which then summons a much larger, deadlier storm of bone shards that spread out in a 30-foot cone. All creatures caught in the storm must make a Dexterity saving throw, taking 6d10 necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. Crea-

tures that fail their saving throws also gain a level of exhaustion from having bone shards embedded in their skin. Removing the shards requires an action and a Wisdom (Medicine) check with a DC equal to your spell save DC. Otherwise, the condition is removed with a long rest, as normal.

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.

DEATHLY FORM

3rd-level transmutation

Classes: Cleric, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: self

Components: V, S, M (cured bone)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You transform yourself into a shambling undead.

When this spell is cast, your type changes to undead, and you no longer have to eat, sleep, or breathe. Any exhaustion levels you have gained are removed but resume once this spell has lapsed. Additionally, you are immune to poison damage and the poisoned condition.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a slot of 4th level or higher, you can augment your new form with new abilities. If you use a 4th level slot, you become immune to the frightened condition. If you use a 5th level slot, you also become immune to the charmed condition and gain resistance to necrotic damage. If you use a 6th level slot, you also gain resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks. If you use a 7th level slot or higher, you no longer have to concentrate on the spell, and it lasts up to an hour or until dispelled. All benefits are cumulative as you cast the spell at higher levels.

DIM THE MOON

2nd-level enchantment

Classes: Bard, Druid, Ranger

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S, M (a silver trinket worth 1 SP)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

A slight glow of moonlight emanates from you, then vanishes. You choose one lycanthrope to transform, causing it to revert to its true form if it fails a Charisma saving throw. Once reverted, the lycanthrope must make a Charisma saving throw any time it wishes to change forms for the duration of the spell, wasting the action and staying in its true form on a failure. The spell ends if the lycanthrope makes a saving throw and successfully changes shape, or if it resists the spell initially.

If the target of this spell is a willing target, the spell's duration is 1 hour and prevents involuntary transformations for those suffering from the curse of lycanthropy. When cast in this way, the silver trinket is consumed in the casting.

HANDS OF THE DEAD

1st-level conjuration

Classes: Cleric, Druid, Warlock

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 50 feet

Components: V, S, M (a severed finger or claw)

Duration: 1 minute

You raise your hands in supplication to dark forces, creating a number of hands that reach up from the ground to grapple an opponent. You choose a 5-foot square from which the hands erupt. Any creature of medium size or smaller must make a Dexterity saving throw or be grappled. The creature must make an escape check at the end of each of their turns using your spell save DC to escape. The spell does not end once they save, and any character entering or re-entering the square, or ending their turn in the square must make the same saving throw or become grappled. Other characters entering the square are affected as well if they end their turn in that square.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a slot of 3rd level or higher, you can increase the number of targets (and by exten-

sion, squared) affected for every two levels beyond 1st (two targets at level 3, three targets at level 5, etc). Large creatures can be affected by this spell if they occupy at least two squares affected by this spell.

HOWL OF THE BEAST

3rd-level enchantment

Classes: Bard, Druid, Sorcerer, Wizard

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self (50 ft. radius)

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You unleash a horrible, keening wail that scythes through your opponents' souls and leaves them unable to effectively defend themselves. Enemies must make a Wisdom saving throw, becoming frightened of you on a failure. While frightened, your foes cannot move any closer to you and are compelled to move at least 50 feet from you. They are free to attack you with spells and ranged weapons, though they have disadvantage to do so. Affected enemies must make a new saving throw at the end of their turns, ending the effect on a success. If you willingly approach an affected creature, they are not compelled to leave the spell's radius but are free to stay and attack you at range, or even with melee attacks if you are adjacent to the enemy.

HUNTER'S SENSES

2nd-level transmutation

Classes: Druid, Ranger

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S, M (a bit of glass)

Duration: 1 hour

This spell grants you supernatural senses. However, you must decide what kind of benefit to gain, choosing between sight, hearing, or smell. You can only benefit from one of these supernatural abilities at any given time. While the spell is in effect, you have advantage on any Perception and passive Perception checks that apply to the specific bolstered sense. In certain circumstances, you are able to use your senses to perform supernatural feats, such as sighting enemy movement a mile away,

tracking by scent, or hearing a distinct sound within a crowded city.

NATURE'S FURY

3rd-level transmutation

Classes: Druid, Ranger

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (cured meat)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

To cast this spell, you consume the cured meat and recite a sacred word that rings deep within you and the target of this spell. You then touch the target, imbuing them with the power of nature, augmenting their muscles. You can also target yourself. As long as this spell is in effect, the target's natural attacks count as magical and silvered and deal an additional 1d4 damage of the same type as the attack. This spell can affect you or any creature has a natural attack, and can specifically augment an unarmed strike.

PLAGUE TOUCH

4th-level conjuration

Classes: Cleric, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (a rat tail)

Duration: Instantaneous

You rub your finger on a diseased rat's tail before touching the exposed skin of your intended victim. Those exposed to this spell must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failure, they gain a disease of your choice (see "Adventuring: Diseases" in the SRD). The disease can be cured by the usual means but is especially virulent. For 1 hour after the victim contracts the disease, any creature that is within 5 feet of the victim must make the same Constitution saving throw or become infected by the same disease. Secondary victims are not extra virulent and transmit the disease through the normal means.

WATERS OF TRUTH

1st-level divination

Classes: Bard, Druid, Sorcerer, Warlock

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: S, V, M (a body of water)

Duration: Instantaneous

This spell transforms still and pure water into a reflective surface that reveals illusions, ethereal creatures, invisible creatures, and shapechangers. Water must be a minimum of 5 ft across. To make use of this spell, you must be able to see the reflection of the creature or effect from the reflection off of the surface of the water, requiring a Wisdom (Perception) check with a DC determined by your GM (typically DC 12).

Rituals of Horror

The following spells, though part of the spells presented in this book, are specifically meant to be used as rituals and can be learned and (mis)used by even those with no magical ability.

These occult spells represent dangerous magic that reaches out to affect the supernatural. Whether they ward against it, summon its presence, or beg its unseen favor, these spells interact somehow with dark forces beyond the grasp of most mortals.

New Rule: Non-Ritual Casters

Non-Ritualist. There are many tomes and even oral histories that teach hedge magic to the uninitiated. Anyone may attempt to meddle in the mystic arts, and even wild talents have mastery over magic, but the untrained do not have the discipline or knowledge of arcane formulas that prevent catastrophic consequences.

The following spells have special rules for allowing the casting of a ritual spell without any special ritual knowledge. These may be the results of a sorcerer's apprentice misremembering their master's teachings, or a foolish adventurer attempting to recreate a ritual through an ancient tome that has a page or two missing. Whatever the cause, the only requirement is that the non-ritual caster has some access to the ritual's instructions, whether they be complete and correct, or not.

A non-ritual caster will always perform a ritual that is grossly flawed, and often it can be so detrimental that the benefits rarely outweigh the

drawbacks. Consider this as a guideline for any ritual to be cast by a non-ritual caster, and really anyone foolish enough to meddle with something that they barely understand.

For any other ritual, consider potential negative consequence to the spell being cast, either by creating an imperfect result, or even creating some random but negative magical surge that affects the caster in some way. When in doubt, consult this random table.

RANDOM MISFORTUNE TABLE

Roll a d12

1-2	The spell has no effect, and any material components are consumed regardless of whether the spell would have consumed them.
3-4	The spell works as written for non-ritual casters, but you have angered the powers that govern mystic secrets. You have disadvantage on all rolls to save against or resist magical effects for 24 hours.
5-6	The spell works as written for non-ritual casters, but it affects a random target or allows the original target to pick a new target. In the case of a non-targeted spell, the spell instead backfires and explodes for 1d8 force damage per level of the spell, affecting a 10-foot radius centered on the caster.
7-8	The spell has no effect, and the spell creates an <i>anti-magic field</i> (as per the spell) that lasts for 1 month from the time of casting, centered on the spot where the ritual was completed.
9-10	The spell summons a storm of mystic energy. The area encompassing a 100 ft radius centered on the ritual becomes difficult terrain due to tumultuous winds and unstable magical energy. All creatures within the storm are subject to force damage once per round (1d6) until they can leave the immediate area.
11	The spell has no effect, and you summon a random outsider. (GM's choice)
12	The spell goes wildly out of control, and works too well! Your GM is encouraged to create a proper though catastrophic consequence, such as the summoning of dozens of overzealous unseen servants, for instance.

Note: You may also elect to have flawed rituals available to learn for those spellcasters capable of doing so. Someone practiced at ritual magic can tell that a ritual is flawed, whereas an amateur would not. In the case of an incomplete ritual being cast by someone capable of ritual magic, make sure that you flatly state that not only is there a danger of the spell going wrong, but hints of what the consequences may be. The reason a non-ritual caster gets no such warning is that they have no way of knowing when they are stumbling into disaster.



Ritual Mishaps as Curses

Consider any of the mishaps either from this table or from the miscasting of a ritual for a curse effect, whether to add to a cursed item, a result of divine intervention or a *bestow curse* spell.

The effects of each miscast spell are meant to be interesting and perhaps the fodder for adventuring, rather than debilitating and show-stopping. Curses should similarly be interesting, and a motivation for more adventure, rather than an obstacle to be dealt with before more fun can be had. Remember that your players should have enough warning before dealing with a flawed ritual to decide if they want to cast it, so that they may accept the consequences.

Ritual Spells

EXORCISM

2nd-level abjuration (ritual)

Caster: Cleric

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: 10 feet

Components: V, S, M (a holy symbol, scripture in any media, such as cuneiform or book)

Duration: Instantaneous

Notable disturbances destroy small objects around you as you attempt to force an unwanted spirit from a possessed individual. As long as you maintain concentration for the entire hour, you can perform an opposed Wisdom or Charisma check against the possessing entity (you may choose which). If you succeed, you drive the spirit out at the culmination of the spell's casting.

Non-ritual Caster: A layman may cast this ritual spell if he is taught by the clergy, though it would be foolhardy to attempt such a task without significant assistance. Non-ritualists that cast this ritual and fail the contest are at risk of being possessed and have disadvantage to checks against any such attempts. Whether the attempt successful or not, the non-ritualist also gains 1d4 levels of exhaustion.

MAGIC SEAL

2nd-level abjuration (ritual)

Caster: Bard, Cleric, Wizard

Casting time: 1 action

Range: 10 feet

Components: V, S, M (chalk containing powdered silver, worth 50 gold, which the spell consumes, and a container, which is effectively consumed by the spell)

Duration: Until the container is broken

After defeating an enemy of a certain type (including celestials, elementals, fey, fiends, or undead), you may imprison their essence within a container. You must have drawn a mystic symbol upon the container beforehand, and you may only cast this spell on a creature that is somehow subdued (knocked out, incapacitated, or dead). Sleeping targets are not subject to this spell.

No matter what state the target is in, it must make a Charisma saving throw to resist. If it fails, it becomes trapped within the receptacle, and cannot escape unless an outside force breaks the container, or they break it from the inside.

A trapped creature may make an attempt to break its prison at every new moon. At this time, the ritual must be cast again, allowing the trapped creature a new saving throw to escape. If the ritual is not cast, the creature automatically breaks free. If this ritual is performed at every new moon for one year, the seal becomes permanent unless broken from the outside.

Non-ritual Caster: A non-ritual caster may attempt to cast this spell, but the magical prison is rendered imperfect. The trapped creature has advantage on its saving throw to escape the prison once it has been trapped. Moreover, it forges a link with the caster while it is imprisoned, and it can attempt to reason with, corrupt, or even cast enchantment spells at the caster once each day at sunset. An evil creature is likely to use this time to thoroughly corrupt its warden before instructing them to set the creature free. This link is broken once the demon is freed, slain, or properly imprisoned.

RITUAL OF THE HARVEST

3rd-level divination (ritual)

Caster: Druid

Casting Time: 1 or 2 hours (see text)

Range: Special (see text)

Components: V, S, M (a sacrifice worth at least 100 gold, typically crops or livestock, which the spell consumes)

Duration: Instantaneous

By communing with the spirits of nature, the ritual caster may perform this two-hour ritual in the form of a raucous feast, culminating in the sacrifice and ritual destruction of crops, livestock, or even a well-made effigy. If the casting is uninterrupted, the forces of nature take notice, and the surrounding area out to a 10-mile radius is blessed with a slight boon to the next harvest, typically increasing yields by 5-10%. A given area may not benefit from this boon more than once a year.

Alternately, the caster may instead meditate for 1 hour, after which the caster is considered to have an advantage on any Wisdom (Survival) and Intelligence (Nature) skill checks, and provides enough sustenance for them and any companions. These benefits last for 24 hours.

Non-ritual Caster: Unscrupulous ritualists and spirits may even seek to replace the normal sacrifice with that of a sentient being, especially if the being happens to be from a rival faction. While this is normally unnecessary, non-ritualists that cast this ritual must use a sentient sacrifice. If you are an amateur and are disrupted during the ritual, nature responds angrily through a local manifestation. This takes the form of an angry elemental, or even natural disasters ranging from droughts to volcanic eruptions.

SÉANCE

1st-level conjuration (ritual)

Caster: Bard, Warlock

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: Self

Components: V, S, M (a crystal ball, tarot deck or séance board worth at least 10 gp)

Duration: Concentration

Through the use of special divining tools, you summon the attention of something oth-

erworldly and often incorporeal. This may manifest as a number of physical disturbances, such as objects being knocked over, or the temperature in the immediate area dropping. This is followed by an eerie quiet as the being turns its attention to the séance participants.

A called entity (typically a ghost) must make a Wisdom saving throw. If it fails, and the entity is compelled to answer any questions honestly for as long as the ritual caster concentrates.

Once concentration on this spell is broken, the entity stays and acts freely until banished, or it may return to its original location at any time. It is up to the GM to decide if the summoned entity is friendly or hostile. The spell caster may banish the ghost as an action.

Non-ritual Caster: If you are an amateur with proficiency with occultist tools, you may attempt to cast this spell with no special training or instruction. You must make a Charisma check with a DC of 15. If you fail, a random entity of the GM's choice is summoned. An unsuccessful summon can act like beacons for rogue entities asking for or even demanding help from the assembled group.

Magic Items

Monster hunting is arduous, and even the best of the best need tools to fight them. While some make due with mortal instruments, others seek artifacts to stem the tide of darkness. In this section, we examine a number of magical items that are either meant to augment the hunt for monsters or to act as an aid to evil.

ARMOR OF THE SMILING TYRANT

Armor (heavy), uncommon

This armor has details and craftsmanship that please the eyes. When wearing this armor, you have advantage on Intimidation and Deception checks. You also have disadvantage on Persuasion checks made against those that do not fear or respect you.

AXE OF PERDITION

Weapon (Axe), very rare (requires attunement)

This smooth black hand axe appears to be made of a solid piece of ebony wood, even including the axe head. You gain a +1 to attack and

damage rolls with this weapon. In addition, any creature hit by this weapon must make a DC 12 Strength saving throw, they are knocked prone on a failure, or prone and stunned for 1d4 rounds if they fail by 5 or more. You can use a bonus action to summon the axe back to your hand.

BAG OF RATS

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This bag appears to be made from rat fur and is uncomfortably itchy to the touch. Once per day, you can reach into the bag and cause a swarm of rats to emerge in a space within 10 feet of you. As a bonus action, you can direct the swarm to use its movement, but you cannot control its action; the swarm attacks anything that is in its space, including you. After 1 minute, the swarm returns to the bag, and can't be summoned again until the next stroke of midnight. If the swarm is defeated or otherwise lost, the bag does not function again until you fill it with cheese worth 1 gp.

BLADE OF EFFICIENT MURDER

Weapon (short sword), rare (requires attunement)

This handsome blade has a crimson red handle, with has marbled red stains along the blade. You gain a +1 to attack and damage rolls with this weapon. You also deal an additional 5 slashing damage when you attack a target and no other living creatures are within 30 feet.

BLOOD GEM

Wondrous item, rare

The blood gem is a sparkling ruby that one might appraise to be worth 1000 gold or more. When it comes into your possession, it cannot be sold or traded, and other creatures view it as a worthless rock.

Curse. You cannot be rid of this stone, and attempts to leave it or throw it away are futile; it always reappears on your person. Any time you come into contact with coins or gems, you begin to weep blood for 1d4 minutes. The curse ends if you are subject to a *remove curse* spell, or if you forsake your worldly possessions and live a life of austerity for a year and a day. In either case, the ruby crumbles to dust, perhaps reforming in some other location.

CLAWS OF THE PREDATOR

Weapon (claw), rare (requires attunement)

This twin set of claws are grasped so that three blades jut from your hands. The claws otherwise function as a pair of short swords that give you +1 to attack and damage rolls. If both claws strike the same target during your turn, the target must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a success, there is no effect, but on a failure, the target is frightened for 1 round, or 1d4 rounds if they fail the saving throw by 5 or more. This ability does not have to be activated but expends a charge. Claws have 3 charges that reset at sunset.

CLOAK OF THE SLASHER

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This billowing cloak moves almost as if on its own, and trails behind you like an extension of your being. While wearing this cloak, your stealth checks are made with advantage. If you are in dim light, you can hide as an action, even if being observed.

Curse. Once you draw a weapon, you cannot willingly drop it until you slay a creature. If you hold a weapon while wearing this cloak during a sunset, you must also make a DC 13 Charisma saving throw. If you fail, you are considered charmed and are compelled to find and slay an innocent living creature. The next morning you awake and have murky memories of the event. You cannot remove this cloak until you are subject to a *remove curse* spell.

CONSECRATION SALTS

Wondrous item, very rare

These salts are said to be made from the bodies of ancient holy men. None know for sure, but they are certainly of a holy origin. When spread around the site of a haunting or the grave of an unruly ghostly entity, the haunt or entity are rendered nullified for a year and a day. If the site is disturbed or subject to a gruesome act (murder, dark ritual, etc), then the activity resumes. If the site is not disturbed for a year and a day, the activity is dispelled entirely.

CROWN OF CORRUPTION

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

This crown appears to be made of sharp obsidian

and is adorned with precious gems that range from blue to purple. Even just laying eyes on it compels people to wear it or seek the power that it represents. It has passed hands from one kingdom to the next, coveted as a spoil of war for ages untold. When worn, the crown increases your Charisma to 20 if it is not already 20 or higher. It also allows you to expend a charge to cast either the *domination* or *suggestion* spell. The crown has two charges that recharge at midnight.

Curse. Once per week, the crown takes a wicked idea from your head and makes it real, as per a wish. The crown will make anything manifest, short of ending your life, though you are free to fulfill that wish yourself.

DAGGER OF THE DEATH CULT

Weapon (dagger), rare (requires attunement)

This dagger appears made from shards of bone melded together by unnatural means, with a small femur for a handle. You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon. If you attack a restrained creature with this dagger, you deal maximum damage. If you attack an incapacitated creature with this dagger, the creature takes maximum damage and must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature immediately loses all hit points and begins making death saving throws. If you deal damage to a creature that is making death saving throws and use this dagger, they immediately die and their soul is stored in the dagger. Only one such soul can reside in the dagger, and a special ritual must be performed to remove the soul for more unsavory purposes.

DEMONIC IDOL

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

This item attracts the attention of fiends, undead, and evil fey. This idol can be used in a special sacrificial ritual that takes 1 hour and requires the death of an innocent. At the end of the ritual, if the ritual is performed correctly, and summons a **horned devil** that is loyal to you. If the ritual is improperly performed or interrupted during the hour, 1d12 **lemures** are summoned that attack everyone in sight for 1d12 minutes.

Curse. The item gives you glimpses of the hellscape that torture your waking moments. With each long rest, there is a 1-50% chance that you gain no benefit from the long rest and instead gain a level of exhaustion. If you roll 51-100%, then you can rest normally and even remove an exhaustion level as normal. If you die while you own this idol, your soul is claimed by the Nine Hells. You cannot rid yourself of the curse until a remove curse is cast upon you, at which time you must untune from the idol.

GHOST WARD LANTERN

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

This lantern glows even when not lit, appearing luminescent and captivating. When lit, the lantern can ward off incorporeal undead, who can't approach within 50 feet of the lantern unless they make a DC 12 Charisma saving throw. The lamp burns holy water rather than oil. 1 flask of holy water lasts for 10 minutes. Lighting the lantern takes an action. Incorporeal undead within the radius when the lantern is lit must make a Charisma saving throw or be frightened for 1d4 rounds and be unable to enter the radius of the lantern.

GLADIATOR'S BLOOD GLOVES

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This pair of cestus is perpetually coated in dried blood that cannot be washed off. With them, you add your strength bonus twice to unarmed attacks. You can grapple a creature one size larger, or two creatures of the appropriate size by gripping them with each glove, and you can also initiate a grapple as a bonus action.

GRAVEGOOD WEAPON

Weapon (any), uncommon (requires attunement)

When a righteous warrior dies and becomes a zombie, the warrior's indignation can manifest through their weapon. Such a weapon gains magical properties. You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon, but only against undead. Such weapons are known to exist when heroes are slain in rituals dedicated to fiends or when transmuted by fey, working against the respective creature types.

GRAVE ROBBER'S SHOVEL

Wondrous item, uncommon

The shaft of this shovel is black and the blade a dark grey steel. This shovel can magically exhume a corpse without disturbing the grave or coffin. The shovel can do so once and regains the ability to do so at midnight.

HEELSTRIKE ARROW

Weapon (arrow), uncommon

This thin arrow is made entirely from a light steel. When you attack with this arrow, you gain a +1 to attack and damage rolls. If you strike a creature with this arrow, it must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, its walking speeds are halved for 3d4 rounds. The arrow is destroyed when it strikes a creature, but not when it misses its intended target.

IDOL OF THE PERNICIOUS CAT GOD

Wondrous item, legendary

This idol looks like an ornately detailed miniature statue of a black cat wearing gleaming jewelry. When you attune to this idol, you gain wondrous catlike powers. You gain a climb speed of 40 feet, darkvision out to 60 feet (or 120 if you already possessed darkvision), and advantage on Dexterity checks and saving throws.

Curse. You cannot willingly be parted from this idol unless you are the subject of a *remove curse* spell. After every long rest, you must make a DC 10 Charisma saving throw. If you ever fail this saving throw, your soul is bound into the idol, and your body is inhabited by a cat spirit. The cat spirit sows mischief in your name, acting like a licentious criminal. Each midnight thereafter, you must make a DC 14 Charisma saving throw to return to your body. Once you have returned, you are not subject to the idol's curse for a month, after which the idol attempts to replace you with the same mischievous spirit, which seems to delight in ruining your life and reputation. When you fail your third such saving throw, you are instead permanently charmed to behave as the cat spirit does, and the idol can be transferred to a new victim.

HOLY FIRE

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This flame is imparted by a divine source and can be transferred to others by holy ritual. It imparts its beneficiary with the ability to speak and understand any language. It can also be expended to expel a curse, a possession, disease, or mutation. Once used in such a way, the flame flickers out forever.

LONGSWORD OF PIETY

Weapon (longsword), rare (requires attunement)

Said to be a relic from a defunct religious order, this sword shines with a soft blue glow out to 10 feet, and grants you a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls. In addition, the sword has 1 charge. At any time while you are wielding the sword, you can expend a charge to automatically succeed on one saving throw. The sword regains one charge after being bathed in holy water in the sunlight. This sword functions only as a normal longsword in the hands of anyone with an evil alignment and falls out of its wielder's hands if the wielder seeks to harm an innocent, even if by magical compulsion.

OBSERVANT STATUE

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

A statue that can be made from nearly any substance, and shaped to appear as nearly any humanoid shape. This statue, once attuned, can be activated to "observe" its surroundings when a certain condition is met, such as when an intruder enters without whispering a passcode, or when a certain type of creature (such as an aberration or fiend) approaches within 100 feet. If such a condition is met, you are magically alerted, and can later touch the statue to "see" what it has seen for up to 10 minutes from the point when the statue was triggered, though you cannot hear any sounds of the event.

ROBE OF SHADOWS

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

You can slip into the shadows and become invisible as a bonus action. You can plane shift into the shadowfell once per day. You can use your bonus action to snuff out spells that create light

as long as they are of 3rd level or below, or are cast with a 3rd level slot or below.

SWORD OF PURSUIT

Weapon (any sword), rare (requires attunement)

This gleaming sword has inlaid runes that undulate in the light. You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls with this weapon. This sword has 3 charges. Whenever you deal damage to a creature with this weapon, you can spend a charge to designate the creature as your tracking target. Attempts to track that creature have advantage until the next dawn, at which time you can spend another charge to continue attempting to track that creature. You also know the direction (but not distance) of your quarry. This sword regains spent charges at dawn unless you are actively in pursuit of a creature.

TEETH OF THE DEAD

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

Once per day, this set of teeth can be inserted into the mouth of a corpse, and allow it to speak. A corpse that has been dead for more than a year only speaks its last thoughts, while a younger corpse can converse with varying ability about the knowledge it had in life. The teeth can be used once and must be cleaned with a paste made from cremated ashes before they can function again.

UNDERTAKER'S OIL

Wondrous item, uncommon

When full, the flask containing this oil seems transparent and immaterial, though it is not. When poured on a weapon, the weapon similarly appears translucent and can deal damage to undead as if it were a magic weapon. The flask can coat one weapon or 10 pieces of ammunition, and once poured will function for 5 minutes.

WEREFANG

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

This pendant is created from the tooth or teeth of a were-creature. It will not function during the day, but at night you can call upon it to transform you into the same kind of were-creature to which the tooth belonged. This ef-

fect is otherwise treated as a *shapechange* spell, lasting 2 minutes. After the first minute, you must make a Charisma saving throw at the start of each round to avoid going berserk, using every action to attack the nearest creature. This effect can be dispelled prematurely by magic or if you drop to 0 hit points, but will otherwise last for the full 2 minutes.

THE WISHING DOLL

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

This doll looks devilishly detailed and beautifully crafted. Close inspection shows that the doll moves ever so slightly, usually shifting its gaze in an unsettling way. This item automatically attunes to anyone that possesses it for more than a day. Once attuned, your casual wishes are granted, usually in the worst possible way. If the item is discovered to have magical properties, it can be used to make conscious wishes, and similarly makes them result in catastrophe.

When making a conscious wish, you can make a DC 20 Intelligence check. On a failure, the wish goes completely awry, resulting in mayhem that outweighs any benefit of the wish.

On a success, you can make a good *wish* that undoes any harm done by any previous harm done by the doll (often for wishing the doll never existed), or gain a random magical boon (your GM can pick a boon from the effects of a *deck of many things* from the following list: the fates, knight, throne, vizier). Whenever a good wish is made, the doll vanishes forever regardless of the wish.

WOLFSBANE AMULET

Wondrous item, common

This amulet takes the form of a bit of fur kept in a tiny vial. When worn, you have advantage to resist the curse of lycanthropy and gain +1 to your armor class against lycanthropes. The small vial can be broken against a lycanthrope, requiring them to make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a success, the lycanthrope is frightened for 1 round. On a failure, they are frightened for one minute.

WOLFSBANE VIAL

Wondrous item, common

This simple potion is made for emergency situ-

ations. Many apothecaries and sages have at least one vial on hand. Drinking this potion can stave off a lycanthropy curse for one night.

ZOMBIE BEACON

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

This strange monolith is small enough to be moved by cart and horse. Those who come across it feel a strange draw to own the monolith. If someone claims the monolith, they can attune to it by keeping it near them for 3 days. On the sunset of the third day, all dead creatures within 100 miles rise as **zombies** and begin to move towards the monolith.

Curse. If attuned for more than 1 day, you must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw at the end of that day, and each month thereafter. On a failure, you become a **zombie marshall**, and the beacon is destroyed. The beacon cannot be unattuned or separated from you unless you are subject to a remove curse. The beacon can be destroyed otherwise by impaling a **zombie marshall** against it and reciting a holy scripture.

ZOMBIE POWDER

Wondrous item, uncommon

When spread on a corpse that has been dead for no more than 24 hours, it becomes a docile **zombie** servant under your control. The zombie exists for a tenday. If the Zombie comes into contact with fresh human blood at any point, it goes berserk in the same manner as a **flesh golem**.



Chapter 08 – Horrific Hazards

Just as dangerous as the creatures that are born of the night are the less tangible horrors that threaten the safety and sanity of the innocent. These hazards can come in the form of disease, poisons, or even haunts called upon by the ethereal forces of darkness.

The following are some hazards that are especially prevalent in horror games. Some are expanded versions of current horrors, such as new poisons, and supernatural diseases. The haunt section provides a new system of supernatural hazards that can cause mayhem and distress to your players as they traverse haunted places and sites of atrocities.

Poisons

Basilisk Breath (Inhaled). This poison must be harvested from a special gland in the neck of a Basilisk. A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw, or become restrained. It must repeat the saving throw at the end of the next round. On a failure, it becomes petrified for 1d4 days. On a success, the creature is no longer restrained and the effect ends.

Cost: 750 gp

Bebelith Poison (Injury). This poison must be harvested from recently slain bebelith and is extremely hard to preserve. Proving the efficacy of this poison to potential buyers is even harder. A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or take 36 (8d8) poison damage and gains the poisoned condition. The creature must repeat the saving throw at the end of every minute. With each successive failure, the poisoned condition persists, and the target takes an additional 13 (3d8) poison damage. After two successful saves, the poison ends.

Cost: 1,500 gp

Burning Angel Feather Fumes (Inhaled). This poison is harvested from both good and evil outsiders, as demon fat is required to make the feathers burn. A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 14 (4d6) poison damage. Additionally, the creature becomes hideous and has disadvantage on any charisma ability checks for 1d4 days. On a success, the creature suffers no damage, and the disfigurement lasts only 1d4 minutes.

Cost: 300 gp

POISONS		
Item	Type	Price per Dose
Basilisk Breath	Inhaled	750 gp
Bebelith Poison	Injury	1,500 gp
Burning Angel Feather	Fumes	Inhaled 300 gp
Devil's Eye	Injury	400 gp
Giant Centipede Poison	Injury	275 gp
Giant Scorpion Poison	Injury	375 gp
Giant Spider Venom	Injury	250 gp
Lifebane	Ingested	600 gp
Sasson Juice	Contact	700 gp
Vilestar	Contact	800 gp

Devil's Eye (Injury). This poison must be harvested from an evil outsider; it need not come from a devil, specifically. A creature subject to this poison must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or lose all damage resistances and immunities for 1d4 rounds. The creature must repeat the saving throw at the end of every round, ending the poison on a save.

Cost: 400 gp

Giant Centipede Poison (Injury). This poison must be harvested from a dead or incapacitated giant centipede. A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 10 (3d6) poison damage. If the poison damage reduces the creature to 0 hit points, the creature is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

Cost: 275 gp

Giant Scorpion Poison (Injury). This poison must be harvested from a dead or incapacitated giant scorpion. A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or take 22 (4d10) poison damage, or half as much on a successful save.

Cost: 375 gp

Giant Spider Venom. (Injury). This poison must be harvested from a dead or incapacitated giant spider. A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned, and gain one level of exhaustion. The creature must repeat the saving throw at the end of every round, suffering another exhaustion level on a failure. On a success, the poison ends, and the creature recovers any accumulated exhaustion levels at the rate of 1 per minute.

Cost: Cost: 250 gp

Lifebane (Ingested). A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, or take 27 (6d8) poison damage, as

well as losing an equal amount from their hit point maximum. The creature must repeat this saving throw at the end of each round, taking 9 (2d8) damage on each successive failure, as well as reducing their hit point maximum by an equal amount. After two successful saves, the poison ends.

Cost: 600 gp

Sasson Juice (Contact). A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or take 18 (4d8) poison damage and become paralyzed for 1 minute. On a success, the creature takes half damage and has disadvantage on any physical ability checks or attack rolls for 1 round.

Cost: 700 gp

Vilestar (Contact). A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, or have their Strength reduced to 3 for 24 hours. Additionally, the creature gains an exhaustion level for every turn that it performs an action during combat. The creature must repeat the saving throw at the end of every hour, ending the effect on a successful save.

Cost: 800 gp

A note about price: Even though it would seem that poisonous creatures may become a gold mine from harvesting their poisons, remember that these poisons often must be processed for preservation or efficacy. Doing so generally costs time for crafting, and requires that half the cost of each dose be spent towards this preparation. Additionally, selling poisons is usually frowned upon, hazardous, and can attract unwanted attention just as with magical items. Access to a guild that deals with poisons can generally facilitate such transactions.

Diseases

With less magical healing, disease is a very real danger to the inhabitants of the Mists. Mundane diseases claim many lives, and magical disease are even more terrifying.

ASHEN INFLAMMATION

This disease is a mounting fever that eventually consumes its victims in fire. Those coming into contact with infected individuals, or the ash of the immolated victims must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become infected. Creatures that do not breath receive advantage on this saving throw.

The first symptoms of the disease appear in 1d4 + 1 hours, as the infected begin to develop a heavy fever and rash. The infected creature suffers 1 level of exhaustion; while the infected creature has at least 1 level of exhaustion they are also vulnerable to cold damage. At the end of each long rest, the infected creature must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, they take 2 (1d4) fire damage for each level of exhaustion they possess and gain another level of exhaustion. On a success, they take no damage and lose a level of exhaustion. If the creature reaches level 6 of exhaustion, they burst into bright flame and then become a pile of loose ash. All creatures within 10 feet of the dying creature must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 27 (5d10) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Once the infected creature loses all levels of exhaustion, the disease ends.

ROSEN DOOM

The disease known as rosen doom is identified by the haunting reddish hue that affected corpses take on. The blood of the deceased victims also remains a strange reddish color even decades after their death, partially preserving corpses, and retaining the virulence of the disease for just as long.

This disease is primarily spread through contact with infected blood, although any bodily fluid can transfer the disease. A creature that makes contact with such a fluid must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, becoming infected on a failure.

Symptoms develop within 1d4 days. Infected creatures suffer 1 level of exhaustion. While exhausted, the creature coughs blood and develops

weeping sores across their body. At the end of each long rest, the creature must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 11 (2d6) necrotic damage on a failure and gaining 1 level of exhaustion.

On a successful save, the DC of the saving throw is reduced by 1d4+1. When the saving throw DC becomes 0, the disease ends.

CALCIFICATION VIRUS

This virus slowly turns the victim's bodily fluids into a solid calcified substance. Sufferers typically suffocate on their own blood well before their blood completely calcifies. As the body decomposes, fluids calcify as well, until the body turns into bones and dust.

The dust carries the disease and can become infectious if breathed in or ingested. Creatures exposed to the disease must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become infected.

Within a day, the victim begins to feel pain and fatigue. After 3 days, the creature begins to develop rough patches over the skin that feel hard and thick. At this stage, the creature has disadvantage on Constitution checks (but not saving throw). After 8 days, the creatures become blind and develops stiff joints, gaining disadvantage on Dexterity checks, as well as reducing their movement speed by half. After 18 days the infected creature must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw every hour or begin to suffocate. There is no cure for the crystal virus. Creatures suffering from the disease remain infected until the disease is cured with magic or they die. Curiously, if an infected creature has their shape changed, they may attempt another save to end the disease when they return to their original form.

MARROW OOZE INFECTION

Though not technically a disease, the marrow ooze parasite nonetheless infects its victims with its presence. A marrow ooze enters the body through a wound or exposed orifice (potentially the mouth or ears) while the victim is sleeping, and begins to consume the host's marrow. The victim can make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw to resist the infection. On a success, the marrow ooze escapes avoiding being destroyed by the host's immune system. On a failure, the host is infected but actually feels better than ever. Infected creatures begin to look more

attractive, and are healed of any bone deformities, bone conditions, or diseases of the blood.

Each day thereafter, an infected creature must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the host reduces their hit point maximum by 10, to a minimum of 1. Once the host has reached this minimum, the marrow ooze splits and horrifically transforms the host's limbs into new marrow oozes in a process that resembles the melting of a piece of wax. The host is left without limbs, but their hit point maximum is restored. These victims are at increased risk of developing a traumatic insanity.

A host that succeeds at two saving throws (they need not be consecutive) can expel the creature, though the expulsion process is painful and difficult. Once the expulsion process begins, the host begins to bleed from every orifice and loses body fluids through violent and frequent body emissions. This process reduces deals 2d6 piercing and 2d6 poison damage unless the host receives proper medical care (requiring a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check). If a victim should die due to this violent process, their insides are liquefied, and 1d2 marrow oozes emerge from the body.

MARBLEWIFE SYNDROME

Though some legends tell of master crafters creating lovers out of stone, this disease was named for such a fable. The disease turns its victims to stone and can be contracted by a not yet petrified victim, as well as during "spore" seasons in which the petrified victim gives off a fungal-like shedding that can further affect other creatures. These seasonal spores complicate attempts to unpetrify victims, which often leads to the destruction or entombment of victims that might otherwise be cured.

After physical contact with an infected creature, a victim must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or become infected. If an infected statue is sporing, a creature that comes within 20 feet of the statue must make the same saving throw. Sporing statues are covered with a flaky substance that resembles dried paint.

A victim begins to lose points from their Dexterity score at the rate of 2d4 per 24 hour period. If this results in a Dexterity score of 1 or less, the victim becomes petrified. Any means of unpetrifying the victim

will also remove the disease, and infected individuals also can benefit from either any means that remove disease or that remove the petrified condition, both of which cure the infected.

There are dreaded tales of entire cities succumbing to this disease, drawing in the curious and the greedy, only to add to the grim menagerie of lifelike statues.

TERROR PLAGUE

Called by some the "rabid fear", this disease attacks the mind and is spread through bodily fluids, most commonly by sweat. Victims begin to see hallucinations of their darkest fears, often attacking others and spreading infection in an addled attempt to fight off the visions of terror.

A victim exposed to the body fluids of an infected must make a DC 12 Constitution save or become infected. Onset happens during the first evening of infection, and symptoms manifest as visions of dangerous and deadly creatures or hazards, or often the subject of the victim's phobias or self-doubts. Once these visions begin, the victim sweats profusely, to the point that they drip with sweat. Infected creatures are unable to sleep or rest, and gain no benefits from a short or long rest other than staving off exhaustion. Prolonged infection might result in long-term madness (see madness rules).

One cure for this disease is to gouge one's eyes out. Though not a popular cure, it can be a necessary one to stave off madness and sleep deprivation. This does not so much cure the disease as it prevents the symptoms, and the victim can still transmit the disease to others (though they do not suffer from the heavy sweat that the visions induce). The only other non-magical cure must be procured from the blood of a **hag** and requires a DC 20 Wisdom (Medicine) check to properly distill into a working cure. Whatever the connection between hags and this disease may be, it only serves to make each all the more terrifying.

TELEPATHITIS

A strange and unusual condition, telepathitis is transmitted by mental contact with an infected creature, or more rarely through physical contact with brain tissue. Such contact requires a DC 13 Constitution save if physical contact is made, or a DC 11 Wisdom save if mental contact is made. Failure results in infection.

A creature so infected can begin to read thoughts, but does so erratically, gleaning surface thoughts from any nearby creatures. Through mental strain, an infected creature can hone the ability and listen to specific thoughts, as per the spell *detect thoughts*. They can only use this ability once and regain the ability to do so after each long rest.

However, this and other mental stressors cause the disease to worsen, and they begin to deteriorate. An infected victim gains an exhaustion level each time they strain to use their ability to detect thoughts and gain an additional exhaustion level if they read the thoughts of a creature with an intelligence score of 18 or higher. The infected creature also gains a level of exhaustion if they are around a crowd of 10 or more for more than a minute. With each level of exhaustion gained, the infected suffers from a headache of increasing intensity.

When the infected creature reaches 6 levels of exhaustion, their head explodes and they die. This can only be prevented by prolonged sensory deprivation and rest. The infected creature cannot have any levels of exhaustion nor be exposed to any thoughts for a minimum of 3 days. If such conditions are met, they are no longer infected.

Curiously, creatures that resemble brains are susceptible to this disease, which displays more as a wasting cancerous condition. Intellect devourers, grell, and brain consuming creatures are likely vectors for this disease, which sometimes mercifully thins their populations.

SHADOWED TYPHUS

This magical illness infects a victim's shadow, causing the victim to slowly become a dark shade.

This disease may be contracted if an infected creature stands in your shadow, or by lurking in the same shadow as an infected creature. Creatures of the outsider and aberration type are immune to the effects of the disease, but may still carry and transmit the disease to others.

Symptoms develop the sunset after contraction. At that time, the victim begins feeling weak, and their shadow appears darker than usual. The victim begins to fear any light and feels pain and anguish if exposed to sunlight (this exposure does not cause any physical harm). The creature must make a DC 15 Constitution check to willingly step into any bright light.

If allowed to linger in the shadows, the disease worsens, and the infected creature begins to look as though they are in the shadows even when in the light. After three days without exposure to any bright light, the creature begins a transformation into shadow that takes place from sunset to dawn after the third day of prolonged darkness. The infected creature becomes a **shadow** that is able to create other shadows through disease rather than by its strength drain ability (which otherwise remains unchanged).

The only cure for this disease is prolonged exposure to sunlight (1 uninterrupted hour), radiant damage (equal to half of maximum hit points), or a lesser restoration. Spells and abilities that remove curses or diseases will also end this disease.

RISEN SICKNESS

Among all disease, few are as feared as risen sickness. Fabled to have toppled empires, this sickness creates undead with staggering efficiency, and at the least ensures a culture of fear and paranoia. Even the rumor of risen sickness is enough to rally mobs to stamp it out, and kings have been known to wipe out entire communities as a safety measure, whether it was merited or not.

What is not certain is how the disease starts, but when it does, corpses begin to rise and hunger for flesh. This disease often spreads to long-dead corpses who have no resistance to the disease whatsoever, and swell the ranks of the risen.

Walking corpses are considered zombies, replacing their slam attack with a bite attack that imparts the infection (+3 to hit, 5 ft reach, one target, 1d4+1 piercing damage). These corpses infect their victims with a disease that kills and raises even more walking corpses. An individual exposed to a bite must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw. Failure means the victim is infected. After every hour of infection, the infected creature loses 2d6 hit points from their maximum. If this maximum reaches zero, the infected creature dies and rises as a zombie within 1 minute of death.

There is no simple cure for this disease outside of magic, though there are special herbs that can remove the infection before death. An infected victim that is cured is also restored to their normal hit point maximum. There are rumors of random individuals that are naturally immune to the disease,

though such tales also say that the immune are carriers, and unwittingly help the spread of the disease.

Haunts

Though the world of horror fantasy certainly has ghosts and other ephemeral horrors, they are not the same as the supernatural activity that can encompass a “haunt”.

A haunt is a ghostly resonance that can affect a creature that triggers it. Such haunts are very likely to occur in places of death and psychic distress, such as torture chambers, mass graveyards, and battlefields. The nature of each haunt is unique and can cause a milieu of terrible effects, from a scare all the way to death.

Building a Haunt

The following tables can assist in the guidelines for creating a given haunt. Each contributing factor can affect the haunt’s final CR, and determine the difficulty and/or deadliness of encountering one.

Most haunts have three basic elements that might affect its difficulty: The passive perception needed to detect and avoid it, its effect, and how hard it is to overcome the effect.

There are also elements of a haunt that do not affect its CR, such as its trigger, and location. The base CR of a haunt is 0 before modifications. If a haunt is still 0 or less after all modifications, its effective CR is 1/2.

Although each haunt has a CR, the GM can determine whether a group has successfully overcome a haunt, whether that means surviving the haunt or destroying it.

Haunt Construction

Haunt Factor	CR Adjustment
7-9	-1
10-12	+0
13-14	+1
15-18	+2
20+	+3

Passive Perception to detect

DC of effect	
Below 10	-1
10	+0
11-12	+1
13-15	+2
16-18	+3
19-22	+4

Average Damage Dealt	
0-10	+0
11-21	+1
22-30	+2
30-45	+3
46+	+4
60+	+5
75+	+6

Add +1 to the CR adjustment for every additional 15 points of damage

Condition	
Exhaustion, poisoned, deafened	+1
Blinded, frightened, restrained	+2
Charmed, paralyzed, stunned, suffocation	+3
Death, petrification	+4

Maximum number of creatures affected	
1	-1
2-3	+0
4+	+1



Sample Haunts

SPECTRAL KNIFE

CR ½

Location: Roadside where the highwaymen murdered the newlywed couple.

Passive perception to notice: 9

Trigger: Any one creature that approaches within 100 feet of the site at night.

Effect: A young couple once attempted to travel to a neighboring town to consult a sage regarding the bride's sudden illness. The highwaymen sought to take the money that the couple had for the sage's fee. The highwaymen killed the couple and took the money, and were never brought to justice. The husband's survival knife drew the blood of one of the thugs, and still haunts the site. As it is a prominent legend in the town, there is a sign on the highway that warns people not to approach the road at night. Anyone that ignores the warning and approaches the site is attacked by a spectral knife. An afflicted creature must make a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or take 5 (1d10) psychic damage. The haunt stops after the first attack but is reset once each hour, on the hour until sunrise.

Destroying the animated knife: The haunt can be ended if the brigands are brought to justice. Barring that, sprinkling the blood of a murderer on the site will also end the haunt.

CHILLING DARKNESS

CR 4

Location: Wine Cellar

Passive perception to notice: 14

Trigger: Three or more creatures present

Effect: When triggered, the corks from all the wine bottles appear to come out, and the contents of the bottles spill out into a chilly darkness that envelops the immediate area. All creatures currently in the wine cellar must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 14 (3d10) cold damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. This darkness foils the darkvision of living things. Those who wish to exit must make a DC 13 Dexterity check to avoid falling prone for each round of movement they make, but if no danger is present, there is nothing inherently dangerous about the darkness, as the cold damage only occurs once. The darkness persists for 10 minutes,

after which it dissipates, the wine bottles appear unopened, and the haunt can begin anew if the trigger conditions are met.

Destroying the Chilling Darkness: A house servant was once brought to this room and brutally murdered for attempting to steal wine. Speaking a prayer of rest for the soul of the house servant can quell the haunt, even if it is in progress. A DC 14 Intelligence (Religion) check might be appropriate to know of an appropriate prayer.

THE PAINTING

CR 9

Location: Hallway leading to the east wing of the mansion.

Passive Perception to notice: 18

Trigger: Being adjacent to the painting.

Effect: An ominous painting hangs in the hallway, depicting the former master of the mansion. When seen from the corner of the eye, the master appears craven and ghoulish. Anyone that nears the painting must make a DC 16 Charisma saving throw or become charmed and compelled to attack the nearest living creature for up to 5 rounds. If there are no living creatures to attack, the afflicted victim must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become wracked with nightmarish visions and is dealt 27 (5d10) psychic damage. Those that succeed at the saving throw only take half damage. Only one such creature can be afflicted in this way. The haunt can be triggered only once per night.

Destroying the painting: The painting itself can be destroyed, but it merely reappears at the next stroke of midnight. To unravel the haunt, one must draw a circle of salt on the floor near the painting, and perform an esoteric rite of exorcism. This rite can be performed with a DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check.

Chapter 09 – Fear & Madness

Insanity plays a strong part in the elements of horror, as fear is a cloying presence that can un-hinge the mind. The madness that takes hold can be a signpost of horror, as the protagonists meet twisted minds that have been broken by inhuman creatures, as well as mortal born cruelties like war and terror.

Here we give codified rules on how sanity (and the lack thereof) can play a role in your game, and how you can inject the substance of sanity into your game, creating a mood of fear and uncertainty.

- † Different madness rules (use HP as madness, and dying gains you a permanent insanity)
- † Psychic damage types now deal Sanity damage.
- † Permanent Insanity can only be removed through extensive downtime activities or divine intervention
- † Insanity can serve as a mechanical disadvantage against certain creatures.
- † As a GM, you can elect to let a player survive “death”, but gain an insanity specific to the cause of death.
- † Insanity can be a source of inspiration, may work well with backgrounds for RP purposes.

MADNESS

In a typical campaign, characters aren't driven mad by the horrors they face and the carnage they inflict day after day, but sometimes the stress of being an adventurer can be too much to bear. If your campaign has a strong horror theme, you might want to use madness as a way to reinforce that theme, emphasizing the extraordinarily horrific nature of the threats the adventurers face.

GOING MAD

Various magical effects can inflict madness on an otherwise stable mind. Certain spells, such as *contact other plane* and *symbol*, can cause insanity, and you can use the madness rules here instead of the spell effects in the *SRD*. Diseases, poisons, and planar effects such as psychic wind or the howling winds of Pandemonium can all inflict madness. Some artifacts can also break the psyche of a character who uses or becomes attuned to them.

Resisting a madness-inducing effect usually requires a Wisdom or Charisma saving throw.

MADNESS EFFECTS

Madness can be short-term, long-term, or indefinite. Most relatively mundane effects impose short-term madness, which lasts for just a few minutes. More horrific effects or cumulative effects can result in long-term or indefinite madness.

A character afflicted with short-term madness is subjected to an effect from the Short-Term Madness table for 1d10 minutes.

A character afflicted with long-term madness is subjected to an effect from the Long-Term Madness table for 1d10 x 10 hours.

A character afflicted with indefinite madness gains a new character flaw from the Indefinite Madness table that lasts until cured.

SHORT-TERM MADNESS

d100	Effect (lasts 1d10 minutes)
01-20	The character retreats into his or her mind and becomes paralyzed. The effect ends if the character takes any damage.

21-30	The character becomes incapacitated and spends the duration screaming, laughing, or weeping.
31 - 40	The character becomes frightened and must use his or her action and movement each round to flee from the source of the fear.
41 - 50	The character begins babbling and is incapable of normal speech or spell-casting.
51 - 60	The character must use his or her action each round to attack the nearest creature.
61-70	The character experiences vivid hallucinations and has disadvantage on ability checks.
71 - 75	The character does whatever anyone tells him or her to do that isn't obviously self-destructive.
76- 80	The character experiences an overpowering urge to eat something strange such as dirt, slime, or offal.
81-90	The character is stunned.
91-100	The character falls unconscious.

LONG-TERM MADNESS

D100	Effect (lasts 1d10 x 10 hours)
01-10	The character feels compelled to repeat a specific activity over and over, such as washing hands, touching things, praying, or counting coins.
11-20	The character experiences vivid hallucinations and has disadvantage on ability checks.
21-30	The character suffers extreme paranoia. The character has disadvantage on Wisdom and Charisma checks.
31-40	The character regards something (usually the source of madness) with intense revulsion as if affected by the antipathy effect of the <i>antipathy/sympathy</i> spell.
41-45	The character experiences a powerful delusion. Choose a potion. The character imagines that he or she is under its effects.

46-55	The character becomes attached to a "lucky charm," such as a person or an object, and has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws while more than 30 feet from it.
56-65	The character is blinded (25%) or deafened (75%).
66-75	The character experiences uncontrollable tremors or tics, which impose disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws that involve Strength or Dexterity.
76-85	The character suffers from partial amnesia. The character knows who he or she is and retains racial traits and class features, but doesn't recognize other people or remember anything that happened before the madness took effect.



86-90	Whenever the character takes damage, he or she must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be affected as though he or she failed a saving throw against the <i>confusion</i> spell. The <i>confusion</i> effect lasts for 1 minute.
91-95	The character loses the ability to speak.
96-100	The character falls unconscious. No amount of jostling or damage can wake the character.

INDEFINITE MADNESS

dl00	Flaw (lasts until cured)
01-15	"Being drunk keeps me sane."
16-25	"I keep whatever I find."
26-30	"I try to become more like someone else I know adopting his or her style of dress, mannerisms, and name."
31-35	"I must bend the truth, exaggerate, or outright lie to be interesting to other people."
36-45	"Achieving my goal is the only thing of interest to me, and I'll ignore everything else to pursue it."
46-50	"I find it hard to care about anything that goes on around me."
51-55	"I don't like the way people judge me all the time."
56-70	"I am the smartest, wisest, strongest, fastest, and the most beautiful person I know."
71-80	"I am convinced that powerful enemies are hunting me, and their agents are everywhere I go. I am sure they're watching me all the time."
81-85	"There's only one person I can trust. And only I can see this special friend."
86-95	"I can't take anything seriously. The more serious the situation, the funnier I find it."
96-100	"I've discovered that I really like killing people."

CURING MADNESS

A *calm emotions* spell can suppress the effects of madness, while a *lesser restoration* spell can rid a character of a short-term or long-term madness. Depending on the source of the madness, *remove curse* or *dispel evil* might also prove effective. A *greater restoration* spell or more powerful magic is required to rid a character of indefinite madness.

Optional Madness

System Modifications

This system is an addendum to the normal madness system and adds both complexity and options to your game. You can use some or all of this system, and the list of insanities is handy for use even if you ignore the system rules within.

MADNESS EVENTS

DC	Event
DC 8	Surprised to find a mangled animal carcass.
DC 11	Surprised to find a human body part.
DC 13	Surprised to find a human corpse, finding a stream flowing with blood.
DC 14	Finding a mangled human corpse, awakening trapped in a coffin, seeing a ghoul.
DC 15	Witnessing a friend's violent death, meeting someone you know to be dead.
DC 16	Experiencing extreme pain, seeing a corpse rise from its grave.
DC 20	Seeing an evil deity, being the only survivor of a large-scale massacre.

New Category-

Permanent Insanity

A character who gains any level of insanity gains 1 point of madness. That point of madness must be removed through some kind of therapy or magic. Someone who gains 6 madness points becomes permanently insane. You can adjust this number up and

down as you like depending on the nature and grittiness of the campaign. A permanently insane character becomes an NPC under the control of the GM. A character who has gone permanently insane can never be normal again. He is forever lost in his own world and from the reality of the environment that surrounds him. The character may be a ravening lunatic or outwardly indistinguishable from a normal person; however, the character has fallen into a deep, internal corruption by searching forbidden knowledge.

A GM may use Table 1-5: Random Indefinite Insanity to outline the disorder a permanently insane character suffers.

Expanded Madness Tables

These tables can offer some alternatives

INDEFINITE MADNESS

The following disorders are examples of permanent insanities that might afflict a character. Consider them as types of indefinite madness that are available in place of the offered tables. They may also represent a deeper permanent madness, though such choices are left to the GM as they decide how to run the character as an NPC.

SHORT-TERM MADNESS	
D100	Effect (lasts 1d10 minutes)
01-20	Character faints (can be awakened by vigorous action taking 1 round; thereafter, the character is shaken until the duration expires).
21-30	Character has a screaming fit.
31-40	Character flees in panic.
41-50	Character shows physical hysterics or emotional outburst (i.e. laughing, crying, and so forth).
51-55	Character babbles in incoherent speech or in a torrent of coherent speech.
56-60	Character gripped by intense phobia, maybe cementing him to the spot.

61-65	Character becomes homicidal, dealing harm to the nearest person as proficiently as possible.
66-70	Character has hallucinations or delusions.
71-75	Characters say or do whatever those nearby say or do.
76-80	Character is gripped with a strange or deviant eating desire (dirt, slime, human flesh, and so on).
81-90	Character falls into a stupor (assumes fetal position or oblivious to surrounding events).
91-100	Character become catatonic (can stand but no willpower or interest; may be led or forced to perform simple actions).

LONG-TERM MADNESS

D100	Effect (lasts 1d10x10 hours)
01-10	Character performs compulsive rituals (constantly washing hands, praying, never stepping on cracks, and so on).
11-20	Character has hallucinations and delusions (at the discretion of the GM).
21-30	Character becomes paranoid.
31-40	Character gripped with a severe phobia (refuses to approach the object of phobia except on a successful Wisdom save [DC 18]).
41-45	Character has aberrant desires and obsessions (either with people or objects).
46-55	Character develops an attachment to a "lucky charm" and cannot function without it (treat as poisoned).
56-65	Character develops psychosomatic blindness, deafness, or the loss of the use of a limb or limbs.
66-75	Character has uncontrollable tics or tremors (disadvantage on physical ability checks).
76-85	Characters have amnesia (Disadvantage on Intelligence based checks that involve memory or gained knowledge).

86-90	Character has bouts of reactive psychosis (delusions, hallucinations, and so on).
91-95	Character loses the ability to communicate via speech or writing.
96-100	Character becomes catatonic (can stand but no willpower or interest; may be led or forced to perform simple actions).

ANXIETY DISORDERS

Anxiety disorders generally develop from a variety of risk factors including personality, genetics, and life events that burden the character. When this anxiety builds over a prolonged period of time (especially when combating frightful creatures), the character may begin to develop an anxiety disorder.

Generalized Anxiety Disorders: The character suffers from a variety of physical and emotional symptoms that can be grouped into certain categories. Motor Tension: The character suffers from jitteriness, aches, twitches, and so on. All attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks involving Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution have disadvantage.

Automatic Hyperactivity: The character suffers from immense sweating, a racing heart, dizziness, clammy hands, and so on. All saving throws and ability checks have disadvantage.

Expectations of Doom: Anxieties culminate into a fear and an anticipation of misfortune. All attack rolls and ability checks have disadvantage.

Vigilance: The character suffers from distractions, inability to focus, insomnia, and so on. All saving throws and checks involving Intelligence, Wisdom or Charisma have disadvantage.

Agoraphobia: The character has a fear of open places. The character becomes very nervous outside familiar surroundings and must make a DC 15 Wisdom save in order to leave home or engage socially. The character may also develop a related phobia, such as uranophobia (fear of the sky), barophobia (fear of the loss of gravity), or xenophobia (fear of strangers).

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder: This malady develops into two forms: obsessive thoughts or compulsive actions. Some characters may exhibit both.

Obsessions: The character cannot help thinking about an idea, image, or impulse incessantly, often involving violence and self-doubt. Obsessive impulses pose dangerous situations when coupled with auditory hallucinations. There might be “voices” urging the character to take a dangerous or aggressive course of action.

Compulsions: The character insists on performing ritual actions, such as locking and unlocking doors, before entering or leaving their apartment. The need to perform these actions are so great, a character may ignore their survival in order to perform these actions. Performing a ritualistic compulsion lasts 1d10 rounds.

Phobia or Mania: A character afflicted by a phobia or a mania persistently fears a particular object or situation.

Phobia: A DC 15 Wisdom saving throw is required for a character to be able to force themselves into (or remain within) the presence of the object of their phobia. On a success, the character has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks relating to the object. On a failure, the character is frightened and must flee from the object of the phobia.

Philia: Philias are rarer than phobias. A character affected by a philia is inordinately fond of a particular stimulus and takes great pains to be with or near it. For example, a character with Hematophobia has a fear of blood while a character with Hematophilia has an unhealthy attraction to the act of bleeding. Resisting the impulse to indulge their mania or philia is a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw.

Dissociative Disorders

A character who becomes dissociative suffers from a lack of connection to thoughts, memories, feelings, actions, or sense of identity. Certain ordeals are so horrifying for the character that it becomes too terrible to remember.

Dissociative Amnesia: This is the inability to recall important personal information by trying to avoid unpleasant memories or events. The character must make a DC 20 Intelligence check to recall such details or the cause of amnesia. This check can be tried once per day after benefiting from

a long rest. At the GM's discretion, this may or may not affect a Wizard's ability to memorize and prepare spells, but it is more likely than not that a wizard is not denied their spellcasting just as they retain their ability to perform other skills or tasks with no problem.

Dissociative Fugue: The character flees from home or work and cannot recall their past. Characters may assume a new identity. **Dissociative Identity Disorder:** This is the infamous multiple personality disorder that has provoked the production of many films and books. Each personality a character harbors has a distinct name, behavior, and possibly, even gender. The player needs to keep track of each of the character's different personalities (each character has the same ability scores and games statistics, but different goals, outlooks, attitudes and so on).

Impulse Control Disorders

These disorders include compulsive gambling, pathological lying, kleptomania, and pyromania.

MOOD DISORDERS

These affect the character's outlook and attitude to the point where it impinges on their abilities.

Depression: This disorder may include symptoms of weight gain or loss, too much or too little sleep, persistent feelings of guilt or worthlessness and can lead to hallucinations, delusions, stupor, or thought of suicide. The character will continue to accrue levels of exhaustion while suffering from depression until they reach 5 levels. These levels cannot be removed by normal or magical means until the underlying issues have been addressed. The character only dies from exhaustion if they have received 6 levels of exhaustion that are from a source outside of this mental illness.

Mania: The character possesses a constant euphoric or irritable mood. This includes talkativeness, great delusional self-esteem, no need for sleep, easily distracted, and so on. A character rolls a d20 at the start of their turn. On a natural 1, they lose focus and take a random action that does not involve attacking or helping allies, such as picking flowers or dancing a jig.

Bipolar Mood Disorder: The character changes between the two mood states staying in one mood for weeks at a time or rapidly switching from one to another without notice.

Personality Disorders

These disorders cause an unpleasant behavior, making it difficult for characters to interact with others. The character has disadvantage all Charisma-based checks. Especially bad checks can sometimes lead to creating hostile relationships with NPCs.

Psychospecies Disorders

Characters with this disorder might believe they are a different type of creature: animal, undead, aquatic, and so on.

Schizophrenia Disorders

Characters suffering from this disorder suffer a break from reality. Symptoms include hallucinations, delusions, and cognitive impairment. Characters with this impairment have disadvantage to pierce illusions or avoid the effects of illusion school spells.

Sleep Disorders

Insomnia and narcolepsy are two of many types of sleeping disorders. These disorders cause a disturbance in the character's daily activities. Characters performing demanding tasks such as engaging in combat or casting a spell may, when stressed, need to make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw to stay awake and not put themselves in a dangerous situation.

Somatiform Disorders

These disorders are diagnosed when a character suffers from physical symptoms without actual physical injury or disease. **Somatization Disorder:** The character suffers from a physical ailment or disease-like effect. Symptoms can include dizziness or impotence to blindness and intense pain. The character does

not believe that their symptoms represent a specific disease. Treat as poisoned.

Conversion Disorder: The character has dysfunctions that suggest a physical disorder, though involuntary, the symptoms actually provide a way for the character to avoid some undesirable experience. Treat as poisoned.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE DISORDERS

Characters with a substance abuse disorder find comfort in using a particular drug. This includes alcohol, amphetamines, cocaine, hallucinogens, marijuana, and so on. Characters should feel a daily personal struggle and Wisdom saving throws might be used to resist or succumb to such cravings. When sober, the character must make a Constitution saving throw after benefiting from a long rest. On a failure, the character is poisoned. If the character fails by 5 or more, they are intensely physically ill and do not gain the benefits of the long rest. This saving throw must be made until the character is free from the disorder or they indulge in the substance.

PERSONALITY DISORDERS

Here is a list of potential personality disorders that might otherwise not seem like insanities, but could be spun that way, especially if they become severe or overriding personality traits.

- † Antisocial Reckless behavior, habitual liar, and so on.
- † Avoidant Low self-esteem or socially withdrawn.
- † Borderline Impulsive or unable to control.
- † Compulsive Perfectionist, authoritarian, or indecisive.
- † Dependent Lacks self-confidence or subordinate.
- † Histrionic Craves attention and excitement.
- † Narcissistic Craves attention and admiration.
- † Passive-Aggressive
- † Stubborn and deliberately inefficient.
- † Paranoid Jealous, humorless, or secretive.

REMOVING INSANITY WITHOUT MAGIC

While the onset of insanity might be a slow crawl into crippling madness, some games can deal with the slow mental healing process. In such cases, insanity can still exact a heavy toll, but he slowly reversible through hard work.

STORY REWARDS

The GM may reward players by removing an insanity should they foil a great horror or other evil enterprise. This may even coincide with gaining a level or completing a campaign arc.

MENTAL THERAPY

To give useful mental therapy, a therapist must have the Medicine skill. Intensive treatment can remove insanities from the troubled character. Receiving treatment that is a downtime activity. A typical insanity can be cured after 100 days of treatment. This number can be modified depending on the needs of the campaign, as well as the intensity of the insanity. If a character is suffering from an especially long bout of temporary insanity, mental therapy can potentially reduce or remove the temporary insanity, as outlined below.

MEDICINE SKILL

Immediate Care: When someone suffers an episode of temporary insanity, a therapist can bring them out of it by making a DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check. Doing so takes roughly 10 minutes of effort.

Short Term Care: A therapist can also use immediate care to stabilize a character suffering from a bout of symptoms related to their indefinite insanity. On a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Medicine) check the character can suppress the effects of the indefinite insanity for up to 4d6 hours. This treatment generally takes an hour of effort and counts towards one day of mental therapy towards permanently removing the insanity.

Long-Term Care: Providing long-term care means treating a mentally disturbed person for a day or more in a place away from stress and distractions. A therapist must spend 3 hours per day doing nothing but talking to the patient. If the therapist makes a DC 16 Wisdom (Medicine) check at the end of this time, the patient makes two days worth of progress towards removing a specific insanity, or one day's worth of progress towards removing two insanities. If the therapist fails by 5 or less, the patient still received the benefits of short-term care. A therapist can tend up to six patients at a time; each patient beyond the first adds 3 hours to the total time per day that must be devoted to therapy. The check must be made each day for each patient. A roll of 1 forces the therapist to make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw against madness.

NPCs & SANITY

While most insanities can be cured by player agency, curing mental impairments for non-player characters may be a different process, and take a different kind of investment of player character resources.

While treatment of temporary insanity on an NPC can end with a moment of consultation and a quick Medicine check, treatment of permanent insanity is pointless since a character can never recover regardless of the therapist or facility.

After 1d6 months, if undisturbed by further trauma and with an agreement with the Game Master, an indefinitely insane nonplayer character finds enough mental balance to reenter the world. There are three kinds of care that may help the character remove an insanity during this recovery period. The type of care a character receives are based on the resources expended towards care.

PRIVATE CARE

This involves the character finding care at home or in some friendly environment (i.e. a church or the home of a wealthy relative or friend) where constant vigilance and nursing are available. It is a place where personal care is undistracted by the needs of competing patients.

If mental therapy or alchemical medications are available, roll d% for each game month that one

or the other is used. A result of 01-50 is a success: remove an indefinite insanity. On the result of 51-100, the healer fumbles the diagnosis or the character rejects the alchemical treatments. He or she makes no progress is made that month.

Benefiting from this treatment is considered to be a wealthy lifestyle, and either the character or a benefactor must pay the daily associated costs. It should be noted that despite the lifestyle costs, a character may or may not benefit from the normal bonuses associated with this lifestyle.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Commitment to a good insane asylum is the next best alternative. Therapy using the Medicine skill is usually the only treatment available, however, primitive institutions might undermine progress towards treatment.

Roll d% for each game month a character is in the care of an institution. A result of 01-40 is a success: remove one indefinite insanity. On the result of 41-100, the NPC rebels against the environment, and no progress can be made that month. An especially bad asylum is likely to cause more insanity, eventually leading to permanent insanity.

Benefiting from institutionalization is considered a squalid lifestyle, which might be paid by a friend or relative, though often is paid for by some function of the city or kingdom that maintains the institution. In some cases, the institution keeps patients in wretched conditions and gains money from some exploitative aspect of the asylum's operational procedure, such as selling the hair of patients to wig makers.

WANDERING AND HOMELESS

If the two previous cares are not available, an insane NPC may end up homeless, babbling incoherently as he or she struggles for survival. Such a character makes no progress unless he or she is able to join a group of the homeless and find at least one friend among them. To find a friend after joining such a group the NPC can make a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check once per month. If a friend appears, the affected character removes an indefinite insanity after 6 months, as long as they are not exposed to stress within that time.

For each game month during which an insane NPC lives as a derelict, roll d%. On a result of 01- 99, the character survives. On a result of 100, the NPC dies as the result of disease, exposure, or violence, or is rendered permanently insane.

FANTASY SETTINGS AND INSANITY

In a traditional fantasy campaign based on a medieval setting—or prior—adequate treatment for those suffering from mental illness looks bleak. They are essentially two venues a character has available in getting treatment: go to a monastery or wander.

A monastery is a refuge away from the world and is a place where a character can peacefully collect their thoughts. Some monasteries dedicated themselves wholly to this cause. In order to enter into a monastery, one must give the Abbot all of his or her possessions. This is used to support the monastery and the new addition.

Use the same rules for Institutionalization. A monastery is less likely to abuse its patients, and will generally not charge for their services, and are more disposed to show compassion to their patients.

Alchemical Treatments in a Fantasy Setting

In a fantasy game, the Game Master should decide whether rare herbs and alchemical substances can provide the same benefits that modern psychiatric drugs can deliver. Therefore, a Game Master needs only decide how easily he wants characters to overcome insanity effects. Once the desired tone of the campaign is known, the Game Master can determine whether alchemical treatment is available. You may decide that this variant assumes that skilled alchemists can create substances that offer the same benefits that psychiatric drugs can provide. However, you may feel that, like real-world history, very few alchemists bothered brewing poultices for curing the mentally ill, but instead tried to create a formula of turning lead into gold for their rich patrons.

As long as a character can afford the correct herbs and alchemical substances and is able to ingest them, the symptoms of indefinite insanity can be ignored.

Ingesting these alchemical substances and drugs does not make a character immune or even particularly resistant to future insanity. A DC 25 Intelligence (Alchemist's supplies) check is needed to accurately prepare the correct herbs and substances and administer the correct dosage.

Long-term alchemical treatment can remove indefinite insanities, just as the use of the Medicine skill can. Each day that the medication is taken is treated as a day of downtime towards removing the insanity.

Receiving the benefits of alchemical treatment are expensive, and can cost anywhere from 10-100 gold per daily dosage. A character can benefit from both treatments with the Medicine skill and alchemical treatment.

Removing Insanity with Magic

The way insanity and magic healing interact can greatly affect the feel of your game. At one extreme, the GM can rule that magic can easily cure insanity, in which case insanity becomes little more than a specialized condition like frightened or poisoned. In such a case, characters can usually restore themselves with a day or two of rest and spellcasting.

At the other extreme, the campaign might be structured so that magical healing can do little or nothing to remove insanity, and even powerful divine spellcasters capable of curing the most deadly physical malady shy away from those encounters that might inflict mental trauma. The spells that can potentially remove indefinite insanity are discussed below.

The Game Master should feel free to choose which of these spell effects are present in the game, but once established, these effects should not be changed in mid-campaign.

Keep in mind that these rules are in place of the rules in the SRD regarding the effect of magic on insanity, but mostly coincide with the way that those rules work.

Calm Emotions: This spell cannot directly remove an insanity, but it can temporarily mitigate the effects of temporary or indefinite insanity. While the spell is in effect, the targets act calmly and ignore behavior changes caused by temporary or indefinite insanity. This spell has no effect on those suffering from permanent insanity.

Heal: In addition to its normal effects, heal removes all forms of temporary insanity. You may choose to allow this spell to remove one indefinite insanity per casting, in addition to its other effects. This also applies to the *mass heal* spell.

Mind Blank: While the spell is in effect, the subject automatically succeeds at all saving throws against madness.

Miracle: This spell can remove all insanities. *Miracle* even heals permanent insanity. This effect should be viable even in a campaign where magic does not normally affect insanities.

Restoration, Greater: If the caster chooses, greater restoration can remove all short-term and long-term insanities, one indefinite insanity, or permanent insanity, rather than the normal effects of the spell.

Restoration, Lesser: If the caster chooses, lesser restoration can remove all-short term insanity or long-term insanity instead of its normal effects.

Wish: see *Miracle*.

Removing Magical Healing

As a function of your campaign, you may not want for spells to remove madness. Though they are powerful resources, they are nonetheless easily acquired by most adventurer groups, eventually

trivializing insanity in general for the adventurers and their allies.

You should consider instead allowing for spells to be effective in a slow and protracted process of removing insanity, with daily castings over many days (a perfect downtime activity) to remove a given madness, with deeper madresses requiring longer amounts of time. This way the madness can still be cured but represents a deep commitment from a healer or spellcaster that could potentially be a source of madness itself.

If you remove magical healing, make sure that there are other avenues that will help mitigate or remove insanity, as it could quickly cripple your players in long-term campaigns.



Chapter 10 – Horror Adventures

When designing a horror adventure, the locations and backdrops are key. You won't get far if your campaigns take place in sunny meadows or well-kept metropolis. The following suggestions will help you not only achieve the mood but also find great locations for your games.

Bear in mind that these are all suggestions, and can be implemented partially, in whole, or not at all. Horror is something that is best when personalized. If you can use these design elements to scare your players, please do. If not, you may have the key to creating a horror campaign that your players won't forget.

Horror Based Adventure Goals

The most important question for you is what you wish to accomplish with a horror campaign. Do you wish to use horror as a backdrop to highlight the heroism of your party, or do you wish to truly evoke the gritty dread of horror that will ultimately lead to failure and despair despite the party's best efforts?

These questions are of enormous importance as you plan and modify your campaign. Though 5th edition fantasy is intrinsically geared towards heroism, big challenges, and big rewards, it can be subtly modified to fit other paradigms.

If you want to play a default horror based campaign, it doesn't mean that you have to negate any dread or fear that your players might otherwise experience. It does mean that you will have to work harder at evoking those feelings if your group is empowered and expecting of glory and victory as a default assumption.

Consider that a group of powerful adventurers may not have anything to truly fear. They may be anxious or concerned about a big red dragon, but the

monsters that prey upon frightened commoners are not going to scare your group of jaded explorers.

In this case, you will have to play up a few factors. First, you have to tap into a fear that they cannot fight. Lead them into the scene of a horrific crime or event, and highlight the small details that evoke the sense of mystery and sadness that come with it. The deed is done, and they likely cannot do anything to change it. This can showcase that evil can and will win out in places that the heroes cannot reach, and that they may be a bulwark against the darkness, but they cannot be everywhere at once.

Second, you have to tap into existential fears. They might be able to fight back a demon, but in doing so the ensuing damage to the fabric of reality might cause small and horrible changes, such as the birth of children with demonic essence, or a famine that will starve and kill thousands. If every victory comes at a price, the players will soon understand the bleakness of the world, and perhaps it will encourage them to find solutions to the problems they unknowingly wrought.

But the ultimate point is that you cannot let evil always (or even often) have a face that can be punched. When evil is a populace that cannot be swayed away from wrongdoing or an invasion that cannot be stemmed, then the group will really understand the struggle for hope and the slow death of optimism.

And if you are instead evoking total dread without so much as a prospect for triumph, then your job is easier, as long as your group understands the base assumption; doom is inevitable, and their struggle is only to see who survives the longest.

But bear in mind the disclaimer that comes with horror design. It is easy to be gross, gauche, or even rude in your presentation of horror. The horror genre is given to a schlock element that favors shock value over true fright, and can sometimes

step on the boundary of good taste. I implore you to know your table and stay away from provocative themes when you can, or at the least treating such themes with maturity and dignity.

Horror Treasure

Treasure in most games is simple. It can be composed of valuables or magic items. However, in a horror campaign, the paradigm will naturally shift. Is food scarce? A source of food may be as valued as a treasure trove, or more so if gold can't even buy you food. Is the population diminishing? Lives may be valuable, either illicitly or otherwise, as humanoids face potential extinction.

While magic items may be a good reward, you must be careful not to give something that may negate a story element. An item that links to another plane may either present refuge for your group and their loved ones, entirely removing any desire to stay in a domain of dread. An item that somehow solves a supply shortage will diminish the woe felt by the group and their allies. And yet some magic items can be perfect for such a campaign. Even an item that merely produces light is a treasure for a group that must venture into an oppressive dark realm, while an item that can produce fire may save lives in a deep and foreboding winter.

You as the GM are the final arbiter of what is or is not appropriate in your campaign, though a horror based campaign will require more thought and deliberate effort into the choosing of treasure. These choices will surely be of importance to the mood and theme of your game and are not to be taken lightly.



Horror Campaign Events

Certain events can either be the kick off of a good horror game, or pivotal to its story. Consider the following events as suggestions for your horror campaign. Use and change them as you like, giving them your personal touch when applying them to your game.

- † A demon lord or army is summoned.
- † A star falls with varying catastrophic effects (widespread destruction, the introduction of a strange new creature, radiation, space disease, etc).
- † A god dies or disappears.
- † An angel is falls in disgrace to evil.
- † The followers of a religion are the target of ethnic cleansing.
- † The worship of a god is perverted.
- † The prayers of the righteous are ignored.
- † A plague outbreak threatens lives everywhere.
- † A mass suicide or animal death event cause panic.
- † An oracle dies, leaving a mysterious and ominous prophecy of doom.
- † An unscheduled eclipse causes concern among scholars and the clergy.
- † An entire town or city becomes abandoned, and no one knows why.
- † A prominent figure or leader is assassinated, throwing an entire region into chaos and war.
- † A natural itself is in upheaval, perhaps as an active and thinking force.
- † Some force constructs and intends to use a weapon of mass destruction.
- † A well-known star or other celestial body disappears from the sky.
- † Ominous trumpets are heard over an entire continent.
- † The dead rise from their graves with malicious intent.
- † The world is dying, the sun is being snuffed out, or some other event seems to indicate that the end of all life is near.
- † No new children are being conceived, and people grow old and desperate as the end of civilization approaches as a result.
- † A change in the seasons has rendered the land unbearable. Either eternal winter, eternal summer, or ceaseless rain has caused a prolonged catastrophe.

Soft Places: Where the Material Plane Blurs

When darkness spreads across the land, it tends to touch across the planes and reach to those places that exemplify evil and destruction. This is not merely an analogy, but a real blending of the planes. In some places where the sun fails to reach, the shadow plane can take over and start to influence the region. Other locations or events can be tied to realms of evil, such as the sites of violent warfare linking to the plane of Gehenna.

The inclusion of such a portal or node in your campaign can vary greatly depending on your desire to bring the denizens or geography of the plane into your world. It may be a simple portal that allows only the weakest of evil denizens to enter, or it may merely be a warping in reality that slowly twists flora and fauna into approximate aspects of the plane's themes. A dark forest may start producing shadow wolves, or a cursed desert may spawn forth imps and devil scorpions, while a giant canyon may be the staging ground for a full-on planar invasion!



Such planar incursions may be the fuel for your campaign, as the themes of dread are directly tied to the existential threats that come from such an invasion. Players may have to petition scholars and planar beings for assistance in ending the threat and closing the gates to the evil planes forever. They may even be required to travel to the strange realms themselves, to deal with its native denizens, and close the gate by some means from the other side, potentially with them in it.

The following are a few suggestions for various planar incursions, and how they might work in your campaign.

The Elemental Planes. Though not innately evil themselves, the elemental planes can both be inimical to life on the material plane, as well as bring genuine evil into the world by various means. Some elemental creatures are actually evil, while evil non-elemental creatures may make its home in the elemental plane. A link to the plane of fire might cause regional droughts, while a link to the plane of water may cause intense storms that can destroy regions. It is also said that the plane of air has links to alien realms that would drive mortals mad. Though the planes of earth are relatively benign by comparison, a link to this plane may act as a trap for mortals who are likely to get lost in the labyrinthine tunnels within.

The Ethereal Plane. Though the Ethereal Plane is not inherently evil, there are things that live within it that either uses it as a staging ground for nefarious purposes or live there as a matter of course. Given that many dangerous demiplanes are adjacent to the ethereal plane, it can act as a conduit of evil incursions from such planes.

The Evil Planes. As a catchall, there are many evil planes that are terrifying in their own right, whether they go by the name of Hell, the Abyss, Abaddon, or any other number of torturous dimensions where pain and suffering are a matter of course. Though the planes themselves may have traits that are innately dangerous, the bigger danger comes from the denizens of such places

entering the material plane in search of victims. Even the least of these creatures can wreak havoc on a small community or district.

The Lawful Planes. Though the lawful planes seem like they are relatively harmless, the strict adherence to law and pattern are likely to cause dangerous changes, both by altering traits of the linked area and for any lawful creatures that might seek to personally assert these patterns. A small populace might find themselves enslaved to a mechanical overlord bent on turning the landscape into a metallic region of law and order, or even as workers in a giant clockwork machine that has no discernable purpose.

The Realms of Madness. For the relatively fragile mind of mortals, there are many planes that would drive their small minds mad. Whether the formless morass of the infinite Plane of Chaos or the incomprehensible realms that house dead gods and stranger things, the composite planar reality contains things that are better left unknown. If any such planar location touched the material plane, it would likely result in mental and physical suffering that even a demon could not fathom.

The Shadow Plane. The shadow plane is a natural source of dread and danger, containing creatures that are either antagonistic towards life, represent some aspect of death, or both. The land of shadows contain many of the monsters that god-fearing peasants speak of in whispers, and in-

cursions by this plane can usually result in deadly wastelands devoid of life, hope, and even color.

Blurred Zones

Though you may have an idea of the realm you want to blend into your campaign's reality, here are some ideas for the focal points for such incursions.

Cult Headquarters. Cathedrals and castles that belong to cultists are a prime area of planar incursion. Cults are given to activity that seeks to pierce the planes, or at least call upon planar powers. Sometimes their pleas fall on deaf ears. More often, their call is heard, and dangerous beings answer with terrible howls and unnatural agendas.

Haunted Area. Many planar blurs can occur in places that have been the sight of mass deaths. Some may be as quaint as a mansion or graveyard, while warzones and charnel houses represent more dangerous locations. Depending on the severity and scope of the location, the planar incursion could be full blown in scope or activity. Some war zones can create restless undead in mass numbers, while charnel houses may create a portal into a realm of death and dread.

Mountain Top. Many religions give much credence to the idea that a mountaintop is a place of spiritual purity. Some even speak of it as a doorway



into another world, untouched by the fragile hand of man. Whatever the truth, the highest peaks are often shrouded in clouded mystery, appearing for all purposes like an alien landscape and atmosphere. The caves and peaks of these mountains could perhaps be the location of some strange realm, whether it be a godly and divine place or bizarre dimension of terror.

Subterranean. The underground is likewise a place that fascinates and frightens the superstitious. Surface-bound mortals are rarely suited for life underground, and mapping such places would pose a colossal task. Though some fantasy races are at home in the underground, even these groups do so with the knowledge that they cannot protect from every threat that comes from further below. Some worlds have caverns that extend for miles below the surface. In these deep recesses, there are planar links and ancient prisons that could loose unimaginable horrors.

The Gothic City: New Urban Location

To round out the ideas above, the gothic city is a perfect representation of various goals and ideas that persist within the horror genre. It is ripe for both catastrophic events, small terrors, and everything in between. It can be the staging ground for your campaign, as a bastion of civilization against the barren and uninhabitable wastelands, or the den of evil the

The gothic city is a staple of fantasy horror. It is large enough to get lost in, or ignored, and certainly large enough to get killed in. Though the word gothic would imply a style of architecture, era, or culture, here it implies a place of foreboding darkness.

The gothic city is one where things are dreary, the buildings themselves are oppressive, and evil can lurk unabated within the plentiful shadows and alleys that permeate the ill-constructed city. Any city can be gothic, whether it be Victorian or Pre-historic, as long as the city is large enough to welcome the pall of darkness and evil.

Such a city need not have a tyrant or evil democracy in charge, though it certainly could have one as well. What is important is that the common people feel oppressed, whether it is by the climate, the political landscape, disease, or some other overwhelming force that diminishes the hope of the commoner.

The gothic city is a perfect place for cultists and evil beings to infest, often thriving on the membership and sacrifice of the downtrodden, whose sudden absence is unlikely to arouse suspicion from any authority. Certain insidious cults can even infiltrate governments, effectively being in charge of an entire city so as to better oppress the masses and promote their chosen patron.

Other features of a gothic city can include legal or illegal death matches, dangerous neighborhoods with varying levels of daily violence, and curses or effects that can damn entire swaths of the population.

These cities are usually damned in some way or another, and not easily fixed through the intervention of a player group. Whether the infection of a cult or demonic incursion is removed from a gothic city, it often invites a new evil to take the place of the old. You should not set out to crush the will of players hoping to improve a gothic city or the life of its citizens, but you should remind them that the city is that way for one or more reasons that define the city.

Making a gothic city into a normal one is likely to be the focus of an entire campaign, or perhaps most of one, and requires the concerted effort of many well-intentioned people. Some divine intervention wouldn't hurt either.



Chapter 11 – Monsters & Cults

Monsters

Although monsters are ubiquitous in most fantasy adventure games, creatures of horror must be unique to even the horrors that exist in a fantasy game. An ogre might be scary or intimidating because they are bigger and stronger than you, but a shadow that stalks your dreams is far scarier. It is always the silent threats that scare us the most; the things we cannot see coming, and that we fear as we gaze into the darkness. Our hind brains urge us to fear these unknown elements, wincing at the suggestion of their imminent existence. We know too well in our deepest thoughts that such creatures could, and perhaps do exist.

Monsters of this ilk must then be the best of predators, and stalk the innocent, attacking only when our demise is assured. But they do not always strike physically, for we fear for the wholeness of our minds and souls just as we do for our health and physical wellbeing. The creatures herein represent these dark fears, the strangest and most profound dangers that the mind can conceive.

A Treatise on Villainy

Many would posit that the true star of a given campaign is the villain. Truly, they are the foil and mirror against which the PCs compare themselves. If heroes are defined by their villains, then it is up to you as a GM to make the villain as memorable and interesting as possible.

While not all villains must be evil (or even think like humans do), a villain must oppose the heroes, or seek something that is counter to their hopes and goals. What makes a good villain is that they are not simply seeking to accomplish their goals, but they are multifaceted creatures that are setting plans into motion and may have complicated reasons for wanting what they want.

Even when an unfathomable creature may be the greatest threat to your campaign world, consider the motivations of the lieutenants that seek to unchain that creature, and what their motivations might be. The head cultist may be the mouthpiece for the creature in a manner of speaking, and express need for a villain with depth, with the unfathomable creature merely being a means to an end for the cultist.



ASPECT OF DEATH

This gaunt figure wears a thick robe that reveals only bony hands and a skeletal face. The figure wavers like a mirage when directly observed.

Often mistaken for a grim reaper, or an actual avatar of death, this apparition is in fact a spirit empowered by death on a grand scale. Graveyards, abandoned battlefields, and charnel houses are all likely locations for an aspect of death. This creature has no particular duty or purpose related to the shepherding of the dead, but such a spirit can often become interested in a strong motivation related to its location. An aspect of death that occupies a ghost town may be obsessed with slaying the bandits that killed the townsfolk, or one that occupies a graveyard may simply absorb the myriad motivations of the unfulfilled people that now rest there. At least one aspect of death became a champion of slain animals, killing butchers and ranchers. Though these grim creatures can often be murderous and relentless, they are limited by their location; an aspect of death can only manifest at night, and returns to its location at dawn, no matter how far it has strayed.

ASPECT OF DEATH

Medium fiend, unaligned

Armour Class 18

Hit Points 209 (22d8 +110)

Speed 0ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+5)	26 (+8)	21 (+5)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Int +5

Skills Insight +8, Intimidation +8, Investigation +5

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non magical attacks

Damage Immunities cold, fire, lightning, necrotic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 90 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages understands all languages, but only uses gestures

Challenge 15 (13,000 xp)

Ethereal. The aspect exits on the Ethereal Plane but can interact with creatures or objects on the Material Plane. It can see 90 ft. into the Material Plane.

Fervor of the Dead. The aspect of death will manifest every night at sunset, and begin to pursue its goals. If it is reduced to 0 hit points, it disappears until the next sunset. It cannot be permanently defeated unless it is first defeated at its location, and its location is either consecrated or defaced by powerful magic.

Incorporeal Movement. The aspect can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Invisibility. The aspect is invisible.

Motivated. When pursuing its special goals, the aspect has advantage on ability checks and attack rolls related to completing its goal. Some aspects have a very specific goal, and dissipate when their goal is accomplished. Others have goals that simply can't be achieved, and linger on until they are decisively dispelled.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The aspect makes two claw attacks.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6+3) slashing damage and 27 (6d8) necrotic damage. If the target has any levels of exhaustion, they must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or gain another level of exhaustion.

Frightening Gaze (Recharge 4-6). The aspect glares at one creature it can see within 10 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. The frightened creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success. If a target succeeds on a saving throw or the effect ends, the target is immune to the aspect's gaze for the next 24 hours.

Breath of the Grave (Recharge 5-6). The aspect breathes out in a 30 foot cone, and every living creature caught within it must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or gain a level of exhaustion. Creatures that already have a level of exhaustion are unaffected by this ability.

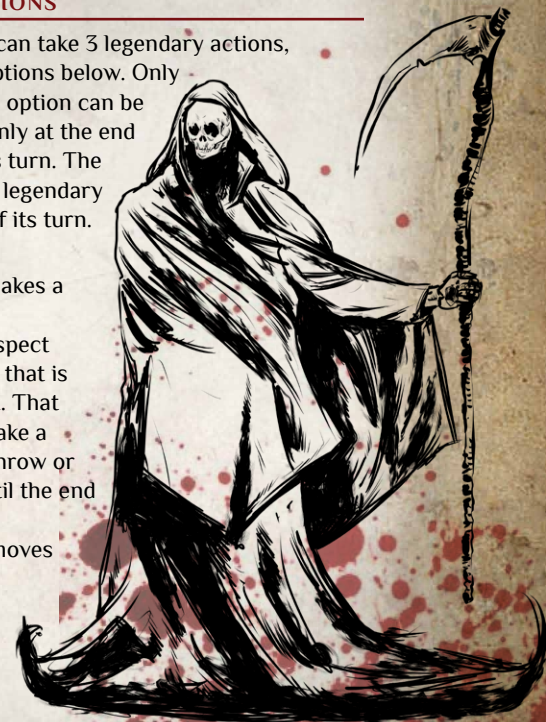
LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The aspect of death can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. The aspect regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Claw. The aspect makes a claw attack.

Death Stare. The aspect glares at a target that is not adjacent to it. That creature must make a Wisdom saving throw or be restrained until the end of its next turn.

Move. The aspect moves half of its speed



BEGRUDGED SOUL

A transparent and disfigured corpse looms menacingly, its visage twisting as if to mock or frighten any onlookers.

Though little is known about begrudged soul, many rumors abound of their origin. Some say they are ghosts of powerful and influential people that refused to fade into obscurity. Others say that they form from a coagulation of lesser ghosts when the stars are right. Whatever the truth, the begrudged soul is a dangerous and potent entity that seems less impeded than lesser ghosts. It can drain the life out of its victims, and even take corporeal form if it slays its victim.

BEGRUDGED SOUL

Medium undead, any alignment

Armour Class 11

Hit Points 88 (16d8 +16)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +6

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison;

bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion,

frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified,

poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 90 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages any languages it knew in life

Challenge 8 (3,900 xp)

Ethereal Sight. The soul can see 90 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Form of the Deceased. As an action, the soul can coalesce into the form of a once living creature that has died in the area (within 1000 feet) in the last 24 hours. The soul can never take the same form twice. The soul gains a corporeal form with 40 temporary hit points. The soul can revert to its normal form as a bonus action, or reverts automatically once it no longer has temporary hit points. The soul can do this once, and regains the ability to do so at the stroke of midnight.

Incorporeal Movement. The soul can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

ACTIONS

Aging Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 36 (8d8) necrotic Damage. Creatures reduced to 0 hit points by this attack are immediately considered to have one death saving throw failure.

Haunt. The soul can use its otherworldly might to frighten non-undead creatures within 30 feet. Affected creatures must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1d4 turns. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to the soul's haunt for the next 24 hours.



BONESEEKER

You see before you a strange mass of flesh and bone that seems to undulate with patches of hair, and disparate humanoid facial features.

The disgusting creature known as the boneseeker seems to be a walking amalgamation of limbs and tissue, with many grasping arms. The mass of roiling flesh seeks out marrow on which to feed, preying on lone victims when it can, or active ones when its hunger drives it into a frenzy. When ready to drain victims, the boneseeker opens one of its many hidden mouths to reveal rows full of hooked teeth and a proboscis that it uses to drain marrow and blood. Creatures that die in such a way sometimes are added, whole or in part, to the boneseeker's mass.

BONESEEKER

Medium undead, unaligned

Armour Class 12

Hit Points 52 (8d8 +16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	4 (-3)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, lightning, necrotic

Damage Immunities poisoned

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Undead Nature. A boneless doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The boneseeker makes two attacks with its claws. If the boneseeker is grappling a creature, it must use drain in place of a pseudopod attack or release the grapple. A boneseeker can make two drain attacks if it begins its turn grappling a creature.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6+2) bludgeoning damage. The target is grappled (escape DC 14) if it is Medium or smaller sized creature and the boneseeker doesn't have two creatures grappled.

Drain. One creature grappled by the boneseeker takes 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage. If this attack reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target begins dying as normally, and is at risk of becoming a boneseeker, unless the target is either revived or its remains are burnt before the

next sunset. reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target begins dying as normally, and is at risk of becoming a boneseeker, unless the target is either revived or its remains burnt before the next sunset.



CORPSE CREEPER

A fleshy head crawls about on spider-like boney appendages.

The corpse creeper is a strange parasite that inhabits the darkest caves and dungeons, often threatening to consume entire ecosystems. When not actively stalking for prey, they tend to lay dormant in half-eaten corpses, a tactic that is equally for protection as it is for ambush. Though the corpse creeper is a frighteningly effective invading species, it also has various predators that root them out and eat them, not the least among them being oozes that are surprisingly adapted to devouring the disgusting parasite.

CORPSE CREEPER

Tiny aberration, unaligned

Armour Class 15 (natural)

Hit Points 28 (8d4 +8)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	3 (-4)	14 (+2)	4 (-3)

Damage Immunities poisoned

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive

Perception 12

Challenge 1 (200 xp)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The corpse creeper makes two appendage attacks

Appendage. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 15 ft., one Medium or smaller creature. Hit: 2 (1d4) piercing damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 11). The corpse creeper can only grapple one target.

Incubation. The corpse creeper uses an action to inject its larvae, dealing 1 piercing damage to a creature that it is grappling. For one next minute, the larvae can be extracted with a DC 14 Wisdom (Medicine) check. After that minute, magical remedies such as lesser restoration or remove disease are required to remove it. The larvae reach maturity within 1d6 days, at which time it bursts from its host, dealing 28 (8d6) necrotic damage in the process. For each day's worth of incubation, the target gains a level of exhaustion that can't be removed until the infestation is cured. If the infestation kills the host, a total of three corpse creepers are created.



CORPSE OAK

This large oak tree is ash grey, and appears to have a number of corpses hanging from ropey vines. The bodies appear to sway rhythmically.

The creature known as the corpse oak comes from a relatively unknowable origin, though many have guessed its nature. Whether through the ambient corruption of the land, or an intentional curse wrought by evil forces, the corpse oak always starts as a normal tree, and becomes an insidious murdering monstrosity. The fact that it harvests corpses for its grisly fruit makes it all the more dangerous and frightening. Tales tell of entire corpse oak orchards that were once thriving communities, but if anyone has ever seen such a sight and lived, they dare not speak of it.

CORPSE OAK

Huge plant, neutral evil

Armour Class 16 (natural armour)

Hit Points 187 (22d12 +44)

Speed 0 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	4 (-3)	15 (+2)	4 (-3)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, lightning, piercing, poison

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, prone, stunned

Senses tremorsense 200 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages -

Challenge 8 (3,900 xp)

Corpse Harvester. The corpse oak has many rotting humanoid bodies hanging from its branches. Each tree harvests and keeps approximately 7 corpses, though some larger specimens may hold more.

Dark Harvest. The corpse oak has advantage when attacking a creature that is adjacent to a wandering body.

Wandering Body. Though the corpse oak is stationary, it can release its corpses, as many as 3 per turn as a bonus action. Each corpse uses the statistics of a **zombie**.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The corpse oak can make three attacks with its branches, or it can hurl two rocks.

Branch. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. **Hit:** 13 (2d8+4) bludgeoning or slashing damage. If the corpse oak reduces a living humanoid target to 0 hit points with this attack, it may use its bonus action to drag it up to be hung on a branch. If the corpse is left up on the tree for 24 hours, the corpse becomes part of the corpse oak's wandering bodies.

Rock. Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. **Hit:** 17 (3d8+4) bludgeoning damage.



CORPSE REAVER

This creature appears to be an emaciated humanoid corpse laden with a heap of skulls upon its shoulders. Its fingers end in claws as long as daggers.

Wizards and warlocks are often trucking with forces beyond their power, and the corpse reaver is one such unfortunate byproduct. Crafted by debased cabal of necromancers, the first corpse reaver was an attempt at creating a loyal undead champion; a tireless servitor that could serve as a stalwart tomb guardian, a relentless hunter, or even provide the muscle necessary to guard frail spellcasters. The cabal succeeded in crafting an impressive creature capable of great feats of savagery. The failure came in the creature's ability to follow directions. A glimmer of chaos remained within the "mind" of the first corpse reaver, and it quietly waited and plotted, eventually murdering every member of the cabal under the auspice of a misunderstood order. Eventually, the undead champion received a dark inspiration, and began to seek out other necromancers, tempting them with the dark secrets of the construction of other corpse reavers, each time adding to its dark army of potent undead warriors.

CORPSE REAVER

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armour Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 136 (16d8+64)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +3, Intimidation +5, Perception +3, Stealth +7

Damage Resistances necrotic

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common

Challenge 6 (2,300 xp)

Legendary Resistance (1/Day). If the corpse reaver fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Lone Killer. The corpse reaver deals an extra 3 (1d6) damage of the appropriate type with each of its weapon attacks whenever it is not adjacent to an ally.

Magic Resistance. The corpse reaver has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Turning Defiance. The corpse reaver and any ghouls or ghosts within 30 feet of it have advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The corpse reaver makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claw.

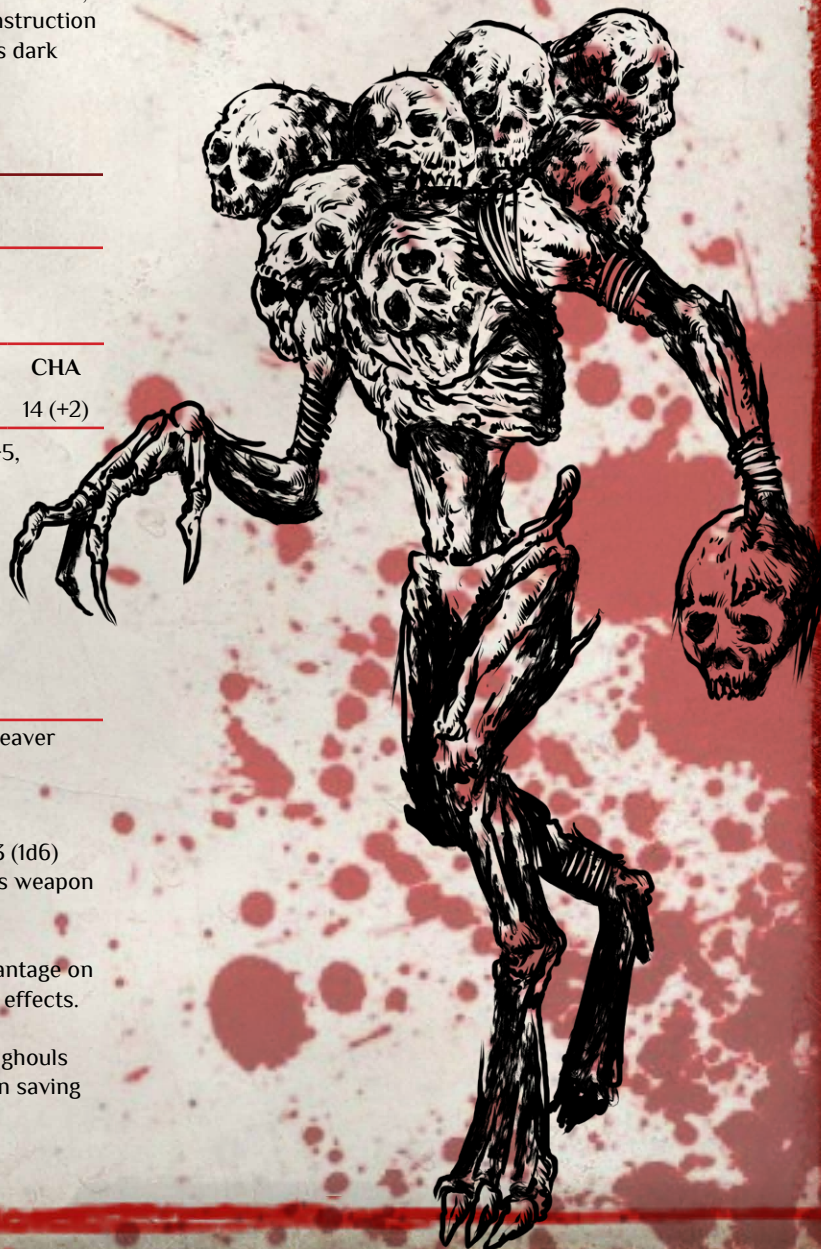
Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6+5) slashing damage.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The corpse reaver can take 2 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The corpse reaver regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Deception. The corpse reaver may attempt a Charisma (Deception) contest with another target's Wisdom (Insight). If it wins, its next attack has advantage.

Reposition. The corpse reaver moves up to half its speed. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.



DARK FOLK

A tall and dark figure cuts an intimidating silhouette against the background. The odd humanoid stares at you through impossibly black eyes and moves with a disturbing gait.

Creatures that hail from dark places, the dark folk are either creatures native to some dark realm, or are humanoids that have been irrevocably tainted by its influence. Whatever the truth may be, these humanoids skulk and plot, as they can only trust themselves and the shadows. Though not every dark one is evil or sneaky, the suspicion that most cast upon this race of people fosters a deep mutual distrust between dark folk and nearly all other races. So far this has not prevented the other races from seeking their assistance, given the dark folk and their penchant for skullduggery.

A typical dark folk has a range of skin tones, usually coal grey or pitch black, but sometimes stark white or even jaundiced colored. What is relatively consistent is their pitch black eyes that resemble a pair of inky black voids. Though not every member of this race is thin, many are. Some dark folk are considerably tall, corpulent, or muscular, depending on the strange anatomical variances within their race. Despite this variance, nearly all dark folk are unsettling to those of other races.

DARK CREEPER

Small humanoid (dark one), neutral

Armor Class 16 (rag armor)

Hit Points 22 (4d6 + 8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Skills Stealth +7

Senses darkvision 120 ft. (14 sq.), passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Death Throes. When reduced to 0 hit points, the dark one explodes in a burst of blinding light. Each creature within 10 feet of the dark one must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be blinded for 1 round. Creatures that are already blinded or that don't rely on sight to see are unaffected.

Innate Spellcasting. The dark one's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 9). The dark one can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *darkness*, *detect magic*

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The dark one deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon

attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the dark one that isn't incapacitated and the dark one doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the dark one has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.



DARK STALKER

Small humanoid (dark one), neutral

Armor Class 16 (rag armor)

Hit Points 43 (8d6 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7

Senses darkvision 120 ft. (14 sq.), passive Perception 11

Languages Common

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Death Throes. When reduced to 0 hit points, the dark one explodes in a burst of blinding light. Each creature within 10 feet of the dark one must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be blinded for 1 round. Creatures that are already blinded or that don't rely on sight to see are unaffected.

Innate Spellcasting. The dark one's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). The dark one can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *darkness*, *detect magic*

1/day: *invisibility*

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The dark one deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the dark one that isn't incapacitated and the dark one doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the dark one has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dark one makes two melee attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Shadow Step. When in an area of dim light or darkness, the dark one can use a bonus action to teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space it can see that is also in dim light or darkness.



DOLL

This small children's doll appears to be animate, and makes a stilted and unnerving movements.

A doll, looking like a miniature person as it does, can inspire both fear and joy in a person, depending on their state of mind. Dolls can be unsettling to many onlookers, especially when they look more human than toy. Some are even receptacles of strange energies, knitting together a personality from stray fragments.

Some dolls are murderous, seeking some revenge or pleasure from the act of murder. These dolls, while not especially strong, are fierce and relentless. Other dolls protect, having received love and warmth from their owners. However, even those dolls that protect may have no compunctions about murdering those who threaten the doll's ward.

Regardless of the kind of doll, most people will react to a living doll with fear and loathing, attempting to run from or destroy any such doll they come into contact with. The exception, perhaps, are the dolls that somehow contain the fragmented souls of loved ones. These dolls are perhaps kept and cared for in the best case, or sealed away in the worst. There are tales of these living dolls having the capacity for companionship, but many more are the stories of murderous toys haunting some forgotten schoolhouse or attic.

DOLL

Tiny construct, neutral

Armour Class 14

Hit Points 62 (14d4+28)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common

Challenge 1 (200 xp)

Immutable Form. The doll is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Weapons. The doll's weapon attacks are magical.

Spring Limbs. The doll's long jump is up to 20 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The doll makes two knife attacks.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d4+4) bludgeoning damage.

ALTERNATE DOLL ABILITIES

The doll occupies different places within the themes of horror. Whether as a voodoo curse holding a real person's soul, or as a remorseless construct created for revenge, the doll can be many of these things. The following abilities can be added to the doll without significantly altering its combat efficiency.

Soul Doll: The Soul Doll contains a real soul, and has the personality and mental attribute of the creature that now inhabits it. When reduced to 0 hit points, the soul within is destroyed, but the doll remains unharmed as a receptacle for a new soul. Implanting such a soul would require a ritual that can either be performed by a willing subject, or inflicted upon an unwilling one.

Murder Doll: The murder doll is merely a mindless automaton that carries out savage attacks on its enemies, or the enemies of its creator. The murder doll is immune to psychic damage, and to the charmed condition. They make regular use of exotic poison on their knives. Though they don't think or feel like a living being, some murder dolls are programmed to emote a glee or savage joy in murdering, unnerving their victims all the more.

Beloved Doll: Similar to the soul doll, the beloved doll is not created intentionally, but can come into being through supernatural circumstance. Often a beloved doll comes to life as the result of a death or emotional ordeal. These dolls think and feel, and may mirror the emotions or memories of beings that imprinted on them (if any), but they are sentient beings in their own right. Enclaves of such creatures may band together and occupy mansions or ghost towns. Beloved dolls have a charisma of 16, and gain the following trait:

Innate Spellcasting. The doll's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). The doll can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

3/day each: *minor illusion*

1/day each: *feather fall*, *unseen servant*

Dragons, Corpse

Engineered by a race foolish or vile enough to disregard the consequences, corpse dragons are genetic atrocities. The ostensible goal of the experiment was to create dragons that were tied to humanoid biology. Whether this was to create a slave race or as a mad whim is not clear. What is certain is that these creatures, while still dragons, are abominations that hate nearly all life. Most corpse dragons are content to spread death and pain to every living being, though a few are lucid enough to also advance an agenda that is not directly tied to torture and murder.

Although the dragons are relative equals in terms of ability and destructive power, the soul dragons appear to have a higher ranking within the pecking order of corpse dragons. Rumors tell of a soul dragon king that secretly controls all corpse dragons, and is biding his time before ordering a draconic cataclysm at the hands of these malformed creatures, though there appears to be no such evidence of a soul dragon king, let alone of any conspiracy involving the theoretical monarch.

BLOOD DRAGON

The unfortunate creature has the appearance of a coagulated crimson ooze in the shape of a dragon, though its wings appear to be the only appendage that is not actively weeping blood.

Of the engineered dragons, the blood dragon is among one of the more successful attempts, and one of the only dragons to remain relatively sane into adulthood. That said, the blood dragon is tainted with a sadistic streak that causes it to scheme and plan the suffering of anything within its moist grasp.

The blood dragon is primarily composed of blood, and as such is poison to most things around it. It naturally attracts creatures that feed off of its blood, and it can give freely to hundreds of smaller blood suckers without ill effect. This odd distinction means that a blood dragon will commonly ally to undead that feast on blood, as well as any living creature that similarly is sustained on blood (such as stirges and giant leeches).

Blood dragons are amongst the most social of dragons, though they tend to associate only with non-draconic creatures. They hate other dragons, and they especially hate other corpse dragons. This attitude has led many blood dragons to act against their interest to derail another dragon, even if it means a delay or diversion from death and destruction.

YOUNG BLOOD DRAGON

Large dragon, chaotic evil

Armor Class: 15

Hit Points: 153 (18d10+54)

Speed: 40 ft., fly 60 ft., swim 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	20 (+5)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	13 (-1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +6, Wis +2, Cha +4

Skills Deception +4, Intimidate +4, Perception +2

Damage Vulnerability necrotic, radiant

Condition Immunities prone, paralyzed, restrained, stunned

Senses Darkvision 200 ft., tremorsense 40 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 8 (3,900 xp)

Amphibious. The dragon can breath air and water

Blood Affinity. The dragon has such control over its blood that it can make its blood deal acid, fire, or poison. The dragon also gains damage resistance to that damage type. This ability lasts indefinitely until the dragon spends a bonus action to change it.

Caustic Secretions. The dragon's blood is inimical to living creatures. Any creature that touches the dragon's blood, either by attacking or being attacked with a natural attack, is exposed to the dragon's blood, taking 4d6 damage, depending on the dragon's affinity.

Liquid Form. The dragon can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. It can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragon makes three attacks; one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit. Reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10+5) piercing damage, plus disease.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit. Reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6+5) slashing damage, plus disease.

Spray of Blood (recharge 5-6). The dragon vomits a spray of its blood in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in the area must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. The damage type is based on the dragon's blood affinity. If a creature fails this saving throw by 5 or more, they are also considered poisoned for 1 minute.

BONE DRAGON

This skeleton at first appears like the animated bones of a dragon, but its eyes and tongue reveal that the imposing creature is very much alive, and has a thick bony exoskeleton.

Among the most sane of the corpse dragons, the bone dragon tends to be cold and calculating. This is not to say that bone dragons are reasonable or even safe to be around, but by comparison they tend to kill more discerningly than their brethren. This is helped by their bony exoskeleton and peculiar anatomy.

Their bodies are composed primarily of bones, with living soft tissues and organs kept inside of marrow sacks that are in turn covered in bone casings. As a result, they are resistant to most conventional means of harm, though as a result they are susceptible to unconventional hazards.

The least fluid of the strange genetic dragons, the bone dragons are perhaps the most grounded and devoted to typical draconic pursuits, after the blood dragons. They both gather hoards, seek the servitude of minions, and terrorize all within their dominion to assert their dominance. The bone dragon seems more able to relate to non dragons, if only in pursuit of exploiting non dragons.

The largest difference is the bone dragon's obsession with transdragonism, as they see their bony form as a strong but unsuitable vessel for their greatness. Some ironically transcend to lichdom, while others seek to find forms that are more majestic or utile. Whatever the case, most bone dragons appear to see their natural form as flawed.

YOUNG BONE DRAGON

Large dragon, chaotic evil

Armor Class: 16

Hit Points: 157 (15d10+75)

Speed: 50 ft., fly 20 ft., climb 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	10 (0)

Saving Throws Con +8, Cha +3

Skills History +5, Intimidate +6, Insight +6 Perception +7

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, poison; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks.

Damage Vulnerability necrotic, radiant, thunder

Condition Immunities petrified, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned

Senses Darkvision 200 ft., tremorsense 80 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 8 (3,900 xp)

Calcified Carapace. The bone dragon is immune to any effects that would alter their size or shape.

High Bone Density. The bone dragon is especially tough and solid, and gains advantage on any Strength contests and saving throws.

Thick Head. The bone dragon's superior skull thickness makes it difficult to afflict its mind. Until it is at half its maximum hit points (in this case, 47 hit points or lower), it has advantage against effects that impart the charmed or frightened condition.

Weak Wings. The bone dragon's wings contain some of the only visible soft tissue, spreading out along its wing bones. Because of its density, the bone dragon can only fly in short sprints, cannot hover, and is more often able to simply glide than gain significant altitude. The dragon is thus unable to make hasty retreats, and relies on its extreme toughness and swift land speed to simply maraud across the countryside with relative impunity.

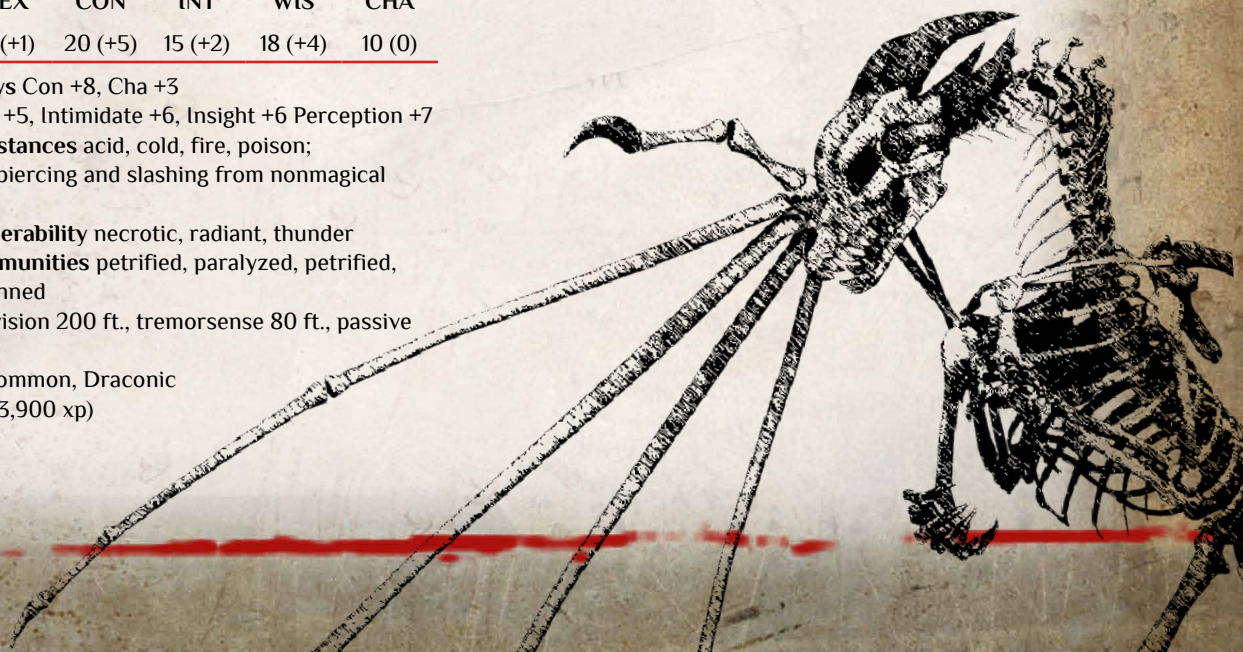
ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragon makes three attacks; one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit. Reach 10 ft., one target. **Hit:** 16 (2d10+5) piercing damage.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit. Reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 12 (2d6+5) slashing damage.

Bone Shards (recharge 5-6). The dragon exhales a cone of bone shavings that cut and suffocate those in its path. Victims caught in the cone must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 40 (9d8) piercing damage on a failure, or half of that on a success. Those who fail this saving throw also inhale bone shards, and have disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks as they suffer from coughing fits. If they use their action, they can make another Constitution saving throw to remove the effect.



SKIN DRAGON

Though the creature has the form of a dragon, it has a thick and saggy skin like that hangs off of it like a putrid robe. Hair and scabs festoon the dragon's skin in an unsettling display.

Perhaps the most grotesque of the corpse dragons, the skin dragon appears like a draconic skeleton draped with an ill fitting costume made of fat human flesh. What is worse is that the roiling mass of skin tissues does not seem anchored in any way to musculature or bone, and seems to float free along the dragon's personage. This can result in distressing sights, especially as the dragon seems to have tufts of hair and other anatomical anomalies that seem to have no purpose than to make the dragon look like the failed genetic experiment it is.

Worse yet, the dragon appears to feel no pain, and is constantly beset with oozing wounds and sores that seem to bother the creature not at all. Those who brave a look into such wounds might see soft dragon scales beneath the creature's grotesque outer layer. This would suggest that flaying a skin dragon may be doing it a favor, but none yet have taken on such an odious task.

In contrast, the skin dragon would appear to be the least sane, and perhaps also the least ambitious of the corpse dragons. It tends to find ruined palaces and temples, and occupies them in an attempt to feel relevant and important. Even the other corpse dragons pity this sad creature, as it is an insult to all of dragon kind in its stupidity and lack of motivation.

Though a very select few skin dragons have been known to befriend smaller creatures, many more merely become psychotic stalkers, content to bring living things to their lair to "play and dine". Few survive such play sessions, and those that do rarely forget the experience.

YOUNG SKIN DRAGON

Large dragon, chaotic evil

Armor Class: 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 138 (12d10+72)

Speed: 40 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	15 (+2)	22 (+6)	5 (-3)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Con +9, Wis +2

Damage Resistances poison, bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks.

Damage Vulnerability necrotic, radiant

Condition Immunities paralyzed, stunned

Senses Darkvision 200 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Draconic

Challenge 8 (3,900 xp)

Loose Skin. A skin dragon has a loose layer of thick skin that hangs off of it like a fleshy robe, and acts as a protection against many harms.

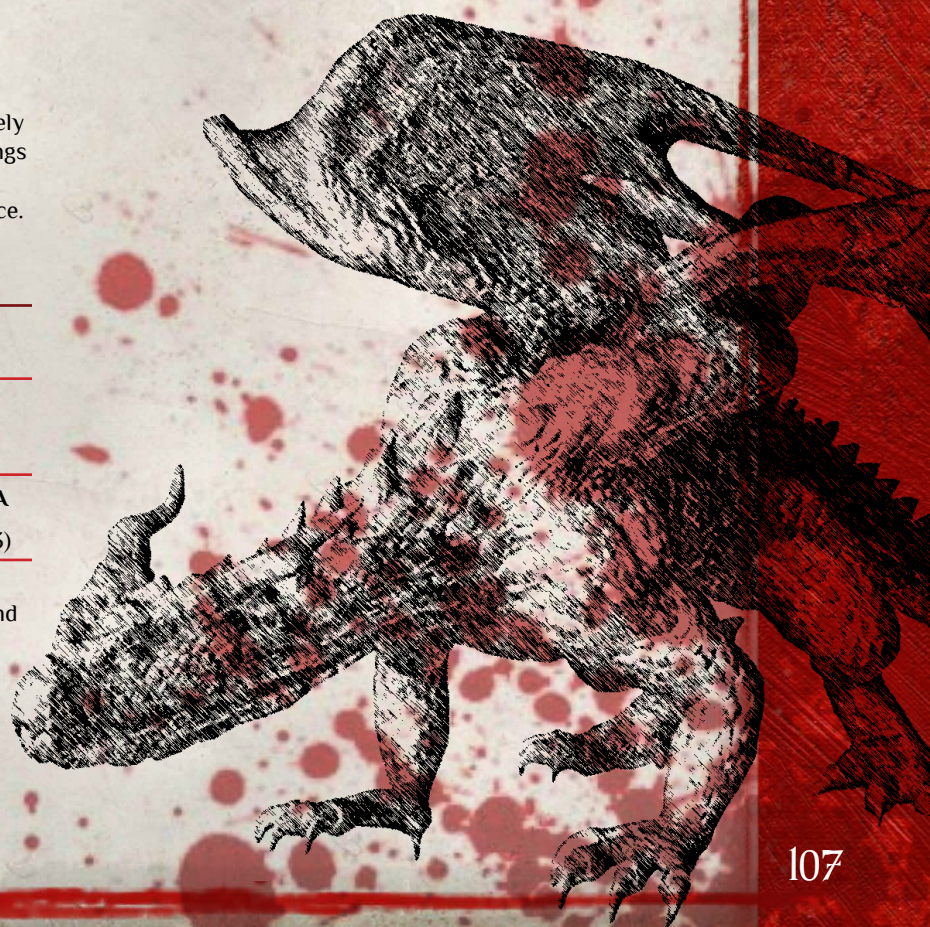
ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragon makes three slam attacks.

Slam. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit. Reach 10 ft., one target. **Hit:** 15 (2d8+6) bludgeoning damage, and the target must make a DC 13 Strength or Dexterity saving throw or become grappled. The dragon does not contest this grapple, and the target must make a Strength or Dexterity saving throw with the same DC at the end of each of their turns. Creatures are dealt 9 (2d8) poison damage when they start their turn grappled by the dragon. The skin dragon can grapple a total of four small creatures, two medium creatures, or one large creature at once.

REACTIONS

Pustules. The dragon can use its reaction to focus on a diseased patch of skin, and cause it to spew caustic juice on a creature within 10 feet. That creature must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, they are considered blind until the end of their next turn. On a success, the creature has disadvantage on attack rolls until the start of their next turn.



SOUL DRAGON

This ghostly dragon seems to pulse with glowing light where its heart would be. The apparition is so bright and strong that it appears to burn at whatever it touches.

Among the corpse dragons, the soul dragon is the most ruthless, angry, and perhaps dangerous. Rumors say that it was made to resemble the human soul, or that it is even fused with such a soul. The soul dragon cares not, for whatever its origin, it is inherently mad, and thoroughly aggressive and ready to spread pain and madness.

Though not invulnerable, the soul dragon can often rampage with impunity, but many soul dragons choose not to. Instead, they seek to goad others into doing their bidding, and arrive to strike only when necessary or to maximize the mayhem they seek to sow. Soul dragons adhere to a strict hierarchy, and tend to seek out other corpse dragons to bully into service. Despite this adherence to hierarchy, soul dragons rarely play well together.

Legend says that there exists a soul dragon progenitor who is a so called king among corpse dragons. The soul dragon king, if he exists, could represent a catastrophic danger to all living things. It is reasonable to assume that whatever race that dared to carry out the horrible genetic experiments on dragonkind was likely brought to ruin by the machinations of such a king.

YOUNG SOUL DRAGON

Large dragon, chaotic evil

Armor Class: 15

Hit Points: 91 (14d10+14)

Speed: 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+1)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Con +5, Wis +5, Cha +9

Skills Deception +9, Intimidate +9, Perception +5

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

Damage Vulnerability radiant

Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses darkvision 200 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 8 (3,900 xp)

Incorporeal Movement. The dragon can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragon makes three draining bite attacks.

Draining Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit. Reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d8+4) piercing damage.

Wither (recharge 6). The dragon chooses a point within 100 feet, and creates a 20 foot radius where motes of light float languidly. Those caught in this radius must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, or gain one level of exhaustion. For every level gained by an enemy, the soul dragon regains 9 (2d8) hit points.



PHLEGMATIC DRAGON

A large and vaguely dragon shaped ooze drips brackish liquids that pool beneath it, punctuated only by teeth, claws, and diseased eyes.

Phlegmatic Dragons are considered a failed attempt at engineering dragons, resulting in a disgusting malformed approximation of dragon that is equal parts disease and mythical beast. The resulting creature lacks the dignity usually afforded to dragons, thanks to their nightmarish bodies that constantly drip with fluids.

Once the sad prisoners of whatever force created them, phlegmatic dragons continue to multiply by budding like a fungus. Phlegmatic hatchlings grow anywhere that corpses congregated, sometimes materializing from beneath graveyard or battlefields in a grim mockery of birth. Since their advent, phlegmatic dragons have multiplied in great numbers, but must remain underground where they can fester freely.

Sadly, the minds of these mockeries are also diseased. Most wish simply to cause as much harm to any living thing in a vain attempt rail against their tragic fate. Phlegmatic Dragons have a great fear of fire, as well as the sun, as both diminishes their personal power. Old wives tales say that they sometimes lurk above ground on stormy days and at night, boldly in search of mayhem to cause.

YOUNG PHLEGMATIC DRAGON

Large dragon, chaotic evil

Armor Class: 16

Hit Points: 120 (16d10+32)

Speed: 20 ft., fly 40 ft., swim 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)	10 (0)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +6, Wis +4, Cha +3

Skills Deception +3, Intimidate +6, Perception +4, Survival +4

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing

Damage Immunities poison

Damage Vulnerability fire, radiant

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 200 ft., tremorsense 40 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 8 (3,900 xp)

Amphibious. The dragon can breath air and water

Ooze. The dragon counts as an ooze as well as a dragon

Plague Bearer. The dragon may contract any disease, and gets no saving throw, but also does not suffer the effects of the disease. Any water in which it swims, up to the size of a small lake, becomes polluted with disease. It

takes polluted roughly 1d10 hours for the water to purify itself if it is running, or 1d10 days if the water is still.

Exposure to sunlight reduces this time by a factor of 10. If the dragon carries other diseases, it may transmit them as well through claw, bite, or breath attacks, in addition to its default disease. All such diseases use the saving throw DC of the dragon's disease ability, and diseases must be resisted separately by those affected.

Sun Averse. The dragon is at disadvantage to attack rolls and saving throws in the sunlight. Any targets of its disease abilities are at advantage to resist the effects of the disease if they are in the sunlight.

Involuntary Emission. If the dragon rolls a 6 to recharge its breath weapon, it unleashes an involuntary emission in addition to recharging its breath weapon. This emission targets a single creature within 10 ft who is affected as though it was caught in the dragon's breath attack.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragon makes three attacks; one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit. Reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d10+3) piercing damage, plus disease.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit. Reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6+3) slashing damage, plus disease.

Disease. Targets afflicted by the one of the dragon's diseases must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for the duration of the disease. Every 24 hours that elapse, the target must repeat the saving throw, reducing its hit point maximum by 5 (1d10) on a failure. The disease is cured on a save. The target dies if the disease reduces its hit point maximum to 0. Exposure to the sun for at least 1 hour a day grants any targets an advantage on the next saving throws to resist the disease. This disease causes a wet cough in the victim, and can be spread to others by exposure to these coughs, using the same saving throw DC as the initial disease.

Diseased Breath (recharge 3-6). The dragon coughs and sneezes loudly, expelling various fluids in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in the area must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 42 (12d6) poison damage and exposure to disease (see above) on a failed save, or half as much and no disease exposure on a successful save.

LESSER LICH

This corpse appears dressed in fine robes, jewelry, and arcane symbols. A dim glow seems to emanate from its otherwise empty head.

This pitiable creature was unfortunate enough to find only half of the necessary rituals and instructions for becoming a lich. Though they are immortal, they are only middlingly powerful as a result. A lesser lich is consumed with the goal of becoming “complete”, killing and dealing with any force that it can, desperate to achieve its potential. Somewhat more reckless and dangerous than a normal lich, in the short term, a lesser lich is far more likely to engage in combat, make mistakes, engage in wholesale slaughter, and have its phylactery destroyed. Do not mistake this creature as a joke; those who go from this lesser state to the greater one are cold, calculating, and remember every slight.

LESSER LICH

Medium undead, any evil

Armour Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 85 (13d8 +27)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11(+0)	15(+2)	14(+2)	20(+5)	14(+2)	15(+2)

Saving Throws Con +7, Int +10, Wis +7

Skills Arcana+15, History+10, Insight +7, Perception+7, Religion+10

Damage Resistances cold, lightning, necrotic

Damage Immunities poison, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses truesight 60', passive Perception 17

Languages Common plus four other languages

Challenge 13 (10,000 xp)

Legendary Resistance (1/Day). If the lich fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Rejuvenation. A destroyed lich gains a new body in 10d10 days, regaining all its hit points and becoming active again. The new body appears within 5 feet of the phylactery.

Spellcasting. The lich is a 15th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). The lich has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *mage hand*, *ray of frost*, *minor illusion*

1st lvl (4 slots): *detect magic*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *thunderwave*

2nd lvl (3 slots): *detect thoughts*, *invisibility*, *mirror image*

3rd lvl (3 slots): *counterspell*, *dispel magic*, *fireball*, *stinking cloud*

4th lvl (3 slots): *confusion*, *dimension door*, *stoneskin*

5th lvl (2 slots): *cloudkill*, *conjure elemental*, *scrying*

6th lvl (1 slot): *disintegrate*, *chain lightning*

7th lvl (1 slot): *delayed blast fireball*, *finger of death*

8th lvl (1 slot): *dominate monster*

Turn resistance. The lich has advantage to saving throws against being turned.

ACTIONS

Paralyzing Touch. Melee spell attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The lich can take 1 legendary action from the options below. The action can be used at the end of another creature's turn. It regains its spent legendary action at the start of her turn.

Cantrip. The lich casts a cantrip.

Move. The lich moves up to half of its speed.



LONELY DECEIVER

A young man stares at you with questioning eyes. He seems to want you to approach closer.

An oddity among the myriad of creatures that stalk their prey, the lonely deceiver is one of the few horrors that attempts to engage its victims on an emotional level before leading them to their doom. What we don't quite understand is why it acts in such a way. The deceiver acts like a social predator, seeking out the lonely or the secluded victim in the hours of darkness. Once it is alone with its victim, it actually listens and cajoles conversation from its prey, leading some to speculate that the deceiver feeds on some aspect of social interaction. However, the deceiver does not stop there; once the conversation reaches its end, the deceiver transforms into a monster and begins sucking the life force from its victim. If interrupted, the deceiver fights like a rabid beast to escape, skulking quickly into the night.

The deceiver's natural shape is that of a hulking brute with black oily skin. When it attacks its prey and attempts to consume its soul, it opens its large gaping and fanged mouth and reveals a cold and inky void.

LONELY DECEIVER

Medium Shapechanger, neutral evil

Armour Class 15 (natural armor) in monster form, 12 in human form

Hit Points 82 (11d8 +33)

Speed 30 ft. climb 30' (monster form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)

Skills Deception+5, Persuasion+5, Stealth+4

Damage Resistances poison

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common

Challenge 3 (700 xp)

Cursed. A lonely deceiver is cursed to live as it does, as a shapeshifting monster that feeds on the innocent. If it is subject to a remove curse spell, there is a 50% chance that it will drop dead.

Lifeforce. A lonely deceiver thrives on the life force of others, and can be satiated if it receives temporary hit points. When the deceiver is benefiting from temporary hit points, it can spend an action to restore hit point damage on a 1 for 1 basis, up to 10 points per action spent; this also serves to feed the beast, as it must consume at least 20 hit points worth of life force energy per week to live. A creature able to grant it daily temporary hit points can sometimes parley with the beast, and keep it as a minion. A lonely deceiver prefers real life force energy to mystically contrived life force, and so it will seek to slake its thirst even during its service to its benefactor.

Shapechanger. The deceiver can use her action to polymorph into a large monster or back into the human form (an attractive humanoid of medium size). Its statistics, other than its size and armor class, are the same in each form. Any equipment she is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. The lonely deceiver reverts to its monster form if she dies. A lonely deceiver typically changes to its monster form before draining its victim, apparently a necessity for the creature's feeding habits.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 17 (3d8+4) piercing damage and the target is grappled (Escape DC 15). The lonely deceiver can only grapple one creature at a time.

Lifedrain. The lonely deceiver attempts to drain the life force from a creature. The deceiver targets an adjacent creature, which then must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or reduce its hit point maximum by 11 (2d10). Creatures that are surprised grappled by the deceiver have disadvantage on this saving. Creatures reduced to 0 hit points in this way are cursed to rise at the next sunset as a lonely deceiver. This curse can be cured with a combination of remove curse and a spell to return a creature to life, such as *raise dead*. Otherwise, killing the lonely deceiver only damns its former soul into an eternity of torment, barring it from resurrection attempts.



MARROW OOZE

A pile of rotting organs, skin, hair, and protruding bones jiggles like a rotting coagulated corpse stew.

The sentient marrow ooze is a terrifying faceless foe that is insidiously cunning, despite being an ooze. The marrow ooze works insidiously by attempting to enter a humanoid body through a wound or opening, usually when the creature is sleeping. The ooze then begins to infest the long bones of the host's body, consuming the host's marrow until it is nearly all gone. This process would normally be painful and debilitating, but the ooze naturally secretes pain killers and endorphins that keep the host happy and largely unaware (or unconcerned) with the apparent infection.

The marrow ooze appears to have a latent psychic ability, and uses it to improve its host body, searching the host's mind for its ideal appearance. The marrow ooze has a unique ability to reshape faces and other bone structures within the body with minimal pain and discomfort. Hosts benefit from a more attractive face, and even the healing of any bone deformities or conditions. This has led more than a few unscrupulous groups to selling or employing these oozes as a beauty or medical product, usually (but not always) with some manner of cure to remove the inherent danger of a marrow ooze infection. The success rate of these schemes is usually not worth the risk (see Marrow Ooze infection in the Hazards chapter).

The most insidious part of a marrow ooze infection is its reproduction cycle. When a marrow ooze has finished consuming the marrow within a victim, it undergoes a strange mitosis, producing as many offspring as the host body has limbs. The limbs are then consumed and transformed into new marrow oozes, leaving the host victim bereft of extremities. Though this process is rarely fatal, it is especially traumatizing. Some large cities have entire wings of their mental institutions devoted to the limbless victims of this strange creature.

SENTIENT MARROW OOZE

Small ooze, unaligned

Armour Class 9

Hit Points 44 (8d4+24)

Speed 20 ft., climb 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13(+1)	9 (-1)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	1 (-5)

Skills Stealth+3

Damage Resistances acid, piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 xp)

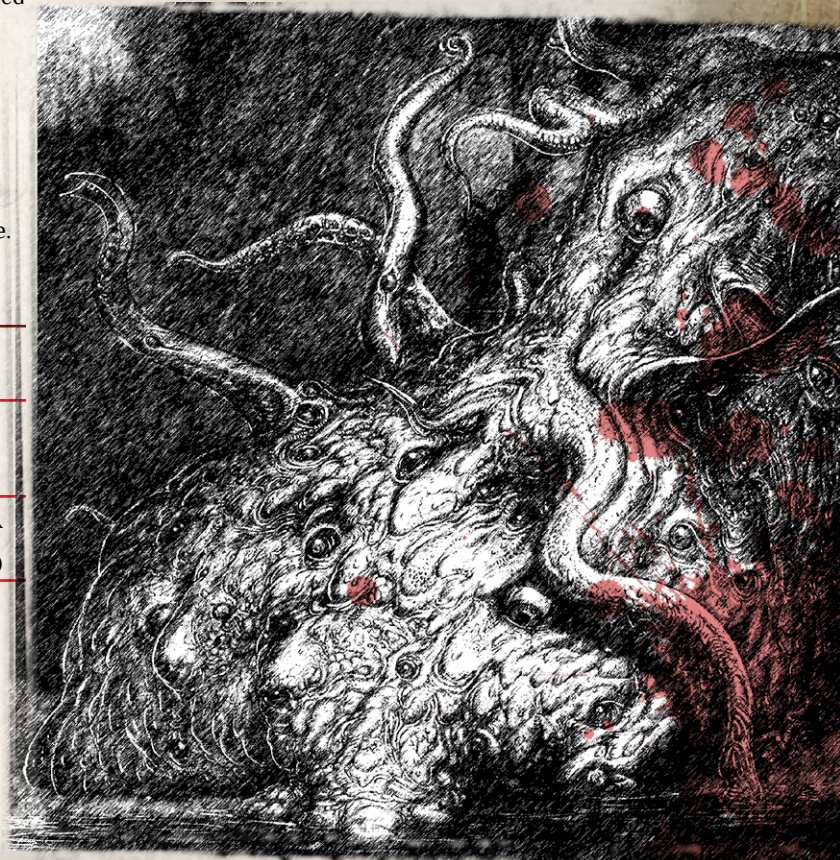
Amorphous. The ooze can move through a space as narrow as a half inch, and as thin as a cut without squeezing.

Camouflage. The marrow ooze is good at hiding, and can usually adhere itself to flat surfaces, hiding in pots, on the inside of a shield, or inside the clothes or armor of a soldier by entering the space of that object, whether it is worn or held. Any creature attacking the ooze must then attack the object in question. If the ooze is hiding on a creature's body, attackers can attempt to hit it, but do so with disadvantage, potentially harming the creature in question. If the attack misses, use the higher of the two rolls and apply that attack to the creature that ooze is hiding on, dealing damage as normal. The ooze cannot hide on a creature that does not wear clothes or armor.

ACTIONS

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) slashing damage.

Infect. The ooze spends its action attempting to enter a creature's body through an opening, such as a mouth or wound. If the creature is not incapacitated, it can make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw to remove the ooze, forcing the ooze into an adjacent space. If saving throw fails, or the victim is incapacitated, the ooze enters, and the creature makes a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, becoming infected on a failure (see Marrow Ooze Infection in the Hazard chapter).



SENSATE FIEND

A large mass of flesh brandishes roughly a dozen thick fanged tentacles that lash and snap menacingly.

The sensate fiend is a creature from the darkest depths of some blasted plane of evil. Where exactly it comes from is unknown. Those that know of the creature can only say that it takes humanoid forms, ejecting a single tentacle from such unnerving locations as palms, mouths, or even eye sockets. Sensate fiends control living beings through these slimy limbs, connecting to spinal columns with its hooked tentacles. In doing so, the sensate fiend enjoys living among his victims, slowly creating addicted minions, and consuming the nervous systems of those that are of no further use to the fiend.

When cornered, the sensate fiend can shed its disguise and reveal itself as a horrid mass of clawed tentacles, attempting to lash out at as many targets as it can. When desperate, the creature will also shed the pretense for manipulation, choosing to smash skulls and connect its tentacles directly to the ruined hind brains of its victims.

SENSATE FIEND

Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class: 18

Hit Points: 187 (22d10+66)

Speed: 30 ft. Swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Con +8, Wis +9, Cha +10

Skills Deception +10, Intimidate +10, Perception +9, Survival +9

Damage Resistances cold, fire; bludgeoning, Piercing or Slashing from nonmagical attacks.

Damage Immunities lightning

Damage Vulnerability psychic

Condition Immunities poisoned, charmed

Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 19

Languages Abyssal, telepathy (tentacle)

Challenge 13 (10,000 xp)

Amorphous. When not disguised, the sensate fiend can move through a space as narrow as 4 inches wide without squeezing.

Superior Disguise. The sensate fiend can secrete a skin and even clothes to match any creature it can observe, or just take a generic but convincing disguise to appear as any medium sized creature, contracting its skin into the worn skin. This disguise is purely cosmetic, and the sensate fiend retains all of its statistics, though the sensate fiend can actually appear as non-humanoid creatures such as beasts and aberrations, as long as that creature is of medium size. The disguise is ruptured

if the sensate fiend has taken more than 50 points of damage below its maximum hit point amount.

Superior Manipulation. The sensate fiend can control up to three creatures at once, coordinating their attacks along with its own, as long as it maintains a tether (see below). If a remains tethered for two successive days, the creature is considered addicted and charmed, and will subconsciously seek to be near to the sensate fiend, at least until the creature realizes the fiend's true identity as an amorphous horror. This addiction only lasts as long as the fiend maintains a single disguise.



ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Sensate Fiend makes three attacks; one with its bite and two with its tentacles. If it is in a humanoid guise, it can make three attacks with a melee weapon, or two with a ranged weapon.

Bite. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit. Reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 17 (2d10+ 6) piercing damage, and the target must make a successful DC Charisma saving throw, becoming charmed by the sensate fiend on a failure until the tether is broken. Severing the tentacle requires an attack. The tentacle has 13 AC and 8 hit points, and the same damage resistances and immunities of the sensate fiend. The sensate fiend can have up to four tethers at any one time.

Tentacles. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit. Reach 5 ft., or Range 50 ft., one target. Hit: 18 (2d12+ 6) bludgeoning damage.

Hindbrain Bite. The sensate fiend can make a bite attack against a dying creature at 0 hp, either breaking through the back of the skull, or otherwise tearing through the target's tissues to reach the hindbrain with its tongue to form a tether. If successful, the fiend can directly control the creature for three turns. This effect otherwise works as per the dominate person spell. The victim is not allowed a saving throw

against this control. If the victim remains tethered by the end of the third turn, it dies, and the sensate fiend regains 20 hit points. An effect that would sever the tongue or restore hit points to the victim ends the control early, and causes the sensate fiend to be stunned until the end of its next turn.

Teleport. The sensate fiend magically teleports, along with any equipment or disguise it is wearing or carrying, up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space it can see. Teleporting while tethered frees any tethered creatures from the fiend's control.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The sensate fiend can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from among the creatures it has charmed. Those creatures do not act on their own initiative, but can be prompted to move and attack when the sensate fiend uses its legendary actions. Only one legendary action can be taken at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. The sensate fiend regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn. The sensate fiend can spend 2 actions to make one of its charmed allies to cast a spell, if the ally is able to cast spells.



Skeletons

BARROW SKELETON

This skeletal moves with a predator's grace, belied only by the creaking of its rusty armor.

A barrow skeleton is created through a special ritual meant to create a tomb guardian, and is more capable than most servile undead. Barrow skeletons are usually meant to be intimidating, and are garnished with heavy and sometimes impractical armor to add bulk to their appearance. They work well in groups of undead, bashing their grave robbers to the floor, allowing the other undead to creep up to the prone victims more easily.

Barrow skeletons are unintelligent, driven only by the orders given to them by their masters. From time to time, a lone ancient barrow skeleton can grow slight personalities and even speak on their own. With the passing of centuries, single barrow skeletons have been known to abandon their posts and wander the land. In this sojourn the barrow skeleton goes from stalwart defender to curious pilgrim.

This pilgrimage rarely lasts long, however, as few are willing to humor the hulking guardian. Some stories tell of an enclave of these erstwhile creatures in some dark cave, learning from each other, and gleaning some semblance of sapience.

BARROW SKELETON

Medium Undead, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (breastplate)

Hit Points 90 (12d8 +36)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	3 (-4)	5 (-3)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception+1

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning, thundering

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic

Condition Immunities exhaustion, charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft, passive Perception 11

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Magical Resistance. The skeleton has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Necrotic Champion. Whenever the skeleton would take necrotic damage, it instead gains that many temporary hit points for 24 hours, to a maximum of 30 temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The barrow skeleton makes two attacks with its glaive.

Glaive. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage and the target must make a DC 13 Strength saving throw or fall prone.

Piercing Laugh (Recharge 5-6). As a bonus action, the barrow skeleton laughs menacingly, causing fear in all who hear it. When the skeleton uses this ability, creatures within 30 feet must make a Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the start of their next turn.

SKELETON TEMPLATES

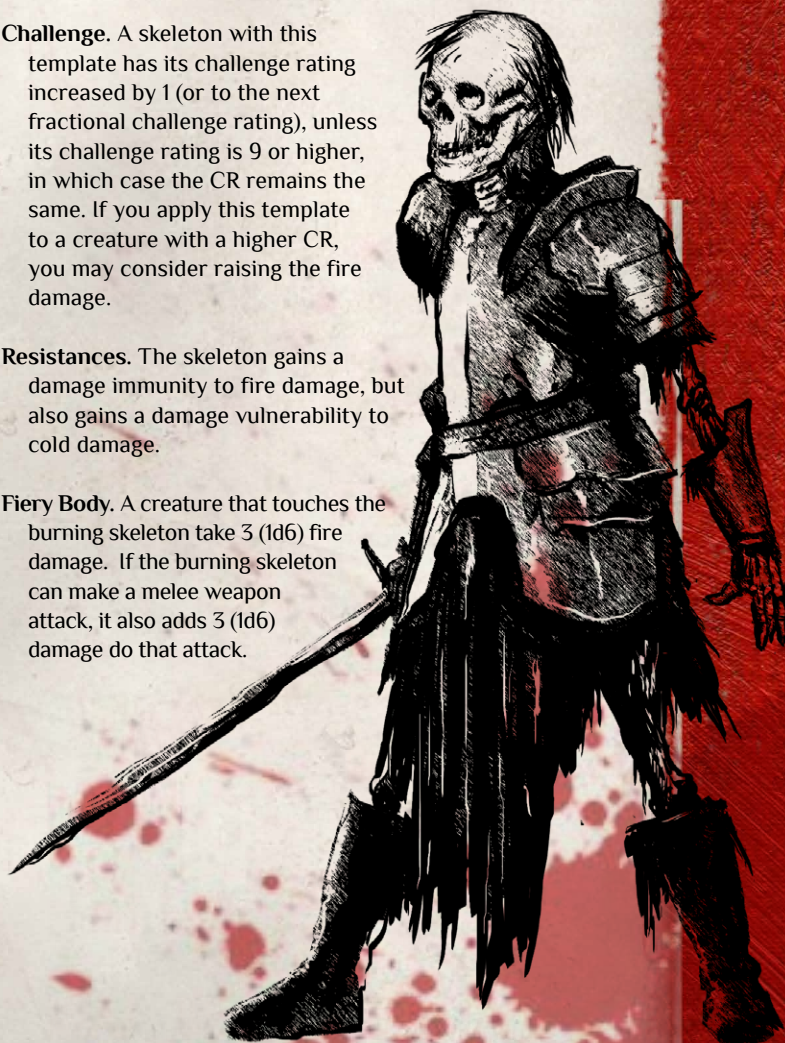
BURNING SKELETON TEMPLATE

Created from the bones of murder victims, burning skeletons are consumed by an unending blue flame that reflects their hopeless rage. The skeleton keeps its statistics, except as follows.

Challenge. A skeleton with this template has its challenge rating increased by 1 (or to the next fractional challenge rating), unless its challenge rating is 9 or higher, in which case the CR remains the same. If you apply this template to a creature with a higher CR, you may consider raising the fire damage.

Resistances. The skeleton gains a damage immunity to fire damage, but also gains a damage vulnerability to cold damage.

Fiery Body. A creature that touches the burning skeleton take 3 (1d6) fire damage. If the burning skeleton can make a melee weapon attack, it also adds 3 (1d6) damage do that attack.



BURNING MINOTAUR SKELETON

Large undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 67 (9d10 + 18)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning, cold

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands Abyssal but can't speak

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Charge. If the skeleton moves at least 10 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be pushed up to 10 feet away and knocked prone.

ACTIONS

Scythe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d12 + 4) slashing damage and 3 (1d6) fire damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage and 3 (1d6) fire damage.



PLAGUED SKELETON

These disgusting skeletons are either created supernaturally through the mass deaths by cause of plague, or purposefully by a necromancer that wishes to spread disease. The skeleton keeps its statistics except as follows.

Challenge. A plagued skeletons challenge rating is increased by 1 (or to the next fractional challenge rating) unless its challenge rating is already 9 or higher, in which case its challenge rating remains the same. If you apply this template to creatures with higher level CR, you might consider raising the DC of the Bone Muck ability.

Bone Muck. A creature that takes damage from a plague skeleton's weapon attack must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creatures becomes diseased, and gains the poisoned condition. Every 24 hours that elapse, the infected creature must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw, ending the disease on a success. On a failure, its maximum hit point total is reduced by 5. If the creature's hit point maximum reaches 0, it dies. Creatures slain in this way have a 5% chance of rising at the next sunset as another plagued skeleton, and automatically become a plagued skeleton if targeted with the *animate dead* spell. The reduction to the target's hit point maximum lasts until the disease is cured.

PLAGUED WARHORSE SKELETON

Large undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (barding scraps)

Hit Points 22 (3d10 + 6)

Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	2 (-4)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6+4) bludgeoning damage, and the target must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creatures becomes diseased, and gains the poisoned condition. Every 24 hours that elapse, the infected creature must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw, ending the disease on a success. On a failure, its maximum hit point total is reduced by 5. If the creature's hit point maximum reaches 0, it dies. Creatures slain in this way have a 5% chance of rising at the next sunset as another plagued skeleton, and automatically become a plagued skeleton if targeted with the *animate dead* spell. The reduction to the target's hit point maximum lasts until the disease is cured.

VARGOUILLE

A demonic head flies through the sky upon glistening red bat wings. Its eyes glow with unnatural light, suggesting a monstrous hunger.

The vargouille only vaguely resembles a head, having wings for ears and tentacles for hair, and glowing green eyes. Though they originate from the lower planes, they find their way into other realms, both due to summoning and their dreadful means of reproduction. Many rightfully fear the kiss of the vargouille, and tales are spun of entire regions plagued by the flying abominations. The mere suggestion of a vargouille is enough to cause an entire peasant village to tremble in fear in the relative safety of their homes.

VARGOUILLE

Tiny fiend, neutral evil

Armour Class 13

Hit Points 45 (10d4+20)

Speed fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Intimidate+3, Perception+3, Stealth+5

Senses darkvision 200 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 xp)

Light Sensitivity. While in bright light, the vargouille has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage. The target must make a DC 11 constitution saving throw against poison, or the victim's hit point maximum is reduced by the amount of damage taken. A lesser restoration spell or remove curse spell neutralizes the poison and allows the wound to heal.

Shriek (recharges after a short rest). The vargouille can unleash a blood-curdling shriek as an action. Living creatures other than Vargouilles within 60' of the Vargouille must make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. If the target fails the saving throw by 5 or more, the target is also paralyzed for the same duration and susceptible to the Vargouille's kiss. A frightened or paralyzed creature may repeat the saving throw at the end of its turn to break the effect. A target that

succeeds on the saving throw is immune to the shriek of Vargouilles for a day.

Kiss. The vargouille can use its action to kiss an incapacitated target. The target must succeed at a constitution check with DC 14 or contact a terrible, fatal condition. Within 1d6 hours of the onset of the disease, the target's hair fall off and terrible migraines plague the victim, conferring the poisoned condition. In another 1d6 hours, the victim's ear start to lengthen, teeth become elongated and the features become distorted. He or she becomes incapacitated and his or her mental ability scores are halved. After a final 1d6 hours, the transformation is complete; the victim's head flies off as a vargouille with no memories of its past and the body dies. Exposure to sunlight (or the daylight spell) stops the transformation but doesn't reverse it, and it resumes once the target is out of the light. To cure the condition, remove disease must be cast on the victim, immediately alleviating the symptoms.



ZOMBIE MARSHALL

This well armored corpse appears animate and alacritous, as it seems to move with a calculated purpose.

The zombie marshall manifests from especially strong sentient creatures. Though much of their personality is lost in the transformation, their strength of will creates in them a leader for the otherwise uncoordinated zombie hordes. Zombie marshalls can direct and manage a throng of zombies in ways that even evil spellcasters cannot, and turn a crowd of fumbling undead into a dangerously organized force of hungry flesh eaters.

While the zombie marshall can be created by necromancers from the corpses of heroes and scions of the world, they can also manifest spontaneously when such scions suffer an unholy end at the hands of dark forces. In either case, the zombie marshall is especially willful and hard to control, though they sometimes serve as lieutenants in dark armies. When untethered, a zombie marshall desires nothing more than to spread death and suffering to every living thing it can lay its rotting eyes on.

A zombie marshall is often accompanied by 2d4 zombie followers, but accomplished marshalls may have more, especially if they are a lieutenant in an undead army.

Undead Nature. A zombie doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

ZOMBIE MARSHALL'S LAIR

A zombie marshall makes its lair in old battlefields, the graveyards of giant beasts, and ghost towns that have succumbed to disease. Sometimes this is simply as a result of the marshall having died on that spot, but more often than not the marshall migrates to that spot with its retinue of undead followers. In the rare case that the marshall is beholden to some greater power, they sometimes make their lairs in the castles and dungeons that serve as the home to their overlords. In these instances, the marshalls take great pains to festoon their own lairs with corpses and bones, ensuring that any who dare enter are haunted by the grim decor.

The area around a zombie marshall's lair becomes fallow out to approximately 1 mile. This area fails to grow anything more than scrub, though some large and scraggly looking trees may sprout from the ground. If death does not already pervade the area, many sick animals seek this place to die, creating a grim boneyard within 10d10 months, though if the zombie marshall is slain, the area returns to normal in a similar amount of time.

LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the zombie marshall takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects:

Bones in a 20-foot-radius within 90 feet of the zombie marshall become partially animated, grasping at nearby creatures. Any creature in the area must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or become grappled (escape DC 12).

A foul aura fills a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on a point the zombie marshall chooses within 50 feet of it. The aura spreads around corners and remains until the marshall dismisses it as an action, uses this lair action again, or dies. The aura appears as a strange bodiless shadow that covers the area. Any creature in the aura when it appears must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 4 (1d8) necrotic damage on a failure, or half damage on a success. Any undead healed of 1 hit point of damage if they end their turn within the sphere.

ZOMBIE MARSHALL

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armour Class 16 (natural armour)

Hit Points 112 (15d8 +45)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +3

Damage Immunities poison, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60ft, passive perception 11

Languages Common

Challenge 8 (3,900 xp)

Innate Spellcasting. The zombie marshall's spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11). The zombie marshall can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

3/day: *animate dead*

Legendary Resistance (1/Day). If the zombie marshall fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Bolster the Dead. Undead creatures within 100 ft of the zombie marshall have their speed increased to 30 ft. if their speed was lower than 30.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the zombie marshall to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie marshall drops to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The zombie marshall makes three slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The zombie marshall can take 2 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The zombie marshall regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Slam Attack. The zombie marshall makes a slam attack

Coordinated Assault. The zombie marshall gives a command to up to two zombies within 30 feet, and each zombies attacks one target, if able.



Horror Templates

Some of the most profound horrors are committed by men and women of various seemingly civilized races. Monsters may lack the morality to restrain their dark urges, but sentient bipeds enjoy a creativity that can be put to use in the most fiendish of ways. That having been said, there are few people that are simply defined by their roles as serial killers, criminal masterminds, or possessed slashers; Rather, these are things that are additive.

As such, these traits are better served as templates, applied to the NPCs already present in the 5th edition ruleset. Not only does it vary the kind of murderers and psychopaths you can employ, it also helps scale the encounters that you use against your players. A serial killer that is a commoner may be a threat at low levels, but one that is a knight or even a gladiator could potentially frighten a group of players at mid level play.

The following templates give guidelines for how to adjust and modify the statistics of existing NPC statistics to fit the theme and challenge appropriate for your game.

The "Difficulty" of CR Increases

CR increases are largely subjective and can take some tempering and testing. While the following abilities may change the threat level of an NPC, it may not. When adding an ability that raises the CR of a given NPC, consider increasing their hit points by about 20-40 points per CR point added. One of the most prominent mathematical facts of this game's edition is that monsters and NPCs have to be tough to survive more than a few rounds of a fight, and the increase in CR without also increasing hit points does nothing to address this. It may take some time to grow into this mindset, but once you go through many combats, you will start to learn how to adjust hit points for the group's opponents, perhaps even on the fly!

Mastermind

A mastermind is an insidious agent that can be anywhere, and be anything. Though they usually do not put themselves in harm's way, they realize that there is an important necessity in getting your hands dirty, whether to put a knife in the right back or be a corpse at the right place and time. The mastermind likes to be a part of the action, and better yet, to observe and test their wits against other intellects, whether to sharpen themselves on the dull rock of a lesser mind or to find the rare equal so that they can have a true battle of minds! A mastermind gains the following abilities.

Ability Score Increase. The NPC's Intelligence score is increased to 18 if it is not already 18. The NPC also gains proficiency in every Intelligence skill.

Challenge. The challenge rating for this NPC is increased by 1 (or to the next fractional challenge rating) unless its challenge rating is already 6 or higher, in which case its challenge rating stays the same.

Perfect Affect. A true mastermind can impersonate nearly any character. To any observer, they are what they say they are; a bar employee, a gawky teenager, or even an able blacksmith. Any character suspicious of the mastermind must make a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Insight) check to gain any understanding of the mastermind's ruse. Anyone who happens to pierce the deception gains the mastermind's respect and ire.

Feign Death. Any time the mastermind takes any damage, they can appear to be dead. Intense medical examination will render the character's heart stopped, pulse stopped, and skin clammy. This ability fools medical examination unless the result of the Wisdom (Medicine) check equals or exceeds 20. However, it is very likely that a mastermind will employ a means of death or a backup plan that will make such an examination unlikely.

Paralyzing Intellect. When the mastermind reveals themselves, whether by choice or otherwise, they can use an action to unleash a diatribe of intellectually charged speech upon the mastermind's audience. This could be a treatise on the deceptions they have been carrying out, a list of imminent and pertinent dangers to the audience members or their loved ones, or simply some nonsense jargon meant only to confound. Living creatures with Intelligence scores of 5 or higher must make a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or be stunned for 1d4 rounds. If a stunned creature takes damage at this time, it has the stunned condition removed and can act normally.

Stunning Action. Any time the mastermind enters combat, they are considered to have surprise on their opponents. Any movement during this round does not provoke opportunity attacks from any creatures able to make them.

Quick Escape. The mastermind can take a bonus action to take the Disengage, Dash, or Hide action.

GM note: This is a great template to apply to virtually any NPC. It can make a commoner become a brutally intelligent pauper revolutionary or a veteran into a vicious disgruntled paramilitary leader. Take special care when applying this template to an assassin, as the combination is amazingly effective; you may even increase the CR of the encounter by 2 or 3. You may potentially want to avoid using this template for the assassin unless you want to create an especially deadly and intelligent opponent.

To that point, this template is less about making an effective combatant and more about making a character that can be anywhere can shrug off attempts to kill or detain them and will attempt to match wits with the characters at every turn. While they are apt to use minions to foil the characters, they are not especially good at directing said minions and are likely to either co-opt

capable NPCs to do their dirty work or simply use disposable henchmen to slow or hinder their enemies, with no thought or concern for anyone but themselves.

While killing or defeating a mastermind is certainly not impossible, a player group is likely to wonder if their enemy could potentially return from any kind of incarceration or even death. All the same, a high level party is not likely to be as concerned with a mastermind, as their powerful abilities are more likely to



Serial Killer

Ubiquitous and iconic, the serial killer is a figure that captures the imagination, tugging at the fears and curiosity of society. What drives them? How do you stop them? While in truth these answers are both grim and mundane, the fictional serial killer is a distinct character in the horror genre.

The serial killer runs the gamut between greasy loner to dapper genius, but the more common thread is a pathological desire to kill. This desire often sharpens their ability to do so quickly, as well as to stage a crime scene to either divert or confound investigators. Some serial killers seem to possess a preternatural ability to take damage and survive nearly any amount of punishment. Some serial killers have also made pacts or are imbued with special powers that render them durable and hard to deal with.

Note: This template is meant to apply to both a normal but deranged killer, but also with some kind of supernatural slasher. Sometimes the two concepts can coincide, but options for both kinds of serial killer are provided.

A serial killer gains some or all of the following abilities. Some of these abilities come with additional choices that are made when the NPC is created.

Challenge. The serial killer can have a number of optional abilities that may or may not affect their final challenge rating. Each ability will say if it will affect the challenge rating and if so, by how much. As you build the NPC, you choose what options to include.

Brutal Attack. When the serial killer attacks another victim, and there are no other creatures within 30 feet, the serial killer deals an additional 10 (3d6) damage with any weapon, unarmed, or natural attack. The damage is either of the type caused by the weapon, or necrotic if it is an unarmed or natural attack. This ability increases the CR of the serial killer by 1 (or to the next fractional level).

Distraction. The serial killer can misdirect attempts to locate him, either by casting suspicion on others, or literally causing a visual distraction when being chased. Attempts to chase, track, investigate, locate or otherwise apprehend the serial killer are made with disadvantage. If the serial killer's current hit point total is half of its maximum or less, they lose the benefits of this ability. This ability increases the CR of the serial killer by 1.

Keen Intellect. A subtle serial killer can outsmart their pursuers and weave webs with which to capture victims. Increase the serial killer's Intelligence score to a minimum of 16, or +2 if it is 16 or higher. In addition, the serial killer has advantage on any Intelligence or Charisma checks to deceive investigation, lure victims, or to conceal their activities. The serial killer also gains proficiency with two Intelligence or Charisma skills. This change does not increase the CR of the serial killer.

Quick. The serial killer's movement speeds are increased by 10 feet. This does not affect the CR of the serial killer.

Unkillable, Greater. The serial killer gains resistance to all weapon damage. When they are reduced to 0 hit points, they are automatically dead. If their body is not completely destroyed, they enter a torpor and return to life with half of their hit point total within 1d4 hours. If restrained by mundane means, the serial killer can escape its bonds automatically within 1d4 hours. This ability cannot be added to a spellcasting NPC.

This ability increases the NPC's CR by 2. If the creature has a fractional CR or lower, this ability instead raises their CR to 2. If the creature has a CR of 6 or higher, their CR is increased by 1. You can award half experience each time the serial killer is reduced to 0 hit points, or full experience if the serial killer is somehow dealt with permanently.

The unkillable ability is always paired with some achievable means to deal with the serial killer, such as a ritual, condition, or substance that will quash their amazing ability to survive death. The serial killer cannot have this ability and Unkillable, Lesser.

Unkillable, Lesser (3/day). The serial killer is tough to kill. Whenever the serial killer is reduced to 0 hit points, there is a 50% chance of them instead staying at 1 hit points if they succeed. On a failure, they are reduced to 0 hit points as normal. This ability does not change the serial killer's CR. The serial killer cannot have this ability and Unkillable, Greater.

Curse Bearer

Some evils are not people or bad intentions. Some evils are accidents twisted by a cruel god of fate. Some evils are people who are too selfish or stupid to seek help or accept their lot in life. Some evils are the doom that cursed individuals bring to their unlucky comrades.

The curse bearer can take many shapes and forms. Whether a hapless pawn manipulated by an evil master or an unfortunate fool that triggered some dark magic, the curse bearer has doomed themselves through some awful turn of events.

The nature of the curse is variable but is always disastrous and far reaching. This template is as varied as curses themselves. The following curses are some examples of the terrible portends that follow the bearer of curses.

Challenge. The curse bearer can have a number of optional abilities that may or may not affect their final challenge rating. Each ability will say if it will affect the challenge rating and if so, by how much. As you build the NPC, you choose what options to include.

Conditional Curse. This curse is insidious, as it can potentially be spread easily by those willing to do so. These conditional curses are usually bound to some seemingly superstitious activity that directly imparting a curse to others. The worst of these curses forces the curse bearer to curse many more people to remove it from themselves.

As an example, the "Jeweled Eye of the Nameless Lord" is a gem that curses its bearer to stare into the eyes of three other individuals to spread the curse. Only then can the curses bearer be free of the gem and the curse, but

the curse renews when another greedy soul seeks out the cursed gem.

Anyone bearing the gem cannot benefit from a long rest and must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw at the end of each night. Once obtained, the jewel cannot be discarded as long as the bearer is cursed. On a failure, they gain a level of exhaustion, as they experience intense headaches and eye pain. If the cursed creature gains enough exhaustion levels to die, they do not die, but instead, have their eyes turned into gems. The experience is painful, but their exhaustion levels are completely removed once the gems are extracted from their eye sockets. Gems made from eyes disappear in 1d4 days, reappearing in the tomb of the Nameless Lord.

The bearer of the gem can remove this curse by making a gaze attack (see below). Knowledge of this gaze attack may coincide with the gem's legend, but the curse bearer may even accidentally confer the curse. If the bearer can curse three individuals, the curse is lifted for the gem bearer, and they can discard the gem. Those cursed by this gaze are doomed unless the gem is returned to the Temple of the Nameless Lord, in which case the curse is lifted for any and all afflicted individuals. Once the curse has run its course, only a greater restoration or regeneration spell can restore the victim's eyes.

The curse bearer gains the following gaze attack and increases their CR by 1. Fractional CRs are increased to 1.

Curse of the Jewel. When a creature that can see the curse bearer's eyes starts its turn within 30 feet of the curse bearer, the curse bearer can force it to make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw if the curse bearer isn't incapacitated and can see the creature. The creature is cursed on a failure. That night, the creature cannot benefit from a long rest and must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, or gain a level of exhaustion. If the creature gains levels of exhaustion that would result in death, they instead have their eyes painfully turned into gems. Once the gems are removed, the creature has their levels of exhaustion completely removed.

Cursed by Darkness. The curse bearer has been targeted by dark forces, whether by jealous mortal hexes or other worldly agents. Curses of this nature tend to be more focused in scope and can spread slight mayhem. The petty creatures that hand out such curses often delight in spying on their victim and seeing what tragedies befall them and their kin.

While some curses target descendents, most of these curses are more immediate. Some examples include having skin that is poisonous to the touch, being unable to gain or maintain weight or even being the bearer of an unidentifiable disease. Such curse bearers are often the source of some deleterious condition and bring harm to those immediately around them. Some go on unwittingly spreading the terrible condition. Dark forces are fond of cursing simple creatures like animals that can happily spread the effects of the curse without a second thought.

Typical effects imparted by this curse are the blinded, deafened, exhaustion, poisoned, and even petrified conditions. If the effect is permanent, the creature's CR is increased by 2, or increased by two fractional levels. If it is temporary, the creature's CR is increased by 1. In either case, the minimum CR for the creature is 1.

Cursed by the Fates. The curse bearer is doomed to die. Those that attempt to defy this reality can bring pain and suffering to those around them.

Within 1000 feet of the curse bearer, any ability checks or attack rolls that result in a natural 1 cause some sort of terrible accident. This could be as a direct result of the action that called for the dice roll, or simply an incidental but dangerous event. The swing of a sword may sever a rope that drops a weight on an innocent bystander, or the opening of a book could cause a deadly earthquake.

Many of those cursed by the fates are driven to seclusion; the cursed either live in isolated ignominy or die a dramatic death that is worthy of epics and tragedies. Such cursed are most dangerous when they put others in danger by refusing to isolate themselves.

A curse bearer with this curse has their CR increased by 2, to a minimum of 3. Such crea-

tures represent an inherent danger to everyone near them.

Cursed by the Gods. The curse bearer has angered the gods, and their wrath spares no bystanders. Such curse bearers often bear a mark signifying divine disfavor, such as bleeding sigil, or having a dead animal affixed to their person. Whatever the case, the cursed is easily identifiable. Wherever the curse bearer goes, great disasters follow. The curse bearer is likely to herald great catastrophes such as earthquakes, tsunamis, or even the awakening of great and terrible creatures like the Terrasque. This trait is meant as a plot element and does not significantly alter the creature's ability.

Cursed by Magic. Some curses are merely magical constructs, either meant to keep the foolish uninitiated from tainting magic with their unworthy hands, or as mean spirited lessons in humility imparted by cruel magicians.

Such curses are more limited in scope, and often only affect the victim, though the wrong curse on the right person could lead to bedlam. Some curses can manifest as mood swings, possessions, or even body swaps. Though potentially troublesome, such curses do not change the curse bearer's CR.

Secret Cultist

Secret societies accept those from all walks of life, often being happy to include people who can do their dirty work. Just like any organization, there is a wide hierarchy that insinuates a cult's influence throughout all walks of life. The influence of the cultist stems from a strong support network and an ironclad code of silence.

Some cults are relatively benign, seeking what many groups do in gathering resources and influence. Others seek nothing less than the annihilation of all life. Whatever their ultimate goals, a cult tends to pursue its goals with ruthless efficiency.

Perhaps the most insidious thing about a cult is its secrecy. Many of its victims have absolutely no idea that they are being spun into a web of deceit and doom until the cult descends upon them. In

a terrifying display of unity and avarice, these societies are hard to stop, and harder to eliminate, each member is fanatical enough to carry forth the goals, whether they have support or not.

The secret cultist gains some of the following abilities, as determined when the NPC is created:

Challenge. The secret cultist's strength lies in a robust support system, and their inability to betray their cause. As such, their CR does not increase as they are not in themselves a greater threat, but can call upon great resources and other members, and the increased challenge is reflected in the cult's strength in numbers.

Cult Leader. A cult leader has a charismatic power over your followers. At any one time, they have no less than a dozen charmed NPCs in their service. They can be from nearly any NPC type, as appropriate. When the cult leader is killed, roll a percentile dice. On a result of 1-50%, the charmed cultists sink into a murderous frenzy and attack those responsible. On a result of 51-100, the cultists sink into a wailing despair and take no actions.

Friends in High Places. The infrastructure of a cult is diverse. A cultist can whisper in the right ear and call down the wrath of local law enforcement, judiciary, or even nobility. Though this rarely results in outright violence, some desperate high ranking cultists can even call down on pet assassins to deal with curious party members. When a cultist is murdered, the cult seeks revenge whether or not their secret was revealed, and will sometimes seek an eye for an eye.

Iron Will. A cultist has been conditioned never to reveal a cult's secrets, let alone speak its name to outsiders. If an effect would coerce the cultist to reveal anything about the cult, they have advantage on checks and saving throws to avoid doing so. Those attempting to coerce the cultist have disadvantage on any checks meant to do so. This ability ceases to function if the cultist is charmed

Programmed. A cultist that has been programmed is obsessed with some aspect of the cult. They are immune to the charmed condition, as they are already charmed by the leader or the cause, and they have advantage to resist the frightened condition. They cannot ignore any command by their cult leader, no matter how dangerous it may be.

Reinforcements. A mid-ranking cultist can call upon their associates to deal with problems. As an action, the cultist can call in other members. Use the following groupings as a guideline:

- † 1 veteran, 3 thugs
- † 5 cultists
- † 2 guards, 3 scouts
- † 1 cult fanatic, 3 guards



Imposter

One of the most horrifying nightmares faced by people is the possibility that their loved ones have been replaced. This nightmare can manifest in a variety of terrible ways. Some imposters are killed and worn as suits, as is the case with the intellect devourer and its feeding habits. Others are cloned, created whole, while the original person is captured or dead. Others are merely impersonated by mundane or supernatural means. Whatever the method, the disturbing thought of a loved one being a doppelganger is enough to strike terror into the hearts of any man or woman.

An imposter gains some of the following abilities, as determined when the NPC is created:

Challenge. An imposter rarely has abilities that make them

Picture Perfect. The imposter is a perfect visual copy of the creature they are impersonating. Nothing is out of place, including birthmarks and other physical attributes. Any attempt to discern that the creature is a fake based only on visual evidence has disadvantage.

Emotionless Doll. The creature cannot emulate emotions or does so in a way that is inappropriate. It may or may not be blatantly obvious that the creature is an imposter. Attempts to discern that the creature is a fake based on social or emotional evidence have advantage. However, the imposter is also immune to the charmed and frightened conditions.

Skinwearer. The imposter is somehow inhabiting the body of the person, rather than just imitating it. The creature cannot be damaged without damaging the host. Treat the creature as a disease, which is expelled if the diseases are somehow cured, or an expert surgery is performed, requiring a DC 18 Wisdom (Medicine) check. Some creatures kill the host before inhabiting it, so curing the disease effectively releases the corpse from the skinwearer's control. The skinwearer can be anything from a tiny slug to a small sized humanoid that wears the body like a shell. In either case, the creature has

Impersonating the PCs

The imposter villain has the unique ability to be able to copy nearly any creature, including the player characters. In this case, you could simply take a player's character sheet, copy it, and apply the relevant abilities. This could even work for lower level versions of your PCs, especially if there are many imposters with the face of one or more of your player characters. This could make for an interesting encounter or combat, especially if each of the players has to fight their double. This could prove to be tricky, but subtle antagonism by these duplicates could be an unnerving way to promote horror in your campaign, especially if press the players to slay numerous duplicates of themselves.

10 hit points and 10 AC, 10 for all of its ability scores, can move 15 feet per round, and no way to attack on its own.

Clone. The imposter is a grown or created copy of the impersonated person or creature. The creature is such a perfect copy that they register as the original through magical detections such as locate person. The clone may or may not have some or all memories of the original, up to the point of creation. Many clones are "born" with various defects, either being unable to grow, heal, or change, while others still are innately drawn to kill and replace the creature from which they were copied.

Vague Memories. Whatever the type of imposter, this ability allows it to have some vague memories of the creature it is impersonating. These memories can help it to avoid being discovered and can negate penalties that would make it easier for others to discover the imposter's nature. The memories are not perfect and can render the imposter confused or addled while they try to conjure memories.

Shapechanger. Imposters with this ability can actively copy any creature with which they come into contact. This ability is extremely dangerous and allows the imposter to hide and infiltrate more easily. Creatures with this

ability increase their challenge rating by 1, to a minimum of 1 for a fractional CR. This ability otherwise acts as the alter shape spell, but with no duration or concentration.

Evil Twin. Through some strange magic or dimensional anomaly, the imposter is actually the same person it is impersonating, but with an alternate personality. This could be an opposite alignment, a dangerous mental illness, or even a dangerous curse (see curse bearer above). Evil twins are thinking breathing beings, and not mere copies, and often are just as impressive or ingenious as their originals.



Doom Bringer

The doombringer is either a nihilist that would see the world undone, or a tyrant bent on using death and terror to rule as much as they can grasp. Whether through promises to dark powers, or some personal ability, the doombringer can tap into thanatotic powers that help them to see their plans to vile fruition. The doombringer gains some of the following abilities*.

Touch of Doom. The doombringer is adept at linking to dark energies and unweave the tapestry of reality. Any time that the doombringer rolls necrotic damage, they add 1 additional necrotic damage per dice rolled.

Undying. The doombringer is effectively undead through their connection to the forces of entropy. When killed, they rise again within 3 nights, and can only be stopped by a potent magical force, such as a great evil ritual gone wrong, or some extremely deadly spell or effects, like a river of lava or the disintegrate spell.

Doom's Herald. The doombringer is a 4th level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma, and its Charisma score becomes 16. Its spell save DC is 14, and it has +6 to hit with spell attacks. The doombringer has the following spells prepared.

Cantrips (at will): chill touch, mage hand, poison spray

1st level (4 slots): bane, disguise self, false life, inflict wounds

2nd level (3 slots): blindness/deafness, hold person, locate object, ray of enfeeblement

In addition to these spells, the doombringer has a minimum CR of 5 or increases its CR by 3 if it is already a higher CR (adjust the statistics accordingly for proficiency bonus). The doombringer also has a minimum of 50 hit points, or more if it already possessed more.

Avatar of Doom. The doombringer is a 12th level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma,

and its Charisma score becomes 16. Its spell save DC is 14, and it has +6 to hit with spell attacks. The doom bringer has the following spells prepared.

Cantrips (at will): chill touch, mage hand, poison spray, minor illusion

1st level (4 slots): bane, disguise self, false life, inflict wounds, ray of sickness

2nd level (3 slots): blindness/deafness, hold person, locate object, shatter

3rd level (3 slots): animate dead, bestow curse, dispel magic

4th level (3 slots): blight, confusion, locate creature

5th level (3 slots): cloudkill, dream, insect plague

6th level (2 slots): create undead, disintegrate

In addition to these spells, the doombringer has a minimum CR of 10 or increases its CR by 3 if it is already a higher CR (adjust the statistics accordingly for proficiency bonus). The doombringer also has a minimum of 100 hit points, or more if it already possessed more.

An avatar of doom can also cast a special ritual that can bring great calamities to the world. It is up to you, the GM, to discover what great doom they can conjure, and up to your PCs to stop the avatar of doom from succeeding.

*The doombringer cannot gain more than one spellcasting ability from this category. These abilities cannot be applied to an NPC that already possesses spellcasting.

Demon-friend

There are many who would cavort with the forces of evil, either as short-term partnerships or even on a long-lasting contractual basis. No matter the length, associating with evil will leave mortals changed both inside and out. Demon-friends can often trade their skin and soul for power, or merely profess their admiration for the evil outsiders by pledging fealty. These demon-friends can be willing slaves or canny partners, depending on how able they are, and all but the wisest and clever are

likely to forfeit their soul when the deal is done, no matter how large or small the gain.

A demon friend gains some or all of the following abilities.

Challenge. The demon friend can gain various abilities that increase their challenge rating. Each ability describes the way in which its challenge rating is increased, if at all.

Demon Affinity. Demon friends can sometimes benefit from their connection to the dark ties to evil forces. A demon friend cannot be willingly attacked by a fiend. If a fiend is magically compelled to attack the demon friend, whether through summoning or charmed condition, those attacks are made with disadvantage. Additionally, the demon friend has advantage on saving throws from spells and abilities originating from fiends. Most demon friends must fulfill a condition to maintain this protection, often requiring dark acts being committed in the name of some dark lord.

Summoner. A consummate ally of the dark, the demon friend can summon the forces of evil either on a whim or through ritual and effort. The demon friend can summon a single fiendish ally of an equal CR or lower. This ability increases the demon friend's CR by 1, to a minimum of 1, and any CR adjustments count for the purposes of this ability.

Hellfire. The demon friend can summon goutts of fire. They know the fire bolt cantrip. Charisma is their spellcasting ability for this spell. The demon friend's CR is increased to 1 if it was a fractional CR.

Blood Bound. Those people who are bound to evil by blood are inexorably linked to them. A demon friend with this trait is counted as a fiend for all purposes, as well as their normal type. This does not affect the demon friend's CR.

Damned. Something about a dark and evil energy is so insinuated in the demon friend that their death is a violent and dangerous event. When the demon friend reaches 0 hit

points, their soul is immediately shunted into some dark plane. This event is accompanied by a violent pandemonium. Though the sensation of this pandemonium can vary, it always has the same rough effect. All creatures within 50 feet must make a Wisdom saving throw, taking 1d6 psychic damage per CR of the demon friend on a failure, or half as much on a success. This ability increases the CR of the demon friend by 1, to a minimum of 1. The new CR is used to calculate the damage at the time of the demon friend's death. This creature cannot regenerate or return from this damnation unless they are saved with a wish spell.

Demon Loved. Through some dint of fate, the demon friend is considered especially coveted by fiends. Fiends treat the demon friend favorably, but may jealously guard this relationship. A demon loved with this trait is likely to be traveling with a retinue of other demons that worship or protect the creature. A demon friend with this trait is also subject to strange rituals that encompass dark prophecies and may be protected as the subject of a future sacrifice that will advance some fiendish agenda.

This trait does not increase the demon friend's CR other than by grouping the demon friend with other demons with their own CR ratings.

Sample Villain

Here is an example of an NPC modified using the various templates above. In this case, I took the base of the berserker NPC from the SRD and applied abilities from the secret cultist, demon friend, and serial killer template groups to create a brutish cult enforcer. You may note that I increased his hit point maximum, gave him an extra attack, and changed his Charisma score (to reflect his monstrous personality). Such tweaks are part of the fun of crafting an NPC.

Zerod is the witless but capable killer that enforces the cult doctrine. Having been inducted into the cult from an orphanage, he knows only the brutality and nihilism that the cult espouses and the marginal favor that the cult leader grants him for a job well done. The emotional scraps he gets as rewards for murdering have left him a

remorseless and efficient assassin. Zerod can barely behave like a human being in normal society, but his cult connections mean that he can live a quiet life of prayer to an evil god when he isn't carrying out the dark whims of his masters.

ZEROD, CULT ENFORCER

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armour Class 13 (hide armor)

Hit Points 133 (18d8 +54)

Speed 30 ft.

Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
6 (+3)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	4 (-3)

Senses passive perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 5 (1,800 xp)

Brutal Attack. When the Zerod attacks another victim, and there are no other creatures within 30 feet, he deals an additional 10 (3d6) damage with any weapon, unarmed, or natural attack. The damage is either of the type caused by the weapon, or necrotic if it is an unarmed or natural attack.

Damned. When the Zerod reached 0 hit points, his soul is immediately shunted into some dark plane. This event is accompanied by a violent pandemonium of illusory fire and devilish shrieking. All creatures within 50 feet must make a Wisdom saving throw, taking 17 (5d6) psychic damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

Distraction. Zerod can misdirect attempts to locate him, either by casting suspicion on others, or literally causing a visual distraction when being chased. Attempts to chase, track, investigate, locate or otherwise apprehend him are made with disadvantage. If Zerod's current hit point total is half of its maximum or less, he loses the benefits of this ability.

Programmed. Zerod cannot be charmed or frightened. He must follow all orders from the cult leader or high ranking demons.

Reckless. At the start of its turn, Zerod can gain advantage on all melee attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against Zerod have advantage until the start of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Zerod makes two short sword attacks. **Shortsword.** Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage and the target must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Other Villains

Though the above templates are a great way to express villains through the current offering of NPCs, you don't necessarily have to even alter the NPCs by very much to have a memorable villain. The following ideas can express villains with no rules modifications.

- † **Betrayer:** This NPC is a long time friend or trusted ally of the group, and turns out to be a betrayer! This type of villain is largely situational and conditional, but easy to run and fun to use on your players.
- † **Black Guard:** Though this is a well-known category of villain for fantasy games, it is easy enough to use NPCs (particularly the knight) and add a template to represent their area of villainy, such as a secret cultist. The acts of evil are what define a blackguard the most!
- † **Possessed:** These characters are less evil and more manipulated by outside forces. There are a number of options available, such as the cursed, or demon-friend templates that have options that might reflect a possessed character.
- † **Disease:** Similar to the curse bearer, disease is a potent obstacle. While disease can sometimes be the work of a sentient being, it is often just a microbial threat with no central source to defeat. Disease can render people into living bio-weapons, or frenetic violent monsters. A disease is easily implemented into NPC stat blocks.



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5th Edition Horror

Horror is a feeling, a place in your mind, and for some, a final destination. Some mad few wish to know the little terrors and the vast dead that populate the dark places between the light, be they candles or stars. The only thing between you and the fiends and fright contained within is the heartbeat that it takes to access the forbidden knowledge within.

If you have ever wanted to play in a setting that is heavily influenced by horrors of madness, violence, and grotesqueness, by all means acquire this book.

It Includes the following elements for a dastardly campaign of fear and folly:

- Character archetypes for every core class.
- A brand new class, the Apothecary, that mixes potions and uses new and untested sciences to explore a dangerous world.
- New spells, feats, and even modified skills to help you gear your game towards a horror campaign.
- A multitude of new monsters meant to turn your stomach, addle your mind, and haunt your dreams.
- A treatise on villainy, with modifications for deranged murderers and disturbed masterminds.
- Advice on how to make your games spooky, dreadful, devilishly short, or even existentially doomed.

There is plenty for player and gamemaster alike to fuel a campaign of horror for 5th Edition Fantasy, and enough to paint a character or setting into dreary stories of woe and ruin.

Seek it out at your own risk.

