

Ravenloft®

Adventure

Children of the Night



LEERWOD

by the Kargat

For use
with all
campaign
settings.

Children of the Night: GHOSTS

Credits

Design: Anne Brown, Steven Brown, Dale Donovan, Miranda Horner, L. L. Hundal, Steve Miller, John D. Rateliff, Sean K. Reynolds, Cindi Rice, Ed Stark, Doug Stewart,

Dan Wenger, Robert Wiese, David Wise

Editing: Miranda Horner & Cindi Rice

Cover Illustration: Todd Lockwood

Interior Illustrations: Mark Nelson and Michael Sutfin

Typography: Tracey L. Isler

Cartography: Diesel

Graphic Design: Matt Adelsperger

Project Coordination: Thomas M. Reid

Art Direction: Dawn Murin

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U.S., CANADA, ASIA,
PACIFIC, & LATIN AMERICA
Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
P.O. Box 707
Renton, WA 98057-0707
+1-206-624-0933



EUROPEAN HEADQUARTERS
Wizards of the Coast, Belgium
P.B. 34
2300 Turnhout
Belgium
+32-14-44-30-44

Visit our website at <http://www.tsrinc.com>



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For the Dungeon Master



he Demiplane of Dread contains many entities known as "ghosts," "spirits," "spectres," and "haunts," to name a few of the appellations. These beings exist

between life and death; their wispy tendrils reach out to others in the hope of hurting, or helping, those they touch. Thirteen of these individuals are described within these pages. They just await a chance to come to life within your campaign.

Using Children of the Night

As with the first volume of this series, *Children of the Night: Ghosts* attempts to provide unique ghosts that Dungeon Masters can easily introduce into their campaigns. Each entry within this book can be used as a mini-adventure for any AD&D® setting and, if the Dungeon Master wishes, can provide a recurring ghost character.

Since it is not possible to put a fully detailed adventure into six or eight pages of text, each entry includes a full biography of the ghost and a short scenario that introduces the ghost to the player characters. While the important aspects of each scenario have been covered, not all of the possible outcomes can be detailed because of space considerations.

The scenarios do not always focus on laying the ghost to rest. In fact, several of the ghosts are either too strong or too dedicated to be put to rest easily. As a result, these ghosts can plague or help the heroes in later adventures.

Although the scenarios in this book have been arranged by player character difficulty, they do not have to be played in this order. In fact, the best way to use the entries is to pepper them throughout a campaign instead of playing them back to back.

To use this accessory, you need the *Player's Handbook*, the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*, and *Domains of Dread*. The *RAVENLOFT® MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Appendices* and *Van Richten's Guide to Ghosts* are useful resources, but they are not required.

Fear, Horror, and Madness Checks

Fear, horror, and madness checks have been indicated in each scenario, but as always, if the players roleplay their reactions accurately, these checks can be ignored. If used, a player must make a fear check for his player character whenever that character sees (and recognizes) a ghost. For further information about fear and horror checks, refer to *Domains of Dread*.

The Concise Ghost



he ghosts detailed within this accessory have been created according to the guidelines set forth in *Van Richten's Guide to Ghosts*. As a result, some terms and powers must be explained.

Magnitudes of Power

Each ghost in this book has been given a level of power, or *magnitude*. Ghosts of the first magnitude have a lesser amount of power than ghosts of the fifth magnitude, which is the highest category of power.

Terms of Physical Consistency

Corporeal: Ghosts that are corporeal can focus their energies so that they can affect their surroundings without becoming a part of them.

Incorporeal: Ghosts that are incorporeal have no physical existence. They can pass through solid objects and are not harmed by ordinary weapons. Thus, they have a hard time moving or otherwise affecting solid objects.

Mutable: Spirits of this description have the ability to shift from one form to another. For example, a mutable ghost can shift between corporeal and incorporeal forms.

Semicorporeal: Ghosts with this physical consistency are mostly incorporeal in form but have aspects that seem to be solid.

Basic Powers and Vulnerabilities

Pains have been taken to explain each extraordinary power that a ghost possesses under the ghost's description. However, every ghost has the same basic powers and vulnerabilities. For ease of reference, these powers and vulnerabilities are explained below.

Powers

Insubstantiality: All ghosts are, or can become at will, physically without form. As a result, they cannot be harmed by nonmagical weapons.

Invisibility: Ghosts can become invisible whenever they are not attacking.

Rejuvenation: To heal itself, a ghost can absorb the essence of the Ethereal Plane. However, once it has taken on the ethereal matter, it cannot perform other activities for a while (leaving it vulnerable). The amount of time a ghost must rest after rejuvenating depends on the magnitude of the ghost. A first-magnitude ghost must rest for an hour while a fifth-magnitude ghost needs to rest for ten minutes.





Introduction

Magic Immunity: Ghosts are not affected by spells and magical items that affect biological processes. The following wizard spells do not affect ghosts: *avoidance* (attraction), *blindness*, *cloudkill*, *contagion*, *deafness*, *death*, *death fog*, *energy drain*, *finger of death*, *haste*, *hold animal*, *hold monster*, *hold person*, *irritation*, *magic jar*, *Otto's irresistible dance*, *polymorph any object*, *polymorph others*, *power word blind*, *power word kill*, *power word stun*, *sink*, *sleep*, *slow*, and *vampiric touch*. The following priest spells also do not affect ghosts: *animal growth* (*shrink animal*), *cause blindness*, *cause deafness*, *cause disease*, *hold animal*, *hold person*, *regenerate* (*wither*), *restoration* (*energy drain*), and *speak with monsters*.

Vulnerabilities

Holy Water: When attacking a ghost with holy water, the ghost's Armor Class always reflects its corporeal status, if it has one. A ghost's magnitude affects the amount of damage done by a vial of holy water: 1st, 1d10; 2nd, 1d8; 3rd, 1d6; 4th, 1d4; 5th, none.

Turning Undead: Based on the ghost's magnitude, a penalty is imposed on turning attempts: 1st, none; 2nd, none; 3rd, -1; 4th, -2; 5th, -4. This penalty is applied to both the priest's 1d20 roll to see if a particular type of ghost is turned and the roll that determines how many Hit Dice of undead creatures are affected. If the attempt is successful but less than the amount of Hit Dice the ghost possesses, the attempt fails. However, the ghost cannot directly attack the priest in this event.

Holy Symbols: Unless they are specific allergens, holy symbols do not affect ghosts.

Allergens: Any item that has the possibility of adversely affecting a ghost is an allergen.

The Mood of Ravenloft



Like all undead, ghosts can be lethal adversaries, but what makes them frightening in their own special way is the eerie way in which they reveal their presence. No fear quite matches the rush of goose pimples that crawl up your spine when you suddenly realize that you are not alone in an empty room. Nothing is more startling than looking into a mirror and seeing someone right next to you, staring balefully. Finally, what thrill of terror compares to seeing a door or window across the room slowly open and close, all by itself, in the middle of the night? That is the delicious dread that makes a good ghost story!

Terror Tips

Slowly I Turned: Shock value is the singlemost overused technique for frightening people—something jumps out at you, or a grisly sight greets you. Such scares are usually gone as quickly as they appeared, and while they are common to the RAVENLOFT setting, they are not the true horror of the gothic genre; they are

not the reason it is called the Demiplane of Dread.

Want to make a player character feel real dread? Tell him he feels it! Tell him repeatedly, and seriously, until he is sure it is true. Convince him that he should be very afraid long before anything horrifying ever occurs. Toy with his imagination. Make the player roll saving throws for nothing. If he investigates anything to see if it is the cause of his discomfort, make it seem so as long as possible, only to frustrate him.

Take your time scaring someone; the dread will last longer.

Did You See That?: This technique is especially effective before the adventurers realize they are dealing with a ghost. Give a single player character fleeting glimpses of the ghost at first. Make him feel like he is being watched, followed, studied. Tell him he spies movement out of the corner of his eye. Let him spot the ghost among the distant trees, or in a reflection, or in the coals of a camp fire, and so forth. In any case, make the player character witness the terror by himself. The strategy is to emotionally isolate the character. After all, as long as the heroes have each other, there is nothing to fear!

Put It In Writing: Isolation is an effective means of creating fear, and you can achieve that effect at a table crowded with roleplayers by writing things down instead of saying them. When individual characters begin to experience things, the entire party is put in an awkward position because it usually reacts to events as a group. Tell the players that you will award extra experience points for good roleplaying in reaction to the notes, and they will often alarm the other players even more.

Not There, Not There, Not There . . . There!: Before a ghost appears in all its ghastly glory, foreshadow with those eerie occurrences that are the spice of ghost stories. Tell (or write) the player character that he feels the hair on the back of his neck stand on end, as if someone is right behind him, when there is nothing there. Tell him an icy-cold chill just washed over his body, then . . . nothing. Make unidentifiable noises in the darkness. Make shadows move even though the light source is stationary. Make a random object shift of its own accord, or create a sudden flurry of supernatural activity such as a group of books quickly opening and slamming shut for about ten seconds, then silence.

Kick Them While They're Down: What is scarier: staging a pitched battle with a deadly ghost, or successfully concluding a pitched battle with a horde of zombies only to have the ghost show up? This concept applies to much more than combat. Put your adventuring party in a vulnerable position before introducing the horrifying element. Make all the doors and window shutters slam shut at the same time, trapping the party, just before the ghost appears. Make zombies' hands spout from the earth and seize the party by the ankles, then tell them something is moaning in the darkness and coming closer. Drop the heroes into a pit trap and then tell them they hear ghostly wailing approaching overhead. Deprive them of control over the situation and watch them fall to pieces.





When is a ghost not a ghost?
... Before it dies.

—Vistani children's riddle

Jimmy Upton



Jimmy Upton



Jimmy Upton

Biography



dventurers are not always so skilled at dealing with unusual situations hidden within familiar forms; in a world where danger lurks everywhere, they are understandably quick to assume that every creature with fangs and claws intends to use those weapons to attack. In Ravenloft, however, it is a dangerous habit to assume that just because something looks familiar, it will act in predictable ways.

Appearance

Jimmy Upton is a beggar on the streets of a city. He wears the plain, brown clothing common among the peasants, but he also wears a dark cloak with the hood pulled up over his head and a fist-sized amulet of bronze and onyx (which he normally hides under his shirt). Most of his face remains in the shadow of the cloak; his mouth is usually the only one of his features which can be seen clearly. He rarely smiles, usually wearing a grim expression which frightens young children. Jimmy has an unnaturally pale complexion and, if one looks closely, is transparent enough that the shape of objects immediately behind him can be seen.

Underneath the cloak, Jimmy appears to be in his late twenties and stands slightly over six feet tall with long, curly red hair and sparkling green eyes. His smile, when he shows it, can light a room and creates a single dimple on his square jaw.

Jimmy Upton

4th-Level Thief, Neutral Good

Armor Class	5	Str	13
Movement	12	Dex	17
Level/Hit Dice	4	Con	9
Hit Points	16	Int	14
THACO	19	Wis	10
Morale	5	Cha	10
No. of Attacks	1		
Damage/Attack	1d2 (thrown sand)		
Special Attacks	Fear aura		
Special Defenses	Magical amulet		
Thief Abilities*	MS 15 (95), HS 10 (85), DN 15, RL 0		
Magic Resistance	50% (amulet)		

* Abilities not listed cannot be performed by Jimmy in his current condition; numbers in parentheses reflect Jimmy's incorporeal skills.

Background

Jimmy Upton's story has a distinct difference between what Jimmy believes has happened to him and the truth of the situation. If asked, Jimmy says that he is dead, a spirit trapped in this world by the machinations of an evil sorcerer. The truth is, however, that Jimmy is not dead at all; he is merely a victim of bizarre circumstance.

In his time, Jimmy Upton was a beggar, con man, and thief. He was not, however, without his own brand of honor; he never stole from anyone who lived in the city nor from anyone who did not have the mark of prosperity about him. He never caused any physical harm to anyone and never stole a man's last coins. As a result, he and his mother Mae (his only living relative) always had food on the table but never lived as well as thieves with fewer scruples.

This bothered Mae. Having survived to her fifties, she wanted to live her twilight years in relative comfort. As long as Jimmy had compassion for his victims, he would have to work twice as hard just to survive and she, being a skilled thief in her own right, would need to continue working as well. She decided that, for the good of her son and herself, she would dupe Jimmy into performing one big robbery which would cover their expenses for years.

While picking pockets one day, Mae saw a stall selling purported magical talismans. One item in particular caught her eye: a bronze amulet decorated with carved pieces of onyx. It was large and decorative enough to sell for a high price (even if it turned out to be nonmagical) but not gaudy enough to draw attention to itself as probable stolen goods. Best of all, the amulet did not seem to be for sale; the proprietor was spending his spare time studying the object, poking it with strange instruments, mumbling incantations over it, but never once putting it on one of the display racks. While observing the merchant, a plan came to her which, she felt, would surely make Jimmy steal the amulet and thereby secure her future.





Before she went home, Mae dirtied her face and clothing to make it look as though she had been thrown to the ground and physically assaulted. When Jimmy saw her, he was horrified. Through forced tears, she told him her manipulative tale.

While picking pockets, she said, she saw a young boy standing alone, crying piteously. He had become separated from his father in the crowds and now could not find him. It turned out that the man was only a few stalls down the row, but he was so grateful to Mae that he gave her an amulet as a reward, for he was a jeweler. And, although he claimed it to be nothing more than a simple design of bronze and onyx, the amulet seemed to pulse with life in her hands.

She took the amulet to a stall that sold magical talismans and charms, her tale continued, to have the proprietor appraise it for her. Instead, the man grabbed the item and loudly proclaimed that she had stolen it from his stall. When she protested equally loudly, he struck her violently and began packing up his stall. Surely, the item must have great value for the man to simply take it and run, losing a day's sales in the market.

Jimmy was outraged (more by the treatment of his mother than the loss of the amulet). He asked who the man was and which stall he worked at. Mae told him, truthfully, that she had never seen the man before and did not know if he would ever come to the market again. Then she described the man and his stall, knowing full well that chances were good he had come to sell for more than one day. She hoped that Jimmy would find the merchant the next day and use the cover of the crowd to steal the amulet from the man in order to "return" it to her.

Unfortunately, she misjudged her son. Since he felt that he was in the right and wanted to take no chance of being caught stealing in the marketplace, he decided to simply confront the man before resorting to stealing the item.

The next day, the merchant did indeed return and an infuriated Jimmy Upton was waiting for him. He vented his anger at the confused man, asking where his mother's amulet was. When the man showed a seemingly genuine lack of comprehension, Jimmy flew into a rage and began breaking display cases. When the merchant grabbed Jimmy, the wild young man saw the amulet sitting on the workbench behind the stall's counter.

The merchant yelled for Jimmy to not to touch the amulet, as it was a powerfully cursed object, but the young man was beyond hearing. He grabbed the talisman and was engulfed in a brilliant, sulphurous-yellow explosion. As consciousness left him he felt only sorrow for not getting his mother's property back for her.

It would be a gross understatement to say that Jimmy was surprised to open his eyes and find himself still in the marketplace. His initial surprise, however, was dwarfed when, upon seeing the face of the "thieving" merchant hovering above him, Jimmy lunged at the man and passed right through him as if he were made of mist. Not only did he pass through the merchant but also through the neighboring stall and several shoppers. It would be impossible to say who was more frightened, Jimmy or the crowd of people who were now nearly trampling one another to escape his ghostly visage.

The merchant, whose name was Fennelstock, began

to babble at Jimmy—how the amulet was a cursed item that he was researching, trying to find a way to negate the harmful magics trapped within it (for the merchant was also a mage of no small talent). He explained that because Jimmy had touched the foul thing, he had been transformed into a ghostly state, which was beyond Fennelstock's powers to reverse. Fennelstock swore that he would solve the puzzle of the amulet and one day make Jimmy whole again.

In the meantime, Jimmy would be perfectly safe. The amulet had been created by a mad wizard named Reston, who was searching for the key to eternal life. The outcome was an amulet that gave the wearer agelessness, perfect health, and left him with no need for food, warmth, or shelter. However, the drawback was that the wearer would be incorporeal; forever separated from the physical world, he could no longer participate in the earthly pleasures which might make living for all eternity worthwhile. In fact, Reston discovered to his own chagrin that when the amulet was donned, it too became incorporeal; the wearer no longer had the power to remove it. He was cursed to eternal life in a ghostly form.

For the next week, Fennelstock stayed in the city, examining Jimmy and testing the effect of the amulet. He repeatedly told the frightened young man that he was not dead and that he would be restored to the physical world in due time; he need only have patience. Jimmy did not believe a word of what the merchant was saying. According to his mother's tale, she had carried the amulet over to the man's booth and nothing untoward had happened to her. The man had already proven himself a thief and a murderer; it was no great stretch to believe that he was a liar as well. He only wondered why the magician had kept him here in this mockery of life rather than letting his spirit rest. He got his answer shortly before Fennelstock left the city.

In the course of spouting more "lies" about returning Jimmy to normal and devoting his every waking hour to solving the dilemma, Fennelstock mentioned how expensive this endeavor would be. His business would have to be closed while he devoted himself to the task at hand, and he was not sure how long his savings would hold out. "Clearly," thought Jimmy, "he is ransoming my eternal rest. He wants me to gather money while he is away and, when he returns, if I have enough, he will free my spirit."

Seeing no alternative, Jimmy asked Fennelstock to provide him with a cup which he could touch but which could also hold and carry coins that he might panhandle. The magician, thinking that Jimmy wanted to try to support his family even in his ghostly form, complied. He then left the city, promising to return once he had solved the riddle of the amulet. That was over five years ago.

Personality

Jimmy is quiet, unassuming, and never actually begs or tries to entice people to give money to him. He sits quietly and waits for people to give of their own free will, at which he bows his head in sincere gratitude. With nothing else to do with his time, Jimmy studies the people who pass on





the street and knows the faces (and quite a few of the names) of the people who have given him money on a regular basis. He is fiercely loyal to these few individuals and will protect them to the best of his ability.

Combat

Since he is completely incorporeal, Jimmy is unable to enter combat. He has no interest in interacting with anyone who is not either giving him money or trying to free him from his spectral existence. If anyone attempts to bother or attack him, Jimmy simply passes through the cracks in a nearby wall or door and avoids the conflict entirely.

However, if his horde of coins is threatened or if he sees one of his patrons being threatened, he will use his fear aura (see below) to try to scare away the threat. If that does not work, he will use his tin cup (if empty) to scoop up any loose material (such as gravel or sand) and throw it in his opponent's face, doing 1d2 points of damage.

Jimmy is under the influence of an extremely potent amulet known as *Reston's Folly*. The amulet was fashioned by a powerful magician who longed for eternal life but recoiled at the thought of transforming himself into a lich. Anyone putting on Reston's Folly is affected as though he were under the influence of a *wraithform* spell with the following exceptions: He may be struck only by magical weapons of +5 enchantment or better; a *dispel magic* spell does not return the wearer to normal form, it simply makes it impossible for him to pass through any objects for 2d6 rounds (for this period of time, the wearer may be struck by +1 or better magical weapons); the amulet also grants its wearer 50% magic resistance; and the wearer gains the ability to generate an aura of fear. The wearer's eyes seem to crackle with energy and anyone within ten feet can feel all the hair on his body stand on end. Otherwise, this aura of fear works the same way as the *fear* spell.

Once the amulet has been put on, it too becomes incorporeal and cannot be removed until the wearer is killed (at which time it and the body again become solid). However, another side effect of the enchantment is that the wearer becomes, for all intents and purposes, immortal. As long as the amulet is around his neck, he will not age and no longer needs food, water, or sleep.

Gone, But Not Forgotten



his adventure can be used for any number of characters of any level. It is entirely possible to go through this whole adventure without once engaging in battle or other serious conflict. Heroes who use their

heads rather than their swords may discover that Jimmy is not a ghost, but the heroes have plenty of room to lead themselves astray. The Dungeon Master is urged to reward them for roleplaying and nonaggressive problem solving. It is recommended that the Dungeon Master read the adventure thoroughly before running it, so that he is familiar with the truth of the situation as well as the false conclusions the heroes may leap to.

Dungeon Masters can easily place this adventure in any city that has an overzealous city militia (such as Stangengrad, Falkovnia).

Background

Firm in his belief that he was dead because of his confrontation with Fennelstock the merchant, Jimmy never returned home. He had no desire to terrify his mother and saw no reason to torture himself with the backdrop of a life he could never lead again. Instead, since the elements had no effect on him and he had nothing to fear from the militia, Jimmy chose to eternally wander the streets. He spends his days begging, trying to raise enough money to buy his freedom when Fennelstock finally returns. Usually he sits near the mouth of a dark alley with his back to a wall (so that his insubstantial form is less noticeable) with his cup between his knees. The city is filled with beggars and vagabonds, so Jimmy hardly stands out as an oddity.

Every three days, Jimmy returns to the marketplace to see if Fennelstock has returned yet. In the years that have passed, he has gathered much more than he could hold in the one cup which is his only usable container. Shortly before Fennelstock left, Jimmy discovered an unused basement within the marketplace where insects and rot had eaten through the floorboards. He began taking the coins he was given and dumping them there for safe keeping. The space under the floor has long since been filled, so now the coins simply spill out to cover the floor. A veritable treasure sits in this unused building; a ransom which measures in the hundreds of gold pieces (although almost all of this money is in the form of copper coins).

The Adventure Begins

After the heroes enter the city, allow them to attend to necessary matters (such as buying supplies and so on). Once they enter the crowded marketplace and purchase everything that they wish to, however, read the following aloud, adjusting as necessary:



The crowd around you grows hushed and all eyes turn toward a small, wrinkled figure who approaches. She is obviously a local woman; she wears the same shapeless brown clothes as everyone else and has a similar unhealthy pallor. "My name is Mae Upton" she says without preamble, "I need your help."



While the Dungeon Master knows that Mae is a trained thief and now a ghost, she is not making any use of her expertise at this time. She appears as a completely normal, grandmotherly peasant woman. She will do nothing to shatter this illusion, and the Dungeon Master should give no hint to the heroes that Mae is anything other than a distraught mother.





Mae Upton, (First-magnitude ghost):

AC 0/8*; MV 12; HD 2; hp 11; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg nil; SA charm persons (as per spell *charm person*; affects up to 4 HD); SD insubstantiality**, invisibility**, rejuvenation**, magic immunity**, +1/0* magical weapons to hit; SZ M (5'5"); ML elite (14); Int very (11); AL CG.

* Ethereal vs. nonethereal/ethereal vs. ethereal or when corporeal;

** Refer to introduction for further information.

Mae Upton passed away on the very morning that the heroes entered Stangengrad. In a cruel twist of fate, her spirit did not go on to whatever final rest awaited it. Instead, Mae found herself still attached to this world, retaining all her memories but also awash in a dreadful epiphany; she was given complete understanding of exactly what had happened to Jimmy and exactly how it was all her fault. Another flash of inspiration told her that in order to escape the same fate she had unwittingly inflicted on her son, she would have to find a cure for his condition. To this end, she walks again in the world of the living for the sole purpose of securing the heroes' aid. If they save Jimmy, they also save her.

On the day of Jimmy's encounter with Fennelstock, Mae heard several neighbors tell tales of what happened. She became convinced that her son had been killed. The guilt she felt was overwhelming; she had lied to her only child and used his love for her to send him into a confrontation from which he never returned. She devoted the rest of her life to helping the poor, caring for the debilitated, and preaching the ways of honesty to her former partners in crime. She did all this in the hopes of regaining enough of her honor to be able to look her son in the face when they meet in the afterlife.

After learning his true fate, Mae has determined what she feels is the best way to get the heroes to help her. (In other words, she plans to lie to them in exactly the same way she did to Jimmy—apparently she still has not learned her lesson.)

Hopefully, the heroes will be interested enough to listen to Mae's "problem." If they put her off or act indifferent to her dilemma, they find out later that Fennelstock returned to town only to be killed by some guards. When they agree to listen to the poor old lady's problem, relate the following information:

- ☼ Jimmy, her son, died trying to save his family a few years back during a terrible epidemic. She, Alma (Jimmy's wife), and little Semetra (Jimmy's daughter) were burning up with fever. Jimmy swore he would save them, but they did not have money for medicine.
- ☼ Jimmy begged on the street to earn money, but the city militia threatened to arrest him. He even tried to sell himself into slavery, but no one would help. In desperation he decided to break into a magician's shop and steal some healing herbs. He was killed during the attempt; however, his feelings of guilt were so strong that his spirit could not pass on to its deserved rest.

- ☼ Jimmy became a ghost, haunting the streets of the city, panhandling to raise enough money to buy off his guilt. The money is all given to poor families (usually similar to his own) for he has no use for it.
- ☼ Jimmy's guilt was so strong that he never bothered to check on his family. He never knew that while he was trying to raise money for our cure, a group of heroes came and worked tirelessly to cure the ill and destroy the plague. They saved the whole family. When they were well enough to resume normal life, some neighbors told them about what had happened to Jimmy.
- ☼ Now, Jimmy's spirit still haunts these streets. Usually it appears seated on a street corner with a tin cup, another of the countless beggars to be seen in the city. Whenever it sees rich or powerful people refusing to aid the poor, or worse yet, actively abusing them, it flies into a spectral rage. Several important people, including one or two members of the city militia, have been seriously injured by Jimmy. To make matters worse, one of the victims recognized him and informed the city militia of his identity. Now they have come demanding that she stop him. They believe that he is stealing money and giving it to Mae. If Jimmy attacks even one more person, they will arrest and execute his family for crimes committed by Jimmy.
- ☼ Mae pleads for help for her and her son. She asks that they not destroy his spirit but simply set it to its final rest.

This tale of woe should touch the heroes' hearts. If they seem reluctant to help Mae, the Dungeon Master should apply subtle pressure (emphasizing the family's plight, for example) to get them to at least look into the situation. Mae will tell the heroes some of the corners that Jimmy usually can be seen on.

Once the heroes have decided to take some sort of positive action, Mae will thank them sweetly and walk into the crowd. She will not turn around or respond to calls from the heroes (or anyone else). If they look for her later, she will not be in the area. Any heroes who specifically look for her as she is entering the crowd should make an Intelligence check. Success indicates that they see Mae in their peripheral vision as she passes into another group of people quite some way away. Beyond this, they will be unable to find any trace of her (through mundane or magical means). Although several people in the crowd know her by name, none of them know where she lives.

The Streets of the City

This section of the adventure, searching for the panhandling ghost, is left completely in the Dungeon Master's hands. It can be as long or short as he wishes. The heroes might have to search the streets for hours (or even days, if the Dungeon Master has other encounters to add) before finally finding Jimmy.

If the heroes try to wander too far (more than three or four blocks) off the main road, they will be met by a patrol of eight city guards. These soldiers will tell them





that this neighborhood is off-limits to nonresidents. If pressed for a reason, they will say that it is quarantined. (They are lying, and it should not be very difficult for the heroes to discern this.) The city militia knows that foreign trade is essential to their city and make every effort to be civil to outsiders, but they have standing orders never to let visitors outside the boundaries of the marketplace.

City Militia Guards, hm, F3 (squad of 8): AC 5 (scale mail, shield); MV 12; hp 21 each; THAC0 18 (16 with Strength bonus); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (1d6 short sword or 1d3 club); SZ M (5'8"-6'6"); ML elite (14); Int average (10); AL LE; XP 65 each.

Jimmy is not panhandling in the marketplace at this point. Once the heroes are past this obstacle, the Dungeon Master may take them to the section "The Ghost On The Corner" whenever he feels it is appropriate.

The Ghost On The Corner

Eventually, the heroes will find Jimmy Upton sitting on a corner in the heart of the slums. When they do, read the following aloud to the players:



As you pass another in an endless series of crumbling buildings, you see something at the edge of your field of vision. Sitting among the filth and refuse is a lonely figure; a soiled cloak covers his face and his dirty, brown clothing is torn in several spots. Between his knees sits a tin cup with two or three coins in it.

He looks the same as every other beggar you have seen. Perhaps it is the fact that no serious panhandler would target such a needy neighborhood, perhaps it is the indifference the figure exudes, neither caring about nor even seeming to notice you, or perhaps it is the way the hairs on your neck prickle whenever you look directly at him. Whatever the reason, you know that the figure before you is Jimmy Upton.



The direction the adventure goes from here is up to the heroes. They can try to reason with Jimmy, trick him into cooperating with them (see "A Quiet Conversation"), begin performing a ritual to release his spirit (see "Prayers and Incense"), or even attack him (see "Get Him!").

Get Him!

If the heroes ignore Mae's entreaties to handle Jimmy in a nonviolent manner, or if they charge at him hoping to use some trickery to capture him, Jimmy jumps to his feet and runs into the nearby alley. The heroes should be able to keep pace with him right up to the end of the alley, where Jimmy runs through the wall and disappears.

It is likely that any attack on Jimmy will include spells of one sort or another. The Dungeon Master must

pay close attention to exactly what spells are used. Remember that, although the heroes believe Jimmy to be a ghost, he is not. See the section "Prayers and Incense" below.

Any heroes who are capable of following him (through the use of a spell which allows them to pass through walls) must make Intelligence checks in order not to lose him as he zigs and zags through buildings and crowds. This check must be made at the start of every round. If they keep up with him for ten rounds, Jimmy leads them to his lair (see "The Return of the Merchant"). If there is any sort of confrontation or chase which ends with the heroes losing track of Jimmy before reaching his lair, there is a 50% chance that the commotion will attract a squad of city guards (see above for stats).

If the heroes cannot follow him, they may notice that he left behind his tin cup. Since this is Jimmy's only way to collect coins and carry them back to his lair, he will come looking for it. If the heroes stay with or take the cup, Jimmy eventually returns. However, getting him to listen to them now will be much harder than if they had approached him peacefully in the first place.

Prayers and Incense

If the heroes instead decide to try to use one or another of their favorite magical or religious methods for dispatching ghosts, they are in for a shock. Because Jimmy is not actually a ghost, few (if any) of the spells which usually work on spirits affect him. On the other hand, if the heroes are clever enough to try using spells that "should not" work, they may have more success.

The final decision is left up to the Dungeon Master, but some of the spells listed as "useless against ghosts" in the introduction should work normally against Jimmy. It is, in fact, very possible for a spellcaster to kill this "ghost." The best rule of thumb is to remember that Jimmy is really like any living nonplayer character except for the fact that he cannot be touched.

If Jimmy is controlled or defeated by any means, it will be an easy matter to get him to talk about his situation. (After all these years of solitude, he really is happy for someone to talk to.) Go to the section "A Quiet Conversation" below. If he weathers a magical attack, Jimmy will flee as described in the "Get Him!" section.

A Quiet Conversation

If the heroes approach Jimmy as if to drop a coin in his cup, he watches them curiously. (If they actually give him something, he smiles gratefully.) If they call him by name, however, he will be wary and prepared to leave at the first sign of trouble.

The Dungeon Master should play Jimmy as a shy, scared man. He knows he is safe from all physical harm, but life beat a natural skittishness into him and the long, lonely years since he came to be in his current state have done little to stabilize his psyche. He passively listens to anything the heroes have to say but simply laughs at many of the facets of the story that Mae told them. He does not understand any reference to his "wife and child" since he never actually married. He





misses his mother but feels he cannot go back to her in this condition (and has no idea why she would tell the heroes such outrageous lies about his life).

If the heroes can win his confidence, Jimmy tells them his version of his story (as described in his background). Any heroes skilled in magic find that Jimmy constantly pesters them to help him defeat the evil magician who has bound his spirit to the world of the living. He offers them all the money he has collected since his "death" and leads them to his lair if they agree to help him.

The Return of the Merchant

When the heroes arrive at Jimmy's lair, Fennelstock is already in the building. Before he left the city, Fennelstock had asked Jimmy where they should meet, and Jimmy had guided him to this building. Read the following aloud to the players:



The building is as rickety and unstable as any you have seen in the city. It seems an odd place for Jimmy Upton to have led you—that is until you get to the basement. In several spots you see that the wooden floor has rotted through, but instead of a dark, dank earth beneath, a mountain of money is contained within. Copper coins can be seen littering the floor of the room, and even more can be seen through all the holes, cracks, and knots in the wood. The entire building appears to stand on a foundation of currency.

A middle-aged, overweight man with a thick, black beard is crouched in the middle of the room, touching, picking up, and slowly examining several of the coins. He looks up as you approach, a bewildered expression in his eyes.

"By the Mists . . ." he stammers, "Is all this for me?"



Jimmy screams with unbridled rage, charges the man, and goes through the motions of beating him senseless. However, since Jimmy is completely incorporeal, this is a futile gesture. Jimmy then begs the heroes to help him to subdue the "evil magician" before he escapes or, worse, attempts to lay the same curse on them.

Fennelstock the Merchant, hm M6: AC 8; MV 12; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2 (punch); SZ M (6'); ML steady (12); Int genius (17); AL LN; XP 975.

Personality: helpful, curious.

Special Equipment: spellbook.

Spells (4/2/2): 1st—*detect magic, identify, magic missile, read magic*; 2nd—*invisibility, web*; 3rd—*dispel magic, lightning bolt*.

Once again, the path of the adventure lies squarely in the heroes' hands. If they listen to Jimmy, Fennelstock

will certainly defend himself, at first casting defensive spells only (like *invisibility*) but taking to the offensive if the heroes seem about to seriously injure or kill him. The battle will likely draw the city militia's attention and result in at least one squad arriving to break it up and take the money (see page 10 for stats). If anything happens to the merchant, Jimmy is doomed to walk the world as a "living ghost" for hundreds or even thousands of years (unless the heroes can somehow solve the riddle of his condition on their own).

If, however, the heroes calmly approach Fennelstock and ask him his version of things, he is quite reasonable and exhibits deep guilt and heartfelt sorrow over Jimmy's predicament. He is a natural storyteller and regales the group with the true tale of Jimmy, his mother, and *Reston's Folly* (which he has only recently learned through the use of divinatory magic). After the story of how Jimmy's condition occurred is told, Fennelstock tells the heroes the following things:

- ✱ When he left Jimmy, he went north to Darkon, where Reston supposedly figured out how to rid himself of the amulet. After combing every library and magic repository he could find, he decided to come back and tell Jimmy of his failure.
- ✱ One morning, while on his way back, he awoke to find his camp completely swallowed by the Mists. As the day passed, the Mists thickened. By nightfall even the light of his campfire seemed distant and faint.
- ✱ The next morning nothing had changed, and so it stayed for three days more. He began to fear for his sanity more than his life. On the morning of the fifth day, he woke and decided to walk through the Mists. Strange sounds chased at his heels. He broke into a run, trying to escape the sounds. Something caught up his feet, however, and all he did was sprawl headlong on the ground. By the time he recovered his wits, the Mists were receding, and he found himself once again in the land of Necropolis—but something had come back with him. When he looked to see what it was that had tripped him, he found a sturdy, leather-bound book. It is the spellbook of Reston, and it contains the cure to Jimmy's problem.
- ✱ From Fennelstock's perspective, he has only been gone from the city for six months; for Jimmy it has been over five years. This may, at the Dungeon Master's discretion, lead to a more heated confrontation between the two nonplayer heroes. Jimmy feels as though Fennelstock abandoned him, while the merchant thinks that he has returned in a very timely fashion. The passage of time is most clearly hinted at in Fennelstock's speech. He refers to having traveled in "Darkon" but having returned to "Necropolis."

Assuming that the heroes can keep violence from erupting, the next step is to actually use the material found in Reston's spellbook. The Dungeon Master is free to put whatever spells he wishes in this tome (perhaps some that are new and useful to the magic users in the party, perhaps nothing of any interest other than the spell to be used in this adventure), but there is one





1st-level spell which must be included: *The Path Home*. This is the spell that Reston, the creator of the cursed amulet Jimmy wears, eventually devised to temporarily negate the amulet's effects.

After casting the spell, the amulet around Jimmy's neck flares with a bright, green light. Anyone not shielding his eyes must make a successful Constitution check or be blinded for 1d4 rounds. Jimmy now has corporeal form again. He can remove *Reston's Folly* and be free of its curse. The amulet will be powerless for 2d10+10 hours, then it will have the same properties as it did when Jimmy first picked it up. Anyone touching it after that time will suffer the same fate as Jimmy has.

Once the spell has been successfully cast, the spellbook disappears. It is magically returned to Reston's old laboratory, a failsafe built in by the overcautious mage himself. Reston's lab, however, has been swallowed by the Mists of Ravenloft (making it rather a difficult place to find, as Fennelstock will attest). This information eventually becomes important to the heroes if one of them decides to keep the amulet—or to touch it after its powers have returned.

The group will likely want to leave in short order. The flash of magical light probably draws the attention of the city militia, and a confrontation with the militia is the last thing Jimmy or Fennelstock wants. Besides, Jimmy wants to be reunited with his mother—they have a lot to talk about in light of Fennelstock's revelation of the truth behind the whole matter.

Family Reunion

If the heroes return to the place that they first met Mae Upton, they see most of the same people still hanging about. Eventually, someone will ask where Mae is and why she has not come to see her son. When this happens, read the following aloud:

At the mention of Mae's name, the area falls into an unnatural silence. All heads are bowed, and no one seems at all interested in looking Jimmy directly in the eye.

Finally, a tall, broad shouldered man with a bald pate and a curly, gray beard steps beside Jimmy. He lays a large, heavily calloused hand on the young man's shoulder.

"Jimmy . . . about your mother . . . she lived with her grief all these years . . . if only you'd have come back even a day earlier . . ."

Let the shock of Mae's death sink in. The heroes may wonder how such a thing can be, how fate could be so cruel. But the truth is that Mae's death was an inescapable step in the sequence of events. The truth is that Mae Upton was dead when the heroes first met her.

When you are ready to reveal this information to the heroes, read the following aloud:



The area is bathed in a soft light that seems to be coming from nowhere. The crowd parts and standing against a wall is Mae Upton . . . her ghost.

The apparition floats over to Jimmy, who is rooted to the floor. It passes a spectral hand through the tear he has just shed, then kisses his cheek with insubstantial lips.



The ghost of Mae Upton will answer one question per hero. She responds with short, simple phrases to any question that she knows the answer to. If someone asks something she does not know (the location of Reston's spellbook, for example), she simply smiles sadly and shakes her head. These unanswerable questions count against the total she will respond to.

When the heroes have asked all their questions (or have run out of questions to ask), read the following aloud:



The apparition looks lovingly at Jimmy one last time, then floats back toward the rear wall. Smiling sweetly, she turns toward you, bows her head and mouths the words "thank you" as she fades from existence. You know that Mae is gone forever.



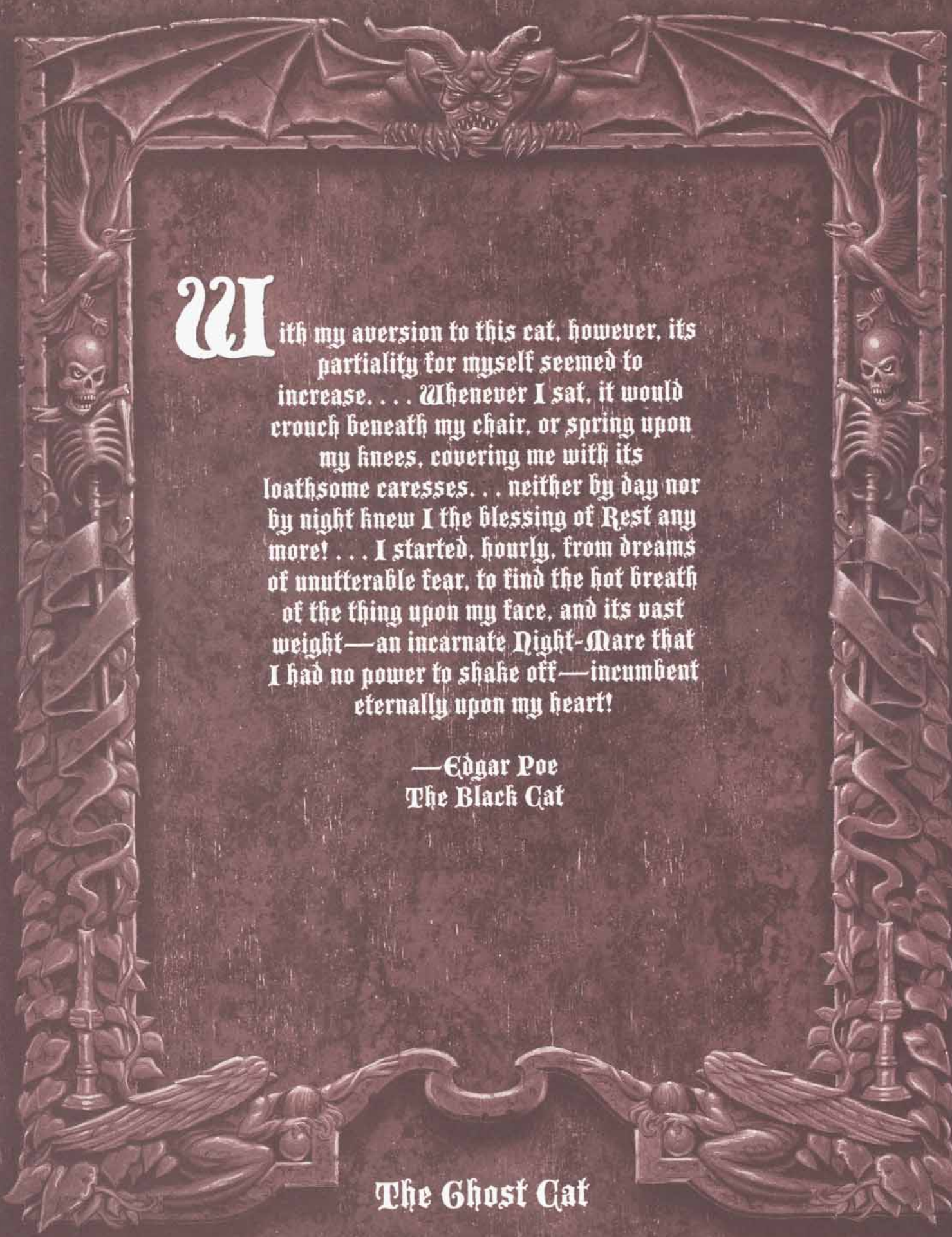
Recurrence

The ghosts in this adventure have all been laid to rest, but that does not mean that the story is necessarily at its end. There are enough questions and loose ends left for a Dungeon Master to spin this tale into another adventure or even the lynch-pin of a campaign.

At the very least, a decision will have to be reached as to what to do with the money Jimmy has collected over the years. Fennelstock will not take more than one hundred gold pieces for his part in the adventure. He feels ashamed for (even unknowingly) allowing Jimmy to linger in such an awful state for so long. Jimmy will take no more than five gold pieces at one time (it would be far too suspicious for a beggar to have any more than that). He tells the heroes to take whatever amount they feel is fair. They were, he feels, instrumental in helping him to regain his life. They should be encouraged, however, to be generous to Jimmy—his life has been so hard, he deserves to live a life of relative luxury. The Dungeon Master may assess a general bonus to the party's next adventure if they do well by Jimmy (or a penalty if they leave him nearly destitute).

Any particularly greedy rogues in the group who decide to "borrow" the amulet are in for a terrible surprise when the item's curse returns in a few hours. The group will have to find Reston's spellbook, wherever the Mists have taken it, in order to remove the amulet.





With my aversion to this cat, however, its partiality for myself seemed to increase. . . . Whenever I sat, it would crouch beneath my chair, or spring upon my knees, covering me with its loathsome caresses. . . neither by day nor by night knew I the blessing of Rest any more! . . . I started, hourly, from dreams of unutterable fear, to find the hot breath of the thing upon my face, and its vast weight—an incarnate Night-Mare that I had no power to shake off—incumbent eternally upon my heart!

—Edgar Poe
The Black Cat

The Ghost Cat



The Ghost Cat



The Ghost Cat

Biography



he unfamiliar offers significant benefits to its *prey*; most victims never suspect their helpful new pet of pushing them along the path of evil until it is far too late to turn back.

Appearance

The ghost cat, or “unfamiliar” as it is sometimes called, looks exactly like a living creature. It usually adopts the form of a cat (typically black) but has also been known to appear as a raven, a rat, and a small monkey. It is large, but not unnaturally so, and typically glossy black in color, without a speck of white fur or feather to relieve its darkness. In all respects it looks exactly like the creature whose form it takes, except one: its dark eyes never blink.

An unfamiliar can usually be seen only by the person it has attached itself to; most other people can neither see nor feel it. At the Dungeon Master's discretion, people who have been marked by evil (for example, those who have failed a powers check or two) may be able to catch a glimpse of it, usually out of the corner of their eye, but it is invariably gone when they turn to look. Those sensitive to evil (paladins, priests of good, and true innocents) often feel a chill when in its presence.

Ghost Cat (Unfamiliar)

Minor Fury, Lawful Evil

Armor Class	-8	Str	—
Movement	18	Dex	—
Level/Hit Dice	3	Con	—
Hit Points	13	Int	16
THACO	17	Wis	13
Morale	19	Cha	16
No. of Attacks	1 or 3	XP	3,000
Damage/Attack	1d4 (bite) or 1d4/1d2/1d2 (bite/claw/claw)		
Special Attacks	Ignores armor, wounds fester		
Special Defenses	Insubstantiality (incorporeal)*, invisibility*, rejuvenation*, unaffected by spells, +1/0 or better magical weapons to hit		
Magic Resistance	100%		

* See the introduction for further details.

Background

The unfamiliar is a ghost that attaches itself to a person who has committed some ill deed. It usually appears shortly after the character has failed a powers check and subtly urges the character to commit further atrocities. It strongly resembles the classical furies in that it has no interests in innocents, choosing instead those tainted with evil by their own acts. To assure that its victim does not fall prey to the many dangers that populate Ravenloft, it sets a mark upon its “master” that only evil creatures can see (typically an unobtrusive scar from a light scratch on the forehead or cheek). Even mindless undead break off attacks on a character so marked and recoil in horror (this protection from attacks is one of the chief reasons so many victims initially welcome the unfamiliar). No creature of less than domain lord status dares risk the unfamiliar's vengeance by destroying its prey, and most domain lords who come across a marked one let him go free, pleased to find one whose misery is destined to equal his own.

Personality

The creature first behaves in an identical fashion to an animal of the type whose form it has taken—in the case of the black cat, for example, it will climb into its master's lap, purr, scratch at doors and windows, and the like. As time goes on, it spends more of its time simply staring at its “master,” as if he were its prey. The slow realization of the truth—that the unfamiliar is the true master and its apparent “master” no more than a hapless victim—typically drives the target of its attentions into acts of desperation; these acts invariably bring destruction and suffering not just to the victim but to his nearest and dearest as well.

Combat

Since the ghost cat's form is usually that of a small, relatively innocuous animal, it rarely engages in combat; it stalks its prey on a spiritual and mental, not a physical,





level. It can interact only with its chosen victim, and on those rare occasions when it resorts to physical combat, it inflicts only minor damage, equivalent to the bites and scratches a normal creature of that type could inflict. However, these small wounds heal very slowly (at 1/30th the normal rate), festering painfully and leaving dead-white scars behind that ache whenever the victim acts in ways contrary to the unfamiliar's wishes. Magical healing is similarly rationed, so that thirty points of healing is required to restore a single hit point so inflicted.

The ghost cat cannot be turned and shows no aversion to holy symbols or holy water. It penetrates circles of protection with ease and accompanies its chosen prey into holy sites with no show of distress, although it may become more agitated if its victim is seeking spiritual guidance or relief, taking whatever measures are necessary to keep the hero from atonement. The only weapon known to work against it is the *atonement* spell, which only benefits its recipient when he undertakes a difficult quest to make expiation for whatever sin drew the ghost cat's attention in the first place. The ghost cat will, of course, seek to prevent such a quest from being successful by any power within its means.

Expiation



his adventure works best as a one-on-one, either between regular sessions with a full group or (better yet) interwoven as a subplot involving one character out of the player-character group. The hero chosen by the ghost cat as its next victim may be of any race, alignment, sex, or level. He is singled out because he committed some act that would normally call for a powers check.

The Dungeon Master should choose the timing of this adventure carefully. The act which provokes it need not be a recent one, but it must be a deliberate one—not the result of a charm or similar compulsion, but a conscious decision on the hero's part to do something which hurt others while advancing his own cause.

Background

At first the relationship between the unfamiliar and master seems beneficial to the hero in question, but things soon prove to be a good deal more sinister than they seem.

The Adventure Begins

The adventure begins with the player characters already anywhere within the Demiplane of Dread.

One: A Friend in Need

The hero and his friends start this adventure in a very tight spot, pursued by an overwhelming force and in desperate need of some safe shelter to hide from their foes. Just when all seems lost and they are trapped in a dead end, a rocky hollow with sides too steep to climb and no other way out, the hero spots something out of the corner of his eye: Draw that hero aside and read him the following:



You can hear your pursuers drawing closer, the dead leaves crunching under their boots. In another minute they will be here, and it will all be over. As your companions draw their weapons and turn to make a last desperate stand, you look around one last time for some means of escape.

Out of the corner of your eye, you catch some movement. Jerking your head quickly, you see an unexpected sight—a black cat, sitting on a small ledge on one of the surrounding rock walls that pin you in, unconcernedly licking itself. It stops and looks straight at you, then jumps down, runs over to one of the rock walls, and scratches at a slight indentation in the stone. Then it disappears. Perhaps you blinked, but it looked as if it walked right through the wall at the point where it had been scratching.



Assuming the hero checks the stone wall, he finds the faint outlines of a secret door. (If the heroes checked before, this somehow eluded their notice.) Pressing on the spot where the cat scratched causes a small stone door, only two feet high, to open. Heroes will have to crawl on their hands and knees to enter (halflings can merely stoop); down a short tunnel (also only two-feet-high and some twenty feet long) lies a small chamber carved out of the rock, smelling strongly of old leaves but dry and, more importantly, safe. The rock of the floor, ceiling, and walls is smooth and cool to the touch. The heroes have just enough room to lie down and rest from their headlong flight. So long as they closed the secret door behind them, they are safe for the moment. Any hero who listens at the door can hear their pursuers cast about for traces of them for a while before bedding down outside; clearly the heroes will not be going anywhere for several hours at least, making this an ideal time to rest and regain spells and hit points.

If the hero mentions the cat (perhaps in answer to companions' queries or congratulations on finding such timely shelter), he discovers that none of the others saw any such thing. In any case, no sign of the cat can be found inside the room.

Two: Purring in the Night

Once the hero singled out in the preceding encounter beds down for the night, read the following aloud to his player, preferably where other players cannot hear.



You are sleeping peacefully, relieved after your recent escape, when something wakes you. You are warm and comfortable, but it is so dark that you can hardly tell whether your eyes are open or closed. You lie there for a moment, drowsy, keeping perfectly still, listening to the breathing of your companions. All seems as it should be, and you are about to drift off to sleep again





when your groggy mind sorts out one sound that should not be there. It sounds uncommonly like purring, coming from a warm spot down by your legs. As you reach down, you feel a bundle of warm fur exactly the size and shape of a large cat. It purrs even more loudly upon being touched, giving your out-reached hand a lick or two before curling back up. Feeling somehow safe and secure, you drift back to sleep.



Stress how warm and drowsy the hero feels; it should be hard to tell whether this little episode really happened or was merely a dream. In any case, in the morning he should wake refreshed to find no sign of a night visitor. Outside, a cautious reconnoiter reveals that the pursuers have given up and gone away; the relieved heroes can exit their little shelter and resume their interrupted business.

Three: Someone to Watch Beside Me

Throughout the next two days, the hero should catch several more glimpses of the cat, each time when no one else is looking that way. Each night, the cat sleeps with the hero, appearing after he has laid down to sleep and disappearing again before he rises in the morning. On the third night, the hero should be awakened from a sound sleep by the sound of growling. (If he is on guard, the growling merely serves to draw the hero's attention.) He should have just enough time to draw a weapon and shout out an alarm before several creatures of the same type they were fleeing from in the initial encounter attack. Here, though, only a few of them assault them, and thanks to the hero's warning, the party quickly defeats them. This whole encounter is designed to lull any remaining suspicions on the hero's part about the cat's good intentions.

Four: A Little Token of Esteem

At some time during the next day, the hero spots the cat in broad daylight, sitting some distance off. Ideally, it chooses a moment when the hero is separated from his group, but if this is not possible, it chooses a time when he is with only one or two.



There it is again! Some way off, sitting placidly on a faint side path off to your left, is the cat, a vivid black against the yellows, reds, greens, and browns of the fallen leaves. Its green eyes stare unwinkingly at you for a moment, then it sets off up the side path, looking back now and then to see if you are following.



If other characters are present, and the hero draws their attention to the cat, he learns that none of them can see anything there. For the cat's part, as soon as it has the hero's attention, it sets off at a steady pace, stopping only if its person lags behind. After some ten to

fifteen minutes, it leaves the path (which is little more than a game trail) and begins digging in the leaves a few feet away. Should any other hero approach, it withdraws a safe distance away, then sits to watch the proceedings. Read the following as soon as a hero reaches the spot the cat indicated:



As you near the spot, something crunches in the leaves under your foot—a branch, perhaps, but to your experienced ear it sounded more like a dry bone snapping. Carefully shoving some of the leaves aside, you reveal the familiar color of old bone—a human ribcage, in your estimation. Closer investigation reveals the skeletal remains of a man. His clothing has long since decayed into unrecognizable rags and his equipment, if any, is long gone, but the bony figures of his right hand still clutch a smooth pebble in what must have been a death-grip.



Heroes who search the area carefully can turn up three stone arrowheads—all that remains of the arrows that killed the man—but no clue to his identity. The fingers must be broken away to retrieve the pebble, which detects as magical if checked. (It is in fact an *anything* item with two charges left.) Alternatively, the Dungeon Master could substitute a messenger or nonplayer character from the ongoing campaign for this anonymous victim and could substitute a different magical item for the treasure. The main purpose of this encounter is to demonstrate the cat's versatility to its new master, hopefully cementing his trust in the animal and perhaps even awakening some greed. Confirming that only the hero could see the creature should help the hero feel singled out and, perhaps, less willing to share the apparent boons brought by the cat. If the hero makes some excuse and sneaks off to follow the cat's lead, all the better, and if he conceals the *anything* item, the cat's work is considerably helped. Failing to treat the skeleton with any sort of dignity or giving it any sort of burial also further the hero's corruption.

Five: The Mysterious Lady

As soon as the hero begins to become comfortable with the cat's presence, throw in the following brief encounter. The Dungeon Master may allow the hero a Wisdom check, an alertness proficiency check, or some other suitable die roll to detect the presence of an observer. If the hero fails the check, assume that he simply does not notice her the first few times; when he finally succeeds, read the following out loud to that player (preferably where the other players cannot hear):



Suddenly, you get a feeling that you are being watched. Glancing up, you find that it is not the cat, as you would have been expecting, but a woman dressed in red, with long black hair and a





black staff and scarf, staring at you intently. Before you can do or say anything, she gestures with her left hand and disappears.



This is Arrness, a formerly evil mage who has become familiar with the ghost cat's ways through her years of experience with Ravenloft's horrors. Unlike the late Rudolph van Richten, Arrness keeps a low profile, helping others where she can but trying to avoid drawing the notice of the domain lords. She suspects that the unfamiliar may have chosen the hero as its next victim and is thus scouting out the situation. For now, however, she keeps her distance and uses a simple *dimension door* to escape unwanted attention. Unlike the cat, however, Arrness is a living person and as such may leave some physical evidence behind testifying that she is no illusion or phantom. Also important is the fact that she may be seen by others. The chance is small, since she is careful, but if any of the others in the hero's group has become concerned about the cat's master and is keeping an eye on him, allow that hero to attempt an observation check similar to the one described earlier in this encounter.

Arrness, hf M12: AC 2 (*cloak of protection* +8); MV 12; hp 27; THACO 17 (*staff of the magi*); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (*staff of the magi*); SA spells; SD spells, *ring of feather fall*, *Arrness's mirror*; SZ M (5' 8"); AL N (formerly NE).

S 14, D 12, C 10, I 17, W 13, Ch 12.

Special Equipment: Arrness's mirror, *staff of the magi* (forty charges), *cloak of protection* +8.

Spells (4/4/4/4/1): 1st—*charm person*, *friends*, *magic missile*, *sleep*; 2nd—*invisibility*, *knock*, *web*, *wizard lock*; 3rd—*fireball*, *hold person*, *hold undead*, *sepia snake sigil*; 4th—*confusion*, *dimension door*, *locate creature*, *polymorph self*; 5th—*dream*, *hold monster*, *sending*, *teleport*; 6th—*project image*.

Years ago, Arrness, the illegitimate daughter of a minor noble family in the Lendore Isles on far-away Oerth, fought her way up to a position of power. Envious of her half-brother's title and position, she allied with a small assassin's guild and plotted to seize the family title, helping to plan the murders of her half-brother and his wife. Both the baron and baroness perished, and initially the blame was fixed on several suspicious local characters, but eventually the plot was exposed. The assassins were hunted down and killed one-by-one, and Arrness was deposed and publicly executed. Her body was recovered and raised by still-loyal henchmen, but the experience deeply scarred her; she had not at all liked the vision of the afterlife she saw during the six days that passed between her death and return to life and set out to make amends for her past misdeeds in the hope that a different fate would await her on her next death. Formerly of neutral evil alignment, she is currently neutral and on the verge of shifting over into neutral good. She came to Ravenloft over a decade ago and, after initially attempting to confront the evil of this place head-on,

withdrew into seclusion, venturing out to help people who seem to face not physical danger but moral corruption.

Arrness's mirror is actually a *mirror of mental prowess*. On the Demiplane its powers are somewhat altered: The ESP power no longer works, and any questions put to it receive obscure and cryptic replies. It still functions as a *crystal ball of clairaudience*, however, and once per day she can use it to create a portal to somewhere else in the same domain. This portal stays open for up to an hour unless she commands it to close earlier, and it can be entered from either side.

She usually wears a scarf to hide the scars on her neck from the headman's greatsword. (It took him three blows to kill her, and each stroke left an ugly mark behind.)

Six: The Mouse

Now that it has gotten the hero's attention and some measure of acceptance as a friendly spirit looking out for the hero's well-being, the creature begins to act more like a normal cat in order to allay any suspicions about its nature. It allows the hero to see it more and more, and even to pet it from time to time (in typical, condescending cat fashion, of course).

In addition, it begins to leave little tokens of esteem where the hero is sure to find them—dead mice, birds, and the like. The first one or two such gifts should be small, innocuous animals (perhaps a mouse in the boot the first time and then a blackbird on the bedroll the second). The third should be something rather more ambitious, suggesting that the cat is more powerful than it appears (a rabbit, a weasel, or even some larger prey like a fox). The fourth occasion should involve the hero catching the cat in the act of torturing prey, allowing for intervention.



Attracted by the sound of excited squeaking, you find that your cat has caught a mouse and, in the fashion of cats everywhere, is playing with its prey. The tormented creature (a tiny brown field mouse, from the look of it), seeing you, raises up on its rear paws beseechingly, as if imploring your intervention—just as the cat gives it a mighty buffet from behind that sends it tumbling almost to your feet. The cat then hunches down and gathers itself up for one final leap, tail twitching with excitement.



Should he stand by and let nature take its course, the cat devours its still-living prey with great contentment, then turns its unblinking stare knowingly upon its master and purrs. If the hero intervenes at this point, he should be able to scoop up the mouse before the cat pounces upon it and devours it, but the cat will be greatly angered by this, growling, hissing, and perhaps even scratching its master. This represents a perfect time to have the cat put its mark upon its master, preferably on the cheek or forehead where it will be easily visible to all.





Seven: Bad Dreams

Arness casts a *dream* spell, which becomes corrupted into a nightmare by the dreamer's link with the ghost cat. Arness's intent is to shake the hero out of his complacency and alert him to the danger posed by the cat. The cat was not able to stop the sending, but it has manipulated the vision to make it appear as if the cat were protecting its master from the attack of a ghost.



Your sleep is disturbed by bad dreams. You seem to have shrunk to mouse-size, while the cat has grown to the dimensions of a panther. It stalks you tirelessly, patient in the certainty that you will be its morsel in the end. Sometimes you can feel its hot breath on the back of your neck as you flee, expecting any moment to feel its claws lay open your back or its teeth meet on your spine. Just when you begin to hope that maybe somehow you have escaped, you round a corner to find it waiting ahead, ready to pounce.

Over and over the same scene plays. Then you round a corner in this endless maze and gasp to find a woman standing there. She is dressed in red robes, with a black scarf around her neck that matches her long black hair and piercing black eyes. The cat, shrunk to normal size again, stands between you, facing her as it raises its hackles and hisses, growling menacingly deep in its throat. She glares at you, tapping her foot impatiently, and speaks:

"Idiot! What were you thinking of, playing with fire like that? Send it away, before it is too late. Already the mark of the beast . . ."

At this point, the cat springs, clawing at her face. She throws up her hands to protect herself and stumbles backwards, falling flat. The cat lands on her chest and begins clawing at her throat, shredding the scarf to black tatters that blow away on the same wind. Her scream fades in and out as if you were sometimes near and sometimes far away. The whole scene suddenly blinks out as your eyes snap open—awake at last! In your own blankets, the cat sleeps sphinx-like, its paws curled beneath it, upon your chest. You can hear its contented purr even above your pounding heart and gasping breath, as it opens its eyes and stares into yours, only inches away.



Eight: Here. Kitty Kitty

At this point, the hero may choose to ignore Arness's warning and actually encourage the cat to stay closer, if he thinks the woman in red poses some kind of real threat. The cat, naturally, accepts such blandishments with dignity and henceforth keeps in sight of the hero almost continuously, both by day and by night. Or the hero may try to distance himself from the cat—a task easier said than done. The cat ignores any subtle attempts to send it away or escape its presence, always turning up again when the hero least expects it. It will be increasingly bold, drinking from the hero's cup, sleeping on his chest, and generally making itself an oppressive, inescapable presence.

Appeals to fellow heroes for help are likely to end in their concluding that the hero has lost his mind, especially if the hero has successfully kept the cat's presence a secret up till now. Actual attacks on the creature are essentially impossible, since it is completely intangible to all but its master, but they can prove amusing to a Dungeon Master with a streak of creative cruelty, especially as the heroes learn the hard way that their attacks will pass right through the creature and strike whoever is behind it.

Should the hero attack it in desperation, the cat turns actively hostile, biting and clawing until the hero breaks off the attack and flees or simply cowers. Other heroes, witnessing the bloody scratches appearing on their friend's hands, arms, and face seemingly out of nowhere, may be forced to make either fear or horror checks, at the Dungeon Master's option; the hero himself should certainly be forced to attempt at least one. Hereafter, the cat openly gloats and begins to lick its lips unnervingly from time to time as it stares at the hero. The trap has long since closed, and it savors the inevitable outcome of its stalking.

Nine: An Unexpected Boon (The Mark of the Beast)

The following encounter can occur any time after the hero has received any sort of scratch or injury, however minor, from the ghost cat.



Ambush! From all sides, muffled human figures shamble into view. A carrion stench, their rotting features, and the total silence of their movements reveal all too clearly that these are living dead. As you raise your weapon to fend off a blow from the nearest one, the attacker's impassive dead face suddenly contorts with fear. It utters a guttural, choking sound and backs away from you. Then it turns and flees, followed by its fellows staggering in its wake, all muttering incoherent fragments of words.



The Dungeon Master may substitute any appropriate villains for the zombies in the preceding boxed text, depending on the experience level of the heroes and their current location; zombies are used here to drive home the message that anything that frightens mindless undead cannot be good news.

Further experiences of the same type should be added by the Dungeon Master as needed: in short, evil attackers begin to shun the marked hero, fleeing as best as they may from his very sight. After the first time or two, this will probably please the hero no end and may lead to some daredevil posturing. Once villagers, barmaids, and strangers passing in the street manifest some of the same uneasiness, the hero may have second thoughts. Before long it will be impossible for the hero to get a room for the night by any means other than open threats. Even other heroes begin to feel a brooding evil in the hero's presence, so much so that they can tell his direction within thirty feet simply by closing their eyes and concentrating on the cold, dark spot that fills their mind's eye. In essence, he has now become the





focus of a “sinkhole of evil” effect (see *Domains of Dread*) that moves with the hero wherever he goes—a fact not calculated to improve the hero’s popularity.

Note that universal rejection of this type often provokes a violent, resentful reaction on the part of its recipient, possibly driving the hero into acts of the sort that require powers checks. The cat will manipulate events as much as possible to provoke such incidents, the better to drive its master into isolation and despair. For example, if the hero has taken to throwing things at the cat, it will position itself where hurled items will hit innocents and either frighten or injure them (or both).

Ten: A Way Out?

Once the hero is sufficiently desperate, or has become sufficiently depraved to put his own interests above those of the group, introduce the following dream episode.



You are standing outside what looks like an abandoned cottage by a dark, weed-choked lake. Once again it is totally silent; no sound of bird, frog, or cricket breaks the gloom. The cottage’s thatch roof looks on the point of collapse and the door sags on one hinge; the barred shutters are slowly decaying in place. A path of mossy stones threads its way from the broken gate to the gaping doorway, passing on either side the remains of what was once a pleasant garden, the flowers now throttled by greedy brambles.

The cat is just outside the door, watching you. It disappears inside, and you follow. You see a hall with doors on either side, and dust lies thickly upon the floor. You notice, in a detached sort of way, that the cat has not left any tracks in the dust, and glancing back you see that you have not either. It disappears through one door that has been left ajar, and you follow.

A library. Odd thing to find in an abandoned cabin. The cat is scratching at one of the shelves. It looks at you, then scratches again. You take down the book it was pawing. It opens to a spot and you begin to read while the cat rubs itself against the spine.

“... and only thus may one escape the coils of that accursed land. The staff is the key to the prison; while it lasts, the prison endures. Break it, and the prisoners go free, each to his home again rejoicing. Beware the jailor, for she...” It gets harder and harder to read in the gathering darkness. You stop to rub your eyes, and when you open them again you are staring into the cat’s unwinking deep green eyes—awake again.



This dream is the cat’s work, pure and simple. Its purpose is to drive the hero to a power-evoking act, either the theft of Arness’s staff or an all-out attack on her. Although breaking the *staff of the magi* in a retributive strike usually has a flat 50% chance of expelling the staff-breaker, in the Demiplane of Dread, it disintegrates him.

Eleven: Arness Again

At some point, Arness judges the situation significantly dire to intervene directly. The Dungeon Master should choose the timing but ideally it should come after the hero has been isolated and is nearing the end of his rope.



There she is again, the woman in red. Perhaps this is another dream, although you do not remember falling asleep. It is getting hard to tell, though, after the events of the last few days. She gives you an appraising look, then sets down her staff and says, “We should talk.”



This is not a dream, but it is not exactly Arness in the flesh, either. The wary mage has used *project image* through her *mirror*. She wants to help the hero but has been ambushed too many times in the past to be too trusting—especially of someone who has committed an act evil enough to attract the attention of an unfamiliar! She is here primarily to answer questions and give the hero an idea of exactly how much danger he is in. Of course, the hero may be so far gone that all he can think about is the best way to backstab the mage and loot her body. In this case, he is in for a sad shock when any attack passes harmlessly through the projected image’s body.

Since Arness herself is not present, the Dungeon Master must determine the ghost cat’s likely response. She will try to time her appearance when it is absent, but this is difficult for her to determine, and she may misjudge. In any case, it will not remain absent long. If present, it hisses and growls at Arness, threatens to attack the hero unless he keeps away from the mage, or whatever the Dungeon Master thinks best fits the scene’s mood.

Arness’s actual dialogue with the hero depends too much upon the hero to be scripted here, but some of the information she will try to impart includes the following:

- ❖ The hero is in mortal danger, not of death but of corruption.
- ❖ She professes not to know exactly what the creature is, but she describes its mission in rough terms (attach itself to a hero, isolate the hero, and drive him to commit evil acts). The story, from early boons and rescues to later torments, should sound only too familiar.
- ❖ Only self-sacrificing acts, she says, can redeem the hero and ultimately drive the ghost cat away. She claims that it is possible to turn away from the path of evil and offers herself up as an example. “I have paid for my crimes,” she says, removing the scarf from around her throat to reveal the three more or less parallel scars where the executioner’s greatsword chopped at her throat. “Are you willing to make recompense for yours?”
- ❖ She warns the hero that he may have to sacrifice everything to escape, including his life. She derides those who balk at this, saying that there are far worse things than death. She does not advocate the hero’s foolishly throwing his life away but warns that the time for holding back has passed; to escape, the hero must do what is right, whatever the cost to himself.





The real danger to Arness during this interview is the portal opened through her magic mirror. While invisible, this offers two-way passage to anyone who can discover it. The Dungeon Master may arrange for the cat to appear, stalk around suspiciously, then leap into the air and disappear (in other words, pass through the portal). Reappearing on the far side, it attacks Arness, launching itself at her face. While she is in no danger (the ghost cat cannot harm anyone other than the victim it has bonded with), the hero might have to make a fear check at seeing her bat at the air and disappear as the attack breaks her concentration and dispels the projected image.

Alternatively, if the hero has a close friend who has been monitoring his progress up to this point, the Dungeon Master may choose to let this hero stumble upon Arness's portal and confront the mage directly. This alternative is especially important if the cat's victim is too far gone to listen to reason. Arness tells the friend much of the information given above, including the necessity for the hero to both repent and atone through some act of self-sacrifice, before sending the hero (or friend) on his way.

Twelve: The Moment of Truth

Now has come the time for the hero to pay the piper. Either he has sunk so far into selfishness and paranoia that the hero positively glories in all the new-found powers granted by the unfamiliar, or he is desperately seeking to break free, whatever the cost. If the former, the cat is urging the hero onward to ever greater atrocities, including the attempted murder of Arness (thanks to her *teleportation* contingency, she is a lot harder to kill than she looks), the theft of her staff, and its subsequent breaking in a retributive strike (having deluded the hero into thinking that this will free him from Ravenloft altogether). If the latter, then numerous opportunities for heroic action of a selfless nature should offer themselves in the course of any adventure—throwing himself in front of an attack aimed at a defenseless hero, foregoing healing when others are in greater need of it, fighting a rear-guard holding action that puts the hero at risk while others escape, and so on.

Of course, the ghost cat will not let its "master" off so easily. While it cannot stop someone from acting, it can torment a hero who disobeys its wishes, inflicting painful injuries that leave permanent scars. The hero may, at the Dungeon Master's option, have to succeed at a fear or horror check to hold to the course of action the cat strenuously opposes. Do not make it impossible for the hero to "make good" for his misdeeds, but do not make it easy, either; the hero should have a very real chance of dying, and his redemption should hang in the balance until the very last moment.

Thirteen: Happily Ever After?

Once the crisis is over, the hero is either freed from the haunting or totally in the power of evil—essentially a nonplayer character denizen of the Demiplane. A character who has succumbed to evil faces one of two fates: If his evil was petty and small-minded, he perishes in the following fashion.



That's odd. The cat seems to be growing bigger. Or is it you who is growing smaller? It must be another dream. Everything but you and the cat is fading away. Nothing looks solid except you and it; you can see right through your surroundings. The color fades out of everything except you and the cat, the only two real things in a grayish, misty world. Now it looms over you, rising to four or five times your height. It is another dream, isn't it? Its eyes gleam in amusement as it licks its lips, opens its jaws, and moves towards you.



The last few minutes of the hero's life in such a case are best left to the imagination. He can flee through walls as if they were not there, plead with unseeing, unhearing friends for help, fight back ineffectually, or simply curl up in a ball and wait. The cat stalks him like a mouse, killing the hero a hit point or two at a time until the time comes for the final, bone crunching pounce and swallow.

If the hero willingly embraced the cat's gifts and exploited the powers it granted whole-heartedly, he becomes a nonplayer character under the Dungeon Master's control. Such a character might well end up a minion of the local domain lord, still exercising the powers and taints gained through many failed powers checks.

By contrast, should the hero resist the final temptation and win through, he has thrown off the curse. In this case, one of two things may happen. In the first, the cat will grow to gigantic size and attack, just as in the boxed text above, with the notable exception that after the first attack the hero begins to grow solid again. The cat can only get in five rounds of attacks in all (doing no more than its maximum 1d4/1d2/1d2 points of damage each time) before the hero returns fully to the real world; the cat then fades from sight with a mournful wail, never to be seen by the hero again. The second option skips the fading and return altogether: The cat, with a wail of anger and unappeased hunger, launches itself at the hero, passing right through him (entering through the front but not passing out again through the back) and disappearing. The hero must make a system shock roll, but if he survives, the haunting is over.

Note that the hero might not have survived the deed that rid him of the curse. If he perished in a final courageous act, at least the player has the consolation of knowing that such deeds are the stuff of legend in any campaign, especially if the hero's doom meant salvation for his companions. Against as insidious a threat as the ghost cat, a "good death" qualifies as a victory.

Recurrence

Whether the hero survives or perishes, the ghost cat itself departs to seek yet another suitable victim in the Land of Mists.





Child of mortality, whence comest thou?
Why is thy countenance sad, and why
are thine eyes red with weeping?

—Anna Letitia Barbauld
Hymns in Prose

Wilhelm Pellman



Biography



ragic accidents can strangely affect a ghost's form, proving more fearsome for spectators and frustrating for the ghost. Wilhelm Pellman is a shade who has a difficult time getting his message across.

Appearance

Wilhelm was a ten-year-old boy of medium build, with a kind face, tawny brown hair, and strong blue eyes. His clothes are well-made and mostly clean. He has a large, bloody gash just above his left ear—the same wound which caused his untimely death. Wilhelm's eyes do not make contact with anyone, for his brain injury rendered him blind, which carried over into his undead state.

Wilhelm Pellman

First-Magnitude Ghost, Lawful Neutral

Armor Class	-1/6*	Str	—
Movement	9	Dex	—
Level/Hit Dice	4	Con	—
Hit Points	20	Int	10
THACO	17	Wis	9
Morale	16	Cha	14
No. of Attacks	1		
Damage/Attack	Special		
Special Attacks	Cause blindness		
Special Defenses	Insubstantiality (corporeal), invisibility**, rejuvenation**, magic immunity**, immune to sight-based spells (see below), need +1/0* or better magical weapon to hit		

Special Vulnerabilities Cannot come within sight of Kole

* Ethereal vs. nonethereal foes/ethereal vs. ethereal foes or when corporeal.

** See the introduction for more details.

Background

Wilhelm was the younger son of Karl Pellman, a wealthy owner and breeder of horses. The Pellman family lives on a large house at the far end of town, and their horse ranch is just outside the town limits.

Wilhelm and his older brother Kole had an extremely adversarial relationship. As the elder son, Kole felt he deserved more attention, but his argumentative and violent disposition prevented him from having many close relationships with either his family or peers. He was known to be a bully and would often beat the other youths of the town just for sport. He was extremely resentful of his younger brother, who made friends easily. Because of this, Wilhelm and his companions were often the targets of Kole's temper.

About a week before the adventure takes place, Kole cornered his brother's best friend Mark in an alley. When Mark tried to defend himself and stand up to his attacker



rather than just take the usual beating, Kole lost his temper and went over the edge. He beat the younger boy senseless, breaking his neck and killing him with just a few blows.

Meanwhile, Wilhelm had been trying to find Mark, to warn him about Kole's particularly angry mood that day. He caught up with his friend just in time to see the final blow. When he saw Mark's body go limp and fall to the ground, Wilhelm screamed, turned, and fled into the street, where he was struck by an out-of-control cart carrying vegetables to the market.

Wilhelm lay where he fell, bleeding from a massive head wound. A local innkeeper known as Mother Ladria held him and tried to make sense of his last words as he died. Because of the violent scene that he witnessed just before his death, Wilhelm became a ghost.

Personality

Wilhelm was a friendly boy in life, but two things now moderate his undead personality. First, he wishes to see his brother punished for murder. Second, the accident that killed him not only damaged the sight-oriented portion of his brain, it damaged his speech functions; the only words that Wilhelm can say are "blood," "onions," and "wine." He can whisper them, speak them, or shout them, but those are the only three words he can vocalize. He is still able to understand other words and responds to people talking to him, but his lack of speech frustrates him. Spells such as *speak with dead* do not help in this





situation; Wilhelm's brain simply cannot function well enough to produce any other words.

Wilhelm has an awareness about things and locations familiar to him, and so when he is seen in town or in his family's house, he follows the hallways and streets as if he could see. However, he disregards and passes through any people or obstacles that are placed in his path.

Combat

If attacked, Wilhelm usually just disappears. He has no interest in fighting and is quite disgusted by violence. His only attack is to cause blindness; anyone he touches must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or go blind for 1d4 hours.

As he is blind, Wilhelm is unaffected by any spells that require sight to work (illusions, symbols, and so on).

A Matter of Trust

In this adventure, the heroes must solve a murder to put to rest a troubled spirit. This involves trying to communicate with a difficult ghost. This adventure is designed for characters of any level. Because they should not actually battle the ghost in this scenario, no magical or silver weapons are required.

The Dungeon Master can set this adventure in any small town he wishes.

Background

Kole Pellman (0-level human male, 5 hp, CN) is a man in his late teens; he looks like a taller, stronger, older version of his brother. While not actually evil, he does enjoy fighting and prefers odds in his favor. He is terrified of his guilt being discovered. After killing Mark, Kole used the confusion generated by his brother's death to sneak through the back fence in the alley without being seen. Once he got home, Kole paid one of the stable hands for an alibi stating that he was running one of the horses when the boys were killed. He has wisely curtailed his violent activities since then, so Mark's death was never connected to him.

Wilhelm's ghost, appearing as he was in the last moments of his life, has been wandering the Pellman home and parts of town, mumbling and sometimes screaming the few words he can actually speak. Wilhelm wishes to expose his brother's crime and have him punished; only when this injustice is brought to everyone's attention will the ghost of the young boy feel that he can rest.

The Adventure Begins

When the heroes arrive in this town, nothing particularly menacing or wrong makes itself obvious at first glance. When passing by the alley where the murder took place, however, the heroes hear a loud scream from within. A few seconds later, the scream is heard again, closer.

People on the street stop and look in the direction of the sound. If any of the party members turn to look, read the following aloud, adjusting as necessary:



Peering into the afternoon shadows between the buildings, you see a boy of about ten years running frantically toward you. His face is a mask of terror, and he looks back once over his right shoulder. In doing so, you realize that the boy is partially transparent, and that he has a huge wound over his left ear, as if he had been struck against something with great force. Before you even have time to move, he runs out into the street and vanishes.



Any characters seeing the grisly spectacle of the screaming, wounded ghost should make fear checks. Wilhelm passes right through anyone standing directly in his path; any person thus touched by the ghost must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or go blind for 1d4 hours.

This, of course, is the event that preceded Wilhelm's death. Most of the people walking by have seen it before and simply watch now with a morbid fascination, continuing with their business when it is over. Only one woman remains in place: a large, older woman with gray hair and tears streaming down her face. If the heroes approach her, she ushers them into her inn (across the street) and offers them some tea. If they ask her questions about the ghost, she relates the following information:

- ✱ The ghost was a boy killed about a week ago. His name was Wilhelm Pellman. She was sweeping in front of her door that day when she heard him screaming. He ran straight out of the alley—and right in front of a passing cart of vegetables. It hit him hard enough to send him flying across the street. He landed almost directly in front of her. She tried to help him, but he was bleeding too badly. His eyes were dull and clouded over, and he did not seem to know what had happened. He just kept saying “Blood! Blood! Onions! Blood! Wine!” until he died.
- ✱ They found the body of Wilhelm's best friend Mark behind the herbalist's shop later that day. He was beaten severely, and his neck was broken. She thinks that Wilhelm witnessed the murder and barely managed to escape from the killer.
- ✱ The other boy's family is offering a reward of one hundred gold pieces to anyone who captures his murderer.

If the heroes decide to stay in town and ask around for more information, go to “Town Gossip.” If they decide to investigate the alley, go to “Scene of the Crime.” If they decide to go to the Pellman house, go to “House Pellman.”





Scene of the Crime

The alley is long and narrow, blocked at the far end with an old, wooden fence. Investigating heroes easily find the location where the murder took place. Read or paraphrase the following, adjusting as necessary:

A rotting stench assaults your nostrils when you enter the narrow by-way. Though the alley is full of shadows, you have no trouble finding the murder site. About halfway down the row, you see dark red specks all over the wall to your left, and the ground shows even more of the brownish stain. Next to the bloody soil, you spot the source of the nauseating smell. A large sack of rotting onions lies open, swarming with flies. The far end of the alley is blocked by a tall, wooden fence littered with more piles of rubbish along the bottom.

If the heroes look closely at the fence, they notice an extremely smeared, reddish-brown hand print on one of the boards. If anyone pushes the board, it moves back, leaving enough space for a normal-sized human to slip through. On the other side, they find a narrow, empty, residential street. As they investigate the fence, read or paraphrase the following:

The pile of trash by the fence begins to rustle slightly, and a man rises from within it. A middle-aged man stands up and looks at you with blood-shot eyes. He begins to sway slightly as he raises a bottle to his lips and takes a long swallow. He then holds out his hand and, with breath the smell of sour grapes, slurs out the words "Gotta a copper for a poor, ol' man?"

Gard has actually taken up residence in this alley. He begs for money in the streets, which he uses mostly to buy more wine. He was actually in the alley during the murder (though he left before Mark was discovered), but he remembers very little.

If questioned about Wilhelm or Mark, he mumbles "Yesss . . . I seen 'em. When I heard the screamin', I looked up fer a second. I saw one brother runnin' that way, and the other runnin' this way." Gard has no other useful information for the heroes, mumbling only about fists and screams. If the heroes question Gard for more than a few minutes, he just passes out.

Town Gossip

Various people in town will be able to tell the heroes the following information:

- Wilhelm was a good boy. He had many friends, and he was obviously his father's favorite.

- The Pellman family is cursed. So many of his kids dying, and then his wife, too. Now he has only the oldest, Kole. Each of their other ones died young, except for Wilhelm.
- You should see Kole; he stayed locked up in their house for a week after Wilhelm died. The lad must have been heartbroken. It looks like he is starting to come around, though.
- Wilhelm's ghost also haunts the Pellman home. He almost killed one of the maids there.

If the heroes ask any of the younger people in town (in the eight to fourteen years of age range), they hear something a bit different:

- Kole is a bully. He always beats up the other children for fun.
- Kole always hated Mark the most. He was jealous of his brother's friends because he did not have any of his own.

House Pellman

The Pellman house is a large wooden building on the edge of town, surrounded by some thin trees and flowering bushes. It is big enough to hold a large family and many servants, but most of it looks closed down and unused.

If the heroes approach and knock on the door, a maid answers it. If the heroes ask to speak to Karl Pellman, she tells them that he is not in. If they mention Wilhelm's ghost or ask to speak to the eldest son, she looks nervous and ushers them in to the sitting room and leaves to find Kole, who comes immediately to meet them. He offers them drinks, and when they are all settled, tells them the following:

"I only know this secondhand, for I was out running a new horse the day my brother was killed. People heard him scream, then saw him run into the street. My brother ran in front of a cart. He was hurt badly and died soon after. My father was at the blacksmith's down the street. He brought him home. We buried him the next day." The young man grimaces and continues, "He was my little brother, the only one I got to know. My other brothers died before they were a year old. And now he's haunting our house and the street where he died, driving us mad in the process." A terrible scream is heard from upstairs, and Kole flinches. "It never stops. He's already attacked one of the maids—he blinded her and pushed her down the stairs. My father has gone to a nearby town to fetch a priest to put Wilhelm's spirit to rest . . . unless any of you can do it now? I can't stand the thought of my little brother being tormented in this way." He looks at you pleadingly.





Of course, Kole knows why his brother's ghost is haunting the house and town, but he is not going to tell the heroes this. He wants Wilhelm's ghost out of the way, so that his crime is not revealed.

If the heroes confront him about being at the scene of the crime, he becomes angry and shouts, "How dare you accuse me of lying! I told you where I was, and I have witnesses to prove it. I was nowhere near Mark or Wilhelm that afternoon. Just ask the stable hands if you don't believe me!" If the heroes continue to argue with or accuse him, Kole will ask them to leave, and they will not be permitted back on the Pellman property. If they apologize or try to smooth things over, he calms down and allows them to question his household staff.

Wilhelm is not really attacking anyone. He is merely trying to communicate with them in order to reveal his brother's guilt. Unfortunately, the maid that he blinded panicked and fell down some stairs and broke her leg. Kole has twisted this incident to his advantage by saying that the ghost attacked the maid. She is too intimidated by Kole to contradict him while he is around.

If the heroes talk with the Pellman staff, go to "The Staff." If they go into town to question the townspeople, go to "Town Gossip." If they go to the alley, go to "Scene of the Crime."

The Staff

The servants of the family consist of two maids, a cook, a groundskeeper, and five stable hands. Few of the staff members have seen the ghost, but they have all heard him yell out "blood," "wine," and "onions." All of them saw Wilhelm and Kole on the morning of the accident, but both of the boys left just after noon. All of the servants are afraid of Kole, so it will not be easy for the heroes to solicit their help.

The Stable Hand: One of the stable hands reports that he and Kole spent the afternoon running a new horse. Any hero who makes a successful Intelligence check notices that this stable hand is wearing extremely expensive, new leather boots. He was bribed by Kole to say they were together the afternoon of the murder. The other stable hands assert that they did not see Kole on that afternoon at all. One of them even whispers that he saw the first stable hand running the new horse—alone.

As the party leaves the stable, they again encounter Wilhelm's ghost. Unlike the first time, the ghost is not replaying the last moments before his death. He is wandering, aware of his surroundings, trying to find someone to help him with his message. Read or paraphrase the following:



Again, the ghostly figure of the injured boy stands before you. He turns slowly to face you, but you notice that his eyes do not meet your eyes; they stare straight ahead, wandering slightly. He puts out his hands in a supplicating manner, and says, "Blood? Onions? Wine! Onions!"



Wilhelm tries to touch any person that he can reach in order to try to communicate his message. If Wilhelm is attacked, he flees and tries another day. If one of the heroes willingly allows Wilhelm to touch him and becomes blind, the ghost manages to transmit a brief flash of memory. Read or paraphrase the following:



You walk through a long, narrow alley, and you hear strange noises ahead of you. You turn the corner and see someone beating the bloody figure of your best friend Mark. A sharp cracking noise echoes softly through the alley, and his body falls limp to the ground, knocking over a large sack of rotten onions. When the murderer turns around, you realize that it is your own brother! You scream and run out of the alley. As soon as you reach the street, you feel a sudden sharp pain, blackness, and a soft elderly woman's voice.



The effort of extending this vision is too much for the ghost, however, and he vanishes immediately afterward. The recipient must make a horror check at experiencing such terrible images first hand.

The Maid: Larissa, the injured maid is propped up in her bed, polishing silverware while her leg is in a cast. If questioned about the ghost while Kole is not around, she says the following:



"I was dusting in the north hallway, which is near where Wilhelm's room is, when I suddenly saw him step through his door. I gave a start and dropped my duster. He turned and smiled at me, like he remembered me, and that's when I saw the wound on his head, just like when they brought his body in from town. He came toward me, smiling, with his hands outstretched, like he was going to give me a hug. He said, 'Blood! Onions! Blood! Wine!' I backed away, but he came closer. When he reached out to touch me, it was like all the lights had gone out, and I was in blackness. I thought I was going to die! I screamed, and ran. . . . I guess I ran right through him, although I didn't feel a thing. I couldn't see where I was going, so I ran right onto the staircase and fell down. I broke my leg, but the boy didn't do it. He couldn't even really touch me. I didn't feel him touch me at any time; he was just air. I don't think he can touch us, really. He was a good boy, and I don't see why he'd try to harm us. Even my sight came back after a couple of hours."



If the heroes ask her more questions about the ghost, she knows very little. She is very shaken up by her experience and wishes her young master could be at peace.





If the heroes ask questions about Kole, she becomes frightened and timid. She keeps looking toward the door as if he might come in any minute. If asked about Kole's whereabouts the afternoon of the murder, Larissa begins to sob uncontrollably, but she still refuses to speak.

Only if the heroes inform her that they already know about Kole's guilt and promise to protect her will she give them any more information. Read or paraphrase the following:

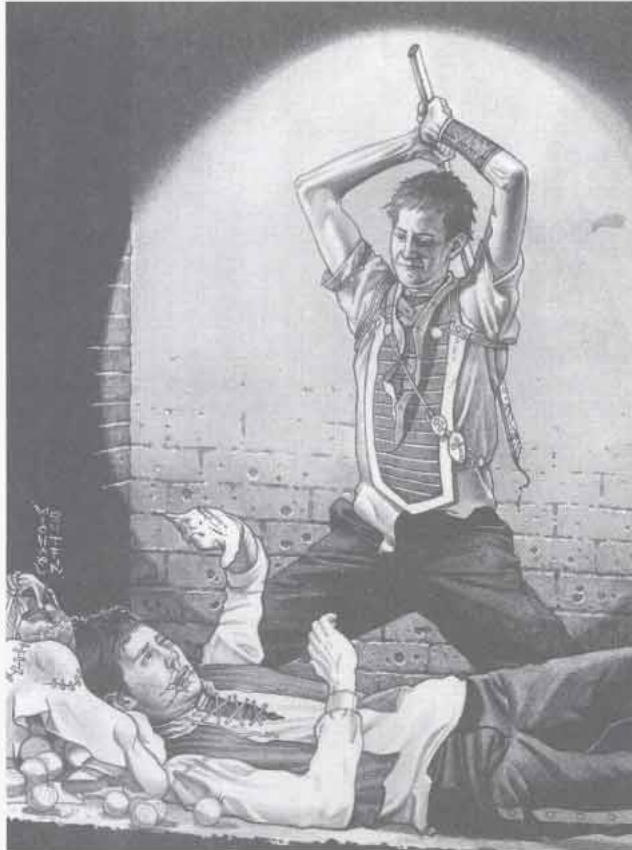


The maid looks extremely apprehensive as she begins to speak. "When Kole came home that afternoon, his clothes were covered with blood. He told me to clean them and threatened to kill me if I told anyone about it." Tears again begin to pour down the woman's face. "But I couldn't get it all out; there was just too much. I knew he would beat me, so I hid them in the firewood pile, and Kole hasn't noticed that they're gone yet."



Larissa can show the heroes where the bloody clothes are, but someone will have to carry her or at least help her walk. Most of the blood is gone, but several very large stains remain.

If the heroes are now ready to report Kole to the authorities (or to Mark's parents), go on to "Guilty."



Guilty

The party now has physical evidence (the blood-stained clothing), the projected memories, and a murder suspect. Speaking to the local authorities leads to an investigation of the stable hand who backed up Kole's story. The man caves in and confesses that he was paid to lie, and so the constable has Kole arrested. The party can help, but the locals would prefer if the visitors stay out of this part.

Surprisingly enough, Kole, when confronted with the accusation and the story of the stable hand, gives in and confesses to the killing, swearing that it was never intentional. He agrees to work on the farm of Mark's parents for ten years, as well as pay a fine, to make up for their loss.

When Kole is arrested, Wilhelm makes one last appearance. Read the following aloud, adjusting as necessary:



Slowly, the form of a young boy shimmers into being. His blind eyes seem to stare right through you for a brief moment, and then he smiles warmly. With an almost jaunty wave, he fades away into a fine mist, which disappears immediately.



When Karl Pellman returns (he could not find anyone willing to help) and discovers his son's guilt, he disowns Kole and gives a large amount of money to Mark's family.

Also, Mark's father pays the heroes the one hundred gold pieces for uncovering his son's murderer.

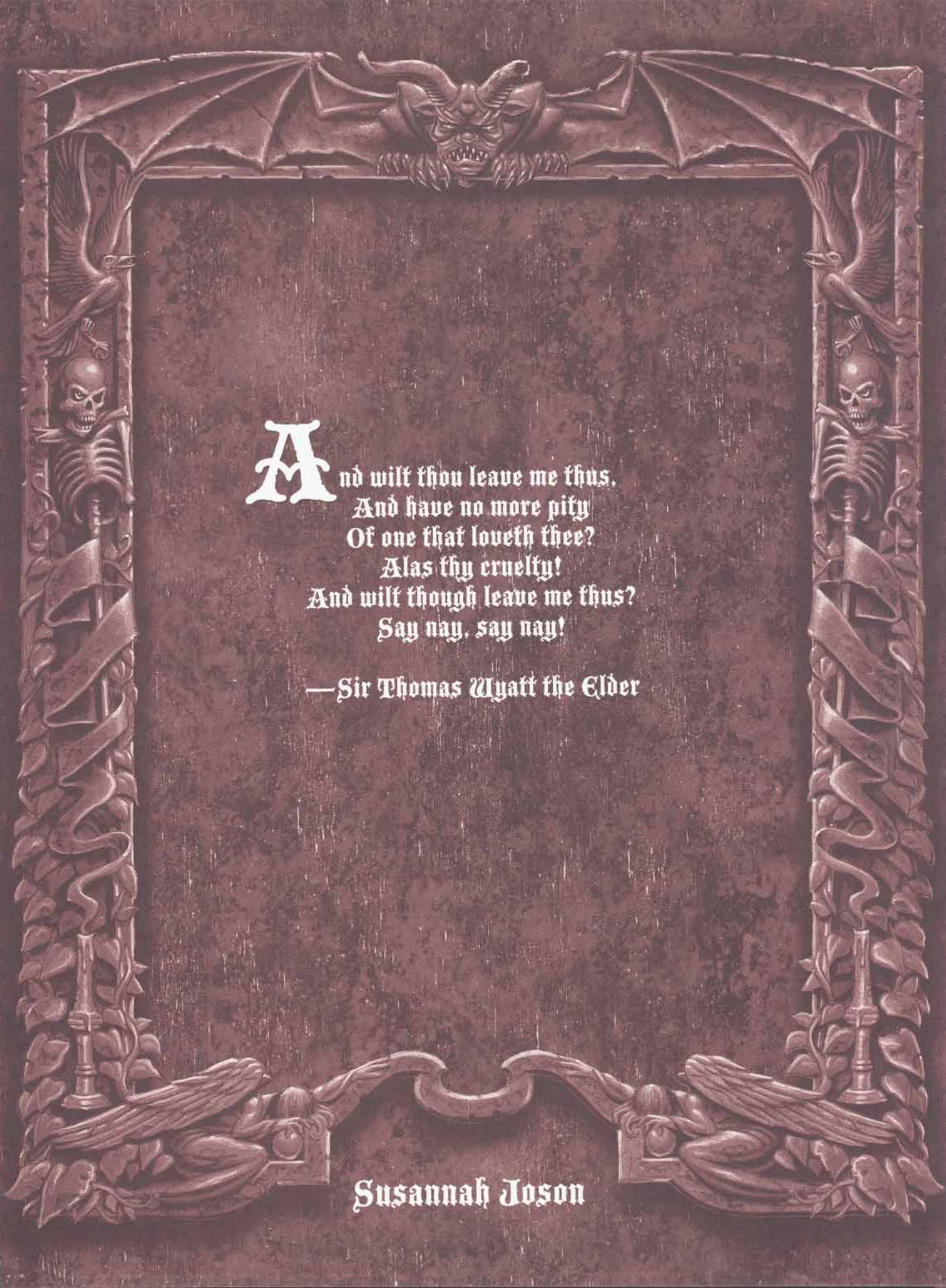
Recurrence

If the heroes help put Wilhelm to rest, then the town is thankful to the party for their help. While Karl is saddened at his elder son's involvement, that is moderated by the knowledge that his younger son is now at rest.

If the heroes do not help put Wilhelm to rest, then he remains a ghost for several months until he can finally bring Kole's guilt to the attention of the authorities. Should the heroes leave and come back at a later date, they find out that another person was able to complete this scenario.

If the Dungeon Master wishes, Kole can revert to his former, violent self. In an effort to get away from Mark's parents' farm, he kills them in their sleep and leaves the area. The heroes can either find this out at the village (while passing through, for example) or simply meet Kole elsewhere. Kole could even start stalking the heroes for their part in the whole situation.





And wilt thou leave me thus,
And have no more pity
Of one that loveth thee?
Alas thy cruelty!
And wilt thou leave me thus?
Say nay, say nay!

—Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder

Susannah Joson



Susannah Joson

Biography

The ghost of Susannah Joson haunts the pond on the Joson estate. Today, the locals stay clear of the pond, for they know that she walks its misty surface. They say that she is so mad with loneliness that she drags men back to the pond to keep her eternal company. . . .

Appearance

Susannah has two manifestations: One is her appearance in life, and the other is her body's present likeness. The former is beautiful and the latter terrifying, but both are netherworldly, ashen, and translucent. Firelight (or its equivalent) can be seen through either form as a greenish glow. Quite importantly, both carry a ghostly red rose.

When Susannah appears, she does not speak or make any sound other than to say the name Rafe. The only time she can be heard is when she appears in the dreams of the man she mistakes for him. (See "Dream Girl.")

Beautiful

Under most circumstances, the only person to whom Susannah appears in her attractive form is the man she believes to be Rafe. To him she appears as a woman in the freshest bloom of beauty. If desired, the Dungeon Master can describe her to that character's player by taking him aside and reading the following description:



She stands exactly five feet tall, a petite and curvaceous woman. Her hair is so black it seems to be spun of the darkness, yet it shines in the dim light. Her large eyes, innocent and a little frightened, are equally dark and deep. Her milky pale skin becomes her even in death, and her lips remain voluptuous in spite of their grayish tint.

The ghost wears a white, high-necked blouse, with long sleeves, and a dark dress that hangs all the way to the ground. A light-colored, lacy shawl wraps around her shoulders. She holds a single, ghostly red rose in her right hand.



Susannah possesses one disturbing thing in this form: Her left, fourth finger (the "ring finger") has been sliced off at the base, leaving not even a stump. The wound, if examined closely, is clearly fresh, but it does not bleed. Susannah seems to be self-conscious about this injury because she keeps her left hand by her side, or otherwise discreetly placed, using only her right hand to make gestures and motions. (If the situation is unclear, have the player make an Intelligence check to see if Susannah's secret is revealed.)

Ghostly

Virtually everyone, besides the man she mistakes for Rafe, sees Susannah in her grotesque form. Even though she is a ghost, she reflects her current physical condition, as she lies at the bottom of a murky pond, weighted down with rocks. If desired, you can describe her to the adventurers by reading the following words aloud:



The creature appears to be a human woman who drowned and crawled back out of the muddy water! Her body is bloated and yellow, criss-crossed with dark black veins just under the surface, frayed and gouged with fish bites. Slugs wriggle under her skin while leeches crawl over her face and arms. Her stringy, black hair hangs in sopping tangles. Her ragged, high-necked blouse and long dress are covered with algae and strung with clammy seaweed, while the shredded remains of a shawl cling feebly to her shoulders.

Muddy water runs from her mouth and nostrils, though she does not seem to notice. A withered once-red rose sags in her hand. Her eyes are vacant, dead, yet when they meet with yours, a surge of emotional power washes over you like cold mist.



The power mentioned in the boxed text is that of her charm gaze ability (see "Combat"). Susannah's finger is missing in this manifestation as well, but the sight of her in this form should not warrant careful examination on





the heroes' part. (The Dungeon Master should call for Intelligence checks if he deems it possible that anyone would notice.)

Susannah Joson

Third-Magnitude Geist, Lawful Good

Armor Class	10*	Str	—
Movement	Fl 12(A)	Dex	—
Level/Hit Dice	Nil	Con	—
Hit Points	Nil	Int	9
THACO	Nil	Wis	8
Morale	5	Cha	13
No. of Attacks	Nil	XP	nil
Damage/Attack	Nil		
Special Attacks	Charm gaze, suggestion		
Special Defenses	Semicorporeal, invulnerable, immune to all magic and spells except <i>abjure</i> , <i>banishment</i> , <i>dismissal</i> , <i>holy word</i> , and <i>wish</i> spells, which send her to her permanent rest on the spot		
Special Vulnerability	Does not go near light brighter than that given off by a lamp or campfire and flees if it is introduced in her presence		
Magic Resistance	100%		

* Any attack roll that hits AC 10 can strike Susannah's form but passes unhindered through it, inflicting no damage, even if magical.

The Joson Family

(Jediah, Meriam, Aldon, Toman)

Second-Magnitude Ghosts, Lawful Neutral

Armor Class	-1/6*	Str	—
Movement	Fl 12(A)	Dex	—
Level/Hit Dice	4	Con	—
Hit Points	25	Int	10
THACO	17	Wis	9
Morale	20	Cha	11
No. of Attacks	1	XP	2,000 each
Damage/Attack	1d6 (cause wounds)		
Special Attacks	Cause wounds (touch causes 1d6 points of damage), cause paralysis (victim must successfully save vs. paralyzation with a -1 penalty to avoid being held for 2d4 turns)		
Special Defenses	Insubstantiality (semicorporeal)**, invisibility**, rejuvenation**, magic immunity**, +1/0* or better magical weapons to hit		
Special Vulnerabilities	Uttering their first names causes them to flee immediately; after the first time, there is a 25% cumulative chance that they attack those who say their names		

* Ethereal vs. nonethereal foes/ethereal vs. ethereal foes or when corporeal.

** See the introduction for further details.

Background

Susannah was the pampered, protected daughter of a landowner named Jediah Joson. As such, she was raised in wealth and groomed for marriage to some equally or more wealthy man. The hardships and cruelties of common life were unknown to her, so the only fear she had was of those things that all who live in the Demiplane of Dread tremble at. Her solicitous father decreed that she maintain the innocence of maidenhood, so Susannah grew up a delicate, romantic heart, anxious to fall in love and spend her life with the man of her dreams.

Little is known of the man who brought her to eventual ruin. He called himself Rafe and claimed to be a "wandering adventure-seeker of noble blood." He was quite handsome and witty, and he stole Susannah's heart from the moment she first laid eyes upon him. Rafe wooed her with the fiery passion of desperate youth. He distinguished himself as a romantic by showering Susannah with red roses so that she had them wherever she went. The young lady's desire for a fairy-tale relationship rendered her all the more vulnerable to the sweet-tongued rake, so Rafe lost no time in laying claim to her marriage bed. He swept her off her feet as ardently as she wished and married her as quickly as he could without arousing suspicion.

Shortly after the wedding, a Vistani crone confronted Jediah Joson in the village, dramatically prophesied that his family was cursed, and promptly fled into the Mists. In truth, she had been paid by Rafe to make the false claim in front of a superstitious public. Then, he began to murder the Joson family, one by one, securing his hold on the family fortune. First, he killed Susannah's brothers by entertaining them with copious amounts of wine, then tying rocks around their ankles and casting them into a small pond on the family estate, after they had fallen into a drunken slumber. Next he murdered Jediah Joson by clubbing him from behind with a shovel and sending him to join his sons. Then, Meriam went into the weedy depths—bound, gagged, and wide awake. All the while Rafe comforted the grief-stricken Susannah, who wept piteously over their disappearances and the "fell curse."

At last, Rafe convinced Susannah to go with him for a romantic boat ride on the pond, promising it would help "put to rest her torturous fears over what had happened to her family." He pinned a red rose to her dress to win her over, and the tactic worked to his ends once more. Then, he rowed to the center of the pond and absently asked what she would give to learn her family's fate, to which she responded "my life!"

"Fair enough," said Rafe with a cruel chuckle. He plucked the rose from her shoulder and threw it into the water, where Susannah slowly focused upon her brothers and parents, just barely visible in the depths. As she screamed in horror, Rafe seized her from behind and held her head under the water so she could look into the vacant eyes of her dead family while she, herself, drowned. When she stopped struggling, he took





a knife and cut her ring finger off, claiming the family heirloom of her grandmother's wedding ring.

What became of Rafe remains unknown. He may have fled with as much wealth as he could carry or changed his identity and become part of the local gentry. He may even have been murdered in revenge, either by friends of Susannah's family or by the Joson's themselves.

Today, Susannah's spirit rises out of the lake every night and walks its surface for a short while, gazing forlornly upon her beloved family in the deep. The exact time during which she appears is sometimes the same for a few days, and sometimes it is different every night. At any point during the day, any who pass by the pond and look into the water may see Susannah looking back at them from beneath the water, as if a reflection in the surface. In either case, the first sight of her should require a fear check.

Susannah always focuses upon one man at a time, who becomes her sole victim/love interest. As mentioned, she believes completely that he is Rafe, the man whom she loved blindly. She desperately wants him to stay with her, to come back to the pond where she dwells eternally, and she exudes all the love and affection she can muster in order to influence him. (Hence, her charm gaze.) Once she identifies a man as Rafe, she ignores all other people, even if they interfere with her attempts to lead him away.

From then on, she still makes her rounds on the surface of the pond every night, but then she fades away only to reappear in the presence of her new "Rafe." As mentioned, she does not show up at exactly the same time of night, so her beloved never knows when she will show up—only that she will. Upon appearing, she casts her charm gaze upon the man (if he is not already enchanted) and coaxes him to follow her back to the pond.

Slipping away to follow Susannah can make for an ongoing problem for the adventurers. They may put a lot of distance between themselves and the pond, but Susannah still appears each night. Sooner or later "Rafe" is going to slip through his comrade's fingers. Most nonplayer characters who witness her appearances and obvious connection to him may react extremely negatively.

If the man is asleep, Susannah enters his dreams and plays out a scene from her life with Rafe, treating the man as her husband. Even if he insists he is not Rafe, she thinks he is teasing her and either becomes amused or upset, depending upon the circumstances of the current dream. This is the only time that she speaks, so the dreams are a valuable way to piece together Susannah's story. (See "Dream Girl.")

Susannah's visits last for only a short while. If "Rafe" is prevented from following her, Susannah's family appears and drags her away from him. She struggles madly and reaches out pitifully to him, throwing her rose to him (which disappears), but she cannot break free of them. Soon they all fade away, unless someone with the ability to strike ghosts (anyone with a magical weapon, for example) troubles them. Unlike Susannah,

the rest of the Josons can interact with living beings, and they are certainly not friendly!

If and when the beloved man dies, due to following Susannah or otherwise, she immediately forgets him and finds a new "Rafe."

Personality

Susannah is a third-magnitude geist, owing to the fact that she died traumatically. (See the "Background" section). Her appearance is humanoid and either beauteous and corrupted, depending upon who looks at her.

Her origin is due to dedication, or rather, a variation of that insatiate yearning that creates a ghost: guilt. She is anchored by a relationship, which means that she can appear to the person who is the object of her guilt, no matter where he goes.

Susannah has completely blotted out the memory of Rafe's part in her death and those of her family members; the truth hurts too much! As a result, she is vulnerable to light brighter than that given off by a lamp or campfire. In addition, Susannah has the characteristics of a geist (as defined in the *RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix III*).

Jediah, Meriam, Aldon, and Toman Joson play only a small part in this scenario. They appear when the "Rafe" figure is prevented from following Susannah, and they drag her away from him. Unlike Susannah, these ghosts can attack and be attacked if they are molested while dragging Susannah away, or if their names are called out too often (see their special vulnerability).

Susannah's parents and two brothers are all second-magnitude ghosts. Their appearance is humanoid and corrupted, as they all appear to be in the same general state as Susannah in her ghastly form. Their ghostly origin is due to sudden death, strengthened by the betrayal of Rafe. They are anchored to Susannah, so they can appear where she does. Their appearances are triggered cyclically, as they appear shortly after Susannah, every night.

The Josons are scandalized, even in death, by the whole sordid affair involving Rafe, and they are ashamed of themselves. Therefore, the utterance of their first names causes them to flee immediately. However, whenever their names are called out after the first time, there is a 25% cumulative chance that they attack those who say their names, attempting to silence them.

Combat

As a geist, Susannah cannot inflict damage any more than she can sustain it, but she can and will lead a man to his death. To do this, Susannah has two extraordinary powers as categorized in *Van Richten's Guide to Ghosts*: a special form of charm person and a specific suggestion spell.

The charm person effect is deployed as a gaze attack (see the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*), rather than a spell. When anyone else, besides the man whom Susannah takes for Rafe, makes eye contact with the ghost and





succeeds at the saving throw, he experiences no effect; if he fails, however, he sees her in her beautiful form for just an instant. (Otherwise, she appears in her ghastly form whenever he sees her.)

When Susannah makes eye contact with the man she takes for Rafe and he fails a saving throw vs. spell, he becomes convinced that she means him no harm and he should follow her! Unless he is physically restrained by fellow adventurers, he follows her to the pond (or all night if too far from the pond to reach it). Fortunately, if he is physically held back for just a moment, the inclination to follow Susannah dissipates, and the man does not remember where he was going. If he successfully makes his saving throw vs. spell, he merely senses an outpouring of affection from Susannah.

Even after the man has been restrained from following the ghost, the charm actually lasts as long as the *charm person* spell dictates (according to Intelligence score). During this time, the man has no awareness of his vulnerability, but Susannah does not have to initiate her gaze “attack” to reestablish his desire to follow her.

If Susannah successfully lures a man to submerge himself completely into the pond where her body lies, she invokes her second special power. She tries to kiss her beloved mortal, which has the effect of a *suggestion* spell. “Rafe” should be given the option to accept or refuse. If he does not willingly return the kiss, he begins to choke on water and regains control of his actions. (See the rules for “drowning” in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*.) If he accepts the kiss, the player must roll a saving throw vs. spell. If he successfully saves, he begins to choke on the water and snaps out of his enchantment, recovering full control of himself. If he fails the saving throw, then Susannah has planted a suggestion in his head: The *Dungeon Master* should give the player a note that claims she has cast *water breathing* on his character. Unless “Rafe” is somehow rescued, he will drown without knowing it (unless someone comes to his rescue) and become a pond zombie.

The first few times that a charmed character is visited by Susannah, he openly attempts to follow her toward the pond. Eventually, if the ghost remains with the group for a while, the character should begin to attempt to slip away. To adjudicate this, presume that the group will immediately identify the danger of not keeping an eye on “Rafe” until the ghost has come and gone. If sensible, they will take precautions against losing him. But once they develop a routine, look for loopholes in the security and challenge them. Let them notice he is missing long enough to send them on a chase in the night, where you can spring all kinds of encounters on the group.

Since Susannah is afraid of bright light, it is possible to keep her away by remaining in a lit area all night. However, if Susannah’s current beloved remains in a brightly lit area, she hovers in the nearest dark place and calls out, “Rafe! Rafe!” in an eerie, ghostly voice for 1d4+1 rounds. If he has been charmed on a previous occasion and the charm has not yet broken, he tries to go to her.

Susannah’s passion and beauty have made quick work of many men, so lots of bodies lie in the pond. They rise much like the Josons do, as a variety of the common zombie. These creatures make sure that none of the Josons’ bodies break free of their weights or otherwise leave the area.

(Pond) Zombies (3d6): AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (claw); SA stench; SD undead immunities to spells; SW daylight; SZ M (6' tall); ML special; Int non- (0); AL N; XP 175 each.

Notes: SA—The pond zombies are so foully decomposed that all within 20 feet must successfully save vs. poison or suffer a –1 penalty to attacks and a +1 penalty to AC for 2d4 rounds; SD—Zombies are immune to sleep, charm, and hold spells as well as death magic, poison, and cold-based magic; SW—If the zombies leave the pond by day, they begin to steam and rot at a rapid rate. In 3d4 rounds, they dissolve into slimy debris unless they are kept wet.

These pond zombies leave the water only if someone recovers any of the Josons’ corpses. At that point, they follow the body thieves until they are destroyed or the Josons are returned to the pond. Of course, they attack in full force while those who would take their charges from them are still in or on the water.

The Josons do not attack anyone unless they are first attacked. If provoked, however, they balefully float toward the offender with death in their eyes, reaching out to cause wounds and paralysis. Once a character becomes paralyzed or flees, the Josons break off their attacks.

And Wilt Thou Leave Me Thus?



his scenario should play like a traditional gothic ghost story, containing not only horror but mystery, tragedy, and romance. Combat will not resolve this tragic plot—the heroes cannot retire Susannah’s restless spirit by simply rooting out and destroying the source of evil that made her. Instead, they must overcome their normally healthy fear of undead and come to her aid like the heroes they are.

The challenge and creature-level are suitable for an inexperienced party (levels 1 to 3), but it can be adapted for higher-level groups by upgrading the magnitudes of the ghosts (using *Van Richten’s Guide to Ghosts*). The pond zombies would also need to be upgraded to an appropriately challenging form of undead.

Background

The scenario to follow is not a structured adventure. Susannah is a sort of nonplayer character who joins the party and cannot be gotten rid of unless they put her spirit to rest. (See “Recurrence.”)





This scenario contains just one programmed encounter, "The Adventure Begins," which brings Susannah and the heroes together. Since the ghost will appear to the heroes every night from then on, it does not matter if they are involved in another story at the time. In other words, this whole scenario is perfect for layering on top of another, longer adventure, or for incorporating into a campaign.

The Adventure Begins

This encounter can take place in any domain the Dungeon Master chooses, as long as it has a pond and nearby human inhabitants. Since Susannah makes appearances by night, when most natives are safely indoors, the pond can lie anywhere, making it easy for the heroes to pass by without thinking anything of it.

As the party travels along, the path ahead of them passes by a roughly spherical, small pond about two hundred feet across, a small cave, and a large and long mound. The water in the pond evenly drops off to a depth of ten to fifteen feet about twenty-five feet from shore but grows no deeper, except for a twenty-foot-deep pocket here and there. The water is fairly cloudy with algae, creating a maximum visibility of about ten feet. The bodies of the entire Joson family lie about ten feet below the surface, about one hundred feet from the shore, near the center of the pond. They are weighted down with rocks that have been tied to their feet, so they "dangle" in a standing position.

The cave and the mound are unoccupied (unless the Dungeon Master wants to insert an encounter). The pond, of course, is a different matter. Susannah has already spotted the heroes and decided that one of the men is "Rafe." The chosen character is determined in one of three ways: he is the first man to look into the pond such that he can see his own reflection; he is the man with the highest Charisma; or his player is the one that will roleplay the part to the best effect. Now, no matter what they do or where they go, Susannah will find "Rafe" every night.

Should one of the men go to the pond's edge and look in, the Dungeon Master should take him aside and read the following boxed copy to him. Note that only "Rafe" will see Susannah in the water.

The surface of the water is utterly smooth and still. It mirrors the clouds overhead, the tops of trees that gather about the shoreline, and you, standing at its edge. As you look into your reflection, the hair on your arms stands up. . . . Another reflection shimmers next to yours, although no one stands there!

You see the features of a young woman with dark hair and eyes. She looks up at you with agonizing longing in her face, then seems to recognize you and assume an expression of utter joy. Whatever your first reaction, you pause a moment before acting and wonder at her incredible beauty!

Read Susannah's beautiful description to the player (see "Appearance") and instruct the player to wait before announcing his next action. Then rejoin the group and read the copy in this box to all the players.

If "Rafe" never looks into the pond, then the following description is all he will hear as well.

Unexpectedly, the hair on the back of your neck stands on end, and you feel an icy wash of bitterness in the pit of your stomach. Somewhere out there, someone—or something—is watching you.

Everyone should roll a saving throw vs. spell, but it is important to note only whether "Rafe" succeeds or fails. If he fails, "Rafe" starts to walk into the water with an expression of rapture on his face. Calling to him elicits no response. If he is not physically restrained by his comrades, he enters the water completely and is subject to drowning as described in the "Combat" section.

If the adventurers decide to enter the water, the pond zombies attack. The adventurers should not find the Joson bodies unless they specifically state they will conduct an active search of the whole pond. Otherwise, nothing else happens at this time. Susannah will make her next appearance that night, and thence every night, until the Josons' bodies are recovered and buried as described in the "Conclusion."

Ghost Story

This encounter can be used if the heroes elect to seek more information about Susannah in the nearest habitation. As presented here, the adventurers can hear a tale about the Josons if they talk to any of the locals, but it could be more difficult to speak to the locals if necessary.

If the heroes inquire after the curious events at the pond, the local people are momentarily taken aback, then invite the strangers to join them for dinner, promising to tell all after they have been properly greeted. Later, when the sun has gone down and all are gathered around a fire, tell the following story:

An ancient woman who has remained in the shadows all night wobbles to a seat near the fire and sits. In the firelight, the desiccated folds of her skin make her look almost corpse-like. With a shaking hand, she gestures to a little girl, who goes over and stands beside her. The old woman turns her head toward the child and speaks, but you hear nothing. The girl looks over at you, and her eyes go wide and glassy. She begins to speak in a lifeless tone of voice.

"When I was a child, a Vistana cursed Jediah Joson and all his kin. One by one, they all disappeared, until all that was left was young Susannah,





so she ran to the pond and drowned herself before the curse could get 'er.

"Now she is lonely, lonely, and when she looks upon a man that pleases her, she drags him back to the pond where he drowns for her company."

The old woman looks to [insert "Rafe's" real name] and points her bony finger. "You have been visited from beyond the Misty curtain. The breaking of a heart has shattered the barrier between life and death, and a bitter spirit walks without rest. Susannah Joson has looked 'pon you, and so you must die."



The natives laugh nervously at the old woman's words. They believe in the ghost, for a few of them have seen her, but none of them has died so her words do not alarm them too much. (Those men who have seen her were fortunate enough to have passed by the pond after she had already identified a "Rafe.") The story of Susannah Joson is well known, so most of the locals steer clear of the pond, and none of them suspects the truth. The old woman is fairly senile and cannot reliably answer any questions.

After the group has had some time to interact with the people, the Dungeon Master should pass Susannah's new beloved hero a note with the word "Rafe" (including quotation marks) on it: Susannah is calling to him. The character has one action, before the following boxed text is read:



The old woman screams and points over your shoulder. [Point at "Rafe."] Several others look in the same direction and scream as well. On the wall behind you hangs a large mirror, dark with age, which casts back the faces of the startled villagers around you.

Then you see her. Gazing outward from beneath the dim surface is the transparent face of a young woman! She cries out, in a voice that chills you, "Rafe, Rafe!" She reaches out to you with a phantom red rose in her hand, but before her hand can cross through the looking glass, she is seized from behind! Ghostly hands clutch at her and drag her deeper into the mirror, until she fades away with a final cry of "Rafe!"



If "Rafe" has not yet been charmed, the entire group needs to make saving throws, as before, so as to hide who is affected. If "Rafe" fails to save, the player should be passed a note which says, "You want to go outside and see no reason why not." Unless one of the other heroes restrains him, "Rafe" will head for the pond and enter it.

Assuming the adventurers regain control of the situation, the natives immediately order them to leave, believing they have brought Susannah among them.

No warriors are among the locals, so they have little chance of bullying the heroes into leaving, but some of them may attack the party with fists if they will not leave. Powers checks may be required depending on how the heroes deal with the situation.

Dream Girl

Wherever the character sleeps, Susannah joins his dreams. This is how the party can piece together the real story, as well as how they can learn how to retire the Joson ghosts. The dreams start suddenly and seem to be realistic enough to fit into a normal day's events. Then, the dreams turn ugly without warning. When things go wrong, madness checks are appropriate.

When dreaming, "Rafe" can hear Susannah speak. She believes he is Rafe and cannot be convinced otherwise. She may laugh at his "little jests" or grow concerned that "Rafe is ill," but she will not consider the possibility that he is not Rafe. Indeed, if the adventurer looks into a mirror during a dream, he will see Rafe's face. Susannah dotes on her lover and actively tries to win his heart.

Red roses and rose imagery are everywhere throughout the dreams, but they should seem like mere romantic imagery rather than an important clue. The heroes need to include a red rose in the burial ceremony or the Josons will not rest. They can return afterward and add a rose to the grave, but without the rose, the visitings go on and on.

As mentioned, the dreams begin by roleplaying Susannah's nightly appearance, the heroes' successful resistance effort, and the safe passage of the rest of the night. Then the action proceeds normally, as if it is the next day, although the entire party can unwittingly be forced to experience "Rafe's" nightmares: Suddenly, a pack of giant wolves, or entrapment in a living wall, or any other scenario in which the party dies horribly, occurs. After all characters have been killed, it is morning in camp—the day never happened. Soon, "Rafe" will not know what is real and what is a dream.

For a little extra drama, the rest of the party notices he is gone, though they do not know for how long. Their chase can be hindered with encounters with monsters while "Rafe" steadily makes his way, untroubled, toward death.

In between the various horrifying dreams, intersperse the following dreams in order. They tell Susannah's story.

- ☀ **First:** Susannah rushes up to "Rafe" and joyfully says, "This is so soon, so sudden, but yes! I will marry you! I love you, Rafe!" Hitherto unnoticed roses bloom all around. Susannah throws her arms around the character and kisses him. If he allows it, she becomes more passionate. If "Rafe" continues to enjoy Susannah's increasing ardor, tell him that when he opens his eyes while kissing her, her form has changed. Now Susannah is in her grotesque form, and her lust is unabated. . . .





❖ **Second:** Susannah stands before the dreaming hero and cries in horror, "Rafe, there is blood on your hands!" He looks down and sees roses on the ground, bright red from the blood running off his hands. Then he hears himself say, "It is just swine's blood, dear."

❖ **Third:** The hero sees himself holding Susannah's head underwater, watching her drown. A single red rose floats away in the water, apparently released by her. When the bubbles cease to rise around her, the hero sees himself seize Susannah's left hand and try to remove the diamond wedding ring. The finger was broken in the struggle, though, so the hero sees himself cut her finger off below the ring.

If the player states that his character is attempting to wake up at any point during the dream, allow him to roll a saving throw vs. paralysis to escape the nightmare. Otherwise, call for a madness check at the dream's conclusion.

❖ **Fourth:** "Rafe" actually witnesses the drowning through Susannah's eyes. He feels the hands around his neck, holding him under, and he sees the whole Joson family below, tethered to rocks and staring upward. He feels himself stop struggling and notices a red rose sinking to the bottom of the pond. Then, he feels his ring finger being cut off.

This dream happens too fast for the hero to attempt to wake himself up. Call for a madness check.

Possible Backgrounds

Dungeon Masters can simply involve the heroes in learning Susannah's story and bringing her to peace, but it is possible to add a little more background to the adventure. Below are a few hooks for turning Susannah's story into a whole adventure.

Stalker Eternal: Susannah can trail the hero whom she mistakes for Rafe a very long time before even initiating formal contact. In this case, Susannah feels not only love but hatred when she looks upon "Rafe," for she knows that he murdered her and her family. Hence, she is shy about approaching the hero and merely shadows him. Taunting the adventurer with ghostly phenomena from night to night strictly for spooky effects adds to the scary atmosphere.

Susannah can even be shy in the character's dreams, appearing in eerie fashion or perhaps leading him on a surreal chase if he follows her. The dreams can slowly grow more and more gruesome over time, until they begin to require madness checks.

A 7th-level priest or 9th-level wizard is required to cast a spell that retires a geist (*abjure* and *dismissal*, respectively). Hence, this scenario could conceivably last until one of the party reaches an appropriate experience level or until the adventurers can hire a spellcaster to help them out, if they never resolve it for themselves.

Justice for Rafe: Dungeon Masters could change the conditions for Susannah's rest to bringing the real Rafe back to face the wrath of the Joson family. (Deliberately leading a man to his death could require a powers check!) He might be a wealthy landowner, beloved by the locals, who has escaped suspicion until the adventurers started snooping. He might be living far away and require detective work to locate. Rafe can even become a major nemesis to the adventurers, always slipping through their fingers just when they think they have him, always committing more evil acts to taunt them, maybe even ascending toward domain lord status.

Vistani Debt: Putting Susannah and her family to rest could be a service required by the Vistani. Just to make it tricky, they might not plainly say what they want. They can say, "When you bring love and peace together, then shall your debt to us be paid." The adventurers will have to figure out what that means.

Otherwise, the adventurers might be cursed by the Vistani, who say, "Until you bring sweet death to one who loves you," (insert a penalty of the Dungeon Master's choice). Dungeon Masters could plague the heroes with that curse for months or years before introducing this plot, allowing them to finally break it.

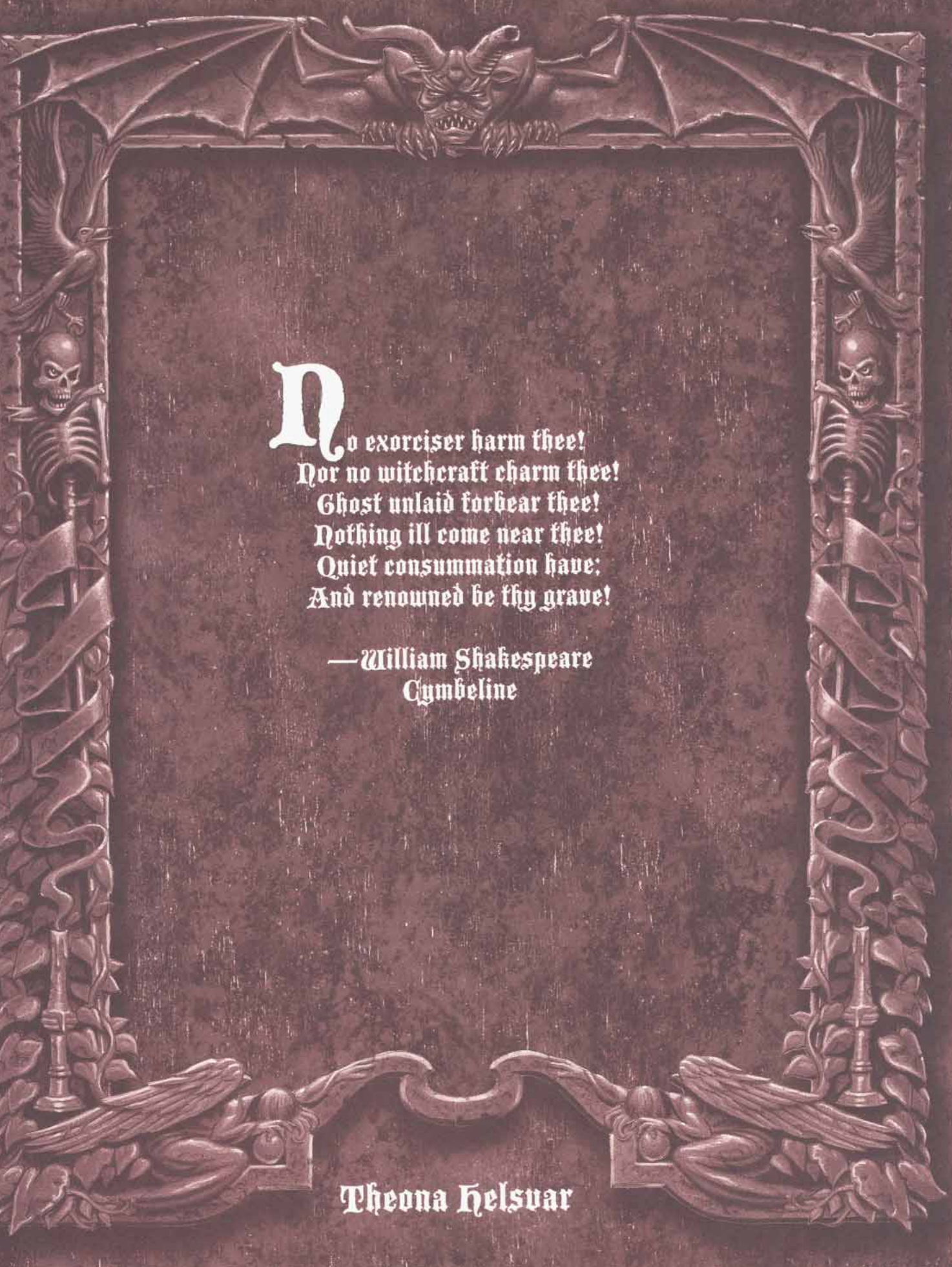
Recurrence

A decent burial is required to retire Susannah and her whole family. Their bodies must be recovered from the pond and buried or otherwise disposed of in a respectful manner. Then, a *bless* spell must be cast, or a nicely roleplayed ceremony must be conducted. If this is done, the ghosts of the Josons appear and stand solemnly by, as witnesses to their own funeral.

One special physical component is required as well: A red rose must be introduced to the funeral in some way. One or more of the characters may wear one, or a bud may be placed at the grave site. If the adventurers have quickly ascertained that they must recover Susannah's body from the pond and bury it, but do not include the rose, then the Josons frown and fade away, and Susannah continues to appear every night as scheduled.

When all is properly concluded, Susannah kisses each hero on the cheek, so quickly they cannot object. She saves the hero who was "Rafe" for last and tenderly kisses him on the lips (if he lets her), hands him a rose which he can feel for just a moment, then rejoins her family. Finally, they all turn and fade away.





No exorciser harm thee!
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
Nothing ill come near thee!
Quiet consummation have;
And renowned be thy grave!

—William Shakespeare
Cymbeline

Theona Helsvar



Biography



rusted companions can become hated enemies because of an evil spirit's influence. Theona Helsvar is one such ghost who inhabits other people's bodies for her own evil ends.

Appearance

In life, Theona Helsvar was a thin, clumsy woman, her wispy black hair only emphasizing her harsh features. As a ghost, her appearance has mutated. Her blackened form has many clawed tentacles bursting forth from it. Her mouth has widened, exposing rows of long, sharp teeth. Even in daylight, her red eyes glow sullenly.

Theona Helsvar

Third-Magnitude Ghost, Chaotic Evil
(Inhabiting Monica's body) †

Armor Class	-2/4* (10)	Str	— (9)
Movement	12	Dex	— (10)
Level/Hit Dice	9	Con	— (8)
Hit Points	54	Int	18
THACO	9	Wis	16
Morale	19	Cha	7 (17)
No. of Attacks	1	XP	8,000 (none)
Damage/Attack	Nil (1d4 (dagger))		
Special Attacks	Drain ability, inhabit body, spells		
Special Defenses	Insubstantiality (mutable)**, invisibility**, rejuvenation**, magic immunity**, +2/+1* or better weapons needed to hit		

Special Vulnerabilities Monica's shawl
Magic Resistance 45%

* Ethereal vs. nonethereal foes/ethereal vs. ethereal foes or when corporeal.

** Refer to the introduction for further details.

† Numbers in parentheses refer to her stats while in Monica's body.

Theona's ability to inhabit bodies works like the *magic jar* spell with a few exceptions. When Theona wishes to inhabit a body, she must be within sixty feet of the victim. The victim must make a successful saving throw vs. spell using a modifier listed under the description of the *magic jar* spell in the *Player's Handbook* or be slain. Theona can also drain 2 points of Charisma. After she touches him, the victim must roll a successful saving throw vs. death magic or lose the points permanently. If the saving throw succeeds, the victim can regain the lost points at a rate of one point per month. If the victim ever drops to zero Charisma, he dies.

Theona's new spellbook: 1st—*detect magic, magic missile, Nahal's reckless dweomer, sleep*; 2nd—*chaos shield, shatter*; 3rd—*alternate reality, fireball, vampiric touch*; 4th—*phantasmal killer, unluck*; 5th—*feeblemind*.

Background

Always aware that she was unattractive, Theona worked hard at developing her keen intellect. While other girls



her age primed and gossiped, Theona sat hunched in her tiny attic room studying. Unable to find anyone to teach her, she began practicing on her own, developing a talent for wild magic.

Over the years, Theona left her house less and less, growing pale and thin. Rather than gaining respect or admiration from the townspeople of Kellee, she became feared and hated. Theona's bitterness made her haughty, and several times she subtly revealed her growing powers, enjoying the stark fear on her neighbors' faces.

After the death of her parents, Theona moved into a deserted cottage in the forest. Sick of being hated and spurned, Theona began researching ways to steal the living bodies of others. After some consideration she finally chose the mayor's beautiful daughter, Monica, to be her victim. Monica had all of the qualities that Theona lacked: charm, beauty, and grace. To gain a focus for her spell, Theona stole Monica's shawl.

Almost ready to enact her plan, Theona took one of her few trips into town. However, the local shopkeeper informed her that she was no longer welcome in town and he would no longer sell her supplies. Thinking to teach them all a lesson, Theona attempted to summon a swarm of insects and instead burned down the entire shop, killing the shopkeeper and his family with an enormous fireball. Injured by her own mistake, Theona stumbled back to her cottage and collapsed.

Theona was later awakened to the sound of her door being forced open. Surrounded by angry townspeople and too disoriented to defend herself, Theona was forced to





her feet and taken back to Kellee. Finally realizing what was happening as her sentence was read aloud by the mayor, Theona started invoking her spell. Unfortunately, she was tied to a stake before she could finish the spell. Searching out the figure of Monica, Theona stared at the girl as her body began to burn. As pain swept over her, Theona continued to stare at Monica until a wave of disorientation hit her. She blinked and found herself standing among the townspeople, watching as her dead former body was burned to ashes. Looking down at herself, she realized that she was in Monica's body.

Personality

Theona is completely fascinated with her new looks and will use them to get her way whenever possible. She takes this attitude with her into any new body that she inhabits in the future.

Combat

While inhabiting a body, Theona uses it to her advantage. She can cast only whatever spells she had memorized before she inhabited the body. Once her spells run out, she attacks with a dagger or quarterstaff (whatever is available). If the body takes a lot of damage, she flees and attempts to take over one of her attacker's bodies. If her first try is not successful, she rakes the person she tried to inhabit with her hands (draining Charisma) before fleeing the scene.

Body and Spirit



In this adventure, the heroes have the opportunity to save a young woman's life and aid a potential ally, the mayor of Kellee. They must investigate the strange events of the past week, overcome an evil wizard's minions, restore the young woman's spirit to her body, and confront one angry ghost.

This adventure is for three to five characters of levels 6 to 8 (about 24 levels total). The heroes will need +2 magical weapons or better to complete this adventure. Although the story takes place in Kellee, a small town in the domain of Tepest, Dungeon Masters can set it in any small town.

Background

Instead of departing, Monica's spirit managed to remain nearby, intent on regaining her stolen body. Theona herself cannot destroy Monica because almost everything in her cottage (including her spellbooks) was destroyed the night she was executed. However, Theona managed to scribe her few memorized spells into a new book.

Hidden in a secret room under her cottage is the one item protecting Theona from the ghost: Monica's favorite shawl. This article of clothing gives Theona a limited amount of power in regard to Monica's ghost. Theona wishes to retrieve it so that she can leave the inn safely. However, if Monica were to possess the shawl, she would be able to take her body back from Theona.

The Adventure Begins

Upon entering Kellee in the late afternoon, the heroes immediately notice its state of poverty and disrepair. Travelers are either completely ignored or treated with trepidation. If the heroes are looking to purchase supplies, they are informed that the local trading post recently burned down, killing the owner and his family.

The only place the heroes can stay for the night is the Hawk's Inn, owned and operated by the mayor. When the heroes enter the inn, they are greeted by Gerald Ferrier himself. Gerald is very helpful, but only nominally friendly. While the heroes are renting their rooms, a beautiful young woman in extremely provocative clothing walks into the room reading an old, tattered book. Gerald Ferrier stops whatever he is doing when she walks through the room and watches her sorrowfully. If any of the heroes try to speak to her, she just gives them a blank stare and continues on her way. After she exits the room, Gerald continues with whatever he was doing. If the heroes ask about her, he tells them only that Monica is his daughter.

The heroes become involved in the story later that day, as the sun is beginning to set. Wherever they are, they are startled from their activities by screaming nearby. Immediately, all the townspeople rush to their homes and bolt the doors. If the heroes choose to investigate, they can follow these sounds to an alley a few blocks north of the inn. As the heroes near the location, read or paraphrase the following:



As you round the corner, you see at the end of the alley a gorgeous young woman trying to ward off a translucent figure floating above her. You recognize the young woman as Gerald Ferrier's daughter. Before you even have time to react, the glowing figure engulfs her, crying out: "Give it back!" The lines of terror on Monica's face contort as pain wracks her body.

After the briefest of seconds, the figure jerks away as if pushed, and Monica falls and lies still on the ground. Sensing your presence, the ghostly apparition turns to you with a surprisingly sad expression. With a shock, you realize that the figure is identical to Monica, from the flowing, blond hair to the pale, green eyes. The only significant difference lies in the clothing. The ghostly form is garbed in modest, almost drab, clothing, while the woman is wearing a tightly-laced, low-cut bodice and a bright red skirt. Eyeing you for a moment, the figure then fades from sight completely, leaving the alley perceptibly darker and somehow colder.



The woman on the ground is actually Theona in Monica Ferrier's body. She is alive and shows no signs of physical injury. Still, she does not awaken for 1d3 hours, no matter what methods the heroes try. If they attempt to carry her home, they are met halfway by her father, followed by the town guard. Gerald takes his daughter and thanks the heroes sincerely, rushing her to the inn.





When Theona awakens, she requests to speak to the heroes alone to properly thank them for saving her life. After Gerald has left her room, she thanks the heroes for saving her from the dark spirit that has been trying to kill her. She mentions that the ghost is jealous and has started to emulate her appearance.

If the heroes question Theona about the night before, she claims to remember very little. She tells them that the ghost has shown up several times but that the closer she stays to the inn, the weaker the ghost seems to be. If asked for more information about the ghost, she tells them it is the ghost of a woman who was executed last week. As soon as she mentions the execution, Theona is overcome with grief and cries out with great sobs. Her father then rushes in and insists that she be left alone to rest.

If the heroes ask about the woman who was executed, Gerald Ferrier gives the heroes a little information about Theona and the fire that she caused. If asked about his daughter, Gerald dodges the question, claiming that she is young and prone to flights of fancy.

If the heroes decide to investigate Theona's home, go to "In the Woods." If they instead decide to stay in town and question the townspeople, go to "Local Rumors."

Local Rumors

Soon after leaving the inn, the heroes are approached by a timid, young man named Thomas who claims to be a friend of Monica's. Concerned for her welfare, Thomas is more than willing to offer information to the heroes.

- Monica hasn't been the same since the execution. She's usually quite chipper, but now she's mean. She's even been dressing weird. Monica was always so modest before. . . .
- She must've lost her favorite gray shawl a few weeks back (thank the gods! She wore that ratty old thing all the time), because she quit wearing it suddenly.
- Monica used to go into the forest to sing. She has a beautiful voice but is too shy to sing in front of anyone. She had a favorite spot in the woods. I used to follow her quietly and listen, but she hasn't gone all week!

Thomas answers any questions about Monica that he can, but he has not seen much of her lately. If asked about her shawl, he just laughs, "I wouldn't be surprised if her own father stole it just to get her to stop wearin' it!"

After a few minutes, a shrill, female voice calls his name. Thomas bolts upright and insists that he must leave. He then runs off down the street without even looking back. Other people give them the following information:

- I thought someone should've done something about her a long time ago. She'd skulk around town, all creepy. Didn't surprise me at all when her family turned up dead, but nobody wanted to say anything.
- Theona? Never knew the woman. I'd heard enough stories though. I was always afraid that I'd meet up with one of those fiends she dealt with.
- You know, Theona's parents left her quite a chunk of money. I wonder what happened to it. No one found anything in her cottage the night of the trial. I bet whoever finds it'll be set for life.

In the Woods

Almost anyone in the village can give the heroes directions to Theona's cottage. The villagers also point out that the cottage was burned to the ground directly after the execution, however, so nothing is left to find.

On the faint path to Theona's cottage, the heroes hear Monica singing. If the heroes follow the voice, go to "Monica's Clearing." If not, go on to "The Burned Cottage."

Monica's Clearing

The heroes do not have to search for long before they happen upon this clearing. Once they are within two hundred feet of the clearing, Monica's ability to lure victims affects the characters. When the heroes reach the clearing, read the following aloud:



After following the sound of the woman's voice, you find a small, hidden clearing. Then, as suddenly as it began, the singing stops, leaving a strange hush over the area. In the center of the clearing on a small tree stump, Monica is sitting quietly, with her hands folded patiently in her lap. As you approach, she looks up expectantly and smiles. Her fatigue seems to have completely disappeared, and she looks even more beautiful than when you first saw her at the inn, the brazen colors that adorned her then exchanged for more conservative clothing. Her long, white skirt flows softly around the sides of the roughly hewn stump. Then, with a start, you realize that you can see that stump—right through her!



Monica Ferrier (Second-magnitude ghost):

AC -1/6*; MV FI 12 (A); HD 5; hp 31; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg special; SA energy drain, lure victims; SD insubstantiality (incorporeal)**, invisibility**, rejuvenation**, magic immunity**, +1/0* or better magical weapons needed to hit; SZ M (5'2"); ML champion (16); Int average (10); AL NG.

Notes: SA—drains one level of experience from victims (see "Special Damage" in *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*); victims within 200 feet of her singing must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or become ensnared (if restrained, ensnared victims fight the restraints).

* Ethereal vs. nonethereal foes/ethereal vs. ethereal foes.

** See the introduction for further details.

If the heroes attack, Monica disappears. She then reappears behind them the next round and begs them not to hurt her. If they attack again, she disappears and will not rematerialize again.

Monica desperately wants the heroes to help her. She begins by telling them what has happened to her. She mentions that she cannot force Theona out of her body or approach the inn. She also states that her form is fading quickly and that it grows harder to materialize each time.

If the heroes ask about her shawl, Monica tells them





that it was stolen while she was in the woods a few weeks back. She has no idea why anyone would want to steal her favorite article of clothing, but she misses it a great deal. Monica knows very little about Theona and can give the heroes no new information about her. After talking to them briefly, Monica begins to fade quickly. She tells them to meet her in the clearing at sundown if they will help her.

The Burned Cottage

When the heroes reach Theona's cottage, read or paraphrase the following:

Before you, the remains of Theona's cottage lie in ruin. Between two formerly magnificent trees, the collapsed and charred frame of her home blends with the piles of ashes covering everything. Several different sets of sooty footprints seem to indicate that you are not the first people to come here since the fire. Still, it looks like there could not have been much left to retrieve after a blaze such as this.

If the heroes search the cottage thoroughly, they find a small, charred box among the ashes. The box contains a silver dagger, a star sapphire ring (worth five hundred gold pieces), and fifteen platinum pieces. Any character who makes a successful Intelligence check with a -2 penalty finds the secret door in the floor. Underneath it, a fifteen-foot-deep hole with a tunnel at the bottom leads east. The hole is about three feet wide and has a rope ladder.

At the end of the twenty-foot tunnel is a small room. As the heroes approach this point, read the following:

Tree branches encircle the damp, rough tunnel under the cottage, making passage difficult. At the end, it opens into a small, cramped room. As soon as you near the room, the two torches next to the doorway automatically ignite, revealing a tiny room full of . . . children? Surely not! But that is what you see before you: a room lined with children, all staring at you with cheerful expressions and glittering eyes. The only feature that distinguishes these identical figures from each other is that each of them wears a large shawl of a different color. These hues seem to jump out at you as the light flickers, assaulting your eyes with scarlet, teal, emerald, fuchsia, sapphire, daffodil, rose, carnelian, orchid, amber, sable, and slate.

The slate shawl belongs to Monica. Theona has hidden it here and protected it with her magical creations.

If a hero touches any of the other shawls, it attacks the character who touched it. At the beginning of the next round, all of the shawls (except for Monica's) rise and attack. The dolls do not move unless someone tries to take the slate shawl.

Animated Shawls (11): AC 4; MV 15; HD 2; hp 13 (each); THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg special; SA smother; SD immune to sleep, charm, and hold spells; MR 25%; SZ M (4' long); ML fearless (20); Int non- (0); AL CN; XP 65 (each).

Notes: SA—With a successful attack, it wraps itself around the opponent and smothers him, inflicting 1d4 points of suffocation damage each round. Any damage inflicted on the shawl also damages its wrapped victim. Characters using slashing weapons can choose to attack more carefully and inflict only half damage on the shawl and no damage to its victim.

If a hero tries to remove the slate shawl, read the following:

As soon as you grasp the slate shawl, the doll's face contorts, and it screams "No!" Its tiny hands reach up to clutch the shawl tighter to its body. At the same time, the torches extinguish and a deafening sound accosts your ears. All around you, the dolls begin a high-pitched shrieking, almost bursting your eardrums with its intensity.

At this point, any characters in the room or tunnel must make fear checks. To remove the shawl from the doll's grasp, the hero must make a successful Strength check.

The dolls do not attack, but they continue to shriek for four rounds. At that time, the shrieking suddenly stops, and the doll guardians explode, filling the room with flying shrapnel. This explosion inflicts 6d6 points of damage, but any hero in the room who makes a successful saving throw vs. breath weapon takes only half damage. Those in the tunnel only take half and can make successful saving throws for quarter damage. Those who managed to get out before the explosion take no damage. If the heroes smashed any of the dolls, the damage decreases by 1d6 for every two shattered dolls.

If the heroes go back to the inn, go to "Confrontation in Kellee." If they stay in the woods until sundown, go to "Theona's Last Stand."

Confrontation in Kellee

When heroes are within sight of the inn, Theona enthusiastically rushes out to greet them. If the shawl is at all visible, Theona shrieks and claps her hands with joy. She thanks the heroes profusely and tries to grab it. If the heroes allow Theona to have the shawl, she wraps it tightly around herself and runs back to the inn.

If the heroes do not let Theona have the shawl, she begins screaming and tries to wrench it from whoever is holding it. Within one round, Gerald rushes to see what is wrong. He demands to know why the heroes have Monica's shawl, but he refuses to believe anything associating Monica and Theona. If the heroes do not return the shawl, Gerald calls the guards and has the characters arrested.

If the heroes are arrested, they are held in the local jail, and the shawl is immediately returned to Theona. If they fail to return the shawl to Monica by morning, she fades away completely. Theona then has nothing more to fear.





If the heroes manage to avoid getting captured or escape with the shawl, go on to "Theona's Last Stand."

Kellee Guards, hm F1 (10): AC 7 (leather armor); MV 12; hp 8 (each); THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (short swords or crossbows bolts); SZ M; ML elite (14); Int average (10); AL LN; XP 15.

Notes: Because these guards are only doing their job, the heroes should receive no reward for killing them. The heroes receive the experience points only if they manage to defeat the guards without killing any.

Theona's Last Stand

If the heroes approach Monica's clearing at sundown, she is waiting for them. If they wait in the clearing until sundown, she approaches from the direction of the path. Either way, read or paraphrase the following:



As Monica walks toward you, she stumbles and begins to flicker. For a brief moment, you are sure that she is going to disappear. She manages to right herself, and with a look of determination on her face, the flickering stops.

"I don't have much time left," she says softly. "Have you found a way to help me?"



If the heroes tell Monica that they have her shawl, she looks confused. She does not realize that the shawl is important to her situation. However, if the heroes attempt to return the shawl to Monica, Theona rides in on a large wolf, holding Gerald Ferrier in front of her. With a knife at Gerald's throat, Theona demands that Monica move away from the shawl, or she will kill her father. Theona does not actually want to kill Gerald, because he is valuable to her right now. In order to fulfill her long-term plans, she needs him to support and protect her. However, she does what she must in order to defeat Monica and the heroes.

Theona then orders the heroes to drop the shawl and step back. If they do this, she nudges her mount forward to pick it up. The wolf grips the shawl in its mouth, and they simply back out of the clearing and leave.

If a hero attempts to return the shawl to Monica, Theona casts a *magic missile* at him, inflicting 5d4+5 points of damage. She also has one of each of the other spells in her spellbook memorized currently. If any heroes rush at her, she tries to make them stop by cutting into the side of Gerald's neck. It is not a fatal cut, but the blood may hold the characters back. If Theona is ever injured, she lets go of Gerald for a brief moment, and he tumbles to the ground. Monica takes this opportunity to rush in, if possible.

If the heroes give in to Theona's demands or seem in danger of losing, Gerald could awaken briefly and jump off (or knock Theona off) the wolf. Monica could call Theona's bluff and rush in to grab the shawl, starting a tug-of-war.

Beauty Is in the Eye of the Beholder

As soon as Monica has the shawl, read or paraphrase the following:



As soon as the shawl is in her hands, bright blue light begins to shine from Monica's ghostly form. When she wraps the dull shawl around her glowing shoulders, Monica is suddenly by Theona's side, reaching her beautiful, pale arms for the other woman. Arcs of white light begin to encircle them both. When it seems that these iridescent swirls could not possibly become any brighter, they suddenly explode in a flash of blinding brilliance. When you finally regain your vision, you see Monica lying on the ground in front of you. But, is it actually Monica?

As if to answer your question, the young woman's body begins to shake violently. Slowly, a ghostly figure rises from the body. This time, however, it is the figure of a scrawny, stooped woman with wispy, black hair. With surprise, the ghost looks at herself and at you. A scream of anguish bellows from her mouth, and the hatred in her eyes is rivalled only by the glints of insanity. As she screams, the ghost begins to mutate into a form that you can only imagine must be worn by the most evil of fiends or the most hideous of monsters. Her wrinkled skin begins to blacken, as though burning off. Tentacles ending in hooked claws burst from the areas where the skin has peeled away, swaying in a rhythmic pattern of pain. The screams begin to sound more like strained growls as rows and rows of sharp teeth slowly lengthen as you watch in horror. When her eyes begin to emit a swirling, hypnotic, red glow, you are forced to look away quickly so as not to be entranced by the ghastly creature before you.



Upon viewing Theona's hideous transformation, the heroes should each make a horror check.

The first thing that Theona attempts is to attack Monica's unconscious form. However, she cannot reach the young woman; every time she approaches, she is forced back, as if by an invisible force. This is because Monica is wearing the shawl, which has become an allergen to Theona. Infuriated by this, Theona attacks the heroes.

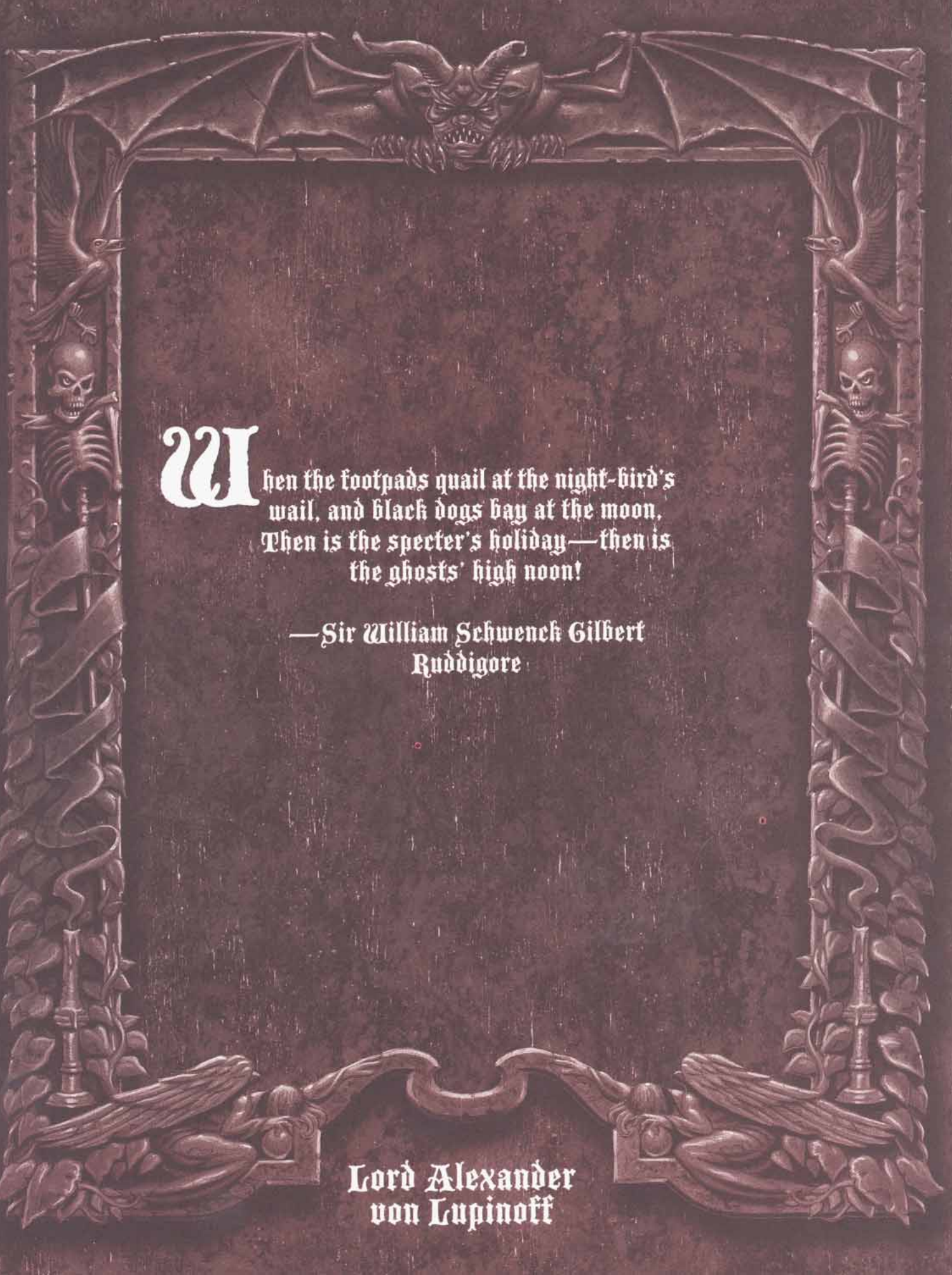
If the heroes think to use the shawl against Theona, they find that this is her greatest weakness. Successfully striking her with the shawl inflicts 3d10 points of damage. Only after being struck with the shawl does Theona flee from battle. Otherwise, she is quite ruthless and attempts to inhabit one of the heroes.

After the confrontation, Gerald and Monica tell everyone about the characters' heroic deeds. A large dinner ceremony will even be held in their honor the next day.

Recurrence

If Theona fled from battle, the residents may try to hire the heroes to pursue her. They will never feel safe as long as she lives. In the meantime, Theona takes her spellbook and leaves for another village. The Dungeon Master can introduce her again when she has taken on another body.





When the footpads quail at the night-bird's
wail, and black dogs bay at the moon,
Then is the specter's holiday—then is
the ghosts' high noon!

—Sir William Schwenck Gilbert
Ruddigore

Lord Alexander
von Lupinoff



Lord Alexander von Lupinoff



Biography



he two ghostly aspects of Lord Alexander von Lupinoff prove that a dichotomous existence is possible even after death.

Appearance

As a result of the unusual circumstances involving the life and death of Alexander, his ghost has two different forms, depending upon the moon's cycle. For all but three nights of the month, the incorporeal ghost of Alexander appears as an indistinct, translucent figure of a man in his thirties, dressed in provincial clothing (waistcoat, ascot, leggings, billowed sleeves, and so on). A viewer cannot identify the ghost as being Alexander, but he can tell that the figure is in deep thought or contemplative sorrow. The ghost's shoulders slump, he crosses his arms on his chest, and he holds or strokes his chin with one of his hands. Unless attacked (or in the presence of the one who killed him, Lord Claude Hornburg), the figure ignores any attempts to contact it. The ghost may be seen pacing a hall in the manor, ascending or descending a flight of stairs, or entering a room by passing through a wall.

On the night of the full moon and the evenings immediately preceding and following that night, he roams the countryside as a huge spectral, corporeal wolf. The

size of a small horse, this wolf glows with a pale, eerie luminescence. Its eyes shine a fierce, bright red, and silvery light radiates from what appear to be numerous arrow wounds in the creature's flanks and back.

Lord Alexander von Lupinoff

Third-Magnitude Ghost

Human form, Neutral (NG in life)

Armor Class	-2/4*	Str	—
Movement	6	Dex	—
Level/Hit Dice	7	Con	—
Hit Points	49	Int	12
THAC0	13	Wis	11
Morale	8	Cha	12
No. of Attacks	1	XP	8,000
Damage/Attack	1d8 (cause wound ability) +2 Strength points drained (drain ability)		
Special Attacks	Cause despair, cause wounds, drain ability		
Special Defenses	Insubstantiality (incorporeal)**, invisibility**, rejuvenation**, magic immunity**, +2/+1* weapons to hit		

Wolf form: AC 4; MV 18; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 3d6; SA howl (twice per turn cause fear ability); SD insubstantiality (mutable)**, invisibility**, rejuvenation**, magic immunity**, +1 weapons to hit; MR 30%; SZ M; ML fearless (20); AL CE; XP 2,000.

* Ethereal vs. nonethereal foes/ethereal vs. ethereal foes.

** Refer to the introduction for further information.

Viewing Alexander's insubstantial human ghost form has the ability to cause despair (in a hundred-foot radius) in those seeing the tragic figure. All persons affected must make an initial saving throw vs. spell to escape the despair effect; morale-boosting spells such *remove fear* add a +4 bonus to this roll. Those who succeed remain unaffected for the duration of that viewing. Those who fail the saving throw suffer a -2 penalty to all attack rolls, saving throws, and proficiency checks for the duration of the encounter. Further, any who fail the initial saving throw and who wish to attack the figure must make another successful saving throw to break through the despair effect.

Alexander defends himself with a touch that inflicts 1d8 points of damage and drains two points of Strength. This loss also decreases any attack or damage bonuses for high Strength scores, and so on. Lost Strength points return at the rate of one per day if the victim succeeds at a saving throw vs. death. If the saving throw fails, then the character regains those points at a rate of one per month.

Alexander's wolf form bites viciously for its primary attack, inflicting 3d6 points of damage. When a character first sees the wolf, he must make a fear check. The wolf can also howl, an ability in some ways similar to a ghost's ability to cause fear. Rather than simply causing fear on sight, however, the sound of the beast's unearthly howl requires a fear check with a -2 penalty from all those within 30 feet of the wolf. If the wolf comes into





the character's sight while howling, then the penalty for the fear check increases to -3. The wolf can howl twice per turn.

Background

Lord Alexander von Lupinoff was the only child of a minor noble who owned a small estate. For as long as Alexander could remember, he had been best friends with Claude Hornburg, the only son of the area's foremost landowner. Eventually, the boys grew into men and inherited their fathers' lands. While Alexander grew to be good and true, Claude grew into a bitter, jealous, greedy creature. Coming to the conclusion that the area's other landowners were impediments to his accumulation of further profits and more power, Claude bought out or forced the region's gentry off their lands until only Alexander's family estate stood between Claude and de facto rulership of the entire area. Over time, Claude had come to resent Alexander's generous nature, and he coveted the Von Lupinoff estate.

A cruel, heartless master to those beneath him, Claude used and abused the peasants on his lands relentlessly, overworking and overtaxing them. Fearful for their future, the peasant farmers who worked Alexander's lands appealed to him for aid and protection. Alexander assured the farmers that he would see no ill befall them while he lived. He decided to visit his childhood friend one last time to try to talk sense to him. Unfortunately, Claude was hoping for just this reaction, and he gladly agreed to the meeting. In fact, Claude even suggested that they take an evening stroll through the woods they had walked so many years before as boys.

Claude then contacted a minor but competent sorcerer who, despite his magical abilities, was a very poor gambler. In exchange for canceling the man's substantial debt, Claude asked the sorcerer to create and help administer a potion for him. The process and ingredients for creating the *potion of lycanthropy* were written on an old scroll Claude possessed. The sorcerer agreed, not concerned with Claude's motivation, just happy to be out of debt.

The evening of the meeting arrived, and Alexander met his old friend under the light of a waxing moon. Together, they walked the deer trails of the forest until the sorcerer, who was magically disguised as a werewolf, attacked. After the "werewolf" wounded Alexander with "claws" (daggers, in reality) treated with the potion, Claude dispatched the "werewolf," making it seem as if he had saved Alexander. He then slathered more of the potion on Alexander's wounds to "heal" them and made him swallow the rest.

Wounded from the ambush, Alexander was helped back to his home by the conniving Claude. In a few days, Alexander had healed, but the curse was only beginning to be felt. The whole region talked of the attack, Claude's defense of his childhood friend against a vicious werewolf, and their lord's chances of becoming a werewolf himself.

Alexander grew anxious and dreaded the passage of time. When the full moon came, his worst fears came to pass. Alexander began to feel his own body shift into an impossibly large wolf. In this bestial form, Alexander

loped off into the woods to perform terrible deeds, which he fortunately did not remember once he reverted to human form.

As months passed and Alexander continued to suffer under the effects of the spell, the physical transformation he was subjected to also started to affect his mind. Somehow, Alexander's innermost being resisted the evil allure of power and freedom that the wolf possessed and remained true and kind-hearted. Unfortunately, this dichotomy within continued to stretch him between good and evil.

Although the villagers suspected the worst of their beloved lord, they still turned to him for protection from the wolf. Out of a sense of guilt, Alexander ignored the peasants' requests for aid. With nowhere else to turn, the tenant-farmers reluctantly sought assistance from the area's only other noble, Lord Claude Hornburg.

When next the moon's face grew toward fullness, Claude incited the villagers into a mob and provided silver arrowheads and some silver knives and daggers to the villagers as well as a large, heavy net to restrain the beast. He then instructed the peasants to set out an animal as bait; he would compensate the farmer who volunteered an animal. A goat whose leg had been cut (so the scent of blood would be strong in the air) was tied out in a clearing near the Von Lupinoff estate.

Just as the moon reached its zenith, Alexander appeared at the edge of the clearing in wolf form. After the wolf killed the goat and settled down to its meal, the villagers opened fire with their bows and mortally wounded it. As the wolf lay dying, its form shifted into that of Alexander von Lupinoff. The villagers backed away in awe and terror. Fearful that Alexander might live long enough to understand what his former friend had done to him, Claude stepped up and delivered the final, killing blow with the same silver dagger he had used to kill the sorcerer. As Claude struck, Alexander fully realized his former friend's part in the whole situation. While part of Alexander was saddened by his friend's betrayal, another part of him, the aspect of Alexander that had been attracted to the wolf form, cursed his former friend and killer. He wished Claude to suffer the rage and despair that filled the final moments of his own life until such time as Claude confessed his crime. In the year after Alexander's murder, Claude tightened his grip on the region and even moved into Alexander's manor house.

Personality

The duality of form and spirit present in Alexander's life continues in Alexander's two ghostly forms. As a symbol of the man he was, his human ghost fears to confront Claude—resisting the urge for vengeance just as Alexander resisted the allure of the wolf form. He knows not the despair he causes in others who see his tragic, yet contemplative form. In not confronting Claude, Alexander only extends his own ghostly existence—in both forms—and suffers a dual, cursed "life" that will continue until Alexander's own curse on Claude comes to an end.

Alexander's wolf form, however, revels in its strength





and malevolence. Each month the wolf roams the region, destroying any of Claude's properties or assets. Any who defend Claude's holdings or who attack the beast outright also receive the full brunt of Alexander's bestial fury. The beast is cunning and has already attacked one party of would-be hunters. (See the adventure background.)

Combat

Simply destroying either of the ghostly forms in combat does not end the affair. Defeating the wolf in combat ends its appearances for that lunar cycle, but it returns with the next full moon. Defeating Alexander's human form has a similar effect. The human ghost is not seen again until after the next three-night rampage of the wolf; then Alexander returns to wander his former home. While both forms can be turned, neither form can be permanently destroyed while Claude (the object of Alexander's dying curse) still lives.

While the wolf will attack on sight anyone hunting it, Alexander will not actually attack anyone unless someone attacks or damages him first, or unless he confronts Claude. When attacking Claude, his wolf form will come to the fore.

The Duality of Visions



his scenario revolves around a strange ghostly presence—strange even for ghosts. While combat does play a part in this adventure, the heroes should be prepared to do more than just swing their swords.

Getting to the heart of the problem and putting to rest the ghosts requires the heroes to be tactful investigators. If the heroes hope to be truly successful, they will need to solve a mystery.

This scenario is best for a group of four to six heroes of 4th to 6th level (about 24 levels total), but it can be adjusted for lower level characters, if necessary. Silver or magical weapons will be helpful should the players choose to enter combat. The only terrain features required include open lands for Claude's herds of sheep, goats, and/or cattle and a sizable forest. This wooded area has yet to be developed since the region serves only a relatively sparse population.

Background

On the first anniversary of Alexander's death, someone sighted a huge wolf roaming the woods on the night before a full moon. The next night the fearsome beast attacked the stables on the Hornburg estate, savaging several animals and killing Claude's prized mare. The wolf appeared again on the next night and attacked a band of hunters who were searching for it. Several hunters died, but two escaped to tell the strange tale that the wolf, after killing a hunter who had wounded it, stepped back from the kill and howled, a sound driving fear deep into the hunters' bones. The spectral wolf continues to appear three nights every month, the

evening of the full moon and the nights before and after that celestial event.

Alexander's curse took another form as well. After the spectral wolf's first three-night spree of killing, a tragic presence came to inhabit Alexander's former abode. A vague, indistinct image of the human Alexander, this phantom simply wanders the halls, causing any who view the image to share the figure's despair. The image does not appear according to any pattern but has never been seen on the evenings when the spectral wolf runs rampant across the countryside; most people, including Claude, have not made any connection between the two ghosts yet.

Claude has never seen the ghost of the manor himself; it is as if the figure wishes to avoid him. Claude suspects that he "inherited" the ghost along with the estate (and in a way, he did). Further, his overweening pride prevents him from taking up residence elsewhere, even though his affairs and the household itself are in a shambles.

The peasants of the area are nearly panicked by the wolf, and Claude's affairs are in constant disarray since he cannot maintain a household staff. To help settle matters, Claude has informed his peasants that he wishes to commission a band of hearty heroes to dispose of the vicious wolf once and for all. He even promises 2% of the "generous" fee he is offering for the wolf's death to the one who brings the party that kills the beast. If the heroes still live after dispatching the wolf, Claude might set them the task of clearing his home of its ghostly boarder.

The Adventure Begins

In their travels, the heroes have reached a roadside inn called the Whispering Wood, which sits on a ridge overlooking the scenic lands that Claude controls. After the characters enter the inn, read or summarize the following:



The Whispering Wood seems typical enough for a rural roadside inn, with a common room and three private rooms that are also likely available as sleeping quarters. A rough-hewn bar, several tables, and many chairs fill the common room. A warm fire crackles in the large fireplace, and the air is pleasantly smoky from the kitchen and hearth fires.

While the innkeepers keep the place clean and dry, you see that many small repairs are needed here and there. Tar patches the ceiling in places to stop leaks, the inn's mugs and dishes need to be replaced, and the menu has only the most basic of choices.

Although several fellow travelers seem to be present, you notice a lack of locals here.



Allow the heroes to take this lead if they so choose. If they approach the other travelers at the inn, the Gulik family (Ivan and Borissa, parents, and their two grown sons, Uri and Yuri) happily converse with the heroes.





They regularly sell bolts of cloth, leather, and canvas in this area, but they do not know much of the current situation since their travels keep them from hearing many details. If the heroes work at it, they can gain the following (not always correct) information from these merchants between sales pitches.

- ☼ Lord Hornburg runs the whole valley now, though he did not a few years ago. Back then, several noble landowners had estates in the region.
- ☼ The last of these other nobles was attacked and killed by a wolf.
- ☼ A great wolf haunts the area now, and Lord Hornburg wants it disposed of. (It must be cutting into his profits.)

Dungeon Masters should not simply disgorge this information but should reveal bits slowly over the course of a conversation. While the Guliks do not know many more factual details regarding the story at hand, feel free to add to their repertoire of rumors and false information. Weave in a mention or two of plots or subplots of your own devising or planting the seeds of some future adventure.

The rest of the evening passes uneventfully. If the offer of employment that the Guliks mentioned intrigues the heroes, they can ask the middle-aged married couple who runs the inn for further particulars. Geoffrey is a dark-haired, fit man with a surprisingly deep voice. His wife, Daneca, is a slim, striking, auburn-haired beauty. Both are friendly, and it soon seems evident that Geoffrey admires heroes. If treated respectfully, they tell the heroes some of the information presented in Alexander's background (except for things they should not know, such as Claude's scheme).

Again, give the heroes this information only if they ask the innkeepers the right questions. When in the role of either innkeeper, play up the fact that despite his tragic end, the people here loved Alexander von Lupinoff and still remember him as a good man despite his curse. They make no such comments regarding Lord Hornburg. In fact, they mention that the peasants believe that Lord Hornburg cursed Lord von Lupinoff in an effort to get more land.

If the heroes want more information on Claude himself, the innkeepers say only that his taxes are steeper than any lord's in the past, and the peasants have little money left to spend. Although they will not complain about it, this fact is why their inn is less busy than it could be. If the characters wish to know more about the wolf, the innkeepers suggest that they go to the Lord's estate and ask about the bounty. The innkeepers will gladly give directions in the morning.

The Meeting

After a quiet night at the Whispering Wood, the heroes will most likely head toward Lord Hornburg's estate in the morning. The innkeepers give the heroes directions, wish them luck, and almost abashedly ask the heroes to mention that they were the ones who sent the heroes.

While traveling, the heroes notice that the few homes and farm buildings they see have a rather ramshackle appearance, as if the folk lacked the money or other resources to effect repairs. By mid-morning, the heroes reach the home of Lord Hornburg. A modest estate originally, it seems to be undergoing renovation.

Upon reaching the manor house proper, the heroes are greeted by Anastasia, the short, round maid who is one of the few servants who have remained with Lord Hornburg through all his recent troubles. She ran the manor house for years for the Von Lupinoffs and refuses to leave. The effects are visible on her, though. Deep circles run under her eyes, her hair has grayed prematurely, and her shoulders slouch unduly. After the heroes introduce themselves and state their purpose, Anastasia asks them to wait in the foyer while she alerts the lord.



The foyer is nicely appointed with expensive woodwork, lacquered floors, and a staircase with bannisters leading to the upper floor. Whatever other problems this lord may have, poverty is not one of them. Despite the lord's expensive tastes, however, the whole place needs a good cleaning.

After waiting for about fifteen minutes, Anastasia reappears. "My lord awaits you in the library," she says a bit breathlessly, "but first you should know that he has been feeling a bit under the weather recently. It's nothing catching—just a childhood affliction acting up again," she hurriedly adds.



Once the heroes enter the library, Anastasia closes the door behind them. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:



The library, if such it is, is dark and musty. As your eyes become accustomed to the dim candlelight, you notice that this room is in shambles. Books lie open all about, and papers cover almost every horizontal surface. You also note that this room contains even more dust than the foyer.

As you look around, a hacking cough erupts from behind the candelabra set on the table to your right. At the limit of the candles' light sits a figure wrapped in blankets, hunched forward due to his wracking cough. As the fit subsides, the figure speaks in a raspy, toneless voice.



Claude introduces himself and asks the heroes to regale him with tales of their valor. They should remember that Claude is a noble and expects to lead the interview. Any rudeness on the part of the heroes will upset him, leading to more coughing fits and a lower price for the wolf's head.





Lord Alexander von Lupinoff

Lord Claude Hornburg, hm F3: AC 10; MV 12; hp 19; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (bite) or 1d8 (long sword); SD detects and neutralizes poison with tongue; SZ M (5'7"); ML unsteady (7); Int very (11); AL LE; XP 120.

If the heroes give a good account of themselves, Claude asks how they plan to find and kill the beast. If the heroes ask for more information on the wolf, Claude can impart the following knowledge:

- ❁ The wolf appears only on the night of the full moon and the nights preceding and following that evening. The wolf's hunting has no discernible pattern.
- ❁ The wolf is silver or gray, has red eyes, and seems to shine in the moonlight. Its tracks always disappear, and its lair has never been found.
- ❁ The beast viciously attacks both animals and people, and it even damages inanimate objects such as buildings, stables, and grainhouses.
- ❁ The wolf killed at least one band of local hunters. Two hunters survived, however (they fled in terror), and they have provided most of this information.

If the heroes ask pertinent questions, they may gain more details. Bear in mind, though, that Claude himself has little knowledge beyond what is listed above. He genuinely wants the creature destroyed and withholds nothing regarding the beast. He knows nothing of the wolf's ghostly nature, though something is certainly odd and unearthly about the beast. He also has no idea that the wolf plays a part of Alexander's dying curse.

Claude's "illness" covers the unsettling changes that he has experienced (due to two failed powers checks). Claude's teeth have become sharp and elongated, giving him the ability to bite. His tongue has grown long, thick, and slimy, and he can identify any poison as such before it enters his system. He can even safely lick contact poison off his skin if the need arises. Finally, Claude's appetite for normal food has decreased. He has not figured out exactly what he craves yet, but if he continues performing evil actions, he will soon understand. Dungeon Masters should note that if Claude fails a powers check during this adventure, he gains the claw attacks (and claws) of a ghoul. He also entertains ideas of tasting the flesh of corpses.

If the heroes decide to take the bounty on the wolf, Claude offers two hundred gold pieces each to them if they provide proof that the silver wolf is dead. Claude prefers the beast's head as proof. If this does not fulfill the heroes' needs, Claude can, if treated respectfully, be haggled up to three hundred gold pieces. If the heroes are rude, however, the offer never goes above one hundred fifty gold pieces each. Of course, the heroes may not realize that every gold piece they negotiate away from Claude comes directly from the exorbitant taxes he imposes on the peasants.

If the heroes act impertinent or ask too many questions about Alexander, Claude will announce their dealings at an end and pound his cane for Anastasia, who will escort the heroes to the door. As they leave the library, Claude tells them to be out of his valley by sundown and never

return. If this happens, the heroes have two options: either hunt the wolf on their own or leave.

If the heroes take the job, Claude offers to pay for their lodging (which will be subtracted from their bounty, of course). As a parting comment, Claude states that if the heroes perform their job well, he might have further employment opportunities for them (referring to the unidentified ghost in his new home).

The heroes can try to gain more information from the two hunters if they wish. However, the hunters told Lord Hornburg all they could remember and fearfully refuse to speak of the wolf. This is also true of most of the peasants; they fear the wolf so much that they hesitate to speak of it for fear that the beast will come for them next time it appears. The wolf has never done such a thing, but the peasants are superstitious folk. When the heroes start investigating and preparing for the wolf, go to "The Hunt."

The Hunt

Allow the heroes to investigate as much as they want, although they should learn, over time, that much more is wrong in this valley than just a lone, crazed wolf. If the Dungeon Master has his own plot threads to weave, now is the perfect opportunity.

To further add to the drama, this scenario assumes that the heroes do not find the wolf at all the night before the full moon. The heroes can easily find the evidence of the wolf's presence the next day, as the butchered bodies of almost a dozen of Lord Hornburg's sheep have soaked a nearby field with their lives' blood. Although the heroes cannot be everywhere at once and the valley is a large area, play up the fact that the shepherds and many of the other peasants feel betrayed by the heroes.

The evening of the full moon gives the heroes another chance to meet the wolf. Whether they set out any bait or simply try to chance across the beast, they will fight the beast tonight. When the heroes first spot the wolf, read or summarize the following:



The quiet surrounding you seems overwhelming. You hear your own breathing and that of those near you like breezes through pine trees, and you are sure they must be able to hear your heart pounding in your chest. Suddenly, the undergrowth before you erupts and a huge, glowing, red-eyed behemoth of a wolf stands before you.



Have the heroes check for surprise and fear at this point. Those who are not surprised can roll for initiative normally. On the first round of combat, the wolf will howl. Beyond that elementary tactic, the wolf simply attacks the closest person, leaping at its target and trying to tear out his throat.

If the heroes succeed at turning the wolf (as a ghost), they cannot find the beast again that night. They do, however, find more evidence of its passing. A peasant family's oxen, their only means to work their small farm, paid the cost of the wolf's fury with their lives this time.





If they fail to kill the wolf in their first encounter, the heroes have one more chance the following night. The ghostly wolf will have healed all damage, however, and fights just as it did the night before.

If the heroes defeat the wolf on either occasion, the beast's form seems to briefly take on a male human shape (if any heroes have previously witnessed the transformation of a lycanthrope, they recognize the process), only to then disperse into a vaporous mist that floats away on the wind. Have all the heroes who see this make horror checks.

Even if they kill the beast, the heroes have no hard evidence to present to Lord Hornburg showing their success. If the heroes have been polite and truthfully explain the combat to him, Claude accepts their story on one condition. Since they lack physical proof, Claude offers to put them up until the wolf would normally return to see if it is truly dead. If they haggle, they can convince Claude to give each adventurer up to ten gold pieces for expenses during the month. All of this is deducted from the heroes' bounty, of course. Claude also insists that they stay in his home, as he refuses to pay for a full month at the inn.

In any case, the heroes are likely to stay in the area for a while to heal wounds and regain spells while waiting for the rest of their bounty. The party's success soon makes its way throughout the valley, and the peasants treat the heroes like royalty for a few days.

Alexander's Turn

The day after the heroes return from a successful wolf hunt, Claude decides to talk to them about the other ghost that has been upsetting things. He sends Anastasia to bring them to the library so that he can ask for their help.

If the heroes seem interested, Claude tells them about the ghost haunting his manor. As far as he is concerned, this ghost existed before he took over the place. However, since he has little concern for his servants (except when they inconvenience him by leaving suddenly), he does not know that the ghost started haunting the house after the wolf showed up for the first time. Claude willingly gives the heroes permission to ask questions of the household staff.

If the heroes politely approach Anastasia for answers to their questions, they can gain the following information:

- ☞ Things in the valley changed after Lord von Lupinoff died and Lord Hornburg took over the estate.
- ☞ The "sad man" first appeared in the house about a year after Hornburg took over the estate. He appears only to the staff, never to Lord Hornburg. Any who see the "sad man" seem to share his profound sorrow, leading most staff to leave the employ of Lord Hornburg.
- ☞ After thinking about it, Anastasia says that the "sad man" disappears for a few days every month around the time of the full moon. Note that the maid does not simply blurt out this last bit of information to answer a tangential question. No one has ever connected the "sad man" to the spectral wolf, so unless the heroes can direct Anastasia's thoughts in that direction, she will never reach the conclusion herself.

If the heroes ask Anastasia to describe the "sad man," refer to the description of Alexander's human ghost on page 42.

By now, the heroes should have linked the two ghosts together and linked Alexander von Lupinoff to the ghosts. If not, they need to do more investigation. If the investigation takes more than a day, then subject the heroes to a couple of appearances by Alexander. These appearances should be brief but should also heighten the tension of the situation. (Refer to the "Introduction" for techniques in ghostly terror.)

Once the heroes discover this link, the human ghost of Alexander appears to them. Read or summarize the following once the party is alone (or several of them are together) in the manor at night (but not during the three nights that Alexander's wolf form normally appears):



Quiet has descended through the house. Suddenly, you notice a slight chill in the room, and the hairs on the back of your necks prickle. You have the distinct feeling someone or something is watching you.

At the far side of the room stands a pale, translucent figure of a man. Dressed in the garb of a provincial noble, his shoulders are slumped, his arms are crossed over his chest, and one hand holds his chin.

Never have you seen so sad a figure. Tragedy seems to ooze from him, filling the room with an air of anguish. Tears well unbidden to your eyes and you fight to maintain control, resisting the urge to fall to the floor and weep like a child who just broke his favorite toy.



Such is the effect of Alexander's despair power. After a few moments, Alexander walks out of the room, without changing his pose or noticing the heroes unless they reacted to this presence with violence. If the heroes try to follow the ghost through the house, have them make Dexterity checks periodically to keep up with Alexander, who is unhindered by walls, staircases, and so on.

If the heroes pursue Alexander, their racket (opening doors to check if Alexander is within, and so on) awakens Claude. He throws a cloak on and storms out into the house to find the source of the noise and silence it.

Alternatively, if the heroes remember that Claude has never seen the ghost, one or more of them may go to him and bring Claude along on the chase. Have heroes make Intelligence checks to recall this fact, if you choose. In any case, Claude and Alexander will soon be reunited.

Alexander's final destination is the library, the room where the heroes first met Lord Hornburg. He likes to be surrounded by his books; they seem to take his mind away from his troubles for a time. The heroes can catch up to Alexander's human ghost here. Before Claude bursts into the room, read or summarize the following:





For the first time, the image seems aware of its surroundings as it browses the shelves of the library. Just then, the door flies open and Lord Hornburg storms into the room wearing an overlarge, hooded nightrobe and raspily demands, "What is going on?"

At this, the translucent image of the man turns, and the two men's eyes meet. Lord Hornburg takes in a sharp breath, and he mutters the name "Alexander." The image of the tragic man reacts as well. At first, fear seems to take him and the figure stiffens. Then, anger becomes evident on the man's face as he begins to change. His form contorts as hair sprouts from beneath his clothes, his nose elongates to a canine snout, and the figure falls to all fours—which quickly become paws, not hands and feet. Soon, an impossibly large, silver wolf with red eyes stands in the library.

As Lord Hornburg backs against the closed door behind him in stark terror, the wolf crosses the room in a single leap that takes the beast dangerously close to the lord's throat.



Alexander's despair power now ceases to function. Have the heroes make fear checks for witnessing the transformation of Alexander's ghostly form. Once confronted with the man who brought about his downfall, the two disparate aspects of Alexander's psyche—as represented by the two ghostly forms—reunite as all of Alexander's rage, grief, and sorrow clash forcibly together.

Heroes who pass their fear checks must now decide what to do. They probably have enough information (or at least plentiful suspicions) to deduce that Claude had something to do with Alexander's death. This may lead them to the conclusion that Claude is about to get what he deserves. If not, the heroes will not want to see Lord Hornburg killed before their eyes. Dungeon Masters must judge the heroes' actions by the knowledge they possess, their general disposition, and the individual circumstances of the campaign. It is possible that powers checks may be called for, depending on the heroes' choice of actions.

At this point, Anastasia enters the room with a candle, dressed in a housecoat over her nightdress. She acts as a witness to the rest of the night's events and corroborates the heroes' story (if they tell the truth, of course).

Regardless of the heroes' actions, at some point in the struggle, the hood falls from Claude's face, revealing the "gifts" he earned by his evil acts. The players should once again make fear checks for their characters. Anastasia gasps in horror and faints dead away. Any nearby adventurer can catch her with a successful Dexterity check.

Claude has no chance against the huge wolf, and unless the heroes intervene, the wolf makes short, messy work of the evil man. Read or summarize the following:



The scents of blood and fear hang heavy in the air. The wolf has mortally wounded Lord Hornburg, but rather than delivering the killing bite, the wolf retreats, sits on its haunchs, and slowly regains human form—the form of Alexander von Lupinoff. In a voice heavy with hatred, Alexander says, "Tell them what you did, or I will tear your spirit to shreds, just as I have your body, for all eternity."



A terrified Claude, bleeding to death but conscious hastily confesses. (See Alexander's "Background.") Anastasia recovers in time to hear Claude's story and will insure that the people know that Claude should be the one cursed by all who lived here, not Alexander.

Recurrence

With all of Claude's secrets revealed, Alexander's curse is fulfilled and he can rest. As Claude finishes his confession, Alexander's form begins to fade, but before he disappears entirely, he raises his head and smiles at the heroes and Anastasia. He seems totally at peace as his form dissipates.

Unless the heroes save him, Claude soon follows. Should Claude survive, Anastasia spreads his confession across the valley. Once recovered, Claude will try to reassert his iron grip on the area, but the peasants will stand no more of his evil. As a mob, they attack and burn the entire estate to the ground.

If the heroes allow him to die (or if the mob gets him), Claude becomes a mutable ghoul-ghost hybrid and blames the characters for his downfall and death.

Lord Claude Hornburg (Second-magnitude ghost): AC -1/6; MV 12; HD 4; hp 23; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg nil; SA cause paralysis, cause revulsion, poison (type K); SD insubstantiality (mutable)**, invisibility**, rejuvenation**, magic immunity**, requires +1/0 magical weapons to hit; SW extreme fear of wolves; SZ M (5'7"); ML unsteady (7); Int very (11); AL LE; XP 4,000.

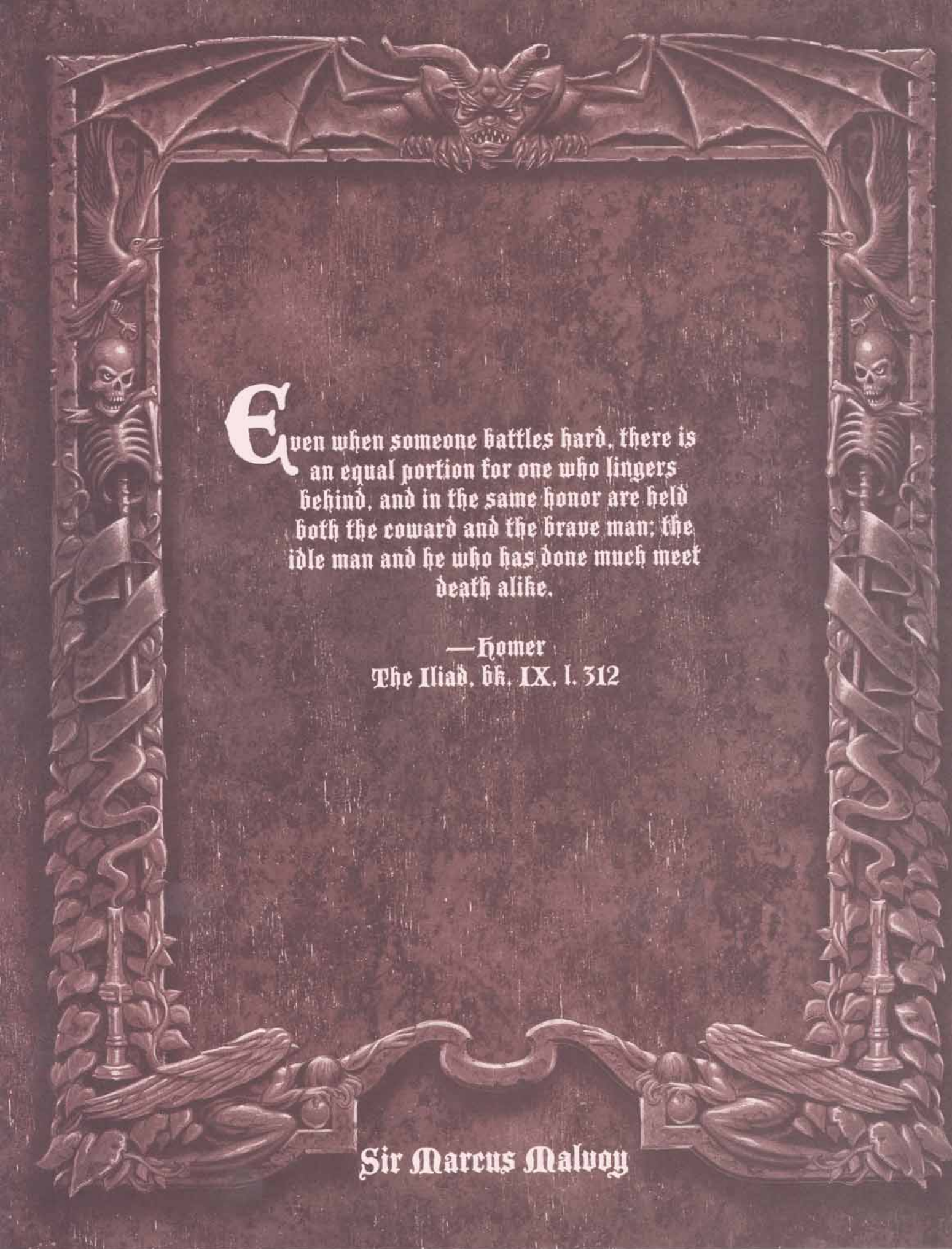
Notes: SA—paralysis: if victim is touched and fails save vs. paralyzation at -1 penalty, he becomes paralyzed for 2d4 turns; revulsion: touching victim causes -2 penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and proficiency checks for 1 hour.

* Ethereal vs. nonethereal foes/ethereal vs. ethereal foes or when corporeal.

** See the introduction for further information

As a ghost, Claude no longer has the ability to taste and neutralize poison, but since he can shift between being incorporeal and corporeal at will, his tongue can now coat an object with contact poison (when corporeal). Claude will use this ability, along with his abilities to cause revulsion and paralysis to do his best to exact revenge on the heroes wherever they go.





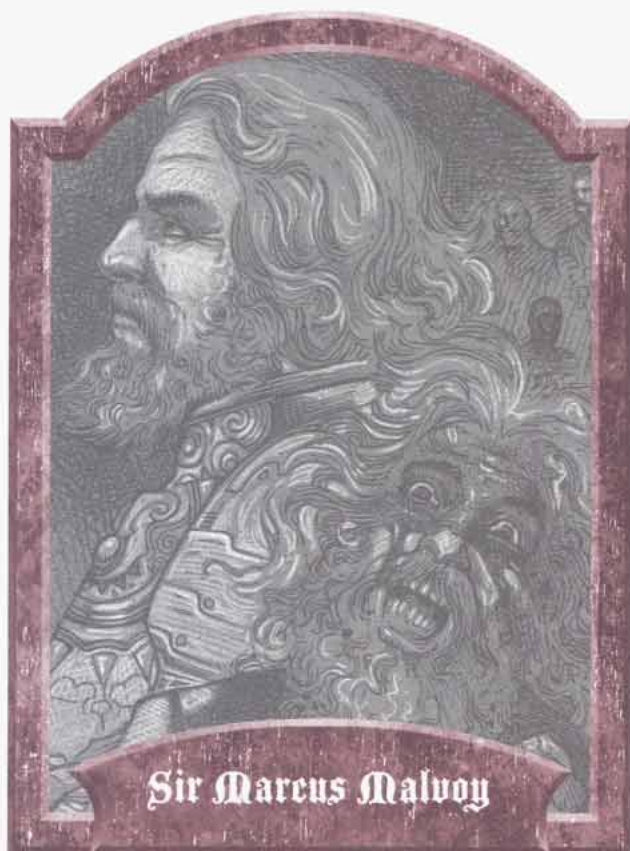
Even when someone battles hard, there is
an equal portion for one who lingers
behind, and in the same honor are held
both the coward and the brave man; the
idle man and he who has done much meet
death alike.

—Homer
The Iliad, bk. IX, l. 312

Sir Marcus Malvoyn



Sir Marcus Malvoy



When Sir Marcus traps a band of heroes or betrays them, he assumes a more frightful form. His body becomes covered in blood (not his own), and his face takes on a wild appearance, like that of someone in a complete panic.

At the same time, perceptive characters who can brave Sir Marcus Malvoy's terrifying appearance may see the shadows of six other adventurers standing behind him. They might even hear the cursing and moaning of these phantoms as well. These are Sir Marcus Malvoy's former adventuring companions, who now haunt Sir Marcus while he haunts others.

Sir Marcus Malvoy

Third-Magnitude Ghost, Neutral Evil

Armor Class	-2/4*	Str	17
Movement	Fl 12 (A)	Dex	10
Level/Hit Dice	8	Con	10
Hit Points	52	Int	14
THACO	13	Wis	7
Morale	2	Cha	13 (7)
No. of Attacks	2	XP	11,000

Damage/Attack 1d8 (cause wounds with sword)
Special Attacks Cause fear, cause wounds, energy drain

Special Defenses Insubstantiality (incorporeal)**,
invisibility**, rejuvenation**, magic
immunity**, +2/+1 or better
weapon needed to hit, may be
turned but not destroyed

* Ethereal vs. nonethereal foes/ethereal vs. ethereal foes.

** Refer to the introduction for further information.

Sir Marcus Malvoy radiates fear in a fifty-foot radius. Victims within this radius must make a fear check with a -2 penalty. Sir Marcus can also cause wounds with his long sword. In addition to the damage inflicted, a victim has a percentage chance equal to the points of damage inflicted of gaining an ugly scar and losing one point of Charisma. Victims reduced to zero Charisma must make a successful saving throw vs. death magic or die. If the saving throw succeeds, the victim becomes a broken one (see *RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendices I & II*). Finally, Sir Marcus has the special ability to drain one experience level of causing wounds.

Background

During the years of desperate confusion after the destruction of the Anuirean Empire, Sir Marcus Malvoy considered himself a hero and a champion, and he longed to make himself a king. His bloodline was pure, and he knew he possessed the legacy of kings. However, Sir Marcus knew he had to prove himself to the rest of the broken empire. He formed a gallant band of warriors, priests, and wizards—all blooded and noble—and they began scouring the land of evil creatures.

Biography

Sir Marcus Malvoy comes from the continent of Cerilia in the *BIRTHRIGHT*® setting and once considered himself one of the premiere adventurers in the region known as Anuire. When drawn into Ravenloft, however, Sir Marcus proved himself a coward by betraying his adventuring companions. Now, trapped in the Demiplane of Dread and tormented by the spirits of his former companions, he haunts other adventurers in the hopes of freeing himself from his curse.

Appearance

Most often, Sir Marcus Malvoy assumes the form he bore during most of his life: that of a wealthy adventurer in somewhat antiquated (but very decorative) armor. He is always slightly transparent, except during the day, when he is almost completely invisible. Thus, Sir Marcus seldom appears in the day, unless compelled.

Sir Marcus Malvoy wears a haughty expression that mars his otherwise handsome features. He seems proud of his appearance—his full, black hair and neatly trimmed salt-and-pepper beard. The only part of Sir Marcus's ghostly appearance that cannot be easily distinguished is the coat of arms on his shield, which seems to be forever in shadow.





Occasionally, one or more of Sir Marcus Malvoy's companions would fall in battle. This may have distressed the would-be king, but he did not show it. He continued to replace his adventuring companions with new, eager men and women willing to follow his banner and take his gold. Sir Marcus himself wisely avoided situations that might prove too dangerous for his own valuable person. A good leader, Sir Marcus found, can lead just as well from the rear.

One day, Sir Marcus Malvoy and his adventurers received a challenge and a summons they could not deny. An evil spirit terrorized the land north of the Malvoy estates. Several heroes ventured into the creature's lair and claimed they wounded the undead beast but could not slay it. They begged Sir Marcus for a few blessed weapons or some sacred talisman they could use to destroy the creature.

Sir Marcus Malvoy refused the petitioning heroes. He declared he could not send others to do a deed he would not venture himself. He armed himself with potent talismans, surrounded himself with his most powerful allies and retainers, and bravely set out to dispatch the wounded creature himself.

When the Malvoy party arrived at the spot described by the other adventurers, they found some signs of the beast. Its peasant victims, their bodies rent and torn, lay where they had been cast about like so many broken children's toys. Sir Marcus had his rangers follow the trail, and soon they came upon dead adventurers, the companions of the fellows who alerted them to this monster's presence. The carnage was great.

Sir Marcus considered turning back. The beast, he reasoned, had moved out of the Malvoy area, and chasing it across open country might insult some of his powerful neighbors. Then, his rangers found more signs: evidence of the beast's wounds and its halting trail toward a well-known cave. The creature, they reasoned, must have used its last energy to retreat into the cavern and could be dying as they spoke.

This strengthened Sir Marcus Malvoy's resolve. A wounded beast—especially an undead one—would be dangerous to all concerned, even if it were nearly destroyed. Sir Marcus decided that he and his most valiant allies would enter the cave and heroically dispatch the dying creature.

They did so. That is to say, Sir Marcus and several companions entered the cave. The remaining retainers never saw their lord or his allies again, and the Malvoy estates passed into the hands of the local baron. It is surmised that Sir Marcus Malvoy met his death in that cave, but no evidence could be found, and the beast has not returned to the surface of Cerilia.

However, Sir Marcus Malvoy's story does not end at the cave. The Malvoy party made its way inward and downward, past where all reliable information said they had to go. The cave was not supposed to be that large. Sir Marcus proposed heading out again, in the hopes of luring the beast into the open, but, again, his companions met his speech with stony silence.

Then a scream rent the air. The group's point-man, a sturdy dwarf warrior, let out a scream of pain and fear that was suddenly cut off. The two men behind him, their bows strung, fell back, splattered by the dwarf's blood and entrails. One let an arrow fly, but to no effect—a spectral hand shot out of the darkness on an arm impossibly long and strangled the archer. His body, Sir Marcus saw clearly, aged and turned to dust in a matter of moments.

The rest of the Malvoy party attacked. They fired arrows, swung swords, and cast spells. One wizard rent the earth with his final incantation, just as the beast tore him in two. The paladin, his sword and armor glowing in the darkness, fell into the pit with the beast, and Sir Marcus was alone.

Then, a hand shot out of the darkness. One skeletal finger, flesh torn completely off, hooked onto Sir Marcus Malvoy's jerkin. Sir Marcus tried to jump back, pulling the battered and bleeding paladin partly out of the pit with him.

The paladin had been cruelly battered. His face was missing an eye, and his nose hung by the merest cartilage. Still, awake and aware, he swung at the pit again and again with the lower half of his broken sword. He yelled at Sir Marcus to pull him up.

Sir Marcus froze. He saw black tentacles of night wrapped around the paladin's legs and could feel them pulling at him. He might be able to wrench the man free, but it could cost him his own life to try. He made a quick decision. Sir Marcus drove his sword at the paladin's chest. The armor turned the blade, but the surprised warrior let go and was dragged, screaming and cursing, into the pit.

The hero-king fled. He ran, and the paladin's curses followed him through the now-misty tunnels and over the darkened floor. They echoed in his ears until he collapsed, exhausted and lost, in the darkness.

Then the laughing began.

The beast found Marcus and tormented him. Sir Marcus cried for mercy and, finally, for death. The undead creature surrounded Sir Marcus with the bodies of his allies and animated them. They all cursed him with dead tongues, and Sir Marcus cried out, beseeching the monster for release.

Finally, the undead beast put Sir Marcus to death. Even then, Sir Marcus's story did not end. Sir Marcus can no longer escape his torment, any more than he can escape his world.

Sir Marcus Malvoy, of the shattered Anuirean Empire on the continent of Cerilia, has entered Ravenloft, where he now roams the Mists in search of heroes who become his victims. Sir Marcus Malvoy is cursed to haunt any heroes he encounters, cajoling them toward deeds of heroism and bravery that he could never accomplish on his own.

The ghost of Sir Marcus usually encounters heroes near the beginning of an important quest. He may actually be the catalyst for a particular adventure, seeking out heroes who just happen to be wherever Sir Marcus is.





Sir Marcus Malvoy

When Sir Marcus presents himself to a group of heroes, he does so in his stately form as a semi-transparent phantom in search of heroes to accomplish a particular mission. Sir Marcus treats any heroes he encounters haughtily (except beautiful human or elf women, whom he tries to charm) and often uses sarcasm to goad heroes into doing what he wants.

Personality

Sir Marcus fears the very thing he most desires: true death. He knows the only way to free himself and rest in peace is to assist a group of heroes in overcoming some terrible evil in Ravenloft. If he does this, he can finally sleep. Unfortunately, Sir Marcus dreads the day when he finally dies his true death, so he always betrays those he haunts.

Sir Marcus Malvoy's former companions are the source of this final fear. They haunt him and torment him for his cowardice in life, and he fears they will continue after he dies the final death. What Sir Marcus does not realize is that the only thing that frees him from their torture is whatever courage he can muster. When Sir Marcus actually swallows his fear and assists living heroes, his ghosts leave him alone. If he ever actually followed through on an adventure and truly helped someone, his former companions would welcome him into final death, and he could rest in peace.

While Sir Marcus is in his "brave" mode, he does not radiate evil (it is part of his curse—he actually is not acting under evil motives at this time and truly believes that *this* time will be different) or fear. He acts very confident and disdainful of heroes who ask too many questions or pry into his past. Under no circumstances will Sir Marcus tell the truth about his past (though he may use elements of it) and, in his "brave" mode, he may not actually remember what really happened.

Combat

Sir Marcus seldom enters combat for any reason. While trying to convince heroes to follow him or partake in a particular adventure, he may feel the need to attack others (or even them) if it makes his point, however. When this happens, Sir Marcus uses a spectral sword to attack, flies out of reach of his most powerful enemies, and may even drain levels from particularly belligerent opponents. (Sir Marcus has the choice of whether to drain a victim's level or not.) Usually, if Sir Marcus in his "brave" mode needs to fight a band of heroes, he does so only as long as he still thinks he might convince them to go along with him; if it looks hopeless, he tries to flee.

When in his "coward" mode, Sir Marcus radiates *fear* in a fifty-foot radius but only against the heroes he once tried to help. He drains levels freely at this time and tries to kill anyone witnessing his betrayal of a party and his cowardice. Fortunately, the spectres that haunt Sir Marcus become most prominent at this time

and often distract or confuse him. (On an attack roll of 1 to 4, Sir Marcus loses his next 1d3 attacks against the party while dealing with his own ghosts.)

Most often, Sir Marcus Malvoy haunts an abandoned mansion or other place "worthy of his position." If heroes come upon him there, he may claim the place as his ancestral home. Usually, Sir Marcus haunts long-abandoned houses, so there will not be many who can contradict him.

The Beast in the Hills



he player characters should be low- to mid-level (4 to 7 is best, with 24 levels total) and need at least one silver or magical weapon. No more than six player characters should be necessary, and fewer should be fine. Some brave villager nonplayer characters (including Victor Szegnoi, during the day) can fill out the party if necessary. This adventure can be set in any rural village.

Background

The small village of Skansorro lies nestled between two large mountains and one thick forest. Its inhabitants have, until recently, been blessed with a quiet peace. Unfortunately, two occurrences have brought this peace to an end.

First, the sheep and goats owned by the villagers have started disappearing. Partially mutilated corpses have been found near the forest and on the hillsides, and a few shepherd boys remain unaccounted for. The villagers fear the worst.

The killing of livestock has happened around Skansorro before. Generally, the people of the village bring in their sheep and goats and pen them up during the wintertime. After particularly bitter winters, wolves come down out of the mountains or the forest and attack the animals for food. The villagers bring the flocks in for a few more weeks and the wolves seek other game. Occasionally, a pack of wolves has attacked the village itself, but Skansorro can be defended against that.

What the villagers have problems defending themselves against is the current predator, however. It started out like a normal wolf attack, and a few lost sheep or goats, mauled and dragged off, were nothing to worry about.

When the shepherds brought their flocks back into the village, however, the attacks continued. Outlying farms were hit first. Gates were torn off their hinges, and animals not slaughtered and dragged off died of fright. At first, no humans were harmed, but that has changed. Three shepherds and two farmers have been killed or have disappeared in the last three weeks; now, the villagers fear to go outside at night—though staying in has not helped much either.

The creature is a wolwere that moved into the





Skansorro area about a year before. It masquerades, during the daytime, as a traveling bard who came to the village a few months before the attacks began. The bard, one Victor Szegnoi, has made himself popular within the small community, telling tales of adventure and singing strange songs to the young women.

Second, a ghost has begun haunting the town hall. It has a booming voice and an intimidating appearance, and only a few brave souls have dared confront it. The ghost claims to be that of a dead adventurer, Sir Marcus Malvoy, and it says it seeks heroes to help him rid the land of evil. The ghost itself has not harmed anyone, but it frightens away anyone trying to contact it. The ghost claims to have come to Skansorro seeking heroes to confront "the evil in the woods."

The Adventure Begins

When the heroes arrive in Skansorro, they should do so at daytime and in mid- to late spring. Everything looks fairly normal, except the people have a tired, haunted look and the animals, still penned up after a long winter, are unusually thin and worn-looking.

The villagers are not particularly happy to see heroes coming to their town, but they do not turn them away, either. They are tired and confused and cannot muster much hope. They believe some curse has been visited upon their town, and they cannot get away from it.

As the heroes are moving down the muddy road through town, they hear a child's high-pitched screaming. Read the following aloud:

"Aulia! Aulia!" comes a woman's cry as a young girl barrels past you. As the child passes, she screams, "Stop chasing me! Stop it!" Shortly after the girl disappears down a side street, the woman races past, her skirts bunched into one hand to keep them from tripping her. "It's all right, Aulia. It's not chasing you. Stop running!" the woman cries out.

If the heroes follow Aulia's and her mother's path, they see the tearful reunion between the two. If the heroes remain where they are, then they can watch the mother and daughter reappear a few moments later. Adrienne cradles Aulia, who is still sobbing from fear, in her arms. Adrienne refuses to talk to the heroes about what happened, but she can tell them to pester Trenton, the innkeeper, about local gossip if they feel that they must be nosy.

Trenton tells the heroes about the attacks on the livestock. (See the adventure background.) The beast seems to attack every third or fourth night. Some villagers have taken to tying up a sheep or goat outside their homes in the hopes it will not burst in on them. This appears to have worked in one case, though the beast did try to get into a barn after mauling the

proffered sheep. The claw marks on the barn look like they were made by a giant wolf.

The heroes do not hear about the ghost unless they are persistent with their questions about what scared Aulia. At that point, Victor Szegnoi, a colorfully dressed bard, saunters over to the heroes and introduces himself. He points out that Trenton, along with the other villagers of Skansorro, feels a little ashamed about the ghost of Sir Marcus.

Victor Szegnoi (wolfwere): AC 3; MV 15; HD 5+1; hp 36; THAC0 15; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 2d6 (bite) and 1d4 (dagger); SA singing brings on lethargy; SD hit only by iron or +1 or better weapons; MR 10%; SZ M (5'8"); ML elite (15); AL CE; XP 1,400.

S 8, D 14, C 16, I 14, W 12, Ch 15 (4).

Personality: manipulative, arrogant.

Special Equipment: earring of false alignment, dagger, lute.

Notes: SA—lethargy works as slow spell and lasts for 1d4+4 rounds.

Victor welcomes the challenge presented by the heroes. Arrogant and evil, he hopes to confound and torment the heroes by striking underneath their noses. As a bard, he acts as a helpful and friendly nonplayer character during the day, trying to assist the heroes in any plan they concoct to trap the beast. When he assumes his wolfwere guise, Victor strikes where the heroes least expect him, killing and fleeing before they can react.

Sir Marcus Malvoy has made the villagers feel guilty about not taking care of the creature themselves. He called out for heroes and did not get any, and now he haunts the village, calling them cowards. When the creature does not attack and keeps everyone awake with its howls, Marcus parades through the village at night scaring everyone with his yelling and shouting.

If the heroes investigate the deaths, go to "Sign of the Creature." If they wish to see Marcus, Trenton tells the heroes that the ghost does not usually show up until nightfall. Go to "A Hero for All Occasions" if they decide to wait.

Sign of the Creature

Trenton tells a young boy named Alain to lead them to an outlying homestead and a few of the shepherd's shacks that have been torn apart by the creature. While at the homestead, the heroes can talk to an old woman named Stefanie who saw her son and daughter-in-law (the two farmers killed) torn apart before her very eyes two nights ago. If pressed in the right way, she describes what sounds like a giant wolf. Still, she is hardly a reliable witness.

The shepherds have nothing new to say about the attacks. It is possible to track the creature's movements, but the tracks peter out in a nearby stream.



A Hero for All Occasions

Sir Marcus appears to the heroes the night after they hear about the attack of the mysterious beast and asks them to help him rid the village of its tormentor. Read the following aloud:

A slightly transparent, armored form steps amongst you. "Sleeping on the job, are we?" booms his hearty voice. He stands tall before you, his expression haughty and proud. He has full, black hair and a neatly trimmed salt-and-pepper beard. "Come on, come on! Let's get this craven creature before it kills again."

If asked why he is interested in killing the beast, Sir Marcus may tell them that he was once Skansorro's protector, but that he died fighting the beast long ago. He may also just play upon their heroism. Once the heroes are ready to help Sir Marcus, the ghost gives them directions to the mansion and tells them to meet him there.

If the heroes tell the villagers about Sir Marcus's visitation, they may express confusion or puzzlement. They remember no "protector" of the village, though a haunted mansion, long abandoned and shunned by the villagers, does lie on a nearby plantation. They say that those who go to the plantation do not return. Go to "The Dead Estate" if the heroes head there. If they decide to track the wolf themselves, go to "The Traitor Surfaces."

The Dead Estate

Sir Marcus does "live" on this plantation. He came to Skansorro a few dozen years ago and has been haunted by his own misery ever since. Every so often, a brave lad or lass comes to the haunted mansion. Sir Marcus always talks the unfortunate person into going off on some hair-brained adventure "under his guidance," and the would-be adventurer gets killed when Marcus betrays him.

However, Sir Marcus has entered his "brave" mode. He welcomes heroes to his "ancestral home." If he promised the heroes treasure, he shows them the equipment left by "would-be grave robbers"—actually former heroes whom Marcus has betrayed. He concocts a story about Skansorro's beast, tying it in to his own "heroic" death. He prods the heroes to find and kill the beast, saying that he will achieve peace by doing so. To start them off, Sir Marcus leads them to some tracks left by Victor that night. Victor purposely left tracks leading to a dark wood so that he could attack and then flee. He wants to harry the heroes, hopefully whittling the group down a little before doing an all-out attack. Once the heroes enter the wood with Sir Marcus, go to "The Traitor Surfaces."

The Traitor Surfaces

Once the heroes enter the wood, Victor starts playing with them. He attacks one character using surprise, and then flees before they can attack back. He continues to do this until the heroes can get a few attacks in return. Outnumbered, Victor should bear the brunt of the heroes' attacks. While he has natural weaponry and a resistance to normal weapons, the heroes probably have enough of an edge that they will be able to kill him.

If Sir Marcus is already with the heroes, then he helps the characters initially. If the heroes did not go to the mansion, Sir Marcus eventually finds the group during the final battle. Regardless, Sir Marcus becomes a servant to his own fear. As he has done so many times before, he shifts into "coward" mode and betrays the heroes, helping Victor either escape or fight back (depending on how close the battle is). Read the following aloud:

In the midst of battle, you hear a bone-chilling moan. Sir Marcus, who had been swinging his long sword at the beast just a moment before, turns toward you, covered in blood. His eyes look wild and panicked. He moans again and lifts his sword as if to swing at you.

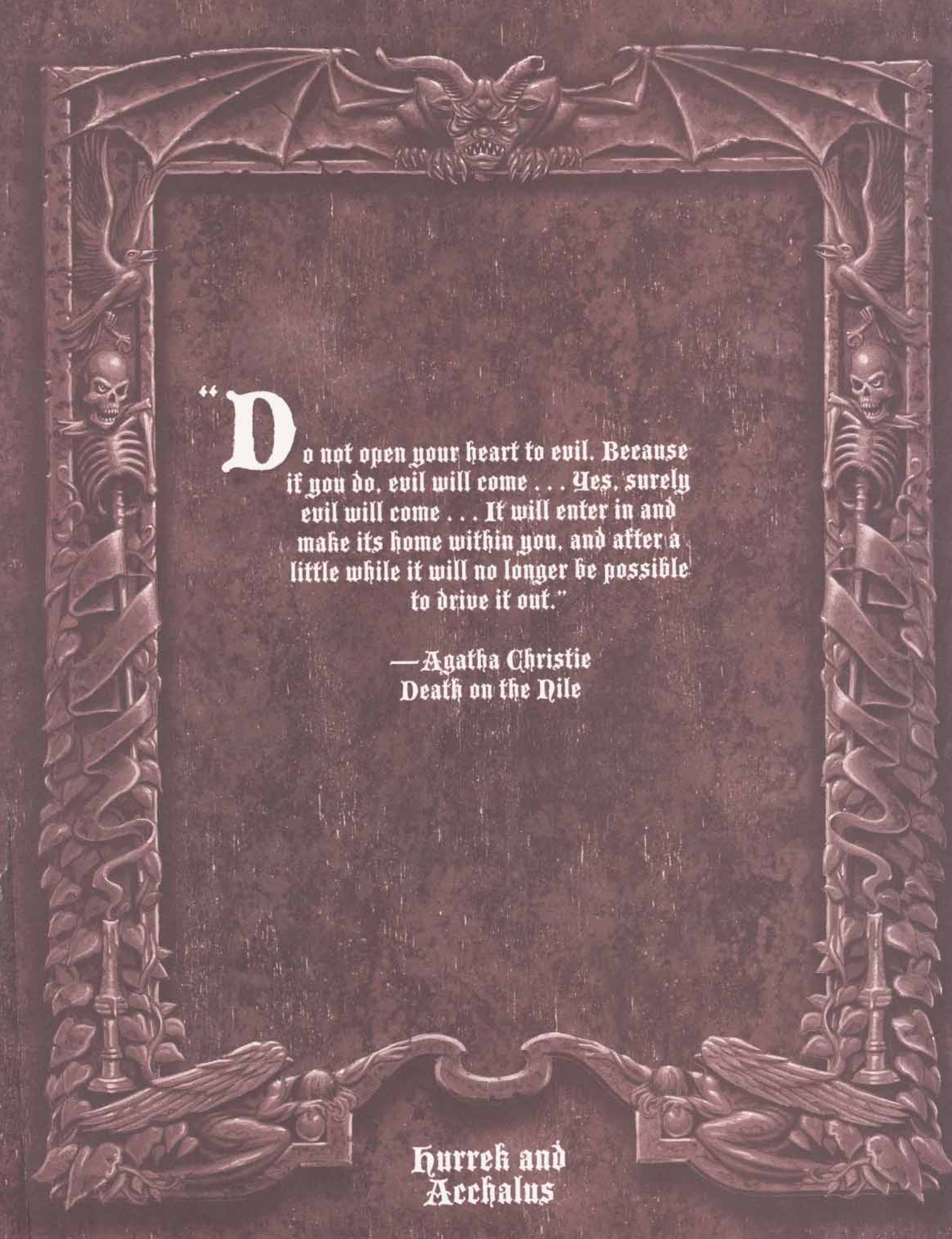
Each character should make an Intelligence check to notice the spectres of six adventurers standing around Sir Marcus.

If the heroes kill Victor, then the villagers thank them for their help and allow them to stay and eat at the inn for free. However, if Sir Marcus has not been destroyed or laid to rest, then he keeps attempting to kill the heroes because they know his cowardly nature. After two days, the villagers are so afraid of what is happening to the heroes that they urge the group to move on.

If Victor has not been killed, then the heroes have a chance to help Sir Marcus to his final rest when they face the wolfwere again.

Recurrence

Sir Marcus continues to try to kill the heroes until they are in another situation fraught with danger. At that point, the heroes have a chance to spur Sir Marcus's brave side on. If they can keep Sir Marcus from turning cowardly again, then his ghost will rest. If not, Sir Marcus turns on the group again.



“**D**o not open your heart to evil. Because if you do, evil will come . . . Yes, surely evil will come . . . It will enter in and make its home within you, and after a little while it will no longer be possible to drive it out.”

—Agatha Christie
Death on the Nile

Hurrek and
Acchalus



Hurrek and Aechalus



Hurrek and Aechalus

Biography

When two diametrically opposed beings exist in the same space and even the same form, danger abounds. When one of these unusual beings is a stone giant, then ghost-hunters should be wary, for the combination of strength and insubstantiality will be their greatest challenge—and their greatest nightmare.

Appearance

Hurrek appears as the stone giant he once was, though he is now a translucent image of his former self. He is over eighteen feet tall, with huge, bulging muscles and a fierce expression on his face at all times. He wears a simple tunic that covers his left shoulder and crosses his chest to drape down almost to his knees, held in place by a leather belt. His misty coloring is reminiscent of his former stone-gray skin tone. He does not carry any weapons, but at his mental command a huge stone club or a large boulder can appear in either of his hands. These weapons are also translucent and appear as ghosts of the real items.

Aechalus in his natural state appears as merely a spot of light, somewhat like a will o'wisp. When inhabiting a body (even a ghostly one), he is not visible, but he does cause the host's eyes to glow with a white, feral light. This light shows from Hurrek's transparent eyes now.

Hurrek the Giant

Fourth-Magnitude Ghost, Chaotic Good

Armor Class	-3/2*	Str	—
Movement	12	Dex	—
Hit Dice	14	Con	—
Hit Points	104	Int	13
THACO	7	Wis	9
Morale	16	Cha	8
No. of Attacks	1		
Damage/Attack	2d8+8 (ghost club)		
Special Attacks	Throw ghostly boulders for 3d10, <i>stone shape</i> , <i>stone tell</i> , and <i>transmute rock to mud</i> once per day as 5th-level wizard, perform telekinesis		
Special Defenses	Insubstantiality (incorporeal)**, invisibility**, rejuvenation**, magic immunity**, +3/+1* or better weapons needed to hit		
Magic Resistance	60%		

* Ethereal vs. nonethereal foes/when corporeal or ethereal vs. ethereal foes.

** See the introduction for further details.

When Hurrek hits with a boulder or club, he unconsciously unleashes telekinetic energy that inflicts the damage listed. Hurrek can also use his telekinetic power to pick up objects in his "hands." He cannot project force or move objects he does not "touch," but otherwise has no limits on this ability.

Aechalus

First-Magnitude Ghost, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class	—/10*	Str	—
Movement	Fl 18(A)	Dex	—
Hit Dice	1	Con	—
Hit Points	1 (special)	Int	14
THACO	nil	Wis	15 (insane)
Morale	20	Cha	—
No. of Attacks	0	XP	19,000†
Damage/Attack	none		
Special Attacks	Dominate victims		
Special Defenses	Insubstantiality (incorporeal)**, invisibility**, rejuvenation**, magic immunity**, +1/0* or better magical weapons needed to hit (not slay)		
Magic Resistance	100%		

* Ethereal vs. nonethereal foes/when corporeal or ethereal vs. ethereal foes.

** See the introduction for further details.

† Total experience points earned for putting both Hurrek and Aechalus to rest.

Aechalus can dominate dead victims and control their actions (similar to the *magic jar* spell). After one turn passes, the victim must make a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation with a +4 bonus to drive Aechalus out. When Aechalus vacates the body, the victim comes back to life with 1 hit point. Once driven out, Aechalus cannot dominate him until a month passes. When Aechalus wishes to use Hurrek's body, however, he does so whenever necessary.





As a type of gestalt, Acchalus/Hurrek can use all of Hurrek's powers and benefits from his immunities. Hurrek's body benefits from all of Acchalus's immunities as well, so they cannot be destroyed while in gestalt form. Acchalus can dominate only one being at a time, so he cannot use his power while dominating Hurrek.

Background

Long ago on the world of Bacchar, there existed a land where peace flourished. This was unusual because the rest of the world constantly suffered strife and war. Ares, the god of war, sent armies to destroy it, but the land and the temple were not without defenders. Athena, goddess of wisdom, the arts, and noble combat, provided skilled warriors for the king for of the peaceful land, which ensured peace for over two hundred years.

Destruction came in the form of a champion of Ares. His name was Hurrek, and he was a giant from the stone mountains at the edge of the world. He led a band of giants and ogres across the world, bringing death in their wake. Hurrek's lack of intelligence made him a perfect tool for Ares. Hurrek and his band were brought to the border of the peaceful land and let loose there. Acchalus, the captain of the defenders of the temple of Athena, was the finest warrior in the land and devoted to the temple's defense. When Hurrek's giants reached the temple and attacked, a fierce battle ensued. Acchalus slew many and fought his way to where he could challenge Hurrek. During the fight between the two, Acchalus's magical sword (a defender +4) was knocked from his hands and lost in the fog. He grabbed the sword of a dead comrade, but as he turned, Hurrek threw a boulder which slew him instantly. The rest of the defenders were routed or slain and the temple looted.

It was during this battle that the Mists brought Hurrek, the temple, the surrounding lands, and the attackers all into the Demiplane of Dread.

Acchalus's violent death and, more importantly, his failure to defend the temple, caused him to return as a ghost consumed by the need to defend the temple against all beings. His failure ruined his self-esteem, and his new form reflects this; he appears as a spot of light.

Acchalus discovered that though he had no body of his own, he could possess the bodies of the living and use them. Thus he could still defend the temple, but he had to find a lesser sword since his own was lost. Eventually rumor said that the place induced madness in those who went there because one man would always turn on his fellows.

During this time, Hurrek and his giants continued to raid the lands of their new home, though each raid cut the band's size considerably. Finally he was forced to flee a battle as his remaining troops were cut down. He came to the temple and took refuge, where he was safe for a time.

Hurrek stayed at the temple for many years, and the aura of peace that still clung to the area worked on him. He learned to read and write from the journals of the monks and scholars who had been there in ages past, and slowly he became more intelligent. Acchalus's ghost, which still lingered in the vicinity, inexplicably could not possess Hurrek during these years, so Acchalus went fur-

ther over the edge into insanity seeing his hated enemy living in "his" temple.

The temple remained hidden for about thirty years, but then a truly cruel warlord found it, and Hurrek died by torture. As he had tortured people in the past himself, his new nature made the experience even more unbearable as he realized the pain he had caused others. The agony brought him back from death as a very powerful but very sad ghost, unable to rest and unable to be evil because of his conscience. He returned to the temple, where he met the ghost of Acchalus. Acchalus had driven off the warlord's men, and when he confronted Hurrek in the Border Ethereal, where ghosts have solid bodies, he possessed the ghostly giant, forming a kind of ghostly gestalt.

In the years that followed, Acchalus used Hurrek's greater powers to drive all beings, even animals, from the region of the temple. He has defined a territory around it into which he allows no one to pass.

Personality

Acchalus is a bitter and insane individual, obsessed with protecting the temple from every other being. He is fearless in combat and unhampered by any moral code. Until he regains his precious sword, he will continue to use others to accomplish his ends, caring little about the fate of his tools. He feels that he has finally found the best possible tool in his hated foe and enjoys the fact that Hurrek suffers all consequences of his actions. He blames his failure and the loss of his prized sword on Hurrek, because it was not until he lost the sword that Hurrek destroyed him.

Hurrek is a gentle soul, troubled and guilt-ridden by his brutal past. His time at the temple has made him quiet and contemplative; he has learned to read and ponder the philosophies of the ancients who studied at the temple. Hurrek's wisdom has allowed him to fight against Acchalus's control; however, he succeeds only during the daytime. At night, Acchalus is strong in his madness and completely in control, but as day breaks he becomes weaker, and Hurrek can make his body "sleep."

Because Hurrek sees the destruction and death that Acchalus causes using his body, he suffers pangs of guilt; his inability to stop Acchalus does not prevent him from blaming himself for each thing that his body does under the other's control. Thus, he is slowly going insane.

Combat

Acchalus has no attacks of his own; he can only dominate a being and use its attacks. When dominating a victim, Acchalus can use its powers as if they were his own and has complete access to the memories of the host. The host's mind remains active and watches on helplessly, unable to stop Acchalus's actions. Acchalus can possess Hurrek because they are both ghosts, and in the Border Ethereal ghosts have bodies as solid as any mortal's.

Hurrek attacks as he did while alive, but his club and boulders are ghostly incorporeal images of the real things. The club and boulders appear in his hands when he wills them to, and he uses telekinesis to provide the impact. If "slain" by any means other than Acchalus's





sword, Hurrek is dispersed to the Border Ethereal and reforms in the temple's main chamber at the next sunset.

Only one way exists to banish Acchalus and Hurrek. First, the two ghosts must be separated, which can be accomplished by retrieving Acchalus's sword and presenting it to Acchalus at the temple. When Acchalus (in any body) holds the sword aloft in the central chamber of the temple, he loses his power of possession and is forced out of the body he controls. This is because his possession power and his feelings about his sword are related; with the true sword, he does not need to use a lesser tool.

Then, the would-be banishers must cause Acchalus to be hit by one of Hurrek's ghostly boulders, which slays Acchalus instantly, and then drive the sword through Hurrek's heart, which slays Hurrek. So long as Acchalus remains in possession of Hurrek's "body" and powers, the boulders cannot be used to destroy him, and the sword cannot permanently harm Hurrek.

The Field of the Damned



A group of heroes is sent on a simple mission to recover a locket, and they discover to their horror that they must either deal with or avoid Acchalus/Hurrek. They also have a chance to explore the temple and find the sword that will eventually be needed to put the ghost to rest once and for all.

This adventure is designed for four to six characters of levels 4 to 7 (about 28 total levels). To run the adventure, the region of the temple must be placed somewhere suitable, preferably near a mountain pass or heavily traveled road. The road should cut through the edge of the marked territory, so anyone who travels the road must cross the territory of the ghostly giant.

Background

Some years after the arrival of the temple, warriors under the command of a baron from a nearby domain began to invade this area; defending troops met them in battle near the temple site. The defenders fared badly, and most were slain. The attackers left the bodies to rot, though eventually the dead were buried by the landscape's natural movement. The attackers then moved on but were repulsed by a larger defense force.

The defenders were led by Lord Colvin, and his second in command was Tilin Scormen, who was the cousin of Lyria Scormen. Tilin carried a locket, which he claimed was a remembrance of his dead wife. Lyria believes that it meant much more to him and wants it back. She hires the heroes (for a suitable sum) to travel to the battlefield site, find the remains, and retrieve the locket. If the locket is not present with the remains, they should continue searching until it is found or all clues peter out.

As for the history of the ghosts, Acchalus's sword was knocked from his hand and carried into Ravenloft by the Mists. There it fell into the hands of a human warrior. As the years went by, the sword changed hands many times. Finally, it became the property of Lord Colvin, who died in the battle near the temple. The sword was "buried" with his remains.

The Adventure Begins

The heroes travel to the region of the temple and arrive near dusk at the outskirts of Acchalus's "territory." The heroes may post whatever watches they desire. Just after midnight, the ghostly giant finds the campsite. Read the following aloud, adjusting as necessary:



The night has passed without incident so far, but suddenly it gets very quiet. A thin chilling fog creeps through the camp. Then, the mist gathers like a curtain, and through it steps a horror from the depths of nightmares—a giant translucent man. This terrifying apparition seems to be made from the mists themselves. The ghostly form looks quickly around and says in a booming voice, "You have come into my domain, and I cannot allow that! Go now, and bother me no more!" The ghost stretches out its hand and a boulder of mist and light appears therein. "Begone!" the figure screams.



The giant lobs ghostly boulders at the fire, any tents the heroes might have, or even any pallets they were sleeping on. The heroes can attempt to engage the ghost in combat, assuming that they do not fail their fear checks and run. They can try to speak with it, but the ghost does not listen. It may, in fact, turn on the heroes if they get too close. They cannot stop it from attacking unless they drive it away. The ghost stops its attack when all the heroes have fled the camp. Then, it turns and walks into the night, slowly becoming more transparent until it finally vanishes. Once it is gone, the heroes can return to the camp and pick up their items.

The heroes must find the site of the battle, which is marked on the map. During the daytime, the search is uneventful until they find either the temple (see "Exploring the Temple") or the battle site (see "Remains of the Fallen"). At night, they have another encounter with the ghost. Its search pattern eventually brings it to where the group is. The ghost should make an appearance close to dawn, coming out of the mist much like it did at the camp.

Exploring the Temple

The terrain here is gently sloping grassland with a few copses of trees. A strange aura of peacefulness pervades the place, caused by the influence of the temple, which is expressed in the thriving trees, the greenness of the grass and the freshness of the breezes. No animals live near the temple, however.

The temple of Athena, which serves as the home for Hurrek and the source of Acchalus's obsession, is a tall one-story stone building. The stones which make up the walls are white and gray-veined marble, and the structure rises to a height of twenty-five feet. The roof is flat, and it is supported by the row of large columns which surround the structure at regular intervals. It sits within a





ring of evergreen trees and is further surrounded by a rolling hilly grassland dotted with trees.

Entry is achieved through a set of huge double doors, each made of a single piece of marble. The doors move silently in shallow trenches, each sliding sideways to allow entry into the main chamber. They can be locked from the inside with bars placed in the trenches. No other entrances lead into the temple.

While rooms containing details relevant to Hurrek and Acchalus have been described, the Dungeon Master is encouraged to add further details to the rooms to help flesh out his campaign.

Heroes who come here during the day find Hurrek asleep and can roam the temple at will, but at night they face grave risk. Acchalus, because of his peculiar curse, can sense when any living being enters the temple and rushes back to destroy the intruders.

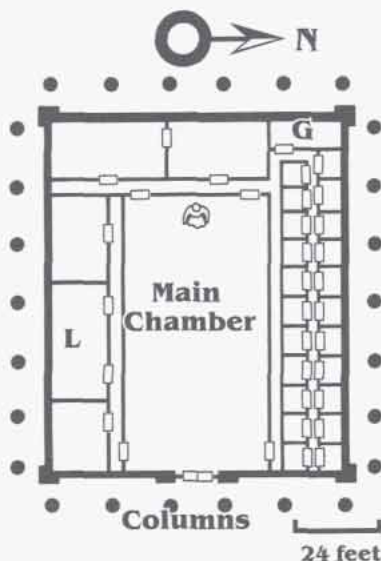
Dormitory Cells: These sparse rooms once housed those who came and lived at the temple. The room

marked "G" is different; it was at one time the storage room for linens and extra supplies for the cells. Hurrek slept in this room, as he could not fit down the narrow hallway to the other cells when he was alive. It is here that he sleeps still, and anyone who comes here during daylight hours finds his ghostly form resting.

Library: This room (marked "L" on the map) houses the works that the monks and scholars used and created. It was looted only once, at the time of Hurrek's death. Hurrek learned to read here, though he carried on the traditions of the monks by working in the main chamber. Hurrek's twelve journals, which he composed between learning to write and his death, are here. They contain a narrative of his journey from violent brute to gentle giant. As a ghost, he came back here and wrote a last entry of his death and tortured feelings. If any hero reads these journals, he learns the information in Hurrek's background. He can also learn some tidbits about Acchalus, including his love for his sword, a description of the sword, and hints about how Acchalus can be killed.

Remains of the Fallen

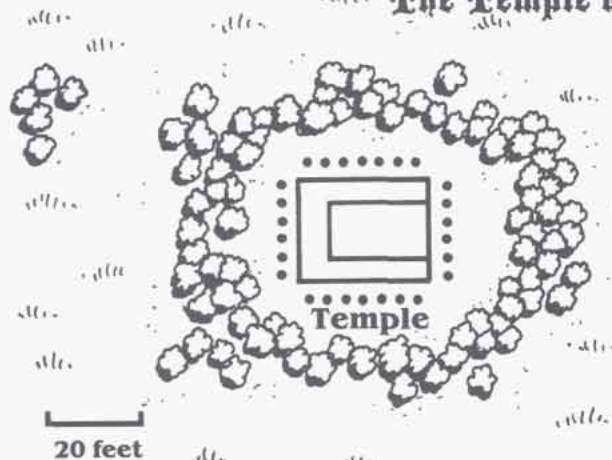
The heroes eventually find the battlefield that they seek.



The field before you arrests your attention. This must be the place, as you can see an occasional spear or rusted sword sticking out of the ground. However, either the grass grows very quickly here, or this battle took place much longer ago than you were told. Instead of bones, armor, and weapons lying thickly over the landscape, you see grass-covered mounds of strange shapes. They are not graves as you know them, but they must certainly contain bodies, as the rusted weapons raised like tombstones testify. It looks as if the ground itself buried the remains of the warriors who fell here.



The Temple and Environs



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Hurrek and Acchalus

As soon as the heroes walk into the graveyard, they see a flash as if something passed at the edge of their vision. This is Marta, a warrior who fell in the battle and arose as a geist, a harmless restless spirit. (See *RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix III*.) Marta was the personal guard of Lord Bryg Colvin. She was eviscerated, so her appearance is rather gruesome. She hopes to draw the heroes away from the field to a copse of trees.

Marta (Geist): AC 10; MV FI 12 (A); HD nil; hp nil; THACO nil; #AT nil; Dmg nil; SA panic; SD invulnerable; MR special; SZ M (5'8" tall); ML fearless (20); Int very (12); AL NG.

Notes: SA—Upon seeing her full form, characters must make a successful horror check or flee in panic; immune to all spells except *dismissal*, *banishment*, *wish*, *abjure*, and *holy word*, which send a geist to its final resting place; cannot be harmed by any physical means and leaves no trace of her existence.

Once Marta has drawn some or all of the heroes into the woods, she appears behind some undergrowth so that just her head and parts of her arms and legs are visible. Her face is unmarred, and she does not want to scare the heroes off at this stage. She speaks to them, telling them who she is and how she was slain in a great battle some twenty years ago. If asked nicely, she tells the heroes the following in return for some answers to her own questions:

- ☼ She has wandered the field ever since her death, unable to cross over into the afterlife and unable to affect anything in the world.
- ☼ After the battle took place, the attackers stopped to strip the bodies and then moved on, leaving the remains scattered across the landscape. The ground itself then began to move and change, and after a few years the bodies were covered.
- ☼ She can tell them she served Lord Bryg Colvin and that she died by being eviscerated, a description that should make the heroes uncomfortable.
- ☼ She asks who they are, why they are here, and what they have done in the past. If they mention the ghostly giant, she reveals that it is the guardian of the old temple which sits about three miles from the battlefield. She did not know of its existence until after she was killed.
- ☼ The reason she has approached the heroes is that she hopes they can send her on to her final resting place. If the heroes can do so, or arrange to have this happen, or at least promise to try to find out how to do this, and they mentioned the locket at some point, she tells them that it is in the mound which contains Lord Bryg Colvin's second in command, Tilin Scormen, and she tells where that mound is. If the heroes can free her from this existence, then just before she fades away she says, "Beware the warriors who still walk . . ."

If the heroes are all hostile or too afraid of Marta, they will have to dig around in the mounds until they find the locket they seek. It is in the grave marked with an "L"

on the map and can be found in a decayed leather pouch on the body. The rest of the bodies here have been stripped clean of real valuables; each has only a few silvers and a piece or two of cheap jewelry. The exception is the mound of Lord Bryg Colvin ("W1" on the map), which contains a gleaming sword in addition to the thing that was Lord Bryg. This sword is the very sword that Acchalus lost in the battle from which he arose as a ghost (which the heroes should recognize if they read the description in "Exploring the Temple").

As the heroes unearth the mounds, they come to the notice of seven wights inhabiting the battlefield. They were Lord Bryg Colvin and some of his warriors, and come from the mounds marked "W" on the map. They respond to disturbances in the mounds after the second mound is unearthed, if one of their own mounds is disturbed, or just as the heroes recover the locket if they dig up the right one first. They claw to the surface and attack immediately, day or night.

Wights (7): AC 5; MV 12; HD 4+3; hp 24 each; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA energy drain 1 level on hit; SD silver or +1 or better weapons to hit, immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, cold-based spells, poison, paralyzation attacks; SZ M (5'-6' tall); ML elite (14); Int average (11); AL LE; XP 1,400 each.

One More Time

If the heroes are within the ghost's territory when night falls, they encounter it again. This time, it appears before them either just as they reach the edge of the territory, at the temple, or near dawn wherever they are (as appropriate). Since they have defiled some of the land within its territory, it is very angry and attacks to kill them. If they show the sword of Acchalus, the giant attacks with renewed fury, but now its goal is to secure the sword; the heroes do not concern him.

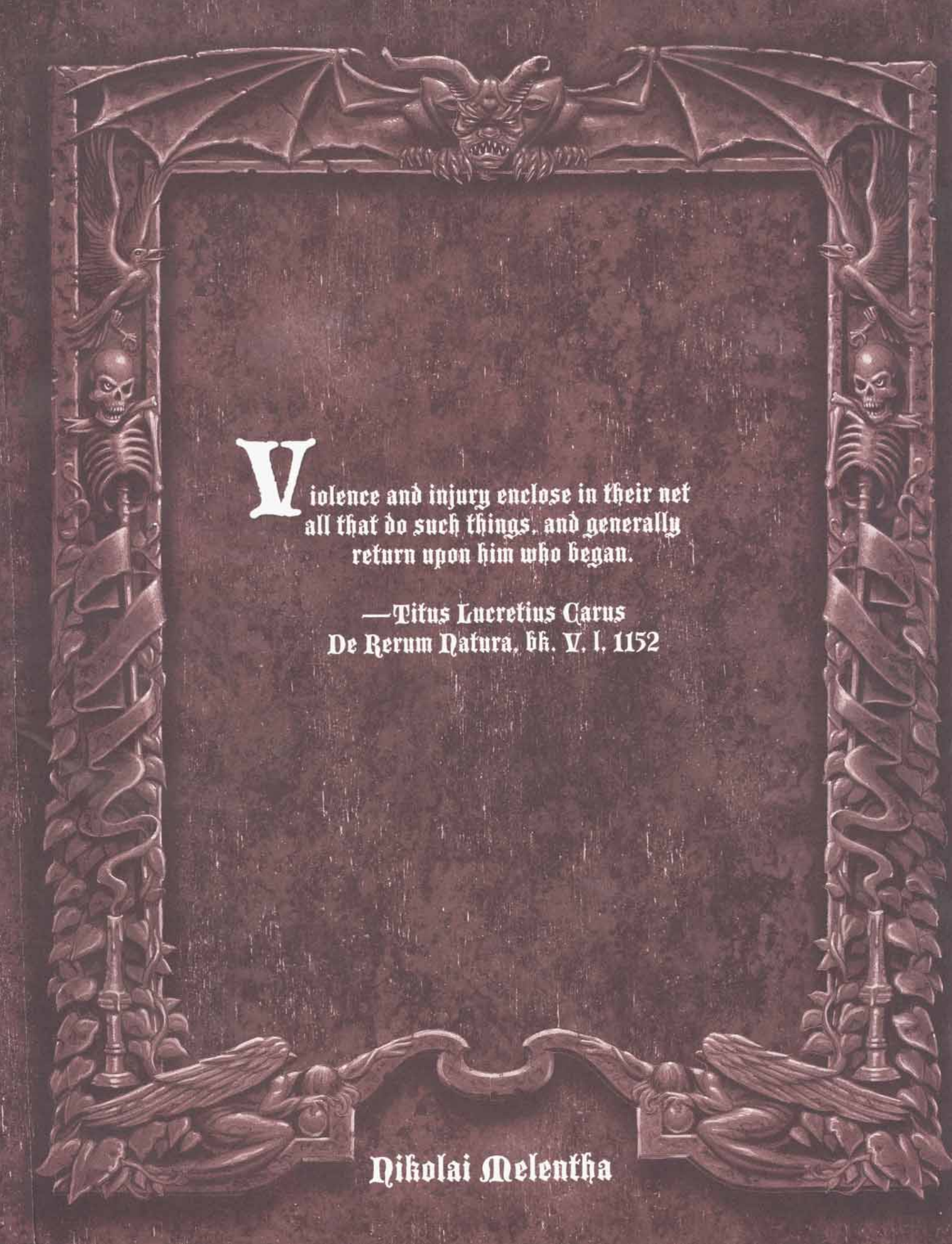
The Lost Locket

If the heroes are able to return the locket to Lyria, they can ask questions about the ghost they met. Lyria promptly directs them to Torean, the local sage. Torean appears to view the whole situation grimly, explaining that soon some of the area's villages will be cut off from necessary trade because of the ghost's expanding territory. He can provide the heroes with clues as to how to kill Hurrek, if necessary.

Recurrence

Acchalus/Hurrek, as a spirit fixed in one location, can be encountered again only if adventures bring the heroes into the region of the temple. Banishing Acchalus/Hurrek should be a long process involving much research, with several trips to the temple to correlate clues from Torean and other local sages. Until he is destroyed, Acchalus will slowly enlarge his territory. This will make him a danger to trade and the survival of the domain where the temple lies.





Violence and injury enclose in their net
all that do such things, and generally
return upon him who began.

—Titus Lucretius Carus
De Rerum Natura, bk. V, l. 1152

Nikolai Melentha

Biography



he ghost known as Nikolai once led a life filled with violence. Now, in his efforts to stop the violence, Nikolai sometimes becomes a part of the problem.

Appearance

Nikolai appears as a handsome, but undernourished, thirteen-year-old boy dressed in ragged clothing. His face and arms bear ugly bruises and scrapes, as though he has been savagely beaten. His face usually shows a guarded, slightly distant expression, although in the rare moments when he smiles, he takes on an almost angelic appearance. When he is wrathful, however, his eyes blaze with a hatred so strong it chills the viewer and his face twists into a hideous mask of fury.

Nikolai Melentha

Third-Magnitude Ghost, Neutral Evil

Armor Class	-2/4*	Str	7
Movement	12	Dex	8
Level/Hit Dice	8+3	Con	10
Hit Points	60	Int	13
THACO	11	Wis	12
Morale	16	Cha	15
No. of Attacks	1	XP	8,000
Damage/Attack	1d8 or special		
Special Attacks	Cause despair, cause wounds, perform telekinesis		
Special Defenses	Insubstantiality (mutable)**, invisibility**, rejuvenation**, magic immunity**, +2/+1 magical weapons needed to hit*		

* Ethereal vs. nonethereal foes/ethereal vs. ethereal foes or when corporeal.

** See the introduction for further details.

Background

Nikolai Melentha was the oldest of two children, who, along with their mother, suffered at the hands of an abusive, drunken father in the poor section of Port-a-Lucine. One day, when he was thirteen, he tried to defend his eleven-year-old sister against a beating by his father. He put himself in front of her and said, "If you touch her again, I'm going to kill you."

Enraged by this "back-talk," the father proceeded to beat Nikolai harder and more violently than ever before. Nikolai died to the screams of his mother and sister. As life left him, his final words were: "Don't you ever touch my sister again, you monster."

Nikolai's mother helped cover up the death of her son, claiming he fell down the stairs. She was too terrified of her husband to do anything else. The law of the Port-a-Lucine accepted that story since they were already bogged down with so many other pressing cases.



Although the father was subdued for a period of time, he eventually returned to his abusive ways. The first time he attempted to beat his daughter while in a drunken rage, however, he suddenly found Nikolai between him and the cowering, crying girl. "I told you I'd kill you if you did that again," Nikolai said, his voice as cold as ice. The drunkard was not long for this world.

If Nikolai's circumstances had been different, he might have grown up to be a powerful defender of good. His desire to secure the safety of his sister and mother was so strong that his spirit clung to this realm of being as a ghost.

Nikolai still watches over his mother and sister, but other victims of abusive parents or guardians also catch his attention. Legends are slowly growing about a guardian angel that watches over the children of Dementlieu. Like almost everything else in the Demiplane of Dread, however, this "guardian angel" has a dark side to him that frequently smothers the light. Nikolai is growing more and more prone to violence and takes personal insult when those he wishes to help fear him. As a result, those he tries to protect occasionally end up becoming his victims, too.

Personality

Although his father tried, he never managed to break his son's strong will. Coupled with Nikolai's determination was a sense of what was right and wrong, and a desire to serve justice. Since his death, he has started to lose his moral compass, but he wishes that abusers of all stripes should



get what he considers their just punishment—death.

Before embarking on attempts to kill a targeted abuser, he always materializes and gives him a warning. If it is not heeded, Nikolai kills the perpetrator as soon as he is about to torment the victim again.

Combat

As a third-magnitude ghost, Nikolai has a number of abilities at his disposal when in combat. When targeting an abuser, he prefers to first use his ability to cause despair. All heroes within one hundred feet of Nikolai must make successful saving throws vs. paralysis with a -2 penalty or become lethargic and depressed. This attack is followed by his cause wounds ability, which inflicts 1d8 points of damage per successful hit. Once his victim is debilitated, he uses telekinesis to kill the abuser. When enraged, Nikolai tends to use only telekinesis to pelt the victim with objects weighing as much as forty pounds.

Pity the Child



his adventure is designed for four to six characters of levels 6 to 8 (about 32 levels total). Most of the adventure deals with trying to find out why Nikolai is haunting the Delacourtes, not with destroying him.

While this adventure has been set in Port-a-Lucine, Dementlieu, the setting can easily be changed to fit another city with the same cultural and level.

Background

It has been almost a year since Nikolai killed his father, and now he has become aware of a threat to a person who was kind to him—Marie Delacourte, a wealthy merchant's daughter who performs charity work two days a week.

As she became more involved in her charity work, Marie discovered that the textile mill operated by her father was staffed mostly by children of the poor, and that many of those children have not been returning from the mill after their indentured servitude was over. (Marie's father, Marcel Delacourte, pays destitute parents ten gold pieces for the use of their child in his factory for one year.) Her father told her not to worry and that the children simply struck out on their own once they had learned a useful skill. In fact, he told her that he gives them some money to help with their new lives, so they do not have to return to the squalor of Port-a-Lucine's slums.

Marie, however, realized that her father was not securing as many workers as he had in the past, and she was beginning to wonder if he was keeping them enslaved. She mentioned this to her fiancé, Jean, who was a supervisor at the mill, and he assured her that everything was fine. He explained that her father, along with Stefan Dyreth, Master of the Weaver's Guild in Martira Bay, had devised a new weaving technique that had lessened the need for workers. Although curious about this new technique, Marie took Jean's word that everything was in order and thrust even the slightest hint of suspicion from her mind.

Both Marie's father and Jean, however, have a secret side that Marie does not know about: Delacourte is a necromancer, and Jean is his hopeful apprentice. Rather than feeding the indentured children, Jean and Delacourte slew them and reanimated them as zombies. After learning this process, Delacourte performed some further research and was on the verge of finding the way to create zombies that retained the skills they had when alive. Further, the bodies of the zombies would decay at a much slower rate while remaining totally obedient.

However, Delacourte needed a test subject. Since Marie was starting to snoop around, her father decided that she would become the first victim of the procedure. Jean, who was starting to become concerned about his meddling fiancée, agreed to this idea. It would leave him with the beautiful wife he wanted, yet she would be completely subservient to him.

Nikolai had attached himself to Marie and her family at this point, and when he overheard the conversation about making Marie a zombie, he tried to warn her.

Unfortunately, all he succeeded in doing was terrifying her. Delacourte became aware that some kind of spirit was haunting the town house when Marie told him of the horrifying experience. However, since he has never geared his spell research toward dealing with ghosts, Delacourte harbored the hope that it would not have too great an impact on his schemes. Unfortunately for him, his hopes are dashed.

Just before the heroes get drawn into this tale, Jean came to the town house to have dinner with Marie and Delacourte. After dinner, Delacourte wished to discuss business with Jean, so Marie decided to retire for the night. Jean walked her upstairs and gave her a goodnight kiss at the top of the landing. This infuriated Nikolai, who managed to unbalance Jean and push him out the window by hitting him with an end table.

The Adventure Begins

Just before Jean dies, the heroes are approaching the town house. The Dungeon Master must contrive a reason for their presence in the Merchant Quarter of Port-a-Lucine. Whatever the reason, read the following aloud:



You move along clean streets that are well-lit by oil lamps. Evening has arrived, and shopkeepers are closing their doors, even as lights appear in the windows of the opulent homes that are interspersed with the storefronts. No gardens grow outside the houses, and their wide front doors with well-polished brass knockers open directly onto the street.

While passing in front of a four-story building adorned with gargoyles, you hear the sound of breaking glass and a scream.



Have each party member roll for surprise, as you continue reading.





Plunging toward you in a shower of glass is a screaming young man whose arms and legs flail at the empty air. His scream comes to an abrupt end when he hits the pavement.



Heroes who were not surprised dodge the falling man and glass shards. Those who were surprised must roll an additional six-sided die. On a result of 1 to 5, falling glass strikes them for 1d4 points of damage. If the result is 6, the sharp pieces of glass shatter harmlessly at their feet.

The young man's skull has been shattered by the violent impact. If the heroes check him to verify whether he is dead, they can see boundless terror etched in his features through the blood that is smeared across them. Before any other actions can be taken, they hear another scream from above.



A woman has appeared in the shattered window, screaming, "Jean! Jean! No!" Her face shows her pain, and tears stream down her cheeks. A man in a dark suit appears at the window briefly to pull her away gently, but her cries are still heard.

Then the front door of the house swings open, and a cadaverously thin man clad in a charcoal gray, impeccably tailored suit rushes out. "Are you injured?" he asks with concern, running his hands through his iron gray hair. "Is Jean still alive?"



This man is Marcel Delacourte, the master of the house. He explains that the young man on the sidewalk was his daughter's fiancée and the latest victim of an evil phantom that has been haunting him and his family these past few months. He is clearly very distraught. As the town constables arrive, Delacourte asks the heroes to wait for him inside and promises that he will see to it that they are not delayed by questions from the local law. However, Delacourte reveals that he hopes they will become more than passers-by as he knows from the party's appearance and bearing (or reputation, if Port-a-Lucine is one of their usual bases) that they are seasoned travelers and, thus, possibly knowledgeable in the mysteries of the world. He will pay handsomely for their assistance in the matter of the ghost.

Delacourte's Offer

As the heroes enter Delacourte's town house, they can hear the faint sounds of a woman sobbing. The young man who pulled the woman away from the window comes down the stairs, and now the party can see that his dark suit is a butler's uniform. He asks if he can be of assistance. Once the heroes explain that they are waiting for Mr. Delacourte, he offers to take the heroes' coats, cloaks, and gear, and then escorts them into the sitting room. He introduces himself as Alain and says

that he will fetch refreshments for them. He will not answer any questions as to what occurred upstairs but merely asks the party to wait.

Delacourte enters the room after a few minutes, followed by Alain, who is carrying a tray with a carafe of whiskey and glasses for the party and Delacourte. Before turning his attention to the heroes, the older man asks how Marie is, and Alain replies that she is hysterical, and Nanette, the maid, is with her. Once Alain has served drinks for everyone and has left the sitting room, Delacourte relates the following to the heroes, his gaunt face pale and drawn:



Delacourte takes a gulp of whiskey and begins to speak. "This evening's tragedy shows that I cannot ignore the ghost that haunts me any longer. I need someone, someone experienced like you, to guard my daughter's safety and to rid us of this evil spirit." He places his empty glass on the elegant table beside him and toys with an expensive cuff link.

"Last month, an entire wagonload of bolts almost spilled out and crushed Jean on the day he proposed to my daughter. The mishap occurred when the draft horse, the most gentle, docile beast to ever walk the land, suddenly went wild as though possessed by the devil himself. Then, two weeks ago, during my daughter's weekly card game with her friends, an oil lamp burst, horribly burning her closest friend. Five days ago, the spirit manifested itself in the sitting room and threatened Marie with harm. Alain says that the unnatural being moved an end table at Jean with such speed and force that it pushed poor Jean through the window."

Delacourte grows even paler. "I need your help to prevent a similar fate from happening to my daughter. Will you please help? I can offer you two hundred gold pieces, plus one thousand gold pieces upon the destruction of the spirit"



He can go as high as two thousand gold pieces upon completion but will not give the heroes a higher advance.

Marcel Delacourte, hm Nec9: AC 8 (ring of protection +1, Dex. bonus); MV 12; hp 27; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2 (fist) or by spell; SZ M (5' 8"); ML elite (13); AL NE; XP 2,000. S 11, D 15, C 14, I 17, W 16, Ch 13.

Personality: calculating, suave.

Special Equipment: ring of protection +1, spellbook.

Spells (5/4/4/3/2): 1st—chill touch (x2), magic missile, read magic, shocking grasp; 2nd—hypnotic pattern, mirror image, spectral hand, wizard lock; 3rd—dispel magic, hold undead, vampiric touch, wraithform; 4th—contagion, enervation, wall of ice; 5th—animate dead, teleport.





The truth about Delacourte is that he has no interest in saving his daughter. While the ghost has him genuinely concerned, he still plans on silencing his daughter with the magical powder he is perfecting. Jean's death, on the other hand, threatens the money-saving scheme he wishes to accomplish. While the government of Port-a-Lucine is not particularly concerned with the well-being of the city's poorer citizens, wholesale murder is generally frowned upon. Delacourte does not want the law looking into his affairs, and hiring his own troubleshooters is the only way he can avoid that.

If the Heroes Refuse to Help: If the heroes turn Delacourte down and go about whatever business they have in Port-a-Lucine, one of them receives a visitation from Nikolai. (See the section titled "Manifestations" for details.) If this does not make the party recant, then they hear stories of a vengeful spirit killing Marcel Delacourte and his daughter going hopelessly insane as a result. (Actually, Delacourte used his powder on Marie and turned her into a zombie, but Nikolai slew him immediately afterward.)

Of course, it is also possible that the heroes will wish to "think about it" while they investigate Delacourte's reputation around Port-a-Lucine. In this instance, everyone in town has nothing but glowing things to say about Delacourte and his daughter.

If the Heroes Agree to Help: Delacourte leaves specifics up to the heroes, but he suggests they find the ghost and confront it, as well as leave a permanent guard in the town house to defend Marie. He gives the party permission to stay in his bedroom, as he will not be at the town house for the next few days. Delacourte claims to have important business at his country estate outside of town for at least the next two days. (He will be finalizing the magical powder.) He gives them their advance money, then goes to bid farewell to Marie. Alain appears momentarily to show the heroes to their accommodations.

The heroes will probably want to speak to Marie (see "Speaking with Marie") or search the house in an attempt to contact the ghost itself (see "Searching the House"). If they wish to speak with the servants Alain and Nanette, then the heroes find out nothing new.

Speaking with Marie

Marie is a delicately built woman of short stature. Her skin is pale, and her finely featured face is framed with dark hair. She is nineteen years old. On the night Jean is killed, she is in no shape to talk

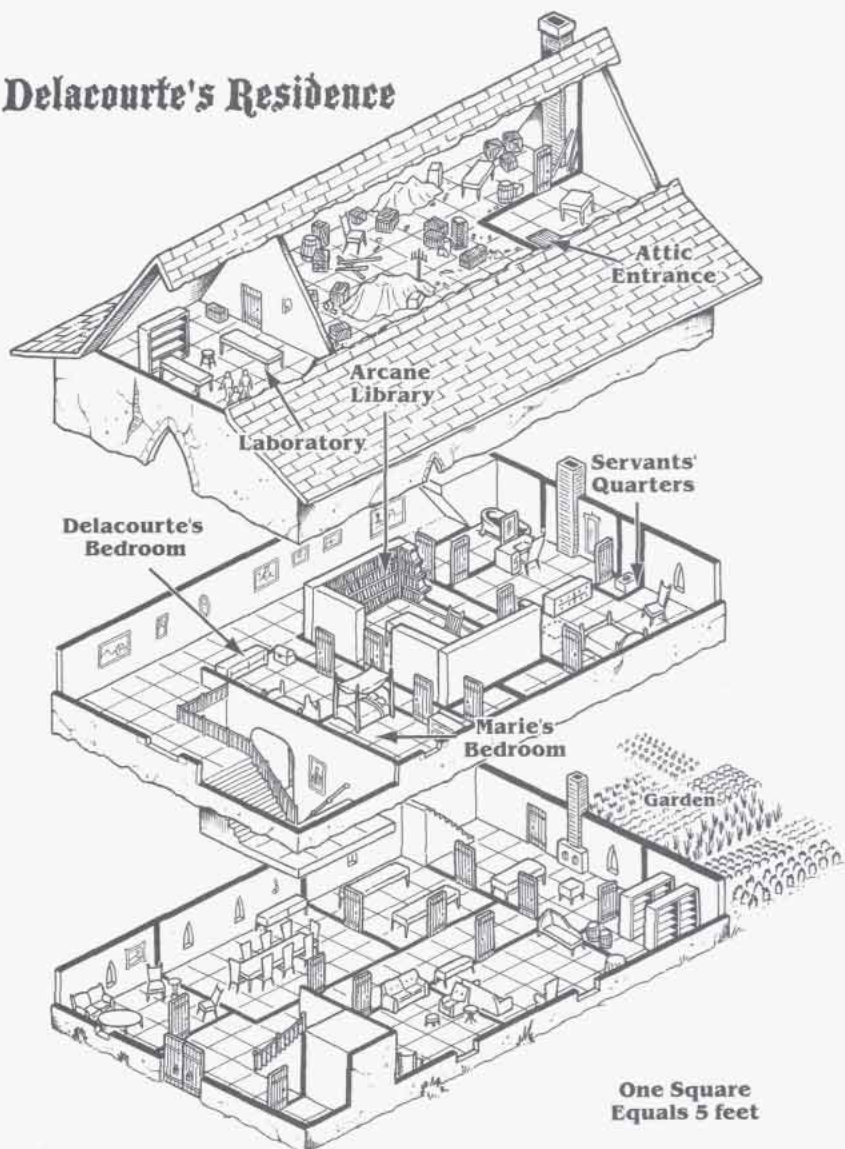
to anyone. Even if the heroes convince the maid Nanette to allow them in, or if they force their way past her, they find Marie in a state of shock. She is not unresponsive, but offers no replies that cannot be dealt with by shaking her head or nodding.

Although the heroes do not see or get a response out of Marie the night of Jean's death, she has Nanette summon them to her as soon as she awakens the next morning. Read the following out loud to the players when they are shown into Marie's chamber.



You enter a room that is draped in shadows. Only a tiny sliver of sunlight penetrates the drawn curtains, and it falls upon a young woman who is sitting in one of the overstuffed armchairs in the room. Her hair is disheveled, and she is wearing a housecoat

Delacourte's Residence



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that is not properly secured, showing her white nightgown. Her puffy, red eyes clearly show that she has been crying.

"Milady," Nanette says, quickly going to Marie's side and pulling the robe shut in an attempt to make her decent for the visitors, "the party hired by your father wishes to speak with you about the terrible ghost that has been haunting you."



Normally, Marie favors wearing the heavy skirts and tight-fitting, short jackets worn by upper-class women, but she is in a deeply depressed state during this adventure and pads around the house in her nightgown, housecoat, and slippers whenever she ventures out of her room. She looks blankly at the heroes and answers their questions in a quiet voice, occasionally stopping to sob or softly weep.

The Dungeon Master should ad-lib her dialogue from the summary below, based on the questions the heroes ask. In addition to relating the same stories that Delacourte told, she tells some that Delacourte forgot to mention.

- Seven days before Jean died, the ghost appeared in her bedchamber in the form of a lad to whom she once gave some extra bread while working with the poor. Jean had stopped by for a late-night visit, and the ghost turned the room upside down, causing furniture and drawers to fling themselves at Jean. All Marie could do was sit in her chair, held fast by some unknown, unseen force.
- Four nights before Jean's death, Marie began having terrible dreams of the ghost menacing her, getting between her and the servants, her father, and the man she loved. The ghost appeared in her bedroom one more time, and it also drove her father out of his private study.

If the heroes have already searched part of the house, they might ask Marie if her father is a wizard or necromancer, a thought which she brands as "impossible." She goes on to state that her father would never hurt innocent children, and has, in fact, been working with another industrialist to develop new production methods that will not require children to slave away in the mills.

Searching the House

Although a map containing a floorplan of the Delacourte residence is provided, only rooms that have some importance to the plot of the adventure are described here. The Dungeon Master should feel free to flesh out the other rooms as he wishes. If the heroes spend a long time searching one particular area (and do not have Alain or Nanette around), Nikolai will appear to them. (See "Manifestations".)

Arcane Library: The door to this room is secured with both a *wizard lock* (cast by Delacourte) and a

mechanical lock. The lock is simple and can be picked with a +10% bonus to the thief's open locks ability.

At the center of the room stands a large table and a single, straight-backed chair. A wide selection of herbs, salts, and chemicals lay in bundles or small piles on the table, along with an ornate dagger and an open book.

If a wizard or priest spends 1d4 minutes flipping through the pages of the book, the hero realizes that the text covers the creation of zombies through the use of a magic powder rather than the casting of actual spells. A pinch of the powder must be thrown into the face of the victim, and if he breathes any of it, or gets any in his eyes, he dies within a minute. After ten minutes, he reanimates as an intelligent zombie who is unwaveringly loyal to his creator. Only a *dispel magic* or *neutralize poison* spell will stop the process. (*Slow poison* delays the inevitable.)

A successful herbalism or spellcraft proficiency check will reveal to a hero that the ingredients for creating the powder are all gathered on the table. If the herbs are examined, it also becomes clear that parts of them have already been chopped off; someone has either made, or has been attempting to make, the powder described in the book.

While the heroes inspect this room, there is a 25% chance that either Nanette or Alain will discover them after 2d4 minutes. He or she will fetch the other as quickly as possible (1d6) and return to kill the trespassing hero.

Servants' Quarters: The only servants who live on the premises on a permanent basis are a young couple, Alain and Nanette Janvier. They share this room, which is furnished with a wardrobe, a large bed, a chair, and a dresser.

While the heroes inspect this room, there is a 50% chance that either Nanette or Alain will discover them after 2d4 minutes. Unless the heroes have already penetrated the attic or discovered Nanette's extra spell components, the servant respectfully asks the heroes not to rummage through their quarters. If the heroes find the spell components or enter the attic, the servant fetches the other as quickly as possible and returns in 1d6 minutes to kill the trespassing heroes.

A trap door in the ceiling of their room leads to a small room on the house's top floor. A leather strap hangs from the door, and by pulling it, the heroes cause a collapsible set of stairs to slide out to allow easy access. (See "Attic Entrance.")

The couple conduct themselves as one would expect servants to do. The truth of the matter, however, is that they are apprentices of Delacourte, one-time cutthroats whom he has schooled in the dark arts of necromancy. Their primary duties here are to safeguard his library and laboratory and to assist him in experiments. The couple will fight to the death to protect Delacourte's work and will also defend each other to the best of their ability.

If the heroes have the opportunity to search this chamber, they find pouches with spell components in a dresser drawer. Heroes with the spellcraft proficiency recognize these as common ingredients of necromancy spells.





Additionally, Nanette has one use of the magical powder that creates zombies. During the first round of combat, she throws it into the face of an attacking hero (with only a -1 penalty to her attack roll, due to the called-shot penalty being offset by her high Dexterity). The hero must then make a successful saving throw vs. death magic, or die within 1d4 rounds—only to rise again as a zombie under Nanette's complete control (but with all his skills intact). Should the powder succeed, Nanette orders the zombie to attack his former comrades. Meanwhile, her husband attacks with spells and a switchblade, and she hangs back and casts spells. If Nanette dies after creating a zombie out of one of the heroes, the Dungeon Master has the option of allowing the player to use the *Requiem* accessory to make a zombie player character.

Alain Janvier, mh T6/Nec4: AC 10; MV 12; hp 27; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (switchblade) or by spell; SZ M (5' 5"); AL NE; XP 2,000.

S 13, D 15, C 14, I 17, W 16, Ch 13.

Personality: detached, cynical.

Spells (4/3): 1st—*chill touch* (x2), *detect undead*, *unseen servant*; 2nd—*darkness 15' radius*, *spectral hand* (x2).

Thief Abilities: PP 25, OL 65, F/RT 40, MS 65, HS 50, DN 45, CW 70, RL 0.

Nanette Janvier, hf T2/Nec5: AC 6 (Dex bonus); MV 12; hp 23; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2 (fist) or by spell; SZ M (5' 3"); AL NE; XP 2,000.

S 11, D 18, C 15, I 17, W 16, C 17.

Personality: scheming, two-faced.

Spells (5/3/2): 1st—*chill touch*, *detect magic*, *detect undead*, *magic missile*, *shocking grasp*; 2nd—*invisibility*, *levitate*, *spectral hand*; 3rd—*feign death*, *vampiric touch*.

Thief Abilities: PP 50, OL 25, F/RT 10, MS 30, HS 30, DN 35, CW 70, RL 10.

Attic Entrance: A wizard-locked door (cast at 9th level) leads from this small room into the main part of the attic. If the heroes manage to get past the door, they find themselves in a large attic filled with old furniture, poor paintings, boxes, and chests. At the far end of the attic, a closed door leads to the laboratory.

Laboratory: The lab has a dark, oppressive air about it. Heroes with spellcraft recognize the trappings of a necromancer scattered throughout the room. As soon as the heroes enter this room, a special version of the *alarm* spell is triggered. Delacourte knows his laboratory has been breached, and he immediately teleports to the entry hall of the town house and climbs the stairs to attack the heroes. (See "Showdown.")

Manifestations

If the heroes explore the house, Nikolai may reveal himself to them. Depending on his mood at the time, he will either convey information to them or harass them to some degree.

When Nikolai is Helpful: Attempts to establish communications in order to discover why Nikolai is haunting the house or attempts to console and reassure Marie cause Nikolai to approach the heroes in a helpful manner. He fully materializes and addresses them in the dialect of Mordentish which is unique to Dementieu. If no heroes know Mordentish, then they can communicate with Nikolai only through the use of a *speak with dead* spell.

It may take several attempts for Nikolai to get the message out, because whenever he frightens Marie or is attacked by the heroes, he immediately turns ethereal and does not communicate with the heroes until he manifests again. Each time he attempts to talk to the heroes, he mentions the following things:

- ☛ He apologizes for scaring Marie, but he wanted to warn her about her father's plans to turn her into a monster. When Nikolai could not get his warning across to her, he felt that he had to kill Jean, who was also involved in the plot.
- ☛ Jean never loved Marie. He only cared about Delacourte and the power he could get from the necromancer. In fact, Jean was going to help her father kill her.
- ☛ Marie has no idea about Jean or her father's evil scheme. Although Nikolai killed Jean, he does not want to kill her father. He feels that this would hurt Marie too much.
- ☛ Marie's father has been researching ways to make the children that he employs become better workers by killing them. The servants help him research.
- ☛ The heroes can find proof of Marcel Delacourte's evil deeds in the house.

Once Nikolai manages to convey this information he does not manifest again until the "Showdown"

When Nikolai is Angry: Any rudeness or hostility toward the ghost, threatening behavior toward Marie, or excessively friendly behavior toward Delacourte and his apprentices cause Nikolai to approach the heroes hostilely. Unless the heroes mortally offend Nikolai, he shrieks in hysterical anger: "You're supposed to help her, you idiots! Stop him! Stop him!" Even as he screams, he uses telekinesis to levitate objects and hurl them at the heroes. He does this for 2d4-1 rounds, or until attacked.

If the heroes mortally offend Nikolai, the ghost attacks the hero who most recently offended him using his ability to cause wounds. If the hero should be under a *protection from evil* spell effect, Nikolai focuses his telekinesis on that hero. This attack lasts for 1d4 rounds, or until Nikolai is attacked, after which he turns both invisible and ethereal until his next manifestation.

Showdown

The heroes have 3d4 rounds of free actions, and then Delacourte announces his arrival with the following statement:





"You're too clever for your own good, my friends. If you had focused on the ghost, then perhaps things would not have come to this."

On his way upstairs, Delacourte stopped at his daughter's room and convinced her to join him in the attic. He also brings the two servants if the heroes have not already incapacitated them. Marie is confused about the whole situation and is surprised to see not only the children, but an arcane laboratory in the room her father had told her contained memorabilia from his youth. She immediately arrives at the correct interpretation of the evidence.

"You have been using magic to keep the mill going? And you've been using magic on the children!" Her eyes widen with horror. "How could you?"
Delacourte touches her cheek tenderly. "My darling, I never should have pampered you the way I did. If I had raised you properly, you might have understood that the poor exist only to serve their betters—us. But it's not too late." Delacourte pulls a small pouch from his vest pocket. It falls open, revealing a white powder.

Heroes who examined the ingredients or read parts of the book in the arcane library recognize the powder as the magical powder that turns victims into zombies. The Dungeon Master should call for an initiative roll from any players who wish to have their heroes attack Delacourte or who want to wrest the pouch from his hand. It takes an initiative of 4 or less to try to stop Delacourte. He flings the powder into Marie's face on an initiative of 6 but changes his target to any hero who charges him.

His target immediately begins to choke. The targeted hero must make a successful saving throw vs. death magic or die within 1d4 rounds, unless someone casts a *dispel magic* or *neutralize poison* on him. If Marie is the target, she automatically fails her saving throw; she rises as a zombie in short order, now the perfect daughter in Delacourte's eyes.

Delacourte orders all zombies (including any hero who dies) to attack the heroes and casts a couple of heavy-duty spells at the party. As he does, however, Nikolai manifests himself, coalescing from dust that had been hanging in a shaft of moonlight (or sunlight).

"You're not gonna hurt anyone ever again," you hear the ghost say. "I'm gonna do to you what you've been doin' to others, and then I'm gonna to kill you again."

Delacourte starts casting a spell, but the insubstantial wif lashes out at him, tearing five gashes across his face. The industrialist stumbles toward you. "Please, help me," he screams, blood streaming from his face to stain his ruffled shirt. "Don't let it kill me!"

The heroes must choose between attacking Delacourte, standing by and letting Nikolai finish him off, or defending him from the vengeful ghost. The first two options result in powers check (with a 2% chance of failure) for the heroes. (Delacourte may be evil, but for the moment he is a victim.)

Those heroes who choose to fight the ghost will find themselves fighting the spirit for four rounds. If they have not disengaged by then, Nikolai ends the battle, saying, "I don't wanna fight you. You're not evil. He is. And I'll get him once you're gone."

Then, he fades away.

Ending the Adventure

If Delacourte survives the attack, the fight has all but gone out of him. He collapses to the floor in pain, and in a sobbing voice begs Marie to help him. If she has been turned into a zombie, she does so in a mechanical fashion, helping him to his feet.

If Marie has not been turned into a zombie, she weeps with her father as she helps him up. After tearfully telling him that she cannot let his atrocities go on, she turns to the heroes and asks if they can help release the children from their evil bondage. Additional research in Delacourte's library will reveal that simple prayers can put to rest the improved zombies. Any good-aligned priest can perform the task.

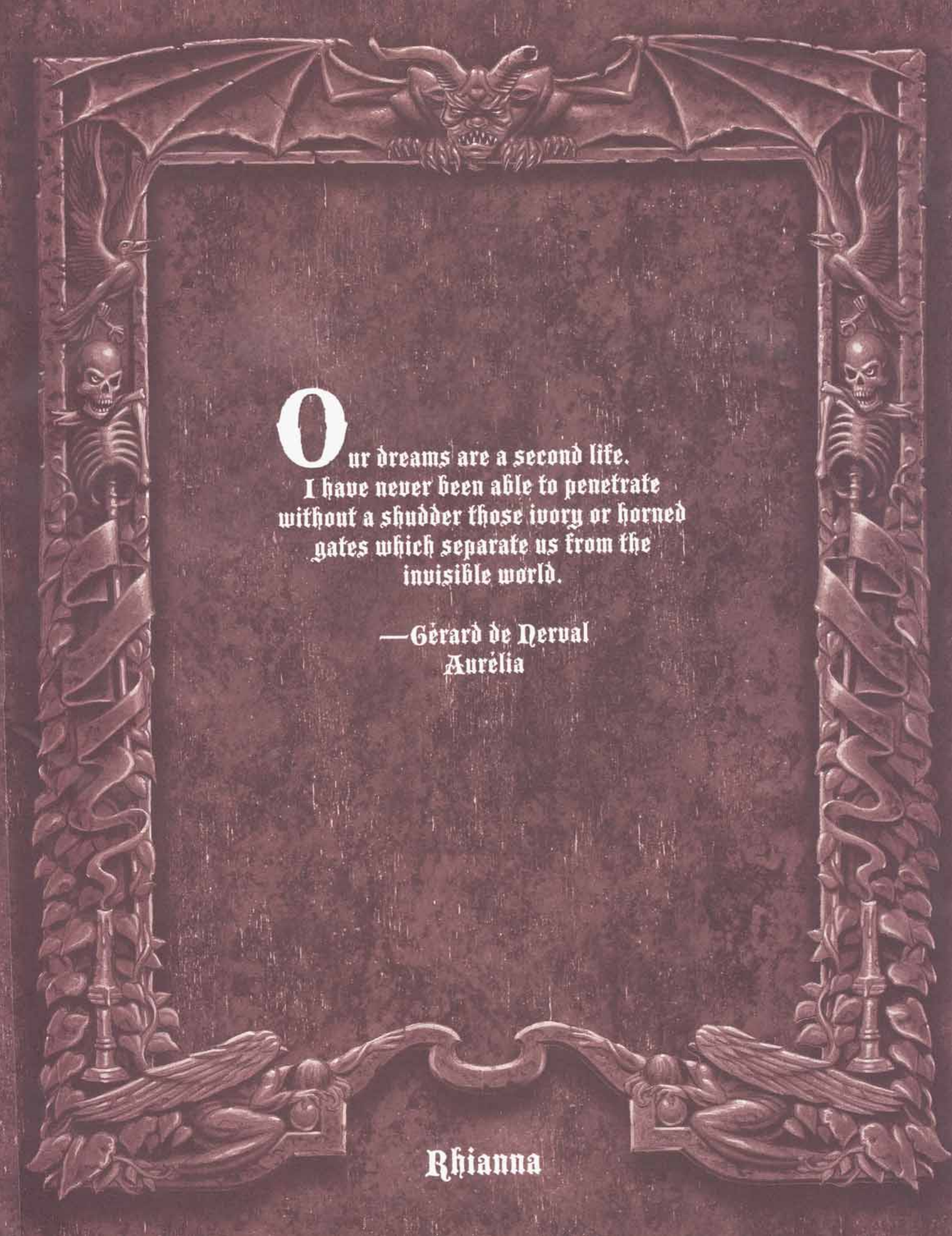
Eventually, the heroes will probably want to turn Delacourte over to the local authorities. Marie weeps as they do so, but she understands that her father's deeds are so heinous that he must pay for them. If the heroes do not turn him over, Nikolai will kill Delacourte in a most brutal fashion.

Recurrence

Several scenarios might grow from this one. If the heroes turn Delacourte over to the Dementlieu authorities, he is sentenced to die for practicing dark magic and committing mass murder. However, corrupt jailers may allow him to escape while they fake his death. Delacourte, after brooding about it for several weeks, then seeks revenge on both his daughter and the heroes.

Whether Delacourte actually dies or not, Marie inherits the family fortune. Once she gets over losing both her fiancé and her father, she entertains suitors (mostly abysmal choices), and the ghost makes things very difficult for her. Nikolai continues to try to protect her, so Marie may seek out the heroes to drive off the spirit.





Our dreams are a second life.
I have never been able to penetrate
without a shudder those ivory or horned
gates which separate us from the
invisible world.

—Gérard de Nerval
Aurélia

Rhianna



Biography



he ghost Rhianna poses no threat to the heroes. In fact, she seeks only their help in stopping a rash of deaths that sweeps through the town in which she lived. She knows of the dark creature that feeds on nightmares and has even seen the evil man who controls it. However, the townspeople believe her to be the terror haunting their dreams at night.

Appearance

Rhianna appears as a faintly shimmering young human adolescent. She has long, flowing golden hair and large, sympathetic blue eyes. The rest of her features tend to blur, enhancing her ghostly beauty. Her incorporeal form consists of a slender torso with limbs trailing off into wispy tendrils.

Rhianna

Third-Magnitude Ghost, Neutral Good

Armor Class	-2/4*	Str	—
Movement	9	Dex	—
Level/Hit Dice	2	Con	—
Hit Points	16	Int	12
THAC0	11	Wis	15
Morale	5	Cha	11
No. of Attacks	0		
Damage/Attack	Nil		
Special Attacks	Cause paralysis, perform telekinesis		
Special Defenses	Insubstantiality (incorporeal)**, invisibility**, rejuvenation**, magic immunity**, +2/+1* or better weapons to hit		
Magic Resistance	30%		

* Ethereal vs. nonethereal foes/ethereal vs. ethereal foes.

** Refer to the introduction for further details.

Background

Rhianna and her family lived happily in a quiet part of the town. Soon after her sixteenth birthday, Rhianna fell ill, her health worsening slowly but steadily. She complained of horrible nightmares, which prevented peaceful slumber. At first, a single nightmare recurred each night:

Rhianna walked down the stairs from her bedroom into someone else's study. At the other end of the room stood a pale, blond-haired man who spun around to face her as she entered. His large eyes burned brightly from within, seeming to look right through her. As she approached, his handsome face twisted in anger and fear. He held forth the golden amulet around his neck and screamed "Begone, foul servant! I no longer have need of you this night!" Rhianna then realized that he was not speaking to her. She turned to look behind her and screamed in terror as an enormous shadow slowly enfolded her in darkness.



During the weeks that followed, however, Rhianna's dreams changed. To begin with, the shadow creature would carry her high above the town, flying back and forth as if looking for something. Eventually, it would dive down through the roof of a house as if it were insubstantial and stand over the inhabitant's bed. From this point, Rhianna witnessed the victim's fearful dreams, unable to help in any way. Several times, she tried to cry out a warning to the sleeping individual, but she found herself too frightened to make a sound.

Over the next few weeks, Rhianna and her family noticed a rash of mysterious deaths in the area. As the number of deaths grew, Rhianna's health worsened, and she became absentminded and listless. Her blond hair grew brittle, her blue eyes dulled, and her skin paled to an almost translucent white. Then on the night of her death, Rhianna had the worst nightmare:

As Rhianna entered the strange parlor, the shadowy figure rushed past her to attack the vicious, blond man. Their battle was swift but brutal, and Rhianna found herself too horrified to flee. When the much diminished shadow finally withdrew, she saw blood pouring down the man's face from the hole where his left eye had been. The fiery glow that always looked through her now emanated only from his right eye. The weakened beast approached Rhianna hungrily, but she still could not move. In its dark embrace, she felt the last of her energy drawn from her body.





Rhianna's mother discovered her limp body the next morning. In an effort to prevent further night terrors from springing from Rhianna's death, her family cremated the body (which prevented her from becoming a bastellus like the one that killed her).

Rhianna's guilt at being involved in so many horrible deaths overpowered her so much that she has become a restless ghost. However, she is now mute, unable to communicate her fears to anyone. Even as she had silently witnessed the evil "night terror" perform its work, so too must she correct its evil without the benefit of speech. Rhianna also unhappily discovered that she can manifest only at night. When the first light of dawn enters the sky, she fades away, but when the sun sets again the next day, she reappears as if no time had passed.

During the days before the player characters entered the picture, Rhianna has tried to get help. Unfortunately, the townspeople have completely misunderstood her. They believe she is the creature responsible for all the recent deaths. Whenever the bastellus draws the last of its victim's energy, Rhianna is helplessly drawn to its location. Several times now, at least one of the victim's loved ones has found her hovering over the body. Stories of the "evil spirit" have spread quickly throughout the town, although nobody has connected it to Rhianna.

Personality

Rhianna's guilt for the deaths she witnessed and fear for future victims give her an almost obsessive purpose. She constantly searches for someone who can stop the current predations of the bastellus. Furthermore, she is convinced that someone within the town controls this particular bastellus.

Combat

Although Rhianna can cause paralysis and perform telekinesis, she rarely uses these abilities. If she does attempt to cause paralysis, the victim must make a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation with a -2 penalty or become paralyzed for 2d4 hours. Rhianna's telekinesis functions much like the wizard spell, but it affects twenty-five pounds. If, for some reason, the heroes attack Rhianna, she immediately disappears. She will approach them several times, however, before giving up completely.

Servant of Nightmares



he heroes have stumbled upon a town preyed upon by a bastellus. With the help of a ghost named Rhianna, the heroes must discover who controls the bastellus and why. It is up to them to stop him before another death occurs.

This adventure is for four to six characters of levels 9 to 11 (about 45 levels total). Heroes should have +3 or better magical weapons available to them for this adventure. The Dungeon Master can place this adventure in any town.

Background

A little over a year ago, a powerful wizard by the name of Mikael Trient was performing extensive research into dreams. Evidently, he went a little too far in his research and attracted the attentions of the Nightmare Man, an evil being who rules in the Nightmare Lands. As a warning about meddling in such matters, the Nightmare Man stole away Mikael's fiancée, Katerina. Mikael has spent his time since then searching for ways to defeat this powerful being and rescue his betrothed.

Mikael recently moved into the wealthy part of town. He possesses an amulet that lets him control a bastellus, a powerful creature that feeds on dream energy. Mikael collects this ill-gotten energy from the bastellus and stores it in the amulet. He (incorrectly) believes that this dream power will make him strong enough to successfully challenge the Nightmare Man. Due to the nature of his plans, Mikael has not slept for almost a week. He believes that falling asleep at this point could be fatal, so he uses magic and a special herbal tea to keep himself going.

Because Mikael siphons off the dream energy it acquires, the bastellus was growing weak. It detected Rhianna's latent ability to visit other people's dreams and decided to use her to conserve its own energy. Eventually, it began secretly feeding on her nightmares in hopes of gaining enough power to free itself from the wizard's control. However, even her life energy did not strengthen it enough to defeat Mikael.

Only seven days have passed since Rhianna's death. In the interim, three more bastellus-related deaths have occurred. Rhianna's ghost has desperately been looking for someone to help her. She has not yet discovered the man who controls the bastellus, but she believes the heroes can find him.

The Adventure Begins

This adventure can begin when the heroes enter the town chosen by the Dungeon Master, intending to stay the night. Once the characters settle in an inn for the evening, they find themselves involved in Rhianna's problems before they even realize it.

After the last character falls asleep, a scream erupts from a nearby room. If the heroes do not investigate immediately, they hear a loud thud, people running upstairs, doors slamming, and muffled cries. This should serve to draw them in. If not, the next morning they can find out what happened, and Rhianna can contact them that night.

The scream came from Madame Rigolio (the wife of a traveling merchant), who discovered her husband dead in the bed beside her. Due to her sensitive and dramatic nature, Madame Rigolio screamed, jumped out of bed, and promptly fainted. Her scream prodded the innkeeper, his sons, and his wife to instant activity, so when the characters investigate the matter, they find the Rigolios' room filled with people chattering tensely at each other.

Once the heroes arrive, the room quiets down only briefly. If they inquire, the heroes can discover the following information:





- The innkeeper, who was the first person in the room, claims to have seen a female figure hovering over Rigolio. If asked for details, the innkeeper shrugs and declares that she faded away almost instantly after he arrived. He knows only that the female was beautiful and young.
- The innkeeper's two sons take turns telling the heroes about similar incidents that have taken place in the town. At first, the people were just found dead, but in the last three cases, a terrible, ghostly, female figure was seen hovering over the corpse.
- While attending to then unconscious Madame Rigolio, the innkeeper's wife tells the characters that more and more people are having nightmares. (Feel free to make up some strange and frightening nightmares for her to tell the heroes! These nightmares are mainly a side effect of the townsfolk's growing fear to fall asleep and are not caused by the bastellus.)

After Madame Rigolio wakes up, she looks around wildly. Once she sees lights and people around her, she calms down. While she does not know much, she willingly answers any questions that the characters ask. She can relate the following information (though it is not all true):

- She woke up because she was having a nightmare about being choked to death by some black presence.
- She felt her husband beside her and snuggled up closer, but when she did so, she felt a clammy presence. She immediately looked up and saw a wispy female spirit bending over the bed. The look of evil on the spirit's face frightened her horribly.
- She screamed and tried to pull her husband away from the vile creature, but when his head lolled over weakly, she realized that he was dead. She remembers nothing after scrambling out of bed.

Although Rhianna is not visible now, she is still around, listening to the conversation. When the heroes are finally left to themselves, she manifests and tries to communicate with them. Her sudden appearance could feasibly require a fear check. Read the following aloud, adjusting as necessary:

The hair on your arms stands up as a slender female form takes shape several feet in front of you. Her delicate face wears an expression of sadness and great need. As she moves toward you, her full mouth parts as if to say something.

Rhianna shows herself to the heroes in the hopes that one of them can understand her. If none of the characters can read lips, Rhianna uses her telekinetic ability to write out notes. If a character possesses the read lips proficiency, make sure that he has this proficiency in the same language Rhianna speaks. Even with the correct proficiency, however, the check suffers

a -2 penalty since Rhianna is somewhat transparent. If Rhianna has to write notes to communicate with the heroes, then they must have the reading/writing proficiency in the correct language as well.

If the characters do not read lips, Rhianna disappears to borrow the merchant's paper, pen, and ink. Once she returns, she writes out her pleas. Either way, she communicates the following:

"Brave ones, this town has great need of your help. Terror stalks the night, killing citizens while they sleep. Please help me find the evil one so that we can stop him and destroy his horrible minion!"

Allow the characters to discuss the matter amongst themselves. If they attempt to threaten Rhianna in any way, she leaves and tries to convince them again the next night. If they seem to accept the plea for help at face value and wish to help, Rhianna eagerly gives them all the information she can. She does her best to pass on information about her life, her nightmares, the "dream-eater" (bastellus), and the one she thinks controls the monster, though she does not know much about the blond-haired man or his motives. She surmises that he is a wizard of some sort, but other than that, she has no further clues for them.

If the heroes still seem suspicious of her and wish to verify some of her story, Rhianna gives them directions to her house and tells them of her cremation several days ago. Her family can verify the events leading up to Rhianna's death.

Once the heroes decide to help Rhianna, dawn breaks, and she fades away with a desperate look on her face. While this leaves the characters in a bit of a lurch, they can do a little investigating on their own or take care of other matters of importance. Go on to "A Chance Encounter."

A Chance Encounter

As the heroes pass through town, raised voices catch their attention. Several other people in the street are also turning their attention to the storefront from which the voices emanate. Read the following aloud, adjusting as necessary:

Already some townspeople have stopped to listen to the deep bellow coming from a small metalsmith shop. You can make out only some of the words "... come in here and insult my work in front of other paying customers. You have not even paid me for the last bit of work. Just get out! Get out of my shop!" You hear a brief sally of murmured words and then some scuffling. A few seconds later, a lean, muscular man pushes a short, red-haired man out of the store and says "Don't you dare come back!" The shorter man stumbles out into the street and lands on his side near you. Everyone scatters and





moves away from the store, acting as if they had not been watching and listening, except for one man across the street. A pale, blond-haired man with a patch over his left eye stares intensely at the fallen man for a moment as he fingers a gold medallion hung on a chain around his neck. As soon as the red-haired man looks up, he recoils in fright and whispers "By the gods! It's him!" He immediately jumps up and runs for the nearby alley. The man across the street turns and walks quickly the other way.



If the heroes follow the red-haired man into the alley, go to "A Witness." If they decide to follow the blond-haired man, go to "The Herbalist."

A Witness

The red-haired man goes by the name of Angus. This formerly powerful warrior has recently been visited several times by the bastellus. He has lost numerous levels of experience and as many nights of sleep since the nightmares began. At this point, Angus's mind is beginning to slip into madness, and he can survive only one more attack by the bastellus.

After seeing Mikael, Angus runs frantically into the alley. If the heroes do not stop him, he runs through to the other end and ducks around the corner. Once out of sight, he tries to find a place to hide, though he is not extremely successful. Angus ends up ducking behind a signpost, a picket fence, or some other similarly obvious location.

If the heroes approach him, Angus does his best to ignore them. If they continue to pester him, read the following aloud, adjusting as necessary:



The red-haired man closes his eyes tight and places his hands over his face. He then turns his face toward the sky and shouts "Leave me alone! Why can't I get any peace?" When he lowers his hands and sees that you are still there, a tear rolls down his face, and he shakes his head slowly. "You're still here," he says sadly. "I'd hoped you would disappear."



If the heroes are extremely nice to Angus and reassure him that they mean him no harm, he tells them his name and even relates the following information:

- Angus and his younger brother were traveling through town and decided to stop for the night. His brother awakened the next morning feeling weak, complaining of horrible nightmares. Angus decided to stay until his brother felt well enough to travel, but the next morning, his brother was dead. Since then, he has been visited by horrible nightmares himself for six nights in a row.
- In each of his nightmares, he has seen the blond-haired man with the eye patch (Mikael). The man always laughs at Angus's misfortunes and shoots flames from his good eye.

- Angus has researched the nightmares and discovered that they are brought on by a creature called a bastellus, which is extremely vulnerable to the *dispel evil* spell. He also knows that the creature usually manifests only at night.
- Angus commissioned the local metalsmith (the one who threw him out of his shop) to make him a special sword, which he intended to have enchanted to help him defeat the creature. He even left a scroll of *dispel evil* (which he cannot use) with the metalsmith, but he never managed to acquire all the other items necessary to imbue the sword with the spell. Now, the metalsmith will not give him back the scroll until Angus pays him for the work he has already done.

If the characters need the scroll, Angus tells them that they are welcome to it, as it does him no good. If they pay the metalsmith seventy-five gold pieces, he turns over Angus's *dispel evil* scroll.

If the heroes suggest that Angus go with them to find Mikael, he panics and tries to run away again. Under no circumstances will he willingly approach the wizard.

The Herbalist

The pale, blond man is Mikael, the wizard. The heroes can follow him down the street, where he enters a tiny herbalist shop. If the heroes enter the shop, they find Mikael standing at the front counter while the herbalist fetches some small packages from the shelves behind him. Mikael eyes the heroes warily but continues with his business. Read the following aloud, adjusting as necessary:



As the heroes watch, the small man behind the counter pulls out a pouch and holds it out toward the blond man. "I believe that this is what you asked for." He stops and pulls his hand back, looking at the other man with concern in his eyes. "However, I am not sure that I should let you have it. You look terrible. These herbs are not meant to be used for extended periods. You should sleep, Mikael."

The blond man's eyes flash with anger as he reaches over the counter grabs the pouch. "I did not come here for your advice, Jacard," he says as he opens the packet and sniffs deeply. "I came for these. Besides, at this point in my research, sleep is not an option."



After Mikael leaves, Jacard politely asks the heroes if he can help them. If they ask about the blond-haired man, the herbalist can give them the following information:

- Mikael Trient just moved into town about a month ago. He bought a pretty large town house, but he lives there alone. (The herbalist can give them vague directions to Mikael's house.)
- Mikael began coming to Jacard's shop to buy some special herbs soon after he arrived. To begin with, he was extremely pleasant and even talked briefly about





his magical studies. Lately, however, he has become extremely argumentative. The herbs he purchases are often used to temporarily ward off sleep.

- Mikael first wore the eye patch about a week ago. Before that, both of his eyes seemed fine. When Jacard inquired about it, Mikael grew angry and told him to mind his own business.

If the heroes decide to follow Mikael, he heads toward his house. If they decide to enter his home or garden, go to "Mikael's Residence."

If the heroes approach Mikael, he looks them over so that he can remember their faces and then sends the bastellus to them that night. In the meantime, he also acts as any normal citizen might if approached by a group of strangers. If approached in a threatening manner, Mikael immediately calls for the local guards.

Town guard, hm, F2 (6): AC 7 (studded leather); MV 12; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (bows or swords); SZ M (5'6"); ML average (9); Int average (8); AL LN.

Guard Lieutenant, hm, F4: AC 6 (scale mail); MV 12; hp 39; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (long sword); SZ M (5'7"); ML steady (11); Int average (10); AL NG.

Any confrontation with Mikael should either warn the heroes off or, if the group is particularly foolhardy, ultimately land them in the local lock-up for the night. This is perfect for Mikael since he can send the bastellus out to find them and they will not have all their resources available to defend themselves. After the night in jail, the heroes are released with a stern warning.

If the heroes have not already spoken with Angus, they see him wandering in the street when they leave the jail.

Mikael's Residence

If possible, the heroes should approach Mikael's residence either around twilight or after night has fallen. As soon as the sun sets, Rhianna finds them and urges them to seek out the wizard and prevent the bastellus from attacking again. Even if Rhianna is with the party, she does not enter the house without them as she is terrified of the bastellus. She can, however, scout the outside of the house if necessary.

When the heroes see Mikael's residence for the first time, read the following aloud, adjusting as necessary:

The huge, wooden house looms before you ominously, its once elegant facade now appearing worn and faded. The large windows looking out of the second story seem to watch you as intently as you watch them. A forbidding wall surrounds the back and sides of the house, enclosing what appears to be an overgrown garden.

If it is daylight and the heroes decide to knock on the door, Mikael answers after several minutes. He refuses to open the door, shouting "Go away! I am busy!" If they approach after dark, he does not answer at all.

The outside of the house has two entrances, one in the front and one in the back. In order to get to the back entrance, the heroes either have to pick the lock on the gate or scale the garden wall.

After the heroes make their plans, if they decide to enter through the back, go to "The Shadowed Garden." If they avoid the garden by using the front door, go directly to "Confronting the Nightmare."

The Shadowed Garden

When the heroes approach the garden wall, read the following aloud:

From beyond the wall, you hear rustling as a light breeze sweeps through the garden. The plaintive meow of a cat comes from somewhere nearby, barely audible over the dry rasping of the leaves.

To get into the garden, the heroes can either try to open the chained and locked garden gate or they can scale the wall. Any character attempting to unlock the gate must make a successful Dexterity check (before attempting to actually pick the lock) to prevent the chains from rattling. If he fails this check, a patrol consisting of three town guards and one lieutenant arrives within four rounds to investigate. (See above for their statistics.) For each person that assists the character in opening the gate, he receives a +2 bonus to his attempt.

Once the heroes arrive in the garden, read the following aloud, adjusting as necessary:

Before you lies a wild, overgrown garden, bisected with a weed-encrusted path. Roses and other flowering bushes run rampant along the path, assaulting you with their sickeningly sweet scent. The wind picks up suddenly, bending the bushes and trees toward the house, as if to beckon you closer. When the wind stops, the rustling near the center of the garden continues for a brief moment, and then everything falls silent.

The movement in the bushes was caused by Mikael's familiar, a midnight cat, which is hiding in a nearby tree.

If the heroes discover the cat before it attacks, it invokes an embarrassing or frustrating curse, hoping to frighten them away. It tailors the curse to fit one of the characters. (See Chapter Twelve: The Whispered Evil in *Domains of Dread* for details on curses in Ravenloft.) The effects of these curses end when the characters leave Mikael's property.





If not discovered, the midnight cat waits until the heroes pass below and attacks as many of them as it can. If injured, it tries to hide again. When the heroes open the back door, it streaks by them and runs into the house to warn its master of their arrival. Afterward, it continues to plague the heroes while they move around the house.

Cat, Midnight: AC 4; MV 18; HD 3+6; hp 28; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1d2/1d2 (front claws), rake 1d2/1d2 (back claws); SA spirit drain, curse; MR 25%; SZ T (1' tall); ML steady (12); Int average (9); AL LE; XP 1,400.

Notes: A midnight cat sees perfectly in all but absolute darkness; stealth imposes -3 penalty on opponents' surprise rolls; surprised on roll of 1 on 1d10; 99% chance to move silently; 85% chance to hide in shadows; scales trees at half normal movement rate without die roll; makes a standing jump of 10 feet or leaps up to 20 feet with running start; rear claws rake for 1d2 points of damage each if both front claws hit; casts embarrassing and frustrating curses when offended; casts dangerous or lethal curses when reduced to fewer than 5 hp (refer to *RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix III* for more information).

If the midnight cat is reduced to fewer than 5 hit points, it brings a dangerous or lethal curse down on the offending hero before running away (or dying). The Dungeon Master should create a curse using the aforementioned rules, centering its effects around nightmares if possible.

The back door to the house is also locked, but someone can easily pick the lock or use a *knock* spell to open it. Once inside the house, go on to "Confronting the Nightmare."

Confronting the Nightmare

Mikael's house appears to be a pretty typical town house on the inside. The rooms are large and airy, with hardwood floors and an ornate staircase. Oddly enough, even though he has supposedly been living here for about a month, the furniture is still covered with old sheets, and a layer of dust coats all of the rooms except the kitchen, study, and a single bedroom upstairs.

Mikael's cat familiar has already warned him of the heroes' presence, so he is downstairs preparing a few defenses in his laboratory.

If Rhianna accompanies the party, she guides them directly to Mikael's study, where she thinks he will be. If she is not, they may search to find a room matching the one in Rhianna's dream. The bastellus waits to attack the heroes if this takes place at night. If they do not enter the study, the bastellus still attacks before they can go down into the cellar to confront Mikael. As soon as Rhianna sees the bastellus, she freezes, paralyzed with fear at the sight of the creature that killed her.

Bastellus: AC 0; MV Fl 15 (A); HD 4; hp 28; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg nil; SA sleep, paranoia; SD +3 or better weapons (which still inflict only half damage), spell immunity (*charm, sleep, hold*, and cold, heat, or electricity effects), immunity to poison and holy water; SW bright light, turned as ghost, destroyed by *dispel evil*; SZ M (6' tall); ML unsteady (5); Int average (8); AL NE; XP 6,000.

Notes: Possesses *sleep* ability that affects all beings within 50 feet (save vs. spell permitted at a -4 penalty; elves are 30% resistant, and half-elves are 10% resistant); on successful attack roll, it moves through a living being, requiring victim to successfully save vs. spell or become extremely paranoid (causing him to attack comrades for 1d4 rounds); 95% chance to hide in shadows (those on guard against dark forms have a percentage chance equal to the higher of their Int or Wis scores to detect it); *protection from evil* prevents it from entering an area; *negative plane protection* affects it and breaks its desire to feed on that victim again; can emulate the *darkness* spell within 50 feet of itself (overcomes magical light sources of less than 3rd level) but shuns areas lit with more powerful spells; passes through solid objects without resistance; if reduced to 0 hp but not destroyed by *dispel evil*, it rises again the next night.

The bastellus keeps the heroes occupied until it reaches 0 hit points. Once this occurs, it emits a telepathic cry that not only causes everyone within fifty feet to make a fear check but also warns its master of the heroes' approach. After the heroes destroy the creature or at least stop its predations for the night, go on to "Ending the Nightmare."

Ending the Nightmare

After they take care of the bastellus, the heroes are free to go downstairs and find Mikael. Read the following aloud, adjusting as necessary:



The creaking wooden stairs lead down into a profound darkness. You notice as you descend that the steps are merely boards nailed onto a frame. An inky blackness swirls below the stairs, and damp, cold air emanates from between the slats.



If the midnight cat has not been killed yet, it takes this last opportunity to attack by leaping up from between the crude, wooden steps.

At the foot of the stairs, the heroes find themselves in a musty little room with a moldy, wooden door in front of them and a rusty, wrought-iron door to their left. The door in front of them leads to a wine cellar, which contains nothing of value. Mikael's laboratory lies behind the door to the left. In an effort to delay the heroes, Mikael has reinforced his door with a bar of wood. The heroes must figure out how to slip the wood up from its horizontal position in order to enter the room. Of course, Mikael also has a few other defenses prepared.

Mikael has already activated several spells. Not only is he invisible until he decides to attack, but he has also cast *shield* (seventy-eight-round duration) and *spell turning* (up to forty-seven rounds/nine spell levels deflected). Mikael waits for the heroes to make the first attack. If they turn to leave, he is perfectly happy with that. After all, he thinks he has finally acquired enough dream energy to defeat the enemy plaguing his dreams. If they prove to be troublesome, Mikael does everything in his power to defend his lab and rid himself of the





Rhianna

heroes. However, he cares more about his overall scheme than his home. If he must sacrifice his laboratory and go elsewhere to finish (using the *dimension door* spell), he does so. Of course, if he seems close to death (5 hit points or less), his *contingency* spell kicks in, teleporting him to a location outside of town.

Mikael, hm, M16: AC 9; MV 12; hp 42; THAC0 15 (14 with *quarterstaff* +1); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (*quarterstaff* +1); SZ M (5'9"); ML fanatic (17); AL LE; XP 10,000.

S 8, D 15, C 9, I 17, W 8, Ch 13.

Personality: paranoid, power-hungry.

Special Equipment: sack with a *potion of extra healing*, *spellbook*, *amulet* (controls *bastellus*),

and spell components; *quarterstaff* +1, throwing daggers (6).

Spellbook (5/5/5/5/5/3/2/1): 1st—*armor*, *comprehend languages*, *detect magic**, *find familiar*, *identify*, *light*, *magic missile***, *read magic*, *shield**, *unseen servant*; 2nd—*glitterdust**, *invisibility**, *locate object*, *mirror image**, *spectral hand**; 3rd—*dispel magic**, *explosive runes*, *flame arrow**, *hold person**, *nondetection**, *vampiric touch**; 4th—*detect scrying**, *dimension door**, *emotion**, *stone-skin**, *wall of ice**; 5th—*dismissal**, *domination**, *dream**, *teleport*, *wall of force**; 6th—*conjure animals**, *contingency*, *enchant an item**, *geas*; 7th—*power word stun**, *spell turning*, *vision*; 8th—*binding*, *permanency*, *power word blind** (asterisks indicate number of spells memorized).

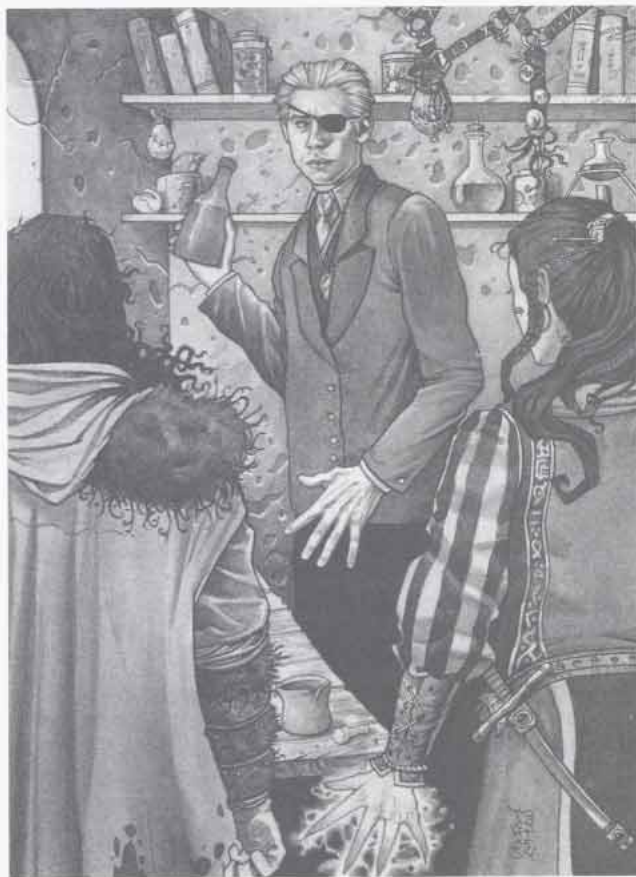
Mikael is quite willing to cut his losses and leave behind his lab, taking with him only his magical items and *spellbook*. However, he will not leave without the *amulet*. If the heroes kill him (despite the *contingency* spell), they can take his possessions. Unfortunately, his *spellbook* has an *explosive runes* spell cast upon it, so they will probably not be able to use it. Finally, if they take the *amulet* from him, it has only the power to control a *bastellus* and drain off its acquired dream energy, either of which might require a powers check (Dungeon Master's discretion).

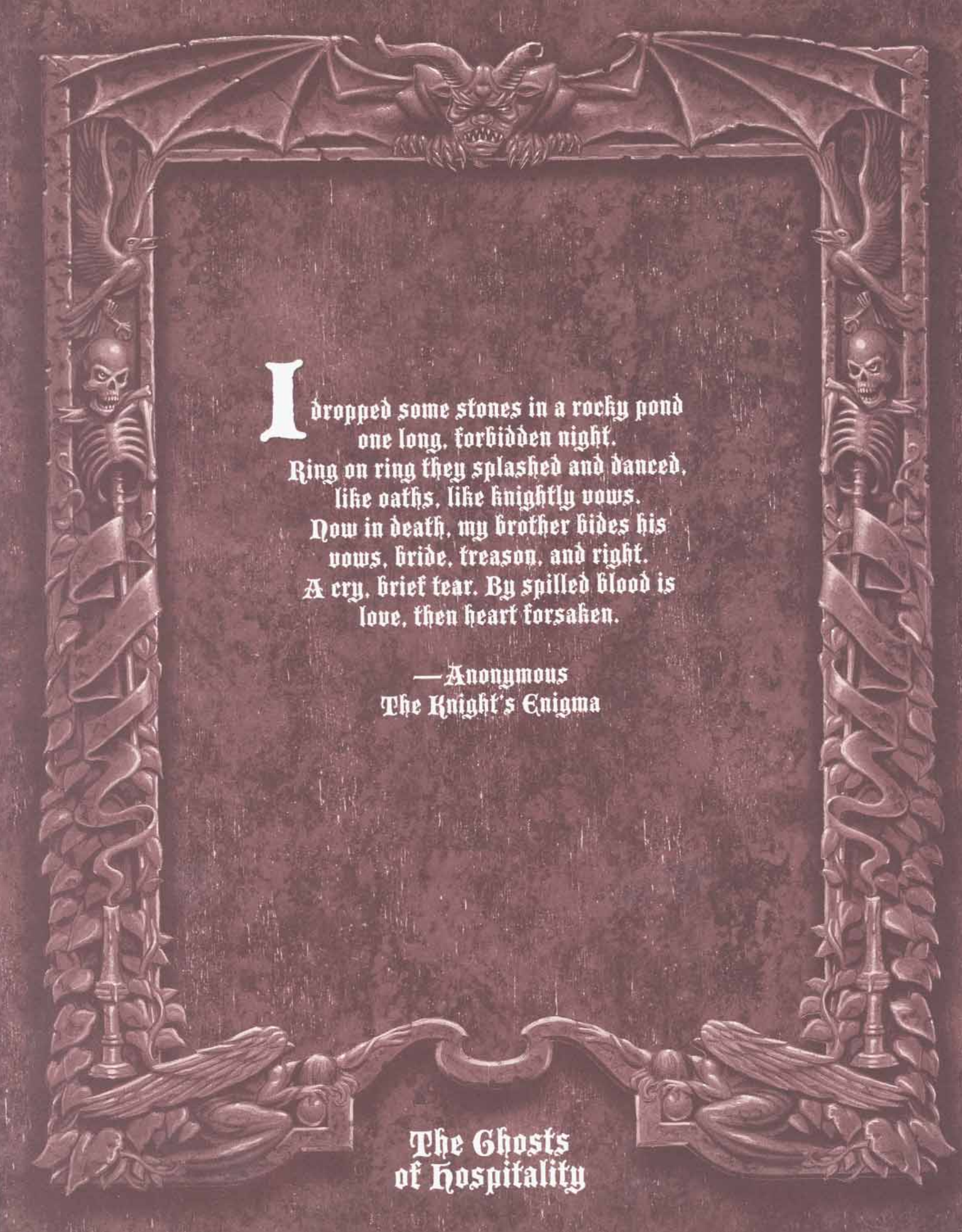
The Adventure Ends

If the heroes destroy the *bastellus* or take control of the *amulet* and send the creature away, Rhianna will be able to rest, if only for a while. Before fading away the next morning, she thanks the characters profusely. She also asks that they make sure that the bodies of all the evil creature's victims are destroyed. If not, those spirits may rise to further terrorize the townspeople.

Recurrence

While Rhianna can rest after Mikael's *bastellus* has been destroyed, she might not rest for long. If another *bastellus* begins preying on townspeople, Rhianna awakens and seeks someone to destroy it. Unfortunately, the townspeople believe that the dream-eater looks like a young female. Thus, if Rhianna should appear again, they blame her for the nightmares plaguing the town.





I dropped some stones in a rocky pond
one long, forbidden night.
Ring on ring they splashed and danced,
like oaths, like knightly vows.
Now in death, my brother hides his
vows, bride, treason, and right.
A cry, brief tear. By spilled blood is
love, then heart forsaken.

— Anonymous
The Knight's Enigma

The Ghosts
of Hospitality



The Ghosts of Hospitality



The Ghosts of Hospitality

Biography

The only legacy of a betrayal and treachery are the ghosts in the stones which haunt Castle Forfarmax. Peculiar and bitter creatures, these ghosts are dedicated to revenge an ancient wrong, repeating their malevolent, bloody history again and again.

Appearance

The ghosts of hospitality are anchored within the stones that lie over their final resting places. To most of the folk who encounter them, they appear as normal floor stones. The discerning, however, see features contorted in an ancient agony in the surface of the stones. Donal MacFarn's stone runs eternally with tears because of his brother's betrayal, and his men-at-arms' features are wrapped in sorrow and deathless rage.

It is Duncan MacFarn's fate to take physical form every time the killing room is entered. He appears briefly as a medieval knight dressed in chain mail and surcoat, a drawn and wicked sword in his hand. Then he is struck down by the largest of stones, ghostly blood flowing from his wounds into the dark earth uncovered by the stones. Weeping, Duncan returns to shade form and disappears beneath the dirt flooring to resume his solitary existence.

The Ghosts of Hospitality (21)

Third-Magnitude Ghosts, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class	-2/4*	Str	—
Movement	Fl 18 (A)	Dex	—
Level/Hit Dice	8	Con	—
Hit Points	64	Int	12
THACO	13	Wis	2
Morale	20	Cha	—
No. of Attacks	1	XP	4,000 each
Damage/Attack	1d10 to 5d10		
Special Attacks	Command undead		
Special Defenses	Insubstantiality (incorporeal)**, invisibility**, rejuvenation**, magic immunity**, +2/+1* weapons needed to hit		
Special Vulnerabilities	Susceptible to sunlight		
Magic Resistance	30%		

* Ethereal vs. nonethereal foes/ethereal vs. ethereal foes.

** Refer to the introduction for further information.

A total of one hundred active stones of various sizes lay in Castle Forfarmax. Donal has overall command of them (a variation of command undead), but each ghost of hospitality controls several lesser stones. The smallest granite shards (thirty stones) cause 1d10 points of damage; fifty large stone blocks weigh between fifty and one hundred pounds and do 3d10 points of damage; twenty weigh over one hundred pounds and exact 5d10 points of damage. Sunlight prevents the stones from flying.

Duncan MacFarn

Fourth-Magnitude Ghost, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	-3/2*	Str	18
Movement	9	Dex	15
Hit Dice	10	Con	12
Hit Points	75	Int	8
THACO	11	Wis	5
Morale	5	Cha	7
No. of Attacks	3/2	XP	11,000
Damage/Attack	2d6 (cause wounds with sword)		
Special Attacks	Cause despair, cause wounds, drain energy		
Special Defenses	Insubstantiality (mutable)**, invisibility**, rejuvenation**, magic immunity**, cannot be turned until the ghosts have been put to rest, only in physical form until "killed" by the stones, cannot be turned in physical form, +3/+1* or better weapons needed to hit		
Special Vulnerabilities	Sunlight reduces Duncan's ability scores by 50%, prevents rejuvenation, and forces him to remain corporeal		
Magic Resistance	40%		

* Ethereal vs. nonethereal foes/ethereal vs. ethereal foes or when corporeal.

** Refer to the introduction for further details.





Once the ghosts of hospitality have been laid to rest, Duncan can use his abilities to cause despair, cause wounds, and drain energy. Victims within one hundred feet of Duncan must make successful saving throws vs. spell or suffer a -3 penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and proficiency checks. This modifier lasts until the victims leave the radius of despair. Spells that boost morale (such as *remove fear*) provide a +4 bonus to the initial saving throws or allow affected characters to make new saving throws (with no bonus).

When corporeal, Duncan can use his sword to cause wounds. In addition to the damage inflicted, a victim has a percentage chance equal to the points of damage inflicted of gaining an ugly scar and losing one point of Charisma. Victims reduced to zero Charisma must make a saving throw vs. death magic. If failed, the victim dies. If it succeeds, the victim become a broken one. (See *RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendices I & II*.)

While incorporeal, Duncan can touch a victim and drain two levels of experience. (See the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide* for details on energy-draining attacks.)

Background

In the west of the highlands, a certain chief, the MacFarn of MacFarn, prepared himself for death. As he had no son or daughter to light his life, he was uncertain who should lead when he left for Avalon. He called his tanist, an aged and wise woman who had served him faithfully and well, and his twin nephews, Duncan and Donal, sons of his brother Alain, to take seat at the side of his death bed.

To his tanist, the MacFarn said these words: "Lady Iolan, you are to hold the Seat of the MacFarns for a Twelfth Month, and I solemnly charge you to watch these two. At the end of that time, you will decide which is to be the MacFarn of MacFarn, Donal or Duncan, for I know them not and cannot settle this in my own mind." So saying, the old chief gave up a massive sigh, a gentle groan, and exited this world along with his last breath.

As the months went by, the twins vied for the old man's legacy, trying to impress the tanist with their prowess as warriors, their talents in the arts, and their skills at negotiation. Both were equal in the tanist's eyes and neither could she choose, though by now she knew them very well.

Then it was that Duncan, more covetous and driven by power's lust than Donal (though he hid this well), invited his brother to a celebration dinner in the keep at Forfarmax. Donal gathered around him twenty men-at-arms, for the roads were dangerous in those days, and, heart and spirits high, rode off for the keep.

However, Duncan had other plans. Some three weeks before the event, he called in foreign stonemasons. After agreeing to his terms, the workers labored day and night to construct a very special feast hall with a low and hollow dirt floor. Upon completion, they were to cut small paving blocks for the floor, but

they were forbidden to lay them in as yet. At the same time, he had many large holes drilled into the ceiling to "take in the air and remove the smoke of the torches."

When Donal and his entourage arrived, they received a royal welcome. Duncan insisted that Donal sit at the head of the table, in the place of the chief, while Duncan sat at the foot. Donal accepted, thinking his brother had conceded his claim to the ancient, oaken Seat of Farn. But halfway through the feast, Duncan dismissed the musicians and, with his entourage, excused himself with a wave of his hand, saying, "Eat, drink, good guests, and you, beloved twin of our mother's womb. I need to settle some accounts with these gentlemen and shall return shortly."

When the door closed, Duncan barred it from the outside with a four-inch beam of solid oak that dropped into iron receivers two inches thick. His archers on the vented roof drew their ashen bows and rained death on Donal and his men from the murder holes Duncan had carved.

When the last man (Donal himself) twitched a final spasm, Duncan's men opened the door, reentered the hall, and knifed any who showed brief signs of life. They removed the tables and the remains of the feast, and then returned with the paving blocks. Donal and his men were interred on the bare soil, and Duncan's varlets laid the dressed floor stones atop their bleeding corpses. The hall they reset for dining, and the victors sat to drink and feast.

One year later, on the anniversary of that bloody, tragic night, Duncan MacFarn of MacFarn, Chief of Clan MacFarn, came home to celebrate his wedding in the ancient keep. The chief, his blushing beautiful new bride, and the entire bridal party gathered in the feast hall. Just as the last guest entered, the oak door slammed shut. The four-inch beam, without human agency, fell into its thick receivers, and the stones of the floor began to fly. In their hundreds they flew, whirling and smashing about the room, striking and bashing and hammering; death rode bloody wings that night. Everyone was slain. Duncan lay smashed and broken, penetrated by granite shards.

When the deed was done and blood stained the bare, dirt floor, the tables, and the walls, did the bar rise up and the solitary door open. Those who came to investigate some days later found a scene of abject horror; the stone plates of the floor now lay at rest and in place, the bodies of the ill-fated nuptial party lay as if sleeping on top of them.

Four hundred years after Donal and his band met their doom, the ruins of MacFarn Keep are choked with death and kept in curse. Though the keep is crumbling now, the undead Duncan unwittingly created will attack anyone opening the door of the damned into the treacherous feast hall, hailing stones from the hall of horror. After the stones have done their work, they invariably return, with precision, to the exact position in which they have lain since Donal's murder. So it has been since Duncan's wedding, so it shall be until the ghosts of hospitality find peace.





Personality

Forfarmax has since passed from the MacFarns, and that clan is now chiefless and landless, making Donal's revenge complete. The great tragedy of the Forfarmax ghosts is the sameness of their unlife. Bound to their stones, they are incapable of movement except to attack. Their spirits are so embittered that there is no communication between them, even between those who were once close friends. And Duncan, the cause of all this misery, is perhaps the most pitiful, for there is no rest for him. Always awake and conscious with no companions, sealed in the terror room of his own design for all eternity, he is by now quite mad. When there is a chance for action, he is besieged on all sides, taking form only until slain again by the stones. In his solid form, he can also be "killed" by others but rejuvenates to pay once more for his crimes.

Combat

Over the years, experience has taught the stones a couple of effective combat techniques. Their favorite is to let the shards loose first. The shards were the lesser foot troops in Donal's entourage; they are fast, accurate, and deadly. When the shards have done their damage, the larger rocks aim themselves at the intruders and launch themselves for 3d10 points of damage each. Finally, whether or not any interlopers are still standing, the boulders fly, crushing bones and bruising muscle for an additional 5d10 points of damage per stone.

A second method is to allow a large party to come most of the way into the killing room, waiting until the band is either centered or against one wall. The simultaneous explosion of stone usually leaves no survivors.

The Vengeance of Stones



his adventure is for four to six players of levels 9 to 12 (about 45 total levels). The party should include at least one priest (two would be better) and a wizard. Magical weapons of +3 or better, while they will affect Duncan, have no effect on the stones. Instead, the players should be ready to solve the mystery of how to lay the stones to rest.

This adventure can take place on any lonely heath on the Demiplane of Dread.

Background

Castle Forfarmax stands atop the highest hill in the Western Highlands. The bitter events of four hundred years ago still poison the site with the depth of their rage and the power of their hatred. The grounds within half-mile of the castle are possessed by brambles, hard-thorned bushes that scrape and tear at man's legs. The road is a hazy scar almost completely hidden in the foliage of centuries of neglect. No sound can be heard here, it is said, except for the uncommon wails of things best left undisturbed. Not a bird whistles, no foxes rustle and play, and even the crickets are silent and gone.

So has it been since the brothers died without issue; the "clansmen," fearing the wrath of the dead and the moan of the banshee, took to others, giving their allegiance as clansmen to more powerful leaders in less dangerous places. Spread throughout the Highlands, the MacFarns are a vanished race. And so its land passed to distant cousins, the macGrannins of Kilovin.

The current Lord Forfarmax, Niall MacGranin is a sophisticated and educated man in his mid-fifties. While his own large home lies in the valley formed by the castle mount and the gentle hills to the east, he has had his eye on Castle Forfarmax for some time. It would, he believes, make an excellent observatory on which to mount his new reflecting telescope. He actually had his men begin work on clearing the grounds until the overseer decided to investigate the soundness of the interior of the castle's main structure. He lived, though three of his men died, pierced by unliving rocks. The overseer's tale of flying stones and horrible wailing caused the workmen to throw down their picks, shovels, and rakes, and to run as swiftly as wounded deer from the vicinity of Forfarmax.

Niall is currently in a foul mood and has been since his work crew ran off, snapping at servants, being surly to guests, and cursing the occluded night sky above his manor. The old saying "when the lord's in sorrow, the people suffer" is more true in Forfarmax these days than anywhere else in the Highlands.

The Adventure Begins

The heroes should arrive in the town of Forfarmax toward evening. A brisk wind and a heavy rain have made the last few miles of travel difficult. Cold and wet, the welcome glow of The Two Cormorants, the town's lone small inn, beckons them to seek lodging for the night. They will learn of the problem at the inn, travel to meet with Lord Forfarmax, and then to the castle.



The inn is small and well appointed; its eight round tables look as worn as the leather-covered chairs that surround them. Everything has the appearance of aged attention and loving care. As you glance around the inn, you notice that few of the other tables are occupied, and those that are taken seem to be haunted by morose men who talk in muted grumbles and whispers. An atmosphere of melancholy abides in this place, so thick it is almost palpable.

The fat, cheerless landlord approaches and says with a sigh, "What'll it be then? There's a hearty stew on the stove, bread, good ale, and rooms to let," softly adding, "all o' 'em," under his breath.



Allow the characters to be served. If they ask what the local problem is, the landlord tells them; if they do not inquire, he tells them the tale anyway.





"You see," he says, taking a chair and pouring himself an ale from your pitcher, "a long time ago there was horrid murder done in these hills. Murder so foul it would curl your hair, it would. Murder to make evil ghosts of the very rocks the helpless victims stood upon." He takes a long swallow and continues, "Lord Forfarmax, who is also Niall MacGranin, our own clan chief, is vexed by them up there in the castle, and he would be rid of them. He'd certainly pay to be rid of them. Takes 'is vinegar out on us, he does."

If the heroes ask for more details, give them a garbled version of the background tale. Only Lord Forfarmax knows the whole story; the clansmen know only what has come their way through rumor and supposition.

If the adventurers ask how much his lordship might be willing to pay, the landlord responds that that is a matter for the Great Lord, not for lowly clansmen such as he. He also offers them directions and another incentive.

"His lordship's manor is back down the road you took up from the south, cross over the stone bridge at Kerdall Creek (the first water you come to), and turn right. That road leads to Niall's manse." The innkeeper smiles, "We'll have something here for you, too, if you can lay the ghosts back into the ground. We been keeping a fund, ourselves. Must be two hundred or three hundred gold pieces in it. Yours if you do the deed."

The heroes should rest at the inn and continue on at daybreak. Lord Forfarmax will be in a better disposition since his depression worsens with the failing afternoon light and by nightfall he is downright vicious.

The trip to the manor is uneventful. Lord Niall is gruff, nervous, and looks as if he has not slept in long while. The heroes should cut their own deal, but the man is desperate and will offer up to three hundred gold pieces per adventurer for an afternoon's work. He tells them the story of the MacFarns and warns them about an old crone that lives near the keep and occasionally pokes her hooked nose into other people's business.

When the heroes are ready to travel to the keep, go to "The Old Crone."

The Old Crone

Halfway up the hill to the keep, the old crone meets the heroes. Read the following aloud:

"Ye've been sent by MacGranin, haven't ye?" announces an elderly woman whose face sags under a great amount of wrinkles. Her hunched form shakes as she cackles loudly. "Ye think ye'll

survive the stones, do ye?" She cackles again and suddenly whispers in a cracked voice, "Don't ye be tellin' them I tole ye this, but stones dunnot like sunlight. Aye, they like the dark." Her face breaks into a wide, leathery grin just before she starts cackling again. As she skips off down the hill and into the mists, she sings out in mismatched rhyme, "Ye've been tole the way to be, now find the light and make him see! Let the arrow help your quest, just brandish it and do your best!"

If the heroes attempt to go after her, they cannot find her. It is as if she has been swallowed by the mists that surround the castle. Once they continue on up the hill, they can occasionally hear random words such as "light," "death," and "bones" echoing through the fog.

The Castle

The castle's desolate exterior is surrounded by brambles, dark thorn trees, and a thick, damp muck that sucks at the boots of those trying to cross to the tower. No animals live in the scrawny brush, and birds, in their wisdom, avoid this place altogether. A perpetual fog shrouds the castle and grounds so that the whole of its structure is never seen.

The characters can make swift progress up the castle hill, but the last one hundred yards are tough and become even more difficult with each step forward. When they reach the castle they must deal with the brambles and the mud. When traversing the brambles, the adventurers have a 50% chance of being scratched (1-4 on 1d6) or punctured (5-6 on 1d6). For the last twenty feet add 10% (cumulative) per ten feet traveled; each thorn scratch causes 1d2 points of damage, each puncture wound inflicts 1d4 points of damage. There is a 30% chance (roll for each character) that the mud surrounding the castle is quicksand. Individuals may pull themselves out with a successful Strength check at a -4 penalty, or free characters can use their wits, equipment, or Strength to rescue trapped companions.

You are at the front door of the castle. You can see that what was once a three-story structure is now collapsing in upon itself. Through the sagging main doors you can see another doorway on the right that leads to the large square extension that was the feast hall. You can also make out that the roof of the extended hall is filled with rubble and debris, the products of centuries of fear and neglect.

Shrewd heroes will consider clearing the fallen rock and detritus from the roof of the feast hall before entering the keep itself. The debris covers the ventilated roof of the feast hall extension and the murder holes to a depth of three feet. Exposing the circular holes to daylight allows enough light inside to weaken the ghosts and





The Ghosts of Hospitality

Duncan; the sunlight also prevents Duncan from returning to his ghostly form. The ghosts will throw themselves against the ceiling, creating a great din of confusion, but otherwise the characters are not threatened—even the stone shards are too large to pass through slots drilled for arrows. The pandemonium increases as the holes are opened. Fearful wails of torment and rage add to the sounds of the hard rocks crashing. At this point, a fear check should be made to see if any characters flee from the chaos on the low roof.

Once at the ruined castle door, heroes can go to two places. The feast hall door is to the right, with the bar across it, lying in the massive, iron receivers. To the left lies the crushed storage room with its minor hidden treasure. When the heroes enter the main doors to the castle, read the following:



Before you lies a hallway that extends about ten feet before being cut off by ancient stone rubble. On your right is a door, closed and barred. Two massive, U-shaped receivers sit on the door sill, one on each side of the door. In the iron sockets lies an oak timber fully four inches thick. It seals the door from the outside. Opposite this room lies a smaller room with no door.



If the adventurers go to the storage room first, read or paraphrase the following:



Through the crumbling doorway you see that half the room is in ruins and filled with fallen rock. On the wall to your left are two large cabinets, both crushed, though the bottom drawers look as if they have been spared. It appears that the MacFarns once used this room to store valuables.



In the drawers of the rotting cupboards are three gold pieces, two tarnished silver pieces, and an arrow broken off at the tip. This was the arrow that killed Donal MacFarn. When taken into the feast hall, it acts as a protection from normal missiles spell with a fifteen-foot radius. The protection it provides lasts for three turns before flickering out.

When the heroes stand outside the feast hall door, read the following aloud:



An eerie silence like that of a tomb presses down on you as you stand before the bare door. Any sound you make amplifies and echoes throughout the hall. A sense of fateful expectation taints the air around you, making it hard to breathe.



The door is unlocked. If the characters wish to enter the hall without being barred in, they must prop it open with heavy stones. Any other alternative does not stop the door from being magically held shut in some manner.

The heroes must somehow get into the dining room alive and raise the spirit of Donal, which is embedded in a flat, very heavy stone. His shade commands the other twenty ghosts inhabiting and controlling the stones (though he does not command Duncan). Each shade is faintly visible, with vaporous traces of human features dancing on the surface of the rocks that cover their specific remains.

Read the following aloud, adjusting as necessary, as the last adventurer crosses the threshold:



The door behind you slams shut with a whoosh and a bang. All around you, the stones on the floor begin to shudder and rock. Even the stones below your feet start shaking out of their places. The room is alive with vibrations.



To resolve this situation, the adventurers must uncover Donal's skeleton and lay his bones in the sunlight. It lies under the stone wet from his weeping; the crested ring worn on the index finger bone of his right hand identifies him. This action draws his spirit out of the stone. If the heroes can convince Donal that he has extracted all the vengeance he is ever going to get and that he is now killing innocent victims, he and his men will go to their final rest. Read the following aloud:



Suddenly, the floor stones whoosh to the sky in a great swirling mass. Undefined forms accompany the stones as they head up. Donal gives your party a final wave before he floats up. When they are all out of sight, you hear joyous laughter behind you. "I'm free!" declares the armored ghost behind you. With a jaunty wave of his own, the ghost leaves the room.

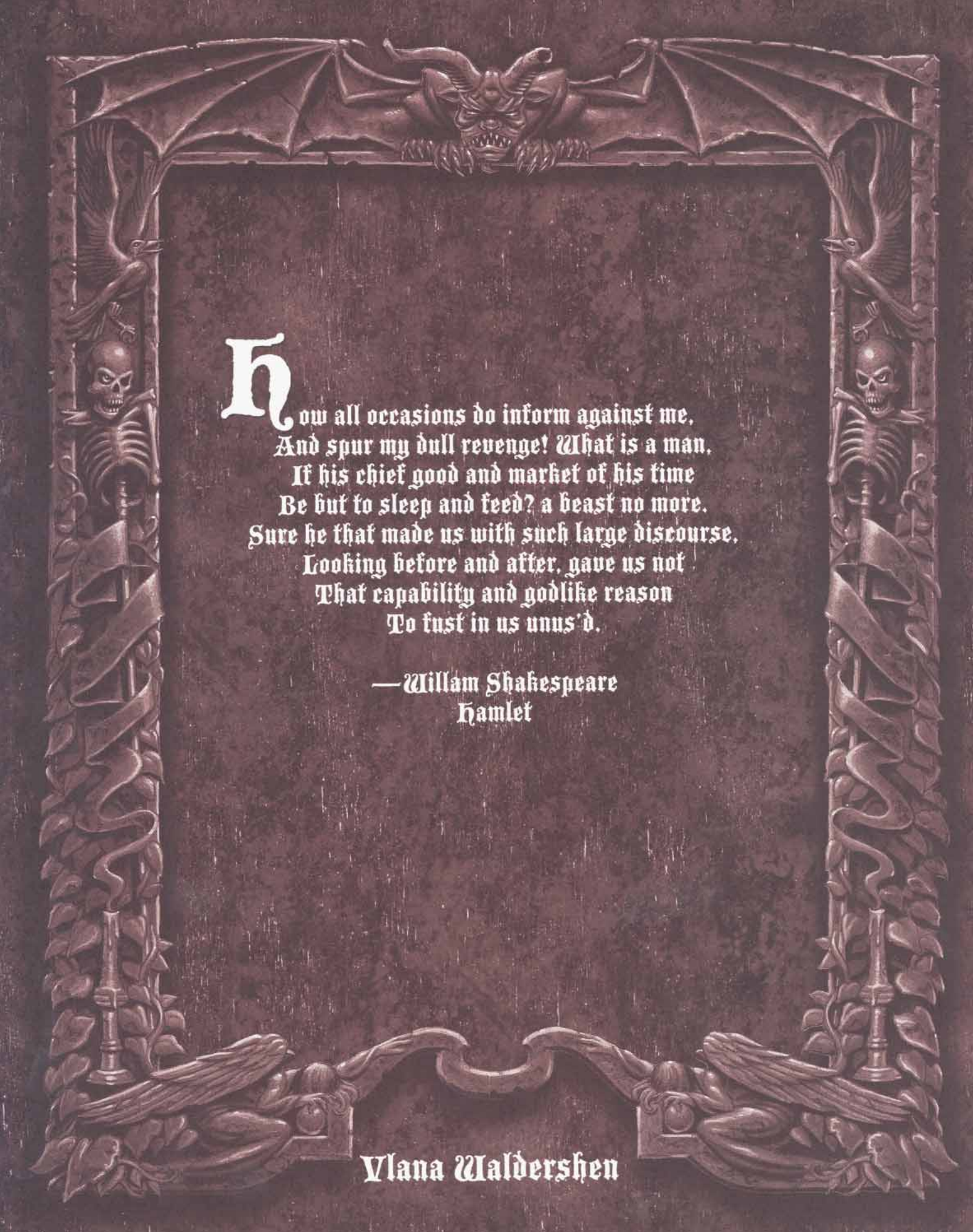


The ghost of Duncan MacFarn does not stick around to explain himself to the heroes. However, if the heroes confront him, he tells them that he can go to his rest once night falls. When the last light of day leaves the area, he becomes incorporeal and invisible. To all extents and purposes, Duncan is gone.

Recurrence

Once the ghosts of hospitality are laid to rest, Duncan MacFarn is freed from his eternal torture. He wishes to look around the area and make plans to take the reins of control from MacGranin. The Dungeon Master can bring him back into play once he has garnered a little more power.





How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast no more.
Sure he that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To fust in us unus'd.

—William Shakespeare
Hamlet

Vlana Waldershen



Biography



Vistana becoming a member of a *giorgio* family can end only in great tragedy. Such is the case with Vlana Waldershen, the ghost of an outcast Vistana who married into a rich and influential family.

Appearance

Vlana bears the harsh countenance she possessed as a living being, and her face commonly distorts with a rage that has not left her in over two decades. She can vary her physical consistency, shifting between corporeal and incorporeal, as easily as a living creature breathes. She wears the colorful Vistani garb she died in as a symbol of her renunciation of the family that took her in and made her one of their own.

Vlana Waldershen

Fourth-Magnitude Ghost, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	-3/2*	Str	18(00)
Movement	9	Dex	9
Level/Hit Dice	10	Con	13
Hit Points	51	Int	16
THACO	11	Wis	13
Morale	15	Cha	11
No. of Attacks	2	XP	14,000
Damage/Attack	2d6 (cause wound ability)		
Special Attacks	Spells, dominate victim, drain energy, cause paralysis		
Special Defenses	Insubstantiality (mutable)**, invisibility**, rejuvenation**, magic immunity**, +3/+1* or better weapons to hit		

* Ethereal vs. nonethereal foes/ethereal vs. ethereal foes or when corporeal.

** Refer to the introduction for further information.

By touching her victim, Vlana can drain two levels of experience (see Chapter 9 in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide* for further details). Vlana can also attempt to dominate a sleeping victim with her touch. The victim must make a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation with a -2 penalty or fall under her control for one week. To remain in control of a victim, Vlana's incorporeal form must slip into the body and control its actions. At the end of the week, the victim must make another successful saving throw (with the same penalty) or remain under the ghost's control for another week. If the saving throw succeeds or if Vlana is forced out of the body after successfully dominating it, then Vlana must wait one hour before she can make another attempt on that victim. (See the *magic jar* spell description for further details.)

If Vlana so chooses, her touch attack causes paralysis. The victim must make a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation with a -3 penalty or become paralyzed for 2d4 days (although *dispel magic* or something similar can remove the effect). Vlana can



Vlana Waldershen

also cause wounds with her dreaded touch. A victim of this attack has a percentage chance equal to the points of damage inflicted to permanently lose a point of Charisma due to disfigurement. If a victim's Charisma is reduced to 0, he loses the will to live; he must make a successful saving throw vs. death magic or die. Even if the saving throw succeeds, the victim becomes a broken one. (See *RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendices I & II*.)

Finally, while Vlana lived, she studied arcane mysteries. As a result, she could memorize and cast several spells. This ability remains with her even in death.

Spells Memorized: 1st—*charm person*, *magic missile*, *sleep* (x2); 2nd—*darkness 15'* radius, *fog cloud*; 3rd—*suggestion*.

Background

Vlana was thought to be a witch's daughter by her Vistani tribe. She never knew her Vistana mother, and nobody in the tribe knew who her father had been, although Vlana's mother insisted emphatically that he was wholly Vistani. Because her status as a full-blooded Vistana was uncertain, Vlana lived with the caravan as a *giogoto*, or friend of the tribe. Even though her mother's tribe welcomed her presence in their caravans, they did not allow Vlana to participate in several of the tribe's activities. While growing up, Vlana felt isolated and barely tolerated. As a result, she





started investigating the magical arts.

One day, when her caravan passed through the lands controlled by the Waldershens, Vlana met a handsome young man named Thaeos Waldershen, the local baron's son. It was clear from their first meeting that he was intrigued, and even smitten, by her dusky beauty. Vlana soon started accepting his attentions and returned them with heartfelt delight. Before either of them truly realized what was happening, Thaeos asked for Vlana's hand in marriage and she accepted.

Unfortunately, they had an obstacle to overcome before the marriage could take place. The old baron refused to accept Vlana and threatened to disinherit Thaeos if he married her. Just when matters were coming to a head, the old baron died without warning (due to Vlana's familiarity with deadly, undetectable herbs), and Thaeos inherited the manor house and its surrounding lands. Thaeos and Vlana lived blissfully and in due time had a robust son, whom they named Drugen. Once their son was born, both Thaeos and Vlana lost sight of their love for each other and focused their attentions on the child.

Thaeos was proud of his son and wished to train him in the sports a nobleman should know. By the time Drugen was four, however, Vlana was already secretly schooling him in the dark arts. She felt that Drugen might need these abilities when he ascended to the baronetcy. When Thaeos discovered her actions, he forbade Vlana from teaching such disturbing things to his son and outlawed the practice altogether in his province.

Because of her husband's reaction, Vlana felt powerless, which was a feeling that she disliked above all others. Spitefully, Vlana cast away all pretense of politeness and began behaving rudely to members of the house and visitors alike. She even approached outright paranoia and started accusing everyone of plotting to bring about her downfall. Secretly, though, she continued to school Drugen in the occult arts with more fervor than before.

Since Thaeos spent most of his time in administrative matters, some time passed before he discovered her disobedience. When confronted with it, he banished Vlana from seeing Drugen altogether and threatened to have her imprisoned if she disobeyed him again. In a fit of rage, she locked herself in her room and was neither seen nor heard from for two full days.

Two days after Vlana locked herself in the tower, the annual harvest festival took place in the village. As Thaeos reigned over the festivities, young Drugen enjoyed watching the jugglers and listening to the music of the minstrels. At the festival's climax, Vlana appeared suddenly in her old Vistani garb and made long accusations about Thaeos's treachery and deceitfulness. Just when her vituperative cries seemed to reach the pinnacle of ferocity and hatred, Vlana invoked a terrible curse, condemning the entire Waldershen line for Thaeos's crimes against her. After her vile declaration, she leaped at him, but Thaeos was quicker. He ducked her charge and, grabbing a sword

from his chief advisor, Bracy, struck the baroness through the heart. Vlana writhed in agony as the cold steel bit her flesh, and she died within moments. At her death, her shade caressed Drugen (using her cause wound ability) and then fled to the manor and took up residence in the mausoleum, where she has rested undisturbed ever since.

As the entire festival stood in silent shock, they became aware of a soft sobbing. Sitting in the corner of the village square, almost forgotten, wept four-year-old Drugen. Curiously, a bright red mark ran down the left side of his face, from hairline to neck.

Thaeos forbade any present at the festival to speak of these events. Few disobeyed, for the curse of a Vistana is a powerful thing and a topic that should not be brought up lightly. Even those who took Vlana's body to the manor and cremated it (since Thaeos refused to place her body in the mausoleum) do not speak of it. Only Thaeos and Bracy know that Vlana's ashes reside inside the manor house instead of in the mausoleum.

Though the villagers never fully forgot Vlana, they made a good effort to do so. The curse weighed heavily upon Thaeos's brow, and he brought in many experts to discuss the matter. Most of the consultants agreed: Thaeos's quick action had prevented the curse before it could come to pass; Vlana had died under her own black cloud, and the line would never fail. Thaeos was comforted by this news, but he did not forget it.

A year after Vlana's death, Thaeos married Sarna, the daughter of a neighboring count. She was young, energetic, and adored by the people. A year after their marriage, Sarna bore him a son and died after the delivery. Thaeos was beside himself with distress. Was an interpretation of the curse missed? The experts returned and their prognostications for a distraught baron were as reassuring as could be: The curse had finally been fulfilled, and the family was now safe.

While Thaeos busily threw himself into estate matters in an effort to forget the curse, Drugen became increasingly moody. While he did not remember the events of the cursed festival, he missed his mother. Aester, Sarna's son, was more carefree, but the two were not very close. Hoping to draw the brothers together, Thaeos brought in a young warder named Josephine to be raised with them. She was the daughter of a provincial lord and was just four years old when she arrived. She and Aester, one year her senior, grew close as they aged, while Drugen, who was six years older than the girl, withdrew even further.

After many years passed, Vlana decided to move into action. Using her powers, she dominated Drugen so that he could start rebuilding the arcane laboratory in her old room. Midway through this process, Thaeos discovered Drugen's activities and almost disinherited him. Before he could utter the words, however, Vlana left Drugen's body and killed Thaeos. Then, by using a *suggestion* spell, Vlana had Drugen make it look like Thaeos had died in his sleep.

After the funeral, Vlana once again dominated Drugen and continued to set up her arcane laboratory.





Vlana Waldershen

Seeing that the relationship between Aester and Josephine was fast becoming an engagement, Vlana had Drugen declare his intention to marry Josephine. Now that the brothers are visibly at odds, Vlana feels that the stage is set for a "family tragedy."

Personality

Vlana's entire existence as a ghost has been spent preparing for the downfall of the Waldershens. She herself plans to fulfill her final curse on Thaeos's line. Although she has been patient throughout the years, she has still caused some mischief to the Waldershen household. Now that their downfall is at hand, she does not know (or even care about) what will come later. She has entertained vague hopes of reclaiming the barony for herself—as she was denied her rightful place so long ago—but right now she focuses on the present, not the future.

Combat

At some point, the heroes may need to combat Vlana. She willingly fights them anywhere, but if the battle goes badly for her, she flees to the mausoleum for a last stand. If she ever becomes mortally wounded, she retreats to the Ethereal Plane to fully rejuvenate for about an hour before coming back and trying again.

Vlana fights primarily with her spells and hands—she needs nothing else. Her touch can leave blazing red welts that fade into ugly scars. She can also cause paralysis and drain energy to render her attackers helpless.

Vlana's ultimate goal is to destroy the Waldershen family, and she will kill anyone who threatens that end. The only exception is her son: She will not kill him until he is the last remaining Waldershen, since she wishes to use him to kill his brother.

The only hope of stopping Vlana completely and forever involves either killing her outright in combat or casting a *disintegrate* spell on her ashes. Only Bracy knows that the ashes are hidden in an urn behind a secret bookcase safe in the old baron's study. (See "The Manor" for more details.) Another way to thwart Vlana's plans involves spreading her ashes over the Waldershen manor grounds to prevent her from entering them. Once she realizes that her plans can no longer be carried out, Vlana will leave the area.

The Fall of Waldershen



n this adventure, the heroes must stop the ghost of Vlana before she obliterates the Waldershen line. They can accomplish this by destroying Vlana or by banishing her from the Waldershen estates.

This adventure is designed for four to six characters of levels 9 through 12 (about 50 total levels). Heroes should have +3 or better magical weapons available to combat Vlana. It would also be helpful, but not

necessary, to have a wizard with the ability to cast the *disintegrate* spell present. This adventure can take place in any rural setting.

Background

The adventure takes place ten days after Thaeos's funeral. When the heroes arrive in the village, they can sense the villagers' excitement. The reason for the activity and excitement is that Drugen, now Baron Waldershen, announced two days ago that he intends to marry Josephine within the month. The news came as a shock, as it is well known that Josephine and Aester have strong feelings for each other. Unfortunately, the new Baron will not be denied and refuses to listen to reason.

Aester has protested the marriage, but he can do nothing short of challenging his brother—which he is considering. He does not know the full story of the curse, but he knows that Drugen's mother was a Vistana and that mysterious circumstances surround her death. He has consulted Bracy, who was formerly his father's chief advisor, but has not yet convinced him to speak about past events.

As for Josephine, she has never been comfortable around Drugen. She is terrified of him in his current state but does not possess the strength to resist him openly. She knows that her father would heartily approve of a marriage between her and Drugen, so she feels that she cannot return home to escape the situation.

The Adventure Begins

After arriving in the village, the heroes see several groups of women chatting together and weaving garlands outside their small cottages. As they pass by one of these groups, a man with his sleeves rolled up walks over and announces to the group of women that another boar has been dressed for the wedding feast. He walks on to the next group. If the heroes speak to the women, they find out the following:

- ✿ The new Baron Waldershen plans to marry Josephine de Monceau in two days.
- ✿ The old baron's funeral was ten days ago.
- ✿ The women believe that Josephine and Aester Waldershen, the Baron's younger brother, love each other. They also believe that Aester and Drugen have bad blood between them over the whole situation.
- ✿ The new baron has been withdrawn and reclusive ever since he was a child.
- ✿ Bracy, the old baron's chief advisor, believes that a ghost haunts the manor.
- ✿ The Waldershen family suffers under a terrible curse.

When the heroes find out all that they wish to (or decide not to talk to the women), a black carriage rolls into town and stops before the cottage next to them. Read the following aloud:





As you watch, a matched pair of ebony horses bring a dark carriage to a stop in front of the cottage next to you. The driver climbs down from his perch and opens the door for the carriage's occupant. A beautiful woman with light brown hair gracefully steps down from the carriage. Her delicate features attempt to form a neutral expression, but the underlying sadness, and even fear, that she feels is betrayed by her brown eyes. She sees you watching and becomes momentarily disconcerted.

From inside the carriage comes a dark, masculine voice, "I will be back for you shortly, Josephine. Try not to dally. We've a lot to accomplish before nightfall." Josephine's look of fear intensifies before she composes herself and enters the cottage. Once she is safely inside, you hear a thumping from inside the carriage, and the carriage driver cracks his whip. Slowly, the carriage starts moving forward.



After the carriage moves off, the heroes can find out from the women that the man in the carriage was Baron Drugen Waldershens and that Josephine is visiting the seamstress for a final fitting on her bridal gown. By now, the heroes' curiosity should be piqued. If they continue to ask questions, the women shoo the heroes away, telling them that a lot of preparations must be made before the wedding. The women also tell the heroes that they can usually find Bracy at the Bray Nigh Inn if they want to know more. They mention that the inn is the only place that Bracy feels comfortable since Baron Thaeos's death.

Bracy is not at the inn this evening, but the barkeep Rin knows his whereabouts. If asked, he states the following:

- ❁ Bracy has gone "ghosting" on the manor grounds. Just the other night, Bracy was sure that he saw something near the mausoleum. Rin mentions that Bracy often wishes that someone with knowledge of ghosts would come along and help him.
- ❁ Rin is not superstitious. He thinks that the ghost is a scheme of the new baron to get Aester's girl.
- ❁ Rin knows nothing about the curse since he did not live in the area during the fateful festival.
- ❁ He has heard some people saying that Baron Drugen has not been the same since his father's death.

If the heroes try to speak with Josephine before the carriage returns, she seems wary at first. If they convince her of their intention to help her, she asks them to meet her at the Waldershens manor that evening, since Drugen will be busy. If they attempt to get something more from her than that, the carriage comes to collect her.

Nothing further can be found in the village about the events at the manor. When the heroes decide to head for the manor, go to "The Manor."

The Manor

The Manor Grounds: The manor grounds of the Waldershens are at the edge of a large wood two miles from the village. An eight-foot iron fence surrounds the grounds, and two stone pillars flank the gate. The grounds immediately around the manor house and stables look well-kept, but the rest of the grounds have been somewhat neglected. Overgrown patches of weeds choke once formal gardens, and a small orchard has been swallowed up by tall grass.

The Mausoleum: The most neglected area is the northwest corner of the grounds, where the entrance to the mausoleum lies. The area is choked with weeds and overgrown with scrub so dense that visibility is limited to four feet. Hidden in the brush is a small (ten feet by ten feet) mausoleum, itself obscured by thick ivy. Underneath the brush and ivy is a building made of aged stone with an iron gate that leads to the catacombs beneath the manor grounds. If not for the ageless construction of this mausoleum, the building would have fallen over years ago.

Thaeos so reviled Vlana for speaking her curse that he had the body burned instead of buried; in fact, Vlana's ashes remain in the manor house.

The last interment in the mausoleum was Thaeos's father, and he occupies the last berth in the catacombs. (Sarna's body was sent to her family for burial.) No excavation has taken place to add room, so Thaeos was buried a short distance from the mausoleum entrance. His grave does not yet bear a headstone, but it is easily visible as a mound of fresh earth and a wreath of dead flowers.

The Manor House: The manor house itself is a two-story structure made of stone with plentiful windows, but it too has seen nobler days. While not quite run down, the house bears a gloomy air that it did not have in years past. Vines of ivy crawl up the walls and frame the panes of leaded glass, but even the leaves have taken on an ashen hue. Dungeon Masters should feel free to add details to the house to suit their current campaigns.

Vlana's ashes are stored in the old baron's study. Thaeos had Bracy place them in an urn and hidden in the secret bookcase safe in hopes that the curse would be deflected. The safe is revealed when the hook holding Thaeos's father's scabbard is pulled out from the wall. Underneath the urn lies part of a letter from Rudolph Eneimos, one of the people Thaeos consulted about the curse after Sarna died. The letter states "After talking to you about the curse, it is my humble opinion that the complete and irrevocable destruction of her remains should put the curse to a final rest. However, if that cannot be accomplished, I believe that her remains should serve to protect against immediate danger. Nothing . . ." The rest of the paper has been ripped away. At the time, Thaeos assumed that since he had cremated Vlana's remains, the curse would stop. However, Rudolph was referring to the *disintegrate* solution listed in the "Combat" section.

Finding Bracy: If the heroes come to the manor looking for Bracy, he can be found west of the house, wandering the area in search of the ghost that he believes haunts the manor. Bracy, an older man with graying red hair cut short above his powerful shoulders, served as Baron Thaeos's





retainer and chief advisor. Just recently, he was released from his post by Drugen. He is somewhat wary of the heroes' motives, but if they can convince him of their interest in helping him with the ghost or concern with Josephine's feelings about being married, he takes them back to the Bray Nigh so that they can have "a private discussion away from Baron Drugen and his brother." Once there, he asks the innkeeper for a private room. In the room, he bars the door and begins the tale of Vlana's curse, warning the heroes not to speak of it to anyone else.

Use the details presented in Vlana's background and the adventure background to tell the story from Bracy's point of view, casting Vlana in the worst possible light. Since he feels uncomfortable revealing this information, he often hesitates. The heroes must continually prod him into speaking if they wish to obtain all of the details.

Aester does not know this story. It had been Thaeos's wish that Aester never learn of the events, so Bracy has to this point refrained from telling him. However, Bracy desires someone's help, and he hopes to get it from the heroes.

If the heroes ask pertinent questions, they can learn the following:

- ☼ Three days after Thaeos's death, Bracy saw movement by the mausoleum. While checking it, Bracy saw what he thought was a woman suddenly disappear from sight. Since then, Bracy has seen occasional glimpses of a woman who promptly disappears, as if sensing his gaze.
- ☼ Baron Drugen has been behaving differently for several months now. Bracy believes that some evil influence has been creeping over the baron, causing him act rudely and harshly to his family and staff. He thinks that this might be due to ghostly possession, but he is not sure.
- ☼ Drugen's behavior grew worse after Thaeos died. Now he hides away in his mother's room for hours at a time. Bracy suspects that Drugen has taken up his mother's arcane arts.
- ☼ Bracy knows that Aester and Josephine love each other, but he feels powerless to stop her marriage to Drugen.

Bracy can provide no more leads to solve the mystery, but he can take the heroes to explore the grounds or to consult with Josephine, who should be home by now (see "Meeting Aester").

Meeting Aester

As the heroes arrive at the grounds, Aester meets them at the gate. Read or paraphrase the following:

As you approach the stark stone pillars of the gate, a cloaked rider dismounts his chestnut steed to open the iron gates and enter. When he sees you, however, he stops. Brushing his fair hair back, he looks at Bracy with a questioning expression on his face. As he does so, his cloak falls open enough to reveal a sword hanging at his side.

After Aester dismounts, he and Bracy greet each other, and Aester asks him about the heroes and their business at the manor. Bracy introduces the heroes but is abrupt when describing their errand. He says only that the heroes are experts at identifying ghosts. Aester then asks to talk to Bracy alone. Before going, Bracy encourages the heroes to look around the northwestern half of the grounds. He says that he will catch up with them in a few moments. After excusing themselves, Bracy leads Aester's horse away from the group and follows Aester as he wanders some distance towards the manor house. If the heroes decide to follow his advice, go to "Seek and Ye Shall Find."

Seek and Ye Shall Find

When the heroes approach the northwestern corner of the grounds, read the following aloud:

After parting some thick underbrush aside, you come upon a small clearing lit by the full moon. A dark figure faces a mound of brush. He stands completely still, zombielike, and his lips move silently in an unheard conversation.

The figure is Drugen. He is in a trancelike state and stands in a spot exactly above Vlana's lair in the mausoleum. She has summoned him here to attempt to place a suggestion in his mind. If the heroes watch Drugen silently, they witness him begin to shake violently as he throws off the power of her spell. If the heroes approach Drugen during his trance, he does not react to them at all. Touching him or causing him any physical harm, however, alerts Vlana to their presence and breaks the spell. Either way, Drugen collapses to the ground in exhaustion. At the same time Drugen collapses, they hear Aester's voice crying out in alarm and fear.

After Aester and Bracy left the heroes to talk privately, a creature dressed in colorful Vistani garb came up from behind Bracy, grabbed him about the throat, and dragged him off into the brush. Panicking, Aester's horse reared and galloped off in the direction of the heroes. Looking about in desperation, Aester called for Bracy but received no answer.

If the heroes do not go to Aester's aid immediately, he first rouses the servants and then attempts to find the heroes. With this extra help, he takes Drugen inside the manor and organizes a search for Bracy. Unless they look in the mausoleum soon, it is doubtful that the heroes find Bracy alive.

Aester shows concern for his brother and makes certain that Drugen rests comfortably. After checking him over, he finds that Drugen has no physical wounds, though he remains unconscious all evening.

Once his brother is taken care of, Aester calls the heroes into his study on the first floor. After they sit down, Aester relates the events of the day and asks for help.





- ✱ Aester just returned from a trip to see an old Vistana woman about what little he knows about the curse. She claimed that the curse was partly broken but would say no more.
- ✱ He suspects that Drugen's mother was involved with the curse. However, he does not know any further details.
- ✱ His brother has been behaving strangely for several months, getting worse after Thaeos's death.
- ✱ Aester loves Josephine, and he knows that she returns that love.

If the heroes decide to help Aester and start by searching the grounds (including the mausoleum), go to "The Mausoleum." If they wish to speak to Josephine, then go to "Interviewing Josephine." If any of the heroes wish to place a watch over Drugen that night, then run "The Sentinels."

What Happens If . . . If Drugen remains conscious for the evening, he tries to usher the heroes off the grounds. He desires no additional complications as he prepares for his wedding and wants no possible support for his brother's protestations.

Interviewing Josephine

The heroes may wish to speak with Josephine and find out what she knows. They can find her in the sitting room, busily working on needlework. After introductions have been made, she shares some information with the heroes:

- ✱ She loves Aester and fears Drugen. Drugen has been acting strangely for the last several months.
- ✱ She knows very little about the curse or Vlana. As a result, any questions on these topics provoke little response from Josephine.
- ✱ Josephine willingly volunteers information about some nightmares that she has had since she was a child. She describes dreams about a floating woman who comes into her room and watches her sleep. The woman has a pale face, and her eyes are too empty, which is what frightens Josephine the most. Recently the dreams have become violent. Josephine dreams that the woman tries to kill her. So far the woman in the dream has thrown Josephine from her window and strangled her with her own shawl. She has even had other nightmares where the woman beats her again and again with a heavy statue Josephine has in her room.
- ✱ Josephine eventually told Bracy of the bad dreams, and he gave Josephine a good luck charm. The charm is a small red vial of opaque glass dangling from a red ribbon. When she wears it, she does not dream of the woman. She thinks that Bracy got the charm from the Thaeos's study.

The charm contains a small portion of Vlana's ashes, and it gives the wearer a +4 bonus on die rolls to resist Vlana's powers and spells. If the heroes make the connection between the charm and the study, allow

them to look for Vlana's ashes there. (See "The Manor" for more details.)

The Sentinels

Aester does not put a guard over Drugen this night, although the heroes might wish to do so. If not, sometime between midnight and dawn Vlana's ghost enters the manor house. She comes through Drugen's window—whether it is open or not—and attempts to dominate his body again. Anyone present has a chance to stop her. It takes three rounds for her to successfully dominate Drugen, and any hit that causes her damage foils the attempt. If the heroes successfully stop Drugen's domination, Vlana tries again the next night, and the next night, and so on.

Vlana has waited a long time for her revenge on the Waldershens, and the involvement of the heroes has—in her mind at least—threatened to stop the chain of events. She took Bracy and killed him, hoping it would be enough to drive off the heroes. Though his body lies cold and dead in the mausoleum below, the troublemakers remain.

Her first action as Drugen is to find, and murder, Aester. If the heroes are not with Aester or have not posted a guard outside Drugen's room, she enters Aester's bedchamber and plunges Drugen's dagger into his heart. If a guard is posted, she demands to know who the person is and why he came to the manor. She also requests that he leave at once. After voicing this demand, Drugen/Vlana makes her way into Aester's room and attempts to kill him. Though Aester puts up a valiant effort to defend himself, Drugen/Vlana possesses great strength. Unless aided, Aester (0-level human) falls to her attack.

If the heroes do interfere, they need to kill or severely incapacitate Drugen to stop him. Vlana cares nothing for her son's life and will throw it away without consideration. If they incapacitate Drugen, Vlana abandons the body when they are not looking. If they kill him, she abandons it immediately.

Drugen/Vlana, hm F1 (dominated): AC 10; MV 12; hp 7; THAC0 17 (Strength bonus); #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+6 (dagger, Strength bonus); SA 18(00) Strength due to Vlana's control; SZ M (5'6"); ML champion (15); Int very (11); AL CE; XP 15.

If she kills Aester, Drugen/Vlana proceeds to Josephine's room to exact the fate with which she tortured the poor girl in her dreams. She plans to paralyze her, beat her to death, and turn her into a ghost.

If her domination of Drugen ends without achieving her goals, Vlana seeks to murder Aester and Josephine at any opportunity. She appears when they are left alone and drains their energy or paralyzes them and dispatches them by other means. If they are not left alone, she waits until she can dominate another victim.





The Mausoleum

Just behind the mausoleum's gate lie thick, oaken doors, but these blew open years ago, allowing in volumes of leaves, rodents, and other debris. Inside the building stands a shrine to the Waldershén line—a life-sized statue of a nobleman in full plate armor without a helm, wielding a sword aloft in a gesture of timeless pride. The entire room is covered with thick layers of dust, cobwebs, and dead leaves, which also adds a musty, decaying smell to the atmosphere. In a pile of decaying leaves lies the cold body of Bracy. His throat shows the bruises of being dragged through the brush, and his lifeless hands bear broken fingernails, indicating a struggle. If necessary, horror checks should be made when the characters see Bracy.

The entrance to the catacombs lies under the statue, and close examination of the statue's base shows that it can be slid away from the gate. Since the mechanism is in disrepair, the heavy statue does not slide as easily as it once did. It takes a combined sixty points of Strength to expose the full trapdoor, and any lesser amount opens the trapdoor only enough for a halfling to crawl through.

The trapdoor gives way to a ten-foot drop into the catacombs. The main intersection smells of mold and rotting flesh, and several dead rats—large ones—are scattered within sight. From there, three passages parallel the edges of the manor grounds.

Vlana's lair is, ironically, in Thaeos's father's berth at the end of the middle passage from the entrance. Read the following aloud, adjusting as necessary, when a hero enters the room:



Following the trail of dead rats leads you to a small room. The smell of death hangs heavily in the air. Suddenly, the air thickens, and you realize that you can see your breath. Before you, a misty form starts coalescing into a female shape. Hate-filled eyes glare down upon you as she approaches angrily.



Fear checks should be made at this point. When Vlana attacks, it is up to the heroes to take care of themselves.

Conclusions

The degree of success that the heroes achieve with this adventure depends on how many members of the Waldershén family still live and if Vlana remains a ghost. If both brothers live, Drugen does not assert his previous desire to marry Josephine. He thanks the heroes, blesses Aester and Josephine's marriage, and acknowledges that a heavy weight which he did not even know he bore has been taken from his shoulders. If Drugen perishes, Aester becomes the baron and rules the land with Josephine at his side for years to come. If both brothers die, the heroes have failed.

Recurrence

If Vlana remains a ghost and the Waldershéns still live, she continues her attempts to kill them. If Vlana lives and the heroes spread her ashes around the manor, then she realizes that she cannot fulfill the curse and flees the area. If the Waldershéns have died and the heroes have not managed to banish her from the manor grounds with her ashes, she takes control of the manor house and attempts to rule the lands around it. She begins terrorizing the village and turns her victims into ghosts bent on serving her needs. Eventually, she will command a ghostly army and set about conquering nearby provinces.

If Josephine becomes a ghost, she continues to haunt the manor grounds.

Josephine de Monceau (Third-magnitude ghost): AC -2/4*; MV 9; HD 7; hp 26; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg none; SA keen; SD insubstantiality (incorporeal)**; invisibility**, rejuvenation**, magic immunity**, not harmed by weapons less than +2/+1*, cause despair; SZ M (5'5" tall); ML average (8); Int average (8); AL N; XP 4,000.

Notes: SA—keen: 2/day, 30-ft. radius, save vs. death magic or die; SD—despair: 100-ft. radius, save vs. spell or -2 to all rolls;

* Ethereal vs. nonethereal foes/ethereal vs. ethereal foes or when corporeal.

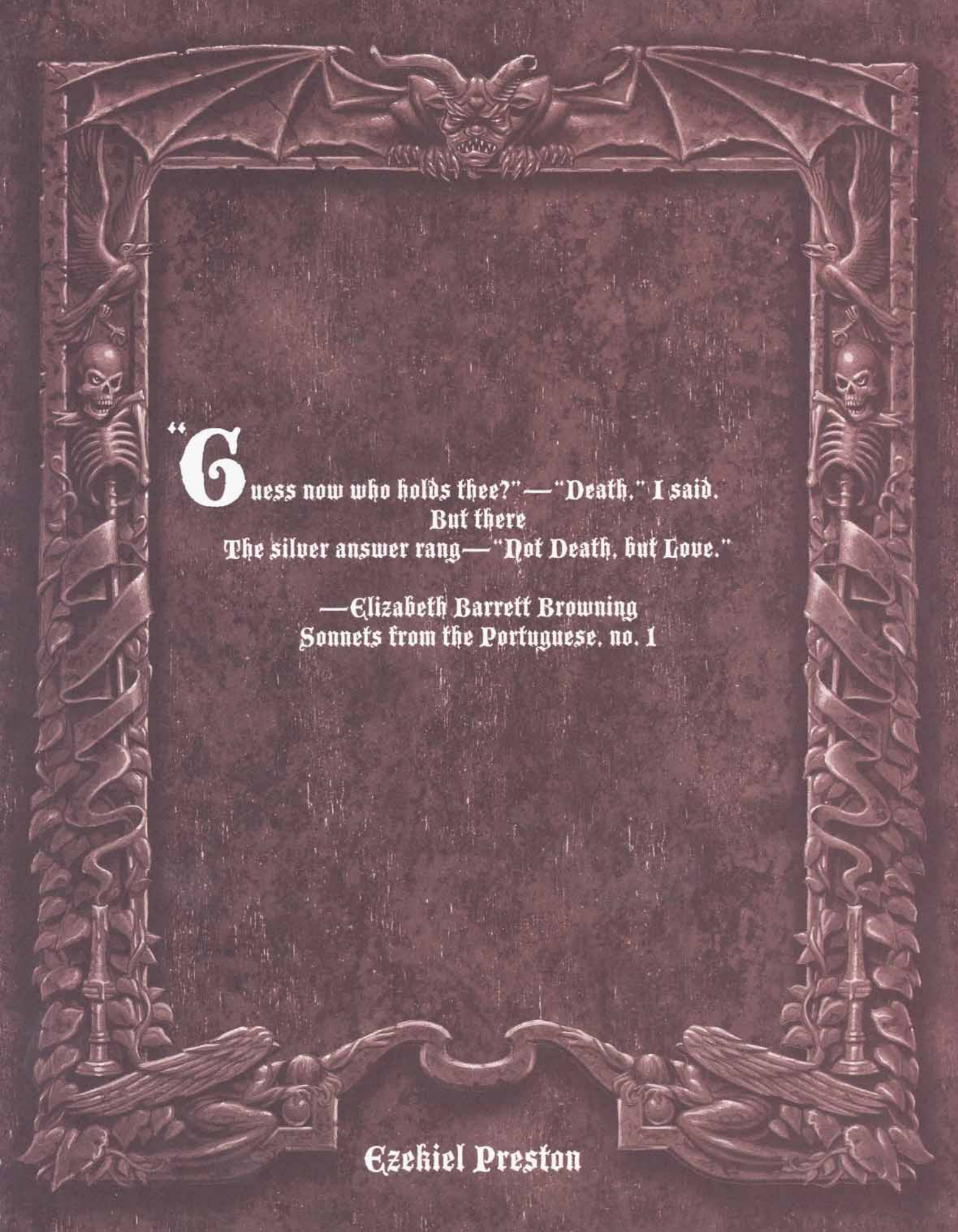
** See the introduction for further information

Josephine would be as beautiful a ghost as she was a human if all of her fatal injuries had not remained with her. As it is, she looks like a beautiful woman who was beaten to death with a blunt object. Her crushed head sits crookedly on her broken shoulders, and her right arm hangs limply at her side. Her hair still flows down her back, but it is ripped out in patches and the rest is a tangled mess.

She wanders the manor grounds, and those who see her report that she cowers in fear, gibbering unintelligibly. She does attempt to speak—when the rare opportunity presents itself—but her words are always mere moans and grunts. She does not seem to understand fully the circumstances of her existence.

Since her death, she refuses to reenter the manor house or go near the corner of the mausoleum at any cost. She keeps each night at 3:13 (the time of her death). If approached aggressively, Josephine flees. If pursued, her distress increases, automatically triggering her ability to cause despair. If attacks persist, she howls in pain, triggering her keening attack. As a last resort, she goes berserk. Her resulting rampage does not end until every living being on the manor grounds is dead or has fled.





“**G**uess now who holds thee?” — “Death,” I said.
But there
The silver answer rang — “Not Death, but Love.”

—Elizabeth Barrett Browning
Sonnets from the Portuguese, no. 1

Ezekiel Preston



Biography



f all the tragedies that Fate can level upon human lives, none seems so great as that of unfulfilled love. The melodrama of Amalia Preston and Willem Tyson is told far and wide by all who understand the sorrow of lovers cheated by Fate and other, darker forces such as those embodied by Ezekiel Preston.

Appearance

Ezekiel Preston, a devilishly handsome gentleman in life, has managed to retain his appearance in death. He has raven-black hair, sharp black eyes, and a well-trimmed goatee. He dresses richly, and due to his illusion power, can actually change his clothing or appearance whenever he wishes. He frequently carries a cane topped with a crystal ball. When he is not concentrating on his appearance, his legs tend to blur into a colorful haze.

Ezekiel Preston

Fourth-Magnitude Ghost, Lawful Evil

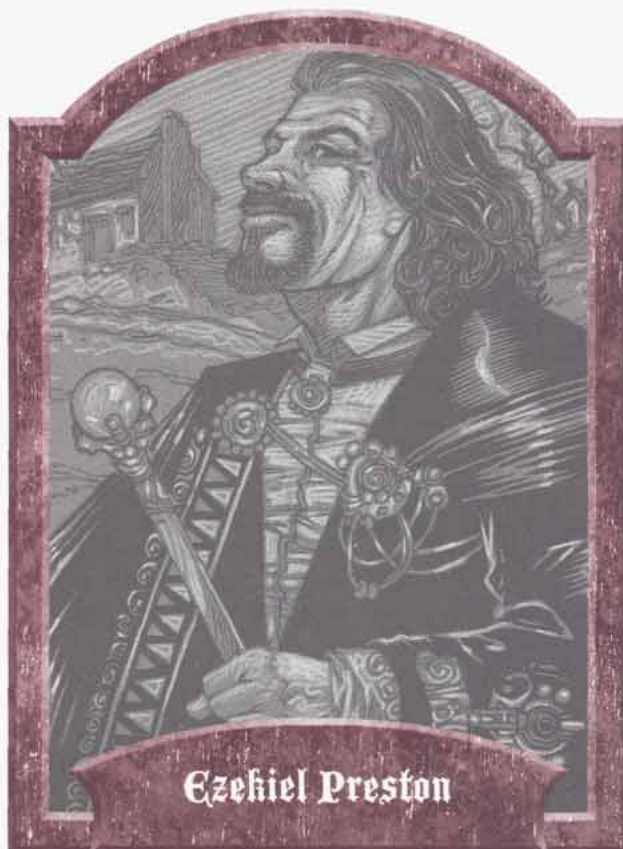
Armor Class	-3/2*	Str	15
Movement	Fl 24 (A)	Dex	14
Level/Hit Dice	12	Con	16
Hit Points	90	Int	18
THAC0	9	Wis	11
Morale	5	Cha	9
No. of Attacks	1	XP	13,000
Damage/Attack	Nil		
Special Attacks	Accelerate aging, create illusions, drain memories, inhabit objects		
Special Defenses	Insubstantiality (mutable)**, invisibility**, rejuvenation**, magic immunity**, +3/+1* or better weapons to hit		

* Ethereal vs. nonethereal foes/ethereal vs. ethereal foes or when corporeal.

** See the introduction for further details.

With a successful touch attack, Preston has the chance to age his victim $1d4 \times 20$ years. If the victim is an 11th-level priest or higher, he automatically makes his saving throw vs. spell. If the victim is not from the priest group and has thirteen or more levels of experience, then he gains a +2 bonus when making a saving throw against this attack.

Preston also has the ability to create illusions that appeal to the senses of sight, sound, smell, and touch. He loves to use this ability in conjunction with his ability to drain memories (so that he completely throws a victim off-track). To drain memories from a victim, Preston must make a successful touch attack. The victim loses permanently the last $1d10 \times 10$ months worth of memory unless he makes a successful saving throw vs. spell. If the victim succeeds, he regains his memories gradually over the next $4d10$ days. Preston also has an unusual variant of the ability to inhabit objects. Since he cannot



Ezekiel Preston

travel more than one mile away from his temporary anchor location, he must inhabit an object no larger than a human and be carried away from the anchor location. The point at which he leaves the object becomes his next temporary anchor location.

Background

Until his thirtieth birthday, Ezekiel Preston had the best of everything. He had a perfectly healthy body, an excellent education, a beautiful wife, and a large amount of wealth. However, while in his teens, Preston developed a taste for gambling. After a while, he grew bored making bets within his means, so he started putting up larger sums and going into debt. At first, he was able to get money from his father. After his father refused to pay, though, Preston set up an "accident" that killed his sire. Then, to help buffer his gambling habits, he married the richest, most beautiful woman he could find.

In an effort to remain in control of his gambling, Preston purchased a house that he could retreat to whenever he felt the urge to gamble. That is when he first saw Amalia. She seemed so pure and innocent that his breath was quite taken away. He decided then and there that he needed to take her as his wife so that her purity could rid him of his gambling habit. After making arrangements with Amalia's family, he returned to the city to dispose of his current wife and all of her assets (to pay off the last of his gambling debt). Then he returned to Preston Hill and awaited the day that he would marry Amalia.





Unfortunately, Amalia wished to marry someone else. Preston found this out after the young man, whose name was Willem Tyson, came forth and faced him in combat. Because Preston had been schooled in such things, it was an easy matter to dispatch the young whelp. One day after her would-be lover's funeral, Preston married Amalia.

However, Amalia sickened and died not too many months after the wedding. Preston refused to follow her deathbed request to bury her next to Willem. Instead Preston had her buried near his home. After unsuccessfully trying to sell his house and being shunned by the locals, Preston moved back to the city. Without Amalia's purity to temper him, Preston fell into his old ways with a vengeance, gambling himself into the poorhouse. One winter's day, while trying to find a good spot to beg for more coins, he stumbled over a frozen corpse. Instead of seeing the corpse's face, however, he saw his own. Fear settled deep into Preston's bones. That night, while lying shivering in the poorhouse and brooding over Amalia's love for another man, he vowed that death would never hold him. The next morning, his corpse was thrown onto a heap with several others while his ghost watched gleefully.

Personality

Ezekiel Preston has a wide selfish streak in him. He is also self-centered and insists on having things go his way. Although he is not a procrastinator, he does linger, and even savor, the plan-making stages of any scheme that he wishes to implement. As in life, Preston's biggest weakness is gambling. Any time someone presents a situation to him in the form of a bet or gamble, Preston takes him up on it.

Combat

As a fourth-magnitude ghost, Preston has several abilities at his fingertips. He uses his ability to age victims only when he is angry or in immediate danger. He prefers to toy with his victims by draining memories from them and then placing them in illusionary situations and seeing how they react. Since Preston has a measure of self-doubt, he often flees after being hit a few times. He rationalizes his flight by believing that he needs a better plan to dispose of his enemy.

The Preston Hill Ghosts



his adventure is suited for four to six player characters of levels 12 to 15 (about 72 levels total). Because of Ezekiel Preston's involvement with the scenario, weapons with magical bonuses of +3 or better will be helpful. The adventure can be set virtually anywhere in any time period in a tiny, remote village.

The Dungeon Master can vary the difficulty of solving the mystery in this scenario by determining how much

time has passed since Amalia's death. If she was buried rather recently (a few years or less), clues will still be fresh and many residents will be available who can relate the circumstances of the story. If many years have passed (perhaps fifty or more), residents who were direct witnesses of the events will have died or moved from the area, leaving fewer witnesses and more second-hand (and thus less accurate) information.

Background

Amalia Wright (her maiden name) was a rather plain girl with thick, dark tresses and sparkling blue eyes. As it is in all small towns, neighbors knew her for miles around, but no neighbor took more interest in Amalia than Willem Tyson, her schoolmate. When Willem turned thirteen, he and Amalia (who was eleven) stood under a spreading oak tree and promised themselves to each other forever, sealing their pact with a kiss. When Amalia turned fourteen and finished school, they planned to marry.

In the meantime, Amalia's parents promised her hand to Ezekiel Preston. The young couple pleaded with Amalia's father and mother to cancel the wedding, but the Wrights would not hear of it. Amalia cried every day as the wedding approached. Her parents realized that a bride who cried through her wedding day would be quite a spectacle and would not reflect favorably on anyone. They postponed the wedding until they could ensure that their daughter was restored to physical and mental health.

Overjoyed at her temporary freedom, Amalia ran from the house, saddled her horse, and set off to find Willem. At his home, however, she learned from a neighbor that he had left the house in a rage, carrying a sword and cursing Preston under his breath. Amalia rode swiftly to Preston's home, hoping to prevent Willem from committing an act he would regret.

Upon reaching Preston Hill, she could hear angry shouts so she spurred her horse up the slope. As she crested the hill, she caught sight of Preston and Willem sparring with each other, but a sudden flash of steel in the moonlight told her she was too late. Willem staggered and crumpled to the ground, a victim of Preston's quick dagger. The following day, Willem was laid to rest in the graveyard adjoining the school where he and Amalia played as children.

A day later, Preston and Amalia were wed. A more cheerless wedding could hardly be imagined. The bride barely managed to whisper her consent to the minister's vows, and all in attendance were overcome with sympathy for the grieving bride. Only Preston and the Wrights showed any signs of joy at the wedding dinner.

Amalia led a tortured existence over the next several months. Her nights were sleepless, and her days were spent wandering the nearby hills or sitting for hours near Willem's grave. Five months after Willem's death, Amalia took to her bed. The girl who once brought cheer to all who knew her was too weak to walk, speak, or dress.





On a gloomy winter day precisely six months after Willem's demise, Amalia sat straight up in her bed and spoke to her maid. Her figure was bony and her hair matted, but in her eyes danced the old sparkle of life. "I'll soon see Willem!" she announced. "Help me get ready!" Then her voice dropped to a whisper. "Make sure that we are together in this world for all eternity." Then Amalia fell back into her pillows and died.

Preston, despite her deathbed request, buried Amalia on the edge of the woods behind his home, with a white marble stone marking her grave. After repeatedly trying to sell the house, Preston closed it up in late winter and moved out of the area forever. The Wrights endured six months living as strangers in their own village, but Amalia's hauntings eventually drove them from their home.

Amalia's ghostly appearances were barely noticeable at first, but they intensified with each full moon. Six months after her death, her spirit fell into the pattern that she follows currently. Almost immediately after Amalia's death, Willem settled into his current pattern of hauntings. To this day, the pair seem to have no knowledge of each other's situation in the afterlife.

The Adventure Begins

Shortly after the heroes arrive in town, they should hear locals discussing the hauntings or should observe the ghosts firsthand. A small inn called The Frowning Mule is available to provide meals and beds at standard rates found in the *Player's Handbook*. The heroes might overhear talk of the ghosts' legend here or might be approached to investigate the hauntings.

The Frowning Mule is owned by a middle-aged gentleman named Stan. He has lived in town all his life and remembers everyone who lived nearby. He does not believe that stories of the hauntings are true, for he has never seen evidence of them personally. He can direct the heroes to the people most likely to provide information about the hauntings: Miss Lily, an elderly schoolteacher, and Wanda, the niece of the maid who was at Amalia's bedside when she died.

Miss Lily has a small, two-room suite on the second floor of a boarding house in town. She appears to be in her sixties, and has white hair and a slim build. She stands no more than five feet tall but has a commanding presence. If the heroes visit her home, she is cordial and offers tea. At the schoolhouse, she invites them to make themselves comfortable in the schoolroom.

Depending on the time that has elapsed since Amalia's death (assuming it was not more than fifty years), Miss Lily remembers Amalia as a student. (If more time has passed, Miss Lily's relates second-hand information from her predecessor, a woman named Coletta.) She recalls that Amalia and Willem were truly in love, and she has no doubt that they now haunt Willem's grave. She has seen both of them personally on a few occasions and can identify the cycles in which they visit Willem's grave (see "To Quiet the Dead"). She also narrows down the times of Amalia's haunting of her parent's farm to the full moon but cannot concretely say that they center on the two days before and the day

after the full moon. Lily relates most of the story of Amalia's marriage to Preston, although she is unaware of the details following the actual wedding.

Wanda can be old or young depending on the time that has passed. If her Aunt Rosetta (Amalia's former maid) left the area recently, Wanda might be in her teens. If more time has passed, Wanda might be middle-aged.

Wanda is a bright-eyed, friendly woman. As a hopeless romantic, she cannot retell the story of Amalia and Willem without a tear coming to her eye. She knows the entire story of the young lovers, for she pieced together all the details of the tale shortly after it happened. She was not living in town at the time of either death but moved here with her parents and two sisters a few months after Amalia died. Wanda's aunt moved in with Wanda's family for a few months and always felt that Amalia died of a broken heart and that Preston made no effort to comfort his wife. Aunt Rosetta was so saddened by the entire affair that she moved to a large city a few months later to escape the terrible memories.

Wanda considers herself an expert on the ghosts. When the Dungeon Master relates Wanda's story, a great deal of melodrama is essential. Wanda even goes so far as to gesture dramatically and pantomime events as they might have happened. Wanda provides the all-important clue to the players: That on Amalia's deathbed, she delivered the message, "Make sure that we are together in this world for all eternity."

Wanda is extremely disappointed that she has never seen Willem's ghost. Wanda has observed Amalia at her grave on Preston Hill only a few times. She knows from other reports that Willem visits the grave and has also heard of Willem's late-night pantomimes.

To Quiet the Dead

The reports from Wanda and Miss Lily should be enough to give the heroes the idea that the ghosts observe regular haunting cycles, and also that if the two are laid to rest side by side, the hauntings will end. The heroes will no doubt wish to visit the haunts to learn the best time and method to attempt moving one of the graves. The ghosts and particulars about their haunts are summarized here for convenience. Dungeon Masters should feel free to add further detail to the areas.

Amalia Preston (Second-magnitude ghost):

AC -1/6*; MV FI 24 (A); HD 4; hp 18; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2 points (cause stun); SA cause stun, keening; SD insubstantiality (incorporeal)***, invisibility**, rejuvenation**, magic immunity**, +1/0 or better weapons to hit; SZ M (5'3"); ML steady (11); Int highly (13); AL LG.

Personality: sweet, angry.

Notes: SA—with successful fist strike (2 points of damage), victim feels as if pierced by a dagger of ice, victim must make a successful save vs. paralysis or be stunned for 1 round; keens once per night at farm, anyone within twenty feet must make a successful save vs. death magic with a +1 bonus or perish.

* Ethereal vs. nonethereal foes/ethereal vs. ethereal foes.

** See the introduction.





Amalia appears as a wispy figure formed of white smoke. She is slim and somewhat plain but has beautiful long, dark hair. Most often, she appears to be crying. When she appears at Willem's grave, she wears simple clothing appropriate to her time period and station in life. When haunting her parents' home, she wears her bridal clothes. At her gravesite, she is clad in a black lace gown and matching shawl draped over her head.

Amalia never leaves herself open to destruction. She disappears if she believes she is within one or two blows of destruction (making her guess based on the strength of successful attacks against her). She might return if her attackers attempt to disrupt Willem's grave but avoids injury at all costs. She resumes her normal haunting pattern on the following evening, restored to full hit points.

Willem Tyson (Third-magnitude ghost):

AC -2/4*; MV FI 24 (A); HD 7; hp 36; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2+2 (fists) or 1d3+2 (blacksmith's hammer); SA cause wounds; SD insubstantiality (semicorporeal)**; invisibility**, rejuvenation**, magic immunity**, hit only by +2/+1 or better weapons; MR 30%; SZ M (5'8"); ML steady (12); Int very (12); AL CG.

Personality: protective, practical.

Notes: SA—(Amalia's grave) cause wounds by successfully striking (1d8 points of damage), victim has a percentage chance equal to the points of damage inflicted to have Charisma reduced by one point, those reduced to zero Charisma must save vs. death magic, failure of save means death, successful check means victim becomes a broken one (see *RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendices I & II*); (Willem's grave) hits victim either with fists or a hammer; the damage bonuses associated with the attack are the result of cold shock.

* Ethereal vs. nonethereal foes/ethereal vs. ethereal foes or when corporeal.

** See the introduction.

Willem also appears as a wispy white figure and always wears the clothing of a blacksmith: a white shirt and loose leather trousers.

Both ghosts use their speed and flight to disorient and terrify their victims. Although Amalia and Willem are not powerful spirits, the Dungeon Master should create an atmosphere of terror using their quick movements, random strikes, and special powers.

Home of Amalia's Parents: The farm has been deserted since Amalia's parents were driven away by her hauntings. The buildings are all in need of repair—the paint is peeling, shingles are missing, and clapboards are coming loose.

Amalia visits four nights surrounding the full moon, including the two nights before and one night after. She is seen circling the house, sobbing uncontrollably and pleading with something unseen; she attempts to scare strangers and attacks any who try to damage the property, although she still recognizes certain people in the village and will allow them onto the property without hesitation (Dungeon Master's discretion).

Amalia also has a keening attack and has learned to make the most of it while at her parent's home. When she

feels outnumbered, she rises out of reach of her attackers, then lets loose a terrifying, unnaturally loud scream.

Amalia can enter the house and barn at will, although she avoids the barn. She does not seem to recognize that the tool shed and chicken coop exist and will not enter them. She cannot pass beyond the boundaries of the farmyard.

Amalia's Grave: Amalia's grave is located on the edge of the woods behind the Preston house. An area about fifteen feet in diameter was cleared for the gravesite; the grave lies at the center, with the white marble headstone facing west. Grass has grown thickly over the site, and weeds clamber around the headstone. The site is always silent except for a whistling wind that whips over the top of the hill.

On the second night after the full moon and for the next six nights, Amalia walks restlessly around her grave. Sometimes she tugs at the stone or tries to tear up the turf over her grave with her hands; she flees if confronted.

Willem visits Amalia's grave all nights other than those he spends at the house or his grave; he often seats himself next to her tombstone, leaning his head against the cold marble. If approached, he attacks violently in an attempt to kill the trespasser. Little can be said or done to Willem to divert his desire to cause harm; in this state, he can think only of revenge. Willem attacks with both his hammer and his cause wounds ability in a somewhat random fashion. He is blinded by his agony and cannot think clearly enough to make coordinated attacks. Instead, he flies around his victims, weaving among them and striking at random. When flying among his victims in this manner, he gains a -2 bonus to his armor class. The Dungeon Master should consider the possibility of Willem's speed and movement causing a disruption in spellcasting attempts.

If the heroes attempt to dig up the grave while the other two ghosts are not present, Ezekiel Preston appears. Read the following:



The crying of the wind dies abruptly as a colorful mist starts forming into a dapper gentleman holding a cane topped with a crystal sphere. He smiles at you before saying, "Surely you do not wish to disturb this poor girl's rest further? Hasn't she suffered enough?"



This is Ezekiel Preston. After introducing himself as Terrance Sinclair, a scholar of the region who attempts to help heroes in their quests, he spins a story about how Amalia's suffering is less in her current state than it would be if the heroes dug her up. Although he will not go into detail, he does hint that if her body comes out of the ground, Amalia will attack. If the heroes disbelieve his story and dig up the coffin, Preston disappears and then uses his ability to create illusions to make himself look like Amalia and attempts to age one of the heroes. If successful (or hit by a blow), "Amalia" and her body





Ezekiel Preston

seem to disappear (another illusion). If this plan does not succeed, Preston leaves and starts working on another plan.

House on Preston Hill: The house on the hill stands deserted and will inevitably fall into ruin. Depending on the timing of the adventure, the house will show varying signs of decay. Peeling paint, loose shutters, missing shingles, and holes in the roof or walls will all become part of the decor eventually. Although the town is visible from the top of Preston Hill, it is at least a fifteen-minute ride on horseback. Summoning help requires at least half an hour.

Willem visits four nights around the full moon, including the two nights before and first night after. He remains oblivious to anyone nearby and has no attacks since he is reenacting the scene of his death (once per night). He performs the scene up to the point at which Preston hoists Willem's body onto his horse and sends it away. As the phantom steed gallops down the hill, Willem and the horse dissolve into the night.

When haunting, Willem and Amalia never enter the house. Amalia never ventures beyond the clearing that surrounds her grave. Willem either confines himself to Amalia's grave or pantomimes the scene of his death.

Willem's Grave: Willem was laid to rest in the shade of a maple tree next to the schoolyard where he played as a child. Because the schoolhouse doubles as a church, a small graveyard stands behind the structure. About two dozen other graves also fill the tiny cemetery. Space is available for perhaps twenty more graves.

Nothing out of the ordinary can be found in the school/church. Willem and Amalia limit themselves to the confines of the graveyard and appear only after sunset and before sunrise.

Amalia visits Willem's grave on all nights other than those at her grave or her parents' home. She sometimes kneels, her face covered by her hands, sobbing uncontrollably. She occasionally slumps over the tombstone or seats herself alongside it, stroking it lovingly as if speaking to her beloved. She fights violently to defend the grave but flees if she is near destruction.

Willem visits his grave seven nights beginning on the second night after the full moon; he paces back and forth around the grave as if trapped and attempts to drive away intruders. He first attacks using his fists; if anyone attempts to disturb his grave, a blacksmith's hammer mysteriously appears in his hand (which he uses to drive off intruders).

Ghosts' Reactions: The outcome of heroes' visits to the haunts depend on their actions. If they are peaceful, they are in danger only at Willem's grave and Amalia's grave on certain nights. If they are aggressive, they are likely to be in danger at Amalia's parents' home as well.

Since no time limit exists, the heroes may observe the haunts for as many nights as they wish as they try to choose the best time to move a grave. The ghosts will even attack in daylight according to their cycles if anyone attempts to dig up the graves.

A Final Peace

Either grave may be moved in order to put the ghosts at rest, but for the sake of romance and melodrama, it is more appropriate for Amalia to join Willem in the schoolyard.

If the heroes do not decipher the haunting cycles and choose to dig while either ghost is present, the ghosts attack according to their described patterns. If the Dungeon Master desires, the ghosts may at some point realize that their wishes are being fulfilled and cease attacks. They will then observe and follow the heroes in ghostly form to witness the entire process. Before the body is placed in its new grave, read the following:



A colorful haze appears above the body and coalesces into an angry man. "So, you wish to bring these two together despite my wishes. So be it! It is on your heads now!"



This is Ezekiel Preston. He immediately attacks, attempting to drain memories from each of the heroes. This time, since he is extremely angry, he will not stop fighting until he has successfully drained each hero's memories or until he has very few hit points left. After either of these occurrences, Preston makes an illusory exit and inhabits one of the heroes' items so that he can travel with the group.

If the heroes succeed in burying the body, read the following:



A wispy puff appears in the air above the grave. Soon it is joined by a second small cloud. The wisps swirl and expand, soon forming the shapes of a young man and woman. Amalia's long hair floats about her and embraces Willem as the two reach for each other. They clasp each other tightly for long moments, then look toward you and smile. Hand in hand, they sink into the earth in their respective graves.



If the heroes check on the ghosts' haunts the next evening, they find everything to be quiet. The pair has finally been laid to rest.

Recurrence

Once the heroes successfully finish this scenario, the townspeople (especially Lily and Wanda) thank them. However, Ezekiel Preston now inhabits one of the heroes' items. At a suitable point in the future, he makes another appearance in the heroes' lives.





Shades of the Night

by The Kargat

What you cannot see CAN hurt you. . . .

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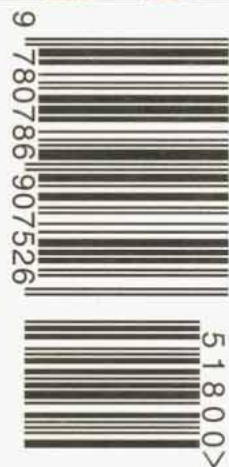
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ASIA, PACIFIC & LATIN AMERICA
Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
P.O. Box 707
Renton, WA 98057-0707
+1-206-624-0933



EUROPEAN HEADQUARTERS
Wizards of the Coast, Belgium
P.B. 34
2300 Turnhout
Belgium
+32-14-44-30-44

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