



# Ravenloft

## MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH



ADVENTURES ON GOTHIC EARTH

A Ravenloft® Campaign Setting Expansion

# MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH

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# Introduction

*LET US GO HENCE: THE NIGHT IS NOW AT HAND;  
THE DAY IS OVERWORN, THE BIRDS ALL FLOWN;  
AND WE HAVE REAPED THE CROPS THE GODS HAVE SOWN,  
DESPAIR AND DEATH; DEEP DARKNESS O'ER THE LAND'*  
— ERNEST DOWSON, "A LAST WORD"





The last decade of the 19th century stretches out before us, a beacon to a new and inviting future. I think of all that we have accomplished and feel no small sense of pride in our humanity. Gone are the nights that we must spend at the mercy of the implacable darkness. Gas and electric lights bring the brightness of the stars to our streets and our homes. No longer do we need to wait for letters to arrive by fragile posts; we can send our news to one another by telegraph wire or by Bell's innovative telephone. Our leisure time has greatly increased by new mechanisms that have shortened the hours we spend in labor at home and in the workplace. New entertainments are emerging to fill those expanded leisure hours.

Each day, it seems, men of science (and, I am told, some women of science) are unlocking new doors into the realms of discovery. Cures for many diseases that have long plagued society are emerging from the laboratories of these dedicated scientists.

Yet even as I sit here in my study on this last evening before the advent of the 1890s, I cannot wholly rejoice in the works of men. For there are things that yet exist that most men have no knowledge of, forces that defy science and reason, entities whose natures are best described in terms such as "nightmares," "bogeymen," and, yes, I dare say the word — "demons."

I first learned of the darkness at the core of the world's energies from a group of courageous individuals, among them one Abraham Van Helsing, known as a great scholar, scientist and humanitarian. What many do not know is that Dr. Van Helsing is also a crusader, a soldier — no, rather, a commander — in a clandestine war against things so horrible that few would believe or admit of their existence.

Yet these "things" do exist. And they are symptomatic of something even worse, something that Van Helsing and his colleagues name the Red Death.

Why do I, an old woman with most of her life behind her, write now of subjects over which I have no control? Certainly, if those who have already spent lives, fortunes and reputations in a war between light and darkness could not defeat their greatest foe, I can cause no real harm to any such megalithic beast.

Yet knowledge is a fragile thing, and records so easily destroyed. So, too, are the bearers of this wisdom tracked down and obliterated. Van Helsing has begged me, in the name of a greater duty to humanity, to put those things he has told me, and other bits of truth I have since learned from my own observation, into writing in the hopes that those who come after us can meet this hideous evil being armed with more than just weapons and spells. They can face their enemy with knowledge and truth.

I write this for all these reasons, but, above all, I write this for my brother Abraham, who fears he will not have the time to tell his own tale.

Here follows a history of the madness and horror that has entered the world and that now stands poised to make its great move to crush all that is good and institute a reign of terror and bloodshed. Here is the tale of the Red Death, what we know about it, what it has done, what we fear it may do and where its strongholds — those we know of — lie.

May all who stand for the light, whether they be gods, goddesses, science or faith, witness the truth of my words, given unto you this 31st day of December 1889.

Miriam Van Helsing



Welcome to **Masque of the Red Death: Adventures on Gothic Earth**, a roleplaying game of magic and mystery, horror and intrigue set in the fading years of the 19th century.

This book gives you rules and ideas for playing characters native to Gothic Earth, a world very like our own world in the 1890s, but one in which magic exists and the taint of corruption eats away at the heart of the world. This is the world of Bram Stoker's Count Dracula and other vampires, of Frankenstein's monster, of ghosts and mummies and werewolves. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde live in symbiotic torment, while ancient tombs in Egypt await the advent of archaeologists and explorers eager to unlock their doors and loose their curses upon the unwary.

### *A World Apart*

Gothic Earth is a world cut off from other universes, though other universes may, in fact, exist. That was not always the case, however. Once the world known as Gothic Earth was rich in magical energies. The men and women who inhabited that fair world lived close to the source of magic, which penetrated their blood and powered their hearts and minds. That spirit of magical

energy infused everything that lived. It served as the bond that held the world together, permeating the rocks and soil, the oceans and the atmosphere.

But a great change came upon the world, impelled by a force from another universe. From the realm of the Mists, the lands known as Ravenloft, a creature heard a summoning so powerful it shattered the barrier that held the Dread Realm apart from all other worlds. This entity, impressed and amused by the power of the summoning, decided to take advantage of the opportunity to stretch its "wings." Traveling quickly on the source of the summoning, it found itself — to the great detriment of its unfortunate summoner — in a new world filled with untainted energy. Greedily it submerged itself in the magic of the world and the world, bit by bit, responded. The deed was done and true darkness had entered Gothic Earth.

The advent of this entity, known as the Red Death, sealed off the borders of the world, rendering it inaccessible for other planar travelers, whether native to Gothic Earth or outsiders, such as the Red Death itself. (There are a few exceptions to this barrier, but those will be spoken of in their proper time and place.)



At least that is one of the stories recounting the origin of the Red Death. There may be others, but in the end, all that really matters is that Gothic Earth suffers from a malevolent and subtle presence — and only a few brave individuals dare to risk their all to fight that presence.

### *How to Use This Book*

**Masque of the Red Death** requires the *Dungeons & Dragons® Player's Handbook* and the **Ravenloft® Player's Handbook** for information not set out explicitly in this book. Additional information can be obtained from the *Dungeons & Dragons® Dungeon Master's® Guide*, the *Monster Manual™*, the **Ravenloft® Dungeon Master's® Guide** and **Ravenloft® Denizens of Dread™**. Special rules for character classes, skills, feats and spells peculiar to Gothic Earth are outlined in this book.

**Chapter One: A History of Gothic Earth** presents the historical movements and events of Gothic Earth as they relate to the coming of the Red Death and its subsequent works. This chapter also chronicles the ongoing struggle against the Red Death and its minions, including the banding together of the forces of both good and evil into secret societies. Some key events of the 1890s as well as biographical capsules on some of the decade's most illustrious individuals finish out this section.

**Chapter Two: An Atlas of Gothic Earth** describes the geography of Gothic Earth and notes "hot spots" where the Red Death has left its mark. Though most of the world is covered, some places receive more attention than others — places where adventurers are likely to visit and areas of interest to the Red Death and its followers.

**Chapter Three: Character Creation** describes how to generate heroes native to Gothic Earth. Though most of the rules for creating characters as outlined in the *D&D Player's Handbook* apply to Gothic Earth characters, there are some significant differences in character classes as well as new skills and feats.

**Chapter Four: Money and Equipment** provides information on types of money used on Gothic Earth. In addition, this chapter describes common and not-so-common equipment (along with prices) useful to player characters.

**Chapter Five: The Magic of Gothic Earth** explains the differences in spellcasting in the world of the Red Death due to the tainted nature of magic and the effects of societal belief on the effectiveness of magic. General principles of magic and the nature of magic items are presented here as well.

**Chapter Six: Combat** elaborates on the differences between combat in standard fantasy as described in the *D&D Player's Handbook* or the **Ravenloft Player's Handbook** and the more ad-

### *Fiction and History*

**Masque of the Red Death** takes place on Gothic Earth in the 19th century. Unlike stand-apart fantasy worlds, Gothic Earth is an alternate universe differing from our world in only a few points. Magic does exist on Gothic Earth. So does evil. Thanks to the coming of the Red Death, evil has taken a major role in world events.

Historical facts remain much the same on Gothic Earth, though a few dates here and there may vary slightly. The motivations behind historical figures, however, can change a great deal.

History is, in fact, interpreted according to the movements of the Red Death and the groups that oppose it. Therefore, events as simple as the fall of Rome have sinister causes. Rather than the inevitable decadence and weakening of an empire that has overextended its borders and succumbed to complacency and, perhaps, its own propaganda, Rome's fall came about due to the machinations of the Red Death and served to spread chaos and anarchy, fertile breeding grounds for evil's minions, throughout Western civilization.

In ascribing certain historical events to the workings of the Red Death, there is no attempt to excuse other, human culprits. Although slavery, substance abuse and other ills of the world from ancient times to the 19th century present of **Masque of the Red Death** can be linked with supernatural evil, these vices exist because humans exist who profit from them. The Red Death moves through history, but it needs willing hands and hearts to implement its agenda.



vanced forms of combat used in the 19th century on Gothic Earth.

**Chapter Seven: Madness and Mystery** outlines the procedures for making Fear, Horror and Madness checks in Gothic Earth. In addition, this chapter discusses omens, curses and the mysterious wanderers known as the Vistani.

**Chapter Eight: A Practical Guide to the Nineteenth Century** is just that — a compendium of information about the fashions, customs, leisure activities and culture of the decade. This chapter offers a wealth of ideas to help flesh out adventurers (as well as their enemies), making them three-dimensional inhabitants of Gothic Earth.

Four appendices contain information exclusively for the Dungeon Master (DM), providing important elements for any campaign in Gothic Earth.

**Appendix I: The Villains of Gothic Earth** presents a gallery of Gothic Earth's most notorious villains, including the Prince of Darkness and the sinister priest Imhotep. Statistics and traits for each villain provides in-game data, while informa-

tion on each villain's background, combat tactics, lair and motivations allows DMs to present these heinous creatures as believable (and believably despicable) individuals.

**Appendix II: Monsters in the World** details information about some of the minions of the Red Death. These monsters can be used along with or instead of those presented in the *Monster Manual* or *Denizens of Dread*. In addition, some guidelines are presented for adapting high-fantasy creatures to the less fantastic world of Gothic Earth.

**Appendix III: Lairs of Evil** gives some sample places of great evil in Gothic Earth along with information on the master of the lair, its history and other inhabitants. A discussion of how to adapt the techniques of terror as set forth in the *Ravenloft Dungeon Master's Guide* to the world of *Masque of the Red Death* provides a refresher course in horror gaming.

**Appendix IV: Adventures in Gothic Earth** offers ideas on running a *Masque of the Red Death* campaign as well as a pair of adventures in outline form for use in jump-starting a campaign. A list of possible adventure hooks rounds out the chapter.







### *Resources*

Below is a list of some books and films that may be useful for others wishing to delve into the world of the 1890s.

*American Victorian Costume in Early Photographs*, by Priscilla Harris Dalrymple.

*The Beast of Chicago: an Account of the Life and Crimes of Herman W. Mudgett, Known to the World as H.H. Holmes*, by Rick Geary.

*Crocodile on the Sandbank*, by Elizabeth Peters; this is the first in a series of mysteries involving archaeologists in Victorian Egypt.

*Decades of Beauty*, by Kate Mulvey and Melissa Richards.

*Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic and Madness at the Fair that Changed the World*, by Erick Larson.

*From Hell*; this film starring Johnny Depp is based on Alan Moore's graphic novel about Jack the Ripper.

*Inventing the Victorians*, by Matthew Sweet.

*League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*; this graphic novel was also made into a film that boasts an all-star cast including Sean Connery and Stuart Townsend. Though these Victorians are a bit more far thinking than most, the visuals, manners and interrelations may provide fodder for both players and DMs.

*The 1900 House: an Extraordinary Living Experiment*, PBS video.

*Songs of the 1890s: Piano, Vocal, Guitar*, introduction by Elaine Schmidt.

*To Say Nothing of the Dog*, by Connie Willis.

*Tussie-mussies: the Victorian Art of Expressing Yourself in the Language of Flowers*, by Geraldine Adamich Laufer.

*The Victorian Vision: Inventing New Britain*, edited by John M. Mackenzie.

*The Victorians* by, A.N. Wilson

*Wild Women*, by Autumn Stevens



### *Special Thanks and Grateful Acknowledgements*

This is not the first version of **Masque of the Red Death**. In 1994, TSR, Inc., published the original *Masque of the Red Death* as an expansion of the Ravenloft line set in an alternate version of this world's 1890s. The original boxed set, *Masque of the Red Death and Other Tales*, by William W. Connors, with D. J. Heinrich, Shane Hensley, and Colin Mc Comb, — which also contained *A Guide to Gothic Earth*, three adventure booklets, a poster, a map and a DM screen — opened up a whole new world of gaming to fans of gothic horror. This was followed by *The Gothic Earth Gazetteer* by William W. Connors, in 1995, and *The Guide to Transylvania*, by Nicky Rea, in 1996.

The developers would like to give special thanks to all the talented people who contributed to those first versions of *Masque*, upon which this version is inspired. You all laid the groundwork of a wonderful product!

Thanks to the following people (in alphabetical order) for your grand vision:

Richard Baker III, Karen Boomgarden, Anne Brown, Jonatha Ariadne Caspian, Dave Conant, William W. Connors, David "Zeb" Cook, Peggy Cooper, Tim Coumbe, Ned Dameron, Stephen Fabian, Sarah Feggestad, David Gross, Paul Hanchette, Andria Hayday, D. J. Heinrich, Shane Hensley, Paul Jaquays, Harold Johnson, Nancy J. Kerkstra, Angelika Lokotz, Colin McComb, Dawn Murin, Jon Pickens, Richard Pike-Brown, Dr. John Rateliff IV, Robh Ruppel, David C. Sutherland III, Steve Winter and Bruce A. Zamjahn.

Thanks also to all the players, DMs and organizers of the Living Death tournament campaign for keeping this game setting vibrant and ongoing and inspiring its re-birth!

We only hope we do you justice. This book's for you!





# Chapter One: A History of Gothic Earth

*NO, NO, THOU HAST NOT FELT THE LAPSE OF HOURS,  
FOR WHAT WEARS OUT THE LIFE OF MORTAL MEN?  
'TIS THAT FROM CHANGE TO CHANGE THEIR BEING ROLLS:  
'TIS THAT REPEATED SHOCKS, AGAIN, AGAIN,  
EXHAUST THE ENERGY OF STRONGEST SOULS  
—MATTHEW ARNOLD, "THE SCHOLAR GIPSY"*





Before the coming of the Red Death, magical energies permeated the world. Men and women who attuned themselves to these energies, either through study of the world around them or study of themselves, could tap into these energies. These people became known as wizards, sorcerers, wise women, shamans and priests. While some groups of people remained tribal, roaming their lands and following the animals that provided them with food, clothing and shelter, others settled in one place, farming the land and growing what they needed.

From the settlements of these agricultural people, cities arose, becoming great centers for trade with other cities as well as places to propitiate the gods who blessed (or cursed) their endeavors. Great cities such as Hamoukar and Susa arose in the fertile lands of Mesopotamia. In Egypt, the cities of Giza and Memphis, among others, prospered, drawing their life from the Nile.

Throughout the world, magic played a part in the lives of the people, whether simple magics to bring rain and make the lands and people fertile or more complex magics to increase the practitioner's power or grant him eternal life.

The search for the latter type of magic led to the downfall of the mystic and magical energy that infused the world.

### *The End Begins*

During the Third Dynasty in Egypt, around 2700 B.C., a priest named Imhotep crafted a series of rituals and spells into the tomb of Djoser, the current pharaoh, with the intent of warding Djoser's spirit after his death. The nature of these spells was such that, rather than have the intended effect, they created an opening into another realm and "something" came through from that other place.





That something, later to be known as the Red Death, infused the magical energies of the world with its own corruption and began a process that would slowly eat away at the fabric of magic. So slowly as to be almost imperceptible, magic changed, becoming tainted with the evil of the Red Death. The repercussions of this change would affect every spellcaster from that time forward. Imhotep himself found himself inextricably linked to the entity his magics had given entry to.

### *A Time For Waiting*

During the centuries immediately following its arrival, the Red Death took note of its new surroundings. Even then, it was planting the seeds of a great plan to dominate the earth. Though the Red Death remained quiescent for more than a thousand years, its mere presence on Gothic Earth initiated a series of changes flowing out from one another as ripples from a stone dropped in a pond. The evil that was the Red Death latched onto the world's magical energies, slowly corrupting them. First, powerful spells grew a little weaker, not always working as they should. Smaller spells sometimes failed entirely.

In Egypt, where the Red Death acquired its first servants, it was able to corrupt those spells that dealt most directly with life and death — or more specifically, life after death.

Imhotep's spells and the spells of all who came after him tainted the preservative spells for the nobles of Egypt, ensuring that most of them did not pass into the Underworld with all the honors due them but remained, instead, as dreadful, undead mummies bound by the Red Death to prevent the curious from looking too closely into Egypt's many secrets.

With these mummies, the Red Death's legions of horror took form and would expand throughout the centuries as more and more types of undead came into existence.

In the meantime, the Red Death experimented with dabbling in human affairs from its vantage point as an interested observer.

By nudging the chaos factor here and skewing the magic probabilities there, the Red Death fostered discontent between the young, powerful nations of the world. Where the game died mysteriously, leaving a tribe of hunters on the verge of starvation, the settled community nearby experienced a bountiful harvest. It was a small matter for

the hunters to see this as a sign that they should take what they needed, particular when their shamans and wise women had visions directing them to do so.

Small wars broke out between tribes, between ancient cities and between the beginnings of nations. The Red Death absorbed magical and death energies, and feasted where there was evil intent.

### *The Early Qabals*

But where there was evil, there was also good. Priests, scholars, wise men and women, astrologers and shaman from the young cultures of the world recognized that things were not as they had been and that some new presence had entered the world. Careful to work in secret, lest they be censured by their peers and targeted by the evil thing whose existence they posited, these thinkers, some of whom were adepts or mystics, gathered together in small groups to share their ideas and to reinforce their observations.

One of their first realizations was the fact that they, themselves, could do little to stop the evil that had permeated their world. They did determine that the best they could do for future generations was to attempt to record the passage of this entity through the world, noting each event that seemed to have some connection with this monstrous being.

For centuries, these groups labored in secret to compose poems, oral catalogs and, later, written scrolls codifying their discoveries. Whether or not anyone would ever be powerful enough to confront this great force, they did not know. They did what they could and forced themselves to be content.

These early qabals had no names. Names, in that time, were power and having a name made it possible for someone to gain power over you. Those who fought the Red Death through the collection and study of information did so behind the curtain of anonymity, hoping thereby to prevent the Red Death from finding and controlling them.

### *The Ancient Empires*

For more than two thousand years after its arrival on Gothic Earth, the Red Death watched and waited as cities grew into empires and empires rose and fell.

In Sumeria, a cup-bearer named Sargon rose in power until he overthrew the current rulers and forged his own empire around the year 2200 B.C.E.





Sargon the Great, as he was called, ruled the kingdom of Akkad from the city of Agade, near the former capital of Kish. He was famous as a road builder, established a postal service, amassed a formidable number of clay tablets, which he stored in a library and ruled through governors he selected himself.

He tried to establish a dynasty, but his grandson was overthrown. Sargon's empire disappeared after little more than 100 years.

After Sargon, Ur-Nammu revived the defunct Sumerian Empire. Under his rule, the first code of laws came into being. A century later, however, Sumer came under attack by the Elamites and Amorites, a tall folk who were formerly nomadic but who settled near the city of Ashur. The fallen Sumerians saw the collapse of their empire as a sign that the gods had abandoned them.

Some scholars see the movements of the Red Death in these events. Sargon's library enabled qabalists to gain access to the knowledge contained in the clay tablets, while the roadways and posts enabled communication among scholars (as well as providing safe travel for merchants, soldiers and tax collectors).

The Sumerian code of laws went a long way toward establishing order in the land, providing a sense of security and safety to even the common folk. Because the Red Death works best where ignorance and fear dominate the populace, it provided a nudge here and a push there to various of its minions to topple these empires.

In the 1800s B.C.E., the Amorite King Hammurabi embarked on a path of conquest, forging his own empire ruled from the city of Babylon. Where he conquered, he established a set of laws, later known as the Code of Hammurabi, to ensure peace and justice throughout his lands, even though what was "just" for a poor man was often quite different from what was "just" for a noble or priest.

Like some of ancient history's greatest kings, Hammurabi did his work under the patronage of the sun god, which he knew as Shamesh.

Though the Kassites, a fierce mountain tribe who used horses as war mounts, invaded Babylon and greatly weakened the Babylonians, Hammurabi's descendants continued to rule there until the Hittites sacked Babylon in the 1500s B.C.E. Here again, the passage of the Red Death can be traced, promoting unrest in civilizations that threaten to become centers of learning and repositories of arcane lore.

The same thing was happening in other parts of the world. The Minoan civilization in Crete dated back to 3000 B.C.E., becoming a showplace for gorgeous palaces and elaborate religious rituals. In 1700 B.C.E., a great disturbance, probably a powerful earthquake, toppled many cities in Crete. Though the cities were rebuilt, they would face more trials as nature seemed to take up arms against the island realm. A monumental volcanic eruption on the nearby island of Thera in 1650 B.C.E. created great tidal waves that destroyed much of Crete's coastline. This eruption caused the sinking of the island of Atlantis, according to some scholars. The subsequent disturbances in temperature, rainfall and the harvests for several years thereafter cast great doubt in the minds of the people as to their priests' ability to provide favorable growing conditions.

References in ancient scrolls from this time period to prophecies concerning mysterious visitors, red fogs and growing shadows hint at the presence of a sinister being during this time. Scholars familiar with the cryptic signatures left by the Red Death in the pages of history point to these prophecies as indications that the end of the Minoan Empire and the disappearance of Atlantis were, if not arranged, then urged onward by the plans of the Red Death.

In Greece, the Mycenae people moved into Greece and became the dominant culture. During this period, the Trojan War, later immortalized in Homer's *Iliad* took place. In turn, the Mycenae Greeks fell to the Dorian invasion and Greece withdrew from the world.

By the time Homer wrote his *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, immortalizing an age of Greek heroes and their god-influenced deeds, Greek civilization had taken another upswing, their culture heavily influencing those around them as the city states of Sparta, Athens, Ithaca, Syracuse and other *polis* prospered, fought wars with each other and developed separate identities.

Again, qabalists saw evidence of the Red Death's movements in the slow progress of humanity. For every cultural leap forward, there was a war or a tyrant or a disaster to drag society backward. The Red Death used the critical removal of great leaders through assassination, accident, sickness or death in battle to manipulate the flow of history to its advantage. These researchers have also alleged that the Red Death, in some instances, substituted doppelgangers for particularly charismatic rulers



or, sometimes, used possession on certain key individuals in order to make certain that people whose goals opposed his did not stay in power unmolested for long.

Some scholars see in Homer's poems clear references to a powerful force working behind the scenes. The actions that the heroes of the Iliad and the Odyssey take often seem "out of character" and are attributed to the workings of various gods. Students of the Red Death's activities see these attributions to deity-intervention as oblique references to the Red Death. Even Homer did not want to draw attention to his hidden messages from the wrong people.

In 335 B.C.E., a young Macedonian general named Alexander, son of Philip of Macedon, inherited his father's position as ruler of Macedon and continued his father's mission to build an empire. Alexander's phenomenal success ushered in a Golden Age of culture throughout Persia, Egypt and Greece. Indeed, Alexander spread Greek culture throughout the Mediterranean region. His untimely death at the age of 32 raised many suspicions among qabalistic scholars that the Red Death had marked Alexander as an enemy. Indeed, there is some evidence that Alexander himself was a member of one of the qabals that pit themselves against the Red Death's depredations.

By the 300s B.C.E., the Ptolemies had established their rule in Egypt, now one of three great monarchies established after the death of Alexander. Civilization flourished along the Mediterranean coastline; also, cities such as Athens, Persepolis, Susa, Babylon, Samarkand, Tyre and Alexandria became centers of learning and trade.

By this time, the Red Death's presence had so tainted the earth's magical energies that the practice of magic had nearly died out. Explorers and sailors brought back tales from far away of wizards, sorcerers and nature priests who kept the secrets of magic alive.

### *The Defiance*

In the city of Alexandria, a group of scholars, sages, adepts and mystics formed a secret society to pool their resources and find a way to purge the world of the evil that had entered it so long ago. Calling themselves "The Defiance," this qabal made use of the Great Library at Alexandria as their headquarters and as a giant reserve of knowledge. The rooms in the Great Library held the great works of the ages, manuscripts of some of the

greatest minds, including Socrates, Aristotle, Aristophanes, Sophocles, Pythagoras and Euripides, among others. The library's collection also included rare (even then) magical treatises and mystical writings by men and women of power.

Members of the Defiance met at regular intervals to share their information and collaborate in finding a way to defeat the Red Death, for some of them had given the great evil a name. Finally, after more than a century of meeting, the children and successors of the original members of the Defiance thought they had succeeded. They put together a great ritual that, had it worked, should have resulted in returning the creature known as the Red Death to the realm from which it came.

The enemy, however, was already in their midst even as they planned the ritual. Despite the wards and protections the Defiance had constructed about their meeting place within the Great Library, one of their number was, in fact, a servant of the Red Death. Some recent studies of the history of the Defiance suggest that a red widow, disguised as a mystic named Inclavia, had infiltrated the qabal. Working from within as one of the members of the Defiance, this creature served as a conduit for the perceptions of her master.

Just as the qabal began their banishing ritual, a minion of the Red Death, a respected Church leader named Cyril, who had made a pact with that entity, selling his soul for power and adulation, led a group of outraged people to the library. With cries of "heretic" and "blasphemer" on their lips, the crowd stormed the Great Library, broke in upon the ritual and dragged the participants into the streets. Many members were killed or badly injured by the attack. A few fled the city. One of their members, a woman named Hypatia, who was a distinguished scholar, mathematician, and philosopher, was brutally martyred for her beliefs.

The Defiance had fallen, its members either dead or fled, broken in body and spirit. The subsequent destruction of the Great Library, along with most of its books and scrolls, erased most of the information about the Red Death so laboriously gathered over centuries by scholars, adepts, mystics and others dedicated to the eradication of evil.

### *The Red Death's Shadow Grows*

After the disappearance of the knowledge contained in the Great Library, few people had the resources to oppose the plans of the Red Death. By the beginning of the 6th century, the Red Death's



influence spread throughout Europe and into Asia and the Orient. The American continents and the islands of the Pacific remained, as yet, free of the Red Death's control. But since those who could protect the world from the Red Death had suffered an almost irreparable defeat, it seemed that it was only a matter of time before the Red Death would exercise control over the entire world.

With the fall of the Roman Empire in the 5th century and the rise of the barbarian tribes throughout Europe, the era known as the Dark Ages of Western civilization began. Much learning, including any knowledge of the Red Death, was forever lost in the ruins of looted and burned cities.

Elsewhere in the world, other civilizations prospered. In the Americas, the Mayan culture took the form of numerous city-states ruled by a hierarchy of priests. In Africa, the kingdom of Ghana arose around the trans-Saharan camel trade routes.

The surviving members of the Defiance fled to other centers of learning, or else sought refuge in places as far away from civilization as possible. Some traveled to the ends of the earth, seeking anonymity as a sort of protection from the Red Death that had marked them for destruction. Others hid themselves in the emerging monastic orders. From the ashes of the Defiance grew other orders, studying in secret to preserve what little magic they remembered and make certain that the Red Death did not corrupt everything utterly. Some of these small groups vanished after a short time; others fell to corruption. A few survived, however, managing to pass along their knowledge to succeeding generations of members.

Whether they remember their original goals or whether they have fallen utterly under the control of the Red Death or whether they simply forgot what their purpose used to be, all present day qabals trace their beginnings back to the Defiance.

### *Out of the Stone*

Though the Red Death held sway throughout Europe during the Dark Ages, the Byzantine Empire remained relatively free of the Red Death's dominion. In Europe, many of the qabals (or shadow orders, as they were called for existing in evil's shadow) fell to the corruption that surrounded them. Though many of the Goths and Celts showed a high degree of "civilization," albeit one depen-

dent on tribes rather than cities and oral rather than written traditions, other groups were little more than marauders and bandits, looting and pillaging the remnants of earlier civilizations.

In the midst of such chaos and lawlessness, however, a few lights of goodness and knowledge continued to shine. Monasteries kept alive not only the written culture of the world through these dark centuries, they also preserved what few pieces of secret lore remained. Both monasteries and convents also served as hiding places for some of the new qabals. Other qabals sought shelter within pagan communities in Ireland and Scandinavia, while communities of scholars in the Middle East gave succor to their own wise men and women.

Many of the illuminated manuscripts of Europe's monastic period contained coded rituals and information about the Red Death encoded in the illuminated designs and flourishes.

In the middle of the 6th century, a king named Arthur arose in England, uniting the warring Briton nobles to defend England against the Saxon and Viking invaders. Under Arthur, learning flourished once more, civilization began to reassert its order throughout the weary British Isles, and the seeds of knighthood and chivalry took root, to blossom in later centuries.

Most importantly, within the heart of Camelot, Arthur's great castle, a strong and powerful qabal grew, ready to take up the mantle of the Defiance. This qabal, which called itself the Stone, had as its leader none other than the legendary adept now known as Merlin, though his real name remains a mystery.

Joining together with other adepts in Europe, Arabia and the Middle East and Northern Africa, Merlin established a network of connection among the qabals that stood against the Red Death. Calling themselves the White Wizards, they opposed the fallen, corrupted qabals. Using their magic to communicate with one another, the White Wizards were able to identify and destroy many of the minions of the Red Death as well as put an end to some of the corrupt qabals.

Under Merlin's leadership, until his mysterious disappearance, the Stone and the White Wizards made great inroads in their task of spreading the light to places sunk in shadow by the Red Death. To some extent, they succeeded. If nothing else, they ensured that the world did not fall at that time to the plottings of the Red Death.



### *Plagues and New Monsters*

In 542, a plague that began in northern Africa was carried by shipboard rats to Constantinople. From there, the plague spread quickly throughout Europe, halving the population.

Scholars of the supernatural indicate that the plague coincides with the first appearance of lycanthropes, and that many of the plague rats were, in fact, wererats created by the Red Death for this express purpose. While other shapechangers existed in some cultures, many of these, such as werebears, were beneficial members of their tribal society.

Some metaphysicians who studied the growth of evil suggested that the Red Death had decided that the time was right to introduce new monsters to the world. Wererats were but the first of many to follow.

### *The Holy Roman Empire*

In 800, Pope Leo III crowned the warrior-king of the Franks as emperor of a new, "holy" Roman Empire. One of Charlemagne's first actions, as a new convert to the Christian religion, was to declare Christianity the official religion of the new empire.

Many of the qabals that fought the Red Death saw this event as a victory for the forces of good and light. A unified empire would make sharing resources and information easier and would unite church and government into one governing body that would bring justice and order to a beleaguered Europe.

Ironically, the forces of the Red Death saw this as a victory as well, since a unified church and state would make it easier for a tyrant to gain control of many resources at once.

Those who were not Christians but who yet fought the Red Death grew fearful that this move portended distress for them. Pagans in northern Europe as well as Islamic and Jewish scholars in Africa and the Middle East realized that the Holy Roman Empire, in adopting Christianity as the one, true faith, had opened up a rift between themselves and other religions.

In 867, a great schism divided the Christian church into two parts, one ruled from Rome and the other from Constantinople (formerly Byzantium). A further division, this time on the political front, took place upon Constantine's death

in 870. His three sons divided Europe among them, creating artificial political borders and introducing an element of divisive nationalism that made it harder for qabals to work within each other.

For the forces of good, the overall result of the formation of the Holy Roman Empire was less than perfect. Persecutions of non-Christians divided qabals along religious lines, making the sharing of information about the Red Death more difficult than before. In addition, a good number of men and women who had grown in their magical powers were captured and put to death by church zealots who labeled them heretics and witches.

The forces of the Red Death, however, did not claim as much of a victory as they would have liked. They had hoped to utilize a unified Empire as a means of disseminating their evil and corruption. They did not perceive that the qabals had grown strong and quick to identify minions of the Red Death. Even divided, the forces of good provided a surprising amount of resistance to the evil horde.

### *The Erosion of the Stone*

The Red Death's counterattack began slowly. More and more hideous creatures appeared in the world. The dead walked, things that had no right to be crawled up from the depths of the earth and descended from the heights. Whether created for specific purposes — and many of these creatures were sent to destroy some highly placed member of the Stone or one of the White Wizards — these beings of darkness remained on after their tasks were done, waiting for other prey to find them.

Hounded by many authorities, pursued by foul monsters, destroyed from within by their own connections with the world's tainted magic, the members of the Stone and other qabals fell by the wayside. Some individuals died gruesome deaths; others disappeared. Still others simply left the fight, broken-hearted and weary of the constant struggle.

Soon no qabal trusted anyone outside its own membership. The Red Death had succeeded in dividing its foe. The Crusades would deal them a near-fatal blow.

### *Crusades of Death*

Beginning with the 11th century, a series of Crusades, or Holy Wars, sent armies of knights and untold foot soldiers away from their homes in Europe on a quest to free the Holy Land, and





specifically, the city of Jerusalem, from its Moslem rulers in the name of Christianity. Though the crusaders believed they were doing the work of God, the destruction they wrought was incalculable. The Saracen armies, as well, fought for their idea of religious truth. Both sides suffered and died, and their homelands were the worse for their loss.

As one Crusade followed another, the object of the crusaders' quest grew more vague. Unable to reach the Holy Land, the Fourth Crusade, in 1204, sacked the city of Constantinople and initiated a process that would end in the demise of the Byzantine Empire. The crusaders returned, rich with plunder. Some did not return at all, but hideous creatures that assumed the forms of these unfortunate knights returned in their place. Thus, the Red Death placed spies — doppelgangers and rakshasas — in the heart of Europe, seeded among the nobles.

The forces that opposed the Red Death, the qabals of resistance to the growing evil in the world, were fractured and unable to present a unified front. They could do nothing to prevent the slaughter of the Crusades and the enmity between Moslem and Jew and between Moslem and Christian that would continue to haunt the future. Once again the plans of the Red Death bore bloody fruit.

### *The Great Destruction*

In the mid 1300s, one of the greatest disasters in European history occurred. Traveling from the eastern lands, from Asia and the southern Russia, the Black Plague swept across Europe and the British Isles. Once again, many of those who died were members of shadow orders opposed to the Red Death. Fully one third of the population of Europe perished in agony.

Though the disease itself was a natural byproduct of the Oriental rat flea, carried to Europe by rats from merchant ships, the processes whereby flea-infested rats found their way on board ships bound for Constantinople and other ports with access to European trade routes was, in part, orchestrated by servants of the Red Death.

### *The Rise of the Phoenix*

Though the Red Death seemed to make great inroads in western Europe, every action eventually produces a reaction. In the 14th century, a qabal arose in Italy made up of brilliant minds, wise mystics, philosophers, scientists, artists and other men and women of good will and great talent. Calling themselves the Phoenix, after the mytho-



logical bird of perpetual death and resurrection, this qabal spearheaded advances in the arts and fledgling sciences.

Many historians fluent in the secret history of Gothic Earth credit the Phoenix for being the catalyst from which the movement known as the Renaissance sprang.

A few scholars of forbidden lore indicate that the Phoenix owed its sudden genesis to a minion of the Red Death, a lord who repented of his actions and foreswore his former master in the interests of rescuing humanity from the destruction that loomed in its future.

### *The Renaissance*

The Catholic world had just recovered from the Great Schism that pit the French against the rest of Catholic Europe and resulted in a period of nearly 40 years in which two popes reigned, one in Avignon, France, and the other in Rome. In England, the warring houses of York and Lancaster began a long struggle known as the War of the Roses that would last through the latter half of the 15th century and result in a victory for the Lancastrian house of Tudor. In the Middle East, Timur (or Tamarlane), who had led the Mongol hordes across Persia and Turkey, died in 1405 before trying to conquer China. This left room for the rise of the Ottoman Empire, and for the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453.

In China, the Ming dynasty continued its rule, while the Ashikara Shogunate rose to power in Japan. In Central America, the Aztecs established the grand city of Tenochtitlan, while in South America, the Incan Empire continued to evolve.

Against this world backdrop, the Renaissance blossomed like a brilliant flower in a tumultuous garden of growth and riotous upswelling. Some of the most talented individuals came together in Florence, Italy as well as in other Italian city-states in an outpouring of culture and celebration of human nature such as had not been seen since the Golden Age of Greece.

Indeed, the Renaissance brought about a rebirth of interest in classical knowledge and art and, with the renewal of classicism came the opportunity to study once again forgotten works of ancient philosophers. Thus, many members of the Phoenix were able to obtain manuscripts from the classical period that re-acquainted them with knowledge about the Red Death that had long been consigned to the ashes of antiquity.

Many believe that great men like Leonardo da Vinci, the architect Brunelleschi, the painters Piero della Francesca, Raphael and Michelangelo were all members of the Phoenix at one time or another. Some even believe that Savonarola, the preacher and religious purist was, though misguided, a fervent warrior against the Red Death, despite his aversion to secular art and literature. Other scholars have offered evidence that the political genius Niccolo Machiavelli had fallen under the influence of the Red Death; some even contend that a creature masquerading as Niccolo Machiavelli was responsible for the actions of that individual, actions that led to the eventual downfall of the Phoenix.

The 15th century also brought about the rise of the Red Death's most powerful servants. Vlad the Impaler, Prince of Wallachia in life, met his death and arose as a powerful vampire, the lord of all the vampires of Eastern Europe and a bitter enemy of the forces of enlightenment and goodness.

### *New Worlds to Conquer*

As the Renaissance fueled the fires of knowledge, the desire to know more about the physical world grew immense. Driven not only by the need to explore the still unknown parts of the world but also by the necessity of finding an alternate trade route to the Far East (since the Turkish occupation of Constantinople closed off trade to China through that city), explorers from various nations set out across the sea in search of new worlds.

The voyages of Christopher Columbus, Ferdinand Magellan, John Cabot, Vasco da Gama and other explorers introduced the Old World to the American continents — and opened up new lands to colonization in an age in which acreage meant power and empires counted their wealth by how many people they ruled as well as by the money in their coffers.

With the explorers and the colonists that sailed between Europe and the Americas in the 16th and 17th centuries came those who served the Red Death. Members of qabals of darkness smuggled their members aboard ships bound for the New World. With them, as well, came creatures of darkness — all manner of lycanthropes, doppelgangers and other foul minions.

Once in their new homes, the qabals that served evil set about summoning other creatures





and either awakening the nascent evil that already slept in the New World or else corrupted existing creatures to the service of the Red Death. And, everywhere, magic grew corrupt. The native populations that greeted the newcomers, often with open arms, soon found that their own magic grew strange and alien to them. Their spells and rituals did not work as well, their shamans and wise men and women grew exhausted with magical workings and, now and then, the shadow of darkness and corruption would creep into their souls, tainting their spirits and drawing them into a net of evil — the trap of the Red Death.

### *The Circle*

One of the most effective qabals in the New World arrived with the Puritans who settled in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. These scholars were well versed in Biblical knowledge as well as in the classics and used both their faith in God and their understanding of the true nature of the world to do battle against the forces of evil. Unknown to their neighbors, who saw them as simply God-fearing men and women, members of the Circle met with some of the native shamans, medicine men, wise women and lorekeepers, working with them to combat the Red Death's minions, the hungry ghosts, flesh-eating ghouls, cannibal spirits and other supernatural menaces.

Finally, however, their works were uncovered and their existence betrayed. Another powerful entity by the name of Zemplak the Destroyer arrived from another dimension in much the same manner as the Red Death entered Gothic Earth. In their attempts to banish Zemplak, the Circle came up against a force greater than they were prepared to handle. They were defeated and their identities penetrated by Zemplak. Using its own minions and pawns within the community of Salem, Massachusetts, Zemplak spread rumors that the members of the Circle were witches and consorted with demons and other foul spirits.

One by one, the men and women of the Circle were arrested by their neighbors, imprisoned, branded as heretics and devil-worshippers, tried for religious crimes and put to death — by hanging, in most instances.

This disaster was an overwhelming victory for the Red Death. Zemplak went on to join forces with the Red Death, the Circle was destroyed and the Red Death could spread its influence relatively unchecked.

### *Slavery and the Awakening of Terror*

The practice of slavery had been a shameful part of human history for thousands of years. During the 17th and 18th centuries, the slave trade between Europe and the colonies of the New World reached a level of depravity heretofore unknown to the human experience. European slave traders brought men, women and children taken from their tribal homes in Africa to work on the plantations of the Caribbean and the southern colonies of North America as well as the estates of Brazil and other regions of South America. No part of Africa was left untouched by the slave trade. Whole tribes disappeared into the hands of white plantation owners, their identities and culture taken from them.

Though the Red Death did not put the idea of slavery into men's minds, it did profit extensively from the taint slavery left on those who trafficked in the ownership of humans. Further, the entry of the Red Death into the world created a huge upsurge of magical energy in Africa that went unnoticed by the rest of the world. Horrendous creatures moved in the jungles and on the savannas, kept in check by the adepts and mystics found among the tribal folk of Africa. So many of these magic-using men and women fell to the slavers' chains that not enough of them remained to hold back the tide of horror any longer. The creatures spawned by the Red Death were free to roam the continent of Africa and the rest of the world.

### *Enlightenment*

A powerful wind of change swept through Europe and made its way across the Atlantic in the middle of the 18th century. Based on the beliefs — or rather, certainties — that reason and science held the answers to humanity's problems, this movement of intellectuals, scientists and philosophers spearheaded massive changes in world governments and social institutions.

In France, credited as the cradle of the Enlightenment, philosophers such as Rene Descartes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Voltaire (Francois Marie Arouet) proposed that humans could understand the world around them through applying principles of reason, that experimentation and empirical observation has as much weight as authority and that no one religion was any better than another — in fact, that religion had no place in matters of state or society. Denis Diderot embarked on a great



compilation of knowledge, his *Encyclopedia*, and recruited over 100 thinkers to work with him on this project.

A century earlier, a few far-sighted individuals put into writing some bold philosophical ideas that would be echoed by the thinkers of the Enlightenment.

In 17th century England, Thomas Hobbes and John Locke developed their own theories of government and the workings of the human mind. Hobbes' *Leviathan* posited the ideas that human law derives from natural law and that rulers held authority not by divine right but by the consent of those they ruled. Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* embraced the theory of the *tabula rasa*, the clean slate of the human mind at birth and the acquisition of knowledge through experience while his *Two Treatises on Government* advanced the idea of government as a social contract meant to protect equality and freedom — extremely radical ideas in an age of monarchs who ruled by divine right and of slave owners who considered other human beings as chattel.

The Jewish philosopher Baruch Spinoza, writing from his home in the Netherlands, speculated on the nature of God and the question of human actions and responsibilities in his *Ethics*. Spinoza identified God with nature, as had some Greek classical philosophers. He also supported the concept of natural law and empirical knowledge.

The Enlightenment spread to the American colonies, as well. Political thinkers, statesmen and practical scientists such as Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine not only took to heart the spirit of Enlightenment thought, they also set into motion the actions that would result in the Declaration of Independence of the American colonies from the England and, in 1776, the outbreak of the American Revolution.

The status of women during the Enlightenment underwent a curious turnabout. In some areas, women's status seemed to improve — more women were able to receive an education. The nature of that education, however, was severely restricted, since some subjects, such as philosophy, were considered unfit for women. By and large, the new economic ideas of the Enlightenment, while they introduced new ideas concerning production and trade, deprived many women of businesses and limited their opportunities. Only in the latter part of the 18th century did women political and philosophical thinkers make their voices heard. Mary

Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* and Olympe de Gouges's *Declaration of the Rights of Women* forced many men to re-think their attitudes and a new age in women's rights stood ready to emerge.

Influential during this period and perhaps even at the root of the Enlightenment were a trio of qabals: the Alliance, the Society of Keepers and the Sisterhood. Joining together into one group known as the Enlightened, they encouraged many of the thinkers credited with the origins of the movement to publish their works. Though they remain carefully hidden, the Enlightened are rumored to exist currently in Europe. They seem to prefer intellectuals and scientists; thus adventuring groups with qualifying members may be able to discover their whereabouts and make contact with them if necessary.

### *In Light, Darkness*

Just as the inheritors of such noble qabals as the Defiance, the Stone and the Phoenix arose to carry on the light during the 17th and 18th centuries, so, too, the Red Death spurred its forces to spread darkness wherever it could. Throughout Europe, the ideas of the Enlightenment gave hope and promised progress to beleaguered humanity. At night, however, when only hearth fires, candlelight and torches kept the shadows at bay, the creatures of horror and madness were once again free to stalk the world.

In the rugged mountains of Carpathia and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, the undead walked. Vampires and other restless spirits leeches the lifeblood of a helpless populace. Werewolves and other foul creatures roamed the Black Forest and other deep woods while trolls and their kin ruled the dark Scandinavian nights. Ghost ships and the spirits of drowned sailors often led those who traveled by water to their deaths as if to say that no matter how enlightened humans had become, the darkness still held terrors too numerous to mention.

### *American Revolution*

In the latter half of the 17th century, the frustration of the American colonies over their treatment by England reached a peak. Bolstered by the thinking of the Enlightenment's political philosophers who espoused the idea of government with the consent of the governed as opposed to the divine right of kings, the thirteen American colo-



nies declared their independence from England and fought a bloody and costly war to lend substance to their declaration. The newly formed United States of America stood as a bastion of rational statesmanship, acknowledging the rights of those who are governed along with the responsibilities of those who govern them.

Yet even in the new nation, those who served the Red Death waited for the opportunity to sow their seeds of corruption and taint, knowing that even the strongest ideals can be soured and warped.

*Liberty and Death: the French Revolution and the Red Death*

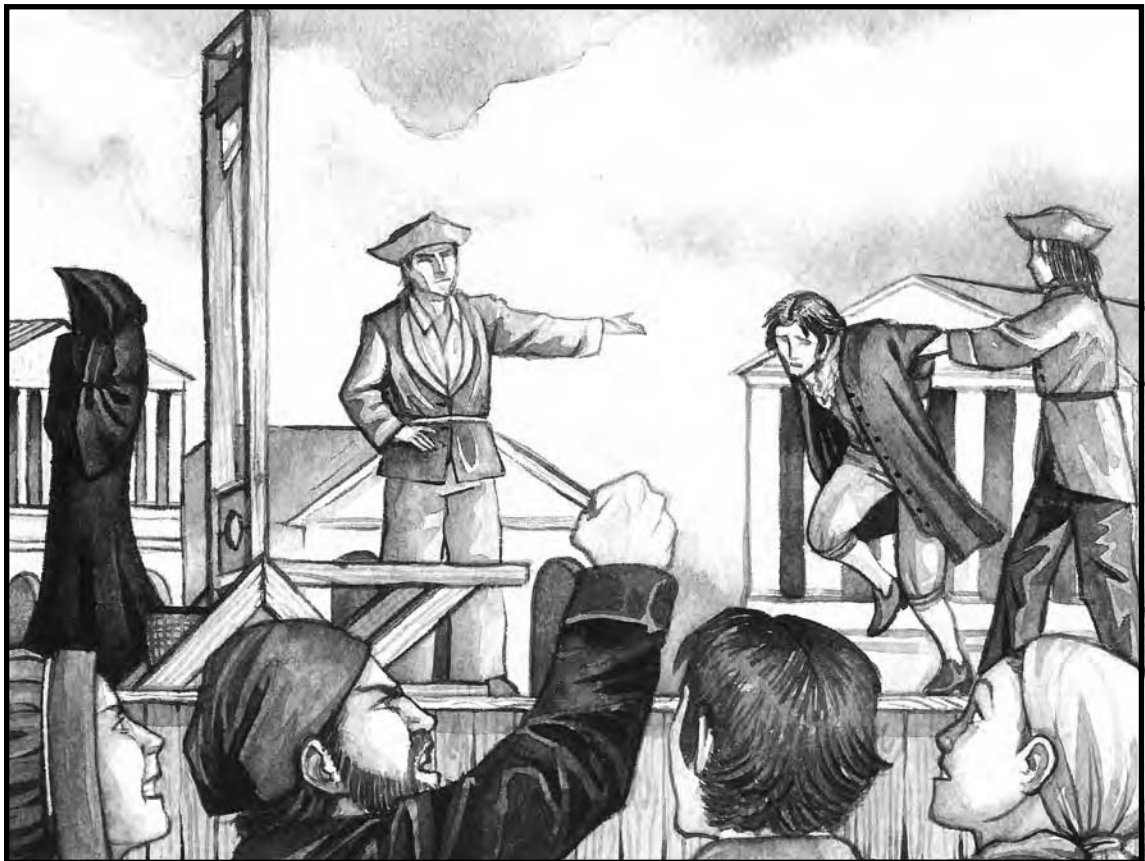
In France, in 1789, the citizens of Paris led the country in an uprising against the royalty and the noble classes. Inspired by the American Revolution of 1776, the French Revolution took the motto "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité" (liberty, equality, brotherhood) as its rallying cry.

But this granting of economic and intellectual freedoms to the lower classes did not long remain untainted. Even as the social barriers were break-

ing down, the forces of corruption entered the fray, firing the revolutionary fervor until it reached the level of fanaticism. The Revolution became the Terror; the guillotine became a familiar site in the streets of Paris and the nobles (and any who sympathized with them or gave them comfort) lost not only their status and privilege, but their heads as well. Blood ran in the streets of French cities and the minions of the Red Death drank in the heady reek of slaughter and madness.

*The Nineteenth Century*

The 19th century dawned full of hope and progress. Enlightenment thinking gave way to even more dramatic forms of speculation about the universe and the place of humans within it. Charles Darwin's theories of natural selection and evolution advanced a notion that was both liberating and belittling to mankind. By claiming that humans evolved from primates, Darwin placed humanity firmly within the cycle of earth's life and death. On the other hand, by removing the concept of divine origin, Darwin's theories were seen





by some as an excuse to encourage the “survival of the fittest” in its worst aspects — through robbery, deceitfulness, murder and other vices.

The Industrial Revolution brought a new way of doing things into being just in time to match the new ways of thinking established by the Enlightenment philosophers. Starting with the invention of the steam engine by Robert Fulton in 1807, the parade of inventions that included the Bessemer converter, the open hearth furnace, the telegraph, the telephone and the electric light bulb opened the door to the conquest of time and space through rapid transportation and instant communication and, ultimately, a way to bring light to the darkness through the magic of electricity. Work centered more and more in the factory rather than in the small shop or the cottage industry. A new social class — the hourly worker — came into being.

In the midst of such incredible steps forward, the Red Death insinuated itself into every aspect of 19th century existence. Along with the rise of factories came intolerable working conditions, the existence of child labor and a new form of slavery that resulted in men, women and children working fourteen and sixteen hour days for wages that could barely keep their heads above water. The Red Death took advantage of the physical and mental exhaustion of factory laborers to find new ways to corrupt people, turning them into its servants.

### *The Civil War*

In the United States, the division between slave owning states and anti-slavery states grew wider until, in the 1860's, civil war broke out between the southern states, most of which relied on the labor of slaves to support their largely agricultural economy, and the northern states, which depended on a large population of wage-earners to keep their industrial economy viable. Added to this mix were the abolitionists, who recognized slavery as the dehumanizing evil that it was and fought in the political, economic and social arenas to end that institution.

Many abolitionists, in fact, recognized the supernatural cause at the root of slavery as an ancient enemy — the Red Death. While this entity did not force humans to engage in the practice of buying and selling other humans, it did encourage the ones who did and rewarded many slave-owners with corrupted power. While the Civil War raged on battlefields such as Antietam and Gettysburg, a secret war erupted on other battlefields, some be-

low ground in hidden temples that served infernal creatures, others in the swamps of Louisiana and the mountains of Tennessee and North Carolina. This other war consisted of qabals of light on one side and qabals of darkness in service to the Red Death on the other.

The end of the Civil War brought an end to slavery as an official institution, but it did not prevent the evils of prejudice and racial hatred. Some servants of the Red Death donned white sheets and rampaged the countryside spreading fear and terror in the hearts of newly freed former slaves. Others traveled through the South as carpetbaggers, capitalizing on the chaos of war's aftermath. Still others took advantage of the increasing numbers of immigrants coming to the United States from Ireland and other European countries as well as the Asian immigration of railroad workers on the West Coast. These servants of the Red Death lured many newcomers to America to their deaths or, often, to worse fates.

### *Westward Ho!*

The 19th century also saw a rapid expansion of the United States' territory westward to the Pacific. Ex-soldiers from both sides of the Civil War sought new lives in the relatively unsettled places west of the Mississippi. Large groups of people united by religious belief or national origin or simply a desire to find a better life away from the stultifying eastern seaboard traveled across country in wagon trains and by railroad. The lands they settled had conveniently been cleared of its indigenous Native American populations and were now open territory for Americans hungry for land and a new start.

The Indian tribes who had lost their ancestral lands to the onslaught of white settlers were forced to settle on reservations, mostly composed of poor land in out of the way places. Despite attempts to keep their lands, the Native American tribes could not stand up to the consolidated efforts of the U.S. cavalry and the constant press of settlers. The Battle of the Little Big Horn, the Trail of Tears and the massacre at Wounded Knee in the 19th century fed the servants of the Red Death even as they entrenched feelings of prejudice and hatred between the Native American tribes and the new American nation.



### *European Matters*

Great political and social changes took place in Europe in the 19th century. From the Napoleonic Wars of the early decades to the Franco-Prussian War in the 1870s and the many battles that led to the unification of Italy came new borders to old nations. Uneasy relations during peacetime between European nations contributed to the spirit of change and uncertainty throughout the world.

In spite of the inroads made by agents of the Red Death as they encouraged men and nations to feed their aggressive impulses, the forces of light gained some victories. Urging nations to treat each other with fairness and humane actions even in war, the qabals opposed to the Red Death helped bring about the international talks that led to the signing of the Geneva Convention in 1864 governing the treatment of captives of war.

Great discoveries also brought light and hope to Europe. Scientists such as Marie Curie and Louis Pasteur made great discoveries in chemistry and medicine, while Sigmund Freud and Florence Nightingale brought new theories to the practice of healing.

### *All Around the World*

Elsewhere in the world, the same kaleidoscopic spirit of change and discovery held sway. Japan opened its first bank and embraced the spirit of industrialization.

Wars erupted throughout the world in the 19th century. The British fought to hold onto their colonial territories in the Sudan and in Afghanistan. The war between Greece and Turkey led to the slaughter of thousands of Armenians in Turkey. China and Japan went to war. Famine in Russia increased the unrest that would eventually lead to a revolt in the next century. War broke out between Italy and Abyssinia, while the British fought the Boers for control of South Africa.

### *Jack the Ripper*

In 1888, a series of murders in the Whitechapel District of London heralded a new form of terror—the serial killer. The murderer known as Jack the Ripper murdered five women within a short period of time; the murders appeared ritualistic in nature and the killer was never apprehended. The murders simply stopped.





Whether Jack the Ripper was possessed by the energies of the Red Death or whether he played a part in some ritual meant to strengthen that entity or whether he was simply a deranged individual caught up in his own nightmare has never been determined, though many qabals believe that such a heinous series of murders could only be laid at the doorstep of the Red Death.

### *The 1890s*

The Masque of the Red Death is set in the 1890s, a decade of magic and meaning in the background of Gothic Earth. A new century is about to begin and anyone who is sensitive to the magical and spiritual energies feels that the world stands at a crossroads in time and history. The actions of the next decade may, in fact, determine whether or not the human race chooses to grow in peace and prosperity or whether it opts for material power and the brutality of war.

The agents of the Red Death have gathered their forces for a wholesale onslaught on those who work for good, seeing the proliferation of war and cruelty as the best means for gaining power for their unholy master. The inheritors of those early qabals, the children, many times removed, of the Defiance, the Stone, the Phoenix and the Enlightenment now join forces with any who can help them fight against their ancient, evil foe.

### *Motifs of the 1890s*

The 19th century as a whole represents a time of extreme creativity and political machinations. Science, the arts, inventions and philosophy result in some of the most far-reaching discoveries and theories since the Renaissance. On the other hand, imperialism and colonialism reaches its peak in the 19th century, with European countries scrabbling to lay claim to lands in Africa and the Middle East and other places untouched by European or American colonists. A few major motifs run throughout the 1890s, providing some jumping-off points for games set in the world of Gothic Earth.

#### *Spiritualism*

The emphasis on scientific rationalization and materialism made popular in the 19th century by Charles Darwin and Karl Marx, among others, was met by a counter-reaction in the spiritualist movement. The Theosophist movement led by Madame

Helena Blavatsky attracted many seekers of spiritual truths. Sir James Frazer's *Golden Bough* provided an extensive study of the world's mythology. Mediums who claimed to be able to contact the dead flourished in Europe and America, while philosophical and religious discussion groups enjoyed great popularity. This search for the supernatural as an antidote to materialism helped to preserve magical energies for the adepts and mystics of the world, but it also provided a means for the Red Death's minions to contact and control unsuspecting and well-meaning people, turning them into pawns for the Red Death's evil schemes.

#### *Invention*

The 19th century saw the invention of many, many items, from the first automobile to the telephone. Most people believed that there was nothing science couldn't do and that only human shortsightedness prevented miracles from occurring in the laboratories and workshops of scientists and inventors. Many good and useful discoveries and inventions arose during this period, but some scientists and inventors had something in mind other than the welfare of humanity. These corrupted individuals created monsters in their laboratories and produced poisons and toxic materials to further the cause of corruption in the world.

#### *Exploration*

Though most of the world had been explored, there were still a few areas left for the bold and adventurous travelers. Expeditions to the poles, to the hearts of the African and South American jungles and to the highest mountain ranges of Tibet and the Near East caught the attention of many people as they traveled vicariously with the explorers who dared accomplish the impossible. Yet some things were not meant to be discovered. Lairs of the Red Death's servants often lay hidden in the most inaccessible parts of the world, in the frozen north or the mountains of Tibet or the hostile deserts of Arabia.

#### *Imperialism*

Throughout the 19th century, the European powers and the United States sought to extend their influence in the lesser developed continent of Africa and the Indian subcontinent as well as the Middle East. Wars broke out between various European nations during this period as more than one





country tried to claim parts of Africa or Asia for themselves. When a European country claimed land in another part of the world, the native culture was generally lost or weakened in favor of the ruling culture. This often freed supernatural creatures that had been held in check by the powers of native shamans. The general deadening of morality and ethics that comes with waging war also contributed to the side of corruption.

#### *From the 1890s to the Future*

The future of the world rests in the hands of those brave souls who dedicate their lives to battling the supernatural entity at the root of the world's evils. The player characters stand on the front lines in their struggle against the Red Death and its minions. Though they may not realize who they fight at first, their accumulated knowledge leads them inexorably to the knowledge of their foe and the magnitude of the forces that oppose them.

Depending on their actions, the player characters can ameliorate or exacerbate the events of future decades. They may not be able to prevent major disasters or wars of the next century, but they can lessen the effect. DMs may use their knowledge of 20th century history to provide visions of possible futures should the characters fail in their goals.

As they progress in their knowledge of the Red Death, characters may even discover how to banish or destroy the Red Death. Perhaps they can recover the lost works of Alexandrian lore or undo the mistakes of qabals of the past.

The history of Gothic Earth does not have to follow precisely that of the "real world." It is possible for player characters to forge a utopian 20th century; it is just as possible for them to fail utterly.

The world of **Masque of the Red Death** awaits its salvation — or its destruction.



#### *Table 1-1: The 1890s*

The following table provides a listing of major political events between 1890 and 1899.

**1890** — Massacre of Sioux at Wounded Knee. Idaho and Wyoming become 43rd and 44th states of the U.S.. Panic in the U.S. stock market after the London banking house of the Baring Brothers goes under. Luxembourg becomes a separate nation from the Netherlands. Zanzibar becomes a protectorate of the British Empire. Zimbabwe falls under the control of the British South Africa Company. Japan holds its first general election. Influenza epidemics break out all over the world.

**1891** — The American Express Company introduces traveler's checks. A mass emigration of Europeans to Canada begins. U. S. farmers send corn in large quantities to famine victims in Russia. Presidential proclamation opens 900,000 acres of Indian lands to settlement. Pithecanthropus erectus is discovered in Java. France and Russian reach a political entente. Young Turk movement of revolutionaries begins in Geneva. Pan-Germany League is founded. Pope delivers an encyclical on the plight of the workers. U.S. and Chile nearly go to war over an attack on American sailors from the U.S.S. *Baltimore* harbored in Valparaiso. Earthquake in Japan kills over 10,000 people.

**1892** — Writer José Martí founds Cuban Revolutionary party. Iron and steel workers in United States go on strike. Ellis Island becomes first stopping place for immigrants to the United States. Presidential proclamation opens 3 million acres of Cheyenne and Arapaho land to settlement. Cholera epidemic reaches United States from Europe. Gladstone becomes Prime Minister of England. Krakow, Poland hosts the Pan-Slavic Conference. Prince Ito becomes Premier of Japan.





**1893** — Grover Cleveland becomes 24th president of the United States. World Exposition opens in Chicago. The failure of Philadelphia and Reading Railroad throws U.S. into economic panic. Fridtjof Nansen begins his expedition to the North Pole. Gold certificates are suspended from being issued when U. S. Treasury's gold reserves fall below \$100,000,000 minimum. Six million acres of Cherokee land is open to settlement. Stock market crashes on June 27th. Franco-Russian Alliance is signed. Ivory Coast becomes a French colony. Second Irish Home Rule Bill is vetoed by Britain's House of Lords. Natal achieves self-government. Transvaal annexes Swaziland. Laos added by France to Union of Indochina. New Zealand becomes first nation to grant women the right to vote. Queen Liliuokalani is deposed in Hawaii and replaced by a provisional government. U.S. makes Hawaii a U. S. protectorate

**1894** — Presbyterian General Assembly convicts Professor Henry Preserved Smith of heresy. Rioting and civil unrest result in strikes by 750,000 workers in United States. Republic of Hawaii proclaimed. Britain completes conquest of Uganda. Sven Hedlin explores Tibet. Captain Albert Dreyfus is arrested in France, precipitating a political crisis. Japan and Korea declare war on China. Armenians are massacred in Turkey.

**1895** — Cuba fights a war of independence against Spain and hero José Martí dies in battle. President Cleveland decides in favor of Brazil in border dispute between Brazil and Argentina. Stefan Stambulov, the premier of Bulgaria, is assassinated. Anti-British hostility in the Transvaal increases due to the Jameson Raid. Lenin is exiled to Siberia. Korea becomes independent. Korean queen is assassinated with the involvement of the Japanese.

**1896** — Utah becomes the 45th state. Gold Rush begins in the Klondike region of Alaska. Spanish General Weyler suppresses Cuban rebels. Nicaraguan revolution breaks out and U.S. marines arrive to protect U.S. interests in that country. Spain refuses U. S. support in pacifying Cuba with intent of gaining independence for Cuba. William McKinley becomes 25th U. S. president. Athens, Greece hosts first modern Olympics with 13 nations competing. Evidence pointing to Alfred Dreyfus' innocence is suppressed. 27,000 perish in Japanese tsunami. Malaya comes under British control. India's wheat crop fails. Ethiopian independence maintained by King Menelik II's defeat of the Italians at Adwa. Transvaal and Orange Free State form military alliance. Madagascar annexed by France. Shah of Persia is assassinated.

**1897** — U.S. protests General Weyler's actions in Cuba. Liberal government in Cuba results in Weyler's recall to Spain. Zionist movement is begun by Theodor Herzl in Basel, Switzerland. Crete and Greece unite. Greece defeats Turkey in Battle of Thessaly. Mathieu Dreyfus discovers Major Esterhazy's authorship of document that convicted his brother. Kiao-Chow, China is occupied by Germany. Famine spreads through India due to failure of wheat crop. Slavery is abolished in Zanzibar.

**1898** — Battleship *Maine* explodes in harbor of Havana, beginning the Spanish-American War. Hawaii becomes part of United States. Britain leases Hong Kong from China for 99 years. Spanish-American War ends. Spain cedes Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Guam to the U.S. Esterhazy is acquitted of forgery in Dreyfus trial. Colonel Henry admits to the deed. Italian assassin murders Austria's Empress Elizabeth. Boxer Uprising begins in China. Chinese Empress Tz'u-his imprisons the emperor. Confrontation between British and French at Fashoda ends in French withdrawal from the Sudan.

**1899** — Boll weevil spreads from south of the Rio Grande into cotton producing states of southern United States. U. S. lays claim to Wake Island. U. S. Congress approves more ships for the navy. 2,000 people die as hurricane storms across Puerto Rico. Dreyfus judgment annulled and a retrial is called. Decree by French president pardons Dreyfus. Hague Conference formed to settle international disputes. Boer War begins.





## Chapter Two: An Atlas of Gothic Earth

*ON A STARRED NIGHT PRINCE LUCIFER UPROSE,  
TIRED OF HIS DARK DOMINION SWUNG THE FIEND  
ABOVE THE ROLLING BALL IN CLOUD PART SCREENED,  
WHERE SINNERS HUGGED THEIR SPECTRE OF REPOSE.  
POOR PREY TO HIS HOT FIT OF PRIDE WERE THOSE.  
AND NOW UPON HIS WESTERN WING HE LEANED,  
NOW HIS HUGE BULK O'ER AFRIC'S SANDS CAREENED,  
NOW THE BLACK PLANET SHADOWED ARCTIC SNOWS'  
—GEORGE MEREDITH, "LUCIFER IN STARLIGHT"*





The misty realm of Ravenloft holds myriad territories, each evincing a unique horror, each ruled by a single dark overlord. Gothic Earth knows no such divisions. No boundaries except those created by nations and no divisions except those found in the minds of the folk who inhabit the world exist. Rather, all of Gothic Earth falls under the supernatural sway of the Red Death.

Despite this power, despite the rampant evils that lurk within the darkest shadows, Gothic Earth still essentially belongs to mankind. Humanity's tenacious grip on life and its stubborn insistence on survival in even the most hellish regions has allowed man to spread to almost every corner of the globe. And those areas that have resisted man's incursions thus far exist as beckoning unknowns, irresistible in their mysteries, tempting in their secret, as yet undiscovered riches and exotica.

Two separate passions inform the Western mind in its relationship with other cultures. The existence of a burgeoning revolution in industry and transport allows man to travel faster and farther than ever before, and the newly emerging social imperative to explore, conquer and "civilize" leads to the institution of colonialism. Meanwhile, in those foreign and exotic locations the west seeks to know, ancient cultures clash with newer ideas among their own peoples while also having to endure those of the same western invaders.

As is its wont, the Red Death uses misunderstandings and conflict to further its own power, insinuating itself into both old and new cities, perverting all peoples' beliefs and practices to its own purposes. This corrupting influence is what renders the usually familiar places detailed below both more alien and more dangerous. In Gothic Earth, things rarely coincide exactly with the reality of the Earth we know.

## *Africa*

Darkest Africa. The very phrase conjures visions of dense, teeming jungles filled with perils both known and imagined. Wild beasts, terrible serpents and uncivilized pagan tribes are the least of the dangers western man faces when attempting to penetrate the secrets of the Dark Continent. Witch doctors with strange arcane powers and cannibals salivating for a taste of white flesh fill popular imagination alongside an equally strongly held belief that Africa needs Europeans to civilize, educate, Christianize, westernize — and most im-

### *A Word Concerning Choices*

In this section we have chosen to present the world from a Western point of view. The colonization by the British Empire and European nations of great areas of the world established ties that forever changed the natures of the places they claimed. As this also formed the backbone of the accepted prejudices of the day, we felt that portraying the world from that perspective made the most sense for our purposes. Naturally, the native peoples of these lands have their own cultures and lifestyles. We recommend portraying different societies as somewhat rude awakenings for characters who have no idea what they are getting into in foreign climes. Any characters who hail from these areas will have a different perspective already, but will probably have suffered from European intrusion one way or another. In either case, many resources exist to fill in the picture with far more detail than we have room for here. Our main concern in choosing this way of presentation has been to show the beliefs of the day, which seem to lend themselves quite nicely to the Red Death's machinations.

portantly — create new markets for European goods among her native peoples. That Africa contains within her mysterious environs a wealth of exploitable raw materials as well as diamonds and gold, hones Europe's desire to unlock the continent's secrets to a fever pitch.

Although the Europeans knew Africa long before the New World was even discovered it remained mostly unexplored until the 19th century. By mid century explorations and missionary travels into sub-Saharan Africa pique ever-more interest and whet European appetites for exotic adventure.

As the 1800s come to a close, however, various European powers carve Africa into dozens of colonies according to their whims with no thought for



tribal alliances or traditional territories. Much less do they ponder the feelings or rights of the native peoples whose ancestors have claimed the land since before recorded time began.

As the accepted knowledge of the day is Darwin's evolutionary theories applied to social situations, Europeans see themselves as infinitely superior to the poor savage Africans. Europeans see it as their duty to teach the Africans to live productive lives — as defined by European standards. Naturally, no Europeans believe that any African could ever hope to achieve the same level of culture, civilization and intelligence as the Europeans themselves enjoy.

Some progress is made toward colonizing the interior, but the bastions of Western civilization remain coastal in nature. Despite the veneer of European life laid over the African cities described below, they remain essentially native at their cores, with seething resentment the emotion that infects most of the cities' non-European residents. In both cases, the cities depicted are those best known to Westerners rather than any within the interior of the continent.

### *Alexandria*

This incredible Egyptian city is located along the northwestern tip of the Nile Delta. It hovers along a slim strip of land that divides Lake Maryût from the Mediterranean Sea. The island of Pharos, which lies just offshore, was made famous for an ancient lighthouse built there. Standing nearly 360 feet tall, its light could be discerned by sailors on the Mediterranean from miles away and served as a great navigational aid. Though connected to the mainland only by a narrow stone pier in former times, silt buildup from centuries of Nile floods has made the stone stretch into a broad peninsula by the late 1800s.

As a more modern metropolis than Egypt's truly ancient cities, Alexandria retains a feeling more akin to the rest of the Mediterranean than places such as Memphis. It provides a staging point for further exploration into the ancient land of secrets and mysteries, an occupation that proves endlessly fascinating to Europeans bent on finding the source of the Nile, unlocking the secrets of the





pyramids and opening the hidden tombs of the Pharaohs.

### *History*

Like so many other cities that share its name, Alexandria, Egypt was founded by Alexander, the Great. Brought into being in 322 B. C., the city of Alexandria almost immediately replaced the ancient city of Memphis as Egypt's capital. Soon, Alexander's newest glorious namesake became a center of commerce and a cultural mainstay for the western Mediterranean Sea. Because of its status as a major center of Hellenistic culture, Alexandria became one of the mightiest — and wealthiest — cities of the ancient world.

Such was Alexandria's influence and majesty that fully a third of the city was given over to the Royal Sector, which held royal tombs (some dating back to Alexander's time) and also great gardens that featured biological and zoological wonders.

For over a thousand years Alexandria flourished as a hub of Mediterranean culture, hosting the Greeks, the Romans and finally the Arabs. As the terminus for trade via the overland route from Asia, it held a pride of place almost unrivaled elsewhere. Its power and its prestige tumbled in the 16th century as European sailors and traders discovered and began plying trade routes around the Cape of Good Hope, speeding trade and for a time providing a way to outwit the bandits who plagued the overland routes.

Alexandria's next moment of glory emerged in 1801 when British forces claimed a major victory over French army forces near the city, thus thwarting Napoleon's expeditions into Egypt.

In the early part of the 19th century, Mehemet Ali, viceroy of Egypt from 1805 to 1840, decided to restore Alexandria's lost prestige as one of the region's major economic powers. Slowly the city began to rise again, a pace that quickened mightily with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. Once again the city found itself at the center of trade and power.

In 1882 festering resentments led to the slaughter of massive numbers of Europeans. This prompted an Anglo-French naval unit to retaliate and subjugate the city through bombardment. Soon thereafter, the British took occupation of the city, moving then to take control of all Egypt. Near the end of the 1800s, both Alexandria and the whole of Egypt still languish under British rule.

### *Forbidden Lore*

Modern Alexandria lies atop ancient ruins — of the original city and of the settlement atop which the ancient city was built. Layer upon layer of ruins underpins the city, with countless tales of those buried within those ruins. Most speak of timeless catacombs and the lost tombs of pharaohs that contain unbelievably valuable secrets and esoteric knowledge that speaks of life and death — and life renewed after death for the fortunate few.

Some claim that when the Great Library at Alexandria burned, a few zealous scholars removed the most valuable lore and the greatest secrets hidden within and entombed them somewhere beneath the city, for safe keeping, or for some more nefarious purpose. Whether this is truth or hope speaking no one knows. Such tales tempt both the scholar and the thief, however, as do other stories of fabulous jewels and gems buried alongside such ancient knowledge.

Whatever secrets may be held within the shadowed crypts and darkened ruins beneath the city, it is well for those who would seek them out to remember that the Red Death's dealings with mankind that occurred in the ancient kingdom of Egypt continue into the dawning of the 20th century. Whatever treasures or lost lore that might be found in Alexandria almost certainly holds the taint of corruption and the possibility of unleashing ever-greater evil upon the world.

### *Cape Town*

Geographically about as far from Alexandria as it could be and still remain on the same continent, Cape Town lies near the southern tip of Africa some 31 miles north of the Cape of Good Hope. It crouches beneath the plateaus of Table Mountain on the shores of Table Bay. As a sub-Saharan area, southern Africa is far closer to the Africa of popular imagination than the more "cultured" Egyptian cities far to the north.

### *History*

Founded in 1652 by Jan van Riebeeck, Cape Town served as a base for the Dutch East India Company, with most of its economy tied up in provisioning ships from Europe bound for the Far East. The settlement expanded rapidly, becoming a major port soon thereafter. In the 18th and 19th centuries Cape Town dominated southern Africa



as the most important port on the run around the Cape of Good Hope. With the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 much of Cape Town's shipping was diverted away from the city as the dangerous swing around the cape became unnecessary. Cape Town reeled under the sudden cessation of their livelihood, as economic disaster loomed for the city.

Like many other African territories claimed by European powers, Cape Town became a disputed area with both the British and the Boers (Dutch settlers) claiming the land by the late 19th century. As one of the ports from which the slave trade was carried on until the mid 1800s Cape Town was well known to all sorts of maritime traders.

By the 1890s Cape Town has begun to recover, rebuilding its economy and looking toward a brighter future when it will once again take pride of place as one of the most important seaports on Africa's southern coast. Aside from its importance as a seaport, Cape Town also served as a vital staging point for travelers and traders seeking to enter the interior.

Tension manifests throughout Cape Town and its environs as the Boers and the British each strive to dominate the area. The Boer Wars loom less than a decade away. As the two colonial powers struggle for control, the native peoples hope vainly for some acknowledgement of their cultures, customs or even common humanity. Their resentment simmers beneath the surface, stirring an already tense situation to a seething boil.

### *Forbidden Love*

As with other areas where European incursions have disrupted the lives and customs of the native people, Cape Town still reels from the effects of the slave trade of the past decades. Ancient spirits may have taken offense at the treatment of their people; new spirits steeped in blood, pain and anguish may have been created. Their resentment might manifest as everything from bad luck to supernatural curses and fates worse than death.

As it has served as both a slaving port and a jumping off point for expeditions into the interior, Cape Town has played host to a number of odd types in its day – slave traders, fortune hunters, explorers, missionaries and self-styled spiritualists among them. Any and all could have brought the Red Death's corruption with them or fallen to evil while plying their trades. Further, those who have used Cape Town as a base for their explorations into the interior have sometimes discovered and

brought back... *things*: Strange, exotic beasts long thought extinct, creatures never imagined even in nightmare and weird tribal totems and oddities filled with ancient magic white men could never comprehend.

Aside from these mysteries, the city's placement near to the Cape of Good Hope endows it with a certain supernatural reputation. The most famous — or infamous — phantom ship known to the world, the *Flying Dutchman*, plies the seas near to the cape. Her name brings an eerie shiver to all who make their living sailing and even greater unease to the folk who make their homes in Cape Town. It is said by some that the *Dutchman* attracts other ghostly and supernatural phenomena by its presence. Cape Town's citizenry would certainly agree.

### *America, North*

The United States of America and the various provinces of Canada dominate the continent of North America. Though trading centers, towns and cities grow speedily along both coasts of each, the continent's interior is sparsely populated and barely explored with some parts remaining completely unknown in the 1890s. Communication from one part of the land to another is unreliable and travel is fraught with many perils.

The native tribes are being overrun, with many forced onto reservations and others being decimated by disease, starvation, deliberate genocide and battle against government forces determined to drive them out of area white settlers desire. Woodland tribes are driven westward into deserts, plains tribes are deprived of their livelihood as the buffalo are hunted to near extinction.

### *Atlanta*

Atlanta lies near the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the state of Georgia. A crossroads for settlers coming into and crossing through the region, Atlanta develops into a city of considerable influence due to both the trade and the culture available there.

History records the beginnings of Atlanta from 1833 when a settler named Hardy Ivy built a home on land that would later host the city. The land actually belonged to the Creek Indians, but by 1837, the single dwelling had grown into a town called Terminus, which later was known as



### *Forbidden Love*

Marthasville. In 1845, the name was changed to Atlanta, said name bestowed upon the growing city by J. E. Thomas, railroad tycoon who wanted it to serve as the easternmost destination for his Western and Atlantic Railroad.

Though not the capital of the Confederacy during the American Civil War, Atlanta served a vital role in transportation, nursing of the wounded and supplies for the Confederate army and was beloved of the south for its grace and culture as much as for its economic supremacy. This made Atlanta a prime target for the Union armies advancing into the south. On September 2, 1864, Union forces under the command of General W. T. Sherman captured the city. On November 15, at Sherman's command, the city was torched, which left it destroyed.

During Reconstruction after the war, the rebuilding of Atlanta became a priority symbolizing the reunification of the nation. In 1868, four years after its destruction, the newly rebuilt city of Atlanta is named Georgia's capital. Despite the rebuilding, Southerners will curse the name of Sherman for centuries to come.

In and around Atlanta the souls of both Confederate and Union soldiers linger, awaiting resolution that never arrives. Spectral cavalry charges clash noiselessly, ghostly Union soldiers float by carrying insubstantial torches to burn newly rebuilt Atlanta and incorporeal lines of soldiers rush one another, bayonets fixed and dripping with crimson gore. Some say that those caught within such a battle may find themselves subject to attacks that are far too real.

Bathed in the blood of battle, Atlanta is a lodestone for the macabre. Rumor hints that a great Confederate general lingers in proud undead splendor somewhere within the city's most exclusive district. It is whispered that he is assembling an army of undead to arise someday and punish those who betrayed the Confederacy's cause and surrendered his beloved city to Sherman.

### *Boston*

One of the oldest cities in North America, Boston is situated on Massachusetts Bay between the Neponset, Charles and Mystic Rivers. This old city has a long and illustrious past. From its premier position leading the fight against the British during





the American Revolution to its stance against slavery in the Civil War, Boston has earned its place as the heart of New England.

### *History*

Puritans fleeing the suppression of their religion in England founded the city of Boston in 1630. Europeans immigrating to the New World brought myriad cultures to the area. Though the city became a cultural center, it retains its puritanical philosophies and practices.

Part of Boston's fame lies in its attention to education. In 1635 the Boston Public Latin School opens. A year later sees the opening of Harvard University. Together they constitute the first formal schools established in the Americas. From its humble beginnings, Boston grows into a major trade center due to its excellent harbor.

Best known for its role in the American Revolutionary War Boston hosts the "Tea Party" that protests England's unfair taxation of her colonies. When the 13 American colonies rise against Britain, many of the most telling and famous battles of the war occur in and around Boston, placing it in the forefront of the conflict.

Following the war years Boston continues to grow, enjoying great prestige and power as elite families such as the Cabots, Lodges and Lowells gain fortunes from shipbuilding and the textile industries. Combining wealth with conservative politics and a love of learning, Boston becomes known as the Athens of the Americas.

Before the American Civil War Boston leads the abolitionist movement. During the Civil War, the city serves as a major staging and supply center for the Union Army. The city's contribution to winning the war for the north consolidates Boston's reputation as a city dedicated to liberty and freedom.

In the 19th century, Boston experiences waves of immigrants from Europe, especially Irish fleeing British oppression and hunger in Ireland. This influx of people gives the city a pool of labor that allows it to become an industrial metropolis along with its status as a major port and a center for education and culture.

### *Forbidden Love*

Despite – or perhaps because of – its eminent position, Boston and environs have always been steeped in the supernatural. From the landing at

Plymouth Rock to the Revolutionary War to the Salem Witch Trials of 1692, from its gabled houses to its hoary stone churches to its covered wooden bridges, the very land seems infused with the spirits of the restless dead. Lights flicker in deserted graveyards; strange faces peer from beneath the ice of deeply frozen lakes and frightful phantom horsemen ride the twisting back roads near the city. Those seeking evidence of witchcraft or ghostly presence need look no further than the city by the bay.

### *New Orleans*

New Orleans, Louisiana, Queen of the Delta, lies near the mouth of the mighty Mississippi River near to graceful Lake Pontchartrain. As one of the largest ports in the world, New Orleans creates a vital link between the central part of the United States via the Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico, and thence, the Atlantic Ocean.

### *History*

Founded in 1718 by Sieur de Bienville, who named it for Philippe II, Duke of Orleans, New Orleans becomes the capital of French Louisiana less than five years later. Even as a newly founded town located in the New World, New Orleans develops a particularly French identity, which remains with the city throughout its existence.

In 1762 the Spanish take control of the city. Spanish culture mixes with the French arts and culture already in place and with that brought into the city by free blacks and slaves to create a unique blend of food, music and culture known as Creole. In 1800, the French regain control of the territory; the French then sell New Orleans to the young United States of America as part of the Louisiana Purchase only three years later.

As part of the United States, New Orleans explodes into prosperity as a center for the slave trade and as a major exporter of cotton. In 1815, Andrew Jackson's forces defeat the British in New Orleans, and when the war ends, the city is free to flourish both in trade and in its special cultural elegance.

Despite being conquered and occupied by Union forces during the American Civil War, New Orleans resists the intrusion of northern values, maintaining its own traditions. Perhaps because of this, reconstruction of the city in the wake of the war has been slow and New Orleans has yet to



return to its previous grandeur. Nonetheless, it remains a very important port and a major production center for sugar.

### *Forbidden Love*

Great swamps known as bayous created by the flow of the Mississippi surround and penetrate the city of New Orleans. These dark and twisted bayous play host to myriad unknown perils both natural and supernatural. The dark streets of the city — particularly those of the old quarter — teem with life, and if locals are to be believed, unlife. Many of New Orleans' citizens nod knowingly when any speak of the...things...that walk the dark alleys and among the wrought iron surrounded courtyards.

Legends hint at bestial creatures that range the bayous and blood-sucking monsters that prey upon the innocent and the guilty alike. Most, however, speak in whispers concerning a secret cult of magical practitioners, necromancers who utilize long forgotten magic of the darkest sort. Most such adepts are rumored to be found among the ex-slaves who inhabit the city. While everyone knows they exist, few could claim to ever see their mystic practices.

Nevertheless, their influence is felt throughout the city. Rumor tells that the living dead inhabit the bayous of New Orleans in large numbers. Some say these creatures are ghouls slaving for the taste of living flesh, others speak of shambling horrors robbed of all will who perform heinous deeds or mindless drudgery at the behest of their necromancer masters. Those seeking instruction in the dark arts as well as any wanting to combat evil could hope for no more productive hunting grounds than New Orleans.

### *New York City*

Comprising Manhattan Island and the lands adjacent to it, New York City has distinguished itself as one of the premiere cities of the United States. Lying just off the Atlantic Ocean, it has become a center for political movements and for manufacturing as well as a financial center for the country.

### *History*

Before the coming of the Europeans, the Mahican and Munsee tribes controlled the area where New York now stands. Farther inland were



tribes that would make up the Iroquois Confederacy, which was formed around 1570.

It is believed that as early as 1524 Giovanni da Verrazzano, an explorer in the hire of France, sailed as far as New York Bay and to the Hudson River. In 1609 Henry Hudson explored the river that today bears his name and claimed the land for the Netherlands. In the same year, Samuel de Champlain explored the New York region and claimed the land for France.

By 1624 the Dutch established Fort Orange, the first permanent white settlement in the area. Within a year Dutch settlers began to settle New Amsterdam. In 1626 Peter Minuit, governor of the colony, purchased Manhattan from the Indians. Though the Dutch continued to try settlement, their efforts proved not as profitable as they had hoped and in 1664 the English took control of New Amsterdam, renaming the territory New York. Three years later, the Dutch formally surrendered their claim to New York.

In 1669, Sieur de la Salle, a French adventurer, explored the Niagara region. Twenty years later, in 1689, war broke out between England and France. New York became a battleground, beginning with a series of four wars called the French and Indian Wars.

In 1763 the Treaty of Paris ended the French and Indian Wars. New York would not long see peace, however. In 1776 New York ratified the Declaration of Independence and the next year the First and Second Battles of Freeman's Farm were fought there. In 1778 New York ratified the Articles of Confederation and in 1779 a military expedition into Iroquois land led by General James Clinton and John Sullivan opened the land for white settlement.

From 1785–1790, New York City served as the capital of the United States. During that time, in 1786 New York became the 11th state, ratified the Constitution of the United States in 1788 and inaugurated George Washington as president in 1789 all in New York City.

New York knew more warfare with the coming of the War of 1812 where most of the fighting took place along the Canadian border. In 1825 the Erie Canal was opened and in 1839 the anti-rent movement became a powerful political force after farmers dressed as Indians to fight landowner's attempts to evict farmers from the land.

From 1861–1865 New York contributed more men and money to the Union in the Civil War

than any other state. This situation led to the people of New York rioting in New York City due to their opposition to having more New York men drafted.

In 1865 with the end of the war, many manufacturing centers were built in New York. The city took on more cosmopolitan features even as different sections began to attract settlers that would give them their particular cultural and ethnic emphases in the years to come.

In 1884 France presented the United States with the Statue of Liberty that was placed near New York to welcome immigrants to their new home. In the 1890s Ellis Island became the official immigration stop as most immigrants came to New York City, their dreams of America founded in what they had heard of this great metropolis.

### *Forbidden Love*

Few native Americans remain in the New York area, but those who do remember that the Iroquois Confederation was said to have come about when the tribes foreswore cannibalism. Tales of cannibals still practicing their rituals during the dark of the moon are still told and may explain some of the disappearances in the city. Rumor tells of a great cabal of magically active folk that control the destiny of the city, telling that those who "fight city hall" rarely profit from it. Then again, New York politicians are scary enough that they hardly need supernatural help to get what they want. Every possible permutation of superstition has come to New York from the various immigrants, and who is to say that these folk didn't bring such things with them when they came to the great city of New York.

### *San Francisco*

Situated on the peninsula defined by the Pacific Ocean and San Francisco Bay, the city of San Francisco rises as one of the most important ports on the Pacific Coast.

### *History*

Sir Francis Drake first explored the San Francisco Bay region in 1579 on his voyage around the world. Yet a permanent European settlement was not established until 1776. Called Mission Dolores and founded by Juan Batista de Anza it consisted of a fort and a community that surrounded it. With the passage of time, more settlers came to the



region, expanding the settlement into a city, which was then re-christened Yerba Buena.

In 1846 during the Mexican War, American Naval forces under the command of John Montgomery capture Yerba Buena. The next year the city received its third name: San Francisco. According to legend, the name San Francisco had been given to the city's bay in 1595 by Spanish explorers who wished to honor St. Francis of Assisi.

After gold was discovered in California, in 1848 the region became a Mecca for treasure hunters, wild adventurers and lawless individuals, all bent on fattening their pockets and few caring about the effects on the community of their dealings. So pervasive was their influence that the city's waterfront districts was given the name of the Barbary Coast a name that became synonymous with piracy, lawlessness, murder and corruption.

As immigrants poured into the city from far-flung areas worldwide, vigilante groups took up arms to restore order to the city. Though immigrants flooded in from Europe, many Chinese also entered the area and the city became truly cosmopolitan. In 1869 the completion of the railroad linking east with west gave the city the impetus to develop into a major metropolis, which it continues to become into the 1890s.

### *Forbidden Lore*

The land originally held by native peoples and taken by colonizers who held no respect for the traditions of those they displaced does not rest easy. The earth shifts, shaking ominously at times. Most speak of the natural phenomenon of earthquakes; some hint at earth spirits angered by the fouling of the seas and so much greedy mining for gold. Some mines, inimical to those who attempt to profit from them, are called haunted. Whether the beings that haunt these mines are spirits of the land, something completely unknown or the ghosts of miners killed in accidents or by claim jumpers none can say.

Stories told by sailors making their way through the darker areas of the waterfront as well as tales passed along by some of the less savory elements of San Francisco society hint that something truly evil has arrived in the city by the bay. The waterfront has always had its mysterious disappearances. Most point to the use of press gangs to recruit crews for the many ships that pass through this great port. Others describe infernal beasts that snatch the unwary in the dark of night.

The Chinese who have settled in the city reveal that they were not alone when crossing from their homeland and speak of ancient evils that accompanied them and plague their new home. While some more forward thinking folk scoff at such tales, they would be wise to remember that the Chinese come from an ancient and complex culture and their stories should not be so swiftly discounted.

### *Vancouver*

Sheltered by Vancouver Island, the city of Vancouver, Canada, lies along a flat expanse of land on the Burrard Inlet on the Strait of Georgia. Though far northward geographically, this sheltered inlet remains free of ice year round due to a mild climate.

### *History*

Europeans first discovered the landmass that would become known as Vancouver Island in 1778 by no less a personage than the famous explorer James Cook. It wasn't until 1792 that the Burrard Inlet found exploration from George Vancouver, who claimed the region for England. It took until 1875 for the first settlement, called Granville, to be established. In 1886, when the connection was made linking to the Canadian Pacific Transcontinental railway, the city changed its name to Vancouver.

Now that the city was linked to the world via land and sea, its population grew precipitously, increasing Vancouver's importance exponentially. Someday Vancouver will become one of the most important cities in Canada. At this time, however, it is still very much a frontier town with a great port. Its primary industries include logging and fishing and its people embody the ideals of self-sufficiency and toughness.

### *Forbidden Lore*

In this unexplored forests and towering mountains Vancouver rests like an oasis of civilization in the midst of a huge expanse of temperate wilderness. Locals tell frightful stories of the strange creatures that lurk within the forests nearby, salting their tales with descriptions of great hairy beasts that walk upright like men and have strangely human faces. Others speak of huge white apes that charge through the wilderness with speed equal to that of a wolf or bobcat. Still others claim that



these beasts can change themselves, taking on the appearance of human beings, looking either like native Indians or European colonists.

The Indians who have lived in this area for centuries before the advent of white men on their soil say little, but when pressed may speak in the quietest of whispers concerning the howling spirits of the wind and forests. It is said that these fearsome creatures bring madness and death to those who encounter them and do not like to be disturbed. From their tales, the numbers of these creatures would have to surpass that of the people of Vancouver for them to have done all they are said to have done. Either that, or they must move at the speed of lightning from locale to locale, trailing terror in their wake.

### *America, Central and South*

Central America was once dominated by the great Mesoamerican cultures of the Aztecs and

Mayans who made the region their home. Though each created a mighty empire, these civilizations fell under the dominion of European powers greedy for their gold and determined to Christianize them.

In South America, where the Chimu, Nazca and Incan civilizations flourished, much the same happened. Once Europeans explored part of this continent, the native people suffered greatly, for the Spanish and Portuguese who claimed these lands brought diseases that the native people could not fight off. The vast continent with its great mountain ranges, pampas, lush rain forest and mighty rivers remains virtually unexplored. Ancient ruins in the interior stand intact, testament to the grand cultures that created them.

### *Mexico City*

At a high elevation on a wide plain that was once a lake stands Mexico City. In the distance can be seen both the snow-capped peaks of the Sierra Nevadas and the still smoldering caldera of the





volcano known as Popocatepetl. Though clearly locate din a tropical clime, the city's 6,900-foot elevation makes its climate relatively cool. The Zócalo or Plaza de la Constitución is a great commons area that forms the heart of the city. Many of the most important buildings are located there.

### *History*

Once known as Tenochtitlan (since its founding in 1325), the largest city ever built by native Americans, this capital of the Aztec Empire supported a population of over 700,000. This metropolis became known as Mexico City in 1521 after Hernán Cortés and his troops destroyed it and rebuilt Spanish settlements over the entire area. In 1530 Mexico City became the seat of a viceroy and bishopric, and in 1551 founded a university, one of the oldest in the Americas.

In 1821, revolutionaries seized the city and a year later saw the city host the first Mexican Congress. In late 1824, Mexico City was made the capital of an independent Mexico.

### *Forbidden Lore*

Aztec influence never truly faded, nor have all forgotten Tenochtitlán. The Mexican government would prefer to present their thriving city as both calm and quiet, but this is far from true. Many of the natives can trace their ancestry back to the great kingdoms of the Aztecs and other Mesoamericans. Stories of the suffering their ancestors endured under the boot heels of the Conquistadors are passed from generation to generation. Secret societies and dark cults abound with rumors that certain practitioners among them keep alive the ancient magic of the Aztecs with their devotion to the sun, the weather and to combat.

Countless tales speak of vast, underground chambers and lost temples to the Aztec gods where the descendants of the great Mesoamerican culture still practice banned rituals. Said to contain innumerable treasures, they are also rumored to host angry spirits just waiting for European intrusion to provide an excuse to rip them limb from limb for their treatment of the native peoples. The natives respect and honor such places, though a few are said to have taken certain relics with the intention of using them against the Europeans who stole both their land and their heritage.

### *Port-au-Prince*

This notorious and lawless city lies on the island of Hispaniola in the Caribbean and serves as the capital of Haiti. Port-au-Prince is located at the junction of two mountainous peninsulas that form the island. This gives the city great importance as it has easy access to both the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean via the Gulf of Gonaïves.

### *History*

Europeans first discovered the island of Hispaniola when Christopher Columbus sailed nearby in the late 1400s. In the 17th century French pirates established themselves along the island's western coast, but in 1697 the French government took official control of the island and named it Saint Dominique. The government founded the city of Port-au-Prince in 1749.

Haiti is blessed with a climate that makes it perfect for growing sugar cane, a factor that led to Saint Dominique becoming the home of thousands of slaves transported from Africa by the French colonial government.

Word of the French Revolution reached Port-au-Prince in 1789, sparking a violent civil war.

In 1803 British troops assisted Jean Jacques Dessalines in driving the French off the island. Dessalines declared the colony to be an independent state and named it Haiti, which means "mountainous place." In the late 1800s, Port-au-Prince still carries an atmosphere somewhat akin to the French pirates who inhabited it centuries earlier. Now attempting to survive as an independent state, Haiti exports valuable crops such as coffee, sugar cane and cotton, yet it remains a wild seaport with the excitement and dangers inherent in such lawless territories.

### *Forbidden Lore*

Importing thousands of slaves from Africa inevitably led to there being some dark practitioners of ancient magic among them. These dangerous adepts are the subject of numerous rumors as to their supposed powers. Among their talents is said to be the ability to sap the will of a person and force the victim to serve the adept without question. Further, these priests and priestesses seem to possess sources of information that nobody else has at their disposal, even those who pay dearly to be kept abreast of events. It is said that nothing that tran-



spires in Port-au-Prince escapes their notice, and if offended, their vengeance is quick and deadly.

### *Buenos Aires*

The Spanish originally founded Buenos Aires to serve as a convenient landing area along the 45-kilometer wide estuary of the River Plate. Blessed with a mild climate year round, Buenos Aires has become one of the most important ports in the Southern Hemisphere.

#### *History*

The Spanish established the first European settlement in Buenos Aires in 1536. So fierce were native attacks against the settlement, that in 1541 the colony was abandoned. Loath to give up such a potentially valuable port, however, Juan de Garay reestablished the colony. Spain generally ignored it until 1776 when Buenos Aires became the capital of a Spanish vice-royalty that included Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay.

The people of Buenos Aires and the lands surrounding it gained their independence from Spain early in the 19th century. They also resisted attempts by the British to replace Spain as their overlord. Disputes between the agricultural barons from the provinces and the urbanites of Buenos Aires prevented unity, however. It took until 1880 for Argentina to become united with Buenos Aires as its capital city. Since doing so, the city has made great strides in modernizing.

Buenos Aires has become a very important center for meatpacking and shipping, taking advantage of the prolific cattle production on ranches in the hinterlands. In 1882, the first *frigorifico* (meat refrigeration plant) opened in the city and by 1887 nearly 60 refrigerated ships routinely carry meat from South America to Britain.

#### *Forbidden Love*

Like almost every other place that Europeans colonized, the Spanish who founded Buenos Aires tried to stamp out the culture and religious practices of the native populace. Though they have succeeded in this superficially, beneath the surface the natives keep alive those aspects of their lives and culture that predate Christianity.

Rumors run rife of natives living in the wilds near Buenos Aires who can take the shape of *el tigre*, the mighty and much respected (and feared)

jaguar. Throughout South America tales concerning winged serpents and of horrid practices hark back to the time of the Inca and Chimu civilizations. Though these stories are known throughout the lands, many center in and focus on Buenos Aires. Disappearances of Europeans who wander too far from their normal haunts or away from the city give credence to such tales, yet may simply be the work of natives determined to one day win back their lands and their dignity.

### *Lima*

Located 10 degrees south of the equator, Lima is hot and dry throughout the year. Its position lies at the base of the Cerros San Bartolome fringe and along the left side of the River Rimac on the Pacific Coast of South America.

#### *History*

The area now known as Peru existed as the homeland of the wealthy Inca civilization long before Europeans ever discovered it. Early encounters between the Incas and the Spanish were not friendly. The Spanish explorer Francisco Pizarro summoned the Incan king Atahualpa to a meeting early in the 16th century. When the king and his retinue arrived, Pizarro and his troops slaughtered all one thousand of the retinue and took the king hostage. Negotiations proved fruitless and eventually Pizarro ordered Atahualpa to be killed. Having lost their king to the ruthless Spaniards, the natives made no resistance as Pizarro conquered the Incan capital of Cuzco.

Pizarro founded Ciudad de los Reyes (City of the Three Kings) on Epiphany in 1535. The settlement site was chosen because irrigated farmland nearby assured a good food supply and a sheltered port called Callao lay just north of it. Eventually, the name was changed to Lima, a derivation of the name of the nearby river.

In 1543, the city became the capital of the vice-royalty of Peru, then in 1545 was made an archbishopric. In 1551, when the Emperor Charles V decreed the establishment of the University of San Marcos in Lima, it was the first university in South America and the second such institution in Latin America.

Lima sits upon a dangerous fault line, making it susceptible to tremors and earthquakes. Though usually minor, disaster struck in 1687 and again in 1746 almost destroying the city.



In the early 19th century, most of South America struggled for independence. Lima was one of the last to surrender to the nationalists, but in 1821 the city could no longer resist and José de San Martín declared Peru's independence from the Plaza de Armas.

### *Forbidden Love*

Due to Pizarro's ruthless handling of the Incas, the lands around Lima are soaked in native blood. Like most of the rest of Central and South America, the heritage of the great Mesoamerican empires lives on. While many Lima residents speak in hushed voices concerning the remnants of the Incas who practice ancient rituals (perhaps involving blood sacrifices), others point to stranger occurrences. The Pacific Coast of South America rests uneasy, being subject to earthquakes and volcanic activity. Accounts from several sources say that strange creatures have at times emerged from deep beneath the earth. Some say these creatures are enormous fire spirits; others claim to have seen huge beasts made of living stone or glowing magma. Whether these tales are true or not remains to be seen.

### *Asia*

Asia is a continent of myriad cultures, some of which are among the oldest in the world. Western Asia moves to a different rhythm than the east, yet also parts company with its neighbors to the west. Caught between the European colonial states and the great Russian Empire. Full of contrasts and existing as a melting pot of peoples and cultures, Western Asia is known to Europeans primarily through familiarity with the Ottoman and Russian Empires.

The Far East, also called the Orient, is both mysterious and frightening to Europeans and Americans. The colonial powers may have spread their influence into the region, even acquired bases of operation, yet even as they interact with the people of the orient on a daily basis, they fail to understand the history, culture or philosophies of the orient. Thus, the Far East slips from westerners' grasps even as they seek to consolidate their gains.







## *Bangkok*

This oriental jewel lies near the Gulf of Siam on the eastern bank of the Chao Phraya River. Laced with canals, the city is a major railroad and commercial center for the region. Known for its beautiful *Wats*, or temples, Bangkok's Wat Phra Kaeo (Chapel of the Emerald Buddha) is the most impressive of all. This exquisite temple was completed in 1785 and lies within the walls of the Royal Palace.

### *History*

The earliest civilization in Siam was that of the Mons, who brought a Buddhist sensibility from the Indian subcontinent. In the 12th century, the Mons met with a Khmer culture moving from the east, the Srivijaya emerging from the north and the peoples of Nan Chao migrating to the south. Together the princes created the first Siamese capital in Sukhothai. Later, they moved it to the famous city of Ayutthaya.

Originally called Krung Thep or the City of Angels, Modern Bangkok was founded in 1782. In that year Chakri assumed the throne of Siam as Rama I. The new king moved the capital to Bangkok from Thon Buri on the west bank of the Chao Praya where it had been since 1767.

Said to resemble Ayutthaya, the ancient capital of Siam, Bangkok was built around a series of canals. Its architecture is considered to be some of the most intriguing in the Far East. Interestingly, Siam is the only country in this region to escape colonial rulership through deftly playing off one European power against another.

### *Forbidden Love*

The West holds no monopoly on terror or on horrors hidden from everyday life. The Orient contains many creatures unknown to westerners that reflect the nightmares and terrors of the people that inhabit these ancient lands. From weird shapechanging animals to creatures of the night to demons that torment humankind due to jealousy or the breaking of taboos no European could grasp, the Far East, and particularly Bangkok, is infested with horrors best contemplated only in daylight from within the shelter of a temple.

## *Calcutta*

Calcutta's carefully chosen site is protected by the Hooghly River to the west, a creek to the north and by salt lakes some two and a half miles to its east. The city lies along the east bank of the Ganges and filled with modern British style buildings.

### *History*

Before 1690, Calcutta as a city did not exist. In that year, Job Charnok, an agent for the East India Company found this site for a British trade settlement. Three large villages, Sutanuti, Gobindapur and Kalikata, lay along the east side of the Ganges. None were the capital of the region of Bengal in which they lay. In 1698 the East India Company bought the three villages from their local landlord, Sabarna Chowdhury. The Mughal emperor granted the company freedom of trade in exchange for 3,000 rupees per year. The next year the British began developing their new city of Calcutta. The new Mughal emperor reiterated the trade agreement in 1717. By 1727 by order of King George I a civil court was put in place and a city corporation established.

In 1756 Siraj-ud-daullah, *nawab* of Bengal, attacked Calcutta and captured its fort. He renamed the city Alinagar. His victory was short lived as the British recaptured the city when led by Robert Clive on the battlefield of Plassy in 1757. In that same year the British first printed currency in a Calcutta mint.

In 1765, Clive took Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from Badsha Alam II through an agreement to pay excises. 1770 brought horrible famine to Calcutta, a time that has become infamous in the city's history. Yet by 1772, Calcutta had recovered sufficiently for its first governor-general Warren Hastings to transfer all the important offices of government to the city, making it the capital of British India.

A printing press was established in the city in 1780 and locally printed newspapers the *Bengal Gazette* and the *Calcutta Gazette* were in print by 1784. In 1801 Fort William College was opened and by 1817 the Hindu College (later renamed Presidency College) was established. In 1854 the first railways in India were run from Hooghly to Calcutta and in 1857 the University of Calcutta was built. 1875 brought Calcutta's first horse drawn tramcar, the building of the India Museum and the



founding of the *Statesman*, the leading English newspaper. In 1886, the second Indian National Congress was held in Calcutta. In the 1890s Calcutta is the first city of British India and as such is much like a modern British city though its Indian roots remain.

### *Forbidden Lore*

The famine that ravaged Calcutta late in the last century has left its mark in the form of ghostly beings, skeletally thin and hungering for anything that can fill their distended, starving bellies. Many tell tales of such beings coming to their homes and reaching through windows to take food left on tables or counters within their reach. More frightening are the tales of those caught out alone late in the darker places of the city. While those folk do not report anything untoward (in fact, never report anything again), people living nearby have heard the most pitiful screams and later found parts of those unlucky enough to have been consumed by the hungry dead.

Others tell a different story, dismissing the tales of ravenous ghosts altogether. The village named Kalikata, which became apart of Calcutta derived its name from the word *Kalikshetra*, which means "ground of the goddess Kali." Before the 1600s, the area was sacred to Kali, the death goddess, and sacrifices were made to her there. When people go missing in Calcutta or when body parts are discovered, those who know the city's history speak of cultists who perpetuate the worship their ancestors began.

### *Constantinople*

Occupying both banks of the Bosphorus, the narrow strait that separates Asia from Europe is Constantinople, once known as the great city of Byzantium. In the 1890s, Constantinople is the capital of the Ottoman Empire. The city is a major seaport giving access to both the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea. Carved by the Bosphorus, the city's amazing natural harbor has been deemed the Golden Horn.

Most splendid of the city's sights is the imposing structure of Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom), built in the 6th century as a church, converted to a mosque in the 15th. Many other architectural wonders grace Constantinople, among them the Mosques of Suleiman the Magnificent and Bayazid III. These, along with many other buildings of the

city, show a fusion between Roman architecture and the unique style of the Ottoman Turks.

### *History*

Constantinople began its modern history in A.D.324 when the Roman emperor Constantine decided to utilize the site of the ancient city of Byzantium to become the new capital of the Roman Empire. Though he had several reasons for his choice, including difficulties with Rome, the main reason for locating the capital in Byzantium was its closeness to the Imperial frontiers. Like Rome, Constantinople is built atop seven hills. At one time in its history high walls surrounded it. The oldest section, Stambul, is situated west and south of the Golden Horn topping the actual ruins of Byzantium.

Cultural innovations ranging from law to philosophy, Christian theology to art have sprung from the midst of this marvelous city throughout its existence. As the headquarters of the Patriarch of the Eastern Orthodox church, the city is also a stronghold of the Christian faith with over 200 Christian churches scattered throughout the city.

As such a bastion of the faith, over time, Constantinople has become one of the most frequently besieged cities of the world. The city was attacked by the Arabs from 673 to 678 and attacked again in 717 and 718. Not to be outdone, the Bulgarians came against Constantinople in 713 and in 813. The armies of the Fourth Crusade, ostensibly representing the Roman Catholic Church, took the city in 1203 and again in 1204. Finally, this greatest and most magnificent of cities of the ancient world fell to the Turks in 1453. Such a history of conflict has left a dark impression on the city to the present day.

### *Forbidden Lore*

To western minds, Constantinople represents the extreme frontier of the civilized world (and even Constantinople is suspect as it is in the hands of barbarous Turks!). Beyond the city is nothing but the unknown perils and strange customs of Asia. While most westerners are less than well informed about the truth of what they have hears, they can't be blamed for believing just about anything regarding the "barbarian hordes" they imagine still sweep through the area even at the close of the 19th century.





The wild and dangerous Ottoman Empire that occupies western Asia is rumored to be a haven for vampires, werewolves and other even more horrendous monsters. The Turks are said to practice strange rituals and engage in cruel tortures, kidnapping and imprisoning anyone that strikes their fancy. Most troubling, the area provides a Mecca for gypsy tribes that seem to infest the region. Chief among these tribes is a particularly dark and mysterious tribe known as the Vistani. It is rumored that crossing the Vistani is tantamount to signing one's own death warrant. As to the truth behind all the tales, perhaps a gypsy fortuneteller knows, few others do.

### *Saint Petersburg*

Commanding the approaches to the Neva River and built atop an ancient Swedish fortress, Saint Petersburg occupies both sides of the river as well as the islands in the middle of it. A major port, the city has access to the White and Caspian Seas, the Volga and Dnepr Rivers and the Gulf of Finland, though its harbor is usually frozen from November to April.

### *History*

St. Petersburg's history as a city began when Peter I captured the site in 1703 and built the Fortress of Peter and Paul upon it and also built the Fortress at Kronshtadt. He then ordered a city to be erected and named it Saint Petersburg in honor of his patron saint. Peter made a vow to give the city a western flavor and looked upon it as his "window on Europe." In 1713 he moved the royal family to Saint Petersburg, making it the Russian capital.

During the 18th century, the city's population grew rapidly. Saint Petersburg gained recognition as one of the great cultural centers for Western Europe and things Russian became the vogue. When Emperor Alexander I had the marshes around the city drained, thus freeing more land for expansion, the population of the city doubled. The city also underwent massive harbor facility developments in the 19th century, allowing Saint Petersburg to rapidly industrialize.

The dichotomy between the luxurious lifestyles of the Russian court and the grinding poverty suffered by the city's factory workers led to great unrest and ultimately became one of the driving forces behind the Russian revolutionary movement and the December uprising of 1825.

### *Forbidden Love*

Rumors say that the Russian nobles came to Saint Petersburg not to bring prosperity, recognition or importance to the new city but to escape some terrible threat in Moscow. Many theories abound concerning what could make them flee for their very lives. Some mention that Peter's heirs suffer from being haunted by the ghosts of those they have wronged. Others mention that vampires may stalk the family, but none can say why this might be. As the rulers of any nation, the Russian rulers have enemies, and some claim it is a purely human threat they seek to avoid.

Peter I intended Saint Petersburg to be his window on Europe, seeking to found a western city on Russian soil. He could not escape from the heritage of his Russian forebears or populate the city with other than Russian people, a people to whom superstition is as normal and necessary as breathing. He apparently forgot that windows allow views from both sides; while the folk of Saint Petersburg might look out while bathed in the light from inside, that which waited in the darkness outside could likewise look in and capitalize on any weaknesses shown thereby. Nor did he consider that the very light within would blind those inside to whatever lay just beyond the glass.

Russian folktale teems with myriad horrors that prowl by night, from vampires to hags and witches, from dark fairy folk to malevolent spirits. While some more modern folk dismiss the tales told by farmers and peasants, others say that these creatures have traveled to Saint Petersburg and from there await only an opened window to gain access to the rest of the world.

### *Singapore*

Called Singapura or the city of the lion, the architecture of this metropolis reflects this totem with depictions of the fearsome beast fighting off demons, presenting brave souls with great weapons and gifts and providing feasts for the people. Nestled into an island flanked by the Strait of Singapore, it can boast over 200,000 inhabitants, most of them Chinese.

### *History*

Malay legend tells that a Sumatran prince met a lion while out one day on Temasek. As lions are considered good omens the prince took this as a



sign that he should found Singapore, the city of the lions. While many dispute that lions have ever been near the city and that the prince probably saw a tiger, no one argues that the lion has often acted as a symbol of good fortune for the people of the region.

Almost immediately Singapore established itself as a minor trading post for the powerful Sumatran Srivijaya empire. Subsequently it became a vassal state of the Javanese Majapahit empire in mid-13th century. Though a great and prosperous city in the 13th and 14th century, it sank into the status of little more than a tiny fishing village, though none can say why.

With the intervention of Sir Stamford Raffles in 1819, this changed. The British established a presence in the Straits of Melaka (Malacca) in the 18th century as the East India Company sought to protect its trade lines stretching from China to its colonies in India. The Dutch, the preeminent European trading power in the region for nearly 200 years, were threatening expansion. Raffles convinced the British government that an increased presence would prevent Dutch intrusion. Under his aegis, Singapore recreated itself, losing its reputation as a disease-ridden backwater and reemerging as a flourishing colony, its population swelled with migrants attracted by its tariff-free port and by a military and naval base.

### *Forbidden Love*

No one truly knows why Singapura's population declined so rapidly. Some say that the lions deserted the city, taking their luck with them. Certainly, many of these idealized lion statues and friezes show damage, as though something were eating away at their protections and many areas of the city seem dark and sinister, with squalor defining them rather than prosperity. A few speak of dark adepts that called forth creatures they could neither understand nor control. Tales speak of small, voracious and deadly creatures whose depredations depleted the population. Without a large population to feed on, the creatures began to starve; to save themselves they entered a dormant state. With the return of so many people, the smell of so much blood once again lures them into awakening and their feeding will start anew.





## *Australia and New Zealand*

The South Pacific boasts numerous islands, few of which have felt any European influence in the 1890s. Someday these lands will become centers of culture and economic power, they are currently considered to be backwaters of wildness and lawlessness, little better than frontiers.

### *Brisbane*

The city of Brisbane lies approximately 500 miles north of Sydney. It occupies both banks of the Brisbane River almost 20 miles from its mouth at Moretown Bay.

### *History*

Brisbane began as a penal colony in 1824. It was named for Thomas Brisbane, the Governor of New South Wales. In 1838, regular colonists began settling in Brisbane. The next year saw the convicts withdrawn from the settlement. In 1859 only twenty years later, the city was made the capital of Queensland, and by 1861 the population of Brisbane had reached 6,000.

With its booming businesses in shipbuilding, wool scouring and meatpacking, Brisbane has continued its growth into the 1890s. The city serves an important function as a trading partner and as a secondary port for its neighbor, Sydney.

### *Forbidden Lore*

The arrival of Europeans in this part of Australia broke ancient taboos and played havoc with numerous traditional observances. This has resulted in Brisbane becoming the focus of several unique sorts of supernatural disturbances. What the trespasses were – or are – has not been revealed, nor has the result of the violations been made clear. Some say that offended spirits take their vengeance as and how they choose. Why they choose one victim over another is unknown to anyone of European descent. The native population of Australia does not speak of these occurrences; indeed, other taboos forbid their talking of such with those outside their families.

### *Christchurch*

Christchurch nestles upon the Canterbury Plains on New Zealand's South Island. It rests near

the east coast of Pegasus Bay, separated from Lyttelton, the city's port, by the Port Hills.

### *History*

Four ships full of settlers led by John Robert Godley founded Christchurch in 1850. From Britain, Edward Gibbon Wakefield and the New Zealand Land Company directed the settlers. The city's name was taken from an element of Godley's college Oxford.

The settlers hoped to make a home away from home by creating a city as much like England as possible. Edward Jollie laid out the streets in a grid pattern and the architecture was deliberately constructed to imitate the British Isles. The settlers succeeded in their designs, constructing the city's great cathedral and many other buildings along British patterns, naming streets for English bishops and importing plant life from Britain.

In the 1890s Christchurch serves as an important link on New Zealand's rail system. It also acts as an important agricultural port for the farms of the Canterbury Plains.

### *Forbidden Lore*

In the rough and dangerous seas of the South Pacific only the finest and best-built ships survive for long. The folk of Christchurch have seen far too many ships sail from the port, never to return or be heard from elsewhere again. Lookouts along the coastlands near Christchurch often see lights at sea that flicker and fade out. Some claim the lights were never there at all, others that they are ghost lights of the ships that have gone down in the turbulent seas.

Many stories make the rounds in Christchurch concerning strange creatures that wait beneath the waves to pull down unsuspecting ships and sailors. Almost as many tales speak of phantom ships seen roving the waves on nights of moon and fog. Many claim a curse befalls any who encounter such a ship, while others say that seeing a phantom before one sails is a portent of calm seas and good fortune.

### *Europe*

Claims that the 1800s are a Euro-centric century have some validity. The latter part of the century certainly finds the small island country of England reigning supreme in far-flung locations around the world. Its size notwithstanding, En-



gland emerges as the most powerful empire, blazing forth under the stern eye of a small widow dressed in black with a white cap of mourning, the redoubtable Queen Victoria. Such is the stature of England that Victoria is proclaimed Empress of India in 1876. Her name and sensibilities become synonymous with the age. It is said at the time that “the sun never sets on the British Empire,” a phrase meaning that there is nowhere in all the world that is not touched by the empire (i.e. when one part of the world lies in darkness, it is light elsewhere and in all places the British maintain a presence).

England is not the only European power, however. Germany and Italy strive for unification. Wonders seem to crop up daily and Belgium, France and others seed the globe with their own claims and colonies. Western Europe is particularly active, but Eastern Europe also moves to consolidate their borders and holdings as the Ottoman Empire dissolves.

## *Bucharest*

Bucharest stands exposed on the great plain north of the Danube and along the left bank of the

Dimbovita River. A relatively young city, dating back only to the 15th century, because of conflicts with neighbors, most of the city’s buildings are modern (by 1890s standards), though many churches dating back centuries still stand. Massive fortifications were built to protect the city, but have failed to do so repeatedly. Some onionlike domes do appear in the city, left from Turkish influence. In the Bucharest of Gothic Earth, a single grim peak set off against the open plain overshadows the city. Above the city looms a brooding, dark castle, rumored to be the home of the infamous Count Dracula. A twisting road zig-zags up the peak, shadowed by twisted and sinister looking trees. Whether the count has ever resided in the castle is a matter of speculation as no citizen of Bucharest would dream of going anywhere near it.

### *History*

According to historians, the region around Bucharest was settled by Roman soldiers who interbred with the indigenous people (and the travelers from the east who settled there) in the areas known as Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldavia. Still, it





was not until the 15th century that Bucharest took shape as a city. At that time it became the seat of the Wallachian princes. In subsequent years it fell under the control of the Turks, Serbs, Russians and Austrians.

The area around the city has been the staging ground for many conflicts over the centuries. The land bubbles with the blood spilled in the attempts to hold this ground.

In 1859 Bucharest emerged as the capital of Wallachia and in 1861, when Wallachia united with Moldavia to become the Republic of Rumania, Bucharest became the capital of that newly formed state. The city is in the process of attempting to become a modern place while still holding to the superstitions and practices of their forebears.

The people of Bucharest believe in almost every superstition known to mankind, saying that all of them find some basis in the land around them. Thus, their reliance on crosses and reluctance to harm their churches explains why such still exist in such numbers.

#### *Forbidden Love*

The lands surrounding Bucharest bring fear into the hearts of even the boldest heroes. It is said that Dracula, most feared and sinister of vampires makes his abode in or near the city. What information is available seems to corroborate this, yet his reputation for cunning that such reports may be mere fabrications designed to mislead those who would seek him.

Aside from the stories of Dracula, dozens of other tales concerning the supernatural center around Bucharest, everything from werewolf sightings to demon infestations to ghostly manifestations can be found here. Though most people would never believe that so much evil could lurk in any one place, and dismiss the tales as little more than peasant foolishness, the people of Bucharest know the truth and few can be found beyond the shelter of their homes or a good inn after nightfall.

#### *Dublin*

Resting at the mouth of the river Liffey where it meets Dublin Bay lies the quintessential Irish city of Dublin. In the 1890s the city is noted for its wide streets, lovely Georgian houses and charming people. The city's Gaelic name is Baile Atha Cliath or "town of the hurdle ford." Its modern name,

Dublin, comes from the Gaelic Dubh Linn or "black pool."

#### *History*

This best known of Irish city's earliest history reaches back to the Vikings who established it in the 9th century. In 1170 the Anglo-Normans drove the Sanes from the city and in 1172 King Henry II of England gave it to the men of Bristol. At the time, Dublin was the seat of English government there and the center of the Pale, a fortified area the Anglo-Norman barons controlled. Presumably once outside this influence, folk were considered to be in dangerous and wild territory, thus the phrase "beyond the Pale" was coined.

Only when the 18th century dawned, however, did the area begin to increase its population and hence, its importance. By 1841 Dublin had emerged as the capital of the country of Ireland with over eight and a half million inhabitants. The government began reclamation efforts on the bay providing many new lands for expansion of the city.

By the 1890s, Dublin is considered second only to London for its importance to the British Empire. Nonetheless, all her folk are not so happy with British rule. Beneath its exterior of charm and grace, Dublin is awash with the growing rebelliousness of the native Irish who want an independent Ireland and home rule.

#### *Forbidden Love*

Tales abound throughout Ireland of fairy kingdoms and ancient wronged spirits seeking retribution for past grievances. These stories may emphasize the cuteness and mischievous ways of the "little folk," or hint at treasures to be found by those clever enough to outwit the fairies, yet some warn of the dangers of angering the "good folk" for fear of their reprisals. Other warnings concern spirit creatures of horrid reputation, such as the mournful, and deadly, banshee, whose cry portends death. Whatever the source of the tales, folk would do well to remember that such strange and otherworldly creatures are not encountered without risk both to one's life and one's soul.

#### *London*

London is considered by many to be the greatest and most cosmopolitan city on Gothic Earth. Spanning the mighty Thames in southeastern En-



gland, it is a center of industry and history reaching back more than a thousand years. London leads the world in education and cultural sophistication. It is the first and best destination for entertainment or building a reputation as a world traveler. It is also a city of mystery, wrapped in shadows whether to hide the decaying slums of Cheapside and Billingsgate or the secret machinations of the great Evil and its minions. London is a metropolis of verdant peaceful parks filled with brave statues of heroes, and tiny dank cobwebbed mews overlooking cobblestone streets. In the sunlight nannies walk with their charges, in the darkness savage danger stalks, every footfall cushioned by the fog. For those who fight the Red Death, this city contains some of the oldest and most deadly horrors the people of the world have seen or dreamed of in their worst nightmares.

### *History*

The Romans first settled and fortified the upper area along the Thames estuary shortly after they arrived in Britain in A.D. 43. Called Londinium, this early settlement grew to become the nexus point for travel, the military and as a port city — eventually developing into the largest city of Roman Britain. Even in these early days Londinium was a city for travelers, with almost half the arrow-straight Roman roads in Britain passing through or near this port. By A.D. 200, Londinium had grown important enough to become a walled fortress. But by A.D. 410 the city, after surviving a fire, rebuilding and several years of raiding, was abandoned to the Saxon pirates and its Legion protectors sent home to deal with rebel generals seeking to tear the Roman Empire apart. The Saxons took over, building and expanding the Roman settlement, but were later decimated by invading Danes in the 7th century. The Danish leader Canute became King of England. Upon his death the Saxon, Edward the Confessor, who gave the city Westminster Abbey in 1065, took the throne. A dispute over his successor led to the Norman Invasion by William the Conqueror. After the Battle of Hastings he marched to London—by then the biggest and most wealthy city in the kingdom—and was crowned king. From that point on, royal power for Britain was concentrated in London.

London has had many tragedies; including fires, plague and raiders. The Black Death wiped out over half the population of London in the 14th

century, yet it continued to hold its place as the center for law and government.

After the discovery of the New World in the 1500s and the creation of countless new trade routes, London's importance as an economic center of Europe increased dramatically. The population expanded, more than doubling during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558–1603). From 100,000 to 250,000 entrepreneurial souls sought opportunity and profit from the wonders of the newly found Americas through London's ports.

In 1666, the Great Fire destroyed most of the city's ancient and beautiful buildings, making way for the master architect Christopher Wren to rebuild and add many amazing churches. By 1700 London was the largest city in Europe. An influx of immigrants expanded the city to the east and south, although those with wealth and power chose to live in the north and western sections and have continued to do so for centuries. By the 18th century the city had spread to capture many nearby communities and became the incredible metropolis it is in the Victorian age.

During the 1890s London is a modern city with ancient roots. Gaslights limn the twisting cobblestone streets each night, bringing light to the darkness of ages. As a crucial centerpiece to the British Empire, the metropolis fills with foreign travelers, merchants and adventurers. People rush from place to place using the Tube, underground railways that travel beneath the Thames, no longer needing the many bridges so integral to travel for centuries before. The population, swollen by the advances of the Industrial Revolution, reaches more than four and a half million.

### *Forbidden Love*

Motivations for going to London are many — not all of them benign. Minions of the Red Death find much attractive about the city. Its ever-increasing population and nexus to the world make it a rich source of potential victims. Criminal masterminds such as Adam Worth steal gems and valuable works of art, while leading others on paths of evil through greed. Those who hunt the weak, such as Count Dracula and the twisted psychotic Jack the Ripper, roam the streets of London seeking blood and power. Broken temples and profane statues exist beneath the streets — connections to dark gods of the Roman Empire and before.

Adventurers and archaeologists, caught by the latest enthusiasm for Egyptology and explora-







tion bring great treasures from all corners of the globe. Shops and museums fill with glorious exotic items meant to educate and awe London's populace — each possibly poisoned by evil — tools of the machinations of the Red Death. There is much to fear in the yellow-tainted, gas-lit fog that coils and writhes along the shadowy alleys of London.

Yet great defenders defy the darkness that seeks to overwhelm the city. Few around the world are ignorant of the genius of investigative detective Sherlock Holmes and his associate Dr. Watson. Professor Challenger, explorer extraordinaire and scientist, is also known internationally for his scientific theories and amazing adventures — but few realize his work as a defender against the great Evil as a citizen of London. The valorous deeds of these gentlemen and numerous others make the streets safer for their populace. Spoiling nefarious plots of the minions of the Red Death, however, do leave these brave heroes in danger. The Red Death may not have noticed their work, but its minions surely have, and one day the horrors that invade London will stand against them.

## *Paris*

Stretched along the banks of the River Seine, Paris is considered to be one of the most beautiful and sophisticated cities in the world. Surrounded and sheltered by a ring of low hills, the elegant metropolis boasts many of the world's great wonders including the Arc de Triomphe, grand entryway to the Champs Elysees, and the Louvre Museum, home to the Venus de Milo and Mona Lisa. Long known as the international center for women's fashions, the designers of Paris influence the world with haute couture. Ancient buildings line the streets, their foundations hiding the ruins of Roman temples and altars to gods from times beyond imagining. Sidewalk cafés fill with bohemians discussing and debating art, philosophy, religion and politics with equal fervor. Cabarets ring with song and the squeals and cheers of can-can dancers. The cathedral of Notre Dame holds dominion over all, its gargoyles looming in the sky. Soaring above is arguably one of Paris's greatest achievements — the Eiffel Tower. The Eiffel Tower was built for the International Exhibition of Paris of 1889 commemorating the centenary of the French Revolution. Taller than any building ever before created it is a wonder of cast iron repeatedly lightning struck, illumined in sparkling gaslight and

visited by millions climbing to the top to see the vista that is the City of Lights.

## *History*

Founded on an island along a natural route across the River Seine, Paris was originally settled by Celtic Gauls, known as the Parisii near the end of the 3rd century BC. They fortified the island and called the site Lutetia, in an area now called the Île de la Cité. Centuries of war between the Gauls and Romans ended in 52 BC, when the Parisii destroyed their fort and withdrew, leaving Julius Caesar's legions in control of the territory. The Romans called it Civitas Parisiorum or, for short, Paris. St. Denis, the city's first bishop, brought Christianity in the 3rd century AD. Germanic tribes invaded the city in 508 AD and the Frankish king Clovis I united Gaul as a kingdom and made Paris his capital. Viking raiders destroyed much of the settlement in the 9th century, but the Capetian kings rebuilt the city and made it the capital of France. Notre Dame, the Sainte-Chapelle, and the Royal Palace all added to the magnificence of the city during the next few centuries, with King Phillip II beginning to build walls along the banks of the Seine in 1210. Conflicts between the Norman English and the Capetian dynasty eventually led to the Hundred Years War and the French defeat at Agincourt in 1415. After a few years of English rule in 1429 a young woman named Jeanne d'Arc rallied French troops to a victory in Orleans, and by 1453 most of France was again free.

In the 16th century religious strife sent the city into turmoil with terrible conflicts between the Roman Catholics and the Huguenots (Protestants) leading eventually to the dreadful St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre when the Roman Catholics of the city killed thousands of Protestants. These horrifying troubles continued from 1572 to 1594, when the new Bourbon king, Henry IV came to Paris.

Under his rule and those of other Bourbon kings, Paris was a peaceful city of efficiently enforced law. The monarchs worked to make Paris into the new Rome, with neoclassical edifices such as the Luxembourg Palace, the Pont Neuf Bridge and the Place des Voges. With the rule of Louis XIV came illumination to the city, and an increase in public services. His successor, Louis XV created the Place de la Concorde, with its incredible palatial Hôtel Crillon, refuge for the epitome of Parisian snobbery, and centered by the 3,000 year old Obelisk of Luxor, a 220-ton spire of pink marble carved



with hieroglyphics exalting the reign of pharaoh Ramses II.

Rebellion against the status quo is a reoccurring theme throughout the history of Paris. The citizens rose up against Henry III in 1588, and again in 1648 against Louis XVI. The greatest and most well known of these conflicts is the French Revolution. In 1789 the monarchy was swept away and destroyed — mostly through the use of Madam Guillotine's amazing cutting device. From this point forward the dominance of Paris as ruling city of France was assured.

Napoleon continued the improvement of France's crowning glory by building a new defensive wall in 1844, and, in 1852, Napoleon III transformed much of the city with wide graceful boulevards leading to the center and many elegant parks. Yet this glorious time was not to continue, with the Franco-Prussian war leading to the infamous revolt of the Paris Commune and the death of over 20,000 citizens of Paris against the troops of the Third Republic. During this terrible conflict much of the inner city was destroyed by a great conflagration, and the rebuilding of the physical city as well as its political structure continue until this day.

### *Forbidden Love*

A city of wonder and excitement, Paris is also a dangerous place, in its catacombs shadows of evil lurk in the eyes of withered corpses. Vast sewers beneath the elegant streets are home to crawling creatures rumored to change from monster to man. Giant bloodthirsty rats with red eyes roil and scabble through the darkness. Napoleon, an inveterate explorer as well as empire builder, adventured in Egypt bringing home strange artifacts contaminated by the Red Death. Even the graceful park of the Place de la Concorde stains the City of Lights with a poisonous spire of Evil.

Few Parisians believe tales of the horrors that walk in the shadows of their city. For most their metropolis is a place of fashion and rebellion, elegance and élan. Some few, especially those who study the occult at the Sorbonne, truly understand the evil minions of the Red Death lurking beneath the brilliant lights of Paris. These erudite scholars study the Evil surrounding them, and work daily to foil its plans. For these brave folk sleep does not come easy, and they awaken to every scabbling sound, every rasping breath in the night. For them, the City of Romance is a place of fear.

### *Rome*

Located on the banks of the Tiber River near the Tyrrhenian Sea, Rome is arguably the most important city to the development of western culture. Seat of the Papacy, headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church, crossroads of culture, economic and military might, this great city with its modern streets and monumental structures is rightfully called the Eternal City.

### *History*

Legend claims that two brothers, Romulus and Remus, founded Rome in 753 B.C. Archeological evidence points to occupation of the site much earlier than that and remains from an Iron Age village dating from the 8th century B.C. have been found on Palatine Hill.

The first truly Roman culture divided along class lines, with Patricians or nobles, and Plebeians or commoners all ruled by a senatelike council of elders and an elected monarch. Rome came under the rulership of the Etruscan kings from the 7th to the 6th century B.C. That monarchy was overthrown and a republic arose in its place. Under the republic Rome spread, absorbing nearby communities.

In the 4th century, Rome built the Servian Wall for defense following a Gallic invasion.

In 312 B.C., Rome built the first of its aqueducts. During this period the Appian Way, Rome's great main road, linked the city with southern Italy. Despite the Punic Wars that lasted from 264–146 B.C. the city continued to grow and prosper, amassing military, economic and cultural power.

With the assassination of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, brothers who tried to institute land reforms in the Republic, Rome entered an unstable period that led to civil war. By the end of the 1st century B.C., Julius Caesar had become Rome's dictator, seizing almost total power. Augustus Caesar, Julius' successor, was the first to call himself the Emperor of Rome.

Rome sat at the center of a huge network of roads, connecting far-flung locations to what had become the center of the world and the heart of imperial culture. The city continued to grow and expand even as clusters of low-income housing posed a dangerous fire hazard to the city. To try to avert this, Augustus founded the *vigilis*, an organization of fire fighters he gave powers similar to a



police force. Despite precautions, a great fire swept through Rome in A.D. 64 destroying much of the inner city. Emperor at that time, Nero seized this as an opportunity to build his great Golden House.

By the end of the 1st century A.D., Rome was ruled by the Flavian dynasty, which began a series of public works to win favor with the people. The projects included building the great amphitheater, now known as the Colosseum. Spectacles in these great theaters and handouts of food were instituted to keep the people happy even when the lower class suffered from massive unemployment and poor living conditions. This would come to be known as diverting the people from revolution through giving them “bread and circuses.”

By the 4th century, Rome was too far from the borders of the empire to effectively serve as its capital. Realizing this, Emperor Constantine chose to move the capital to the newly formed Constantinople atop the ancient city of Byzantium. This was also the time in which the first major Christian Basilicas (including the original St. Peter's) were constructed in Rome. Losing its status as the capital resulted in a long decline for the city. In 410 and again in 455 German tribes sacked the city, while in the 6th century, the Ostrogoths occupied Rome. Reoccupation by the Byzantines and the destruction that caused led to a period of even greater decline and chaos.

Despite the difficulties, Rome remained the home of the Papacy and heart of the Roman Catholic church. Though Pope Gregory I tried to stop the decline of the city, the city was enveloped in battle again in the 9th century. Reeling from Arab raiders, Rome reached a low that lasted until the Middle Ages. By this time only one of the city's aqueducts was still functional.

In the 11th century, the city's fortunes improved, though its progress ceased when the Papacy moved to Avignon in the 14th century. In 1377 the Papacy returned to Rome and after the middle of the 15th century, Rome supplanted Florence as the heart of the Renaissance due to papal patronage of the arts. Under Pope Nicholas V Rome's defensive walls were rebuilt and many churches and palaces were constructed. The rebirth of the city continued even when Hapsburg mercenaries sacked it in 1527.

In the 16th century artists such as Michelangelo and Raphael lent their talents to improving the city and wrought wonders. Modern city planning came with the rule of Pope Sixtus V in the late 16th

century, with new roads laid out in patterns and a trio of main streets allowing access to the center of the city from the Piazza del Popolo. Sixtus also oversaw the repair of the aqueducts and the completion of St. Peter's dome. Under continued papal rule, the city entered a period of quiet in the 17th–18th centuries, when more artists and architects continued to enhance the city with their masterpieces.

Napoleon Bonaparte attacked Rome in 1797, taking many of her treasures. The Congress of Vienna in 1815 restored Rome to papal rule, but the occupation had fueled nationalist sentiments, which were acted upon by the House of Savoy, who reunited the country in 1861. The papal rulers resisted absorption into a national state and the city was then forcibly taken in 1870. The pope remained adamantly opposed to this and declared himself a prisoner of the Vatican.

As the capital of a newly reunified Italy, Rome once again has grown at a frantic rate with whole new quarters added to accommodate the influx. In the 1890s Rome once again has become the most important city in southern Europe.

### *Forbidden Love*

In a city as old as Rome, despite its majestic buildings and treasures, many horrors have had the opportunity to hide themselves over the centuries. Some in the city have claimed that animated statues come to life, brought to consciousness by their creators' fevered imagination and will, and that demonic beings inhabit places thought to be holy, draining worshipers and creating an army of the unholy. Others claim that their former inhabitants haunt Rome's oldest structures, and some point to the ancient labyrinthine structures that underpin the modern buildings as hiding places for all manner of secrets, wonders and horrors. Certainly the presence of the church is thought to keep certain evils at bay, but which will prove stronger is a question as yet unanswered.

### *Vienna*

The old and elegant city of Vienna lies primarily along the right bank of the Danube River where it flows from the northwest to the southeast. Overtime the city has hosted such notable persona as Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and a certain Dr. Freud, whose newfangled theories concerning the mind are beginning to attract much interest and



speculation. Blessed with loveliness and charm, Vienna has survived much conflict throughout its existence.

### *History*

The site where Vienna stands was once occupied by the Celts, then by the Roman garrison called Vindobona. Early in the 12th century, the city was given the name Wien and it became the capital for the Badenbergs. By the 13th century they had provided the city with impressive walls and made it a center of courtly patronage, a tradition that continued even after falling to the Hapsburgs in 1278. Since that time, the city has become an important center, being the capital of the Holy Roman Empire, the Austrian Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The city's university was founded in 1365 and quickly emerged as one of the most important universities of Europe and as a center for ecclesiastical studies, in particular.

A bastion of Christianity in eastern Europe, Vienna stood against the Turks when they invaded the Balkans in the 16th century. Vienna withstood two major sieges in 1529 and again in 1683. In the later siege, the city might well have fallen but for Poland's King Sobieski's aid. With the end of the war, great palaces were built around the court within the city and in its outskirts as well as the city flourished.

Vienna became the nexus of the Counter-Reformation in Eastern Europe, proving its importance during the Thirty Years War of 1618–

1648. There ensued a long period of peace for the city until in 1805 and again in 1809 the city was occupied by the French during the Napoleonic Wars. Napoleon even lived in the city for a while.

In 1848, revolution poured outward from Vienna to overtake all the Austrian Empire in the same year Franz-Joseph came to the throne. Then in 1866, German troops arrived at the gates of the city during the Seven Weeks War, again embroiling the city in a great conflict. Regardless of the turmoil of its past, the city has retained its cosmopolitan charm and grace to the present day, even as it searches for its true destiny whether under the continuing Hapsburg regime or as something else. Its future is presently unclear.

### *Forbidden Lore*

Since its founding, reports of macabre and strange activities continue to surround the area of Vienna. Some claim that a number of vampires make their homes in the city and guide its destiny according to their wishes while remaining hidden from most of humanity. Others claim that a cabal of arcane practitioners lies at the heart of the city, encouraging the formation of genius that the city seems to foster. Some say these are ancient wizards that have learned to cheat death. Still others speculate that the Red Death itself makes its lair in the city, though such a theory does not seem lucid. The elusive character of the great evil would suggest it does not long remain tied to any one spot. More likely, one of its chief minions resides there, honing its evil and gathering to itself ever more power.



# Chapter Three: Character Creation

*BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF YEARS  
THERE CAME TO THE MAKING OF MAN  
TIME, WITH A GIFT OF TEARS;  
GRIEF, WITH A GLASS THAT RAN;  
PLEASURE, WITH PAIN FOR LEAVEN;  
SUMMER, WITH FLOWERS THAT FELL;  
REMEMBRANCE FALLEN FROM HEAVEN,  
AND MADNESS FISEN FROM HELL;  
STRENGTH WITHOUT HANDS TO SMITE;  
LOVE THAT ENDURES FOR A BREATH;  
NIGHT, THE SHADOW OF LIGHT,  
AND LIFE, THE SHADOW OF DEATH.*

— ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE, "CHORUS FROM 'ATALANTA'"





The 1890s is a very exciting time, with change constantly occurring. New inventions, new philosophies and new ways of communicating are being developed. Countries plot both openly and behind the scenes, trading colonies and territories as governments seek more power or some other advantage. And all the while evil lurks, waiting to corrupt, searching for a weakness. Player characters (PCs) in **Masque of the Red Death** often start as ordinary people confronted with the reality of the supernatural.

### *Abilities*

The method for assigning ability points remains the same as the system described in the *D&D Player's Handbook* and the *D&D Dungeon Master's Guide*; a few differences in the benefits of the various abilities, however, require some explanation. In addition, some aspects of adventuring in the world of Gothic Earth change the relative importance of these abilities.

**Strength:** The advent of firearms changes the emphasis from melee combat to ranged combat and thus, decreases the importance of having a high Strength score in many instances.

**Dexterity:** Because of the wide use of firearms, a good Dexterity score is essential to those who wish to do well in combat. Since armor does not stop bullets, it has been relegated to museums. Thus, the bonus to Armor Class from a high Dexterity improves the chances of character survival.

**Constitution:** The effort involved in learning and casting arcane spells is physically taxing. Adepts find a strong Constitution score beneficial to their class.

**Intelligence:** As knowledge is often an important weapon in the battle against evil, characters with high Intelligence scores are valuable members of any adventuring group. Arcane spellcasters do not gain additional spells for high Intelligence, though they still need a good Intelligence to cast arcane spells successfully.

**Wisdom:** Arcane spellcasters do not gain additional spells based on high Wisdom; they do, however, need a better-than-average Wisdom score to direct their spells as they intend.

**Charisma:** Investigation and interaction with NPCs of various backgrounds are often critical aspects of adventures in Gothic Earth. Personality and a good first impression improve the success of

certain character classes, thus a good Charisma score is also important.

### *Races*

Humans dominate the Gothic Earth world, and player characters in a **Masque of the Red Death** campaign should be human. (See the *D&D Player's Handbook*, Chapter 2: "Races" for the racial benefits of humans.) Many of the benefits associated with the nonhuman races have less impact in this setting. A dwarf's ability to wear heavy armor or his advantages as a stonemason has little value in a world where bullets have made armor obsolete and steel skyscrapers replace stone buildings. A player should also consider that in the world of Gothic Earth, most people consider dwarves, elves and other nonhuman races as figures of myth and fairy tales.

That is not to say that there cannot be any nonhuman communities hidden away in the wilderness or deep underground. The DM should consider the myths and legends of an area when shaping these communities. Such settlements would spend a portion of their time and any magical abilities they possess in concealing their existence or their real nature from human society.

If such communities exist, elves might develop their ability to disguise their nature, gaining racial bonuses to Disguise and Hide skills but losing their bonuses for certain weapons. The elves' reliance on magical aid to help hide their communities increases the likelihood of their incurring some taint from the Red Death. Their favored class would be adept or charlatan.

Dwarves may have increased their agility so they could earn money as acrobats and circus performers, thereby gaining a racial bonus on Tumble checks and a racial Dodge bonus. Those dwarves most likely to go out into the world are those who have a trade or ability to offset their "deformity." Their favored class would be tradesman or performer.

### *Nationality*

The late 1800s was a time of increasing nationalism, exploration, continuing colonization and immigration. So much far-ranging travel and exploration increases the importance of detailing the ancestry and origin of the player characters. The character's background affects how others



view and react to her. Europeans see Americans as brash and ignorant; Germans have a reputation for being dull and pedantic. While many people label the Irish charming, the British see them as stubborn and rebellious. (See Chapter Eight for more information on attitudes of the period.) Nationality can provide guides for circumstance bonuses — or penalties — for Bluff, Diplomacy and Gather Information checks or can simply serve as roleplaying hooks for characters.

## Character Classes

The world described in the *D&D Player's Handbook* resembles our Medieval or Renaissance periods in culture and development. **Masque of the Red Death** is set in a world that resembles the latter years of our 19th century. The professions, trades, crafts, arts and fields of academic study have proliferated greatly; the character classes, therefore, have evolved differently.

Six core classes are detailed here, each with variants that present alternative areas of specialization. Each variant only lists changes from or additions to the core class on which it's based. Tables for level progression based on the *D&D Player's Handbook* are also provided where appropriate for ease of reference. The core classes and their respective variants are as follows.

Core Class	Class Variants
Adept	Charlatan, metaphysician, occultist
Athlete	Explorer/scout, shootist, soldier
Intellectual	Parson, physician, scholar/scientist
Mystic	Medium, shaman, spiritualist
Sleuth	Criminal, dandy, journalist
Tradesman	Mechanic, performer

### Multiclass Characters

The background and roleplaying aspects of the various subtypes should be considered before multiclassing. Certain combination of classes might gain the negative reactions from NPCs. For example, a soldier who multiclassed as a shaman might find that his former friends and colleagues believe he has “gone native” and is no longer someone they are willing to give information to.

## Adept

For most people, magic exists only in fairy tales. These unbelievers scoff at tales of spellcasting, considering such reports as myths rather than history. Still, a few individuals have secretly kept alive the ancient knowledge of magic. While many frauds might claim knowledge of the arcane arts, truly talented people are few and far between. These practitioners are often self-taught and lack some of the advantages of the D&D wizard. Magic is much less reliable and spells draw on the physical energy of the adept. The force of an adept's intellect directs and focuses the energy of the spell. Adepts in Gothic Earth cannot memorize any spells, even *read magic*, without a spellbook. Adepts do not get bonus spells from high Intelligence scores.

### Game Rule Information

Adepts use Table 3–1 for base attack bonus (BAB), saving throw and bonus feats and Table 3–2 for spells per day. Adepts do not get Scribe Scroll or Familiar at 1st level; instead, they get a bonus metamagic feat at 1st level and one additional bonus metamagic feat every 5 levels.

**Hit Die:** d4.

### Class Skills

The adept's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Concentration (Con), Knowledge (Ancient Language) (Int), Knowledge (Forbidden Lore) (Int), Hypnosis (Cha), Psychometry (Wis), Prognostication (Int) and Sixth Sense (Int).

**Skill Points at 1st level:** (6 + Int modifier) x4

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 6 + Int modifier

### Class Features

All the following are class features of the adept.

**Weapons:** All adepts are proficient in simple weapons and handguns.

**Spells:** All adepts begin the game with knowledge of the *detect magic* and *read magic* spells, three other 0-level spells of the player's choosing and three 1st-level spells chosen by the player and the DM. Since magic in Gothic Earth is not codified, each adept character's starting spell list depends on her background.



**Arcane Weave (Ex):** Adepts have the ability to expend personal energy to cast arcane spells through their use of Forbidden Lore (arcane magic).

The character must have an Intelligence score equal to 10 + the level of the spell to learn or cast a spell. See Chapter Five for information on how to cast spells.



*The general adept, the charlatan, the metaphysician and the occultist*





Table 3-1: The Adept

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Detect magic, read magic, starting spells
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	—
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	—
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	—
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Bonus metamagic feat
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	—
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	—
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	—
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	—
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Bonus metamagic feat
11th	+5	+3	+3	+7	—
12th	+6/ +1	+4	+4	+8	—
13th	+6/ +1	+4	+4	+8	—
14th	+7/ +2	+4	+4	+9	—
15th	+7/ +2	+5	+5	+9	Bonus metamagic feat
16th	+8/ +3	+5	+5	+10	—
17th	+8/ +3	+5	+5	+10	—
18th	+9/ +4	+6	+6	+11	—
19th	+9/ +4	+6	+6	+11	—
20th	+10/ +5	+6	+6	+12	Bonus metamagic feat

Table 3-2: Adept Spells Per Day

Level	0	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
1st	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	4	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3rd	4	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4th	4	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5th	4	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
6th	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
7th	4	4	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	—
8th	4	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—
9th	4	4	4	3	2	1	—	—	—	—
10th	4	4	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—
11th	4	4	4	4	3	2	1	—	—	—
12th	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	—	—	—
13th	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	1	—	—
14th	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	—	—
15th	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	1	—
16th	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	—
17th	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	1
18th	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2
19th	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3
20th	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4



## Charlatan

Numerous stage magicians, prestidigitators and illusionists work in carnivals and on the stages of Gothic Earth. For the most part, these people know nothing of the Red Death or the art of magic. Every now and then, however, a charlatan stumbles upon the truth. If that unfortunate soul survives the discovery of real magic, he quickly learns a new respect for the supernatural and gradually begins to master the hidden energies that he has tapped. Charlatans have more in common with the *D&D* bard than they do with the *D&D* wizard. Their ability to do real magic is innate and, while it is powered from their physical energy, the force of their personality, rather than their intellect, directs their spells. Charlatans, therefore, use their Charisma modifier when casting magic.

### Game Rule Information

This variant on adepts uses Table 3–3 and Table 3–4 for base attack bonus (BAB), saving throws, bonus feats and spells per day.

**Hit Die:** d4.

### Class Skills

In addition to the class skills for the adept, a charlatan's additional class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Perform (Cha), Open Lock (Dex) and Sleight of Hand (Dex).

**Skill Points at 1st level:** (5 + Int modifier) x4

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 5 + Int modifier

### Class Features

In addition to those features of the adept class, the charlatan also gains the following class features.

**Spells:** All charlatans begin the game with knowledge of the *prestidigitation* spell. Table 3–5 lists the number of spells a charlatan knows at each level. Spells known should be selected from the “Bard Spells” list in Chapter 11 of the *D&D Player's Handbook*.

**Arcane Weave (Ex):** Charlatans have the ability to expend personal energy to cast arcane spells through their use of Forbidden Lore (arcane

Table 3–3: The Charlatan

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Skill focus: Sleight of Hand
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	—
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	—
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	—
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Greater Spell Focus: Illusion
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	—
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	—
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	Ranged legerdemain 1/day*
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	—
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Bonus feat
11th	+5	+3	+3	+7	—
12th	+6/ +1	+4	+4	+8	—
13th	+6/ +1	+4	+4	+8	—
14th	+7/ +2	+4	+4	+9	Ranged legerdemain 3/day*
15th	+7/ +2	+5	+5	+9	Bonus feat
16th	+8/ +3	+5	+5	+10	—
17th	+8/ +3	+5	+5	+10	Shadow illusion**
18th	+9/ +4	+6	+6	+11	—
19th	+9/ +4	+6	+6	+11	—
20th	+10/ +5	+6	+6	+12	Bonus feat

\* see arcane trickster in the *D&D Dungeon Master's Guide*  
 \*\* see shadowdancer in the *D&D Dungeon Master's Guide*

*Table 3-4: Charlatan Spells Per Day*

Level	0	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
1st	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
3rd	3	1	—	—	—	—	—
4th	3	2	—	—	—	—	—
5th	3	3	1	—	—	—	—
6th	3	3	2	—	—	—	—
7th	3	3	3	—	—	—	—
8th	3	3	3	1	—	—	—
9th	3	3	3	2	—	—	—
10th	3	3	3	3	—	—	—
11th	3	3	3	3	1	—	—
12th	3	3	3	3	2	—	—
13th	3	3	3	3	3	—	—
14th	4	3	3	3	3	1	—
15th	4	4	3	3	3	2	—
16th	4	4	4	3	3	3	—
17th	4	4	4	4	3	3	1
18th	4	4	4	4	4	3	2
19th	4	4	4	4	4	4	3
20th	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

*Table 3-5: Charlatan Spells Known*

Level	0	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
1st	4	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	5	2	—	—	—	—	—
3rd	6	3	—	—	—	—	—
4th	6	3	2	—	—	—	—
5th	6	4	3	—	—	—	—
6th	6	4	3	—	—	—	—
7th	6	4	4	2	—	—	—
8th	6	4	4	3	—	—	—
9th	6	4	4	3	—	—	—
10th	6	4	4	4	2	—	—
11th	6	4	4	4	3	—	—
12th	6	4	4	4	3	—	—
13th	6	4	4	4	4	2	—
14th	6	4	4	4	4	3	—
15th	6	4	4	4	4	3	—
16th	6	5	4	4	4	4	2
17th	6	5	5	4	4	4	3
18th	6	5	5	5	4	4	3
19th	6	5	5	5	5	4	4
20th	6	5	5	5	5	5	4



magic). The character must have a Charisma score equal to 10 + the level of the spell to learn or cast a spell. See Chapter Five for information on how to cast spells.

**Constitution (Ex):** Magic is extraordinarily dangerous for the charlatan. She is not sure of the limits of her powers and does not fully understand the repercussions of her actions. Therefore, each time she attempts to cast a spell she must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the level of the spell) or take 1d2 points of nonlethal damage.

### *Metaphysician*

The metaphysician is an expert on the occult who views the practice of magic and the study of all that is supernatural as a scientific endeavor. He believes that the application of the scientific method to the macabre and the unusual will eventually result in a complete understanding of that which seems to defy explanation.

In all dealings with the supernatural, the metaphysician remains cool and calm. He tries to examine every encounter with the dispassionate eye of the scientist. To his mind, no mystery is so dark, no creature so fantastic that it cannot be mastered through application of the scientific method. Observe, hypothesize and test; that is the motto of the metaphysician.

### *Game Rule Information*

Metaphysicians gain the Skill Focus: Knowledge (science) feat at 1st level and every 5 levels thereafter but do not gain bonus metamagic feats. See Table 3-6 and 3-7.

**Hit Die:** d4.

### *Class Skills*

In addition to the class skills for the adept, metaphysicians' additional class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Academician (Wis), Knowledge (science) (Int) and Knowledge (earth sciences) (Int).

**Skill Points at 1st level:** (6 + Int modifier) x4

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 6 + Int modifier

### *Class Features*

In addition to those features of the adept class, the metaphysician also gains the following class features.

**Arcane Weave (Ex):** Metaphysicians have the ability to expend personal energy to cast arcane spells through their use of Forbidden Lore (arcane magic). The character must have an Intelligence score equal to 10 + the level of the spell to learn or cast a spell. See Chapter Five for information on how to cast spells.

**Methodical Bonus (Ex):** The metaphysician is well versed in the theory and practice of magic. His methodical approach to spellcasting increases the time to cast spells but also increases the accuracy of the spellcasting. Casting time is doubled but the metaphysician gains a +2 competence bonus on his casting check.

**Analytical Weakness (Ex):** With all his efforts toward analytical thought, the metaphysician has a difficult time accepting that which he cannot explain. Because of this, the metaphysician is unusually vulnerable to mind-affecting magic. Therefore all checks versus mind-affecting magic are made with a negative 2 modifier.

**Spells:** All metaphysicians begin the game with knowledge of the *detect magic* and *read magic* spells, three other 0-level spells of the player's choosing and three 1st-level spells chosen by the player and the DM. Starting spells should reflect the character's background and experience.

### *Occultist*

When occultists first begin to study magic, they focus on how a particular type of magic works. They dedicate their lives to studying magic and become particularly skilled at searching out and learning new spells. Their dedication often becomes fanaticism; nothing is more important to them than their studies. This can cause the occultist problems when dealing with those who do not believe in magic.

### *Game Rule Information*

Occultists use Table 3-8 for base attack bonus (BAB), saving throw and bonus feats and Table 3-9 for spells per day. Occultists gain the Spell Focus feat for their chosen school of magic at 1st level.

**Hit Die:** d4.

### *Class Skills*

In addition to the class skills for the adept, occultists' additional class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Academician (Wis),

Table 3-6: The Metaphysician

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Detect magic, read magic, starting spells
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	—
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	—
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	—
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	—
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	—
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	—
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	—
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	—
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	—
11th	+5	+3	+3	+7	—
12th	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8	—
13th	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8	—
14th	+7/+2	+4	+4	+9	—
15th	+7/+2	+5	+5	+9	—
16th	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	—
17th	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	—
18th	+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	—
19th	+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	—
20th	+10/+5	+6	+6	+12	—

Table 3-7: Metaphysician Spells Per Day

Level	0	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
1st	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	4	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3rd	4	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4th	4	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5th	4	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
6th	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
7th	4	4	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	—
8th	4	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—
9th	4	4	4	3	2	1	—	—	—	—
10th	4	4	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—
11th	4	4	4	4	3	2	1	—	—	—
12th	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	—	—	—
13th	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	1	—	—
14th	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	—	—
15th	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	1	—
16th	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	—
17th	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	1
18th	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2
19th	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3
20th	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4



Knowledge (Cryptology) (Int) and Knowledge (history) (Int).

**Skill Points at 1st level:** (5 + Int modifier) x4

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 5 + Int modifier

### *Class Features*

In addition to those features of the adept class, the occultist also gains the following class features.

**Arcane Weave (Ex):** Occultists have the ability to expend personal energy to cast arcane spells through their use of Forbidden Lore (arcane magic). The character must have an Intelligence score equal to 10 + the level of the spell to learn or cast a spell. See Chapter Five for information on how to cast spells.

**Spells:** All occultists begin the game with knowledge of the *detect magic* and *read magic* spells along with three other 0-level spells of the player's choosing and three 1st-level spells chosen by the player and the DM. Two of the three starting spells

for each level must be from the occultist's school of specialization.

**School Specialization:** At 1st level the occultist chooses a school of magic for specialization (see the sidebar on school specialization in Chapter 3 of the *D&D Player's Handbook*). In addition to the listed benefits, the occultist gains a +2 competence bonus when learning spells from his chosen school.

**Social Consequences:** The occultist's devotion to his studies adversely affects his ability to interact with people who deny the existence of magic. Therefore occultists suffer a -4 penalty on Diplomacy, Gather Information and Sense Motive checks when dealing with those who do not believe in magic.

**Opposed School (Ex):** At 10th level, the occultist's mind has become so focused on his chosen school that when magic from an opposed school is used against him, he gains a +2 bonus on saves.

*Table 3-8: The Occultist*

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	<i>detect magic</i> , <i>read magic</i> , starting spells, spell focus (specialist school)
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	—
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	—
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	—
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Bonus feat
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	—
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	—
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	—
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	—
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Bonus feat, +2 bonus on saves vs. opposed school
11th	+5	+3	+3	+7	—
12th	+6/ +1	+4	+4	+8	—
13th	+6/ +1	+4	+4	+8	—
14th	+7/ +2	+4	+4	+9	—
15th	+7/ +2	+5	+5	+9	Bonus feat
16th	+8/ +3	+5	+5	+10	—
17th	+8/ +3	+5	+5	+10	—
18th	+9/ +4	+6	+6	+11	—
19th	+9/ +4	+6	+6	+11	—
20th	+10/ +5	+6	+6	+12	Bonus feat



*Table 3-9: Occultist Spells Per Day*

In addition to the spells listed below, the occultist gains one additional spell from her specialist school of each level she can cast.

Level	0	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
1st	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	4	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3rd	4	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4th	4	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5th	4	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
6th	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
7th	4	4	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	—
8th	4	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—
9th	4	4	4	3	2	1	—	—	—	—
10th	4	4	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—
11th	4	4	4	4	3	2	1	—	—	—
12th	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	—	—	—
13th	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	1	—	—
14th	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	—	—
15th	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	1	—
16th	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	—
17th	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	1
18th	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2
19th	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3
20th	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

## *Athlete*

While society places a greater emphasis on education, some prefer to hone their physical skills and participate in competitions. Athletes run the gamut of Gothic Earth's social classes. Some, such as baseball's Christy Mathewson or Honus Wagner, are simple, unassuming folk at heart. Others, such as tennis's Lottie Dod or Joshua Pim, are more sophisticated members of the upper class. Athletes are fierce competitors, feeling a constant need each time they compete to push themselves further than ever. Considered primarily a bastion of male participation, most sports remain restricted to men. Golf, tennis, riding, archery and field hockey enjoy popularity among females and are most appropriate for female characters in this time period.

## *Game Rule Information*

Athletes use Table 3-10 for base attack bonus (BAB), saving throw and bonus feats.

**Hit Die:** d10.

## *Class Skills*

The athlete's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Escape Artist (Dex), Equestrian (Dex), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Listen (Wis), Profession: Athlete (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex) and Use Rope (Dex).

**Skill Points at 1st level:** (5 + Int modifier) x4

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 5 + Int modifier



### *Class Features*

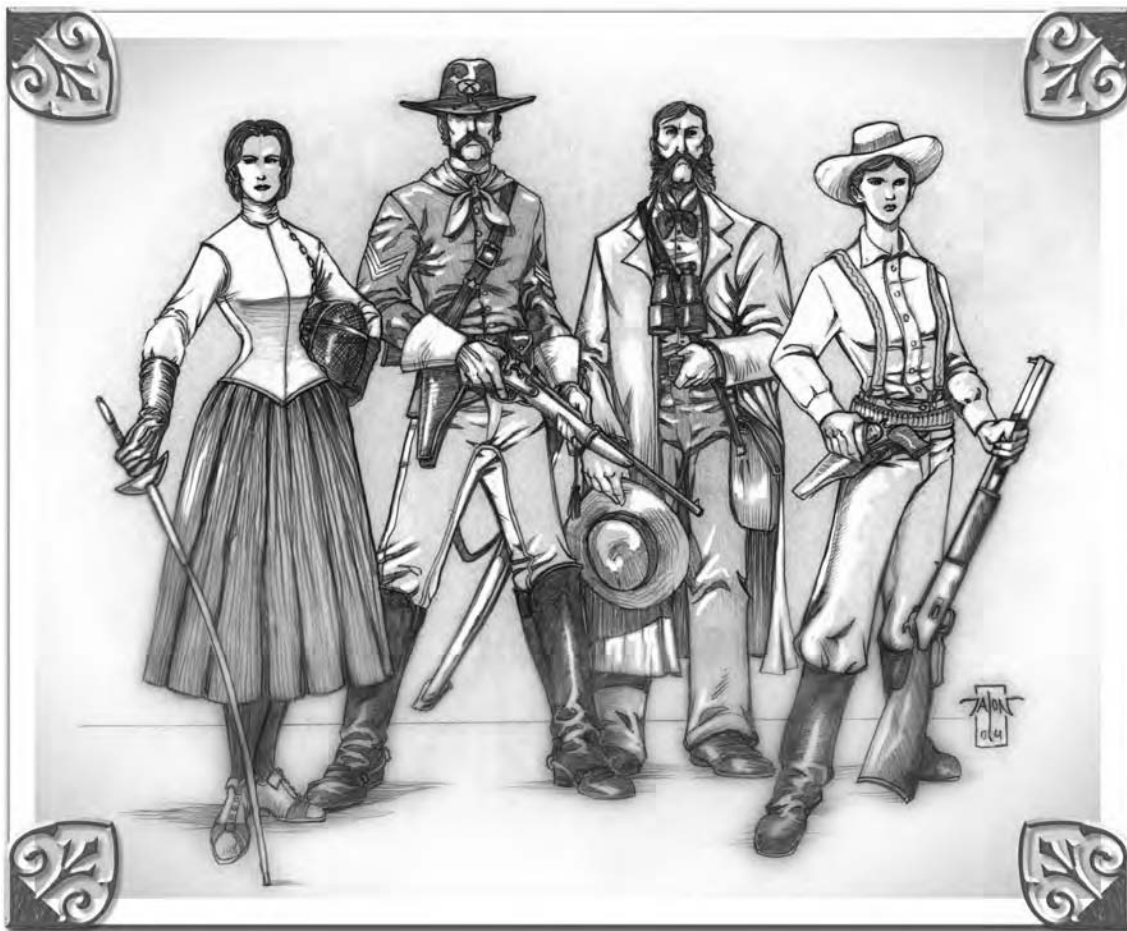
All the following are class features of the athlete.

**Weapons:** All Athletes are proficient in all firearms, martial and simple weapons.

**Bonus Feats:** At 1st level an athlete gains a physical improvement feat in addition to the feats 1st level human characters gain. They gain an additional physical improvement feat at 2nd level and every 2 athlete levels thereafter. The available feats are Acrobatic, Agile, Athlete, Blind-Fight,

Deft Hands, Diligent, Dodge, Endurance, Exotic Weapon Proficiency, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Improved Pugilism, Improved Unarmed Strike, Keen Sense, Mobility, Nimble Fingers, Pugilism, Run, Self-Sufficient, Stealthy, Toughness and Uncanny Sense.

**Sport Focus Feats:** One of the following sports focuses may be taken instead of a bonus feat at 1st, 4th, 6th, 12th, 16th and 20th level. A different sport must be chosen each time. Bonuses from different sports do not stack.



*The general athlete, the soldier, the explorer/scout and the shootist.*



Table 3-10: The Athlete

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Bonus feat or sports focus
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Bonus feat
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	—
4th	+4	+1	+1	+1	Bonus feat or sports focus
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	—
6th	+6/ +1	+5	+2	+2	Bonus feat or sports focus
7th	+7/ +2	+5	+2	+2	—
8th	+8/ +3	+6	+2	+2	Bonus feat or sports focus
9th	+9/ +4	+6	+3	+3	—
10th	+10/ +5	+7	+3	+3	Bonus feat
11th	+11/ +6/ +1	+7	+3	+3	—
12th	+12/ +7/ +2	+8	+4	+4	Bonus feat or sports focus
13th	+13/ +8/ +3	+8	+4	+4	—
14th	+14/ +9/ +4	+9	+4	+4	Bonus feat
15th	+15/ +10/ +5	+9	+5	+5	—
16th	+16/ +11/ +6/ +1	+10	+5	+5	Bonus feat or sports focus
17th	+17/ +12/ +7/ +2	+10	+5	+5	—
18th	+18/ +13/ +8/ +3	+11	+6	+6	Bonus feat
19th	+19/ +14/ +9/ +4	+11	+6	+6	—
20th	+20/ +15/ +10/ +5	+12	+6	+6	Bonus feat or sports focus

*Sport Focus Feats*

Athletes enjoy certain advantages due to their skill in their chosen sports. The following table details those advantages.

Feat	Bonus
Baseball/Cricket	+2 competence bonus on Balance and Spot checks
Baseball/Cricket, Improved	<i>Pitcher:</i> Bonus Weapon Focus feat (specific thrown weapon) <i>Others:</i> Bonus Weapon Focus feat: for club, sap or brass knuckles.
Boxer	+2 bonus on Spot and Sense Motive checks
Boxer, Improved	+2 competence bonus on fist attacks
Golfer	+2 bonus on Knowledge (physics) checks
Golfer, Improved	+2 competence bonus on Endurance checks
Hockey	+2 competence bonus on Balance and Spot checks
Hockey, Improved	+3 bonus on Fortitude saves
Gymnastics	+2 bonus on Balance and Tumble checks
Gymnastics, Improved	+2 bonus on Jump and Climb checks
Soccer	+2 competence bonus on Endurance and Spot checks
Soccer, Improved	+2 competence bonus on all Dexterity-based checks
Tennis	+2 competence bonus on all Dexterity-based checks
Tennis, Improved	+2 Dodge bonus
Wrestler (Greco-Roman)	+3 bonus on attempts to escape from Grapples
Wrestler (Greco-Roman), Improved	+3 Bonus on Grapple attempts.



## Explorer/Scout

The waning years of the 19th century are a time of exploration and adventure. Large sections of Africa, Australia and the Americas are savage and untamed (at least they seem so to the citizens of the civilized Western world), the polar regions are all but unexplored, and the mysterious Orient holds unlimited wonders for individuals brave enough to seek them out.

Explorers assume many appearances and roles. Some are professional scouts who serve as guides for hire. Others pursue their own explorations, seeking the fame and prestige of being the first human to set foot in a remote, dangerous place. Despite such differences, these heroes have a love of the wilderness and a sense of wonder that comes with the discovery of nature's hidden secrets. Explorers are self-reliant. They do not seek the company of others, but recognize the necessity of companions at times.

## Game Rule Information

Explorers/scouts use Table 3–11 for base attack bonus (BAB) and saving throw. They receive feats as detailed below.

**Hit Die:** d10.

## Class Skills

In addition to the class skills for the athlete, explorers' additional class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Craft (gunsmith) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Search (Int) and Spot (Wis).

**Skill Points at 1st level:** (6 + Int modifier) x4

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 6 + Int modifier

## Class Features

All the following are class features of the explorer/scout.

**Weapons:** All explorers/scouts are proficient with martial, primitive, simple handguns and longarms.

Table 3–11: The Explorer/Scout

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Bonus feat or ability
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Bonus feat or ability
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	—
4th	+4	+1	+1	+1	Bonus feat or ability
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	—
6th	+6/ +1	+5	+2	+2	—
7th	+7/ +2	+5	+2	+2	—
8th	+8/ +3	+6	+2	+2	Bonus feat or ability
9th	+9/ +4	+6	+3	+3	—
10th	+10/ +5	+7	+3	+3	—
11th	+11/ +6/ +1	+7	+3	+3	—
12th	+12/ +7/ +2	+8	+4	+4	Bonus feat or ability
13th	+13/ +8/ +3	+8	+4	+4	—
14th	+14/ +9/ +4	+9	+4	+4	—
15th	+15/ +10/ +5	+9	+5	+5	—
16th	+16/ +11/ +6/ +1	+10	+5	+5	Bonus feat or ability
17th	+17/ +12/ +7/ +2	+10	+5	+5	—
18th	+18/ +13/ +8/ +3	+11	+6	+6	—
19th	+19/ +14/ +9/ +4	+11	+6	+6	—
20th	+20/ +15/ +10/ +5	+12	+6	+6	Bonus feat or ability



**Bonus Feats and Abilities:** At 1st, 2nd, 4th, 8th, 12th, 16th and 20th level, explorers/scouts gain either a bonus feat or a bonus ability. Feats include Diehard, Disarming Shot, Dodge, Endurance, Exotic Weapon Proficiency, Far Shot, Improved Grapple, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Unarmed Strike, Keen Sense, Light Sleeper, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Mounted Firearm, Nimble Fingers, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Run, Self-Sufficient, Spring Attack, Toughness, Tracking, Two-Weapon Fighting, Uncanny Sense, Weapon Finesse and Weapon Focus.

Abilities include camouflage, evasion, hide in plain sight, swift tracker, wild empathy and woodland stride (see Chapter 3 of the *D&D Player's Handbook* for a description of these abilities in the "Ranger" class description.

**Social Consequences:** The explorer/scout is at home in the wilderness and occasionally has a hard time fitting in when in more "civilized" locations. Therefore explorers/scouts suffer a -4 penalty

on Diplomacy, Gather Information and Sense Motive checks when dealing with "city people."

### *Shootist*

*A dusty street in a western town, two men square off, hands posed to draw their weapons to prove who is the fastest...*

Once a common sight in the boomtowns and growing cities of the American West, the gunfighter in the 1890s is a dying breed and duels are uncommon. A few still exist, however, whose expertise with a gun has gained them fame; Kid Curry, Wyatt Earp and the Sundance Kid are just a few who are still alive in the 1890s. Most of those who were referred to during that time as "shootists" were experts with pistols, but the greater range of the repeating rifle enticed some to focus on these firearms. Competition shooting has increased in popularity and is one of the first sports included in the modern Olympics.

*Table 3-12: The Shootist*

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Combat feat
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Combat feat
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	—
4th	+4	+1	+1	+1	Combat feat
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	—
6th	+6/ +1	+5	+2	+2	Combat feat
7th	+7/ +2	+5	+2	+2	—
8th	+8/ +3	+6	+2	+2	Combat feat
9th	+9/ +4	+6	+3	+3	—
10th	+10/ +5	+7	+3	+3	Combat feat
11th	+11/ +6/ +1	+7	+3	+3	—
12th	+12/ +7/ +2	+8	+4	+4	Combat feat
13th	+13/ +8/ +3	+8	+4	+4	Combat feat
14th	+14/ +9/ +4	+9	+4	+4	—
15th	+15/ +10/ +5	+9	+5	+5	Combat feat
16th	+16/ +11/ +6/ +1	+10	+5	+5	—
17th	+17/ +12/ +7/ +2	+10	+5	+5	Combat feat
18th	+18/ +13/ +8/ +3	+11	+6	+6	—
19th	+19/ +14/ +9/ +4	+11	+6	+6	—
20th	+20/ +15/ +10/ +5	+12	+6	+6	—



### *Shootist Feat Progression by Style and Level*

The following table lists the progression of combat-oriented feats for the shootist depending on whether or not the character chooses the longarm or handgun style of firearms combat.

Level	Longarm	Handgun
1st	Point Blank Shot	Point Blank Shot
2nd	Rapid Shot	Two Weapon Fighting
4th	Far Shot	Improved Two Weapon Fighting
6th	Trick Shot	Disarming Shot
8th	Weapon Specialization*	Weapon Specialization*
10th	Improved Precise Shot	Greater Two Weapon Fighting
12th	Toughness	Toughness
13th	Ricochet Shot	Shot on the Run
15th	Evasion	Evasion
17th	Greater Weapon Specialization*	Greater Weapon Specialization*

\*Must be for the combat weapon style chosen.

#### *Game Rule Information*

Shootists use Table 3–12 for base attack bonus (BAB) and saving throw. They receive feats as detailed below.

**Hit Die:** d10.

#### *Class Skills*

In addition to the class skills for the athlete, the shootist's additional class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Craft (gunsmith) (Int), Search (Int) and Spot (Wis).

**Skill Points at 1st level:** (4 + Int modifier) x4

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 4 + Int modifier

#### *Class Features*

All the following are class features of the shootist.

**Bonus Feats:** Instead of physical improvement feats, the shootist chooses a combat style of

either handgun or longarm. Use the following table for level-based bonuses. The shootist gains these feats even if the character does not have the prerequisite for the feat.

#### *Soldier*

In the time in between the Renaissance and the 1890s, the soldier has developed into more of a specialist. Soldiers usually excel at a few weapons rather than acquire proficiency with all weapons. Soldiers also can make use of some alternative weapons. They may expand their weapon skills by taking the Exotic Weapon Proficiency or Martial Weapon Proficiency feats. This variant of the athlete class is designed to reflect men who are enlisted in a military force.

#### *Game Rule Information*

Soldiers use Table 3–13 for base attack bonus (BAB), saving throw and bonus feats.

**Hit Die:** d10.



### *Class Skills*

In addition to the class skills for the athlete, the soldier's additional class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Craft (gunsmith) (Int), Knowledge (demolition) (Int), Knowledge (military history) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (navigation) (Int), Search (Int) and Spot (Wis).

**Skill Points at 1st level:** (4 + Int modifier) x4

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 4 + Int modifier

### *Class Features*

All the following are class features of the soldier.

**Bonus Feats:** The soldier gains combat-oriented feats instead of the athlete's physical improvement feats, at the same rate of progression. The available feats are: Archery, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency, Far Shot, Greater Two Weapon Fighting, Greater Weapon Focus, Greater Weapon Specialization, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical, Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Unarmed Strike, Martial Weapon Proficiency, Mobility, Mounted Combat, Mounted Firearm, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Rapid Reload, Rapid Shot, Ride-By Attack, Run, Shield Proficiency, Spirited Charge, Spring Attack, Trample, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus, Weapon Specialization and Whirlwind Attack.



*Table 3-13: The Soldier*

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Combat-oriented feat
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Combat-oriented feat
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	—
4th	+4	+1	+1	+1	Combat-oriented feat
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	—
6th	+6/ +1	+5	+2	+2	Combat-oriented feat
7th	+7/ +2	+5	+2	+2	—
8th	+8/ +3	+6	+2	+2	Combat-oriented feat
9th	+9/ +4	+6	+3	+3	—
10th	+10/ +5	+7	+3	+3	Combat-oriented feat
11th	+11/ +6/ +1	+7	+3	+3	—
12th	+12/ +7/ +2	+8	+4	+4	Combat-oriented feat
13th	+13/ +8/ +3	+8	+4	+4	—
14th	+14/ +9/ +4	+9	+4	+4	Combat-oriented feat
15th	+15/ +10/ +5	+9	+5	+5	—
16th	+16/ +11/ +6/ +1	+10	+5	+5	Combat-oriented feat
17th	+17/ +12/ +7/ +2	+10	+5	+5	—
18th	+18/ +13/ +8/ +3	+11	+6	+6	Combat-oriented feat
19th	+19/ +14/ +9/ +4	+11	+6	+6	—
20th	+20/ +15/ +10/ +5	+12	+6	+6	Combat-oriented feat





## *Intellectual*

The latter half of the 19th century is a time of progress and invention. Scientists make new discoveries every week (or seemingly so); scholars decipher ancient writings and doctors find new methods of treatment. The intellectual class represents those who have a formal education. Some individuals use their knowledge to provide a service. This class is extremely flexible as the various areas of study suitable for the era are many.

### *Game Rule Information*

Intellectuals use Table 3–14 for base attack bonus (BAB) and saving throw. They receive feats as detailed below.

**Hit Die:** d6.

### *Class Skills*

The intellectual's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Academician (Wis), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (ancient language) (Int), Knowledge (archeology) (Int), Knowledge (cryptology) (Int), Knowledge (etiquette) (Int), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (government) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int) and Profession (Wis).

**Skill Points at 1st level:** (8 + Int modifier) x4

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 8 + Int modifier

### *Class Features*

All the following are class features of the intellectual.



*The general intellectual, the physician, the scholar/scientist and the parson.*



Table 3-14: The Intellectual

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	—
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Bonus Skill Focus feat
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	—
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	—
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Bonus Skill Focus feat
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	—
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	—
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	Bonus Skill Focus feat
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	—
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	—
11th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Bonus Skill Focus feat
12th	+6/ +1	+4	+4	+8	—
13th	+6/ +1	+4	+4	+8	—
14th	+7/ +2	+4	+4	+9	Bonus Skill Focus feat
15th	+7/ +2	+5	+5	+9	—
16th	+8/ +3	+5	+5	+10	—
17th	+8/ +3	+5	+5	+10	Bonus Skill Focus feat
18th	+9/ +4	+6	+6	+11	—
19th	+9/ +4	+6	+6	+11	—
20th	+10/ +5	+6	+6	+12	Bonus Skill Focus feat

**Weapons:** All intellectuals are proficient in both simple weapons and handguns.

**Bonus Skill Focus Feats:** At 2nd level and every 3 levels thereafter, the intellectual gains a bonus Skill Focus feat for one Knowledge skill in which she has at least 5 ranks. If the intellectual does not have 5 ranks in any Knowledge skill, she does not gain the bonus feat.

### Parson

In this context, the term parson is used to refer to any devoutly religious man or woman. Whether such a character is a Christian or Jew, a Moslem or Buddhist, his devotion to his religion is unshakable. While such characters lack spellcasting ability, they can do much to raise the morale of any adventuring party. Parsons are among the greatest enemies of the Red Death for they feel a deep compulsion to rid the world of its dark and sinister agents.

Parsons range from soft-spoken, fatherly gentlemen to adamant believers gripped with missionary fervor. In any case, they are assumed to be knowledgeable about their faith and the teachings of their church. The parson is just as quick to pray for divine favor before undertaking a hazardous task as he is to offer thanks for its successful completion.

### Game Rule Information

Parsons use Table 3-15 for base attack bonus (BAB) and saving throw. They receive feats as detailed below.

**Hit Die:** d8.

### Class Skills

In addition to the class skills for the intellectual, parsons' additional class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Listen (Wis), Perform (Cha), Sense Motive (Wis) and Spot (Wis).

**Skill Points at 1st level:** (6 + Int modifier) x4

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 6 + Int modifier



Table 3-15: The Parson

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Iron will
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	—
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Bonus Skill Focus feat
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	—
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Turn undead
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	—
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	—
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	Make blessed water
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	—
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	—
11th	+5	+3	+3	+7	—
12th	+6/ +1	+4	+4	+8	—
13th	+6/ +1	+4	+4	+8	—
14th	+7/ +2	+4	+4	+9	—
15th	+7/ +2	+5	+5	+9	—
16th	+8/ +3	+5	+5	+10	—
17th	+8/ +3	+5	+5	+10	—
18th	+9/ +4	+6	+6	+11	—
19th	+9/ +4	+6	+6	+11	—
20th	+10/ +5	+6	+6	+12	—

### Class Features

All the following are class features for the parson.

**Bonus Feat:** Iron Will at 1st level.

**Bonus Skill Focus Feat:** At 3rd level, the parson gains a Bonus Skill Focus (Knowledge Religion) feat for one ancient religion of their choosing.

**Turning Undead:** At 5th level, the parson gains the knowledge of the rituals involved in turning undead as a mystic (see below). They turn undead as a mystic four levels lower than their parson level. If they multiclass to a mystic spellcasting class that can turn undead the parson's ability to Turn Undead will stack.

**Make "Blessed Water":** At 8th level, the parson gains the ability to infuse clean water with positive energy, thus making it useful as a means of combating undead and other manifestations of negative energy. The parson may create one flask of blessed water (which functions in the same fashion as holy water) once per day. Each flask is

capable of doing 1d6 damage to any undead creature.

**Dedication:** These characters devote much of their time and energy to the study of their faith and in silent prayer. Further, they are peacemakers who will do everything in their power to avoid violence. As such, parsons cannot gain any feats that improve their ability to use a weapon.

### Physician

Working with the most current scientific methods and the highest of ideals, physicians bring comfort and health to the suffering and dying. The physician is a familiar figure, trusted and beloved, who does his best to remain in touch with the latest news from the medical community.

Most physicians have sworn an oath to ease the pains of man at every opportunity and to cause no harm to a patient. Players of physician characters should keep this in mind as the character's constant motivation. This is especially important





in combat. The physician is a healer, not a killer and should be reluctant to use force where cleverness and logic suffice. He does not hesitate to take measures to protect his allies from harm and tends the wounded (even injured enemies of a nonsupernatural nature, at least) as soon as gunplay is over.

*Game Rule Information*

Physicians use Table 3–16 for base attack bonus (BAB) and saving throw. They receive feats as detailed below.

**Hit Die:** d6.

*Class Skills*

In addition to the class skills for the intellectual, physicians' additional class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Knowledge (life science) (Int), Knowledge (science) (Int), Knowledge (earth sciences) (Int), Knowledge (toxicology) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (physician) (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis) and Spot (Wis).

**Skill Points at 1st level:** (10 + Int modifier) x4  
**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 10 + Int modifier

*Class Features*

All the following are class features of the physician.

**Skill Focus: Profession:** At 3rd-level the physician gains a bonus Skill Focus feat for either Profession (physician) or Knowledge (life science). They do not gain the bonus feats listed for intellectuals.

**Medical Boards:** Physicians must pass their medical boards in order to practice their profession; therefore, a 1st-level physician class player character must have at least 2 ranks in Knowledge (life science) and 3 ranks in Profession (physician). In order to keep abreast of the latest scientific discoveries in the field of Medicine, the physician is required to have at least the same number of ranks in Profession: (physician) as they have physician class levels + 1.

*Table 3–16: The Physician*

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	—
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	—
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Skill Focus bonus feat
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	—
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	—
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	—
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	—
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	—
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	—
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	—
11th	+5	+3	+3	+7	—
12th	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8	—
13th	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8	—
14th	+7/+2	+4	+4	+9	—
15th	+7/+2	+5	+5	+9	—
16th	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	—
17th	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	—
18th	+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	—
19th	+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	—
20th	+10/+5	+6	+6	+12	—



**Hippocratic Oath:** The physician character operates under a strict code of conduct. He must give aid to all that need it, regardless of personal risk. A physician who ignores this duty may be investigated by a governing medical body and stripped of his license to practice medicine. Such characters lose all access to prescription medicines and are unable to place patients in hospitals or similar facilities. This applies a  $-4$  penalty to all attempts to the physician's attempts to heal. Breaking the Hippocratic Oath is also cause for a 1% powers check. Depending on the PCs action, the DM might increase the DC of this check.

### *Scholar/Scientist*

The scholar is an intellectual who has devoted his life to the pursuit of knowledge and education. As a rule, such characters are almost always affiliated with a college, museum, or similar institution devoted to research and learning. These characters tend to be bookish individuals who prefer the comforts of the lab and library to the rigors of field research.

A scientist is an intellectual who pushes herself to discover new knowledge using precise methodology and is extremely dedicated to her particular branch of study. Gothic Earth scientists are often considered to be introverted and cold. To be sure, most would rather be hard at work in their laboratories than enjoying a night on the town. This criticism, however, is often untrue. Most scientists pursue their work with the dream of making everyone's life better.

Other bold souls may be suited to go into the world and discover things; the scholar and the scientist prefer to remain in his study or Lab to catalog, test and analyze the findings when they return. Of course, from time to time, even these recluses are forced to leave their comforts behind to examine something firsthand or, perhaps, to flee a pursuer who wants something they possess.

### *Game Rule Information*

Scholars/scientists use Table 3-17 for base attack bonus (BAB) and saving throw. They receive feats as detailed below.

**Hit Die:** d6.

*Table 3-17: The Scholar/Scientist*

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	—
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	—
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Knowledge Skill Focus bonus feat
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	—
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	—
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	—
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	—
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	—
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	—
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	—
11th	+5	+3	+3	+7	—
12th	+6/ +1	+4	+4	+8	—
13th	+6/ +1	+4	+4	+8	—
14th	+7/ +2	+4	+4	+9	—
15th	+7/ +2	+5	+5	+9	—
16th	+8/ +3	+5	+5	+10	—
17th	+8/ +3	+5	+5	+10	—
18th	+9/ +4	+6	+6	+11	—
19th	+9/ +4	+6	+6	+11	—
20th	+10/ +5	+6	+6	+12	—



### *Class Skills*

In addition to the class skills for the intellectual, scholars/scientists' additional class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Knowledge (earth science) (Int), Knowledge (forbidden lore) (Int), Knowledge (life sciences) (Int), Knowledge (science) (Int), Knowledge (Toxicology) (Int) and Search (Int).

**Skill Points at 1st level:** (10 + Int modifier) x4

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 10 + Int modifier

### *Class Features*

All the following are class features for the scholar/scientist.

**Bonus Skill Focus Feat:** At 3rd level scholar/scientists gain a bonus skill focus feat for one Knowledge skill. They do not gain the bonus feats listed for intellectuals.

**Circumstance:** Scholars/scientists benefits from having the proper resources. When in a good library or well-equipped laboratory, they gain a +2 bonus on all nonarcane Knowledge checks. The reverse is also true; if scholars/scientists do not have such facilities on hand, they suffer a -2 penalty on these checks. Just as the scholar is assumed to be affiliated with a college, museum or similar institution devoted to research and learning, scientists are assumed to begin play with access to a laboratory sufficient to meet their research needs. This facility is not theirs to do with as they please, however, and presumably is part of a school, museum or private research institution.

## *Mystic*

In Gothic Earth, the mystic class is akin to the cleric in the *D&D Player's Handbook* with a few major differences. Mystics get their abilities from the study of the spirit world. They learn how they can "weave" the spirit world to interact with the real world. No connection exists between mystics and religion. The access to spells is determined by study of domains, not by worship of a deity. The rituals and knowledge of the spirit world are the basis of their spells.

### *Game Rule Information*

Mystics use Table 3-18 for base attack bonus (BAB) and saving throw and Table 3-19 for spells per day. Mystics gain a bonus metamagic feat at 1st level and one additional bonus metamagic feat every 5 levels. The mystic chooses which domain to use for her bonus domain spell.

**Hit Die:** d6.

### *Class Skills*

The mystic's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Hypnosis (Int), Knowledge (ancient language) (Int), Knowledge (forbidden lore) (Int), Prognostication (Wis), Psychometry (Wis) and Sixth Sense (Wis).

**Skill Points at 1st level:** (5 + Int modifier) x4

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 5 + Int modifier

### *Class Features*

All the following are class features of the mystic.

**Weapons:** All mystics are proficient in both simple weapons and handguns.

**Mystic Weave (Ex):** The mystic has the ability to infuse the energy of the spiritual world guided by the use of Forbidden Lore (mysticism). The character must have a Wisdom score equal to 10 + the level of the spell to learn or cast a spell. See Chapter Five for information on how to cast spells.

**Starting Domains:** All mystics start with minor access to the All Domain. See Chapter Five for information on how mystics gain access to additional domains.

**Turn or Rebuke Undead (Ex):** This is a ritual, not a supernatural ability. As such, turning



or rebuking undead takes a full-round action to complete. See Chapter 8 of the *D&D Player's Handbook* for details on how this ability works.

**Chaotic, Evil, Good and Lawful Spells:** When a mystic casts spells of an opposite alignment to their own, the powers check is doubled. For instance if a good-aligned mystic casts the 3rd level spell *magic circle against good*, the powers check would be 6%, but if he cast the 3rd level spell *animate dead*, which has both Necromantic and

Evil as its descriptors, the powers check would be 12%.

**Abstracted (Su):** The mystic is always attuned to the spirit world and is less observant of the real world. This abstraction grows as the mystic's understanding and ability to manipulate the energies of the spirit world magnifies. Therefore, mystics suffer a -2 penalty on all Spot, Search and Initiative checks. This penalty increases to -4 at 5th level, -6 at 10th level, -8 at 15th level and -10 at 20th level.



*The general mystic, the medium, the shaman and the spiritualist.*

Table 3-18: The Mystic

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Bonus metamagic feat
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	—
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	—
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	—
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Bonus metamagic feat
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	—
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	—
8th	+6/+1	+6	+2	+6	—
9th	+6/+1	+6	+3	+6	—
10th	+7/+2	+7	+3	+7	Bonus metamagic feat
11th	+8/+3	+7	+3	+7	—
12th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	—
13th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	—
14th	+10/+5	+9	+4	+9	—
15th	+11/+6/+1	+9	+5	+9	Bonus metamagic feat
16th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	—
17th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	—
18th	+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+11	—
19th	+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+11	—
20th	+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+12	Bonus metamagic feat

Table 3-19: Mystic Spells Per Day

Level	0	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
1st	3	1+1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	4	2+1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3rd	4	2+1	1+1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4th	5	3+1	2+1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5th	5	3+1	2+1	1+1	—	—	—	—	—	—
6th	5	3+1	3+1	2+1	—	—	—	—	—	—
7th	6	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1	—	—	—	—	—
8th	6	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1	—	—	—	—	—
9th	6	4+1	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1	—	—	—	—
10th	6	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1	—	—	—	—
11th	6	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1	—	—	—
12th	6	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1	—	—	—
13th	6	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1	—	—
14th	6	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1	—	—
15th	6	5+1	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1	—
16th	6	5+1	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1	—
17th	6	5+1	5+1	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1
18th	6	5+1	5+1	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1
19th	6	5+1	5+1	5+1	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1
20th	6	5+1	5+1	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	4+1	4+1	4+1



## Medium

Mediums often consider themselves victims of fate, either blessed or cursed with the possession of magical powers, regardless of their desire to delve into arcane mysteries. While other mystics might spend years mastering their craft, the medium's powers to cast mystic spells develop spontaneously.

The medium is a tortured soul, for the burden of his power weighs upon him constantly. In some cases, the medium accepts his lot in life and uses his powers willingly. Others so "gifted" are reluctant to use their magic, fearing that they are tapping into something beyond their control. In either case, the medium takes the practice of magic as a very serious responsibility.

### Game Rule Information

Mediums use Table 3–20 for base attack bonus (BAB) and saving throw and Table 3–21 for spells per day. They receive feats as detailed below. The medium chooses bonus domain spells from the Divination domain.

**Hit Die:** d8.

### Class Skills

The medium class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Hypnosis (Int), Knowledge (ancient language) (Int), Knowledge (forbidden lore) (Int), Prognostication (Wis), Psychometry (Wis) and Sixth Sense (Wis).

**Skill Points at 1st level:** (5 + Int modifier) x4

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 5 + Int modifier

### Class Features

All the following are class features of the medium.

**Weapons:** All mediums are proficient in both simple weapons and handguns.

**Mystic Weave (Ex):** The medium has the ability to infuse the energy of the spiritual world guided by the use of Forbidden Lore (mysticism). The character must have a Wisdom score equal to 10 + the level of the spell to learn or cast a spell. See Chapter Five for information on how to cast spells.

**Starting Domains:** All mediums start with minor access to the Divination domain. They must gain major access in that domain before studying other domains. See Chapter Five for information

on how mediums gain access to additional domains. The bonus domain spells are restricted to the Divination domain for the medium.

**Speak With Spirit (Su):** At 3rd level, mediums gain the ability to bring forth the spirit of a departed soul. The spirit can answer simple questions (generally requiring one word answers) through the use of a limited telekinesis ability. The ability is limited to moving small items (5 lb.) in order to produce a signal (such as a noise or movement of the object in a certain direction). The signal takes 1d2 rounds to manifest. The medium can attempt this a number of times per day equal to her level. The spirit is only present (able to answer questions) for 1 minute per three levels. The spirit does get a Will Save (DC 10 + the mediums class level) to resist the call to answer. Note that the spirit is not constrained to tell the truth. The medium may attempt to contact a specific spirit (DC is 10 + HD of target spirit + 1 per month since death and to a maximum range of 1 mile) or may attempt to contact the nearest spirit (DC is 10 + 1 per 100ft. range + 1 per year since death). The roll to attempt this is equal to d20 + Charisma bonus + level of the medium (+ Spell Focus: necromancy). If the character rolls a natural one then they contact a random evil spirit. On a natural 20, the spirit possesses the medium and may answer complex questions. Using the Speak with Spirit ability requires a powers check (DC 2% per hit dice of the spirit contacted).

Mediums do not gain bonus metamagic feats.

## Shaman

The shaman is a mystic who comes from a tribal society, referred to as "primitive" by the typical citizen of the 1890s. In so labeling the shaman, most people have no idea that the shaman's affinity for nature and the wild places of the world constitutes a far greater talent than the supposedly civilized people of Gothic Earth could ever guess. This affinity for wild things and the vibrant energies of life give the shaman his power to cast mystic spells.

Whether a Native American, an Australian aborigine, or an African tribesman or any other indigenous tribe member, the shaman represents a force that should not be underestimated. His outlook on life is not tainted by the creature comforts common to the inhabitants of Europe and the United States. Indeed, he looks at the people of the Western world with pity, for they have broken



Table 3-20: The Medium

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	—
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	—
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Speak with spirits
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	—
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	—
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	—
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	—
8th	+6/ +1	+6	+2	+6	—
9th	+6/ +1	+6	+3	+6	—
10th	+7/ +2	+7	+3	+7	—
11th	+8/ +3	+7	+3	+7	—
12th	+9/ +4	+8	+4	+8	—
13th	+9/ +4	+8	+4	+8	—
14th	+10/ +5 <sup>1</sup>	+9	+4	+9	—
15th	+11/ +6/ +1	+9	+5	+9	—
16th	+12/ +7/ +2	+10	+5	+10	—
17th	+12/ +7/ +2	+10	+5	+10	—
18th	+13/ +8/ +3	+11	+6	+11	—
19th	+14/ +9/ +4	+11	+6	+11	—
20th	+15/ +10/ +5	+12	+6	+12	—

Table 3-21: Medium Spells Per Day

Level	0	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
1st	3	1+1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	4	2+1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3rd	4	2+1	1+1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4th	5	3+1	2+1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5th	5	3+1	2+1	1+1	—	—	—	—	—	—
6th	5	3+1	3+1	2+1	—	—	—	—	—	—
7th	6	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1	—	—	—	—	—
8th	6	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1	—	—	—	—	—
9th	6	4+1	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1	—	—	—	—
10th	6	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1	—	—	—	—
11th	6	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1	—	—	—
12th	6	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1	—	—	—
13th	6	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1	—	—
14th	6	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1	—	—
15th	6	5+1	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1	—
16th	6	5+1	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1	—
17th	6	5+1	5+1	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1
18th	6	5+1	5+1	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1
19th	6	5+1	5+1	5+1	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1
20th	6	5+1	5+1	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	4+1	4+1	4+1



their ties with nature. To live like they do would certainly kill him, for theirs is a discordant culture.

### Game Rule Information

Shamans use Table 3–22 for base attack bonus (BAB) and saving throw and Table 3–23 for spells per day. They receive feats as detailed below. The shaman chooses which domain to use for her bonus domain spell according to the information listed below.

**Hit Die:** d8.

### Class Skills

In addition to the class skills for the mystic, the shaman class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Hypnosis (Int), Jump (Str), Knowledge (forbidden lore) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Psychometry (Wis), Prognostication (Int), Sixth Sense (Wis), Survival (Wis) and Swim (Str).

**Skill Points at 1st level:** (4 + Int modifier) x4

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 4 + Int modifier

### Class Features

All the following are class features of the shaman.

**Weapons:** All shamans are proficient in primitive weapons, simple weapons and longarms.

**Mystic Weave (Ex):** The shaman has the ability to infuse the energy of the spiritual world guided by the use of Forbidden Lore (mysticism). The character must have a Wisdom score equal to 10 + the level of the spell to learn or cast a spell. See Chapter Five for information on how to cast spells.

**Starting Domains:** All shamans start with minor access to either the Plant or Animal domain. See Chapter Five for information on how shamans gain access to additional domains. The bonus domain spells are restricted to either the Animal or Plant domain for the shaman.

**Bonus Abilities:** At 1st level, the shaman gains wild empathy. At 2nd level, the character acquires nature sense. At 5th level, the shaman gains woodland stride. At 7th level, the shaman acquires trackless step and at 10th level, the sha-

Table 3–22: The Shaman

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Wild empathy
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	Nature sense
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	—
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	—
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Woodland stride
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	—
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	Trackless step
8th	+6/ +1	+6	+2	+6	—
9th	+6/ +1	+6	+3	+6	—
10th	+7/ +2	+7	+3	+7	Venom immunity
11th	+8/ +3	+7	+3	+7	—
12th	+9/ +4	+8	+4	+8	—
13th	+9/ +4	+8	+4	+8	—
14th	+10/ +5	+9	+4	+9	—
15th	+11/ +6/ +1	+9	+5	+9	—
16th	+12/ +7/ +2	+10	+5	+10	—
17th	+12/ +7/ +2	+10	+5	+10	—
18th	+13/ +8/ +3	+11	+6	+11	—
19th	+14/ +9/ +4	+11	+6	+11	—
20th	+15/ +10/ +5	+12	+6	+12	—





Table 3-23: Shaman Spells Per Day

Level	0	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
1st	3	1+1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	4	2+1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3rd	4	2+1	1+1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4th	5	3+1	2+1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5th	5	3+1	2+1	1+1	—	—	—	—	—	—
6th	5	3+1	3+1	2+1	—	—	—	—	—	—
7th	6	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1	—	—	—	—	—
8th	6	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1	—	—	—	—	—
9th	6	4+1	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1	—	—	—	—
10th	6	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1	—	—	—	—
11th	6	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1	—	—	—
12th	6	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1	—	—	—
13th	6	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1	—	—
14th	6	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1	—	—
15th	6	5+1	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1	—
16th	6	5+1	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1	—
17th	6	5+1	5+1	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1
18th	6	5+1	5+1	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1
19th	6	5+1	5+1	5+1	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1
20th	6	5+1	5+1	5+1	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	4+1	4+1

man receives venom immunity. (See the section on the Druid in Chapter 3 of the *D&D Player's Handbook* for descriptions of these special abilities.) Shamans do not gain bonus metamagic feats.

**Turn or Rebuke Domain Spirits:** A shaman cannot turn or rebuke undead humans or humanoid creatures, but they can turn aside (though they cannot destroy) or rebuke spiritual manifestations of plants or animals, depending on their original domain choice. This power extends to undead version of plants or animals. See the *D&D Player's Handbook* for rules for turning/rebuking undead.

### Spiritualist

The spiritualist is a scientist devoted to the study of mystical powers. Like the metaphysician, he applies scientific method to every endeavor. To the spiritualist, magic is simply a field of science that has yet to be explored.

The spiritualist tends to be arrogant. His vision of the spirit world makes him feel superior to

what he considers the blindness of the common man. He considers those scientists who do not recognize the supernatural as a valid area for research to be ignorant fools.

### Game Rule Information

Spiritualists use Table 3-24 for base attack bonus (BAB) and saving throw and Table 3-25 for spells per day. The spiritualist receives bonus spells for the Knowledge domain only.

**Hit Die:** d6.

### Class Skills

In addition to the class skills for the mystic, the spiritualist's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Academician (Wis), Knowledge (science) (Int) and Knowledge (earth sciences).

**Skill Points at 1st level:** (6 + Int modifier) x4

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 6 + Int modifier



### *Class Features*

All the following are class features of the spiritualist.

**Weapons:** All spiritualists are proficient in both simple weapons and handguns.

**Mystic Weave (Ex):** The spiritualist has the ability to infuse the energy of the spiritual world guided by the use of Forbidden Lore (mysticism). The character must have a Wisdom score equal to 10 + the level of the spell to learn or cast a spell. See Chapter Five for information on how to cast spells.

**Starting Domains:** All spiritualists start with minor access to the Knowledge domain. See Chapter Five for information on how spiritualists gain access to additional domains. The bonus domain

spells are restricted to the Knowledge domain for the spiritualist.

**Perfectionist:** The spiritualist's methods make him a perfectionist. He takes his time when casting a spell and devotes every thought to making sure it is cast exactly right. The result of this dedication is that spells cast by a spiritualist take longer to cast than those employed by mystics. Therefore all casting time are doubled. (If a spell has a casting time of one action it then becomes a full-round spell.) However, because of the effort taken the Spiritualist also gains a +2 circumstance bonus on the spellcasting check.

**Bonus Feats:** Spiritualists do not gain bonus metamagic feats.

*Table 3-24: The Spiritualist*

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5
8th	+6/ +1	+6	+2	+6
9th	+6/ +1	+6	+3	+6
10th	+7/ +2	+7	+3	+7
11th	+8/ +3	+7	+3	+7
12th	+9/ +4	+8	+4	+8
13th	+9/ +4	+8	+4	+8
14th	+10/ +5	+9	+4	+9
15th	+11/ +6/ +1	+9	+5	+9
16th	+12/ +7/ +2	+10	+5	+10
17th	+12/ +7/ +2	+10	+5	+10
18th	+13/ +8/ +3	+11	+6	+11
19th	+14/ +9/ +4	+11	+6	+11
20th	+15/ +10/ +5	+12	+6	+12



Table 3–25: Spiritualist Spells Per Day

Level	0	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
1st	3	1+1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	4	2+1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3rd	4	2+1	1+1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4th	5	3+1	2+1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5th	5	3+1	2+1	1+1	—	—	—	—	—	—
6th	5	3+1	3+1	2+1	—	—	—	—	—	—
7th	6	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1	—	—	—	—	—
8th	6	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1	—	—	—	—	—
9th	6	4+1	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1	—	—	—	—
10th	6	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1	—	—	—	—
11th	6	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1	—	—	—
12th	6	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1	—	—	—
13th	6	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1	—	—
14th	6	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1	—	—
15th	6	5+1	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1	—
16th	6	5+1	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1	—
17th	6	5+1	5+1	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1
18th	6	5+1	5+1	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1
19th	6	5+1	5+1	5+1	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1
20th	6	5+1	5+1	5+1	5+1	4+1	4+1	4+1	4+1	4+1

## Sleuth

This class consists of all manner of characters, from the constable strolling the foggy banks of the Thames to the sheriff on the dusty streets of Dodge City, not to mention their unofficial counterparts, such as the much-renowned Sherlock Holmes.

Many sleuths are actual detectives working in a police department or for private organizations such as the Pinkerton detective agency. The actions of a detective are dictated by the desire to end the careers of criminals and lawbreakers. Some detectives are intense and dedicated, perhaps seeking vengeance for a personal wrong committed in the past. Others pursue criminals as an intellectual matter, matching their wits against those of their enemies. Still others maintain a vigilante approach, believing that they must take the law into their own hands when necessary.

### Game Rule Information

Sleuths use Table 3–26 for base attack bonus (BAB), saving throw and bonus feats.

**Hit Die:** d6.

### Class Skills

The sleuth's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Craft (gunsmith) (Int), Disable Device (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (criminology) (Int), Knowledge (cryptology) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (government) (Int), Listen (Wis), Open Lock (Dex), Profession (Detective) (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis) and Use Rope (Dex).

**Skill Points at 1st level:** (8 + Int modifier) x4



**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 8 + Int modifier

*Class Features*

All the following are class features of the sleuth.

**Weapons:** All sleuths are proficient in simple weapons and all firearms.

**Concealed weapons:** The sleuth class gains a +2 circumstance bonus on Spot checks when searching for or being searched for concealed or hidden weapons.

**Influence:** Characters with this class are assumed to have close ties to local law enforcement agencies. As such, they have some level of access to police files and similar sources of information. They gain a +5 circumstance bonus on Gather Information checks when dealing with law enforcement agencies in their hometown. When dealing with law enforcement agencies in areas outside their hometown, this bonus is reduced to +2.

**Bonus Feat:** At 3rd level the sleuth gains a bonus Skill Focus feat for one class skill. At 5th



*The general sleuth, the criminal, the journalist and the dandy.*



Table 3–26: The Sleuth

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	—
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	—
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+1	Bonus Skill Focus feat
4th	+3	+1	+4	+1	—
5th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Investigator/negotiator
6th	+4	+2	+5	+2	—
7th	+5	+2	+5	+2	Evasion
8th	+6/ +1	+2	+6	+2	—
9th	+6/ +1	+3	+6	+3	—
10th	+7/ +2	+3	+7	+3	—
11th	+8/ +3	+3	+7	+3	—
12th	+9/ +4	+4	+8	+4	Trap sense
13th	+9/ +4	+4	+8	+4	—
14th	+10/ +5	+4	+9	+4	—
15th	+11/ +6/ +1	+5	+9	+5	—
16th	+12/ +7/ +2	+5	+10	+5	—
17th	+12/ +7/ +2	+5	+10	+5	—
18th	+13/ +8/ +3	+6	+11	+6	—
19th	+14/ +9/ +4	+6	+11	+6	—
20th	+15/ +10/ +5	+6	+12	+6	—

level the Sleuth gains either the Investigator or the Negotiator feat as a bonus feat.

**Evasion (Ex):** At 7th level the sleuth gains evasion. See the section on the “Rogue” in Chapter 3 of the *D&D Player’s Handbook* for a description of this special ability.

**Trap Sense (Ex):** At 12th level the sleuth gains trap sense. See the section on the “Rogue” in Chapter 3 of the *D&D Player’s Handbook* for a description of this ability.

### Criminal

The hunted and the hunter share many of the same characteristics. Some criminals are driven to crime by the desire for wealth; others commit crimes just for the thrill of breaking the law. Others feel that they have no choice but to turn to a life of crime because their background and upbringing did not give them the chance for success that others in society may have had. All criminals feel

that members of the law enforcement community are the “enemy.”

The criminal class includes all manner of people who make their living through illegal activities, from the low-life mugger skulking in the dark alleys of New York City, to the high-society professional jewel thief living in comfort in Paris. This variant can serve for any player character who lives outside the law, making his living by using his skills to profit at the expense of others. Criminals, too, come into contact with the evil forces that taint the world and sometimes find themselves lending their expertise to a group of adventurers or heroes in order to combat an even greater threat than the law.

### Game Rule Information

Criminals use Table 3–27 for base attack bonus (BAB), saving throw and bonus abilities. Criminals do not gain the bonus feats or special abilities of the sleuth.

**Hit Die:** d6.



### Class Skills

In addition to the class skills for the sleuth, the criminal's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Disguise (Cha), Forgery (Int), Hide (Dex), Move Silently (Dex), Sleight of Hand (Dex) and Tumble (Dex). They do not have Criminology or Profession (detective) as a class skill.

**Skill Points at 1st level:** (8 + Int modifier) x4

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 8 + Int modifier

### Class Features

All the following are class features of the criminal.

**Trapfinding:** Beginning at 1st level, criminals may use Search to find traps. It does not allow them to find magic traps. See the section on the "Rogue" in Chapter 3 of the *D&D Player's Handbook* for a description of this ability

**Sneak Attack:** At 2nd level and every 4 levels thereafter, the criminal gains the sneak attack

ability. See the section on the "Rogue" in Chapter 3 of the *D&D Player's Handbook* for a description of this ability.

**Evasion:** At 4th level, the criminal gains evasion. See the section on the "Rogue" in Chapter 3 of the *D&D Player's Handbook* for a description of this ability.

**Trap Sense (Ex):** At 8th level and every 4 levels thereafter, the criminal gains trap sense. See the section on the "Rogue" in Chapter 3 of the *D&D Player's Handbook* for a description of this ability.

**Powers checks:** Illegal activity does result in a powers check. (See Chapter Seven: Checks and Balances for more information.) Because of the criminal's habituation to illegal activity, they make powers checks at double the normal percentage chance for that act.

**Influence:** Criminal characters do not have any special influence with law enforcement agencies. They gain a +3 circumstance bonus, however, to Gather Information when dealing with the criminal element in their hometown.

Table 3-27: The Criminal

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	Trapfinding
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	Sneak attack +1d6
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+1	—
4th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Evasion
5th	+3	+1	+4	+1	—
6th	+4	+2	+5	+2	Sneak attack +2d6
7th	+5	+2	+5	+2	—
8th	+6/ +1	+2	+6	+2	Trap sense +1
9th	+6/ +1	+3	+6	+3	—
10th	+7/ +2	+3	+7	+3	Sneak attack +3d6
11th	+8/ +3	+3	+7	+3	—
12th	+9/ +4	+4	+8	+4	Trap sense +2
13th	+9/ +4	+4	+8	+4	—
14th	+10/ +5	+4	+9	+4	Sneak attack +4d6
15th	+11/ +6/ +1	+5	+9	+5	—
16th	+12/ +7/ +2	+5	+10	+5	Trap sense +3
17th	+12/ +7/ +2	+5	+10	+5	—
18th	+13/ +8/ +3	+6	+11	+6	Sneak attack +5d6
19th	+14/ +9/ +4	+6	+11	+6	—
20th	+15/ +10/ +5	+6	+12	+6	Trap sense +4



## Dandy

The upper crust of society has more than its share of people with boundless curiosity and plenty of time in which to indulge their inquisitiveness. Generally they use charm to get their way, but if that does not work they have no compunction about using money and status to intimidate others to do what they want or tell them what they need to know. Their curiosity is their weakness, often leading them to poke their elegant noses into the world of crime.

### Game Rule Information

Dandies use Table 3–28 for base attack bonus (BAB), saving throw and bonus abilities.

**Hit Die:** d4.

### Class Skills

In addition to the class skills for the sleuth, the dandy's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Equestrian (Dex), Forgery (Int), Hide (Dex), Knowledge (etiquette) (Int), Move Silently (Dex),

Sleight of Hand (Dex), Perform (Cha) and Tumble (Dex). They do not have Knowledge (criminology) or Profession (detective) as class skills.

**Skill Points at 1st level:** (10 + Int modifier) x4

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 10 + Int modifier

### Class Features

All the following are class features of the dandy.

**Weapons:** All dandies are proficient in simple weapons, sword cane and firearms.

**Influence:** The dandy's family is almost certainly well-connected and highly respected. Once per month, the dandy can use this influence to acquire some favor or exert some influence in official matters. This influence translates as a +10 circumstance bonus on one Diplomacy check.

**Intimidation bonus:** Because of their wealth and position in society, when the dandy succeeds in using Intimidate, the target remains under his influence longer. See Chapter 4 of the *D&D Player's Handbook* for more information and substitute hours for minutes to calculate how long the target remains friendly to the dandy.

Table 3–28: The Dandy

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	—
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	—
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+1	—
4th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Appraise +1
5th	+3	+1	+4	+1	—
6th	+4	+2	+5	+2	—
7th	+5	+2	+5	+2	—
8th	+6/ +1	+2	+6	+2	Appraise +2
9th	+6/ +1	+3	+6	+3	—
10th	+7/ +2	+3	+7	+3	—
11th	+8/ +3	+3	+7	+3	—
12th	+9/ +4	+4	+8	+4	Appraise +3
13th	+9/ +4	+4	+8	+4	—
14th	+10/ +5	+4	+9	+4	—
15th	+11/ +6/ +1	+5	+9	+5	—
16th	+12/ +7/ +2	+5	+10	+5	Appraise +4
17th	+12/ +7/ +2	+5	+10	+5	—
18th	+13/ +8/ +3	+6	+11	+6	—
19th	+14/ +9/ +4	+6	+11	+6	—
20th	+15/ +10/ +5	+6	+12	+6	Appraise +5



**Appraise Bonus:** At 4th level a dandy with 5 ranks in Appraise gains a competence bonus of +1 for every four levels of dandy.

## Journalist

The popular press is a booming industry in the 1890s. Every major city has at least one newspaper; monthly magazines bring stories of global events to an eager public; and the works of popular novelists are purchased as quickly as they can be printed. Journalist characters are constantly on the watch for events that can be documented and reported. A good journalist is dogged and relentless in the quest for a story. A journalist might be motivated by a desire for personal fame, the noble belief that he is serving his fellow man, or the simple joy of revealing that which others would prefer to keep secret.

### Game Rule Information

Journalists use Table 3–29 for base attack bonus (BAB), saving throw and bonus abilities.

**Hit Die:** d6.

### Class Skills

In addition to the class skills for the sleuth, the journalist's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Academician (Wis), Craft (photography) (Int), Disguise (Cha), Forgery (Int), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (literature) (Int), Profession (journalist) (Wis) and Profession (photographer) (Wis). They do not have Knowledge (criminology) or Profession (detective) as class skills.

**Skill Points at 1st level:** (8 + Int modifier) x4

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 8 + Int modifier

### Class Features

All the following are class features of the journalist.

**Weapons:** All journalists are proficient in simple weapons and handguns.

**Connections:** As a journalist advances her career, she establishes an information network. At 3rd level the journalist character gains a circumstance bonus of +1 per every 3 levels to Gather Information checks. This bonus is doubled if the character is in her hometown.

Table 3–29: The Journalist

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	—
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	—
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+1	Connections
4th	+3	+1	+4	+1	—
5th	+3	+1	+4	+1	—
6th	+4	+2	+5	+2	—
7th	+5	+2	+5	+2	Skill Focus feat
8th	+6/ +1	+2	+6	+2	—
9th	+6/ +1	+3	+6	+3	—
10th	+7/ +2	+3	+7	+3	—
11th	+8/ +3	+3	+7	+3	—
12th	+9/ +4	+4	+8	+4	Skill Focus feat
13th	+9/ +4	+4	+8	+4	—
14th	+10/ +5	+4	+9	+4	—
15th	+11/ +6/ +1	+5	+9	+5	—
16th	+12/ +7/ +2	+5	+10	+5	—
17th	+12/ +7/ +2	+5	+10	+5	Skill Focus feat
18th	+13/ +8/ +3	+6	+11	+6	—
19th	+14/ +9/ +4	+6	+11	+6	—
20th	+15/ +10/ +5	+6	+12	+6	—





**Skill Focus:** at 7th, 12th and 17th level the journalist gains a Skill Focus feat in any class skill.

## Tradesman

Tradesmen make up the majority of the population in Gothic Earth. Tradesmen are the artisans, the corner grocer, housekeepers, the tailor or the policeman on his beat, to name but a few of the possibilities. Tradesmen often learn their profession or craft by serving an apprenticeship. The backbone of society they are the only class to have Craft, Perform and Profession all as class skills.

### Game Rule Information

Tradesmen use Table 3–30 for base attack bonus (BAB), saving throw and bonus abilities.

**Hit Die:** d6.

### Class Skills

The tradesman's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Craft (any) (Int), Equestrian (Dex), First Aid (Wis), Handle Animal (Cha), Knowledge (etiquette) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Perform (Cha), Profession (any) (Wis) and Use Rope (Dex).

**Skill Points at 1st level:**  
(10 + Int modifier) x4

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 10 + Int modifier

### Class Features

All the following are class features of the tradesman.

**Weapons:** All tradesmen are proficient in simple weapons and handguns.

**Related Profession or Craft:** At 3rd, 9th and 15th level, a tradesman gains an additional related profession or craft as a bonus skill (i.e., no experience point cost to start). For example, when a tradesman with Profession (silversmith) reaches 3rd level, she may gain Craft (beadwork) 1 or Profession (jeweler) 1 or some other similar craft or profession. She must pay normal experience point costs to improve any bonus crafts or professions.

**Skill Focus: Profession or Craft:** At 6th, 12th and 20th level, tradesmen gain the Skill Focus feat for a chosen profession or craft. Each time they receive this feat, it must apply to a different profession or craft.



*The general tradesman, the performer and the mechanic.*



Table 3–30: The Tradesman

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+0	+2	+2	+0	—
2nd	+1	+3	+3	+0	—
3rd	+2	+3	+3	+1	Bonus Profession or Craft
4th	+3	+4	+4	+1	—
5th	+3	+4	+4	+1	—
6th	+4	+5	+5	+2	Skill Focus: Profession or Craft
7th	+5	+5	+5	+2	—
8th	+6/ +1	+6	+6	+2	—
9th	+6/ +1	+6	+6	+3	Bonus Profession or Craft
10th	+7/ +2	+7	+7	+3	—
11th	+8/ +3	+7	+7	+3	—
12th	+9/ +4	+8	+8	+4	Skill Focus: Profession or Craft
13th	+9/ +4	+8	+8	+4	—
14th	+10/ +5	+9	+9	+4	—
15th	+11/ +6/ +1	+9	+9	+5	Bonus Profession or Craft
16th	+12/ +7/ +2	+10	+10	+5	—
17th	+12/ +7/ +2	+10	+10	+5	—
18th	+13/ +8/ +3	+11	+11	+6	—
19th	+14/ +9/ +4	+11	+11	+6	—
20th	+15/ +10/ +5	+12	+12	+6	Skill Focus: Profession or Craft

### Mechanic

The workers tending trains, steamships or those new-fangled automobiles are specialist tradesmen who frequently with a more extensive and technical education. Also among their number are electricians dealing with ever more complicated electrical devices. Some of these individuals spend their spare time trying to invent new ways of doing things. A few get to work with master inventors such as Edison, Kettering and Greener. Mechanics occasionally become part of a group of heroes, contributing their expertise and mechanical skill in the fight against the darkness.

### Game Rule Information

Mechanics use Table 3–31 for base attack bonus (BAB), saving throw and bonus abilities.

**Hit Die:** d8.

### Class Skills

In addition to the class skills for the tradesman, the mechanic's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Knowledge (science) (Int) and Spot (Wis).

**Skill Points at 1st level:** (7 + Int modifier) x4

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 7 + Int modifier

### Class Features

All the following are class features of the mechanic.

**Weapons:** All mechanics are proficient in simple weapons and all firearms.

**Bonus Skill Focus:** At 1st, 3rd, 5th and 10th level the mechanic gains one bonus Skill Focus Feat for any Craft skill.



Table 3–31: The Mechanic

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+0	+2	+2	+0	Bonus Skill Focus feat (Craft)
2nd	+1	+3	+3	+0	—
3rd	+2	+3	+3	+1	Bonus Skill Focus feat (Craft)
4th	+3	+4	+4	+1	—
5th	+3	+4	+4	+1	Bonus Skill Focus feat (Craft)
6th	+4	+5	+5	+2	—
7th	+5	+5	+5	+2	—
8th	+6/ +1	+6	+6	+2	—
9th	+6/ +1	+6	+6	+3	—
10th	+7/ +2	+7	+7	+3	Bonus Skill Focus feat (Craft)
11th	+8/ +3	+7	+7	+3	—
12th	+9/ +4	+8	+8	+4	—
13th	+9/ +4	+8	+8	+4	—
14th	+10/ +5	+9	+9	+4	—
15th	+11/ +6/ +1	+9	+9	+5	—
16th	+12/ +7/ +2	+10	+10	+5	—
17th	+12/ +7/ +2	+10	+10	+5	—
18th	+13/ +8/ +3	+11	+11	+6	—
19th	+14/ +9/ +4	+11	+11	+6	—
20th	+15/ +10/ +5	+12	+12	+6	—

### Performer

This variant of the tradesman class includes stage actors, opera singers and even circus acrobats. Performers live and die by their reviews and popularity. Those who are well known get top billing, higher pay, better roles and better accommodations. Because of this, less well-known performers tend to be flamboyant people in order to draw attention to themselves. They often dress conspicuously and act in a pompous or otherwise eccentric fashion. Despite their peculiarities, performers can often serve a vital function as members of a group engaged in the hidden war against the Red Death.

### Game Rule Information

Performers use Table 3–32 for base attack bonus (BAB), saving throw and bonus abilities.

**Hit Die:** d6.

### Class Skills

In addition to the class skills for the tradesman, the performer's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Move Silently (Dex) and Tumble (Dex).

**Skill Points at 1st level:** (7 + Int modifier) x4

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 7 + Int modifier

### Class Features

All the following are class features of the performer.

**Weapons:** All performers are proficient in simple weapons and handguns.

**Bonus Skill Focus:** At 1st, 3rd, 7th and 10th level the performer gains one bonus Skill Focus Feat for any Perform skill.

**Music and Oratory Inspiration Option:** Performers who specialize in music or oratory can at



Table 3–32: The Performer

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+0	+2	+2	+0	Bonus Skill Focus feat (Perform)
2nd	+1	+3	+3	+0	—
3rd	+2	+3	+3	+1	Bonus Skill Focus feat (Perform)*
4th	+3	+4	+4	+1	—
5th	+3	+4	+4	+1	—
6th	+4	+5	+5	+2	—
7th	+5	+5	+5	+2	Bonus Skill Focus feat (Perform)*
8th	+6/ +1	+6	+6	+2	—
9th	+6/ +1	+6	+6	+3	—
10th	+7/ +2	+7	+7	+3	Bonus Skill Focus feat (Perform)*
11th	+8/ +3	+7	+7	+3	—
12th	+9/ +4	+8	+8	+4	—
13th	+9/ +4	+8	+8	+4	—
14th	+10/ +5	+9	+9	+4	—
15th	+11/ +6/ +1	+9	+9	+5	—
16th	+12/ +7/ +2	+10	+10	+5	—
17th	+12/ +7/ +2	+10	+10	+5	—
18th	+13/ +8/ +3	+11	+11	+6	—
19th	+14/ +9/ +4	+11	+11	+6	—
20th	+15/ +10/ +5	+12	+12	+6	—

\* May substitute Inspiration option for one (and only one) of these feats

chose at 3rd, 7th or 10th level to gain one of the following special abilities: countersong, fascinate, inspire courage or inspire competence. If this option is chosen the character does not gain a Bonus Skill Focus feat at that level. (See the section on the “Bard” in Chapter 3 of the *D&D Player’s Handbook* for a description of these abilities.)

### Starting Money

Characters in *Masque of the Red Death* begin play with some money at hand. This money is used to buy starting equipment and to finance their beginning adventures. DMs and players should work together to determine appropriate salaries or income for characters with a livelihood. In addition, characters who battle the Red Death may receive stipends, rewards or expense money for their efforts from leaders in the fight against darkness.

### Optional Rule: The Upper Crust

The society of the 1890s revolved around class and wealth. Players might wish their characters to come from a wealthy background, a factor that could be extremely helpful in conducting investigations. Wealth can also be a drawback for clandestine operations. The shaman, charlatan and medium classes seldom have characters from the upper crust of society or who have a wealthy background. The dandy already has a wealthy background and needs no adjustment. To reflect a wealthy background, multiply the initial starting money (from the Starting Money Table) by fifty dollars.



Table 3-33: Starting Money

Character Class	Starting Money
Adept	2d6 x \$10.00
Athlete	3d6 x \$10.00
Charlatan	2d6 x \$10.00
Criminal	3d6 x \$10.00
Dandy	4d6 x \$10.00
Explorer/scout	3d6 x \$10.00
Intellectual	3d6 x \$10.00
Journalist	3d6 x \$10.00
Mechanic	4d6 x \$10.00
Medium	2d6 x \$10.00
Metaphysician	2d6 x \$10.00
Mystic	2d6 x \$10.00
Occultist	2d6 x \$10.00
Parson	2d6 x \$10.00
Performer	4d6 x \$10.00
Physician	4d6 x \$10.00
Scholar/scientist	3d6 x \$10.00
Shaman	2d6 x \$10.00
Shootist	3d6 x \$10.00
Sleuth	3d6 x \$10.00
Soldier	3d6 x \$10.00
Spiritualist	2d6 x \$10.00
Tradesman	4d6 x \$10.00

dedicated souls known as antiquarians. These experts in antiquities, rare books and forgotten languages are sometime hard to find but extremely valuable resources.

Members of the adept class, with the exception of the charlatan, mystics and intellectuals find the antiquarian a logical progression for their interests and skills. Some explorer/scouts or journalists may also pursue this prestige class.

**Hit Dice:** d4.

*Requirements*

To qualify to become an antiquarian, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Skills:** Academician 8 ranks, Knowledge (any two ancient history) 5 ranks in each, Knowledge (any two ancient languages) 5 ranks in each.

**Feats:** Skill Focus (Academician), Ancient Knowledge Expert.

*Class Skills*

The antiquarian's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Academician (Wis), Appraise (Int), Connoisseur (Wis), Knowledge (ancient languages) (Int), Knowledge (cryptology) (Int), Knowledge (forbidden lore) (Int), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int) and Search (Int).

**Skill points at each level:** 4 + Int modifier.

*Class Features*

All the following are class features of the antiquarian prestige class.

**Mythic Lore (Ex):** At 1st level and at 9th level, the antiquarian's intense research into the facts behind the myths of a specific culture gives her a +5 Bonus on Knowledge (forbidden lore) checks associated with a cultural myth. The culture must be designated each time the character gains this benefit (and it must be taken for a different culture each time).

**Instant Mastery (Connoisseur Books) (Ex):** At 2nd level, the character gains 4 ranks in Connoisseur (old and rare books). See the "Loremaster" prestige class in Chapter 6 of the *D&D Dungeon Master's Guide*.

**Instant Mastery (Ancient Language) (Ex):** At 3rd and 7th levels, the character gains 4 ranks in one Knowledge: (ancient language) skill heretofore unknown to her. Each time the antiquarian

*Prestige Classes*

After characters have acquired some experience in their ongoing battle against the supernatural horrors that beset the world of Gothic Earth, they may wish to specialize further through choosing a prestige class. The following classes are particularly appropriate for the 1890s, though they may be customized for many time periods or for other campaign worlds.

*Antiquarian*

A librarian jealously clutches an old tome; a fanatic searches the kasbahs of Cairo for genuine papyrus; a scholar complains about faulty translations of a rare manuscript — these are the



Table 3-34: The Antiquarian

Level	BAB	Fort	Reflex	Will	Special
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Mythic lore
2nd	+0	+0	+0	+3	Instant mastery (connoisseur books)
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Instant mastery (ancient language)
4th	+1	+1	+1	+4	Skill focus
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Decipher script
6th	+2	+2	+2	+5	Instant mastery (connoisseur artifact)
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Instant mastery (ancient language)
8th	+3	+2	+2	+6	Skill focus feat
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	Mythic lore
10th	+4	+3	+3	+7	Instant mastery (connoisseur artifact)

receives Instant Mastery, she must designate a different language. See the “Loremaster” prestige class in Chapter 6 of the *D&D Dungeon Master’s Guide*.

**Skill Focus (Ex):** At 4th and 8th levels, the character gains a bonus Skill Focus feat for any antiquarian class skill.

**Decipher Script (Ex):** At 5th level, the character receives the ability to puzzle out or translate arcane runes, complex symbols or other obscure messages. See Chapter 4: Skills in the *D&D Player’s Handbook* for a description of this skill.

**Instant Mastery (Connoisseur Artifact) (Ex):** At 6th and 10th levels, the antiquarian gains 4 ranks in Connoisseur Artifact. See the “Loremaster” prestige class in Chapter 6 of the *D&D Dungeon Master’s Guide*.

### Artifact Hunter

Though he might call himself an archaeologist or an acquirer of rare antiquities, others would label him a grave robber, tomb raider or ghoul with some degree of accuracy. The artifact hunter may have a formal or military education, but it is just as likely that his classroom was a ruined temple or an ancient tomb. He is an adventurer devoted to the search for antiquities and mysteries of the past. Whether he is motivated by excitement, the quest for knowledge, material gain or a combination of

the three, he is constantly seeking to uncover treasures from the ancient past.

This prestige class attracts members of the explorer/scout class, soldiers, sleuths or criminals. Although some intellectuals and mystics might desire to gain some field experience by becoming artifact hunters, these individuals are not as numerous as the more physically oriented classes.

**Hit Dice:** d8.

### Requirements

To qualify to become an artifact hunter, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Skills:** Archeology 8 ranks, Disable Device 5 ranks, Knowledge (any one ancient language) 5 ranks, Knowledge (any one ancient history) 5 ranks, Survival 5 ranks.

**Feats:** Skill Focus (archaeology).

### Class Skills

The artifact hunter’s class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Connoisseur (Wis), Disable Device (Int), Escape Artist (Dex), Knowledge (ancient languages) (Int), Knowledge (cryptology) (Int), Knowledge (forbidden lore) (Int), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Open Lock (Dex) and Search (Int).

**Skill points at each level:** 4 + Int modifier.



### *Class Features*

All the following are class features of the artifact hunter prestige class.

**Find Hidden Entrance (Ex):** At 1st level, the character gains a +3 competence bonus when attempting to find hidden entrances of tombs, ancient cities and temples.

**Trapfinding (Ex):** At 1st level, the character gains the ability to use Search for finding nonmagic traps. See the “Rogue” in Chapter 3: Classes of the *D&D Player’s Handbook* for a description of this special ability.

**Instant Mastery (Connoisseur Ancient Architecture):** At 2nd and 6th levels, the artifact hunter gains 4 ranks in Connoisseur (ancient architecture). Each time the character receives this Instant Mastery, he must designate a different ancient culture. See the “Loremaster” prestige class in Chapter 6 of the *D&D Dungeon Master’s Guide*.

**Canny Defense (Ex):** At 3rd level, the artifact hunter gains the ability to augment his Dexterity bonus with his Intelligence bonus to assist in defending himself. See the “Duelist” prestige class in Chapter 6 of the *D&D Dungeon Master’s Guide*.

**Trap Sense (Ex):** At 4th level, the artifact hunter gains a +1 to his Reflex save to avoid traps and a +1 to his AC to dodge attacks from traps. At 7th level, this bonus increases to +2 and at 10th level, the bonus increases to +3. See the “Rogue” in Chapter 3: Classes of the *D&D Player’s Handbook* for a description of this special ability.

**Detect Secret Doors:** At 7th level, the character gains a +3 competence bonus when using Search to find a secret door.

**Evasion (Ex):** At 9th level, the artifact hunter learns to avoid most attacks through his agility. See the “Rogue” in Chapter 3: Classes of the *D&D Player’s Handbook* for a description of this special ability.

**Skill Mastery (Ex):** At 8th level, the artifact hunter gains the ability to use a particular skill under adverse circumstances. Even in conditions that might preclude doing so, the artifact hunter can take 10 when using the chosen skill. See the “Rogue” in Chapter 3: Classes of the *D&D Player’s Handbook* for a description of this special ability.

**Improved Reaction (Ex):** At 10th level, the artifact hunter gains a +2 bonus on initiative checks. See the “Duelist” prestige class in Chapter 6 of the *D&D Dungeon Master’s Guide* for a more complete explanation of this special ability.



Table 3–35: The Artifact Hunter

Level	BAB	Fortitude	Reflex	Will	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Find hidden entrance, trapfinding
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Instant mastery: connoisseur ancient architecture
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Canny defense
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Trap sense +1
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Decipher script
6th	+6	+5	+2	+2	Instant mastery: connoisseur ancient architecture
7th	+7	+5	+2	+2	Detect secret doors, trap sense +2
8th	+8	+6	+2	+2	Skill mastery
9th	+9	+6	+3	+3	Evasion
10th	+10	+7	+3	+3	Improved reaction, Trap sense +3

## Exorcist

Exorcists are religious specialists who are trained and empowered to banish evil spirits. Unlike most religious figures on Gothic Earth, exorcists do have spiritual powers (mystic spells) to help them in their spiritual warfare against evil. Through elaborate rites, the exorcist hopes to drive away the spiritual forces of the Red Death, preventing them from causing harm to the bodies and souls of humanity. Specific creatures that exorcists are particularly effective in combating include ghosts, haunts, odems, carrionettes, ghostlights and even fiends, as well as other monsters capable of dominating or possessing their victims. They also have heightened powers against all forms of undead.

Exorcists are serious about their work and very devoted to their religion. Not all of them are dour and grim, but most are. Generally, exorcists have completed many years of training to learn their skills and perfect their devotion. Most exorcists should be at least middle-aged. The ranks of exorcists consist almost exclusively of members of the mystic class and its subclasses.

**Hit Dice:** d8.

### Requirements

To qualify to become an exorcist, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Alignment:** lawful good.

**Skills:** Knowledge (modern religion) 5 ranks, Knowledge (forbidden lore) 5 ranks.

**Spells:** Able to cast 3rd level mystic spells.

**Domains:** Minor access to Protection domain, major access to All domain.

### Class Skills

The exorcist's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Knowledge (ancient languages) (Int), Knowledge (forbidden lore) (Int), Knowledge (history) (Int), and Sixth Sense (Wis).

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 3 + Int modifier.

### Class Features

All the following are class features for the exorcist prestige class.

**Spells and Turning:** As the exorcist continues training in some areas of Spiritcraft, she adds her prestige class level to her mystic level when determining both spells per day and her ability to turn undead. If the previous mystic class could not turn undead, the exorcist may only count her prestige class levels when attempting to turn undead. (Exorcists do not gain access to new domains as they gain levels in this prestige class.)

**Extra Turning (Su):** See *D&D Player's Handbook* Chapter Five: Feats for a description of this feat.





**Resist Possession (Su):** Because of the nature of her studies, an exorcist gains a +4 bonus on her Will save whenever a creature or person attempts to take over her mind either by spells such as *magic jar* or through a natural ability.

**Extend Spell:** See *D&D Player's Handbook* Chapter Five: Feats for a description of this feat.

**Protective Ward (Sp):** The exorcist can perform a protective ritual that uses some of her physical energy as well as the energies of the spirit world. This ritual grants someone the exorcist touches a resistance bonus on her next save equal to the exorcist's level in her prestige class. This protection lasts for one hour. This ritual takes 2 rounds to prepare and has a DC 14 to complete. A 4th level exorcist can do this once per day. An 8th level exorcist can do this twice a day.

**Dismissal (Sp):** At 5th level, an exorcist can cast *dismissal* (as the spell) once per day due to her study of the rituals involved in exorcising spirits. This does not take up a spell slot. At 10th level, the frequency increases to twice a day. A Spiritcraft check is still required when using this ability.

**Maximize Spell:** See *D&D Player's Handbook* Chapter Five: Feats for a description of this feat.

**Dispel Evil (Sp):** At 7th level, an exorcist can cast *dispel evil* once per day even if she does not have access to that spell due to her study of rituals and the casting out of evil spirits. This does not take up a spell slot nor does it allow the exorcist to take this

as one of her normal spells. A casting check is still required when using this ability

### *Forbidden Loremaster*

Some people believe that knowledge is power, especially knowledge of the past and of magic. Forbidden loremasters believe that they must find out what secrets groups such as The Defiance (see Chapter One) knew. Their focus is on learning which paths of research the ancients followed. They assume that since the "Great Enemy" feared the Defiance so much that the secret organization had discovered important information now lost to those who would fight the same enemy in the 1890s. Forbidden loremasters spend their much of their time looking for journals and diaries from times long past, seeking clues as well as searching for ancient texts and rituals. In their studies, they also search for ways to cast more spells or knowledge about how to cast spells more effectively.

While forbidden loremasters can come from any class, all of them must have some levels in one of the adept or mystic classes in order to qualify for this prestige class. Most forbidden loremasters are either adepts or mystics.

**Hit Dice:** d6.

### *Requirements*

To qualify to become a forbidden loremaster, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

*Table 3-36: The Exorcist*

Level	BAB	Fortitude	Reflex	Will	Special	Spells
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Extra turning	+1 level of existing mystic class
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Resist possession	+1 level of existing mystic class
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Extend spell	+1 level of existing mystic class
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Protective ward 1/day	+1 level of existing mystic class
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Dismissal 1/day	+1 level of existing mystic class
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Maximize spell	+1 level of existing mystic class
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Dispel evil	+1 level of existing mystic class
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	Extra turning	+1 level of existing mystic class
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	Protective ward 2/day	+1 level of existing mystic class
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Dismissal 2/day	+1 level of existing mystic class



**Skills:** Academician 8 ranks, Ancient Language (any two) 5 ranks in each, Ancient Religion (any) 5 ranks.

**Feats:** Skill Focus: Academician, Skill Focus: Knowledge (forbidden lore).

**Spells:** Able to cast 1st level arcane or 1st level mystic spells.

### Class Skills

The forbidden loremaster's class skills (and the key abilities for each skill) are Academician (Wis), Concentration (Con), Knowledge (ancient language) (Int), Knowledge (archaeology) (Int), Knowledge (cryptology) (Int), Knowledge (forbidden lore) (Int) and Knowledge (history) (Int)

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 6 + Int modifier.

### Class Features

All the following are class features of the forbidden loremaster prestige class.

**Spells per Day/Spells Known:** A forbidden loremaster continues training in magic as well as her field of research. Thus when a new forbidden loremaster level is gained, the character gains new spells per level (or spells known, if applicable) as if she had gained a level in her former spellcasting class. Those who were arcane spellcasters and who

continue to study the spirit world do not improve their ability to turn or rebuke undead unless they advance in the mystic class that gives them the ability to do so.

**Instant Mastery: Knowledge (Ancient Language):** At 1st level and at 6th level, a forbidden loremaster gains 4 ranks in one heretofore unknown Knowledge: (ancient language). Each time the character receives this ability, she must designate a different language. See the "Loremaster" prestige class in Chapter 6 of the *D&D Dungeon Master's Guide*.

**Mythic Lore (Ex):** At 2nd level and at 9th level, the forbidden loremaster gains a +5 bonus on Knowledge (forbidden lore) checks associated with a cultural myth due to the character's intense research into the facts behind the myths of that culture. The character must designate a different culture each time she gains this benefit.

**Instant Mastery: Knowledge (Ancient History):** At 3rd level, the forbidden loremaster gains 4 ranks in one heretofore unknown Knowledge (ancient history) of a specific country or people.

**Rediscovered Ritual I:** At 4th level, the forbidden loremaster has discovered and can utilize a mental exercise that allows the memorization of an additional 1st level spell per day.

Table 3-37: The Forbidden Loremaster

Level	BAB	Fortitude	Reflex	Will	Special	Spells
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Instant mastery: Knowledge (ancient language)	+1 level of existing class
2nd	+0	+0	+0	+3	Mythic lore	+1 level of existing class
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Instant mastery: Knowledge (ancient history)	+1 level of existing class
4th	+1	+1	+1	+4	Rediscovered ritual I	+1 level of existing class
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Metamagic feat	+1 level of existing class
6th	+2	+2	+2	+5	Instant mastery: Knowledge (ancient language)	+1 level of existing class
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Rediscovered ritual II	+1 level of existing class
8th	+3	+2	+2	+6	Quicken spell	+1 level of existing class
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	Mythic lore	+1 level of existing class
10th	+4	+3	+3	+7	Maximize spell	+1 level of existing class



**Metamagic Feat:** At 5th level, the forbidden loremaster gains one bonus metamagic feat chosen from among the following: Extend Spell, Heighten Spell or Widen Spell.

**Rediscovered Ritual II:** At 7th level, the forbidden loremaster has discovered and can utilize a mental exercise that allows the memorization of an additional 2nd level spell per day.

**Quicken Spell:** At 8th level, the forbidden loremaster gains the Quicken Spell feat. Powers check for spells cast with this feat are at the level the spell is cast plus +2. Because of the casting times, this feat can only be used with 0 and 1st level spells.

**Maximize Spell:** At 10th level the Forbidden Lore Master gains the bonus Metamagic Feat: Maximize Spell. Dark Power checks for spells cast with this feat are at the level the spell is cast at +2.

### *Lycanthrope Hunter*

Some characters encounter a werecreature in a way that profoundly affects them. They may see one of their trusted friends change shape before their eyes or witness a lycanthrope use its claws and fangs to shred to bits one of the character's relatives. The character may have had a narrow escape from a werewolf or wereboar. Whatever the motivation, the lycanthrope hunter has become a deadly foe of these creatures. These dedicated characters polish their skills to improve their chances against these deadly and cunning beasts.

Almost any class of character may become a lycanthrope hunter, though most of those who do have some affinity for or strong interest in the supernatural.

**Hit Dice:** d10.

### *Requirements*

To qualify to become a lycanthrope hunter, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Base Attack Bonus:** +5.

**Skills:** Knowledge (forbidden lore: lycanthrope) 5 ranks, Sixth Sense 5 ranks .

**Feats:** Track.

**Special:** The character must have had a significant encounter with a lycanthrope.

### *Class Skills*

The lycanthrope hunter's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (forbidden lore: lycanthrope) (Int), Listen (Wis), Search (Int), Sixth Sense (Wis), Spot (Wis) and Survival (Wis).

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + Int modifier.

### *Class Features*

All the following are class features of the lycanthrope hunter prestige class.

**Sneak Attack:** At 1st, 4th and 7th levels, the lycanthrope hunter gains the sneak attack ability. See the section on the "Rogue" in Chapter 3 of the *D&D Player's Handbook* for a description of this ability. This sneak attack, however, applies only to lycanthropes.

**Favored Enemy (Lycanthrope) (Ex):** At 2nd, 5th and 8th levels, the lycanthrope hunter may select a type of lycanthrope as a favored enemy. See the description of the ranger's favored enemy special ability in Chapter 3: Classes of the *D&D Player's Handbook*. Each time he receives this ability, the lycanthrope hunter must choose a different werecreature type, such as werewolf, wereray, wererat, etc.

**Bonus Combat Feat:** At 3rd and 9th level the Lycanthrope hunter gains a bonus combat feat.

**Sense Lycanthrope (Su):** At 6th level, the lycanthrope hunter receives the ability to detect the presence of any lycanthrope within 60 feet. The lycanthrope hunter cannot tell the direction of the lycanthrope or pinpoint its location. Use of this ability is a full-round action and invokes a 2% powers check.

**Smite Werecreatures (Su):** At 10th level, the lycanthrope hunter can smite a werecreature once per day in a fashion similar to the D&D paladin's ability to smite evil. See the description of the "Paladin" in Chapter 3: Classes of the *D&D Player's Handbook* for a description of this ability. The character adds his Charisma bonus, if any, to the attack roll and adds 5 points to his damage roll.



*Table 3-38: The Lycanthrope Hunter*

Class Level	BAB	Fortitude	Reflex	Will	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Sneak attack +1d6 against lycanthrope
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Favored enemy (lycanthrope)
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Bonus combat feat
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Sneak attack +2d6 against lycanthrope
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Favored enemy lycanthrope
6th	+6	+5	+2	+2	Sense lycanthrope
7th	+7	+5	+2	+2	Sneak attack +3d6 against lycanthrope
8th	+8	+6	+2	+2	Favored enemy lycanthrope
9th	+9	+6	+3	+3	Bonus combat feat
10th	+10	+7	+3	+3	Smite lycanthrope





## Master Inventor

Part craftsman and part scientist, inventors are constantly looking for new ways to do things or ways to improve existing devices. From tinkers working in basements to entrepreneurs with fully equipped labs and factories at their disposal, the unique talents of men such as Thomas Alva Edison, Alexander Graham Bell and George Eastman change the world around them.

Most master inventors come from the tradesman or scholar/scientist classes, although almost any class with a grounding in the material world and an affinity for tinkering and experimentation (such as the sleuth class and its variants) may attempt to qualify for this prestige class.

**Hit Dice:** d6.

### Requirements

To qualify to become a master inventor, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Skills:** Craft (electrical device, mechanical device or steam engine) 5 ranks in any two, Disable Device 5 ranks, Knowledge (earth science or science) 5 ranks in either, Open Lock 5 ranks;

5 ranks in two of the following: Disable Device or Open Lock;

5 ranks in one of the following: Knowledge (science) or Knowledge (earth science).

### Class Skills

The master inventor's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Connoisseur (Wis), Craft (any) (Int), Disable Device (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Knowledge (demolition) (Int), Knowledge (earth science) (Int), Knowledge (science) (Int) and Open Lock (Dex).

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 5 + Int modifier.

### Class Features

All the following are class features of the master inventor prestige class.

**Insight:** At 1st level, the master inventor receives a +3 competence bonus when attempting to create a new device.

**Skill Focus:** At 2nd level, the master inventor gains a Skill Focus feat for any Craft. At 5th level, the character receives a Skill Focus feat for any Knowledge, and at 9th level, the character receives a Skill Focus feat for any master inventor class Skill.

**Material Substitution (Ex):** At 3rd level, the master inventor is extremely adept at using available materials when repairing, creating or improving a device. The character gains a +10 competence bonus on Search to find adaptable parts or materials.

**Skill Mastery (Ex):** At 4th and 10th level, the master inventor acquires the Skill Mastery special

Table 3-39: Master Inventor

Class Level	BAB	Fortitude	Reflex	Will	Special
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Insight
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Skill focus: Craft
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	Material substitution
4th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Skill mastery
5th	+4	+1	+1	+4	Skill focus: Knowledge
6th	+5	+2	+2	+5	Quicken craft device
7th	+6	+2	+2	+5	Canny defense
8th	+7	+2	+2	+6	Intuit formula
9th	+8	+3	+3	+6	Skill Focus (any class skill)
10th	+9	+3	+3	+7	Skill mastery



ability as described in the “Rogue” portion of Chapter 3: Classes in the *D&D Player’s Handbook*.

**Quicken Craft Device (Ex):** At 6th level, the master inventor is so skilled that it takes half the time to use Craft when creating a machine or device. This cannot be used to create an object or device of masterwork quality.

**Canny Defense (Ex):** At 7th level, the master inventor receives the ability to use his Intelligence bonus along with his Dexterity bonus to augment his defense against attack. See *D&D Dungeon Master’s Guide*, Chapter 6: Characters, “Duelist, “Special abilities.

**Intuit Formula (Ex):** At 8th level, the master inventor’s affinity for the laws of physics and mathematical formulae allows him to apply these factors creatively to solving problems. When attempting to craft a device, solve a physical or mathematical conundrum or use engineering or some other form of mechanical science to overcome some snag — whether in his workshop or in the field — the master inventor may add his Wisdom bonus to his Intelligence bonus to augment his ability check.

## *Qabalist*

Although the formal practice of magic has been dead for many centuries on Gothic Earth, tiny clusters of individuals still exist to study the secrets of this forbidden art. These societies (usually secret) are called qabals (or cabals). Their members call themselves qabalists.

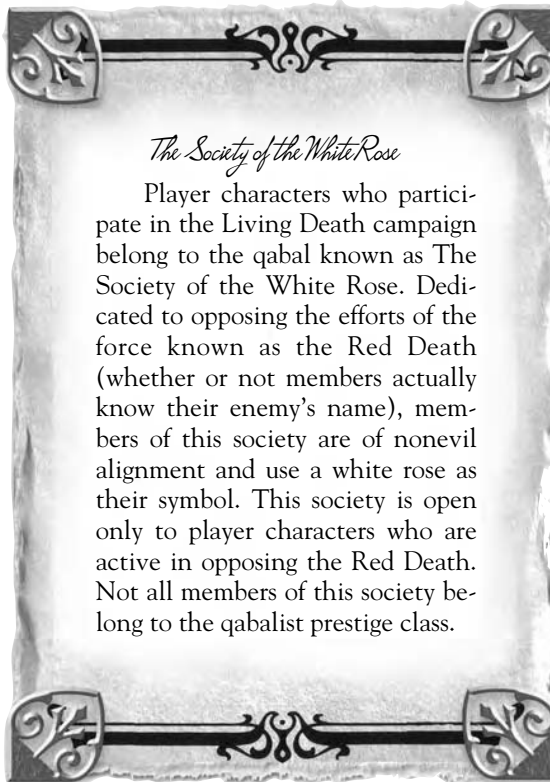
The qabalist is both an arcane spellcaster as well as a collector of information about qabals — those that currently exist as well as the famous and infamous qabals of the past. Qabalists conduct research in all parts of the world for knowledge about the identities, symbols, members and history. In the case of modern qabals, the qabalist desires to discover if another qabal might be an ally to participate in joint tasks, a neutral organization to be respected but left alone, or an enemy to be destroyed.

**Hit Dice:** d6.

## *Requirements*

To qualify to become a qabalist, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Skills:** Knowledge (forbidden lore [qabals]) 5 ranks.



### *The Society of the White Rose*

Player characters who participate in the Living Death campaign belong to the qabal known as The Society of the White Rose. Dedicated to opposing the efforts of the force known as the Red Death (whether or not members actually know their enemy’s name), members of this society are of nonevil alignment and use a white rose as their symbol. This society is open only to player characters who are active in opposing the Red Death. Not all members of this society belong to the qabalist prestige class.

**Feats:** Skill Focus: Knowledge (forbidden lore), Spell Focus (any two).

**Special:** Must be able to cast 3rd-level arcane spells.

## *Class Skills*

The qabalist’s class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Academician (Wis), Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Disguise (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Knowledge (ancient language) (Int), Knowledge (forbidden lore) (Int), Listen (Wis), Open Lock (Dex), Psychometry (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis) and Sixth Sense (Wis).

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 6 + Int modifier.

## *Class Features*

**Spells per day:** A qabalist continues training in magic and arcane studies. Therefore, each level in the qabalist prestige class is added to the character’s arcane spellcasting level when determining the number of spells per day she may cast.

**Metamagic Feat:** At 1st and 2nd level, the qabalist gains one of the following feats: Still Spell, Silent Spell or Extend Spell.



Table 3-40: The Qabalist

Class Level	BAB	Fortitude	Reflex	Will	Special	Spells
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Metamagic feat	+1 level of existing arcane class
2nd	+0	+0	+0	+3	Metamagic feat	+1 level of existing arcane class
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Skill focus	+1 level of existing arcane class
4th	+1	+1	+1	+4	Greater spell focus	+1 level of existing arcane class
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Quicken spell learning	+1 level of existing arcane class
6th	+2	+2	+2	+5	Spell defense	+1 level of existing arcane class
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Skill mastery	+1 level of existing arcane class
8th	+3	+2	+2	+6	Quicken spell	+1 level of existing arcane class
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	Spell defense	+1 level of existing arcane class
10th	+4	+3	+3	+7	Spell mastery	+1 level of existing arcane class

**Skill Focus:** At 3rd level, the qabalist gains a bonus Skill Focus feat for one of the following skills: Disguise, Hide, Move Silently or Spot. The character must have 2 ranks in the skill chosen.

**Greater Spell Focus:** At 4th level, the qabalist gains the Greater Spell Focus feat.

**Quicken Spell Learning (Ex):** At 5th level, the qabalist has fine-tuned her skill in the study of magic that it only takes her half as much time to learn a new spell.

**Spell Defense (Su):** At 6th and 9th level, the qabalist must pick one school of magic, for which they already have the Spell Focus Feat. The character gains a +2 spell resistance bonus from spells in that school.

**Skill Mastery (Ex):** At 7th and 10th level, the qabalist acquires the Skill Mastery special ability as described in the "Rogue" portion of Chapter 3: Classes in the *D&D Player's Handbook*.

**Quicken Spell Feat:** At 8th level, the qabalist acquires the Quicken Spell feat.

**Spell Mastery (Ex):** At 10th level the qabalist gains the benefit of this Wizard class ability. See *D&D Player's Handbook*, Chapter 3: Character Classes, "Wizard."

### Spy

The 19th century saw an abundance of political intrigue, war and rebellions. Spies worked for individuals as well as governments. During the

War Between the States, Belle Boyd and Rose O'Neil Greenhow proved that spying was not just a sport for men. Spies work for governments, industry, individuals and causes.

The secret war against the Red Death has engendered its spies as well, brave men and women who live beneath the surface, sometimes leading double lives, sometimes hiding behind an apparently normal façade in the pursuit of information that will enable others to know their immortal enemy a little bit better and fight the Red Death and its minions a little bit more effectively.

Spies usually come from members of the sleuth class, though some may be soldiers or explorers/scouts. A few members find that a little bit of spellcasting ability adds to their effectiveness as spies, so charlatans occasionally join this select group. Not a few dandies, as well, find the life of a spy to their liking and a perfect outlet for their many interests and talents.

**Hit Dice:** d8.

### Requirements

To qualify to become a spy, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Base Attack Bonus:** +4

**Skills:** Bluff 5 ranks, Disguise 5 ranks, Gather Information 5 ranks, Sense Motive 5 ranks, Perform (thespian) 5 ranks and Tumble 5 ranks (any three skills)



Table 3-41: Spy

Class Level	BAB	Fortitude	Reflex	Will	Special
1st	+1	+0	+2	+0	Trap finding, skill focus: Sleight of Hand or Open Lock
2nd	+2	+0	+3	+0	Skill focus: Escape Artist or Forgery
3rd	+3	+1	+3	+1	Canny defense
4th	+4	+1	+4	+1	Skill mastery
5th	+5	+1	+4	+1	Skill focus: Spot or Search
6th	+6	+2	+5	+2	Skill focus: Cryptology or Toxicology
7th	+7	+2	+5	+2	Defensive roll
8th	+8	+2	+6	+2	Trap sense
9th	+9	+3	+6	+3	Evasion
10th	+10	+3	+7	+3	Uncanny dodge

**Feats:** Point Blank Shot, Savior Fair, Skill Focus: Bluff

#### Class Skills

The spy's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Move Silently (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Search (Int) and Spot (Wis).

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + Int modifier

#### Class Features

**Trapfinding:** At 1st level, the spy gains the ability to use Search for finding nonmagic traps. See the "Rogue" in Chapter 3: Classes of the *D&D Player's Handbook* for a description of this special ability.

**Skill Focus:** At 1st, 2nd, 5th and 6th levels, the spy gains a Skill Focus for one of the two listed skills. The character must already have at least 2 ranks in the skill selected to gain the feat.

**Canny Defense (Ex):** At 3rd level, the spy receives the ability to use his Intelligence bonus along with his Dexterity bonus to augment his defense against attack. See *D&D Dungeon Master's Guide*, Chapter 6: Characters, "Duelist, and "Special abilities

**Skill Mastery (Ex):** At 4th level, the spy acquires the Skill Mastery special ability as de-

scribed in the "Rogue" portion of Chapter 3: Classes in the *D&D Player's Handbook*.

**Defensive Roll (Ex):** At 7th level, the spy develops the ability to "roll with the damage" and escape potentially lethal harm. See *D&D Player's Handbook*, Chapter 3: Character Classes, "Rogue" *Special Abilities*.

**Trap Sense (Ex):** At 8th level, the spy gains a +1 to his Reflex save to avoid traps and a +1 to his AC to dodge attacks from traps. See the "Rogue" in Chapter 3: Classes of the *D&D Player's Handbook* for a description of this special ability.

**Evasion (Ex):** At 9th level, the spy gains evasion. See *D&D Player's Handbook*, Chapter 3: Character Classes, "Rogue" *Special Abilities*.

**Uncanny Dodge (Ex):** At 10th level, the spy gains uncanny dodge. See the "Rogue" in Chapter 3: Classes of the *D&D Player's Handbook* for a description of this special ability.

#### Undead Hunter

At some point in his life, a character may be profoundly affected by an encounter with one of the undead. Perhaps he has witnessed a vampire attack on a group of helpless people or seen one of his loved ones return from death as a soulless zombie. He may have wandered through a graveyard and encountered the restless spirits of dead friends. Whatever the motivation, the undead hunter has become a deadly foe of these creatures.





He constantly hones his skills in order to improve his chances against the seemingly endless hordes that the forces of evil may send against those who stand for the light.

Undead hunters may come from any class, but they have a few things in common. All have encountered the undead. All have developed some martial expertise in the field and all have an affinity for or an attunement to the presence of the supernatural.

**Hit Dice:** d10.

#### *Requirements*

**Base Attack Bonus:** +5.

**Skills:** Knowledge (forbidden lore [undead]) 5 ranks, Sixth Sense 5 ranks.

**Feats:** Track.

**Special:** The character must have had a significant encounter with one or more of the undead.

#### *Class Skills*

The undead hunter's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Disable Device (Int), Knowledge (forbidden lore [undead]) (Int), Search (Int), Sixth Sense (Wis), Spot (Wis) and Survival (Wis).

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + Int modifier.

#### *Class Features*

All the following are class features of the undead hunter.

**Sneak Attack:** At 1st, 4th and 7th levels, the undead hunter gains the sneak attack ability. See the section on the "Rogue" in Chapter 3 of the *D&D Player's Handbook* for a description of this ability. This specialized ability affects undead only (which are normally not subject to critical hits).





Table 3-42: The Undead Hunter

Class Level	BAB	Fortitude	Reflex	Will	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Sneak attack +1d6 against undead
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Favored enemy undead
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Bonus combat feat
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Sneak attack +2d6 against undead
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Favored enemy undead
6th	+6	+5	+2	+2	Sense undead
7th	+7	+5	+2	+2	Sneak attack +3d6 against undead
8th	+8	+6	+2	+2	Favored enemy undead
9th	+9	+6	+3	+3	Bonus combat feat
10th	+10	+7	+3	+3	Smite undead

**Favored Enemy (Ex):** At 2nd, 5th and 8th levels, the undead hunter may select a type of undead as a favored enemy. See the description of the ranger's favored enemy special ability in Chapter 3: Classes of the *D&D Player's Handbook*. Each time he receives this ability, the undead hunter must choose a different type of undead, such as zombies, ghouls, ghosts, vampires or some other similar creature. This skill gives the undead hunter knowledge of the special attacks, defense, immunities and general vulnerabilities of the chosen type.

**Bonus Combat Feat:** At 3rd and 9th level the Undead Hunter gains a bonus Combat Feat.

**Sense Undead (Su):** At 6th level, the undead hunter receives the to detect the presence of undead within 60 feet but not to tell the direction of the undead creature or pinpoint its location. This is a full-round action. Use of this ability invokes a 2% powers check.

**Smite Undead (Su):** At 10th level, the undead hunter can smite the undead once per day in a fashion similar to the D&D paladin's ability to smite evil. See the description of the "Paladin" in Chapter 3: Classes of the *D&D Player's Handbook* for a description of this ability. The character adds his Charisma bonus, if any, to the attack roll and adds 5 points to his damage roll.

## Skills

No one person can know everything there is to know. Just as the classes are more specialized in **Masque of the Red Death**, so are many of the skills. Only those skills that are unique to Gothic Earth adventures or that have some unique applications that differ from both the *D&D Player's Handbook* and the **Ravenloft Player's Handbook** receive a full description in this section.

### Skill Specialization

Several skills listed below, such as Craft, Knowledge and Profession, cover extremely broad general areas. In many cases, players have the option of choosing a specialized version of a skill for their characters. For example, an occultist might specialize in Knowledge (ancient history [Egypt]) rather than simply Knowledge (ancient history). If a character makes a Knowledge check to discover some information specific to ancient Egypt, her DC would be higher if she only possessed Knowledge (ancient history) than if she specialized in Egyptology. The increase to the DC for this check should be anywhere from +5 to +10 based on how specialized the information is. Some information is so obscure that only those who specialize in that field would know it. However, a DM should be cautious when using something that specialized in an adventure, particularly if the entire success or

Table 3-43: Skills

Skill	Adept	Athlete	Intellectual	Mystic	Sleuth	Tradesmen	Ability
Academician	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	Wis
Appraise	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	C	Int
Balance	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	cc	Dex
Bluff	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	Cha
Climb	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	cc	Str
Concentration	C	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	Con
Connoisseur	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	Wis
Craft	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	Int
Diplomacy	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	Cha
Disable Device	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	Int
Disguise	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	Cha
Equestrian	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	C	Dex
Escape Artist	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	cc	Dex
First aid	cc	C	C	cc	cc	C	Wis
Forgery	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	Int
Gather Information	cc	cc	C	cc	C	cc	Cha
Handle Animal	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	C	Cha
Hide	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	Dex
Hypnosis	C	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	Int
Intimidate	cc	C	C	cc	C	cc	Cha
Jump	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	cc	Str
Knowledge Ancient Language	C	C	C	cc	cc	cc	Int
Knowledge Archeology	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	Int
Knowledge Criminology	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	Int
Knowledge Cryptology	cc	cc	C	cc	C	cc	Int
Knowledge Demolition	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	Int
Knowledge Earth Science	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	Int
Knowledge Etiquette	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	C	Int
Knowledge Forbidden Lore	C	cc	C	C	cc	cc	Int
Knowledge Government	cc	cc	C	cc	C	cc	Int
Knowledge History	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	Int
Knowledge Life Sciences	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	Int
Knowledge Local	cc	C	C	cc	C	C	Int
Knowledge Navigation	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	Int
Knowledge Religion	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	Int
Knowledge Science	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	Int
Knowledge Toxicology	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	cc	Int
Listen	cc	C	cc	cc	C	cc	Wis
Move Silently	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	Dex
Open Lock	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	Dex
Perform	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	C	Cha
Profession	cc	cc	C	cc	C	C	Wis
Prognostication	C	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	Int
Psychometry	C	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	Wis
Search	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	Int
Sense Motive	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	Wis
Sixth Sense	C	cc	cc	C	cc	cc	Wis
Sleight of Hand	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	Dex
Speak Language	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	cc	special
Spot	cc	cc	cc	cc	C	cc	Wis
Survival	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	cc	Wis
Swim	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	cc	Str
Tumble	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	cc	Dex
Use Rope	cc	C	cc	cc	cc	C	Dex



failure of the adventure hinges on one roll of the dice.

Some classes or their variants have a specialized form of a skill as a class skill. For example, soldiers have Craft (gunsmith) as a class skill, but do not have all Craft skills as class skills. Certain skills are only class skills for a class variant. In the table below, if a skill is a class skill only for a variant class, it is listed as a cross class skill.

### *Skill Synergy*

Skills that work together, such as Balance and Climb, or Jump and Tumble, function according to the rules on skill synergy in Chapter 4 of the *D&D Player's Handbook*. Some uses of skill synergy are included in the descriptions of skills used in **Masque of the Red Death**, but DMs should not consider this an all-inclusive listing of skill synergy possibilities.

### *Skill Descriptions*

#### *Academician (Wis, trained only)*

This skill reflects your ability to find information as well as the knowledge of the methodology used in researching a subject.

**Check:** Academician may serve as a general check whenever an institution of learning, newspaper morgues or a university library must be consulted by the heroes to obtain information.

#### *Connoisseur (Wis, trained only)*

You not only possess knowledge of a subject but you also have an exquisite appreciation for the art associated with the field. When you take this skill, you must specify the subject, such as the cuisine of a particular nation, wine making, painting, sculpting, music and similar subjects. If you subcategorize further, your DM may lower the DC of the check for that specialty.

**Check:** You may use this skill to determine whether a specific work is authentic or a good imitation. It is especially useful in determining between an authentic work and an imitation.

**Synergy:** If you select a subject related to a skill in which you already have 5 ranks, such as Craft (cooking), you receive a +2 bonus on skill checks involving the related skill. You also receive a +2 bonus on Appraise checks involving that

subject if you have 5 ranks in both the relevant skill and Appraise.

#### *Craft (Int)*

**Masque of the Red Death** includes several crafts not listed in Chapter 4: Skills of the *D&D Player's Handbook*. These additional crafts include clockworks, electrical devices, gunsmith, masonry, mechanical devices, needlework, photography, steam engines and tailor.

**Clockwork:** You know how to work with the small mechanisms used in clocks and music boxes. With the right tools, you can construct clocks, watches or similar timing mechanisms. When a trap involves such components, the DM may allow you an attempt to disarm it (with a negative modifier to success).

**Synergy:** If you have 5 ranks in this skill and 5 ranks in Disable Device, you gain a +2 bonus when attempting a Disable Device check on a trap that includes timing devices or clockwork mechanisms.

**Gunsmith:** The availability of inexpensive and reliable firearms on Gothic Earth has greatly changed the nature of combat. With this skill, you are able to clean, maintain and repair such weapons.

**Check:** The DC for repairing a firearm varies according to the extent of damage the weapon has sustained. The standard DC is 15 for repairing a firearm, assuming you have the proper tools and material and the damage is not extensive.

The DC to design and build new or unique firearms varies based on the availability of the materials needed and what you wish the weapon to do when it is completed. The base DC is 25 for making a new type of firearm.

**Masonry:** You are skilled in all manner of construction involving stone, brick, cement and similar building materials. Your knowledge goes from building simple retaining walls to building actual structures. You also know how to make bricks.

**Check:** The DC for repairing a structure is 15, assuming the damage to the structure is not exceptional. The DM should determine the DC for building a structure from a blueprint or other plan depending on the complexity of the structure.

**Electrical Devices, Mechanical Devices and Steam Engines:** These skills allow you to understand and



attempt to make or repair machines of the above types.

**Check:** The DC for checks using these skills depends on the complexity of the machine. See the table below.

Complexity	DC
Very Simple	5
Simple	10
Average	15
Complex	25
Moderately Complex	30
Highly Complex	35

**Synergy:** Designing and building innovative or new devices is a difficult task requiring at least 5 ranks of Knowledge (science).

**Photography:** You can use and repair camera equipment. In addition this talent allows you to develop photographic plates and print pictures if the proper equipment is available.

**Check:** You can develop photographic plates and print pictures with the proper equipment with a DC 12. If you must improvise equipment, the DC is 20.

**Synergy:** If you have 5 ranks in Forgery, you receive a +2 bonus in determining if a photographic plate has been tampered with.

**Needlework and Tailor:** If you possess Craft (needlework), you are skilled in the use of a needle for the purposes of embroidery, cross-stitch, needlepoint, tatting, lacemaking or similar ability. If you have Craft (tailor), you are conversant with all the modern sewing techniques and devices of the 1890s as well as in the knowledge of garment construction.

**Check:** Simple clothing or simple needlework projects have a DC of 10. The DM should assign a DC appropriate to the complexity of the work involved and the time needed to complete it.

**Synergy:** If you have 5 ranks in both these Crafts, you receive a +2 bonus when using one or the other of them.

**Special:** A few crafts detailed in the *D&D Player's Handbook* that are no longer in use or are practiced by a only few people are given here. These include armor making, weaponsmithing and alchemy, to name a few. The making of various substances requiring the alchemy skill in Chapter 4: Skills of the *D&D Player's Handbook* are either unavailable or fall under a different category.

**Generating Income:** The age of mass production has arrived, so not all crafts are capable of generating the same standard of income. Some items should have their price increased when made by an individual rather than a factory. When using the formula in Chapter Four: Skills of the *D&D Player's Handbook*, change the gold pieces to American dollars or British pounds by using a ratio of 2 gp for every dollar.

### *Equestrian (Dev)*

Some differences exist between Equestrian and Ride as described in Chapter 4: Skills of the *D&D Player's Handbook*. This skill only gives you the ability to ride horses, ponies, mules or donkeys. More exotic animals, such as camels or elephants are different enough that attempting to ride them is difficult (-5 circumstance penalty).

**Check:** In addition to the standard actions that require checks as described in the *D&D Player's Handbook*, there are two distinctly different riding styles associated with the type of saddle used: English and American. Few equestrians are trained to ride in both methods. You should designate which style your character knows when you choose this skill. A -2 circumstance penalty applies if you attempt to fight or do more than just stay in the saddle while using a riding style in which you have not been trained.

### *First Aid (Wis)*

This skill enables you to attempt to render aid to dying friends or assist wounded characters in regaining mobility. You can use First Aid to perform simple emergency procedures such as bandaging a wound, stopping bleeding, providing immediate relief from snake or spider venom, treating sunstroke, shock, splinting a broken bone, etc. Tasks that require extensive care or complex procedures require Profession (physician) or Profession (nurse) to accomplish.

**Check:** Standard First aid procedures have a DC of 15. DMs may adjust the DC up or down as necessary.

**Synergy:** If you have Profession (physician or nurse), you receive a +2 bonus on First Aid checks.

### *Handle Animal (Cha; trained only)*

You can use this skill to drive a simple wagon with no more than two animals supplying the



power. Profession (teamster) is required to drive teams larger than two.

**Synergy:** If you have 5 ranks in this skill, you receive a +2 bonus on checks involving Profession (teamster).

#### *Hypnosis (Cha; trained only)*

This skill is described in Chapter Two of the **Ravenloft Player's Handbook**.

#### *Knowledge (Archaeology) (Int; trained only)*

You are familiar not only with the study of the past, but also with the techniques by which such information is acquired. You are also acquainted with recent discoveries of archaeological import and with the names of prominent archaeologists currently at work in the field or in universities and museums.

**Checks:** The DC for answering simple questions in your field is 10. Questions of standard difficulty have a DC of 15, while difficult questions may have a DC of from 20 to 30.

#### *Knowledge (Ancient Language) (Int; trained only)*

You must select a specific ancient language when taking this skill. Languages that qualify as "ancient" include Babylonian, ancient Egyptian (demotic or hieroglyphic), Greek, ancient Hebrew and Sumerian. Latin may be selected as a modern language. The DM may decide to allow certain other languages as appropriate.

This skill allows you to know both the written and spoken elements of a language, provided such elements exist. For example, a skill in Egyptian hieroglyphics does not allow a character to "speak" hieroglyphics. Greek, however, can be both written and spoken.

**Checks:** The translation of ancient languages is not always an easy thing and a skill check is required. The DM may set the DC as appropriate within a range of 10 to 30.

#### *Knowledge (Criminology) (Int; trained only)*

You have studied crime and its history. While the first use of fingerprinting in law enforcement has not yet occurred, anyone can learn much from a careful study of criminals and their techniques.



At a crime scene, you are able to realize the importance of something that has been found.

**Synergy:** If you have 5 ranks in Spot and at least 5 ranks in Criminology, you receive a +2 on Spot checks when looking for clues or evidence.

#### *Knowledge (Cryptography) (Ints, trained only)*

You possess some training and skill in deciphering hidden messages and codes. You know how ciphers and codes are designed and can create your own codes.

**Checks:** When confronted with an encoded message, you may make a skill check, although more complex codes might require finding additional information. The DC of the check to recognize the type of code is based on the complexity of the code. A simple substitution code would be DC 5, while a double substitution would raise the DC to 10. A more complex code requires a DC 20 to recognize. Actual deciphering of the codes adds 5 to the DC. If you lack part of the code, such as the code key, the DC to decipher the code is increased by at least 10.

#### *Knowledge (Demolition) (Ints, trained only)*

Explosives are far more common in the **Masque of the Red Death** setting than they are in a traditional fantasy setting. You are knowledgeable about the use of various types of explosives, including how to set charges for the best effect. You also know the storage requirements for various types of explosives and their detonators.

**Checks:** Recognizing common explosives and handling standard problems regarding explosives has a DC of 10 to 15. If you are looking at something that has been detonated to discover the type of explosive used, the DC is 20. More information on explosives can be found in Chapter Six: Combat.

**Special Note:** Attempts to use this skill untrained are very dangerous for everyone in your immediate.

#### *Knowledge (Earth Science) (Ints, trained only)*

This extremely broad category includes the following: agriculture, astronomy, botany, geography and geology. When selecting this skill, you may choose to specialize it in one of these sciences.

**Checks:** Specialization in one of the earth sciences lowers the DC by 5 in some situations. In

others, it allows you access to specific details or information otherwise unobtainable.

#### *Knowledge (Etiquette) (Ints, trained only)*

This skill gives the hero an understanding of the proper forms of behavior and address required in many different situations, including those involving nobility and persons of rank.

**Checks:** Standard situations have a DC of 10. More complicated cultural behaviors have a DC 15. Extremely complex social situations or politically sensitive behaviors have a DC 20 or higher.

**Synergy:** If you have 5 ranks of Diplomacy, you gain +2 to your Knowledge (etiquette) check. If you possess *Savoir-faire*, you can quickly learn the proper etiquette for a culture that you have not previously encountered, thus gaining a further +2 bonus to your check. Your background may also adjust your DC as appropriate.

#### *Knowledge (Forbidden Lore) (Ints, trained only)*

This skill indicates you possess knowledge of events long past that are either sinister or macabre in nature.

**Checks:** Routine knowledge about the supernatural has a DC 10. More detailed knowledge has a DC 15, while complex information has a DC 20 or higher. If you do not pick a special area of forbidden lore, your knowledge is limited to the most general type of forbidden lore, regardless of the success of your forbidden lore check. For example, the noted metaphysician Van Helsing is well versed in battling the supernatural evils of Gothic Earth, but is especially devoted to and knowledgeable about vampires. Someone without a forbidden lore specialization would know that vampires are real and that a wooden stake is thought necessary to kill a vampire. A specialist in vampires could identify all the allergens or weakness of a particular type of vampire. Specialization lowers the DC by 5 for relevant areas. If you have no reason to know about a certain forbidden area of knowledge, the DM may raise the DC.

**Special:** Your possession of Knowledge (forbidden lore) gives you a greater understanding of the dark corners of the universe. Because of this you make all fear and horror checks at a +2 bonus. If the check directly relates to your area of specialization, the bonus increases to +4.

**Special:** Knowledge (forbidden Lore [arcane magic]): If you have Arcane Weave as a class



ability, you may use Knowledge (forbidden lore) to cast magic. See Chapter Seven for details.

**Special:** Knowledge (forbidden Lore [mysticism]): If you have Mystic Weave as a class ability, you may use Knowledge (forbidden lore) to cast magic. See Chapter Seven for details.

#### *Knowledge (History) (Ints, trained only)*

When you choose this skill, you must select a specific area or period of history as your area of expertise. For example, you might select the history of European winemaking, French history or the Italian Renaissance. A subject as broad as European history or the history of a single vineyard in Burgundy would not be appropriate, since one is too general and the other is too specific. You may also use your Knowledge (history) area of expertise for knowledge of art or literature following the same general guidelines.

**Special:** It is important to make a distinction between Knowledge (history) and the Knowledge (forbidden lore). History deals with facts about Gothic Earth that anyone with time and research or the proper education can obtain; forbidden lore deals specifically with the dark, macabre or supernatural side of the universe.

#### *Knowledge (Government) (Ints, trained only)*

You are knowledgeable about the system of government and laws of a designated country or large organization. You are also familiar with the bureaucracy of your chosen country or organization.

**Checks:** You receive a +5 bonus on your check if the skill check involves your chosen country or organization.

**Synergy:** If you also have 5 ranks of Knowledge (local), you gain a +2 bonus when identifying local government officials and their responsibilities. Otherwise, you have only a general knowledge of the type of governments.

**Special:** If you designate an organized modern religion as your specialty, you may have access to resources unavailable to other characters. This skill reflects such resources and indicates that you know how to work within the religious hierarchy to get information and other supplies an adventuring group may need. You may gather information about a specific person, place or object but only one that has some relationship to your chosen organization. Monetary resources are not required to obtain

information but access to a modern means of communication such as a telegraph or mail system is necessary. The system used to communicate the request will affect the length of time it takes to receive an answer. This is up to the DM's discretion as is the scope of information available.

If, however, you wish access to consecrated or otherwise special items that maybe helpful in fighting the supernatural, you must make a successful skill check. Such items may include holy (blessed) water, wafers or other such items. The availability is up to the DM. The base DC is 20; this increases if you are in a place where your chosen religious organization has few resources. If the attempt to acquire such items succeeds by 5 the cost is 10 % less than book price. If the attempt succeeds by 10 or more the cost is halved.

#### *Knowledge (Life Science) (Ints, trained only)*

This category includes the following biology, medicine, psychology and zoology. You may choose to specialize in one of these sciences when choosing this skill.

**Checks:** Specialization in one of the life sciences lowers the DC by 5 in some situations. In others, it allows you access to specific details or information otherwise unobtainable.

**Synergy:** Five ranks in Knowledge (life science) grants a +2 bonus on First Aid checks. If you specialize in medicine, you receive a +2 bonus on Profession (physician) and Profession (nurse).

#### *Knowledge (Navigation) (Ints, trained only)*

Navigation is much more exact on Gothic Earth than in most fantasy campaign worlds. You know how the principles and applications of navigation and can, if necessary, navigate by the stars alone.

**Checks:** A skilled navigator with the proper equipment (maps and a compass, at the very least) can find his way across any stretch of land or sea with relative ease with a DC 10 Knowledge (navigation) check. If a sextant and a clock are used, then you receive +2 to your roll.

#### *Knowledge (Religion) (Ints, trained only)*

When you select this skill, you must designate it as either modern or ancient religion. Modern religion gives you a general familiarity with religions currently practiced on Gothic Earth. Ancient religion provides you with an understanding of





religions that are no longer practiced openly on Gothic Earth.

**Checks:** Common knowledge of a current religion has a DC of 10. If the religion is only practiced in a country or culture unfamiliar to you, the DC increases. Specializing in a specific modern religion grants you access to specific information regarding that religion. If you select an ancient religion, you may choose a specific country (ancient Egypt) or mythos (paganism). Doing so might lower the DC or gain you access to more obscure information.

**Synergy:** If you have 5 ranks in Knowledge (history) with an appropriate specialization, you gain a +2 bonus on your skill check.

#### *Knowledge (Science) (Int; trained only)*

This category includes astronomy, chemistry, electricity, engineering, mathematics and physics, as well as similar physical sciences. When selecting this skill, you can choose to specialize in one of these sciences.

**Checks:** Specialization may lower the DC for otherwise obscure knowledge or may allow access to specific details or information otherwise unobtainable.

**Synergy:** Five ranks in an appropriate specialized Knowledge (science) gains a +2 bonus for Craft (steam engines, electrical devices or mechanical devices).

#### *Knowledge (Toxicology) (Int; trained only)*

Toxicology is the science of poisons, their effects and their handling. You have a chance to identify common poisons, know how they are administered and possess a basic understanding of their effect. You can handle most poisons without endangering yourself. Knowledge (science) is required to make poisons. Knowledge (life science [toxicology]) is necessary to create new poisons that mimic a specific natural disease or to identify the formula for antidotes.

**Checks:** Identification of common poisons and knowledge of how to administer them requires a DC of 10. The DC increases in increments of 5 for less common substances. Handling the poisons begins at DC 15 and increases according to the techniques involved.

**Synergy:** Knowledge (earth science [botany]) gives a +2 bonus when creating a poison derived from plants; Knowledge (life science [biology])

gives a +2 bonus when using animal venom. Knowledge (life science [biology]) can also give a +2 bonus if an attempt is being made to produce a specific effect, such as paralysis from a poison. If you have Knowledge (life science) but have not specialized in toxicology, you must make a DC 15 skill check to gain any of the above synergy bonuses.

**Special:** As with other sciences, a supply of materials and laboratory equipment is required for making new poisons, antidotes or antitoxins. The making of antitoxins requires 5 ranks in both toxicology and biology. The DC for making an antitoxin is 10 + the DC listed for the save against the poison. You can only make an antitoxin in a laboratory and you receive no synergy bonus for additional skills. (The first successful use of an antitoxin occurred in 1894 against diphtheria.)

#### *Perform (Cha)*

When using the formula in the *D&D Player's Handbook* to calculate income based on performance, the DM will need to change copper pieces to nickels, silver pieces to quarters and gold pieces to American dollars by using a ratio of 2gp for every dollar. Also note that the Oratory skill also includes debating.

#### *Profession (Wis; trained only)*

Several professions not listed in Chapter 4: Skills of the *D&D Player's Handbook* are available in Gothic Earth. These include athlete, archeologist, lawyer, miner, nurse, photographer, physician, politician, railroad engineer and teamster, to name only a few.

**Check:** You can practice your profession using the rules outlined in Chapter 4: Skills in the *D&D Player's Handbook*. You should change gold pieces to American dollars or British pounds by using a ratio of 2gp for every dollar.

**Synergy:** If you have 5 ranks in an appropriate Knowledge skill, you gain a +2 bonus when attempting to perform a task associated with your profession.

**Special Profession Physician:** Physicians are able to tend the wounded. If you belong to the physician class, with a successful DC 15 skill check (unless increased by the DM), you may use this skill to restore 1d4 hit points to new wounds or injuries for every 5 levels you possess in the physician class.



**Long term care:** See the section on “Heal” in Chapter 4: Skills of the *D&D Player’s Handbook*, except that characters recover 2 hit points per day per your physician level and 2 temporary ability points per day if engaging in normal activity (with 8 hours of rest). Characters recover 4 hit points per your physician level per day and 3 temporary ability points per day of complete bed rest. If placed in a hospital or similar medical facility, the character recovers 5 hit points per your physician level per day and 4 temporary ability points per day.

**Treating Poison victims:** See Chapter 4: Skills in the *D&D Player’s Handbook*, except that the physician attempting to help a poisoned character grants the patient a +2 bonus on saving throws against poison (regardless of how the poison entered the system). If you have access to a reasonably equipped store of medical supplies (such as a ship’s infirmary or doctor’s office), this modifier increases to +3. If care is given in a hospital or similar facility, the bonus increases to +4.

**Treating Diseases:** Physicians can diagnose and treat diseases. Treatment does not always indicate an immediate cure (or any cure). It may constitute the easing of symptoms through herbs, drugs, poultices or other therapy. Treatment may shorten the duration of an illness depending on the severity of the disease. To administer successful treatment, you must make a skill check (DC of the disease’s save). If you have access to reasonable medical supplies, you receive a +2 bonus. If care is given in a hospital or similar facility, the bonus increases to +4.

The average physician has no knowledge of magically created or transmitted diseases. Some magically created or transmitted diseases require the knowledge of a mystic to cure.

**Special Profession Nurse:** You can perform all tasks listed in the section on “Heal” in Chapter 4: Skills of the *D&D Player’s Handbook* with this skill. However, the DC to treat disease and treat poison victims should be increased by 5.

### *Prognostication (Int; trained only)*

With this skill, you catch fleeting glimpses of the future. When this skill is selected, you must select a method by which you attempt to read the future. Possible techniques include astrology, palm reading, tealeaf reading and numerology, among others. This skill does not present direct solutions the way a *divination* spell might.

**Checks:** The DC is based on how far in the future you are attempting to look and how much detail you seek. The more general the information, the lower the DC.

Nature of information	DC
Very general	10
Moderately specific	15
Very specific	15
Exact detail	35

Time factor	DC Adjustment
Within 24 hours	+2
1 week ahead	+5
1 month	+10

If you are looking into the future for yourself, there is a +2 circumstance bonus on the check. If it is for someone who is not present, there is a –2 circumstance penalty on the check.

**Special:** The use of this skill is hazardous. Because this ability taps the magical energies of the world — energies long ago fouled by the arrival of the Red Death — any use of this skill requires a powers check. The chance of failing this check is based on the nature of the information sought by the prognosticator. If the character seeks only trivial or vague knowledge (“*Shall I be lucky at cards this month?*”), the check has only a 1% chance of failure. An attempt to glean more specific information (“*Will our battle against the vampire be successful?*”) carries a 3% chance of failure. More precise questions, if the DM allows you to ask them, should result in a more difficult powers check (no less than 5%). Note that this check must be made each time the skill is attempted, regardless of whether it is successful. No retry is allowed on failed attempts. Another character may not attempt to aid you when you use this skill.

### *Psychometry (Wis; trained only)*

You have a limited psychic gift that enables you to detect the faint impressions attached to items involved in traumatic or highly emotionally charged events. For instance, you attempt to use Psychometry on a knife used as a murder weapon, a successful check might reveal great pain and terror linked to the weapon. If the object has no traumatic event associated with it, or if the roll fails, you sense nothing.



**Checks:** If you roll an unmodified 20, you relive the traumatic experience as if you had been present at the event. In a severe case, this could result in a fear or horror check, or even a Fortitude save to avoid death or coma or some other trauma. In order to use this skill, you must hold the object and spend one full round concentrating on it. A minimum 1% powers check exists each time this skill is used. Another character may not attempt to aid you when you use this skill.

### *Sixth Sense (Int; trained only)*

You are sensitive to the presence of the supernatural in its many manifestations. If you spend one round clearing your mind and making yourself receptive to the ambient energies of the area, you can sense the presence of spell use, the undead or supernatural creatures. (This is a full-round action and the DM must determine whether a creature falls into this category.)

You experience only a tingling awareness that supernatural energies are near, but you receive no clue as to the nature of the energies. Your Sixth Sense may, however, provide you and your companions with sufficient warning to take special precautions.

**Checks:** The stronger and more powerful the creature or the more powerful a spell is, the lower the DC to sense it. The base DC is 15—the spell level or the level/HD of the supernatural creature. The DM may assign modifiers to the DC based on the situation.

When you consciously invoke this sense, you are reaching into the web of mystical and magical energy. Thus a powers check is required, with a base of 1%. This skill does not pinpoint the location of a supernatural presence, a creature or object. Another character may not attempt to aid you when you use this skill.

### *Speak Language (None; trained only)*

This skill applies only for modern languages. Latin is considered to be a modern language. Ancient languages and dead languages use Knowledge (ancient language).

## *Feats*

Characters gain feats according to Table 3–2 Experience and Level Dependent Benefits in Chapter 3: Classes in the *D&D Player's Handbook* and as

specified by their particular class. Table 3–44 includes all allowed feats in this setting. Feats appearing in bold type are described below.

## *Feat Descriptions*

Only those feats that are exclusive to **Masque of the Red Death** or are different from their description in the *D&D Player's Handbook* are described in this section. All other allowed feats are described in Chapter 5: Feats of the *D&D Player's Handbook*.

### *Ancient Knowledge Expert*

If it is not at least a thousand years old, you are not interested! Arguing over translations of ancient text is your favorite pastime.

**Prerequisite:** Int 16.

**Benefit:** You gain +2 to skill checks for Knowledge (ancient language) and Knowledge (ancient history).

**Special:** You gain a +2 synergy bonus with Connoisseur (ancient artifacts).

### *Called Shot*

When you attack with a firearm you can attempt to slightly injure the target by aiming for an appendage or you can attempt to hit a vital part, causing serious or lethal injury.

**Prerequisites:** Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot.

**Benefit:** Before the attack is made, you must declare you are taking a Called Shot either to increase the lethality of the shot or to “wing” the target. The AC of the target is increased by +4 for the purpose of this attack. If the attempt to “wing” attack is successful, damage is halved. If the attempt succeeds for a lethal shot, the damage is increased by 1d6 for every 4 character levels.

### *Diligent*

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 bonus on Appraise and Knowledge (ancient language) checks.

### *Disarming Shot*

You can try to defuse a situation by shooting a firearm out of the hand of an opponent.

**Prerequisite:** Point Blank Shot.

**Benefit:** You get +2 to your attack role when you attempt to shoot a weapon out of an opponent's hand. You may use this feat only if you are armed

Table 3-44: Feats

Feat	Prerequisite	Feat	Prerequisite
Acrobatic	—	<b>Mimicry Voice</b>	—
Agile	—	Mounted Combat	1 rank Equestrian skill
<b>Ancient Knowledge Expert</b>	Int 16 +	Mounted Archery	Mounted Combat
Animal Affinity	—	<b>Mounted Marksmanship</b>	Mounted Combat
Athletic	—	Trample	Mounted Combat
Blind-Fight	—	Ride-By Attack	Mounted Combat
Combat Expertise	Int 13 +	Spirited Charge	Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack
Improved Disarm	Combat Expertise	Negotiator	—
Improved Feint	Combat Expertise	Nimble Fingers	—
Improved Trip	Combat Expertise	Open Mind	—
Whirlwind Attack	Combat Expertise, Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Base attack +4	<b>Perfect Memory Auditory</b>	—
Courage	—	<b>Perfect Memory Visual</b>	—
Deceitful	—	<b>Perfect Pitch</b>	—
Deft Hands	—	Persuasive	—
<b>Diligent</b>	—	Point Blank Shot	—
Dodge	Dex 13 +	<b>Called Shot</b>	Point Blank Shot, Precise shot
Mobility	Dex 13 +, Dodge	<b>Disarming Shot</b>	Point Blank Shot
Spring Attack	Dex 13 +, Dodge, Mobility, Base attack +4	Far Shot	Point Blank Shot
Endurance	—	Improved Precise Shot	Dex 19, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Base attack +11
Diehard	Endurance	Precise Shot	Point Blank Shot
<b>Exotic Weapon Proficiency*</b>	Base Attack +1	Rapid Shot	Point Blank Shot, Dex 13 +
Extra Turning	Ability to turn or rebuke undead	<b>Ricochet Shot</b>	Point Blank Shot, 1 nt 13 +, Base attack +4
<b>Feign Death</b>	—	Shot on the Run	Point Blank Shot, Dex 13 +, Dodge, Mobility
Great Fortitude	—	<b>Trick Shot</b>	Point Blank Shot, Blind Fight, Dex 16 +, Base attack +8
Improved Critical	Proficient with weapon, Base attack +8	Power Attack	Str 13 +
Improved Initiative	—	Improved Bull Rush	Str 13 +, Power Attack
Improved Unarmed Strike	—	<b>Pugilism</b>	—
Improved Grapple	Dex 13, Improved Unarmed Strike	<b>Improved Pugilism</b>	Pugilism Base attack +4
Stunning Fist	Improved Unarmed Strike, Wis 13 +, Base attack +8	Quick Draw	Base attack +1
<b>Improvised Weapon</b>	—	<b>Rapid Reload</b>	Weapon Proficiency with pistol
Investigator	—	Run	—
Iron Will	—	<b>Savoir-faire</b>	Cha 10 +
Jaded	4th level	Self-Sufficient	—
<b>Keen Sense*</b>	—	Skill Focus*	—
<b>Light Sleeper</b>	—	Spell Focus*	—
Lightning Reflexes	—	Greater Spell Focus*	Spell Focus
<b>Linguist</b>	Int 16 +		
Martial Weapon Proficiency*	—		
Mimicry Sounds	—		

Table 3-44: Feats Continued

Feat	Prerequisite
Spell Penetration	—
Speed Reading	—
Stealthy	—
Toughness**	—
Track	—
Two-Weapon Fighting	—
Improved Two-Weapon Fighting	Two-Weapon Fighting, Dex 17, Base attack +6
Greater Two Weapon Fighting	Dex 19, Improved Two Weapon Fighting Base attack +11
Uncanny Sense*	—
Weapon Finesse*	Proficient with weapon, Base attack +1
Weapon Focus*	Proficient with weapon, Base attack +1
<b>Metamagic Feats</b>	
Empower Spell	—
Enlarge Spell	—
Extend Spell	—
Find Familiar	—
Heighten Spell	—
Silent Spell	—
Still Spell	—
<b>Special Feats</b>	
Alertness	Soldier or explorer/scout only
Combat Reflexes	Soldier or explorer/scout only
Shield Proficiency	Soldier only
Weapon Specialization*	Soldier level 4th +
Greater Weapon Focus	Soldier level 8th, Weapon Focus
Greater Weapon Specialization	Soldier level 12th, Greater Weapon Focus, Weapon Specialization

\* You can gain this feat multiple times. The effects do not stack; each time you take the feat, it applies to a new weapon, school of magic, domain, selection of spells or sense.

\*\* You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects stack.

with a revolver or a rifle. Disarming Shot does not work with shotguns or scatterguns.

### *Empower Spell*

The DC of the powers check when casting the spell is the level of the spell as prepared +2%.

### *Enlarge Spell*

The DC of the powers check when casting the spell is the level of the spell as prepared +2%.

### *Exotic Weapon Proficiency*

Archaic weapons are included in this category.

### *Extend Spell*

The DC of the powers check when casting the spell is the level of the spell as prepared +2%.

### *Feign Death*

You can deceive someone into believing you are dead; you can also slow down your life functions to conserve energy or avoid running out of air.

**Benefit:** You must make a DC 15 Constitution check to succeed at achieving a cataleptic state in which you appear dead to observers. If you succeed, you can remain in that state for one hour. If you exceed the DC by more than 2, you can remain in that state for a number of hours equal to your Con score. If you exceed the DC by more than 10, you can double the amount of time that you stay in that state. A physician must make a DC 40 Medicine check to detect that you are alive.

**Special:** This feat allows you to extend the time you can survive without air. For example, if buried alive you could survive without air for a number of minutes equal to your Constitution.

### *Find Familiar*

This works in the same manner as the wizard's special as described in the Chapter 3: Classes of the *D&D Player's Handbook*. A 20% powers check must be made when it is used.

### *Heighten Spell*

The DC of the powers check when casting the spell is the level of the spell as prepared +2%.





### *Improved Pugilism*

You are especially skilled with unarmed attacks.

**Prerequisite:** Pugilism

**Benefit:** You receive a +2 bonus on damage when using unarmed attacks.

### *Improvised Weapon Feat*

You can find something to use as a weapon when none are readily available.

**Benefit:** This feat allows you to spot an item that can be used as a clubbing weapon. If the item is within a 10 foot radius of your location, you can spot it, move to the item and grab it as a move action. You are considered proficient with the item. The DM decides on the availability of the item.

### *Keen Sense*

One of your senses is so highly developed that you can use it to sense things most humans can't.

**Benefit:** Each time you choose this feat, you may choose one sense that is unusually sensitive. With that sense you can ascertain very faint phenomena. This feat complements Uncanny Sense. Listed below are examples of how this feat works with each of the senses. These examples provide the DM with a guideline and should not be considered as comprehensive.

**Hearing** — You can hear faint sounds, such as a pin dropping, well enough to hear a muted conversation 20 feet away. You gain a +4 bonus on Listen checks.

**Sight** — You can see like an owl in dim light, such as moonlight or starlight well enough to move or fight normally. You gain a +2 bonus on Search checks in low light.

**Smell** — You can smell with the accuracy of a scent hound, detecting faint odors (such as the perfume worn by a woman who passed by an hour ago) well enough to aid in following that person. You gain a +2 bonus on Tracking checks.

**Taste** — You can taste mild flavors, such as in food or drink, well enough to observe the presence of a poison. You receive a +2 bonus on Fortitude saves for ingested poisons.

**Touch** — You can feel the smoothness of surfaces in walls well enough to detect irregularities that might indicate the presence of a secret door. You gain a +2 bonus on Search checks for secret

doors/compartments. Criminals with this feat also gain a +2 to their ability to find traps.

### *Light-Sleeper*

You are awakened by the slightest disturbance nearby.

**Benefit:** Whenever an assailant attempts to sneak up on you, you get a Wisdom check to awaken instantly with immediate awareness of your surroundings and no grogginess. If you fail, you have the same chance a normal character has to awaken. If you roll a 1 on your Wisdom Check, you are so sound asleep that only a loud noise can awaken you.

### *Linguist*

Learning new languages is easier for you.

**Prerequisite:** Int 16

**Benefit:** You receive Speak Language as a class skill.

### *Mimicry, Vocal*

You can imitate exactly the voice of another human you have heard.

**Benefit:** When attempting to imitate a human voice you gain +20 to a Thespians check. How long and how often you have heard the voice dictates the DC of the required check.

### *Mimicry, Sounds*

You can imitate nonarticulated sounds such as the call of a bird or the click of a pistol.

**Benefit:** You receive +10 to a Thespians check for such sounds. A successful check means that the sound is indistinguishable from the real thing. You may also recreate a specific sound such as the bark of the neighbor's dog.

### *Mounted Marksmanship*

You can fire a gun accurately when mounted.

**Prerequisite:** Mounted Combat

**Benefit:** Mounted Marksmanship works exactly as Mounted Archery (see Chapter 5: Feats in the *D&D Player's Handbook*). Mounted Marksmanship benefits you when using firearms, while Mounted Archery helps you when using bows, lassos or bolos.



### *Perfect Memory, Auditory*

The ability to remember anything you have heard.

**Benefit:** This feat is particularly helpful your character might remember something you as a player have forgotten. The check is based on intelligence and the DC is based on the length of time since the information was heard.

Length of Time	DC
Up to 1 week	10
Up to 1 month	15
Up to 1 year	30
More than 1 year	45

If you miss the check by 5 or less you remember parts of the information but not all.

### *Perfect Memory, Visual [General]*

You have the ability to remember anything you have read or seen.

**Benefit:** This feat is particularly helpful your character might remember something you as a player have forgotten. The check is based on intelligence and the DC is based on the length of time since the information was seen or read.

Length of Time	DC
Up to 1 week	10
Up to 1 month	15
Up to 1 year	30
More than 1 year	45

If you miss the check by 5 or less you remember parts of the information but not all.

### *Perfect Pitch*

You can identify and sing specific notes with complete accuracy.

**Benefit:** You can identify and duplicate any single note played or sung with perfect accuracy. You can produce a sound that will shatter glass with a DC 25 Singing check. This feat also grants a +4 bonus on any Singing check.

### *Pugilism*

You are able to fight well with your fists.

**Benefit:** You are highly skilled in unarmed combat. You get +2 to attack rolls when attempting to fight unarmed. You may also choose to do lethal damage rather than nonlethal damage when fighting unarmed but must declare your intentions before attacking.

### *Rapid Reload*

You can load your pistol quickly in combat.

**Prerequisite:** You must be proficient with a pistol

**Benefit:** For a firearm, the normal reloading time is 2 bullets per full round. With this feat, you can reload as a move action.

### *Ricochet Shot*

You can hit something not in the direct line of fire as long as there is something metallic which can allow you to redirect the shot.

**Prerequisites:** Point Blank Shot, Int 13, BAB +4

**Benefit:** Upon hitting the AC of the target, you can ignore concealment miss chances. However, because the ricochet slows the speed of the bullet, the damage is halved. Attempting this is a full-round action and there is a -4 to the attack roll.

### *Savoir-faire*

You have the ability to smoothly and quickly adapt to any situation in any type of company. If you are male and you are suddenly confronted by a pack of angry thugs, you might make a Savoir-faire check to strike up a conversation and pass yourself off as one of the thugs. If you are female, you might be able to charm your way out of danger in the same situation. Conversely, you can exhibit all the grace and nobility shown in the great courts of Europe, perhaps garnering the finest tables in restaurants or the best suites in hotels.

**Benefit:** You receive a +4 bonus on Knowledge (etiquette) checks. When dealing with a culture previously unfamiliar to you (your first trip to India), you can quickly learn the proper etiquette for that culture. You gain a +2 bonus on Knowledge (etiquette) checks in this situation.

### *Speed Reading*

You can read and comprehend any language you already know ten times faster than normal.



**Benefit:** You can read in 24 minutes a book that would take others 4 hours to read. You gain no special understanding of what you read.

### *Trick Shot*

Your skill with a firearm challenges that of the legendary Annie Oakley.

**Prerequisite:** Point Blank Shot, Blind-fight, Dex 16, BAB +8

**Benefit:** You can negate any penalties for Blind-fight with this feat, but one shot takes a full-round action.

### *Uncanny Sense*

One of your senses is highly precise, able to perceive phenomena attuned to that sense.

**Benefit:** Each time this feat is taken, you may enhance a different sense. This feat complements Keen Sense.

**Hearing** — You can hear precise pitches of sounds and are able to identify notes in a chord, name a harmonic, and distinguish accents or dialects. Professor Henry Higgins (of *My Fair Lady*)

possessed this ability. You gain a +4 bonus on Mimicry attempts.

**Sight** — You can see fine detail from a distance with eaglelike vision. You have 20/5 vision and can see well enough to read a newspaper from 20 feet away. You gain a +4 bonus on Spot checks.

**Smell** — You can smell distinct odors, such as the subtle differences in the scents within various perfumes or body odor, well enough to recognize familiar scents. You gain a +4 bonus on Smell checks (Wisdom-based).

**Taste** — You can taste distinct flavors well enough to recognize the flavor of a particular vineyard and type of grape. You gain a +4 bonus on an appropriate skill check, whether Connoisseur or Taste (Wisdom-based).

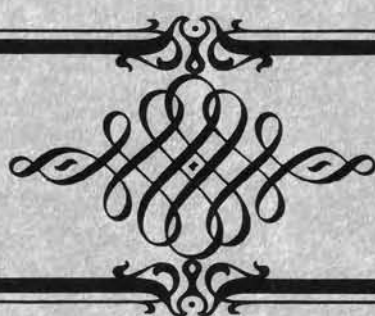
**Touch** — You can feel surfaces and discern heat, moisture and/or minute vibrations, giving you enough information to recognize different weaves, count stitches, aid in determining time of death or ascertain if someone is lying. You gain a +2 bonus on Profession (physician) diagnostic checks and a +4 bonus on Criminology checks.







# Chapter Four: Money and Equipment



*THAT IN THE MORTAR – YOU CALL IT A GUM?*

*AH, THE BRAVE TREE WHENCE SUCH GOLDEN OOZINGS COME!*

*AND YONDER SOFT PHIAL, THE EXQUISITE BLUE,*

*SURE TO TASTE SWEETLY, – IS THAT POISON TOO?*

*–ROBERT BROWNING, “THE LABORATORY”*





Charles Eachus looked up and down, appraising the wooden door of the shop to which he had been sent. The pale white paint was cracked and in parts had entirely peeled away, revealing the dark brown wood beneath. The brass handle was turning green and was covered with dark flecks of rust. Only the small sign that hung on a single nail offered any evidence at all that the building was not totally abandoned. Charles focused on the blocky black writing of the sign. It read "Tools for Exotic Use." He sighed and for the third time checked the address written on the scrap of paper given him by the Lady Omaira Parrilla. This was indeed the correct address.

The door swung open with a low creak and a tiny bell above the door announced his presence. The store's interior did nothing to dispel the idea that this place had long since closed up shop. Through the gloom, Charles could see that a curtain of dusty cobwebs adorned everything. The wooden shelves that held various common tradesman's tools lined the walls on either side but were in severe disrepair, most bent at highly unsafe angles. The floor buckled in parts and threatened to upend the unwary walker. Charles shook his head and prepared to leave when a cough pulled his attention to the only other occupant of the shop.

Charles looked over at the hawk-nosed man in the clerk's apron that gazed over at him with deep-set brown eyes. Somehow he hadn't noticed him amongst the clutter when he first entered.

"Are you the owner of this store?" Charles asked warily.

"Indeed I am, good sir," answered the shopkeeper with a thick foreign accent that Charles couldn't quite place.

Feeling very foolish, Charles nonetheless followed Lady Parrilla's instructions and said, "I'm here because the Knight of Bucksbury is awake again."

He hadn't understood what these words meant, but the Lady was most specific in her instructions. He knew that it had something to do with the apparition he had witnessed three nights back, but the Lady was keeping her secrets and told him only where to go and what to say when he got there.

The store owner's eyes grew wide, and he turned on his heels toward a small door in the back of the shop.

"Come then, my good sir. If this true, then you will need to be ready to face what is coming."

Charles finally gave in to his growing agitation with all the mystery and called to the retreating man, "Wait, what thing? What's going on here? How can you help me with anything, all you have here is junk?"

The man spun sharply and locked his brown eyes with Charles. "What you see here my friend is what I

leave out for the curious or bored who wander into this place. For the task that is set before you, you will need more than these things you see. Follow me into the backroom, and we shall ensure that you are properly equipped. Now come! If this abomination has risen again, we have not a moment to spare!"

### *Fighting back against the Darkness*

The world is a shadowy place with alleyways that hide the very real presence of unnatural wickedness and murderous otherworldly evil. Moving through elite social circles wearing a mask of civility, this evil hunts for its chosen prey. Through the black of night in the haunted forests of the world, this evil hunts. It prowls the seedy docks and places of ill repute. No one among the guilty or the innocent is fully aware of the scope of what is really going on. They shuffle off to their homes and turn the gas lights low, hoping that this nameless horror will choose someone else on this night. What can brave men and women do against such an enemy?

The only real defense that can be counted on is preparation. Once adventurers are made aware of what is watching them from the darkness, they need to be ready to deal with whatever crosses their path. And while they may strengthen their skills with arms and increase their store of arcane knowledge, they should also acquire the right tools to complete their righteous task. Whether it's a men's formal suit to be used to infiltrate an important social function or a hefty wood chopping axe to break down a thick oaken door, the wise adventurer knows that the proper equipment can mean all the difference between maintaining a tenuous grasp on life and meeting almost certain death.

Throughout human history, legends and stories have told the tales of heroes willing to take up arms against the monsters that stalk the night. From the epic courage of Beowulf to the virtue of the knights of King Arthur and the Round Table, these stories have held the attention of those who would one day grow up to become "adventurers." Raised on tales of maidens rescued from harm and dragons vanquished with cold steel, heroes-to-be may feel the reality of their present situation like a blast of cold, unhealthy air in the face or the musty, crawling malevolence that surrounds the opening of a long sealed tomb.

No knights in armor exist to come to the rescue, only ordinary (or not so ordinary) men and



women who seek to pit their skills against the forces of the night.

Hope remains, however. Having taken stock of the evil they now face and the battles they must fight, these so-called ordinary individuals may realize that the wonders of science have marched steadily forward since the time of Arthurian legend. Where the torch and sword have failed to remove this blight permanently from the land, perhaps the bull's-eye lantern and repeating carbine rifle may succeed.

While the style and technology of the equipment that adventurers need in order to face the horrors of the night may differ greatly from those olden days, many of the same common items in the *D&D Player's Handbook* are available and basically unchanged. Basic equipment (and other equivalent items of the 1890s) remains relatively the same. A fishhook is still a fishhook and a pony is still a pony. DMs should feel free to allow players to select standard adventuring equipment from Chapter 7 of the *D&D Player's Handbook*. Some items available in the **Masque of the Red Death** setting either differ significantly from their medieval counterparts or are entirely new. These items are detailed in this chapter.

DMs and players should keep the acquisition of equipment within reasonable limits. Given any restrictions due to their social situation, environment or resources that characters may have to contend with, the DM should be the final judge on what items are available for purchase. If there is no reasonable explanation for the characters to have access to some of the items listed, then it falls upon the DM to suggest that players try an alternate method of acquiring what they need. Obviously things such as mystical potions that can heal wounds or offer a boost to a character's strength are not something that adventurers can pick up at the local dry goods store. It's just never that easy.

The list of items and their descriptions are kept fairly simple in order not to bog down game play with long amounts of research and precise historical facts. In this way, the story can remain securely fixed on telling tales of horror and suspense rather than just doling out bits of trivia. Players should be able to have their characters face the terrors waiting for them without having to do a thesis paper on the use of snuffboxes by Victorian gentlemen.

### *All that Glitters*

The gold coin is the usual method of payment; in the **Masque of the Red Death** setting, however, most societies have advanced to a method of paper money. Actual coins are rarely used to purchase goods and services in the civilized world but are valued more for their history as antiques. In some more remote corners of the world, coins might still serve as primary currency or else act as wealth in a direct barter system.

When characters start shopping around for items that might be useful in their research and duties, the DM may have to convert the value of items from the gold coin standard to more modern currency.

The easiest method is to ignore conversion altogether and value a gold piece at the same amount as a dollar. This would make copper pieces equal to a penny, silver pieces around the same value as a dime and platinum pieces on par with five dollars. This method makes pricing items easy; it in no way accurately reflects what the actual prices of these items would be.

For example, a simple gold coin in the 1890s would be valued at approximately \$5.00 just for its weight in gold. The history and rarity of the coin itself would greatly increase its value. This also holds true for items such as weaponry. An authentic and well-maintained battleaxe from the 13th century would be considered an antique. Its age and condition would bolster the price of the item well beyond the gold piece value listed in the *D&D Player's Handbook*. But, for those who would rather concentrate on the adventure and themes of the story rather than quibble about the price of tea in China, this might be a valid method to consider.

### *Walking in a Strange Land*

Inevitably, intrepid adventurers find themselves leaving familiar locations and traveling to exotic locales in their efforts to purge the world of the evil presence they have discovered. Once they have arrived at their destination, the characters may need to re-equip themselves with fresh provisions in order to continue their hunt. This situation can become an issue for your game sessions if you are seeking to adhere to strict historical accuracy. After all, what was the exchange rate with a particular foreign country in the year and time of your game session? What is the difference between goods and services in the German countryside as



opposed to the bustling confines of Calcutta, India?

Again, do not allow the issue of foreign money exchanges to cause your story to bog down with too many tables and economic facts. Rather than spend time with conversion tables, DMs may simply replace any currency with an equal dollar amount. For example, five yen would be the same as five dollars. This approach may not be realistic to some, and those people are free to do their own research if they feel it suits their game. However, the simpler method will remove complicated mathematics and hours of potentially fruitless research from the free time you have between games, allowing for more time to be spent on writing a better story.

The following list names countries that characters may find themselves visiting and the name of the common currency used there at the time of the game setting. For other, more exotic locations, a little time spent reading in an encyclopedia or searching historical website entries will provide you with the proper names of the currency used.

### *Tools for the Job*

*"All right, I say we move in now and take it by surprise," whispered Harvey Merrick. "We've only seen one set of tracks leading up to that shack, and we can't wait for darkness to come and risk that thing slipping away from us."*

*The old army sergeant glanced over at his traveling companion, Jonathan Haston, and once again regretted his decision to bring him along. The man was an obvious dandy, unused to the ruggedness of life in the wilderness. Haston still wore his expensive sports coat even while they were crawling in the dirt trying to get a better look at their prey. His thin frame was sadly lacking muscle or bulk, as if he were actually a scarecrow that had lost all its straw. If Haston hadn't already encountered beasts like their quarry and, therefore, possessed knowledge of how to stop them, he would never have accepted the fop's help in the first place.*

*"Wait, let me have a go," Jonathan Haston reached into his deep cabinet bag and pulled out a tube of brass and glassware. He extended it fully and placed it to one eye while the other screwed shut. Haston looked out toward the broken down shack that sat at the base of the hill. "I can see at least three of them. One is by the door to the cabin. The other two are shambling around near the lake." He adjusted his position and tensed suddenly.*

*"Wait a moment!" he hissed, "I see one more in the building itself. I really don't think they've noticed*

*Table 4-1: Countries and their Currency*

<b>Country</b>	<b>Currency Used</b>
Arabia	riyal
Austria	florin
Belgium	franc
Bulgaria	lev
Canada	dollar
China	yaun
Denmark	krone
Egypt	pound
England	pound
Finland	markka
France	franc
Germany	mark
Greece	drachma
Hungary	korona
India	rupee
Ireland	pound
Italy	lira
Japan	yen
Luxembourg	franc
Mexico	peso
Netherlands	guilder
Norway	krone
Persia	dinar
Portugal	reis
Rumania	leu
Russia	ruble
Spain	peseta
Sweden	krona
Switzerland	franc

*our presence yet, Mr. Merrick," Haston said as he removed the spyglass from his eye. "We're too far away for their ears to hear, but given their numbers, perhaps we should think this through more completely?" His suggestion was voiced hesitantly, his face pensive and thoughtful.*

*Harvey stared sternly for a moment at his companion, then broke into a broad grin. He reached over and patted skinny Mr. Haston on the back and earnestly proclaimed, "Good thinking, lad! I think this partnership might work out well for us after all, Jonathan!"*



### *Equipment Descriptions*

The following descriptions provide some basic information about some of the less common equipment that your characters may wish to acquire with their hard earned income (or through other, less scrupulous methods, of course).

The prices below reflect the cost of items made of average quality. And while the vast assembly lines have not yet been realized, some products can be made easily and quickly in the 1890s that only a few years before would have been time consuming and costly. Common household items and clothing are among some of the things that through the use of improved technology are now readily available at affordable prices.

Some items can be purchased at a higher cost to reflect more expensive materials used in their construction, such as a gold-embossed button-hook or an engraved silver pocket watch. And some products are just not easy to find, despite the desire of merchants to bring products closer to their buyers.

The DM should feel free to increase price amounts if an item would be considered uncommon or difficult to find. In fact whole adventures

can be designed around just procuring weapons and supplies from people that are not always on the “up and up.”

- **Binoculars:** These viewing aides are very popular amongst the growing ranks of the explorers and adventurers of the day. Their ability to magnify distant objects easily makes them necessary tools for exploration. In addition, they prove their value as a means of observing potentially dangerous persons or creatures from a safe distance. They are also popular among the upper classes that have latched on the current fashion of appreciating “the great outdoors.”

The binoculars listed on the equipment table offer a magnification factor of 10. This means that an observer can clearly view an object 100 feet away as if it were only 10 feet away.

- **Blacksmith’s Tool Set:** The art of the blacksmith is not entirely dead in the modern age. Though not as essential to a town’s survival as it once was, blacksmithing is still a respected and useful profession. A wide assortment of metalworking tools is available in this large, heavy kit. The tool set contains hammers, chisels and tongs as well as finer tools for doing decorative work on metal. In order to make proper use of these items, however,



the character should have access to a working forge or anvil as well as appropriate materials.

- **Burner, Bunsen:** This item is used as a heat source for work in scientific laboratories. The Bunsen burner produces high intensity flames that are not smoky and do not flicker excessively. These items, however, require a gas feed, usually from a city's gas line. For this reason, Bunsen burners are rarely seen outside the halls of science or academia, although some serious experimenters have adapted them for private use.

- **Button Hook:** This is a small metal hook attached to a decorative handle. It is used to help with buttoning the smaller buttons of ladies' blouses and the tall ruffles of the neck as well as for the buttons in men's tall boots. More expensive varieties were made of sterling silver.

- **Cabinet Bag:** This carrying bag resembles the stereotypical "doctor's bag." Stiff leather sides hold the shape of the bag while a hinged top of soft leather provides easy access to the objects within. This item becomes more and more common among the professionals of the emerging middle class.

- **Calling Cards:** A required convention of etiquette, a calling card bears an individual's name, title and address, although women's cards typically contain only the name. The card is handed to a butler or secretary so that this individual may properly announce the caller. If the sought after host is not at home, the card can be left behind as a reminder of the call. Among the social circles of the upper class, the practice of using calling cards is a necessary practice.

- **Camera, Box:** Perhaps the most commonly used camera of the period for landscape and studio photography, this item is bulky, cumbersome and fragile. To take a picture, a photographic plate must be inserted into the camera. Once exposed, the plate can be developed using a photographic kit

- **Camera, Folding:** Very similar to the box camera in operation, the folding camera has the advantage of easier storage and transportation through a soft body frame with accordion folds that can be collapsed and carried or stored in a relatively small place.

- **Camera, Stereo:** While this device is very similar to a box camera in size and appearance, its effect differs greatly. The stereo camera produces two images of the subject, each slightly different in perspective from the other. When developed and viewed with a stereoscope such photographs can

create a crude three-dimensional image. Viewing these optical illusions is a favorite leisure time activity during the 1890s.

- **Carpentry Tool Set:** This kit contains an assortment of carving tools, hammers and other items that may enable a character to make repairs to wooden objects or fashion new items from appropriate materials. However a supply of lumber and other materials is necessary for larger projects.

- **Club Bag:** A cross between a duffle bag and a briefcase, this item is commonly fashioned from canvas and leather. More exotic varieties of club bags, made from the hides of alligators and other exotic creatures are also available for those who can afford them. The growing middle class makes good use of these handy carrying cases, while the upper class often makes a show of owning the more exotically constructed varieties. The club bag has soft sides and a metal frame, and closes with a metal clasp.

- **Cobbler's Tools:** This kit contains tools that include knives, punches and awls. A cobbler's kit is used for the care and repair of leather items. The kit also contains shoe polish, saddle soap and leather cream. Used mostly to fix shoes and boots, it is also used for other leather goods including gloves, backpacks, suitcases, bags and many other items.

- **Compass, Magnetic:** This is a small, hand-held device used in navigation. Within its casing is a lodestone that rotates a directional display. If properly steadied, the arrow always rotates toward the north (barring any kind of large magnetic interference).

- **Gunsmith's Kit:** These tools are designed to aid in the construction and maintenance of most handguns and rifles. Brushes exist, both long and short, to help keep barrels clear of debris, as well as oil and cloth to keep all parts in good working condition. Private owners and craftsmen alike have good reason to keep this kit handy, but for adventurers whose survival may well depend on their weapons, these kits often make the difference between life and death.

- **Handcuffs:** Used primarily by the law enforcement agents, these steel handcuffs are made with double locks, which means each cuff can be locked and unlocked independently of the other. It is often difficult for civilians to acquire these items. Even policemen and certain types of detectives may run into difficulties using handcuffs outside of their police and law enforcement duties. In certain



places of ill repute, however, handcuffs can be acquired for the right price.

- **Lantern, Bull's-eye:** Also known as the "dark lantern," this device is commonly used by criminals and police officers alike. Usually made with an outer shell of tin, it has a large ground glass magnifying "eye" in the front through which light shines when someone opens it. It concentrates the light into a single wide beam. Since it gives off a good amount of heat (sometimes doubling as a personal heater), it comes with carrying handles and even a belt hook. The wick inside can be raised or lowered to adjust the light intensity.

- **Lantern, Harness:** Resembling a smaller version of a common bull's-eye lantern, this device provides light up to a distance of 30 feet. It sheds far less light than larger lanterns; the ease with which it can be clipped onto a belt, however, makes it ideal for situations that call for the character to have both hands free. A harness lantern can carry enough oil to remain lit for up to two hours. It can become quite hot, however, and must be handled with great care.

- **Magic Lantern:** An extremely popular form of entertainment, this device projects an image onto a screen using a lens to enlarge and focus the image. The images are painted on glass slides that are inserted into the machine. It is employed for religious, educational, artistic, scientific and topographical uses as well.

- **Microscope:** This optical device has gone through many changes in recent times, becoming smaller in size and somewhat portable if great care is given to its transportation. It is rarely found outside academic or scientific halls, but those wishing to imitate a scholar often purchase a microscope to reinforce their image. It is used to examine minute objects and is useful in many scientific pursuits. It is fragile and subject to easy breakage.

- **Opera Glasses:** These items are ornate, less powerful versions of the more common binoculars. Opera glasses generally magnify at a power of 2 or 3 times, limiting their use severely. A favorite vanity piece of the social elite, these viewing spectacles are rarely ever seen outside the theatre, except perhaps on display in the homes of those wealthy enough to afford going to lavish theatrical events on a regular basis.

- **Pipe, Meerschaum:** Translated from the German, Meerschaum means "sea foam." This smoking pipe is so named because the stone carved in its creation is light in weight and white in color.

After much use, it tends to darken to a deep cherry red or brown. These pipes are popular with gentlemen of the era, and have been associated with the image of the "Great Detective" Sherlock Holmes.

- **Sewing Kit:** This small kit contains needles, various threads, a few stray buttons and a small pair of scissors. The tools here are meant to repair small tears and to make slight alterations to clothing and costumes. For more extensive work, a sewing machine and appropriate materials are required.

- **Stereoscope:** This popular novelty device uses optics to fool the eye into seeing an artificial three-dimensional image. Constructed mostly of wood, the viewer looks at two slightly different images (usually photographs) through mirrors. They are common throughout Victorian households.

- **Typewriter:** Recently designed with the QWERTY style typing board, this device is rapidly becoming a staple in the business environment. While some models require the typist to lift the carriage in order to see the work, improvements to this device are taking place all the time. Some models are elaborately decorated with flower designs and other decals. Cheaper models are nondecorative and simply functional.

- **Watchmaker's Tools:** This set of tools contains a collection of fine instruments for the maintaining and repairing of the delicate inner mechanics of pocket watches and other chronometrical devices. Watchmaker's tools often include a magnifying lens (sometimes made to be attached to a cap or to fit directly over the eye), miniature pliers, tweezers, polishers and fine brushes for cleaning out debris.

- **Whistle, Police:** These thin metal whistles are standard issue for the constables of the era who use them to summon aid or backup. They replaced the metal and wooden rattles originally used to raise an alarm when it was found that their piercing sound could carry almost twice the distance. Since that time they have come to be associated with an emergency.

### *Getting it the Hard Way*

Francois was unsure of where he was or what direction he had come from. The fog around the dock area was incredibly thick, so much so that he began to wonder if the Baron's kidnapper wasn't the cause. The thick mist seemed to reach out for him as he ran, weighing down his clothes with a clammy wetness that made him shiver from something other than cold. Sounds assaulted Francois' ears from every direction.



He was quickly losing his way.

Running down what he thought was a side street, Francois realized he had made a critical error. His way ended in a solid brick wall – the back of warehouse. He turned quickly and saw what he most feared as fast-moving shapes lumbered toward the mouth of the alley. With no way out, he drew his pistol and offered a silent prayer that his wife and daughter would be all right without him.

Suddenly the grate near base of the wall creaked open. Francois has been so intent on his approaching attackers, he failed to notice the grating or consider it as a method of escape. Now, it was swinging open easily and smoothly.

From out of the darkness beyond the grate came a thin man in an old black cap and dirty, fingerless gloves. The stranger motioned for him to follow. With a quick glance back at the head of the alleyway, Francois ran to the grate and jumped inside. It swung shut behind him with a loud clang.

“Old-Boot” Bill would later prove himself to be a valuable ally. He had been a crook all his life, never looking out for anyone other than himself. But then he stumbled across the same monster that pursued Francois and realized that there were worse things out there than criminals and cutthroats. And in the face of such evil,

all men were brothers in truth. Francois couldn't argue with that.

### *Illegal Activity*

The battle that the characters have taken up is not an easy one. There are times when the characters are going to need to acquire something that may not be within the bounds of the law. Perhaps they need opium to pose as dealers in order to get close to a suspected vampire. They might require large amounts of ammunition to supply a native village with the raw power its people need to fight off creatures that lurk beneath the water of a nearby dark lake. Whatever the reasons, working against the monsters of darkness may sometimes require breaking the laws of mankind.

If they come to this decision, chances are that there will be someone out there willing to sell them what they need — for a price. While it is not illegal to purchase guns and ammunition, if the fight against darkness drags on for too long, someone will notice when the characters start purchasing enough firearms and weapons to supply a small army.





Within the bowels of every urban landscape, there are ways in and out of a city that are not well guarded by law enforcement. Criminals and others outside the law know these passageways well. Hidden passages through waterways, unlit shipping docks or hidden panels in large boxes are just a few of the places the characters may take advantage of with sufficient bribe money and underworld contacts. These places serve as headquarters for the professional smugglers and underhanded criminals who make their living moving goods in and out of their hidden domains.

In order to get these goods, the smuggler or thief has to take risks. If caught, they face a potentially long prison term at best. Such risks add to the cost for procuring the items in question. The DM should use his discretion in determining how much more a grifter or “knight of the post” is going to charge in order to get the characters what they need. Prices could conceivably double or even triple if the characters seem desperate or easy marks. And if they meet an extravagant price, they might seem to be wealthy individuals, a fact that might make them a target of their own suppliers. Little honor exists among thieves. It is often a world of brute force and a wicked use of cerebral talents. Masterminds can direct whole legions of lesser crooks, keeping tabs on entire neighborhoods like fat, deadly spiders in the center of their webs.

Another danger in dealing with the criminal element for ammunition and other dubiously legal supplies is that some of the monsters that the characters search for might find a haven with these same criminals. The unnatural abilities that some creatures possess make them well suited to a lifestyle among thieves and cutthroats. Nested in the seedy underbelly of society, a monster might well build itself a network of criminals to do its bidding. These lackeys may not be aware of their boss’ true nature. Alternatively, they may be fully aware and unconcerned. The characters could very well attempt to purchase illegal items only to find that their supplier is the very creature they are hunting!

It is entirely possible that the characters may find themselves beginning or ending up as members of the criminal element. While this may help them in some aspects of a character’s life — such as getting illegal supplies and moving around the city — this should not be considered the “easy option.” Criminals are still wanted by law enforcement agents who tend to assume that suspects are guilty

until proven innocent. If a person’s reputation becomes tainted by such dark rumors, he may find himself demoted to the status of a social pariah, cut them off from as many resources as he otherwise might have gained.

### *Smoke and Thunder*

“Mrs. Gram, I’m afraid we really don’t have the time for this all this,” said Detective Ferrell as he glanced nervously out the window at the rapidly setting sun. The foreign devil that lurked in one of the storehouses down by the docks would be rising soon. And it would be hungry for the blood of the living. He needed the knowledge kept in the old journal that this frustratingly addled woman held in her care.

Hobbling across the room, Mrs. Gram slowly continued toward the large cabinet that rested against the wall, chattering all the while.

“Are you always in such a rush, detective? You know the old colonel was a busy man as well. He was always rushing about, from one place to another. Never took time to smell the roses, did he? Oh no, never him. He never had time for the simple things in life, God rest his tired soul.”

Finally, at her destination she pulled a rusty iron key out of her pocket and inserted it in the large lock on the cabinet.

“Yes, yes, Mrs. Gram,” the detective said, hoping he did not betray his impatience. “I understand. But what about the notes your late husband brought back from India? You said he had notes he kept in an old journal; notes about what he found there in those jungle ruins! Do you still have that journal?”

Mrs. Gram turned her head and gave the detective a patient smile. She answered in a pleasant voice as she opened the old cabinet, “Oh yes, he brought back his notes. I’ve kept them all these years.” She stepped away from the front of the cabinet and let Ferrell see the inside.

Detective Ferrell’s mouth fell open as he stared at the arsenal laid out before him. Hanging inside the modest cabinet were two hunting rifles, three army issue pistols and at least four long knives. Several boxes of ammunition were all neatly stacked in a row along the bottom shelf. There was even a large well-kept medieval looking crossbow that looked as if it came from the Tower of London itself. The entire collection looked clean and ready for use, not a speck of dust touched one inch of those gleaming weapons.

Ferrell turned slowly to look at the old woman who was now squarely meeting his gaze with focused eyes and with a grim expression on her wrinkled face,



*“After what he saw in those jungles, Detective Ferrell, his notes were not the only thing my late husband brought back from overseas. He was a smart man, gifted by the good Lord with wisdom to suit his age. He knew this evil would eventually find its way here to our home, and he knew that someone would need to stand against it, God rest his tired soul.”*

#### *Firearms Description*

In the time of the **Masque of the Red Death** game setting, reasonably safe and accurate firearms are readily available. The Industrial Revolution's methods of mass production grant the common man easy access to handguns and rifles at prices that most can afford.

Literally hundreds of types of firearms are available to characters; however, for ease of use they have been grouped together into basic types by their similarity. DMs and players who want to add more detail to their characters are free to reorganize these groupings and even research the specifics of other models of firearms to suit their purposes.

- **Handguns:** These small weapons are the preferred tool of those unwilling or unable to carry

around the heavier rifles of the day. Easier to conceal than long guns, this type of firearm carries six rounds at a time. These weapons are divided into three categories: derringers, navy pistols and army pistols.

A *derringer* is a small weapon that only holds a single round. While not as deadly as large firearms, the advantage of this gun is in its ability to fit into an inside coat pocket or even a small handbag. It is often referred to as a ladies' pistol or a purse pistol for just this reason. Derringers are the preferred method of self-defense for the upper class, which can carry them easily without seeming to be “barbaric.”

The *navy pistol* is a lightweight six-shooter that uses .38 caliber ammunition. While it lacks the stopping power of the army pistol, it is more dangerous than the smaller derringer. Navy pistols are commonly found in urban areas as an accepted firearm for the lower class.

*Army pistols* are comparatively larger weapons that use .45 caliber bullets. They are deadlier than the navy pistol and have a longer barrel and heftier weight. But like the navy pistol they can only hold six rounds of ammunition. These weapons are



commonly used by those seen as being outside of civilized society and are better reserved for frontier settlers, rugged cowboys and hardened explorers.

• **Longarms:** Longarms are the weapons of choice for characters who don't have the time to conceal their firearms or who don't care about doing so. Individuals who need a gun to provide both power and range seek out longarms. These guns include rifles, carbines, repeating rifles, repeating carbines, shotguns and scatterguns.

*Rifles* are the standard longarms. Whether it is for military use, game hunting, private target shooting, or dangerous law enforcement situations, the

rifle is a reliable weapon. They are breech loading weapons that require the shooter to manually load the shell into the base of the barrel before each shot is taken. After each round is fired off, the shooter must reload before taking aim again.

*Repeating rifles* have the advantage of being able to hold multiple rounds. A mechanical lever brings the next round into the firing position within the weapon after each shot is taken. The repeating rifle only needs to be reloaded after all the ammunition within the firearm is expended. Because of the lever mechanism these rifles are also called lever action rifles.



### *The Tools of Destruction*

In a world where firearms are easily constructed and readily available to anyone who has the means to purchase them, something must be said about the use and concealment of firearms.

While the clever character knows better than to face the waiting darkness without every advantage she could possibly have, pulling hammers on every threat that rears its ugly head might cause problems in the long run. The mundane authorities, blind to the unholy dangers of the world, often create certain unpleasant entanglements for adventurers as these diligent policemen and constables fulfill their duties of enforcing the law. So how does one avoid the ire of those innocents they are seeking to protect and steer clear of those authorities who represent stability in a world degenerating into chaos?

The subject of gun control in the 1890s is a fairly easy one to discuss — there is no such thing. The only real control hinges on possessing the money to purchase ammunition and the gun itself. The idea that a restriction can or should be placed on citizens by their government concerning their ownership of firearms just hasn't entered the political climate at the time. The constables of the London Metropolitan Police often go unarmed except for their batons. Of course the idea of actually shooting an officer of the law is reserved for only the most foul and desperate criminals. In times of war, the common action taken by the victors is to disarm the vanquished. In time, and after reparations are made, this penalty is usually revoked.

Despite the apparent lenient attitude toward carrying firearms, if the characters start waving around pistols and shooting into the air they are going to attract the attention of a lot of people, including the police. And no matter how legal their actions might be, the constables of the time have some very broad powers when it comes to arresting people if the officer feels they are making a public menace of themselves. And the offenders had better come along quietly.

The wise character's best interests lie in using firearms in public only as a last resort instead of a first strike. The creatures of the night often do their best to conceal their presence from those around them, and the players may wish to follow suit.

The DM should feel free to modify slight historical facts as they see fit so long as the story holds true to its intended theme. If it serves the story better (and helps to restrain some of the wild cowboy diplomacy of some players) to have a secret police force that abuses its authority and employs all manner of quality firearms for unscrupulous purposes, then feel free to write them into your game sessions. The tainted world of the Red Death should be an unsafe place. While details help add flavor to a game the point is really to enjoy the setting, and not quibble over details such as the exact length and design of a policeman's baton.



Carbines are a much lighter version of the traditional rifle, but it has a shorter range of fire and produces less of an impact. However the carbine does use the same ammunition as the rifle, making it easier to purchase rounds and to sort out which rounds go with which weapons for a particular job. Like the rifle, the carbine has a lever action version. The repeating carbine operates under the same basic mechanics as the repeating rifle.

The *shotgun* is most often a two-barreled breech-loading weapon that has a very short effective range when compared to the rifle; it can, however, inflict tremendous damage if used properly. Instead of ejecting a single round at a time like the rifle, the shotgun disperses a spray of small pellets at its target. Despite firing pellets it is difficult to catch more than one target at a time within the shotgun's range of fire at a distance close enough to be effective.

The *scattergun* is a variation of the shotgun. Its barrels are shortened (leading to the weapon commonly being called a sawed-off shotgun) and it is designed to spray a barrage of pellets that can strike multiple targets. This firearm is far easier to conceal under a large coat or even in a large carrying bag.

### *The Stern Rod*

*Excerpt from the journal of Arthur Mosley.*

*I will admit that my fear of the creature had completely unmanned me. The suffering and madness of Hell's damned citizenry could be heard in the awful wailing that issued from its withered throat. Wave after wave of strong revulsion passed over me and I was left cowering on the dusty floor of the warehouse. Even as some part of me knew it was my death to do so I could only cower and whimper, defenseless as a newborn babe. If it wasn't for Mr. Fergus and his swift actions I would not be here to write these memoirs.*

*Although my face was buried in my hands and I lay curled up on the floor, I clearly heard the creature's vocalizations dramatically alter, becoming high-pitched and shrill. It was no longer closing in for the kill; the thing was in a great deal of pain. Whatever spell it had upon me had been broken, and I managed to look up. There was brave Mr. Fergus with his long knife hilt deep in the hip of the beast. His jaw was set in a grim fashion and his eyes flashed as if they were on fire. He savagely pulled out the blade (a small part of my brain registered that there was no blood upon it) and dug it in again and again, piercing the ghastly pale flesh. The wailing monster gave a heave and tossed Mr. Fergus*

*across the room. Our friend Albert Tuttle, who had been in a similar state as myself, had recovered enough to draw his pistol and fire, but the shot went wide, chipping the wood near the creature's head. This near miss shocked the creature into action. With a howl, it ran for the open window. In the blink of an eye, it was gone.*

*As silence descended on us all, we pulled ourselves up and took stock of our injuries. But I do remember one distinct fact. I saw the eyes of the creature in the instant before it disappeared through the open portal. And in those eyes I saw fear. Perhaps we have some measure of hope in this vocation after all. Perhaps we can remove this evil from the world, because we made it afraid.*

### *Mellic Weapons*

While the days of knights in shining armor are now relegated to antiquity, most adventurers or would-be heroes would still conclude that a weapon in hand is far superior to the bare fist. While resorting to weapons in a gentleman's brawl is usually considered bad form, some brawlers — usually not gentlemen — survive by any means necessary. Such activities are the bailiwick of the lowliest and most desperate criminals. Characters caught openly brandishing weapons, therefore, may find themselves treated as criminals by the local law. Concealment and caution are the best ways to avoid unnecessary entanglements with the local law enforcement.

Soldiers are still trained in the use of hand weapons, such as swords and cutlasses. With the advent of reliable firearms, these tools of war take a more secondary role. Many retired soldiers, however, continue to wear their weapons at their sides to social functions. Although many civilians believe that such weapons are merely ceremonial, the swords, sabres or cutlasses worn by these retirees are, in fact, the same weapons they carried into battle when they were in active service.

All that remains of the mighty weapons of the barbarian ages are relics hanging in museums and private collections. Long swords and war axes are rarely ever forged in recent times — and with very good reason. These weapons have outlived their usefulness. Most weapon-bearing individuals now prefer the more “civilized” weapons of conflict. Finding nondescript serviceable weapons that predate the late Middle Ages and Renaissance period should present characters with a difficult task at best.



Some melee weapons, nevertheless, are still easily accessible to most characters provided they can afford them and keep them from being stolen by others.

### *Martial Weapons*

These weapons are the preferred melee weapons of soldiers, explorers and rugged individualists. They are almost never drawn in civilized society. In fact, the sight of most of these weapons might cause bystanders to summon the police to the scene.

- **Sabre:** This weapon was the most reliable close combat weapon of the soldier field commander. While some were quite plain in design and ornamentation, others were highly decorative. Both sorts had keen edges and served their wielders in combat. Often used when the enemy closed ranks upon a soldier before he had the chance to fire another round from his pistol or rifle, the sabre allowed the beleaguered warrior to defend himself. These long bladed, gracefully curved weapons were designed for use one-handed for a quick chop such as that used to dispatch an enemy. Sabre technique emphasizes speed, feints and strong offensive moves.

- **Rapier/Sword Cane:** The rapier is a long, thin weapon. Though not as widely used in war as the sabre, the rapier's elegant design makes it a gentleman's choice of weapon in the art of fencing. Used one-handed, this sword enables multiple swift strikes that deliver a piercing attack aimed at an opponent's vital organs. A variation of the rapier is the sword cane, a rapier-style blade concealed within a gentleman's walking cane. The user has simply to unscrew the top and draw out the weapon, often to an opponent's surprise. This option offers adventurers a chance to provide themselves with arms without raising suspicion. Wielding this weapon on the frontier, however, will most likely brand its owner as a dandy.

- **Axe:** A far cry from the sacred weapon of the Norse berserkers that raided the coastline of England so very long ago, the modern axe sees very little use outside of felling trees and harvesting lumber. By the 19th century, axes are largely nondescript and serve to split wood for fuel-burning stoves. The common wood-cutting axe is used with two hands and requires considerable upper body strength in order to get a good swing going. Of course an intrepid adventurer can always sharpen an axe blade to make it useful for cutting into other things as well.

- **Bayonet:** This weapon consists of a large daggerlike blade affixed to the end of a long rifle barrel for use in close combat. Most bayonets prevent the user from firing the rifle and have to be removed before taking a shot. While soldiers often drilled with the use of these weapons, they were rarely used in actual combat as anything other than a last resort. When a soldier had used the last of his ammunition and the enemy was too close to allow for reloading, the bayonet provided the soldier with a spear. Bayonets were also used when charging the enemy or to deliver the coup to a badly wounded enemy soldier. These useful "tools" also served as a digging tool, an eating implement and even as a candleholder by the soldier in the field. This weapon was exclusively found in the military service, since few private citizens had any use for such a military-oriented weapon.

- **Bowie Knife:** Jim Bowie's knife design was made famous in the United States, but its popularity has spread throughout the globe. Some claim that the Bowie knife is more deadly than an army pistol. After all, a pistol might misfire, or the shooter may miss his intended target. However, facing off against a skilled knife-fighter armed with a Bowie knife spells almost certain death for an opponent. Some varieties can be folded for safe and easy travel. In some places, such as the American West, it is acceptable to wear a Bowie knife in public. In fact, attempting to conceal such a weapon often causes more suspicion than carrying it openly.

### *Simple Weapons*

These hand-held weapons are found among the lowest castes of society, among those who cannot afford to purchase better weapons for themselves. In the 19th century, many are also used by the indigenous people of Africa, India and South America (all lands colonized by the Western world).

- **Bolo:** More often used as a tool for hunting, this ranged weapon requires a great deal of skill to use properly. In its simplest construction, a bolo consists of a length of rope with rocks on either end. The wielder twirls the bolo over his head, releasing it in the direction of the target. If used properly, the bolo wraps around the target, either causing damage to the target as the rocks collide with the quarry or else entangling the target. It is nearly impossible to deploy the bolo in close quarters or with any degree of speed, since it needs to be swung several times to work up enough speed and momentum to achieve a significant distance.



- **Bow:** Still used in some remote cultures around the globe, the bow and arrow is made almost completely obsolete by the invention of the firearm. Some people still practice archery as a hobby or sport, but this is a luxury of the upper class. Those who use the bow usually gain a small amount of proficiency with the weapon with only a little time. Dedicated archers spend many hours practicing and gaining the physical conditioning that enables them to consistently strike a target with skill and accuracy.

- **Club:** This common cudgel can be designed specifically for use in combat, or improvised from materials at hand. A baton is an example of a light club carried by law enforcement officers. A stout tree limb or table leg can also serve the resourceful adventurer in a pinch.

- **Pocket Knife:** This small knife is substandard when compared to the Bowie Knife. It is often double-bladed and folds up for ease of carrying and concealment. Most of these weapons are of poor quality. Some, however, bear gold, silver or ivory handles and are designed as show pieces.

### *Primitive Weapons*

These weapons are most often the survival tools of primitive societies. In the civilized world, these weapons are seldom used for anything other than recreation. Explorers and adventurers in foreign lands might bring back these weapons as trophies of their journeys, but they are rarely put to practical use. As a way of learning about other cultures, however, a traveler may become versed in the combat abilities of these so-called “primitive” weapons.

- **Sling:** This ranged weapon sees little use in the modern society of the 1890s; more primitive cultures, however, still make good use of this weapon. It takes long years of practice to become effective with a sling. Once a level of mastery is gained, a sling-thrower can achieve a great deal of accuracy. So long as small stones and rocks are available, ammunition never runs out.

- **Lasso:** While many other cultures have made use of the lasso in their societies, in recent times the legends of the fabled American West have popularized the common rope. The lasso is a simple length of rope tied in a loop with a sliding knot and swung over the head. It is released so that the open loop encompasses the target. The user yanks on the rope and the sliding knot tightens the

rope and entangles the target. This weapon is almost never used in civilized society, though some assassins make use of smaller lassos to strangle their victims. By far the most visible use of the lasso comes from performers imitating the cowboys of the open plains who specialize in using the lasso from the back of a moving horse. The lasso is also called a lariat or a riata.

- **Net:** The net is a common object used by almost every culture throughout the world at one point or another in their history. Some societies used nets to capture game animals; others employed nets in both river and ocean fishing. As a weapon of war, however, nets are used to disable and capture opponents. In cities, dockworkers and other laborers use nets in shipping yards and docks to help move cargo to and from ships. And, of course, hoodlums find nets advantageous aids for robbery and kidnapping.

- **Spears:** One of the simplest weapon known to man, the spear can be thrown, held and fought with as a distance weapon or set against a cavalry charge. Some tribal people use spears in inter-tribal warfare and for hunting large prey, such as lions.

- **Tomahawk:** Used by the native people of the Americas, the tomahawk is a short axe that serves as a hand-to-hand weapon. As a missile weapon, it demonstrates impressive accuracy. Its slight weight and versatility lends itself to the guerilla fighting style of tribal people — a form of fighting largely unknown to Europeans. A tomahawk is constructed from a rod of wood with the pointed end of the axe head burrowed through a hole in the wood, or with the wood just split and the axe head tied in place with leather straps.

### *Exotic Weapons*

All other weapons listed in the *D&D Player's Handbook* are considered Exotic Weapons for **Masque of the Red Death** characters. The use of them may be gained individually through the Exotic Weapon Proficiency feat. These weapons are more difficult to acquire outside of restoration societies, museums and private collections.

If an artisan or forger of ancient weapons can be located, characters may have these relics recreated with modern construction and smithing techniques. Unless a character has a convincing reason for wanting a Viking battle axe or Norman tower shield, he may have to face awkward questions from the person hired to craft the weapon.

Table 4-2: Miscellaneous Items and Their Costs (and Weights)

Item	Cost	Weight (lb.)	Item	Cost	Weight (lb.)
<b>Garments</b>			<b>General Products</b>		
Belt, leather	\$0.30	—	Alcohol (fuel)	\$0.10	1
Blouse	\$1.25	—	Backpack	\$2.00	2
Bonnet	\$2.25	—	Banjo	\$4.00	5
Boots, riding	\$3.00	—	Baseball mitt	\$2.00	1
Boots, soft	\$1.50	—	Binoculars	\$10.00	2
Boots, rubber	\$1.25	—	Book, cloth cover	\$1.00	0.5
Cap, men's	\$0.50	—	Book, leather cover	\$1.50	0.5
Cape, Opera	\$1.00	—	Book, paper cover	\$0.50	0.25
Dress, common	\$4.00	—	Bugle	\$2.50	1
Dress, women's fancy	\$7.50	—	Burner, Bunsen	\$0.75	1
Gloves, kid	\$1.00	—	Button hook	\$0.40	0.1
Hat, Bowler	\$1.00	—	Cabinet bag	\$3.00	2.5
Hat, Deerstalker	\$1.25	—	Calling cards (50)	\$0.10	0.1
Hat, Ten Gallon	\$1.75	—	Camera, box	\$3.00	3
Hat, Silk Top Hat	\$4.00	—	Camera, folding	\$8.00	2
Overalls	\$2.50	—	Camera, stereo	\$4.00	3.5
Overcoat	\$11.00	—	Clock, alarm	\$1.50	1
Pants	\$1.75	—	Club, bag	\$3.00	2
Petticoat	\$1.00	—	Compass, magnetic	\$1.00	0.1
Raincoat (oil slicker)	\$4.00	—	Goggles (tinted or clear)	\$0.75	0.1
Shirt	\$1.00	—	Guitar	\$9.00	3
Shoes	\$1.00	—	Handbag	\$1.25	1
Skirt, dress	\$3.50	—	Handcuffs	\$3.50	0.5
Skirt, walking	\$2.50	—	Handkerchief	\$0.05	—
Suit, men's hiking/riding	\$8.00	—	Harmonica	\$0.30	0.1
Suit, ladies' dress	\$12.00	—	Hourglass	\$1.00	1
Suit, men's business	\$5.00	—	House paint, gallon	\$1.00	10
Suit, men's dress	\$9.00	—	Ink, 1 ounce bottle	\$0.50	0.1
Union Suit, wool	\$2.00	—	Inkstand	\$0.35	1
			Lantern, bull's-eye	\$2.00	2
			Lantern, harness	\$1.00	1
			Light bulb	\$0.30	—
			Lunchbox	\$0.25	1
			Magic lantern	\$4.00	5
			Magic lantern slides (10)	\$1.00	0.1
			Magnifying glass	\$1.75	0.1
			Marbles (50)	\$1.00	1
			Matches (25/box)	\$0.05	0.1
			Match box, silver	\$1.15	0.1
			Measuring tape (5 feet)	\$0.25	0.1
			Microscope	\$18.00	5
			Monocle	\$1.25	0.1
			Music Box	\$4.50	1.5
			Notebook, pocket	\$0.10	0.1
			Notebook, tablet	\$0.25	0.2
<b>Craftsmen Tools Sets</b>					
Blacksmith's tool set	\$12.50	25			
Carpentry tool set	\$15.00	15			
Cobbler's tools	\$3.00	10			
Gunsmith's kit	\$5.00	2.5			
Photographic set	\$25.00	5			
Physician's bag	\$12.50	6			
Sewing kit	\$2.50	1			
Watchmaker's tools	\$30.00	2.5			

Table 4-2: Miscellaneous Items and Their Costs (and Weights) Continued

Item	Cost	Weight (lb.)	Item	Cost	Weight
<b>General Products</b>			<b>Handgun</b>		
Opera glasses	\$2.50	1.25	Derringer	\$5.00	1
Pen, writing	\$1.00	0.1	Pistol, Army	\$3.50	3
Pencil	\$0.01	0.1	Pistol, Navy	\$2.50	3
Photographic plate	\$1.00	1.5			
Pipe, meerschaum	\$5.00	0.25			
Pocketbook, ladies	\$0.75	0.1	<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Scale, counter	\$2.00	2	<b>Longarm</b>		
Scissors	\$0.75	0.5	Carbine, breech	\$3.50	7
Soap, bar	\$0.03	0.25	Rifle, breech	\$5.00	9
Spectacles	\$2.74	—	Carbine, repeating	\$12.50	7
Spyglass	\$7.00	1	Rifle, repeating	\$15.00	9
Stepladder, 5 ft.	\$1.00	5	Scattergun	\$2.50	7
Stereoscope	\$0.50	0.25	Shotgun	\$3.00	8
Suitcase	\$2.00	1			
Tambourine	\$1.50	1	<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Telescope	\$12.50	2	<b>Ammunition</b>		
Tripod, wooden	\$1.50	5	Derringer (box of 25)	\$0.20	0.4
Trunk	\$2.50	5	Pistol, arms (box of 25)	\$0.25	0.5
Typewriter	\$25.00	10	Pistol, navy (box of 25)	\$0.25	0.5
Violin, standard	\$6.00	1	Rifle (box of 25)	\$0.30	0.5
Wallet	\$0.50	0.1	Shotgun (box of 25)	\$0.35	0.75
Watch, pocket	\$2.50	0.1			
Watch, chain	\$6.00	0.1	<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Whistle, police	\$0.75	0.1	<b>Martial Weapons</b>		
			Axe (woodcutting)	\$0.75	4
<b>Service</b>	<b>Cost</b>		Bayonet (attachment)	\$0.75	1
<b>Transportation</b>			Knife, Bowie	\$2.00	1
Ocean liner (per 100 miles)	\$2.50		Rapier, fencing	\$15.00	4
Railroad (per 50 miles)	\$1.50		Sabre, army	\$17.00	5
Riverboat (per 50 miles)	\$1.00		Sword cane	\$25.00	4
Horse-drawn cab (per mile)	\$0.10				
<b>Communication</b>					
Telegram (per word)	\$0.05				
Telegram (per world, international)	\$0.25				





# Chapter Five: The Magic of Gothic Earth

*BUT YOU CAN READ THE HIEROGLYPHS ON THE GREAT  
SANDSTONE OBELISKS,*

*AND YOU HAVE TALKED WITH BASILISKS, AND YOU  
HAVE LOOKED ON HIPPOGRIFFS.*

*-OSCAR WILDE, "THE SPHINX"*





Though most scholars share the popular opinion that tales of magic and legendary feats of wizardry are little more than children's stories, the truly dedicated researchers of Gothic Earth know better — they know that once, a very long time ago, magic was as common and robust on this world as on any other. The complex weave of magical energy surrounding the world was readily accessible to those who knew the secrets of mysticism and arcane spellcasting. While magic has always been and shall forever remain a dangerous pursuit, it was nowhere near the threat to mind and soul that it has become in the wake of the Red Death's arrival. Indeed, long ago magic helped create a time of great glory and human achievement that has since been reduced to a pale shadow of its former self.

While operating in some ways similar to the magic system presented in the **Ravenloft Player's Handbook** and the *D&D Player's Handbook*, magic functions somewhat differently on Gothic Earth. Players and DMs alike should take care to read this chapter carefully to make sure they understand exactly how magic works on Gothic Earth — and, more importantly, why it functions the way it does. This chapter covers the basic principles of magic to the very spells themselves. Refer to Chapter One for more details on what happened to draw the Red Death to this world and the changes that this disaster caused.

The following section presents a list of basic guidelines and restrictions for the magic of Gothic Earth.

- **The Limits of Magic** discusses how magic is influenced by the setting.
- **Gazing into the Abyss: Spellcasting** covers the steps involved in casting spells in the Gothic Earth setting.
- **The Arcane and the Mystic** describes the two key approaches to spellcasting in Gothic Earth, arcane magic and mysticism.
- **Spells in Gothic Earth** lists those spells available to arcane spellcasters and mystics in the standard Gothic Earth setting.
- **Items of Dread Importance** looks into the impact that magic items have on the Gothic Earth setting — and vice versa.

While enforcing these rules remains the DM's discretion, it is recommended that they remain unchanged to avoid the risk of throwing the entire flavor of magic in this setting out of balance in unexpected ways.

## *The Limits of Magic*

### *Planar Travel*

After the entrance of the Red Death into this world, Gothic Earth has been locked away from all other planes of existence, rotting slowly in the cradle of the Prime Material plane. Travel to Gothic Earth is the ultimate sort of one-way trip: while other creatures may occasionally find their way to this plane from the other planes, as a rule no magic of mortal or monster allows for anything to escape this realm. This is not a warning, it is a fact — no spell that allows creatures to travel to another plane of existence functions on Gothic Earth. Period. The only exception is the Border Ethereal, which may be reached by use of certain spells; however, characters cannot penetrate deeper into the Ethereal plane, and may exit only back onto Gothic Earth no matter where they began or how powerful they might be.

### *Swimaton*

Like the evil permeating the domains of **Ravenloft**, the radiant energy of the Red Death prevents the use of spells for detection of good or evil. Law and chaos can be sensed magically, but only careful observation of a subject can reveal whether it is good or evil.

### *Powers Checks*

If the magical energies of Gothic Earth are thought of as a web, then the Red Death is the spider sitting at the middle, waiting for the slightest pull on the strands to investigate... and strike. Any kind of spellcasting, even the most minor or benign magics, has a chance of drawing the attention of the Red Death and inviting some of that foul entity's corruption into a character's heart, potentially turning even good-aligned spellcasters into little more than debased pawns of this foul being.

Chapter Seven has details on powers checks and their place in spellcasting; DMs should take special care to note the place that powers checks have in this setting, and take care they are observed accordingly.

### *Necromancy and the Undead*

Due to the sinister presence of the Red Death, spells dealing with the undead and their foul pow-



ers are considered to be *enhanced* on Gothic Earth, making them far more likely to corrupt those that dabble in the dark arts. These spells are also more capable of carrying lingering curses and other unexpected side effects even if they are used without apparent immediate consequence. Accordingly, powers checks for spells based in necromancy, evil or other dark arts are much riskier.

### *The Enemy's Lair*

Gothic Earth is not divided into domains as is the Demiplane of Dread. Still, many monsters nonetheless enjoy some potent advantages while within the boundaries of their chosen lair, be it a cave in the deep woods, an ancient crypt or a forbidding castle on the moors. Within these boundaries, which function much the same as sinkholes of evil (described fully in the **Ravenloft Player's Handbook**), a creature's magic is considered to supersede the magic of others. If a vampire has laid an enchantment on its castle that causes it to be permanently shrouded in mists, for example, no magic the characters can muster will be able to dispel these mists. DMs should read more on the nature of sinkholes of evil to fully acquaint themselves with the mechanics involved, but in general assume that creatures are very hard to surprise and have their natural talents maximized when inside their lair.

### *Gazing into the Abyss:*

#### *Spellcasting*

As if the risks of investigating forces beyond mortal comprehension were not enough, the actual act of casting spells is far from guaranteed to succeed on Gothic Earth. Even minor invocations bring the danger of alerting the Red Death to the caster's activities, and more powerful or sinister incantations are almost certain to bring the wrath of this dread entity down on the unfortunate caster's head. Aside from the chance of simple spell failure, physical harm, mental deterioration and even the corruption of a spellcaster's soul are all direct and immediate risks for those channeling such energies. It is not really a question of *if* the arcane arts will ruin a character's health (physical or otherwise), it is merely a question of *when*.

Accordingly, any players unwilling to acknowledge and accept the potential risks, dangers,

complications and consequences of spellcasting on Gothic Earth are thus advised to seek a safer profession for their character to follow, if indeed such a calling exists in this dark and sinister world.

You have been warned.



### *Laws of Gothic Magic*

#### *Magic cannot be trusted.*

No matter whether it is divine or arcane in origin, spellcasting is and should always remain an uncertain art, one that is ultimately indifferent to any attempts the characters make to codify and understand it. Even experienced magic-users cannot always rely on their talents, and the potential for failure — or worse still, perversion or backlash — remains present at every turn.

#### *Magic cannot be purified.*

While magic was once as "clean" an energy as on any other fantasy world, the coming of the Red Death changed that forever. As a canonical matter, the corruption of the web is not something the characters can ever really hope to change, try though they might. Do not allow the characters to have access to totally "untainted" spells or magic items, or you risk losing the very essence of what makes spellcasting so demanding — and dangerous — in the first place.

#### *Magic cannot be cheated.*

Above all, do not allow characters or systems designed to circumvent the terrible risks and costs involved in casting spells in the Gothic Earth, or even just allow it to become a game of simple numbers rather than fear and horror. It may be possible to stave off disaster every now and then, particularly with quick thinking and no little sacrifice, but in the end, magic *will* claim its due — most often with interest.





## Spellcasting

In order to cast a spell successfully, regardless of the character's magical profession (adept, mystic, charlatan, etc.), the character must not only fulfill any verbal, somatic or material requirements, but also succeed at an appropriate Knowledge (forbidden lore) check, (DC of the check = 15 + level of the spell being cast). So a sample spellcasting effort might look like this:

*Lady Rowantree is a mystic with 5 ranks in Knowledge (forbidden lore [mysticism]), attempting to cast cure light wounds on an injured comrade. Cure light wounds is a 1st level spell, so the DC of her level check is 16. She rolls a 12 and adds her Forbidden Lore ranks to the result, for a total of 17 — success! Lady Rowantree mends her friend's wounds, grateful that the needed energies were there... barely.*

Simple failure on this check means that the spell fails outright, with no positive or negative result, as the unknowable magical energies of Gothic Earth simply do not heed the character's desires. Disastrous failure (a natural roll of "1") or exceptional success (a natural roll of "20") have their own effects, as outlined below. In addition, at the DM's discretion, it may be possible for casters to salvage failed casting attempts by sacrificing certain personal energies; see below for more details. Lastly, remember that certain metamagic feats or effects may raise the effective level of a spell, which also changes the DC of the required check to cast it successfully.

Once a character has invested a number of ranks in Forbidden Lore, the chances of failure become slim. Magic, however, is *never* totally safe on Gothic Earth, where the slightest of spells has the potential to rebound disastrously on the caster at an inopportune time. Combined with the toll that even minor spells can take on a caster's soul over time, as reflected by making powers checks for every spell cast, this mechanic helps reinforce the dark and dangerous nature of spellcasting on Gothic Earth — nothing can be trusted all the time.

Remember, the Skill Focus feat does not add to spellcasting checks for Forbidden Lore, nor do any synergy bonuses the character might have acquired from other feats or by possessing higher levels of other skills. However, the benefits of the feat and any related synergy bonuses do apply normally to other uses of the Forbidden Lore skill.

## Casting Times

Spellcasting in **Masque of the Red Death** seldom happens as fast as the wave of a hand or whisper of a few words in a regular fantasy setting. Instead, magic is typically a long, ritualistic affair that can be rushed only at great risk to the caster, if it can be rushed at all. Adepts must light candles, draw sacred symbols, raise ancient tomes and speak the invocations they have memorized from dusty pages, while shamans perform ritual dances, make sacrifices, sing ancient chants and otherwise appeal to magical forces to answer their call. While the actual verbal, somatic and material requirements listed for spells do not change unless otherwise noted, spellcasters on Gothic Earth have a plethora of "incidental foci" such as those described above. These items and actions are involved in successfully casting spells, and while the spell may be performed without these lesser requirements, the DM should feel free to penalize the Forbidden Lore checks or increase the casting times of such spells accordingly.

Casting times may be adjusted at the DM's discretion. The DM should remember, however, that in game terms the increased casting time comes as a result of the difficulty in tapping the waning magical energies available on Gothic Earth and is not simply a tool to penalize players of magic-using characters. The longer casting time is also designed to reinforce the rare and terrible nature of magic on Gothic Earth. When a character can conjure fantastical effects with little more than a quick wave of his hand, it creates a much more casual attitude toward the fantastic than having a character who must spend a great deal of time coaxing even the slightest bit of sorcery into the world.

With that in mind, casting times for all spells have been adjusted to reflect the increased amount of effort it takes to tap into the corrupted and depleted magical energies of Gothic Earth:

- Spells with a listed casting time of one free action now require one standard action.
- Spells with a listed a casting time of one standard action now require a number of consecutive, uninterrupted full-round actions equal to the spell's level + 1 to cast successfully.
- Spells with a casting time listed in minutes or hours require twice as long to cast. A spell that takes one full minute takes two minutes; a spell that takes one hour takes two hours, and so forth.



A spellcaster may abandon her spell at any time during the casting process if she desires, but the spell is still considered lost, though it does not count as cast for the purposes of costs and penalties. For spells requiring long periods of time to cast, spellcasters may take brief breaks to satisfy basic needs such as eating and sleeping, though stopping for any longer than absolutely necessary or performing unrelated tasks immediately results in spell failure.

Please also note that certain classes have additional restrictions or increases in casting time, which should be considered to apply in addition to the changes listed above.

### *Warping*

Should a character roll a natural 1 on the caster level check, not only does the spell automatically fail regardless of existing modifiers, but what is known as Warping occurs as the magical energies at work become twisted and something completely undesirable happens. Some basic suggestions for warped magic are offered below, although DMs are free to invent their own results

as well, using the examples given and the level of the spell being attempted as a general guideline. After all, failing a simple *sleep* spell shouldn't automatically incinerate the entire party, but it could certainly knock out the party's front line fighters instead, and woe indeed to the poor soul who Warps a *wish* spell...

- If the spell was offensive in nature, it rebounds back on the caster or another party member, either determined by a random die roll or by the DM's discretion.
- If the spell was defensive in nature, it instead makes the recipients more vulnerable to the harm it was intended to protect them against.
- If the spell was informational in nature, it provides information that is completely inaccurate yet still at least somewhat believable, making it likely to lead the caster astray.
- If the spell relies greatly on the caster's intent, such as a *wish* spell, it typically warps in such a way that the exact opposite of the stated intent comes to pass, or it is fulfilled in a brutally literal fashion that winds up worse than the caster could possibly have hoped.





- All other spells are warped in a manner determined by the DM, as best fits the nature and intent of the spell in question. Reversible spells, for example, typically do just that, while others may require the DM to determine a way to warp them appropriately.

### *Weaving*

Every once in a while, a fortunate spellcaster touches a tiny portion of the web not corrupted by the energies of the Red Death, resulting in a flawless spell that exacts no cost of any kind on their body, mind or soul. Called a Weaving, such glimpses are typically extremely fleeting moments, as no such “pure threads” have ever been documented more than once at any given location, but even that glimpse is enough to keep many good-aligned spellcasters searching for a way to cleanse the taint of the Red Death from what was once their rightful birthright. On the other hand, touching a pure strand has also led many such intrepid souls to their destruction, as they immerse themselves deeper in magic in hopes of catching another glimpse....

Any time a spellcaster rolls a natural 20 on the Forbidden Lore check to cast a spell, the attempt is automatically considered successful, no matter what penalties or other modifiers might have been in place on the roll. What’s more, the caster suffers no ill effects at all from the spellcasting effort, even if the DM has instituted continual costs for magic use (see below), and spells based on intent that are normally perverted by the corruption of the Red Death are interpreted in the caster’s favor instead. Lastly, a particularly benevolent DM may even rule that touching a pure strand may reverse all the negative effects of magic use for that session so far, as the positive energies of the purified web wash over her. This last benefit is strictly optional, and should generally be reserved for moments of high drama and excitement.

### *From the jaws of Defeat*

A character who fails the Forbidden Lore check required for spellcasting but urgently needs the spell in question to succeed has several options, none of which are particularly pleasant but still might seem more desirable than the alternative in that instant. Accordingly, either the DM — or the character in question (providing the DM allows it) — may choose one of the following sacrifices to make up the difference in the number they rolled against the number they needed to succeed. (In other words, a character that rolled a 13 and needed an 18 would need to make up a difference of five points on this scale.)

- **Physical Damage:** The caster suffers an immediate number of points of nonlethal damage equal to twice the difference they needed to suc-

### *Taking 10 On Forbidden Lore Checks*

Since spellcasting relies on a Forbidden Lore skill check, it is only natural that players will wonder if they can take 10 or even 20 on a spellcasting check at one time or another, which leaves the DM with the question of whether or not this should be possible in their campaign. For the record, it is generally permissible for players to take 10 on a spellcasting check, provided the usual conditions are present — it cannot be done during harsh or highly distracting conditions such as combat, rapid travel, extreme weather and the like. This does not, however, negate the usual costs or penalties associated with magic use such as powers checks or possible physical damage and spiritual corruption. It is also within the DM’s discretion to rule that the potential for dramatic failure — as well as risk of Warping — of any particular spell means that a player cannot take 10 on the roll, in order to ensure that an element of risk is retained regarding Gothic magic. This should be done sparingly, however, or the player will feel cheated if every attempt to take 10 is unsuccessful. On the other hand, taking 20 on a spellcasting check is never permitted, as it represents a period of trial and error and even assumes a certain percentage of failure before success — a luxury that the Red Death does not allow magic-users on Gothic Earth.





### *Mystics and Costs for Spells*

Due to the fact that their magic stems from an external source as opposed to an internal discipline, mystics have certain advantages when dealing with the costs discussed in this section. Aside from outsider intervention, which is itself a different sort of transaction for the spirits, a mystic faced with the possibility of losing a spell can choose to bypass the methods of payment presented under From the Jaws of Defeat. Instead, the mystic enters into a state known as Detachment, taking the difference as a penalty on Wisdom checks related to perception as well as skills such as Spot and Search. This reflects the fact that a mystic must immerse herself more intensely in the Otherworld in order to muster the necessary control over the spirits to succeed. Likewise, if she would normally suffer damage for a spellcasting effort aside from making up the difference, she may choose to suffer Detachment instead of the usual damage.

Accepting Detachment penalties should always be an option for mystic characters in this situation, even if the DM normally insists on a particular type of cost as part of the spellcasting process, as it reflects the intrinsic difference between mystics and arcane spellcasters on Gothic Earth.

Penalties incurred by Detachment fade at the rate of one point per day, or one point per week in the case of Evil or Necromantic magic, and are considered to be cumulative with any other similar penalties a character is suffering at any given time. DMs may choose to limit the maximum amount of Detachment a character can suffer as equal to twice their normal Wisdom bonus, for play balance; any costs or damage beyond that point are calculated and suffered normally.

DMs focused on highlighting the relationship between the mystic and the spirit world may even substitute direct bargaining with the spirits for or in addition to suffering a simple penalty. If this option is used, the mystic customarily agrees to undertake quests, accept taboos or otherwise inconvenience herself in order to convince the spirits to grant her the power she needs. The difficulty of the quests or strictness of the taboos should be proportionate to the difference that needs to be made up.

ceed. Once inflicted, this nonlethal damage is healed normally for damage of its type, but it cannot be absorbed or prevented by any spells or magic items, as it represents the caster giving up a portion of his life force in order to have the spell succeed. Necromantic magic and any spells with the [Evil] descriptor inflict lethal damage instead, even for necromantic specialists or evil characters, as the dark forces involved are extremely taxing on the caster regardless of how proficient or naturally suited to such workings they might be. Any characters that normally suffer nonlethal damage while casting spells automatically suffer lethal damage when making this sacrifice, and take twice the normal amount for evil or necromantic spells.

• **Mental Agony:** Seldom as evident immediately as physical damage, mental agony can be far more devastating in the long term. The character suffers the difference as a penalty on all Madness saves until such time as one is failed, at which point

the total is “reset” and accumulation begins again. (So a character faced with a difference of four would suffer a -4 penalty on subsequent Madness saves.) These penalties are cumulative, until a Madness save is failed or sufficient rest is found. This means that if a character earns a -2 penalty during one session and a -4 penalty at another without resting or failing a Madness save in between, the character is at a cumulative penalty of -6 on all Madness saves until one is finally failed. If Madness saves are not a common feature of the campaign, Fear or Horror saves may be substituted instead. At the DM’s discretion, each full day of uninterrupted rest — no adventuring, magical research or ritual, hard travel or any other activities other than eating, sleeping and light activity — may lower the penalty by one as the character rests her fevered mind. For necromantic spells or those with the [Evil] descriptor, this time is increased to one week per penalty point removed.



• **Spiritual Corruption:** This is the least direct of the sacrifices to be made, but presents perhaps the most insidious danger of all. The character takes three times the difference and adds it to the percentage of all subsequent powers checks related to spellcasting, and continues to add these percentages until a powers check is failed, at which time this total “resets” and begins accumulating anew. Thus, a character making up a difference of three would add 9% to all powers checks related to spellcasting until one was failed; if he made up a difference of four in this fashion before failing a powers check, he must add another 12% to his existing penalty, for a total of +21% to his powers check. This penalty applies immediately, including to the powers check caused by casting a spell. Inviting such spiritual corruption to pay the price of spellcasting may also be the cause for a powers check in itself, especially for good-aligned characters. The DM may rule that if the spellcaster refrains from using magic for a time and performs suitably significant acts of contrition and atonement, these actions may reduce or even eliminate the spiritual corruption modifier over time, though characters seeking to exploit the “slay n’ pray” system in this fashion are in for a rude surprise, as only genuine remorse and desire for atonement can even hope to lift this pall.

• **Outsider Intervention:** This is what ordinary folk might call a “deal with the Devil,” and while Old Scratch himself might not be the entity in question at any particular moment, the idea remains the same. A magic-user, faced with the failure of a crucial spell and unwilling or unable to make any other kind of sacrifice to see it through, begs for the intercession of someone or *something* to see to it that the spell comes to pass. If the caster is fortunate, the plea goes unheard or unanswered; if not, he attracts the attention of an entity willing to provide the necessary magical energies to complete the spell... for a price, of course. Most beings powerful and interested enough to interfere in such matters are also sly enough to couch their offers in the best possible light. Only the truly foolish or degenerate are likely to sell their soul to a devil wreathed in flame and despair, but a pretty face and a clever way with words can ensnare even the most discerning individuals, at least when they have their back to the wall.

The exact nature of the “outsider’s” appearance and subsequent bargaining is entirely at the DM’s discretion. Some entities grant their energies

out of hand, returning later to inform their hapless beneficiary of the debt they now owe. Others insist on hammering out the details before lifting a finger, trapping the spellcaster in a seemingly frozen moment while they negotiate. No matter how they appear, however, a DM should always remember that in this situation, a character cannot be truly be held liable by anything that an outsider does for her unbidden, but can only be held accountable for (much less damned because of) what she specifically requests. It doesn’t matter if a devil made the character’s enemies disappear with a wave, mended all her wounds and brought her friends back to life — unless the character actually *asked* for it to be done, she doesn’t owe the creature a thing (though it may certainly try to convince her otherwise). Of course, what a character means and what he actually says can be two different things. What’s more, if the character does request specific favors hoping that an angel will deliver her, it’s no use crying if a demon answers instead. And no matter what the situation might be, once she strikes an accord, it’s her soul in the balance....

Handling such outsider pacts is not for every group, as it is very easy for slightly over-eager DM to make players feel as though they were unfairly trapped in a terrible situation as the result of an off-handed comment. As a result this option may be ignored if the DM feels it would be inappropriate for the campaign. However, if the group is mature enough to handle the topic and the DM restrained enough to let it unfold naturally, this kind of bargain and the consequences arising from it can become the heart of any number of excellent Gothic Earth adventures.

### *Powers Checks*

Any time a spell is cast, from a lowly *prestidigitation* to a fantastic *wish*, there is a chance that the Red Death will feel the vibrations on the strands of the web and come to investigate. Even the most minor or selfless use of magic has the potential to corrupt the character as tainted magical energies cast a pallor upon her soul. Wise spellcasters, therefore, quickly learn to conserve their magical talents only for when they are most desperately needed, else they risk dragging themselves down to oblivion in the name of their art.

In game terms, this horrifying slide into corruption manifests as a powers check, made every time a character casts a spell. The base percentage chance of failure for this check is the level of the





### *Optional Variant: Continual Costs for Magic*

Some DMs may wish to make the spellcasting costs covered under “From the Jaws of Defeat” a mandatory part of their Gothic Earth campaigns. Charlatans suffer damage for all spells they cast already. The DM may rule that all other spellcasting classes suffer similar penalties when casting spells as well, incurring mental or physical damage on all spellcasting checks and not just attempts to make up the difference on a failed attempts (though they can still do that as well).

There is nothing necessarily wrong with this idea, but there are some things to consider as well. Unless the DM wants to be truly draconian about the cost of spellcasting (and possibly make spellcasters unplayable in a hurry), the continual costs should be fairly low.

Type of Damage or Penalty	Cost
Physical damage	1 point of damage per spell level
Mental agony	-1 penalty on Madness saves per 2 spell levels (minimum -1)
Spiritual corruption	1% per spell level
Outsider intervention	Special*

\*No character should be forced to enter into contracts with outsiders to perform their magic on a regular basis, though dedicated infernalists may certainly try to make a habit of it

Some suggestions for types of damage associated with particular types of magic are listed below. DMs should not see these as written in stone, but merely as guidelines for them to design their own set of costs and punishments for spellcasting.

**Abjuration, Invocation/Evocation, Conjunction, Transmutation (Self)** — *Physical damage*. Spells that create something from nothing, alter the caster’s body, or involve instantaneous or large-scale manipulation of magical energies, tend to inflict physical damage as they pull the required energy directly from the caster.

**Divination, Enchantment, Illusion, Transmutation (Others)** — *Mental agony*. Spells that alter, bend, twist, spindle, mutilate and shatter the normal barriers of sense, belief, perception or even physical reality tend to be very hard on the minds of even veteran spellcasters.

**Necromancy, Summoning** — *Spiritual corruption*. Dealing with the raw energies of death itself or trafficking in the affairs of otherworldly beings is extremely risky for the state of spellcaster’s immortal soul, and frequently result in the corruption of the caster’s very soul.

spell, so that a 5th level spell carries a 5% chance of causing corruption in the caster each time it is cast. Certain metamagic feats or talents may increase a spell’s effective level, and thus raise the percentage of the powers check as well. In addition, certain other factors can add to the percentage as well, as overtly harmful and entropic magics are far more likely to cause spiritual corrosion as compared to a healing charm or a simple *light* spell. These factors include but are not necessarily limited to the list outlined below.

Note that if more than one multiplier would be applied to a percentage for any reason (such as a spell meeting more than one of these conditions simultaneously), these multipliers are cumulative, not multiplicative. For example, if a character finds herself compelled to cast *animate dead*, a spell that normally requires a powers check, as well as being part of the Necromancy school, both of these factors normally double the base percentage for the powers check involved. However, the end result is a x3 multiplier, not x4.



These elements have been included to enforce the terrible costs that more destructive and sinister magics exact from those who attempt to rely on them. Most magic-users quickly learn the benefits of more subtle and indirect magic in the Gothic Earth milieu.

- **Wages of Sin:** Casting any spell that states in its description that it normally requires a powers check — see *Ravenloft Player's Handbook* — is even more dangerous on Gothic Earth. It does not require an additional powers check, but instead doubles the spell's base powers check percentage, making it far more likely to result in spiritual deterioration.

- **Death and Damnation:** All spells of the Necromancy school or those with the [Evil] descriptor have their base percentage doubled for the purposes of determining the required powers check. Channeling such unwholesome energy is far more likely to corrupt even those with best intentions.

- **Destruction's Price:** Spells that directly inflict damage increase the check percentage by a total number equal to one quarter the damage inflicted by the spell, rounded down. This determination is made before the target applies any saving throws, special abilities, which might reduce the actual damage inflicted — what matters is how much damage the caster was capable of and *intended* to cause, not how much the target actually suffered.

- **Wrath and Ruin:** Spells that instantly kill or otherwise utterly destroy their target add half the total HD of creatures slain to the check percentage, rounded down, provided the targets were nonhuman in nature: beasts, undead, monstrous humanoids, etc. However, if the targets slain were humans (however vile or degenerate), their full HD are counted for this total. This condition does not apply to damage-inflicting spells such as *lightning bolt* that might happen to kill their target in



the process, but only to those spells that bypass normal damage systems to outright slay or otherwise destroy the target directly.

#### *Putting the Devil Behind You: Atonement*

As grim as the possible consequences are for failing powers checks related to spellcasting, it is theoretically possible for a truly repentant character to draw back from the brink of damnation and restore her former state of wholeness, but *only* if the

character truly desires to do so with all her heart and soul. Even then, redemption is far from assured. The tainted web of the Red Death has snared countless souls throughout history, from the foulest necromancers to the most innocently misguided magic-users seeking to do good with their gifts. As a result, a simple desire to repent is not enough (though it is a start). As with all such intensely personal storylines, the DM should work closely with the player of a spellcaster attempting to purge



#### *Playing the Damnation Game*

Some DMs may see the constant need for powers checks every time a spell is cast to be a rather exhausting chore. While the general scarcity of magic in the Gothic Earth setting should mean that spellcasting is far from a common occurrence, even one magic-using character in the party can cause magic-use to become a regular feature of the campaign sessions. Other DMs might even see the potential for a mystic to succeed on a powers check for a vile spell such as *animate dead* yet fail on something as minor as a *light* spell as arbitrary and unsuited to preserving the proper dramatic atmosphere of their campaign. While it serves as an object lesson in the dangers of all forms of magical dabbling, it can also be problematic if the DM has to divert the session because a mystic failed a powers check casting a simple *bless* spell in the first five minutes of the game.

Therefore, some alternate methods of handling powers checks are outlined below, in order to allow DMs to adjust the frequency of their occurrence without marginalizing their necessity — or removing the sting from their consequences.

**Hell's Reckoning** — This method requires powers checks at the end of every game session, where the percentage chance of failure is the total percentage generated by all the spells cast during that session. This removes the need to perform minor checks constantly, as well as eliminates the possible incongruity of failing a 1% or 2% check while passing a 30% check. This system, however, tends to be rather harsh in the final accounting on a player who has used an extensive amount of magic. Alternately, the DM could set the powers checks to occur any time a particular percentage had been exceeded, generally anywhere between 20% to 50%, depending on how likely the DM wishes it to be for the character to succeed. In the end, this approach is perhaps best suited to campaigns that wish to remove the need for constant minor checks while still holding a character harshly accountable for his actions. This option also emphasizes the ultimate corruption of all spellcasters by requiring fewer rolls but at higher percentages.

**Moment of Truth** — This free-form system removes the need for constant powers checks each time a spell is cast, but balances it by causing powers checks to be made at the most dramatically appropriate moments. Powers checks occur when the character is channeling a great deal of mystical power at once, confronted with the death of a close friend or loved one, facing down a dire enemy, professing her true feelings to her beloved, etc. At these moments, the corrupt energies that have been slowly accumulating from her contact with the tainted web boil to the surface, threatening to push her into the grip of darkness and alienate her further from the life she once lived. (Remember that even characters that only use their magical talents for healing and protection are still tapping into an alien and ultimately corrupted force to do so, and as such may still become twisted into beings the average person may come to hate and revile.) The actual percentage chance of the powers check should still be derived from spells the character has cast, but the DM may decide which qualify for being included in this percentage and which were cast in such a way that they do not add to this total.





the taint of the Red Death from her spirit to ensure that the motivations for redemption are genuine and that the atonement process itself is handled with the gravity and respect it deserves.

Indeed, because it is such a personal and hard-fought goal, there are no hard and fast systems for determining when a character can reverse the changes wrought by failed powers checks. Only the DM can determine if a character has truly earned such a reprieve, and her decision is final. Some general guidelines for the process of atonement can be found in the **Ravenloft Player's Handbook**, but DMs are encouraged to look beyond the general and into the heart of each character when it comes to such personal storylines. That said, there are some rules that bear remembering when considering which characters deserve redemption and how to approach it:

Characters that willingly and knowingly commit evil acts should have absolutely zero chance at true atonement, at least while they still live. While they may be able to redeem themselves with a final selfless sacrifice — what you might call the mystical equivalent of a deathbed conversion — as a rule, such characters should not be allowed to live through the experience to enjoy the aftermath. If handled improperly, allowing them to survive the experience can be something of a slap in the face to characters that did their best to follow the rules all along.

By contrast, characters that stumble onto the dark path due to ignorance or misguided intentions might have a chance of surviving their atonement and living to see the other side, but it's still not going to be much easier than their evil counterparts. After all, the proverbial road to Hell is paved with just such feelings, and DMs should carefully consider just how "innocent" or "misguided" even a good-aligned character's use of their magical powers really was. Were they just trying to help others, or were there some selfish thoughts mixed into the process? Most otherwise noble characters aren't immune to occasionally using their gifts to show off, take advantage of others or even just get lazy and use them when it's not really necessary, especially if they can justify it by claiming it was necessary in the situation at hand.





### *The Fine Line*

Though this chapter has attempted to pull no punches in reminding players how harsh and unforgiving the magic of Gothic Earth is to those that attempt to wield it, it is important to remember that these penalties are solely intended to affect the character, not the player. If the player is having trouble remembering the difference and is getting upset or feeling that there's no point to using magic, don't hesitate to call a quick time-out, let everyone cool off and then approach the player and assure him that it's nothing personal. A player who chooses to play a magic-using character does so knowing the potential for corruption by the Red Death (even though her character may not be aware of the danger).

Likewise, if as a DM you feel yourself about to get a little carried away and really stick it to a player whose character botched a magical feat, remember that players become just as attached to their characters as you do to your campaign. Make sure your players know that what's happening to them is happening because that's the way the system works, not because you're on a power trip or deliberately setting them up to fail. If both sides keep these suggestions in mind, there should be no problems.

## *The Arcane and the Mystic*

This section discusses differences in philosophy and method between the two means of spellcasting, arcane magic and mysticism. Both draw upon the material covered previously in this chapter, but each has a distinct outlook on magic and the role it plays in the Gothic Earth setting.

### *Arcane Magic*

Magic is not science. It is an Art.

Most educated people laugh at the thought of magic, but underneath their dismissal of it as "superstitious nonsense" lies a deeper reason for their disenchantment — namely, that people scoff at the idea of magic solely because it never seems to work for them. Sure, as children they all had a wish that they wanted more than anything but that never came true. Perhaps on an adolescent dare, they once lit a candle in the old cemetery at midnight but saw no shades from beyond the grave. Maybe they dabbled in parlor spiritualism for a jaded thrill, only to be disappointed when the knocks turned out to be someone else's knees. Some seekers are even clever or fortunate enough to get their hands on an actual magical treatise, only to abandon it as "utter rubbish" when their first attempt to conjure up their dear departed aunt

or bend the will of some desirable young lovely fails to materialize for them in dramatic fashion.

Weak-willed fools.

They don't understand that the secret of magic isn't just in the words, or the gestures or the ritual objects assembled by the practitioner. These are part of the magic, yes, but not the whole of it by any means. After all, if magic was as simple as rote repetition of words in a book, utter anarchy and ruin would long ago have been loosed upon the world as magic was wielded by anyone who could wave a wand or scan a scroll.

No, what most people fail to understand is that the flashy effects are simply the end result of the magical process, not the beginning. Real understanding of magic comes from strength of will, from the willingness to master concepts and principles that can rob one's strength or rend one's sanity in an instant in return for the power that understanding those secrets unlocks. Only once one has truly accepted that risk, has fought and bled and wept for a chance at understanding, has spent hours unto days studying these texts and the secrets they contain until the incantations burn feverish upon the brain, only *then* do these props have any meaning. And that is the heart and soul of arcane spellcasting.

Spellcasters that utilize arcane magic use an enlightened understanding of Forbidden Lore to bend and twist the natural principles of the world



to suit their desires, using the tainted magical energies of the web to fuel their spellcasting. These spellcasters frequently find themselves using their own bodies as conduits for magical power, grimly supplementing the foul and failing energies of the web with portions of their health, sanity or soul as necessary to make their will a reality. Curious students who sneak into that forbidden library because they just *have* to know what it contains, obsessed scholars poring over dusty books and crumbling manuscripts in search of the Secret that will finish their life's work, zealous researchers that feel finding proof for their theories supersedes all need for mundane concerns such as food or family — all these are archetypes for the average arcane spellcaster.

Whereas mystics make contact with spirits from the Otherworld and direct them to carry out their dictates, most arcane spellcasters tend to view this relationship with, at best, a bit of patronizing condescension. Arcane spellcasters believe it demonstrates a lack of dedication or personal capability on the part of the mystic, and at worst that it represents an irresponsible and dangerous dependence on unreliable ephemeral beings to do one's own work for them. This is not to say that arcane magic does not traffic with the Otherworld — far from it. Many arcane spellcasters learn at least some of the secrets of the Beyond in their studies, and some of them even dare to seek out spells that grant them audiences with the potent and invisible entities that reside there. It is simply that in terms of dealing with creatures and problems related to the Other Side, arcane spellcasters tend to leave such responsibilities to the mystics, seeing them as largely beneath their notice in the greater scheme of things.

#### *Themes of Arcane Magic*

If arcane magic can be said to have a positive virtue, it is Will. Stories featuring arcane spellcasters are excellent venues to show how curiosity, willingness to experiment and just the burning need to know can lead individuals to perform great deeds and achieve great heights in the name of discovery. While their field may not be as scientific as those of their colleagues in physics or chemistry (though that is certainly something many metaphysicians would argue), most students of the arcane arts see their vocation as one of the in the field of human inquiry. These devotees pursue it with a rational zeal that would put many scientists to shame.



Although the touch of the Red Death has weakened and warped the energies at their command, and no few seek out the secrets of the Art for their own power and glory, arcane spellcasters serve as powerfully noble examples of what human beings can do when they put their minds to it, no matter how daunting the odds.

Of course, along with such great ambitions comes the threat of hubris. It is all too easy for such driven and strong-willed spellcasters to believe that their pursuits place them above the people around them, and perhaps even above the natural order of the universe. In their endless drive to learn every magical secret and bend the cosmos to their will, these tragic characters sacrifice everything on the altar of power — families, friends, physical health, sanity, even the very purity of their soul. They do this because they are confident that the price is acceptable for what they stand to gain from it. Even good-aligned spellcasters can come to see their special powers and knowledge as something that sets them apart from the other party members. The most generous souls can have trouble containing their wrath if they do not feel that others adequately appreciate how much peril and hardship they endure when using the Art to help their allies. And once they start thinking that, it's only a short trip to thinking that maybe they would be better off without allies, or perhaps that a demonstration of their true power is in order....

### *Arcane Magic: Learning New Spells*

It is a common staple of horror fiction for intrepid adventurers to discover tomes of forbidden lore in ancient crypts or the libraries of eccentric nobles, and equally common for some poor, brave soul in the party to do her best to decipher the terrible drawings and incantations contained therein. In a **Masque of the Red Death** campaign, unless they are exceedingly fortunate and have a learned tutor or an extensive library of their own, most arcane spellcasters must rely on such discoveries as their primary source of new spells to add to their repertoire. Such acquisitions, however, are not without grave risks of their own. Even with spells such as *detect magic* and *read magic*, unlocking the arcane secrets of another caster's spellbook can be a shattering, sanity-rending process for those who fail to master the lore at hand.

Simply put, should an adept or other arcane spellcaster discover a spellbook containing a spell they do not know, they may attempt to add it to


their own collection. This process has three parts: classifying the spell and what it does, copying the spell into the character's spellbook, and binding the spell into the character's being.

#### *Part 1: Classifying the Spell*

This requires a Forbidden Lore check, with a difficulty of 10 + the level of the spell in question; obviously, this number should be kept secret from the player in order to retain the maximum level of mystery and uncertainty. In addition, the difficulty might increase or decrease depending on how familiar the character is with the source of the spell in question — arcane hieroglyphics might be near impossible for a young dabbler to decipher, but nearly second nature for an intrepid Egyptologist. Success reveals the level and school of spell, but not its exact nature, while failure means the character cannot decipher the writing at all and doesn't learn anything about the spell. (Another attempt cannot be made to decipher the spell until the character advances a level as a practitioner of magic.) A character may still attempt to copy a spell he failed to decipher anyway, but at greatly elevated risk for dramatic failure when the spell is actually cast, as outlined below.

In addition, exposure to complex arcane writings can be dangerous for a character's sanity if he is not careful. Any time a character rolls a natural 1 on a Forbidden Lore check to identify a spell, he must immediately make a Madness save with a penalty equal to the spell's level or suffer a bout of madness as the occult symbols and complex writings plague his mind.

**Note:** It is generally assumed that arcane spellcasters employ *read magic* when encountering a new spell and attempting to classify or copy it into their own spellbook. As such, attempting to classify a spell without the use of the *read magic* spell imposes at least a +10 penalty on the DC of the initial Forbidden Lore check. The DM may even rule that a caster is incapable of classifying or copying a particular spell without using *read magic* if the spell stems from a source wildly outside the caster's experience. For example, a rustic country witch from Wales has little to no chance of deciphering a spell couched in an ancient African cave painting without some kind of magical assistance. While it is still technically a spell, it is phrased in such bizarre and unfamiliar ways that the witch would be hard-pressed to recognize it as such, much less translate it to her own magical vocabulary.



### *The Secret Languages of Magic*

Some players may wonder why casting *read magic* doesn't automatically solve all the problems in identifying and copying spells, since by definition *read magic* should allow them to decipher magical script effortlessly. This is a fair question, and as such deserves an equally candid response.

Quite simply, magic on Gothic Earth is not the codified, universal Art that it is on many other fantasy worlds. It remains an insular, personal and secretive craft that often owes as much to the culture, geographic origin and individual history of each caster as it does to the raw magical knowledge being imparted. After all, a Chinese sage and an English scholar both casting *fireball* still have different rituals and gestures involved in invoking the necessary magical energies, so it only stands to reason that it is quite difficult for them to decipher each other's spellbooks.

Given how rare and personalized magical knowledge is, a student reading his old master's spellbook must still classify and copy his master's unique script laboriously, bit by bit to ensure that he understands all the personal flourishes his master added to the spell over time. The student might gain a bonus due to familiarity, but would still have to make the standard skill checks. Thus, in **Masque of the Red Death**, the *read magic* spell serves as a "universal translator" that allows the caster to recognize and understand what would otherwise be a foreign magical language or highly personalized understanding of magical principles. At the same time, *read magic* doesn't instantly grant the caster detailed knowledge of the spell.



#### *Part 2: Copying the Spell*

Copying a spell into a character's spellbook requires one full day's work (16 hours) per level of the spell — though a canny DM may assign a random "apparent level" to a spell the character failed to classify — and requires an additional Forbidden Lore check at the same difficulty given above in order to correctly capture the nuances of

the magical script. Success on this check means the spell has been copied correctly, and has been added to a character's repertoire if it is of a level he can cast. If it is a higher level than the character is capable of casting, it remains unusable, but will be ready upon the character attaining sufficient experience to attempt it. If the character failed to identify the spell before copying it, this check suffers a penalty equal to the spell's level, making it even more likely to fail as the character unknowingly alters the spell's design. Failure on this check means that the character understands the spell's basic school and level, but has copied it incorrectly, and cannot cast it all. The character must wait until he has gained another level before attempting to copy it again. Lastly, attempting to cast a spell the character failed to classify but managed to copy correctly incurs a penalty equal to the spell's level on the spellcasting check.

Most dangerous of all, if a character has both failed to classify a spell and has copied it incorrectly, and the spell was of a higher level than the character is capable of casting, attempting to cast it based on such flawed understanding automatically results in a *Warping*. This happens because the caster's compounded failures send magical energies lashing out of control. Such is the risk of attempting to cast spells a character does not have even the faintest idea about, after all — one cannot reach blindly into the dark and always hope to bring back one's hand intact, let alone something of value.

**Note:** A character may *not* take 10 or 20 on the Forbidden Lore check to copy a spell, as he is already considered to be working slowly and carefully as part of the nature of the process, and gains no additional benefit from working any more slowly than the pace described.

#### *Part 3: Binding the Spell*

This is the last, but most physically dangerous part of learning a new spell. After successfully copying a new spell as outlined above, the character must succeed at a Fortitude save against a DC of 10 + the level of the spell they have learned, as they bind the mystical energies of the spell into the very fabric of their being and make it a part of themselves. Failure on this check does not prevent the ultimate acquisition of the spell — it is still considered learned, and part of their spellbook — but it does mean that the character has suffered as the energies they are absorbing rob them of some of their physical prowess in the process. Any time a character fails this check, he must immediately





### *Learning Arcane Spells: A Summary*

There are four possible outcomes when a character discovers a new arcane spell and attempts to classify it and copy it into her spellbook. Remember that if a spell is successfully copied, the caster must also make a Fortitude save to see if doing so has harmed her physically.

**Successfully classified, successfully copied** — The character has added a new spell to her repertoire, if she is of sufficient level to cast it; otherwise she must wait until she is skilled enough to attempt the magic, but it will be ready when she achieves the right level. She still does not know the exact nature of the spell until she tries it, but suffers no penalty on the Forbidden Lore check required to cast the spell for the first time.

**Successfully classified, unsuccessfully copied** — The character knows the spell's level and general type, but has made several critical errors while transcribing it to her own spellbook. The character knows the spell's level and school, but the first attempt to cast the spell automatically fails, and the character may not attempt to recopy the spell until she has gained at least one more level in her spellcasting class.

**Unsuccessfully classified, successfully copied** — The character has no idea what the spell does, but has managed to copy it precisely and can try to cast it anyway, with a slightly greater chance of failure than before. A penalty equal to the spell's level is subtracted from the Forbidden Lore check when casting the spell for the first time. If the spell is actually of a higher level than the character can cast, the spell simply fails when attempted, though the caster is aware of the reason for the spell's failure.

**Unsuccessfully classified, unsuccessfully copied** — The character knows nothing about the spell and has failed to copy it correctly. Whether or not the character is aware of these mistakes depends on the decision of the DM. Attempting to cast the spell results in automatic failure if the spell is of a level the character can normally cast. If the spell is of a higher level than the character can cast, the result is an automatic Warring, followed by the loss of even this imperfect copy of the spell from the character's spellbook.

subtract 1 point from either their Strength or Constitution; this loss is permanent and cannot be prevented by any form of magic, though the character can raise the affected attribute through normal means later on. Furthermore, no bonuses derived from magic items or other external protections apply on this save, though the Endurance Feat and other "natural" bonuses remain effective.

### *Mysticism*

Mortals crave power. Spirits are power.

Many mystics are raised in cultures that acknowledge the presence of the Otherworld in everyday life, from paying respects to departed ancestors in hopes of continued good fortune to placating capricious nature spirits in return for relief from present problems. These are cultures in which humanity exists alongside any number of other beings on a daily basis. Others may not have

been raised in animistic surroundings, but they have felt the call of the Beyond in their own way. Perhaps they developed a knack for seeing ghosts after a brush with death, or maybe as a child they were innocent enough to notice the river-spirits playing in the shallows and not forget what they had seen.

A small but appreciable minority does not hail from a particularly animistic or superstitious culture and have no personal ties to the Other Side, but pursue contact with the spirit realm out of a sense of curiosity or even fear about what might lie beyond this life. Regardless of their origins, mystics eventually make contact, and the spirit world becomes part of their life forever after... whether they like it or not.

Just as in the Victorian era of our own world, spiritualism, the existence of spirits and the possibility of contacting planes of reality beyond our own enjoys something of a vogue on Gothic Earth



at many different levels of society. A scant handful of years ago it would have been dismissed as superstitious nonsense. Of course, on Gothic Earth, the chances are far greater that even some of these parlor practitioners might contact entities that are genuinely beyond the realm of mortal ken (not to mention spirits that can be malevolent in the extreme). Despite the danger, interest in the spiritual realm persists, with the occasional horror story dismissed as the hysterical delusions of overly excited party guests or the ramblings of gullible rustics in faraway lands. Most mystics do not choose to reveal to the masses the full extent of their gifts regarding contacting and controlling the spirit realms. Nevertheless, certain mystical practices are regarded as little more than part of this passing fad at best or, at worst, a bizarre religious practice of some sort, particularly if the mystic is clever enough to exploit these perceptions to his advantage.

Jaded dilettantes seeking their next thrill do not by any means make up the majority of the mystics in the world. Many mystics are drawn from the more remote cultures and traditions around the world, where the natives have long acknowledged and revered the spirit world that surrounds them. Mysticism thus encompasses the magic of all manner of shamanistic and animistic traditions, embracing notions of guardian angels as easily as it does elementals and animal spirits. In short, regardless of the caster's belief structure, mysticism seems to function in roughly the same fashion around the globe.

In contrast to the self-empowered bent of arcane spells, mystics work their magic by drawing on the forbidden lore of ancient pacts, sacred traditions and ritual commands that bid the spirits of the unseen world to carry out their wishes. While to an unenlightened onlooker it may seem very similar if a mystic and an arcane spellcaster both set a target ablaze, those with the wit and training to look closer will see that how they generate their results couldn't be more different. The arcane spellcaster essentially pulls on the threads of the arcane weave directly, rearranging it to suit her own desires. The mystic bids spirits to make the necessary alterations, though not always without cost. For while mystics are less likely to be required to fuel their magic with their own life energies than their arcane counterparts, this does not mean that the spirits never exact a cost for their efforts — far from it. In fact, most of the complex chants and rituals that make up the casting time for mystic

spells are essentially complicated pleas for spirits to render their assistance combined with reminders of ancient pacts between humanity and the Other Side. Occasionally even these entreaties are not enough, and the mystic must offer up something else to coax the spirits into complying; see the section "From the Jaws of Defeat" on possible sacrifices.

In return for being treated somewhat more lightly when it comes time to pay the price for magic, mystics tend to lack some of the magical versatility of their arcane counterparts. They tend either to focus strongly on dealing with spirits related to particular domains such as animals, plants, healing and the like, or to become dabblers in the spirit realm, familiar with many different types of spirits but not overly potent with any of them. They can generate some energies unknown to arcane magic-users, such as healing magics, but lack some of the more powerful energies. Lastly, dealing with two worlds often takes its toll on a mystic's ability to perceive their immediate surroundings. Mystics increasingly confuse sensory input from one world with that of another. Many mystics also acquire strange compulsions or taboos from dealing with spirits that can sometimes interfere with their interaction with regular society.

### *Themes of Mysticism*

On the positive side, mysticism reaches out to the primal divinity that resides within all living beings, whether they recognize it or not. Connecting to the world beyond not only humbles most mystics with the knowledge of the true size of the cosmos, but fills them with a sense of wholeness and energy they never experienced before. Although many mystics may find themselves questioning their beliefs if they did not include the world of spirits in the past, most find it impossible to deny that there is something more to this life than just the material world. Many liken it to suddenly seeing a world of colors after being blind for their entire lives. Even those that find the spirit world intimidating cannot help but be struck by the constant reminders of the divine they see all around them. Channeled correctly, a mystic's connection to the Other Side can not only mend the bodies of their allies but also help them find a higher purpose during the dark nights spent fighting unspeakable horrors, proof that their struggle is not, after all, in vain.



At the same time, mysticism also draws its adherents ever closer to things that are alien to everything that normal people know, much less experience. Even a devout mystic that attempts to do her best to improve the lives of others is still in regular contact with entities that frighten and mystify ordinary folks. This disconnection from the material world only grows deeper as the mystic increases in power and traffics with ever more powerful spirits.

The more powerful a mystic becomes, the more the spirits take notice of her and attempt to draw her into their own games and schemes. This goes far in explaining why many cultures keep their shamans, holy men and wise women at a safe distance even as they gratefully acknowledge their powers. Of course, some evil-aligned mystics feel the call of the Beyond and throw themselves into it headlong from the beginning. These power-hungry individuals sacrifice their humanity and the ways of civilized folk to become more and more like the spirits they venerate, eventually degenerating into little more than devils made flesh, menacing other folk by their very existence.

#### *Mysticism: Domains of Power*

In contrast to their arcane counterparts, practitioners of mysticism do not need to learn their spells from musty tomes or by deciphering the runes written on ancient relics. Their magical knowledge is imparted to them directly by their spiritual allies on the Other Side, when the mystic proves herself worthy. (In game terms, when the mystic has attained sufficient levels, domain access and Wisdom score to learn the spell.) On the other hand, while they may not be faced with quite as haphazard or hazardous a learning process as their arcane counterparts, in order to expand their magical repertoire these spellcasters must commit themselves to an intense study of a specific field of mystical knowledge. The mystic must acquaint himself with the countless spirits and rituals necessary to summon the proper type of spirits to generate the results he desires. In fact, the process is so complicated that a mystic at first only gains access to a limited number of spells in a given domain. Further, the mystic must choose whether to continue his study of that field and gain complete access to its secrets, or whether he will turn his attention to another domain instead. It is not a



decision to be made lightly. If a mystic chooses to abandon the study of a particular domain before he has achieved greater access to it, he can never again take up study of that domain and must remain forever limited to minor use of that domain.

A mystic character must declare his intention to continue studying a given domain or move on to a new area of study upon attaining each new class level, unless specified otherwise in their class description. Once set, this decision cannot be changed, even if the character has not yet gained a new level yet. Only one domain can be studied in this fashion at a time, and as described above, a character cannot attempt to continue her studies in a domain she previously abandoned, again unless specified otherwise in her class description. Listings for the domains as well as the spells available with major and minor access to those domains can be found at the conclusion of this chapter.

Mystics are not limited to any particular set of domains, as they are considered to be students of the spirit world in general rather than any particu-

lar deity. Characters who choose to follow a particular deity or set of beliefs are highly encouraged to select domains that reflect these convictions as opposed to studying domains based solely on their relative power or utility. The exception to this rule is that alignment domains are restricted to characters of the alignment in question. Should the mystic change his alignment later on (whether willingly or due to a *curse* or similar effect), he immediately loses all access to spells of that domain until he have atoned and returned to his previous alignment. Likewise, studying the Destruction or Necromantic domains is perilous for those of nonevil alignments. While any character may attain minor access to these domains without penalty, major access to either of those domains necessitates an immediate alignment change to the corresponding evil alignment.

Mystics do not gain granted powers from domains, nor do they gain bonus spells for domains, and they cannot spontaneously swap spells for healing or summoning spells.



### *Crowley, Not Rowling*

Accustomed to the fast-paced, high-powered nature of magic in most fantasy settings, some players may feel turned off by magic as it is presented in this chapter. They may complain that the increase in casting times makes magic-using characters “unplayable” or that the limits and alterations to the spell lists are “too restrictive.” In addition, these players might object to the dire risks that spellcasters take each time they draw on their talents to create wonders, as the Red Death patiently stalks them along the strands of the web. Some may feel it excessive to make powers checks every time they want to summon a simple light source.

While a good DM should take care to address the concerns of players in order to foster a more enjoyable experience for everyone in the group, some things regarding magic use should be made clear up front in order to avoid these kinds of problems. First of all, if it hasn’t been made obvious so far, the changes to the magic system in **Masque of the Red Death** are not arbitrary design restrictions. These restrictions help create the proper mood and atmosphere of Gothic Earth. Players should remember that the addition to casting times reflects the additional reliance on the use of ritual items, mystical chants and other trappings of the time period. Very few individuals possess the raw power or strength of will to conjure forth instantaneous effects, and those few that do are widely feared by those that know their ability. Access to magic has weakened greatly in Gothic Earth. Using it, therefore, becomes more difficult than in the ancient past, when magic was easier to touch and the Red Death did not taint all power.

Likewise, the changes to the spell list reflect what is and is not generally appropriate for the Victorian era of the setting. Charming a handsome gentleman with an incantation cleverly disguised as a poem or laying an ancient evil to rest with a complicated banishment ritual is one thing. Summoning hordes of monsters from thin air, creating blatantly magical constructs on a regular basis or otherwise conjuring up overt displays of supernatural power at the drop of a hat runs contrary to the very nature of the Gothic Earth setting.





## Spells in Gothic Earth

Spells are listed by spell level; full descriptions for the majority are found in Chapter 11: Spells of the *D&D Player's Handbook*. Spells marked with an asterisk (\*) are described in the *Ravenloft Player's Handbook*. Spells marked with a dagger (†) are described later in this chapter, after the spell listings. Consult the *Ravenloft Player's Handbook* for additional information on how certain spells interact with the Dark Powers.

DMs should feel free to disallow any spells they feel might unbalance their Gothic Earth campaign.

## A Spell By Any Other Name

Spells are listed by the universal names given to them in the *D&D Player's Handbook* and the *Ravenloft Player's Handbook* for ease of reference. Still, it is important to note that many of them are called something different on Gothic Earth.

For one thing, the famous spellcasters who lend their names to certain spells in the *D&D Player's Handbook* do not exist on Gothic Earth. Therefore, their names should be dropped (or better yet, replaced) when the spells are discussed in-game.

Indeed, players and DMs are encouraged to devise individual spell names better suited to each character's personality and history of magical instruction rather than rely on the stock names for these spells. It is often much more atmospheric and evocative of the period to hear a group of adepts discussing an *incantation of blissful repose* rather than just talking about a generic *sleep* spell. Even if the spell is exactly the same, the name helps set it apart and make it part of the Gothic Earth milieu alone.

### 0-Level Arcane Spells

- Acid Splash:** Orb deals 1d3 acid damage.
- Arcane Mark:** Inscribes a personal rune (visible or invisible).
- Dancing Lights:** Creates torches or other lights.
- Daze:** Humanoid creature of 4 HD or less loses next action.
- Detect Magic:** Detects spells and magic items within 60 ft.
- Detect Poison:** Detects poison in one creature or small object.
- Disrupt Undead:** Deals 1d6 damage to one undead.
- Flare:** Dazzles one creature (-1 on attack rolls).
- Ghost Sound:** Fingert sounds.
- Light:** Object shines like a torch.

- Mage Hand:** 5-pound telekinesis.
- Mending:** Makes minor repairs on an object.
- Message:** Whispered conversation at distance.
- Open/Close:** Opens or closes small or light things.
- Prestidigitation:** Performs minor tricks.
- Ray of Frost:** Ray deals 1d3 cold damage.
- Read Magic:** Read scrolls and spellbooks.
- Resistance:** Subject gains +1 on saving throws.
- Touch of Fatigue:** Touch attack fatigues target.

### 1st-Level Arcane Spells

- Alarm:** Wards an area for 2 hours/level.
- Animate Rope:** Makes a rope move at your command.
- Burning Hands:** 1d4/level fire damage (max 5d4).
- Cause Fear:** One creature of 5 HD or less flees for 1d4 rounds.
- Charm Person:** Makes one person your friend.
- Chill Touch:** One touch/level deals 1d6 damage and possibly 1 Str damage.
- Color Spray:** Knocks unconscious, blinds, and/or stuns weak creatures.
- Comprehend Languages:** You understand all spoken and written languages.
- Confusion, Lesser:** One creature is *confused* for 1 round.
- Detect Secret Doors:** Reveals hidden doors within 60 ft.
- Detect Undead:** Reveals undead within 60 ft.
- Disguise Self:** Changes your appearance.
- Endure Elements:** Exist comfortably in hot or cold environments.
- Enlarge Person:** Humanoid creature doubles in size.
- Erase:** Mundane or magical writing vanishes.
- Expeditious Retreat:** Your speed increases by 30 ft.
- Feather Fall:** Objects or creatures fall slowly.
- Grease:** Makes 10-ft. square or one object slippery.
- Hold Portal:** Holds door shut.
- Hypnotism:** Fascinates 2d4 HD of creatures.
- Identify:** Determines properties of magic item.
- Jump:** Subject gets bonus on Jump checks.
- Mage Armor:** Gives subject +4 armor bonus.
- Magic Weapon:** Weapon gains +1 bonus.
- Mount:** Summons riding horse for 2 hours/level.
- Obscuring Mist:** Fog surrounds you.
- Protection from Chaos/Evil/Good/Law:** +2 to AC and saves, counter mind control, hedge out elementals and outsiders.
- Ray of Enfeeblement:** Ray deals 1d6 +1 per two levels Str damage.
- Reduce Person:** Humanoid creature halves in size.
- Shield:** Invisible disc gives +4 to AC, blocks *magic missiles*.
- Shocking Grasp:** Touch delivers 1d6/level electricity damage (max 5d6).
- Silent Image:** Creates minor illusion of your design.
- Sleep:** Puts 4 HD of creatures into magical slumber.
- True Strike:** +20 on your next attack roll.
- Unseen Servant:** Invisible force obeys your commands.
- Ventriloquism:** Throws voice for 1 min./level.



### *2nd-Level Arcane Spells*

**Alter Self:** Assume form of a similar creature.  
**Arcane Lock:** Magically locks a portal or chest.  
**Bear's Endurance:** Subject gains +4 to Con for 1 min./level.  
**Blindness/Deafness:** Makes subject blind or deaf.  
**Blur:** Attacks miss subject 20% of the time.  
**Bull's Strength:** Subject gains +4 to Str for 1 min./level.  
**Cat's Grace:** Subject gains +4 to Dex for 1 min./level.  
**Command Undead:** Undead creature obeys your commands.  
**Continual Flame:** Makes a permanent, heatless torch.  
**Darkness:** 20-ft. radius of supernatural shadow.  
**Darkvision:** See 60 ft. in total darkness.  
**Daze Monster:** Living creature of 6 HD or less loses next action.  
**Detect Thoughts:** Allows "listening" to surface thoughts.  
**Eagle's Splendor:** Subject gains +4 to Cha for 1 min./level.  
**False Life:** Gain 1d10 temporary hp +1/level (max +10).  
**Flaming Sphere:** Creates rolling ball of fire, 2d6 damage, lasts 1 round/level.  
**Fog Cloud:** Fog obscures vision.  
**Fox's Cunning:** Subject gains +4 Int for 1 min./level.  
**Ghoul Touch:** Paralyzes one subject, which exudes stench that makes those nearby sickened.  
**Glitterdust:** Blinds creatures, outlines invisible creatures.  
**Hypnotic Pattern:** Fascinates (2d4 + level) HD of creatures.  
**Invisibility:** Subject is invisible for 1 min./level or until it attacks.  
**Knock:** Opens locked or magically sealed door.  
**Levitate:** Subject moves up and down at your direction.  
**Locate Object:** Senses direction toward object (specific or type).  
**Magic Mouth:** Speaks once when triggered.  
**Melf's Acid Arrow:** Ranged touch attack; 2d4 damage for 1 round +1 round/three levels.  
**Minor Image:** As *silent image*, plus some sound.  
**Mirror Image:** Creates decoy duplicates of you (1d4 +1 per three levels, max 8).  
**Owl's Wisdom:** Subject gains +4 to Wis for 1 min./level.  
**Misdirection:** Misleads divinations for one creature or object.  
**Obscure Object:** Masks object against scrying.  
**Owl's Wisdom:** Subject gains +4 to Wis for 1 min./level.  
**Protection from Arrows:** Subject immune to most ranged attacks.  
**Pyrotechnics:** Turns fire into blinding light or choking smoke.  
**Resist Energy:** Ignores first 10 (or more) points of damage/attack from specified energy type.  
**Rope Trick:** As many as eight creatures hide in extradimensional space.  
**Scare:** Panics creatures of less than 6 HD.  
**Scorching Ray:** Ranged touch attack deals 4d6 fire damage, +1 ray/four levels (max 3).  
**See Invisibility:** Reveals invisible creatures or objects.  
**Shatter:** Sonic vibration damages objects or crystalline creatures.

**Spectral Hand:** Creates disembodied glowing hand to deliver touch attacks.

**Spider Climb:** Grants ability to walk on walls and ceilings.

**Summon Swarm:** Summons swarm of bats, rats, or spiders.

**Tasha's Hideous Laughter:** Subject loses actions for 1 round/level.

**Touch of Idiocy:** Subject takes 1d6 points of Int, Wis, and Cha damage.

**Web:** Fills 20-ft.-radius spread with sticky spiderwebs.

**Whispering Wind:** Sends a short message 1 mile/level.

### *3rd-Level Arcane Spells*

**Arcane Sight:** Magical auras become visible to you.

**Augment Undead:** You can endow undead with greater resistance against spells and turning. †

**Clairaudience/Clairvoyance:** Hear or see at a distance for 1 min./level.

**Corpse Whisper:** You can send telepathic commands to the undead. †

**Daylight:** 60-ft. radius of bright light.

**Deep Slumber:** Puts 10 HD of creatures to sleep.

**Dispel Magic:** Cancels magical spells and effects.

**Displacement:** Attacks miss subject 50%.

**Explosive Runes:** Deals 6d6 damage when read.

**Fireball:** 1d6 damage per level, 20-ft. radius.

**Flame Arrow:** Arrows deal +1d6 fire damage.

**Fly:** Subject flies at speed of 60 ft.

**Gaseous Form:** Subject becomes insubstantial and can fly slowly.

**Gentle Repose:** Preserves one corpse.

**Halt Undead:** Immobilizes undead for 1 round/level.

**Haste:** One creature/level moves faster, +1 on attack rolls, AC, and Reflex saves.

**Heroism:** Gives +2 bonus on attack rolls, saves, skill checks.

**Hold Person:** Paralyzes one humanoid for 1 round/level.

**Illusory Script:** Only intended reader can decipher.

**Invisibility Sphere:** Makes everyone within 10 ft. invisible.

**Keen Edge:** Doubles normal weapon's threat range.

**Lightning Bolt:** Electricity deals 1d6/level damage.

**Magic Circle against Chaos/Evil/Good/Law:** As *protection* spells, but 10-ft. radius and 10 min./level.

**Magic Weapon, Greater:** +1/four levels (max +5).

**Major Image:** As *silent image*, plus sound, smell and thermal effects.

**Nondetection:** Hides subject from divination, scrying.

**Phantom Steed:** Magic horse appears for 1 hour/level.

**Protection from Energy:** Absorb 12 points/level of damage from one kind of energy.

**Rage:** Subjects gains +2 to Str and Con, +1 on Will saves, -2 to AC.

**Ray of Exhaustion:** Ray makes subject exhausted.

**Secret Page:** Changes one page to hide its real content.

**Sepia Snake Sigil:** Creates text symbol that immobilizes reader.

**Shrink Item:** Object shrinks to one-sixteenth size.



**Sleet Storm:** Hampers vision and movement.  
**Slow:** One subject/level takes only one action/round, -1 to AC, reflex saves, and attack rolls.  
**Stinking Cloud:** Nauseating vapors, 1 round/level.  
**Suggestion:** Compels subject to follow stated course of action.  
**Tongues:** Speak any language.  
**Vampiric Touch:** Touch deals 1d6/two levels damage; caster gains damage as hp.  
**Water Breathing:** Subjects can breathe underwater.  
**Wind Wall:** Deflects arrows, smaller creatures, and gases.

#### *4th-level Arcane Spells*

**Animate Dead:** Creates undead skeletons and zombies.  
**Arcane Eye:** Invisible floating eye moves 30 ft./round.  
**Bestow Curse:** -6 to an ability score; -4 on attack rolls, saves, and checks; or 50% chance of losing each action.  
**Charm Monster:** Makes monster believe it is your ally.  
**Confusion:** Subjects behave oddly for 1 round/level.  
**Contagion:** Infects subject with chosen disease.  
**Crushing Despair:** Subjects take -2 on attack rolls, damage rolls, saves, and checks.  
**Detect Scrying:** Alerts you of magical eavesdropping.  
**Dimension Door:** Teleports you short distance.  
**Dimensional Anchor:** Bars extradimensional movement.  
**Enervation:** Subject gains 1d4 negative levels.  
**Evard's Black Tentacles:** Tentacles grapple all within 20 ft. spread.  
**Eyes of the Undead:** You may scry through the senses of an undead creature.†  
**Fear:** Subjects within cone flee for 1 round/level.  
**Fire Shield:** Creatures attacking you take fire damage; you're protected from heat or cold.  
**Fire Trap:** Opened object deals 1d4 damage +1/level.  
**Geas, Lesser:** Commands subject of 7 HD or less.  
**Globe of Invulnerability, Lesser:** Stops 1st- through 3rd-level spell effects.  
**Hallucinatory Terrain:** Makes one type of terrain appear like another (field into forest, or the like).  
**Ice Storm:** Hail deals 5d6 damage in cylinder 40 ft. across.  
**Illusory Wall:** Wall, floor, or ceiling looks real, but anything can pass through.  
**Invisibility, Greater:** As *invisibility*, but subject can attack and stay invisible.  
**Locate Creature:** Indicates direction to familiar creature.  
**Minor Creation:** Creates one cloth or wood object.  
**Modify Memory:** You can alter the memories of your target.  
**Phantasmal Killer:** Fearsome illusion kills subject or deals 3d6 damage.  
**Polymorph:** Gives one willing subject a new form.  
**Rainbow Pattern:** Lights fascinate 24 HD of creatures.  
**Reduce Person, Mass:** Reduces several creatures.  
**Remove Curse:** Frees object or person from curse.  
**Scrying:** Spies on subject from a distance.

**Shout:** Deafens all within cone and deals 5d6 sonic damage.  
**Solid Fog:** Blocks vision and slows movement.  
**Stoneskin:** Ignore 10 points of damage per attack.  
**Wall of Fire:** Deals 2d4 fire damage out to 10 ft. and 1d4 out to 20 ft. Passing through wall deals 2d6 damage +1/level.  
**Wall of Ice:** *Ice plane* creates wall with 15 hp +1/level, or *hemisphere* can trap creatures inside.

#### *5th-level Arcane Spells*

**Animal Growth:** One animal/two levels doubles in size.  
**Baleful Polymorph:** Transforms subject into harmless animal.  
**Blight:** Withers one plant or deals 1d6/level damage to plant creature.  
**Break Enchantment:** Frees subjects from enchantments, alterations, curses, and petrification.  
**Cloudkill:** Kills 3 HD or less; 4-6 HD save or die, 6+ HD take Con damage.  
**Cone of Cold:** 1d6/level cold damage.  
**Dismissal:** Forces a creature to return to native plane.  
**Dominate Person:** Controls humanoid telepathically.  
**Dream:** Sends message to anyone sleeping.  
**Fabricate:** Transforms raw materials into finished items.  
**False Vision:** Fools scrying with an illusion.  
**Feeblemind:** Subject's Int and Cha drop to 1.  
**Feign Undeath:** You give your target the physical aspects of a zombie.\*  
**Hold Monster:** As *hold person*, but any creature.  
**Magic Jar:** Enables possession of another creature.  
**Major Creation:** As *minor creation*, plus stone and metal.  
**Mind Fog:** Subjects in fog get -10 to Wis and Will checks.  
**Mirage Arcana:** As *hallucinatory terrain*, plus structures.  
**Nightmare:** Sends vision dealing 1d10 damage, fatigue.  
**Overland Flight:** You fly at a speed of 40 ft. and can hustle over long distances.  
**Passwall:** Creates passage through wood or stone wall.  
**Permanency:** Makes certain spells permanent.  
**Persistent Image:** As *major image*, but no concentration required.  
**Prying Eyes:** 1d4 +1/level floating eyes scout for you.  
**Seeming:** Changes appearance of one person per two levels.  
**Sending:** Delivers short message anywhere, instantly.  
**Stone Shape:** Sculpts stone into any shape.  
**Symbol of Pain:** Triggered rune wracks nearby creatures with pain.  
**Symbol of Sleep:** Triggered rune puts nearby creatures into catatonic slumber.  
**Telekinesis:** Moves object, attacks creature, or hurls object or creature.  
**Teleport:** Instantly transports you as far as 100 miles/level.  
**Transmute Mud to Rock:** Transforms two 10-ft. cubes per level.  
**Transmute Rock to Mud:** Transforms two 10-ft. cubes per level.  
**Wall of Force:** Wall is immune to damage.



**Wall of Stone:** Creates a stone wall that can be shaped.  
**Waves of Fatigue:** Several targets become fatigued.

### 6th-level Arcane Spells

**Acid Fog:** Fog deals acid damage.  
**Antimagic Field:** Negates magic within 10 ft.  
**Chain Lightning:** 1d6/level damage; 1 secondary bolt/level each deals half damage.  
**Circle of Death:** Kills 1d4/level HD of creatures.  
**Contingency:** Sets trigger condition for another spell.  
**Control Water:** Raises or lowers bodies of water.  
**Create Undead:** Creates ghouls, ghosts, mummies, or mohrgs.  
**Disintegrate:** Makes one creature or object vanish.  
**Dispel Magic, Greater:** As *dispel magic*, but +20 on check.  
**Eyebite:** Target becomes panicked, sickened, and comatose.  
**Flesh to Stone:** Turns subject creature into statue.  
**Geas/Quest:** As *lesser geas*, plus it affects any creature.  
**Globe of Invulnerability:** As *lesser globe of invulnerability*, plus 4th-level spell effects.  
**Guards and Wards:** Array of magic effects protect area.  
**Heroism, Greater:** Gives +4 bonus on attack rolls, saves, skill checks; immunity to fear; temporary hp.  
**Legend Lore:** Lets you learn tales about a person, place, or thing.  
**Mislead:** Turns you invisible and creates illusory double.  
**Move Earth:** Digs trenches and build hills.  
**Permanent Image:** Includes sight, sound, and smell.  
**Programmed Image:** As *major image*, plus triggered by event.  
**Repulsion:** Creatures can't approach you.  
**Stone to Flesh:** Restores petrified creature.  
**Suggestion, Mass:** As *suggestion*, plus one subject/level.  
**Symbol of Fear:** Triggered rune panics nearby creatures.  
**Symbol of Persuasion:** Triggered rune charms nearby creatures.  
**True Seeing:** Lets you see all things as they really are.  
**Veil:** Changes appearance of group of creatures.  
**Undeath to Death:** Destroys 1d4/level HD of undead (max 20d4).  
**Wall of Iron:** 30 hp/four levels; can topple onto foes.

### 7th-level Arcane Spells

**Arcane Sight, Greater:** As *arcane sight*, but also reveals magic effects on creatures and objects.  
**Banishment:** Banishes 2 HD/level of extraplanar creatures.  
**Bestow Greater Curse:** Bestows curse of lethal severity, as *bestow divine curse* in the **Ravenloft Player's Handbook**.  
**Control Undead:** Undead don't attack you while under your command.  
**Delayed Blast Fireball:** 1d6/level fire damage; you can postpone blast for 5 rounds.  
**Finger of Death:** Kills one subject.  
**Forcecage:** Cube or cage of force imprisons all inside.  
**Insanity:** Subject suffers continuous *confusion*.  
**Invisibility, Mass:** As *invisibility*, but affects all in range.

**Limited Wish:** Alters reality within spell limits.  
**Phase Door:** Creates an invisible passage through wood or stone.  
**Plane Shift:** As many as eight subjects travel to another plane.  
**Power Word Blind:** Blinds creature with 200 hp or less.  
**Prismatic Spray:** Rays hit subjects with variety of effects.  
**Remove Greater Curse:** Reverses the effect of *bestow greater curse*.  
**Reverse Gravity:** Objects and creatures fall upward.  
**Scrying, Greater:** As *scrying*, but faster and longer.  
**Sequester:** Subject is invisible to sight and scrying; renders creature comatose.  
**Simulacrum:** Creates partially real double of a creature.  
**Spell Turning:** Reflect 1d4+6 spell levels back at caster.  
**Statue:** Subject can become a statue at will.  
**Symbol of Stunning:** Triggered rune stuns nearby creatures.  
**Symbol of Weakness:** Triggered rune weakens nearby creatures.  
**Teleport, Greater:** As *teleport*, but no range limit and no off-target arrival.  
**Teleport Object:** As *teleport*, but affects a touched object.  
**Vision:** As *legend lore*, but quicker and strenuous.  
**Waves of Exhaustion:** Several targets become exhausted.

### 8th-level Arcane Spells

**Antipathy:** Object or location affected by spell repels certain creatures.  
**Bestow Ancient Curse:** You can bestow a curse that lasts for generations.\*  
**Binding:** Utilizes an array of techniques to imprison a creature.  
**Clone:** Duplicate awakens when original dies.  
**Create Greater Undead:** Create shadows, wraiths, spectres, or devourers.  
**Demand:** As *sending*, plus you can send *suggestion*.  
**Dimensional Lock:** Teleportation and interplanar travel blocked for one day/level.  
**Discern Location:** Reveals exact location of creature or object.  
**Horrid Wilting:** Deals 1d6/level damage within 30 ft.  
**Incendiary Cloud:** Cloud deals 4d6 fire damage/round.  
**Iron Body:** Your body becomes living iron.  
**Maze:** Traps subject in extradimensional maze.  
**Mind Blank:** Subject is immune to mental/emotional magic and scrying.  
**Moment of Prescience:** You gain insight bonus on single attack roll, check, or save.  
**Polar Ray:** Ranged touch attack deals 1d6/level cold damage.  
**Polymorph Any Object:** Changes any subject into anything else.  
**Power Word Stun:** Stuns creature with 150 hp or less.  
**Prismatic Wall:** Wall's colors have array of effects.  
**Prying Eyes, Greater:** As *prying eyes*, but eyes have *true seeing*.  
**Remove Ancient Curse:** Negates *bestow ancient curse*.\*





**Scintillating Pattern:** Twisting colors *confuse*, stun, or render unconscious.

**Screen:** Illusion hides area from vision, scrying.

**Shout, Greater:** Devastating yell deals 10d6 sonic damage; stuns creatures, damages objects.

**Sunburst:** Blinds all within 10 ft., deals 6d6 damage.

**Symbol of Death:** Triggered rune slays nearby creatures.

**Symbol of Insanity:** Triggered rune renders nearby creatures insane.

**Sympathy:** Object or location attracts certain creatures.

**Temporal Stasis:** Puts subject into suspended animation.

**Trap the Soul:** Imprisons subject within gem.

**Major Access**

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**Geas, Lesser:** Commands subject of 7 HD or less.

**Atonement:** Removes burden of misdeeds from subject.

**Symbol of Sleep:** Triggered rune puts nearby creatures into catatonic slumber.

**Banishment:** Banishes 2 HD/level of extraplanar creatures.

**Geas/Quest:** As *lesser geas*, plus it affects any creature.

**Symbol of Stunning:** Triggered rune stuns nearby creatures.

**Symbol of Weakness:** Triggered rune weakens nearby creatures.

*9th-level Arcane Spells*

**Dominate Monster:** As *dominate person*, but any creature.

**Energy Drain:** Subject gains 2d4 negative levels.

**Foresight:** "Sixth sense" warns of impending danger.

**Freedom:** Releases creature from *imprisonment*.

**Gate:** Connects two planes for travel or summoning.

**Imprisonment:** Entombs subject beneath the earth.

**Meteor Swarm:** Four exploding spheres each deal 6d6 fire damage.

**Power Word Kill:** Kills one creature with 100 hp or less.

**Prismatic Sphere:** As *prismatic wall*, but surrounds on all sides.

**Refuge:** Alters item to transport its possessor to you.

**Soul Bind:** Traps newly dead soul to prevent *resurrection*.

**Teleportation Circle:** Circle teleports any creature inside to designated spot.

**Time Stop:** You act freely for 1d4+1 rounds.

**Wail of the Banshee:** Kills one creature/level.

**Weird:** As *phantasmal killer*, but affects all within 30 ft.

**Wish:** As *limited wish*, but with fewer limits.

*Air Domain*

**Minor Access**

1

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3

**Obscuring Mist:** Fog surrounds you.

**Feather Fall:** Objects or creatures fall slowly.

**Fog Cloud:** Fog obscures vision.

**Sound Burst:** Deals 1d8 sonic damage to subjects; may stun them.

**Gust of Wind:** Blows away or knocks down smaller creatures.

**Wind Wall:** Deflects arrows, smaller creatures, and gases.

**Major Access**

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**Air Walk:** Subject treads on air as if solid (climb at 45-degree angle).

**Control Winds:** Change wind direction and speed.

**Wind Walk:** You and your allies turn vaporous and travel fast.

**Whirlwind:** Cyclone deals damage and can pick up creatures.

*Mysticism Spells*

Mysticism spells are listed by domain and divided into minor (3rd-level or below) and major (4th-level and above) access.

*All Domain*

**Minor Access**

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**Purify Food and Drink:** Purifies 1 cu. ft./level of food or water.

**Virtue:** Subject gains 1 temporary hp.

**Bless:** Allies gain +1 on attack rolls and saves against fear.

**Bless Water:** Makes holy water.

**Consecrate:** Fills area with positive energy, making undead weaker.

**Prayer:** Allies +1 bonus on most rolls, enemies -1 penalty.

*Animal Domain*

**Minor Access**

1

2

**Calm Animals:** Calms (2d4 + level) HD of animals.

**Charm Animal:** Makes one animal your friend.

**Detect Animals or Plants:** Detects kinds of animals or plants.

**Hide from Animals:** Animals can't perceive one subject/level.

**Animal Messenger:** Sends a Tiny animal to a specific place.

**Animal Trance:** Fascinates 2d6 HD of animals.



- 3 **Hold Animal:** Paralyzes one animal for 1 round/level.
- 3 **Speak with Animals:** You can communicate with animals.
- 3 **Dominate Animal:** Subject animal obeys silent mental commands.
- 3 **Reduce Animal:** Shrinks one willing animal.

**Major Access**

- 4 **Giant Vermin:** Turns centipedes, scorpions, or spiders into giant vermin.
- 4 **Repel Vermin:** Insects, spiders, and other vermin stay 10 ft. away.
- 5 **Animal Growth:** One animal/two levels doubles in size.
- 5 **Insect Plague:** Locust swarms attack creatures.
- 7 **Creeping Doom:** Swarms of centipedes attack at your command.

*Charm Domain*

**Minor Access**

- 1 **Detect Law:** Reveals creatures, spells, or objects of lawful alignment.
- 1 **Entropic Shield:** Ranged attacks against you have 20% miss chance.
- 1 **Protection from Law:** +2 to AC and saves, counter mind control, hedge out elementals and outsiders.
- 1 **Confusion, Lesser:** One creature is *confused* for 1 round.
- 2 **Align Weapon, Chaotic:** Weapon becomes chaotic.
- 2 **Shatter:** Sonic vibration damages objects or crystalline creatures.
- 3 **Magic Circle against Law:** As *protection* spells, but 10-ft. radius and 10 min./level.

**Major Access**

- 4 **Chaos Hammer:** Damages and staggers lawful creatures.
- 5 **Dispel Law:** +4 bonus against attacks by lawful creatures.
- 6 **Animate Objects:** Objects attack your foes.
- 7 **Word of Chaos:** Kills, *confuses*, stuns, or deafens nonchaotic subjects.
- 8 **Cloak of Chaos:** +4 to AC, +4 resistance, SR 25 against lawful spells.

*Charm Domain*

**Minor Access**

- 1 **Cause Fear:** One creature of 5 HD or less flees for 1d4 rounds.
- 1 **Command:** One subject obeys selected command for 1 round.
- 1 **Remove Fear:** Suppresses fear or gives +4 on saves against fear for one subject + one per four levels.
- 2 **Calm Emotions:** Calms creatures, negating emotion effects.
- 2 **Charm Person:** Makes one person your friend.
- 2 **Eagle's Splendor:** Subject gains +4 to Cha for 1 min./level.
- 2 **Enthrall:** Captivates all within 100 ft. + 10 ft./level.
- 2 **Hold Person:** Paralyzes one humanoid for 1 round/level.
- 2 **Remove Paralysis:** Frees one or more creatures from paralysis or *slow* effect.

**Major Access**

- 4 **Geas, Lesser:** Commands subject of 7 HD or less.
- 4 **Glibness:** You gain +30 bonus on Bluff checks, and your lies can escape magical discernment.
- 5 **Command, Greater:** As *command*, but affects one subject/level.
- 6 **Geas/Quest:** As *lesser geas*, plus it affects any creature.
- 6 **Hold Monster:** As *hold person*, but any creature.
- 8 **Symbol of Persuasion:** Triggered rune charms nearby creatures.
- 8 **Mind Blank:** Subject is immune to mental/emotional magic and scrying.
- 9 **Sympathy:** Object or location attracts certain creatures.

*Creation Domain*

**Minor Access**

- 0 **Create Water:** Creates 2 gallons/level of pure water.
- 0 **Mending:** Makes minor repairs on an object.
- 1 **Obscuring Mist:** Fog surrounds you.
- 1 **Make Whole:** Repairs an object.
- 2 **Restoration, Lesser:** Dispels magical ability penalty or repairs 1d4 ability damage.





3 **Continual Flame:** Makes a permanent, heatless torch.  
**Create Food and Water:** Feeds three humans (or one horse)/level.  
**Helping Hand:** Ghostly hand leads subject to you.

**Major Access**

4 **Restoration:** Restores level and ability score drains.  
5 **Wall of Iron:** 30 hp/four levels; can topple onto foes.  
**Wall of Stone:** Creates a stone wall that can be shaped.  
6 **Heroes' Feast:** Food for one creature/level cures and grants combat bonuses.  
7 **Restoration, Greater:** As *restoration*, plus restores all levels and ability scores.  
9 **Gate:** Connects two planes for travel or summoning.

*Death Domain*

**Minor Access**

1 **Deathwatch:** Reveals how near death subjects within 30 ft. are.  
**Detect Undead:** Reveals undead within 60 ft.  
**Hide from Undead:** Undead can't perceive one subject/level.  
2 **False Life:** Gain 1d10 temporary hp +1/level (max +10).  
**Gentle Repose:** Preserves one corpse.  
3 **Speak with Dead:** Corpse answers one question/two levels.

**Major Access**

4 **Death Ward:** Grants immunity to death spells and negative energy effects.  
5 **Disrupting Weapon:** Melee weapon destroys undead.  
6 **Undeath to Death:** Destroys 1d4 HD/level undead (max 20d4).  
7 **Tomb Ward:** Protects a tomb from defilers with a curse.\*  
8 **Finger of Death:** Kills one subject.  
9 **Wail of the Banshee:** Kills one creature/level.

*Destruction Domain*

**Minor Access**

0 **Inflict Minor Wounds:** Touch attack, 1 point of damage.

1 **Doom:** One subject takes -2 on attack rolls, damage rolls, saves, and checks.

**Inflict Light Wounds:** Touch attack, 1d8 damage +1/level (max +5).

**Darkness:** 20-ft. radius of supernatural shadow.

**Inflict Moderate Wounds:** Touch attack, 2d8 damage +1/level (max +10).

**Shatter:** Sonic vibration damages objects or crystalline creatures.

**Blindness/Deafness:** Makes subject blinded or deafened.

**Deeper Darkness:** Object sheds supernatural shadow in 60-ft. radius.

**Inflict Serious Wounds:** Touch attack, 3d8 damage +1/level (max +15).

**Major Access**

4 **Inflict Critical Wounds:** Touch attack, 4d8 damage +1/level (max +20).

**Poison:** Touch deals 1d10 Con damage, repeats in 1 min.

**Inflict Light Wounds, Mass:** Deals 1d8 damage +1/level to many creatures.

**Harm:** Deals 10 points/level damage to target.

**Destruction:** Kills subject and destroys remains.

**Disintegrate:** Makes one creature or object vanish.

**Symbol of Weakness:** Triggered rune weakens nearby creatures.

**Earthquake:** Intense tremor shakes 80-ft.-radius.

**Symbol of Insanity:** Triggered rune renders nearby creatures insane.

**Implosion:** Kills one creature/round.

*Swimtion Domain*

**Minor Access**

0 **Guidance:** +1 on one attack roll, saving throw, or skill check.

**Detect Snares and Pits:** Reveals natural or primitive traps.

**Augur:** Learns whether an action will be good or bad.

**Find Traps:** Notice traps as a rogue does.

**Owl's Wisdom:** Subject gains +4 to Wis for 1 min./level.

**Zone of Truth:** Subjects within range cannot lie.

**Locate Object:** Senses direction to ward object (specific or type).



**Major Access**

- 4 **Discern Lies:** Reveals deliberate falsehoods.
- 4 **Divination:** Provides useful advice for specific proposed actions.
- 5 **Scrying:** Spies on subject from a distance.
- 5 **True Seeing:** Lets you see all things as they really are.
- 7 **Scrying, Greater:** As *scrying*, but faster and longer.
- 8 **Discern Location:** Reveals exact location of creature or object.
- 8 **Moment of Prescience:** You gain insight bonus on single attack roll, check, or save.
- 9 **Foresight:** "Sixth sense" warns of impending danger.

*Evil Domain*

**Minor Access**

- 0 **Inflict Minor Wounds:** Touch attack, 1 point of damage.
- 1 **Bane:** Enemies take -1 on attack rolls and saves against fear.
- 1 **Curse Water:** Makes unholy water.
- 1 **Protection from Good:** +2 to AC and saves, counter mind control, hedge out elementals and outsiders.
- 2 **Align Weapon, Evil:** Weapon becomes evil.
- 2 **Desecrate:** Fills area with negative energy, making undead stronger.
- 3 **Bestow Curse:** -6 to an ability score; -4 on attack rolls, saves, and checks; or 50% chance of losing each action.
- 3 **Contagion:** Infects subject with chosen disease.
- 3 **Magic Circle against Good:** As *protection* spells, but 10-ft. radius and 10 min./level.

*Earth Domain*

**Minor Access**

- 1 **Detect Snares and Pits:** Reveals natural or primitive traps.
- 1 **Magic Stone:** Three stones gain +1 on attack, deal 1d6 +1 damage.
- 2 **Soften Earth and Stone:** Turns stone to clay or dirt to sand or mud.
- 3 **Meld into Stone:** You and your gear merge with stone.
- 3 **Stone Shape:** Sculpts stone into any shape.

**Major Access**

**Major Access**

- 4 **Spike Stones:** Creatures in area take 1d8 damage, may be *lowed*.
- 5 **Commune with Nature:** Learn about terrain for 1 mile/level.
- 5 **Transmute Mud to Rock:** Transforms two 10-ft. cubes per level.
- 5 **Transmute Rock to Mud:** Transforms two 10-ft. cubes per level.
- 5 **Wall of Stone:** Creates a stone wall that can be shaped.
- 6 **Move Earth:** Digs trenches and builds hills.
- 6 **Stone Tell:** Talk to natural or worked stone.
- 6 **Stoneskin:** Ignore 10 points of damage per attack.
- 8 **Earthquake:** Intense tremor shakes 80-ft.-radius.
- 8 **Iron Body:** Your body becomes living iron.
- 8 **Repel Metal or Stone:** Pushes away metal and stone.

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*Fire Domain*

**Minor Access**

- 0 **Flare:** Dazzles one creature (-1 on attack rolls).
- 1 **Burning Hands:** 1d4/level fire damage (max 5d4).
- 1 **Endure Elements:** Exist comfortably in hot or cold environments.

**Unholy Blight:** Damages and sickens good creatures.

**Unhallow:** Designates location as unholy.

**Dispel Good:** +4 bonus against attacks by good creatures.

**Symbol of Pain:** Triggered rune wracks nearby creatures with pain.

**Bestow Greater Curse:** Bestows a curse of lethal severity as bestow divine curse in the *Ravenloft Player's Handbook*.\*

**Symbol of Fear:** Triggered rune panics nearby creatures.

**Bestow Ancient Curse:** Bestows a curse that lasts generations.\*

**Blasphemy:** Kills, paralyzes, weakens, or dazes nonevil subjects.

**Unholy Aura:** +4 to AC, +4 resistance, and SR 25 against good spells.

**Energy Drain:** Subject gains 2d4 negative levels.



- 2 **Fire Trap:** Opened object deals 1d4 damage +1/level.
- Flame Blade:** Touch attack deals 1d8 +1/two levels damage.
- Flaming Sphere:** Creates rolling ball of fire, 2d6 damage, lasts 1 round/level.
- Produce Flame:** 1d6 damage +1/level, touch or thrown.
- Resist Energy:** Ignores 10 (or more) points of damage/attack from specified energy type (cold or fire only).

**Major Access**

- 4 **Wall of Fire:** Deals 2d4 fire damage out to 10 ft. and 1d4 out to 20 ft. Passing through wall deals 2d6 damage +1/level.
- 5 **Fire Shield:** Creatures attacking you take fire damage; you're protected from heat or cold.
- Flame Strike:** Smite foes with divine fire (1d6/level damage).
- 6 **Fire Seeds:** Acorns and berries become grenades and bombs.
- 7 **Fire Storm:** Deals 1d6/level fire damage.
- 8 **Incendiary Cloud:** Cloud deals 4d6 fire damage/round.

*Good Domain*

**Minor Access**

- 1 **Protection from Evil:** +2 to AC and saves, counter mind control, hedge out elementals and outsiders.
- Sanctuary:** Opponents can't attack you, and you can't attack.
- 2 **Aid:** +1 on attack rolls and saves against fear, 1d8 temporary hp +1/level (max +10).
- Align Weapon, Good:** Weapon becomes good.
- 3 **Magic Circle against Evil:** As *protection* spells, but 10-ft. radius and 10 min./level.
- Remove Curse:** Frees object or person from curse.

**Major Access**

- 4 **Divine Power:** You gain attack bonus, +6 to Str, and 1 hp/level.
- Holy Smite:** Damages and blinds evil creatures.
- Dispel Evil:** +4 bonus against attacks by evil creatures.
- 5 **Disrupting Weapon:** Melee weapon destroys undead.

- 6 **Remove Greater Curse:** Negates *bestow greater curse*.\*
- 7 **Remove Ancient Curse:** Negates *bestow ancient curse*.\*
- Holy Word:** Kills, paralyzes, blinds, or deafens nongood subjects.
- Symbol of Stunning:** Triggered rune stuns nearby creatures.
- 8 **Holy Aura:** +4 to AC, +4 resistance, and SR 25 against evil spells.

*Guardian Domain*

**Minor Access**

- 0 **Resistance:** Subject gains +1 on saving throws.
- 1 **Hide from Undead:** Undead can't perceive one subject/level.
- Sanctuary:** Opponents can't attack you, and you can't attack.
- 2 **Shield Other:** You take half of subject's damage.
- Silence:** Negates sound in 20-ft. radius.
- Status:** Monitors condition, position of allies.
- Undetectable Alignment:** Conceals alignment for 24 hours.
- 3 **Glyph of Warding:** Inscription harms those who pass it.
- Helping Hand:** Ghostly hand leads subject to you.
- Invisibility Purge:** Dispers invisibility within 5 ft./level.
- Obscure Object:** Masks object against scrying.

**Major Access**

- 4 **Antiplant Shell:** Keeps animated plants at bay.
- Sending:** Delivers short message any where, instantly.
- 5 **Symbol of Sleep:** Triggered rune puts nearby creatures into catatonic slumber.
- 6 **Forbiddance:** Blocks planar travel, damages creatures of different alignment.
- Glyph of Warding, Greater:** As *glyph of warding*, but up to 10d8 damage or 6th-level spell.
- Word of Recall:** Teleports you back to designated place.
- Refuge:** Alters item to transport its possessor to you.
- Repulsion:** Creatures can't approach you.
- Screen:** Illusion hides area from vision, scrying.



**Tomb Ward:** Protects a tomb from defilers with a curse.\*

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**Major Access**

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*Healing Domain*

**Minor Access**

0

**Cure Minor Wounds:** Cures 1 point of damage.

**Detect Poison:** Detects poison in one creature or object.

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**Cure Light Wounds:** Cures 1d8 damage +1/level (max +5).

2

**Cure Moderate Wounds:** Cures 2d8 damage +1/level (max +10).

**Delay Poison:** Stops poison from harming subject for 1 hour/level.

3

**Cure Serious Wounds:** Cures 3d8 damage +1/level (max +15).

**Remove Blindness/Deafness:** Cures normal or magical conditions.

**Remove Disease:** Cures all diseases affecting subject.

**Major Access**

4

**Cure Critical Wounds:** Cures 4d8 damage +1/level (max +20).

**Neutralize Poison:** Immunizes subject against poison, detoxifies venom in or on subject.

**Reincarnate:** Brings dead subject back in a random body.

5

**Cure Light Wounds, Mass:** Cures 1d8 damage +1/level for many creatures.

**Raise Dead:** Restores life to subject who died as long as one day/level ago.

6

**Heal:** Cures 10 points/level of damage, all diseases and mental conditions.

7

**Regenerate:** Subject's severed limbs grow back, cures 4d8 damage +1/level (max +35).

8

**Heal, Mass:** As *heal*, but with several subjects.

*Law Domain*

**Minor Access**

1

**Clairaudience/Clairvoyance:** Hear or see at a distance for 1 min./level.

**Discern Lies:** Reveals deliberate falsehoods.

**Sending:** Delivers short message any where, instantly.

**Tongues:** Speak any language.

**True Seeing:** Lets you see all things as they really are.

**Find the Path:** Shows most direct way to a location.

**Legend Lore:** Lets you learn tales about a person, place, or thing.

**Discern Location:** Reveals exact location of creature or object.

1

**Protection from Chaos:** +2 to AC and saves, counter mind control, hedge out elementals and outsiders.

**Detect Chaos:** Reveals creatures, spells, or objects of chaotic alignment.

**Align Weapon, Law:** Weapon be comes lawful.

**Calm Emotions:** Calms creatures, negating emotion effects.

**Magic Circle against Chaos:** As *protection* spells, but 10-ft. radius and 10 min./level.

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**Major Access**

4

**Order's Wrath:** Damages and dazes chaotic creatures.

**Dispel Chaos:** +4 bonus against attacks by chaotic creatures.

**Mark of Justice:** Designates action that will trigger *curse* on subject.

**Hold Monster:** As *hold person*, but any creature.

**Dictum:** Kills, paralyzes, slows, or deafens nonlawful subjects.

**Shield of Law:** +4 to AC, +4 resistance, and SR 25 against chaotic spells.

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*Knowledge Domain*

**Minor Access**

0

**Know Direction:** You discern north.

1

**Comprehend Languages:** You understand all spoken and written languages.

**Detect Secret Doors:** Reveals hidden doors within 60 ft.

2

**Detect Thoughts:** Allows "listening" to surface thoughts.

**Find Traps:** Notice traps as a rogue does.

**Fox's Cunning:** Subject gains +4 Int for 1 min./level.

*Magic Domain*

**Minor Access**

0

**Detect Magic:** Detects spells and magic items within 60 ft.

**Read Magic:** Read scrolls and spellbooks.



- 1 **Faerie Fire:** Outlines subjects with light, canceling *blur*, concealment, and the like.
- 2 **Restoration, Lesser:** Dispels magical ability penalty or repairs 1d4 ability damage.  
**Undetectable Alignment:** Conceals alignment for 24 hours.
- 3 **Bestow Curse:** -6 to an ability score; -4 on attack rolls, saves, and checks; or 50% chance of losing each action.  
**Dispel Magic:** Cancels spells and magical effects.  
**Remove Curse:** Frees object or person from curse.

#### Major Access

- 4 **Imbue with Spell Ability:** Transfer spells to subject.  
**Restoration:** Restores level and ability score drains.
- 5 **Break Enchantment:** Frees subjects from enchantments, alterations, curses, and petrification.  
**Plane Shift:** As many as eight subjects travel to another plane.  
**Spell Resistance:** Subject gains SR 12 + level.
- 6 **Bestow Greater Curse:** Bestows a curse of lethal severity as bestow divine curse in the *Ravenloft Player's Handbook*.  
**Dispel Magic, Greater:** As *dispel magic*, but up to +20 on check.  
**Remove Greater Curse:** Negates *bestow greater curse*.\*
- 7 **Bestow Ancient Curse:** Bestows a curse that lasts generations.\*  
**Restoration, Greater:** As *restoration*, plus restores all levels and ability scores.  
**Remove Ancient Curse:** Negates *bestow ancient curse*.\*
- 8 **Spell Turning:** Reflect 1d4+6 spell levels back at caster.  
**Antimagic Field:** Negates magic within 10 ft.

#### Necromancy Domain

##### Minor Access

- 1 **Deathwatch:** Reveals how near death subjects within 30 ft. are.  
**Detect Undead:** Reveals undead within 60 ft.

- 2 **Death Knell:** Kills dying creature; you gain 1d8 temporary hp, +2 to Str, and +1 level.  
**False Life:** Gain 1d10 temporary hp +1/level (max +10).  
**Animate Dead:** Creates undead skeletons and zombies.  
**Augment Undead:** You can endow undead with greater resistance against spells and turning.†  
**Corpse Whisper:** You can send telepathic commands to an undead.†  
**Eyes of the Undead:** You may scry through the eyes of an undead creature.†

#### Major Access

- 4 **Feign Undeath:** You give your target the physical aspects of a zombie.\*
- 5 **Slay Living:** Touch attack kills subject.
- 6 **Antilife Shell:** 10-ft. field hedges out living creatures.  
**Create Undead:** Create ghouls, ghosts, mummies, or mohrgs.  
**Create Greater Undead:** Create shadows, wraiths, spectres, or devourers.  
**Symbol of Death:** Triggered rune slays nearby creatures.  
**Soul Bind:** Traps newly dead soul to prevent *resurrection*.

#### Plant Domain

##### Minor Access

- 0 **Know Direction:** You discern north.
- 1 **Detect Animals or Plants:** Detects kinds of animals or plants.  
**Entangle:** Plants entangle everyone in 40-ft.-radius.  
**Goodberry:** 2d4 berries each cure 1 hp (max 8 hp/24 hours).  
**Pass without Trace:** One subject/level leaves no tracks.  
**Barkskin:** Grants +2 (or higher) enhancement to natural armor.  
**Tree Shape:** You look exactly like a tree for 1 hour/level.  
**Warp Wood:** Bends wood (shaft, handle, door, plank).  
**Wood Shape:** Rearranges wooden objects to suit you.  
**Diminish Plants:** Reduces size or blights growth of normal plants.  
**Plant Growth:** Grows vegetation, improves crops.  
**Snare:** Creates a magic booby trap.  
**Speak with Plants:** You can talk to normal plants and plant creatures.



Major Access

- 4 **Antiplant Shell:** Keeps animated plants at bay.  
**Command Plants:** Sway the actions of one or more plant creatures.
- 5 **Commune with Nature:** Learn about terrain for 1 mile./level.  
**Tree Stride:** Step from one tree to another far away.  
**Wall of Thorns:** Thorns damage any one who tries to pass.
- 6 **Ironwood:** Magic wood is strong as steel.  
**Liveoak:** Oak becomes treant guardian.  
**Repel Wood:** Pushes away wooden objects.  
**Transport via Plants:** Move instantly from one plant to another of the same kind.
- 7 **Animate Plants:** One or more plants animate and fight for you.  
**Changestaff:** Your staff becomes a treant on command.
- 8 **Control Plants:** Control actions of one or more plant creatures.
- 9 **Shambler:** Summons 1d4+2 shambling mounds to fight for you.

*Protection Domain*

Minor Access

- 0 **Resistance:** Subject gains +1 on saving throws.
- 1 **Endure Elements:** Exist comfortably in hot or cold environments.  
**Protection from Chaos/Evil/Good/Law:** +2 to AC and saves, counter mind control, hedge out elementals and outsiders.  
**Shield of Faith:** Aura grants +2 or higher deflection bonus.
- 2 **Cat's Grace:** Subject gains +4 to Dex for 1 min./level.  
**Resist Energy:** Ignores 10 (or more) points of damage/attack from specified energy type.  
**Shield Other:** You take half of subject's damage.
- 3 **Magic Circle against Chaos/Evil/Good/Law:** As *protection* spells, but 10-ft. radius and 10 min./level.  
**Protection from Energy:** Absorb 12 points/level of damage from one kind of energy.

Major Access

- 4 **Death Ward:** Grants immunity to death spells and negative energy effects.  
**Freedom of Movement:** Subject moves normally despite impediments.
- 5 **Spell Resistance:** Subject gains SR 12 + level.
- 6 **Antilife Shell:** 10-ft. field hedges out living creatures.
- 7 **Repulsion:** Creatures can't approach you.
- 8 **Antimagic Field:** Negates magic within 10 ft.  
**Mind Blank:** Subject is immune to mental/emotional magic and scrying.

*Strength Domain*

Minor Access

- 0 **Resistance:** Subject gains +1 on saving throws.
- 1 **Endure Elements:** Exist comfortably in hot or cold environments.  
**Enlarge Person:** Humanoid creature doubles in size.
- 2 **Bear's Endurance:** Subject gains +4 to Con for 1 min./level.  
**Bull's Strength:** Subject gains +4 to Str for 1 min./level.  
**Magic Vestment:** Armor or shield gains +1 enhancement per four levels.

Major Access

- 5 **Righteous Might:** Your size increases, and you gain combat bonuses.
- 6 **Wall of Stone:** Creates a stone wall that can be shaped.
- 7 **Stoneskin:** Ignore 10 points of damage per attack.  
**Wall of Force:** Wall is immune to damage.

*Summoning Domain*

Minor Access

- 1 **Summon Nature's Ally I:** Calls creature to fight.
- 2 **Summon Nature's Ally II:** Calls creature to fight.  
**Summon Swarm:** Summons swarm of bats, rats, or spiders.
- 3 **Summon Nature's Ally III:** Calls creature to fight.

Major Access

- 4 **Dimensional Anchor:** Bars extradimensional movement.





	<b>Dismissal:</b> Forces a creature to return to native plane.	
	<b>Summon Nature's Ally IV:</b> Calls creature to fight.	2
5	<b>Summon Nature's Ally V:</b> Calls creature to fight.	
6	<b>Summon Nature's Ally VI:</b> Calls creature to fight.	3
7	<b>Summon Nature's Ally VII:</b> Calls creature to fight.	
8	<b>Dimensional Lock:</b> Teleportation and interplanar travel blocked for one day/level.	
	<b>Summon Nature's Ally VIII:</b> Calls creature to fight.	4
9	<b>Elemental Swarm:</b> Summons multiple elementals.	
	<b>Summon Nature's Ally IX:</b> Calls creature to fight.	5

*Sun Domain*

**Minor Access**

0	<b>Light:</b> Object shines like a torch.	6
1	<b>Endure Elements:</b> Exist comfortably in hot or cold environments.	7
2	<b>Heat Metal:</b> Make metal so hot it damages those who touch it.	8
3	<b>Daylight:</b> 60-ft. radius of bright light. <b>Searing Light:</b> Ray deals 1d8/two levels damage, more against undead.	9

**Major Access**

5	<b>Fire Shield:</b> Creatures attacking you take fire damage; you're protected from heat or cold. <b>Flame Strike:</b> Smithe foes with divine fire (1d6/level damage).	
6	<b>Fire Seeds:</b> Acorns and berries become grenades and bombs.	
7	<b>Sunbeam:</b> Beam blinds and deals 4d6 damage.	
8	<b>Sunburst:</b> Blinds all within 10 ft., deals 6d6 damage.	

*War Domain*

**Minor Access**

1	<b>Cause Fear:</b> One creature of 5 HD or less flees for 1d4 rounds. <b>Divine Favor:</b> You gain +1 per three levels on attack and damage rolls. <b>Magic Stone:</b> Three stones gain +1 on attack, deal 1d6 +1 damage. <b>Magic Weapon:</b> Weapon gains +1 bonus.	
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	<b>Shillelagh:</b> Cudgel or quarterstaff becomes +1 weapon (1d10 damage) for 1 min./level.	
	<b>Shatter:</b> Sonic vibration damages objects or crystalline creatures.	
	<b>Spiritual Weapon:</b> Magic weapon attacks on its own.	
	<b>Bless Weapon:</b> Weapon strikes true against evil foes.	
	<b>Magic Vestment:</b> Armor or shield gains +1 enhancement per four levels.	

**Major Access**

	<b>Freedom of Movement:</b> Subject moves normally despite impediments.	
	<b>Magic Weapon, Greater:</b> +1 bonus/four levels (max +5).	
	<b>Poison:</b> Touch deals 1d10 Con damage, repeats in 1 min.	
	<b>Command, Greater:</b> As <i>command</i> , but affects one subject/level.	
	<b>Flame Strike:</b> Smithe foes with divine fire (1d6/level damage).	
	<b>Blade Barrier:</b> Wall of blades deals 1d6/level damage.	
	<b>Power Word Blind:</b> Blinds creature with 200 hp or less.	
	<b>Power Word Stun:</b> Stuns creature with 150 hp or less.	
	<b>Power Word Kill:</b> Kills creature with 100 hp or less.	

*Water Domain*

**Minor Access**

0	<b>Create Water:</b> Creates 2 gallons/level of pure water.	
1	<b>Bless Water:</b> Makes holy water. <b>Curse Water:</b> Makes unholy water. <b>Obscuring Mist:</b> Fog surrounds you.	
2	<b>Fog Cloud:</b> Fog obscures vision.	
3	<b>Water Breathing:</b> Subjects can breathe underwater. <b>Water Walk:</b> Subject treads on water as if solid.	

**Major Access**

4	<b>Control Water:</b> Raises or lowers bodies of water.	
5	<b>Quench:</b> Extinguishes nonmagical fires or one magic item.	
7	<b>Ice Storm:</b> Hail deals 5d6 damage in cylinder 40 ft. across.	
8	<b>Acid Fog:</b> Fog deals acid damage. <b>Horrid Wilting:</b> Deals 1d6/level damage within 30 ft.	



### *Weather Domain*

#### Minor Access

- 1 **Endure Elements:** Exist comfortably in hot or cold environments.
- 2 **Obscuring Mist:** Fog surrounds you.  
**Chill Metal:** Cold metal damages those who touch it.  
**Fog Cloud:** Fog obscures vision.  
**Heat Metal:** Make metal so hot it damages those who touch it.
- 3 **Call Lightning:** Calls down lightning bolts (3d6 per bolt) from sky.

#### Major Access

- 4 **Sleet Storm:** Hampers vision and movement.  
**Solid Fog:** Blocks vision and slows movement.
- 5 **Ice Storm:** Hail deals 5d6 damage in cylinder 40 ft. across.  
**Call Lightning Storm:** As *call lightning*, but 5d6 damage per bolt.
- 6 **Chain Lightning:** 1d6/level damage; 1 secondary bolt/level each deals half damage.  
**Cone of Cold:** 1d6/level cold damage.
- 7 **Control Weather:** Changes weather in local area.
- 9 **Storm of Vengeance:** Storm rains acid, lightning, and hail.

### *New Spells*

#### *Augment Undead*

Necromancy [Evil]

**Level:** Arcane 3, Mystic 3

**Components:** V, S, F

**Casting Time:** 1 action

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

**Target:** One undead creature

**Duration:** 1 minute/level (D)

**Saving Throw:** Will save negates (harmless)

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

This spell provides temporary enhancement to the loathsome forces that drive the undead. The targeted undead creature suffers a +1 profane bonus to all saving throws and a +3 profane bonus to its turn resistance. This spell affects only undead with at least 3 fewer Hit Dice than the caster has levels (i.e., affecting a 1 HD undead requires a 4th level caster).

Casting this spell requires a powers check.

**Focus:** A scrap of clothing from any undead creature.

#### *Corpse Whisper*

Necromancy [Mind-Affecting]

**Level:** Arcane 3, Mystic 3

**Components:** S, M

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels) and 1 mile

**Target:** One undead creature

**Duration:** 1 message or command/2 levels (no more than 24 hours) (D)

**Saving Throw:** Special (see text)

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

The caster transmits a telepathic message or command to an undead creature within the spell's range. A non-intelligent subject not under the control of another creature receives no saving throw and must obey the command. An intelligent undead or undead under the control of another creature ignores the command on a successful Will save.

This spell allows for transmission only; the caster does not gain the ability to hear the target's thoughts. Each message or command can be no more complex than a single simple sentence. The subject need not be in line of sight if the caster controls it currently. The caster can continue sending commands so long as the subject is within 1 mile. The spell wears off in 24 hours or when the caster transmits the maximum commands possible, whichever occurs first.

Casting this spell requires a powers check.

**Material Component:** A dead humanoid's tongue.

#### *Eyes of the Undead*

Necromancy

**Level:** Arcane 4, Mystic 3

**Components:** V, S, M

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level) and 1 mile

**Target:** One corpse or undead creature

**Duration:** 1 hour/level (D)

**Saving Throw:** Special (see text)

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

While the spell is in effect, the caster can see and hear through the targeted corpse or undead creature's eyes and ears. Corpses and undead under the caster's control currently do not receive a saving throw. The caster can continue seeing and hearing through the subject's senses so long as the subject is within 1 mile. The caster gains no control over the target.

**Material Components:** A dead humanoid's eye and ear.





## Items of Dread Importance

There is no such thing as a *dagger +1* on Gothic Earth.

Too bold, you say? Aren't mystical items a staple of Gothic horror fiction? Indeed they are, but not in quite the same fashion as in the fantasy settings that most players are accustomed to. Even as superstitious and suspicious place as **Ravenloft** still possesses a much greater abundance of magic items than the Gothic Earth setting. To put things quite plainly, there are no "accidental" magic items in the Gothic Earth milieu. Every magic item found in a **Masque of the Red Death** campaign should possess a unique history and set of powers, and have been placed in the game by the DM for a specific purpose. Even if the characters aren't immediately aware of the significance of the magic item they have discovered or what its ultimate intended purpose might be, the DM should plan ahead when introducing magic items to her campaign. Each magical treasure should have a reason for appearing in the course of the campaign.

The reasons for this strict rationing and control of magic items largely echo the general guidelines for magic use throughout Gothic Earth. First and foremost a great deal of the horror and ambiance of Gothic Earth derives from the contrast between the mundane and the supernatural. Even when some characters possess supernatural powers themselves, they should never become so inured to the occult that it becomes an everyday part of their existence. It is hard to create a mood of horror and fear of the paranormal when the characters are all carrying paranormal items strapped to various parts of their bodies. An *extremely* light touch is therefore advised when deciding whether or not to add magic items to the game at any given point, especially if the magic items are particularly powerful or operate continuously.

Another aspect of magic items that can play merry havoc with the themes and atmosphere of Gothic Earth is the "special effects" that often accompany their use, whether the traditional soft glow of an unsheathed magic weapon or the more dramatic results of activating a *circlet of blasting*. While there's nothing necessarily wrong with hav-





ing a *wand of fireballs* on Gothic Earth, for example, it might quickly become more of a nuisance than a boon as the redoubtable Sir Oswald Bumbleton begins happily “nuking” every fell creature in sight with flashy pyrotechnic displays.

DMs are therefore encouraged to think about what each item will look like when it is activated and tailor the exact details of what occurs to blend with the dark and ominous tone of Gothic Earth. As a general guideline, when designing activation effects, think about how interesting the effect will be the first time. Then try to imagine what it will be like the fifth time or the twentieth time it is used. A sword that causes a clap of thunder every time it is drawn might seem like a neat idea at first, but if that sword is going to be activated multiple times every session, the players will quickly become bored and perhaps even annoyed by it instead.

Downplaying or removing many of the more dramatic visual and auditory effects that typically accompany magic item use can make many otherwise questionable items suitable for use on Gothic Earth. This is not to say that magic items should be rendered completely mundane to the eye, especially when in use. In fact, it is common to the genre for all manner of hell to break loose when items of mystical power are unleashed, from sudden storms and flashes of lightning to shadows moving of their own accord to bodiless voices wailing in otherworldly agony. Remember, the Red Death has twisted magic into something corrupt and foul. Even those displays of magical power that do not attract the attention of that dread entity still warp and twist the world in eerie and unexpected ways. While the locals should not believe Judgment Day has arrived every time a character draws her *longsword +1*, something should still happen, even if only the wielder knows it. Perhaps she can suddenly feel the beating of her enemy’s heart or hear the blade wail slightly when she swings it. Regardless of how the effect is transmitted, the wielder — and anyone else with sufficient training to know what to look for — just *knows* that magic is afoot.

Even Sir Oswald’s trusty wand might prove far less damaging to the game’s ambiance if the DM removes the flashy fireball launch and instead uses the following description as the wand is activated. “*The ancient runes carved into the cracked wood begin glowing with dark red light. Sir Oswald immediately begins sweating profusely and the smell of brimstone*

*floods the area just as the intended target suddenly bursts into flames.*”

No actual ball of fire is involved, but the effect is the same, and all but the most close-minded observer realizes that the wand was involved in what happened. With a few relatively slight changes a very “over the top” magic item has become something much more subdued and sinister to see in action, without losing any of its raw destructive power either.

### *Fighting Supernatural Creatures*

With a paucity of magic items to be found on Gothic Earth, the question inevitably arises about how characters are expected to battle creatures that normally can only be harmed by magic weapons. After all, no one wants to see their characters sweat their way through an adventure only to die horribly fighting a hopeless battle against a group of undead they cannot harm. While some DMs might see that as a fitting lesson about the horrors loose on Gothic Earth, most would generally prefer to give their players a fighting chance. Thus, the answer to the question of supernaturally resilient creatures is simply that rather than requiring characters to have magic weapons, the DM should substitute a vulnerability to specific items or elements instead, which the characters can then use against the beasts. (See the discussion of the supernatural “allergens” possessed by different creatures in **Van Richten’s Arsenal** for more ideas on this topic.

Some possible allergens might include silver weapons, weapons forged from materials mined in a monster’s home country, or weapons forged by a single smith during a particular time of the year out of the finest materials in the world and blessed by the nine virginal priestesses of a specific temple (something that should probably be reserved for the most powerful of creatures). Even a cursory glance at folklore is bound to turn up a wealth of items and materials that can serve as potential supernatural allergens, and of course nothing is stopping an inventive DM from creating her own to suit her campaign. The ultimate key is to find a balance between making such creatures daunting opponents that require planning and preparation to battle without making the players jump through so many hoops they become bored or frustrated with the creature before they ever get near it.





### *Laws of Gothic Magic Items*

*They are not accidents.*

Never drop any magic items into an adventure “just because;” doing so can quickly ruin the atmosphere of fear and vulnerability that is essential to horror gaming. Creating these items is a difficult and costly process on Gothic Earth. The most minor item should have at least a short history and a reason for being, even if the players don’t learn it right away.

*They are not flashy.*

With the exception of extremely powerful, high-end magic items — the sort that are the focus of long-running adventures — magic items should have powers and effects that suit the occult and ominous nature of magic on Gothic Earth. The more commonly an item will be used, the more care should be taken to avoid having it dull the horror and awe of magic.

*They are not predictable.*

Most magic items on Gothic Earth do not operate according to the “normal” rules for magic items found on other fantasy worlds. Perhaps one sword is only considered magical within the boundaries of the nation where it was forged, or perhaps another magic item ceases to function if the character ever sheds the blood of a friend or loved one. The harder it is to unlock an item’s secrets or predict what it might do next, the easier it is to keep players from feeling entirely comfortable with the item they’re carrying.



# Chapter Six: Combat

*FAR-CALLED, OUR NAVIES MELT AWAY;  
ON DUNE AND HEADLAND SINKS THE FIRE:  
LO, ALL OUR POMP OF YESTERDAY  
IS ONE WITH NINEVEH AND TYRE!  
—RUDYARD KIPLING, "RECESSIONAL"*





The old woman's face had compacted into a mass of wrinkles as she smiled enthusiastically at the trio assembled before her. Her tiny head bobbed up and down on skeletal shoulders as she tried to nod her approval. In a thin whisper, she addressed her daughter, standing nearby, in her native language and waved her skeletal finger at the box on the table.

The younger woman hesitated before translating, "My mother says that what you require waits for you in the box on the table. She has kept it in her care for many years now. She says she has been waiting for you for a long time." The younger woman looked sternly at the guests, but the older woman continued to nod and smile. One of her dry small hands pointed to the box and then waved to the group.

Charles Eachus spared a quick glance at Lady Parrilla, who stood at his side. Lady Parrilla gave a small, approving nod. Charles stepped forward. With slightly damp hands he carefully unlatched the brass clasps and lifted the lid of the old case. He reached inside and pulled out a long flat sword from its confines. He lifted it to the level of his eyes and then looked over at the elder Mrs. Wei, his eyebrow raised questioningly. Doctor Arthur Mosley piped up in a small voice from the back of the room, "It doesn't look very impressive, does it? I mean, are we really sure this is the right sword?" It was an astute, if simple, observation. The weapon looked as if it would disintegrate at any moment.

The old woman's laugh reverberated against the thin walls of her home. She rattled off more words in Chinese to her daughter. None of the associates standing near the door understood a word of the language and they waited patiently for the translation. The younger Ms. Wei frowned deeply and took a long pause before speaking. "My mother says that this sword belonged to the forgotten warlord Shang Lei. With its might, he commanded the absolute loyalty of his barbarous horde. It is said that once it could even issue orders to the horsemen beyond death, and its power forced them to obey."

The elegant Lady Parrilla moved up close to Charles. With cold blue eyes she appraised the blackened, rusted metal of the blade. She ran one elegant finger over the pitted length of the sword. She then turned to her companions and met their eyes with a steely gaze, "And since those same horsemen have deemed fit to return from the grave to cause hazard to the civilized world once again, we shall have to pray that it can still command that loyalty even now."

### *The Good Fight*

Inevitably, any adventurers moving against the evil that has infected the world is going to become caught up in a very real fight for their lives. Combat is the unavoidable conclusion to situations where the assaults of the unnatural need to be stopped. Even with all the best planning and preparations on the part of the heroes, things often reach the point where a reckoning can only be achieved through force of arms. But what does it take to make the struggle in Gothic Earth different from other environments? The **Masque of the Red Death** setting relies heavily on mood and flavor for its essence, and the combats that take place should be no exception. The same care taken in crafting an interesting and eventful story should be applied to the physical conflicts as well.

The rules and tables used to determine the outcome of rolls will be referred to often in a combat sequence; however this arbitration does not have to cut into the drama you are creating. The tension of your game does not have to be interrupted just because it's time to reach for the dice. While it's never a good idea to bog down combat time with long narratives, this can be balanced with keeping the scene sharp and clear in the minds of your players. Pick relevant details to include in describing what your antagonists are doing during a fight. Are their eyes glazed over or on fire with rage? Are they moving with confidence or does their body language suggest they are seeking a method of quick escape? Conveying these details to the players instead of just rattling off the rolls as they fall will help keep the experience of your game a memorable and enjoyable story.

### *The Wolves in Sheep's Clothing*

Combating the presence of evil in Gothic Earth is a far different matter than in most fantasy settings. The rules of engagement have changed since days of Perseus and Beowulf. A soldier or an explorer cannot simply launch himself into the fray in order to claim victory. While there are wild and untamed wildernesses left to explore, civilization has a firm grip on many parts of the world and there is a stern set of expectations regarding proper behavior. Those who step outside the bounds of normal society find themselves socially ostracized at best or imprisoned at worst. Erratic behavior is a luxury only the theatrical or the very rich can



afford to indulge in. Those who stand out in the crowd will be noticed and this fact both works for and against adventuring types.

The monsters of the Old World, such as the brutish Grendel and his cunning dame in their cave under the cold northern lake, cannot hope to mask their presence for long and as such dwell far from men. In the forgotten parts of the world there are wicked horrors that still openly stalk the night. However there are more clever variations of unnatural forces that walk the earth's more civilized places. Many of these creatures have learned to adapt to their chosen society, often going so far as to place themselves in positions of authority so their actions will better go unquestioned. Some can even cloud minds or steal the appearance of beauty to help with their disguises — and the Victorian ideal often equates beauty with virtue. Evil has long been cunning, and it now understands how men do battle. More often than not, it has the entire civilized world to act as its shield.

The presence of the innocent or even authority figures make confronting the minions of evil a difficult venture. An adventurer who expects to live to fight evil another day would do the cause a great injustice by pulling out his revolver in the middle of the opera house and to take pot shots at one of the creatures of the night. Evil often wears a beautiful face when moving through society. If an adventurer charges in with weapons drawn, most ordinary people will immediately think that person a madman or assassin. Law enforcement officials would seek to subdue the lunatic. What does the hero do when ordinary men and women stand between him and the monster with the beautiful face? Some may decide that for the greater good, some innocents must be sacrificed. And that is a dark road to take, one that leads ultimately into the enemy's grasp.

If taken into custody, the would-be hero might find himself isolated in a holding cell with no place to run and only a few metal bars to keep him from harm. And with evil now aware of his face, it would not take long before the enemy tracked him down in this vulnerable situation. One rash action — and its consequences — might cost him his life, or worse, the lives of those the hero holds dear while he languishes in a cell, helpless and alone.

Gone are the days of monsters. Society has progressed far beyond such superstition and fairy tales. Adventurers must take this into account if they wish to last more than a few nights at their

righteous work. They must adjust their tactics and combative strategies to suit their world.

Do not be afraid to bring the law into play when adventurers go hunting. Ordinary folk are shocked and appalled by cold-blooded murder and will often misinterpret the goals of heroes. The bobbies or the police are never very far away. If the characters are spotted brandishing weapons or covered in the bloody remains of their prey, their guilt in the courts of law and their subsequent incarceration are almost assured. While these restrictions can be used as a punishment for characters who are overzealous in their fight, it should rather be a tool for further creating tension in your story. The characters may only be able to glare angrily at the vampire pretending to be an English duchess from across a crowded room, but if they are cautious they will be ready to follow the monster back to its lair.

Of course, not everyone who has a stake in fighting back against the armies of the supernatural is of a virtuous background. Criminals, for reasons of their own, can seek to put an end to a creature of darkness just as easily as an officer of the law. These underworld figures undoubtedly have an easier time avoiding law enforcement as well as disposing of any criminal evidence that might be associated with their activities.

The tone of combat for Gothic Earth should be both frightening and rewarding, as characters risk death from sword or bullet. There are tense moments where the normalcy of civilized existence is contrasted with the savagery of the monsters walking on cobblestone streets. Instead of crawling into a forgotten crypt with a sword in hand, these adventurers may find themselves in the long hallways of college universities or in the back rooms of hospitals. However, the true faces of these monsters never change, no matter the backdrop. This contrast should not be lost even in the middle of a combat round. Exploring this direction in your combat descriptions and scenes will help capture an altogether different experience for most players, one that will ultimately make your game rewarding for everyone involved.

## *Firearms*

By the 1890s, conventional firearms had developed significant improvements over the harquebus first introduced centuries earlier. And while some of these weapons still exist, they are reserved for private collections.





*Table 6-1: Firearms Damage*

Handgun	Damage	Critical	Range Increment	Type
Derringer	1d6	x3	30 ft.	piercing
Pistol, Army	1d10	x3	50 ft.	piercing
Pistol, Navy	1d8	x3	50 ft.	piercing

Longarm	Damage	Critical	Range Increment	Type
Carbine, breech	1d10	x3	100 ft.	piercing
Rifle, breech	1d12	x3	150 ft.	piercing
Carbine, repeating	1d10	x3	100 ft.	piercing
Rifle, repeating	1d12	x3	150 ft.	piercing
Scattergun	4d8*	x2	50 ft.	piercing
Shotgun	3d8	x2	50 ft.	piercing

\*Scatterguns may hit 1d4 targets within 30 ft. of each other; damage is rolled and divided equally among targets hit.

As common as modern firearms are, they are still not commonly brandished in civilized company. Except by soldiers, law enforcement officers or criminals, firearms are not utilized on a daily basis. Even in law enforcement, guns are used mostly as a last resort. Though the rich may practice with weapons for recreation or hunting, such activities are hardly a substitute for using them against other humans.

Acquiring firearms is often simply a matter of locating a reliable source, such as a mail order catalog or specialty store. So long as you have the money, sporting rifles and other types of firearms are not at all difficult to obtain. Smaller (and more concealable) pistols are a little more difficult to find outside the military. In addition, shop owners may remember the face of the person who purchased weapons from them — not always a desirable situation for heroes who might use those weapons against servants of the Red Death who seem to be upright citizens.

There are illegal methods of purchasing firearms; such methods, however, carry no guarantee of reliability. A gun may well explode after the first use, doing more harm to the shooter than to the target. Finding a quality supplier can be a matter of time, experience and connections.

## *Explosives*

“Are you very sure that you know what you are doing Mr. Eachus?” came the strained voice of Lady Parrilla from somewhere in the dark recesses of the alleyway. Her long black riding dress blended in perfectly with the shadow of the recessed doorway that was her hiding place. Only the glint of her eyes could be seen with any kind of clarity. It seemed an odd question to ask at this late hour.

Charles ignored the woman and instead concentrated on making the final connections between the wires and the wooden plunger. He pulled the handle up and looked back to the source of that voice. “Before I came to London, I did some work on a railroad line overseas. The company’s demolitions man was a complete lout, but he knew how to do his job. When he wasn’t slipping off for a nip of a bottle he was actually very good at what he did. He taught me exactly what it took to get the job done — How much powder to use for what size job, what kind of wire works best — all that. He never once failed to deliver a loud boom and a clear patch of rubble. You should be thankful now that I was such an attentive student.”

Though he couldn’t see her face Charles could hear the irritation in the proud woman’s voice, “Oh, I



am Charles," she said. "In fact, I may just talk with the queen about having you knighted if by the Lord's good grace this plan actually achieves our goal! If we fail to gain entrance, the fiend may well escape to rally its strength elsewhere. We need the records kept in that vault. Now, you had best be about your duties, we can't afford any mistakes."

Before Charles Eachus could prepare an appropriate retort there was a commotion down the street. Someone in a panicked voice was calling out loudly about a fire. Soon bells were ringing and other shouts could quickly be heard. Lady Parrilla's voice spoke up from her hiding place, "That would be the distraction our dear Doctor Mosley was to arrange. It's crude, but it will have to suffice. Do it now Charles, while everyone is concentrating on that false alarm. We won't have a second chance!"

With one final check of the connections and a small prayer whispered to whatever saint watches over fools, Charles pushed hard on the plunger.

### *Calling the Thunder*

With the evolution of gunpowder came the obvious use of black powder on a much larger scale. Used for clearing mining tunnels or opening up land for the railroad, the relative safety of explosives has made their use and application fairly common in rapidly developing areas. Roads through mountainous regions once had to wind around the mountains; explosives allowed the blasting of tunnels through the mountains so that roads could go straight through the stone. Once the smoke cleared, veins of precious metals might be uncovered in nearly no time at all. The very face of the wilderness could be reshaped with enough black powder.

The preferred method of using explosives involves setting a charge in a desired location and then using wires to detonate it through a trigger (such as a plunger) from a safe distance. So long as every effort is taken to ensure proper procedures are followed and all due time taken in setting the charge, this is a relatively standard and safe method of applying explosives.

However, for adventurers, explosives also represent an excellent method for flushing out an enemy or exposing a hidden or dangerous lair. But even under controlled conditions and when being handled by experts in their field, explosives are volatile. In the heat of battle or when working against time as the enemy closes do not present the most ideal times to be setting charges. The use of



explosives should never be a simple matter of just tossing a bomb over your shoulder as you run. Though characters may attempt this action, the chances are greater for the character (and perhaps some innocents) to get caught in the resulting explosion as well.

Laying hands on explosives can be difficult. Dynamite, gunpowder and other volatile substances are not easily available in urban areas (except of course through certain shady channels). Demolition companies, however, can be found in the warehouse and shipping districts of large cities. If a character purchases explosives in small quantities, law enforcement officers might take some notice — particularly if the police are called in to investigate a mysterious explosion in a mausoleum of a nearby cemetery.

Adventurers may wish to invent an imaginary demolitions company in order to procure explosives through legal channels without creating a trail of any kind. Less scrupulous characters can simply attempt to steal what they need from a warehouse or demolition site. Such illegal activities will eventually draw the attention of the police but perhaps only after the adventurers complete their goal. After all, the police are more likely to be on the lookout for a potential bank robbery or political target, not for an explosion in a seemingly random location, such as the wing of the museum that holds certain ancient Egyptian artifacts.

### *Dynamite*

This explosive is commonly used in mining and is one of the most stable explosives to utilize, thus making it the preferred choices for adventurers seeking to use it against the enemy. Dynamite generally comes in the form of short sticks that can easily be concealed within a coat. Dynamite sticks deliver a good deal of explosive power and their fuses can either be lit with a flame or wired to detonate. For a greater impact, several sticks of dynamite can be secured together. Experts in the field of demolitions are often experienced enough to know exactly how many sticks it will take to do the job at hand. Without this kind of knowledge, adventurers just need to take their best guess.

### *Gunpowder*

Used in large quantities for demolitions work, this explosive is usually cheaper to acquire than sticks of dynamite. Because it usually comes in five-pound wooden kegs, it is far more cumbersome

than dynamite and is also less efficient. Long fuses can be used to ignite the powder or it can be wired to explode. As an explosive, gunpowder is difficult to use in close combat (unlike sticks of dynamite that can be lit and thrown). It should, therefore, be used only with much preparation and advance planning. As is the case with sticks of dynamite, it is common to have several cases of gunpowder linked together for a greater impact upon detonation. Of course, this also increases the chances that something could go wrong.

### *Nitroglycerine*

This chemical mixture is not at all easy to manufacture and is rarely seen outside of a laboratory or a demolitions warehouse. While highly effective when used as an explosive, it is also extremely dangerous. It is volatile and is prone to exploding due to extreme temperatures or even if simply jostled too much. Although it is feasible to use vials of nitroglycerine in a combat situation, given its instability, it poses almost as much of a danger to the user as to the intended target. Adventurers would do well to use this explosive with extreme care knowing that one mistake could result in complete disaster.

### *Fuses*

As mentioned, the preferred method for the applied use of any explosive is to do so from a safe distance at the precise time of the user's choosing. There are several methods of detonating explosives, but the most common way is with a blasting cap connected to a lighted fuse.

The longer the fuse, the longer the time a character has before the explosion occurs. Those individuals who are skilled with demolitions can cut a fuse to fit their needs; exact timing, however, is not possible. Because some fuses burn at a faster rate than others, an inexperienced person setting a charge could find himself in for a nasty (and potentially fatal) shock when the fuse burns much faster than he expected.

The fuse itself is a length of flammable cord directly wired to the blasting cap. When flame is applied to the fuse, it begins to burn along its length until it reaches the end, where the blasting cap is located. When the fire reaches the blasting cap, the cap ignites, setting off the explosion. The caps and fuses are safe to transport under proper conditions. This is by far the most reliable method and is preferred by professionals in the field.



*Table 6-2: Explosives and Accessories*

**Explosives**

Type	Cost	Wt (lb.)	Damage/Radius
Dynamite (stick)	\$1.50	0.5	1d12/5 ft.
Gunpowder (keg)	\$2.50	6	1d12 (special*)
Nitroglycerine (vial)	\$2.00	0.1	1d12/5 ft.

\*Gunpowder cannot be used as a missile weapon in combat.

**Accessories**

Type	Cost	Wt (lb.)
Plunger	\$10.00	10
Fuse (50 ft.)	\$5.00	5
Wire (50 ft.)	\$2.50	5

*Plunger Detonator*

This method of detonating explosives is the most precise when it comes to timing. The demolitionist sets a charge on the explosive and then runs a length of wire to the plunger device (hopefully a safe distance from the blast). When the plunger is depressed, an electrical charge travels along the wire and immediately detonates the explosive. Barring any difficulties, such as the wire coming disconnected or being deliberately cut, the demolitionist should achieve the desired result every time. When using wire there is less than can go wrong with the detonation process and the plunger eliminates the need for a possibly unreliable count down.

The wire is typically purchased in coiled lengths of 50 feet, but additional wire can be obtained to allow detonation from greater distances.

*The Power of Faith: Turning the Undead*

Certain rare individuals have a spiritual connection of such potency and purity that it can repel the presence of the walking dead. It is without question or doubt that this ability is a valued resource to any group venturing into catacombs,

crypts and other places inhabited by the restless residents of the grave. However, nothing is without a cost.

Lesser creatures of the night may be turned away and forced to flee by those who develop this talent. With enough focus and skill, an experienced adventurer may even destroy these lesser creatures with but a flex of their spiritual will. Older and deadlier monstrous agents of darkness are not so easily disposed of in this fashion. These creatures have greater fortitude and power to withstand the mystic's power to turn undead.

In a fantasy setting it is typical for a character possessing holy faith to face an army of hostile undead with her holy symbol in hand, ready to unleash the might of her deity. However, the denizens of the world of the Red Death are not so easily shrugged off or pushed aside. The use of this ability causes elder undead creatures to recognize the direct threat represented by the mystic (or parson). Powerful undead will then muster all their talents and tactics to eliminate this threat first and foremost. After all, those who lack this spiritual strength will quickly be swarmed without the protection it offers.

If an enemy's undead servants cannot approach a character who successfully turns them,



perhaps their living minions can. Animal servants are available in both wilderness and urban settings. Swarms of vermin can bubble up from the sewers or a plague of bats can be called down from above the chimneys to cause all manner of distraction and harm. Beasts of the earth can sometimes be controlled and directed to dispatch the character by whatever means they have. Horses may bolt and drag their carriages behind them as they barrel down upon the character. Wolves may race through the trees and close in on the poor soul before anyone even hears their approach. While the character may be protected from the likes of rattling skeletons and moaning zombie, a common bear can be an entirely different matter once it comes to defend its master.

The lord of the undead may even hide himself among his lesser minions in order to approach the offender more closely, taking him by surprise. For example, a vampire may conceal its presence amid a host of zombie minions. What happens when the characters realize that one of these lesser minions is actually their hated prey in disguise?

Even more grim, the monster may attempt to discern how the adventurer obtained these abili-

ties in the first place. By better understanding those that are hunting it, the monster may hope to gain an advantage in future encounters. There are sometimes far worse things than dying at a creature's hands, and rescuing a friend from a fiend's lair is not a course of action that most adventurers happily consider.

The denizens of the night are indeed clever, and if the adventurers are willing to take to the darkness in their zeal, they should be ready for all manner of cunning. Such is the price for combating these dark forces.

### *The Healing Hands*

No matter how careful or cautious adventurers are in their planning, there comes a time when those who fight the good fight suffer harm at the hands of their foes. In taking up an active struggle against the evil of the world, adventurers must be realistically prepared for blood to spill on both sides.

Throughout history, stories exist of a few virtuous individuals who possessed the power to deliver mystical healing with only a touch. While it is possible that adventurers may uncover forgotten



lore to utilize this amazing ability in their own fight, more often they will have to rely upon modern medicine to bind their wounds.

The good news is that by the 1890s the advances in the medical profession have reached a truly outstanding peak (in comparison to what was available just a few decades previously). Modern technology has allowed doctors throughout the known world to share their accumulated knowledge. Techniques, methodology, and bold innovations are all discussed in forums and surgical auditoriums. What this means to the weary and wounded adventurer is that there is hope that their lives may be spared a tragic end — proved they can reach assistance in time.

In an urban setting, a hospital can provide medical treatment at an average cost of \$10.00 per point of damage treated while at their facility. A patient can regain up to 4 hit points of healing a day if they follow doctor's orders and remain under the care of the hospital staff. This may or may not be an option, however depending on how closely danger licks at the character's heels.

Most hospitals keep a record of who checks in and the time of a patient's discharge. Bribery may be possible for those who don't want too many questions asked, but unless the characters are very careful to hide their identities, going to a public hospital leaves a trail that can be followed.

Natural diseases of many kinds can be diagnosed and treated at a well-equipped hospital as well. The treatment received may reduce the severity and length of the disease but may require the character to be off his feet for some time. This expert care can vary greatly depending on the level of civilization in a particular area (as well as whether or not the clients can afford the treatment and care). Certain hospitals simply aren't equipped to handle more exotic forms of disease beyond attempting to make the patient comfortable.

### *The Dark Corners of the Healthy Mind*

Psychiatric care is also readily available in this age of modern miracles, especially for those who can afford it. Mental illness is no longer thought of as punishment from the Almighty (at least not in most civilized clinics). Breakthroughs are taking place in universities throughout the world, and

new theories about the nature of the human mind are springing up almost daily. Asylums are no longer the oubliettes of the Middle Ages but rather places where an earnest effort is made to help heal those who are sick of mind. Or at least, this is the illusion propagated by these institutions.

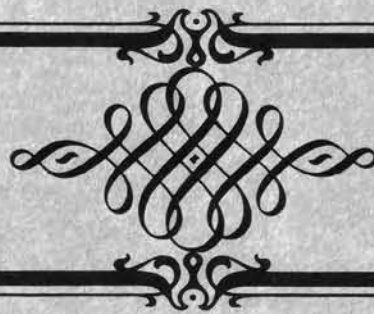
The truth is that some doctors use asylums and mental institutions as arenas for experimentation of a different and unhealthy kind. The darkest corners of the psyche are being understood and illuminated by the light of science. At least, this is what most doctors believe. Some of those corners, however, may not be places that were meant to be explored. It is not beyond reasoning that certain darker forces might be doing their best to fill the asylums so as to take advantage of these lost souls "under carefully supervised conditions."

Prices for mental health facilities vary greatly depending on the quality of care and the level of funding and prestige they enjoy. For a quality clinic that is set up for actual medicine the cost can run up to \$5.00 a day. Lesser facilities that act as dumping grounds for the weak minded are as inexpensive as \$.10 a week. It is possible to be admitted to a hospital facility as part of a university or medical study at no personal cost — but that would take some arranging on the part of the facility and staff. Of course, being taken in by the local authorities could manage the same result at no cost. It is also a very real possibility that the adventurers may find themselves admitted as patients in a mental health clinic if they are not careful in concealing their efforts. Those who attempt to get thrown in the asylum would do well to be warned that it's just as likely that such a person can be thrown in a prison cell and left to rot.

Trying to convince the local constables that they need to mobilize against the shape-shifting beast that appears as a man by day is not a good way of avoiding the asylums. A character might be caught in an act that places her in a poor light — such as plundering a grave while ranting about the corpse rising again. And once inside the bleak walls of the asylum, the adventurers are alone and in just as much danger from the supernatural as if they were stuck in a prison cell, perhaps even more so. After all, despite all the advances and understanding, who would ever believe the word of a desperate lunatic?



# Chapter Seven: Madness and Mystery



*POWER TENDS TO CORRUPT, AND ABSOLUTE POWER CORRUPTS ABSOLUTELY.*

– SPOKEN IN 1887 BY LORD ACTON (1834-1902)





## *Taint of the Supernatural*

A low howl echoes through the shadowy streets of Paris. A young woman, her hair confidently piled in a “Gibson Girl” hairstyle turns, startled by an eerie rumble in the reeking alley nearby. Slowly, she drops her elegant umbrella, raised to combat the misting rain and points its sharpened steel tip in the direction of the noise. Eyes glow in the darkness, many eyes, glistening, yellow and insane. As she backs away, her breath catches in her throat. Her heart pounds as her mind goes blank in merciful confusion as humped shapes, clawed fingers outstretched, reach for her. She swings the umbrella in a weak defense as the twisted figures snuffle and whine at the scent of her fear. They lunge. Boneless, she falls unconscious. Quickly her tailored, pin-tucked snowy blouse blossoms an obscene crimson rose of filth and blood. The ghosts moan and sigh in pleasure as they begin to feed, dragging her limp form deeper into the alley.

Much has been written in the **Ravenloft Player’s Handbook** about Fear, Horror and Madness saves. In the Gothic world of the Red Death, the manipulations of its minions create terrifying situations, monstrous creatures and places of horror, dooming even the most valiant and pure soul to possible insanity or evil with its taint. By using these various saves and power checks, players can more easily visualize their true state of anguish and insanity, giving them roleplaying guidelines. DMs can use powers checks to control player impulses to do evil or to cast spells in a world where the consequences can be dire. In the world of Gothic Earth, thinking seriously about each and every act is beyond important — it can save one’s very soul.

## *Arcane and Mystical Matters*

In **Ravenloft**, spells are rarely very difficult to cast. In fact, many spells — those that kill, create or control undead, or those that might, by their very casting bring illness or curses upon their victims — are often relatively easy to work, building on the evil of the Dark Powers. Only those whose effect would too adversely affect the evil surrounding them are truly a significant challenge to cast.

In the world of Gothic Earth, terror and madness taint the mystical world and the Red Death flavors all magic, no matter how well intentioned, with its evil. Many spellcasters, seduced by the

powers they wield, become addicted to their abilities and use them with abandon. Each *feather fall* cast, every healing spell — no matter how well intentioned — has the opportunity of backfiring on the caster or those around him. Spells require the use of power. Power attracts evil and especially the evil of the Red Death. In Gothic Earth, the Red Death holds the strands of power. So, no matter how altruistic the motive, no matter how small the manipulation of energies, magic’s use provides the opportunity for the Red Death to enter and cause pain and anguish — or worse yet, damage or destroy the minds of those who practice magic.

For those who believe in the supernatural and understand the working of spells and miracles, these risks must be taken in the fight against the evil they know surrounds them. They understand the risk they take in harnessing the energy of the supernatural and are willing to make the sacrifice. For others, the threat of such things may make the thought of spellcasting anathema and any avowed spell caster at the least, suspect.

Often it is the innocent or ignorant who suffers, for while the 1890s are an age of enlightenment, many things exist in the shadows, and the supernatural can sometimes be a temptation — especially to those who know no better. During this time, ouija boards, séances and other attempts to reach into the world of the supernatural became more popular than ever. These activities, while considered merely parlor games by most are practiced at a most horrendous risk — the possibility of attracting the attention of the Red Death.

## *Drifting into the Dark:*

### *Powers Checks in the Gothic World*

The Red Death poisons with a subtle hand. Those who believe “the end justifies the means” may often find themselves caught in a web of darkness no matter their claims of good intent. The powers check was created to discourage characters from performing evil acts, even in the name of good. Each time a powers check is failed, a character falls further and deeper into corruption, seduced by power and darkness.

Although powers checks on Gothic Earth work much as they do in **Ravenloft**, there is one important difference — every time a character casts a spell, he must also make a powers check. As the evil of the Red Death has tainted all magic,





whether mystical or arcane, no matter the motivation, any spellcasting may send the caster down a road to darkness and damnation. Each spell he casts is another chance to draw the Red Death's attention, each step when he fails makes redemption that much harder. However, if adepts and mystics cast a spell for a noble cause there are ways that a spellcaster's corruption may be cleansed through the use of other magics.

### *A Spellcaster's Redemption*

If a DM feels a spellcaster has been wrongly burdened by the Red Death's evil taint, he may allow the misjudged adept or mystic to ask for help. Depending upon the stage of corruption, a powerful shaman or priest may ask the spirits of the world to take on a subject's burden of evil. If the character can find a mystic willing to cast a curative spell — with its inherent dangers to the caster — one stage of corruption may be lifted. Each stage must be cured separately, and mystics may not cast the redemptive spells on themselves. If a character has moved beyond the fourth stage of corruption, no spell can cleanse him of his evil. Unless an exceptional means is found, such characters are certain to become minions of the Red Death. This method should normally be used only to balance a player's unlucky rolls. Table 7-1 lists the stages of corruption and the spells necessary to remove each stage. DMs may find other creative ways for a spellcasting character to receive redemption if a mystic is not available. See the **Ravenloft Player's Handbook** for further information on powers checks and redemption.

Stage of Corruption	Curative Spell
One	<i>Bless</i>
Two	<i>Remove curse</i>
Three	<i>Atonement</i>
Four	<i>Restoration</i>

### *Fear and Horror Saves in the Gothic World*

Both **Ravenloft** and the world of the **Masque of the Red Death** are places of subtle Gothic horror. DMs true to that tradition should find ways to create in their players a sense of the near-constant dread found beyond every darkened doorway. Fear and Horror saves provide a concrete method to help players visualize, feel and understand the terror that overshadows the mind and heart of a gothic hero.

For the most part, Fear and Horror saves can be used exactly as they appear in the **Ravenloft Player's Handbook**, but cultural differences and some advances may change either the reason characters become fearful or how they recover from their fear and horror.

### *Fear Saves*

Fear is a visceral emotion, a raw and elemental reaction to a threat, real or imagined. In **Ravenloft**, where twisted monsters roam the forests and a character has little but a bow or sword, fear is a fact of life. Peasants and common folk huddle in their villages, staying out of the dark. In the Victorian world, and especially on Gothic Earth, explorers hunt their way through dense jungles and send submersibles into the briny deep. They brag about bagging lion or racing steamboats at breathtaking speeds and think nothing more of it than they would of any other amusement. In the **Masque of the Red Death**, Fear saves should not happen as often as in **Ravenloft**, emerging instead only at the overwhelming threat of death to a character and her group. DMs should use the Fear save as it is described in the **Ravenloft Player's Handbook**, but consider having characters make the saves less often. This not only parallels the fearlessness of an adventurous individual from the time period, but also makes the saves more of a surprise to the players and, perhaps, convinces them that, yes, this time you should be afraid. Very afraid.

### *Horror Saves Against the Great Unknown*

In the world of Gothic Earth, people truly believe they have the ability to conquer all and that the place that cannot be explored or examined and understood does not exist. Scientists make new discoveries every day, inventing new things and reaching from the highest mountain peaks to the darkest chasms. This confidence can cause



some characters to assume blindly that they understand their situation, a confidence that often leads to terrifying results. Consider a gentleman carrying a hunting rifle, out on a hunt with a pack of dogs. Suddenly he hears a yelp and realizes that two of the hounds are fighting. Rushing in, he moves to pull them apart. One turns red, glowing human eyes upon him and opens a wolfish maw filled with sharp and bloody teeth. This situation — an attack by a werewolf — while not taken with aplomb in the world of **Ravenloft**, would certainly not be terribly unusual, at least in certain realms. For the average Victorian gentleman, a climb up Mount Everest would be easier—and less improbable. Not knowing what to do could paralyze him, and would certainly require a Horror save — not so much because of the rabid lycanthrope, but because the creature he faces is beyond his understanding — and that is terrifying.

A DM should realize that after a character has faced an unknown and terrible horror and survived or conquered it, he should no longer be required to make a Horror save because of it, unless his survival was not of his doing. If this is the case, another

similar situation should require a Horror save, but at a lower DC to reflect his increasing familiarity with the unknown.

### *Shattered Minds: Insanity in the Gothic*

#### *World*

The Red Death works quietly in the background of the world, sending gentle tremors along the strands it weaves. Many average people do not believe in such things as mysticism, magic or monsters; their minds focus on practical everyday matters. Only when they are caught in a web of supernatural happenings or

placed in a situation beyond mortal ken, do they truly believe in things incomprehensible. Sometimes, minds break under the impossibility of the situation. In the 1890s, science, logic and man's ability to explore and control his world loom as irrefutable in the minds of most. When horrors in the shadows come forth as gibbering nightmares in the light, many minds cannot withstand the strain. Such mental catastrophes often send the unprepared mind into catatonia. Others' minds rot and fester, as they themselves become new horrors to terrify the world.

*Psychology and the Horror Save*

Many in the 1890s are fascinated with the study of the mind. Those with skill in psychology may lessen or reverse Horror effects if they are able to assist a victim within 24 hours of the terrifying event. If a character with Knowledge (science [psychology]) or Profession (alienist) can find a secluded place and spend at least an hour per level of effect counseling the victim, he can provide the character with a chance at another Horror save at a +2. DMs may decide if any other skills or professions also apply.

*Table 7-2: Psychology Skill DC Against Horror*

Type of Effect	DC
Minor Horror Effects	DC 10
Moderate Horror Effects	DC 15
Major Horror Effects	DC 20

**Note:** No psychologist (or alienist) can attempt this reversal more than once per horrifying event, although more than one may try within that first 24-hour period.

#### *Madness Saving Throws*

Much as in the world of **Ravenloft**, Gothic Earth contains elements of adventure, mystery and, most definitely, horror. However, in the 19th century world of **Masque of the Red Death**, the evil is hidden to most of the populace, making such things more of a terrible shock to the average person — even to the less-than-average adventuring sort. With experience, adventurers learn to weather the shock, yet by this very numbing of their horror, they grow closer and more susceptible to the insidious whispers of the darkness surrounding them. Madness saves may be treated much as they are in the **Ravenloft Player's Handbook**, although the likelihood of needing to make a Madness save is greater in a world grounded in scientific knowledge, a world in which such things as monsters should not exist. Characters make Madness saves in the following situations as well as in any other in which the Dungeon Master feels it appropriate:

The character makes mental contact with any minion of the Red Death ranked from demilord to overlord.



The character makes mental contact, whether through the use of spells, psionics or any other supernatural power, with any being suffering from the effects of insanity.

The character is the victim of “gaslighting”—a purposeful attempt by another character or NPC to drive the character insane.

The character is placed in a psychiatric hospital or sanitarium and undergoes treatment there. In this instance, whether or not the character was insane when arriving, the eventual cumulative experience is very likely to drive her mad.

The character is given or takes addictive drugs on a regular basis.

The character witnesses or is a victim of a terrible catastrophe. If the character is an innocent, she makes her save at a  $-2$ . Catastrophes may include the brutal destruction of the rest of her party, extended torture (either to herself or her companions), suffering a loss of faith (in the case of a priest, shaman or other holy person), or transforming into something monstrous (such as being infected by lycanthropy).

#### *Determining the Madness Save DC*

As in **Ravenloft**, the Madness save DC is determined on a case-by-case basis. See the rules from the **Ravenloft Player’s Handbook** for details, with the following additional modifiers:

- **Sanitarium:** Remember that most people in this scientific and rational age do not believe in ghosts, monsters or magic. Subsequently, it is not at all unusual for a character heard babbling about her encounter with a werewolf or the ghost in the attic to be diagnosed as insane. During the 1890s, it became “fashionable” to suffer from multiple personality disorder, and many were diagnosed incorrectly with that mental illness. If a sane character is placed into an insane asylum or hospital, the time spent within the institution directly affects her chance of succumbing to true madness. Add  $+2$  to the DC for each day spent inside, adding another  $+1$  for each experimental treatment or drug administered.

- **Drugs:** Drugs, such as cocaine and morphine, were considered beneficial in the 1890s. Some patent nostrums, in fact, were laced with anything from opium to large amounts of alcohol and turpentine. Regular “dosing” of such things



might indeed cause a character to go mad from the insidious (and unknown) effects. Others might be driven mad by the chemicals in their workplace. Hat makers or “hatters” were exposed to mercury compounds when conditioning furs used in the making of bowlers and top hats. The poisonous mercury vapor damaged the brain, eventually making one “mad as a hatter.” The strength and toxicity or mind-twisting effects of the drugs used should determine the DC. Consider the possibility of some supernatural taint also. If a drug has been changed through the machinations of the Red Death, the DC modifier increases further.

### *Failure Results*

In the 1890s psychiatry was a new and exciting field. Two mental aberrations often mentioned were *hysteria* and *anhedonia*. These effects should be added to the Minor Madness Effects table listed in the **Ravenloft Player’s Handbook** and the DM should roll a 1d6 instead of 1d4 to determine the effect.

- **Anhedonia:** The character finds no pleasure in anything and lives in a constant state of numbness. The character is able to function, but finds nothing funny or interesting, eats only if reminded, and spends a great deal of time in sleep or just staring into space. If faced with temptation, any Will save is made at a +2. (In modern times, this condition resembles clinical depression.)

- **Hysteria:** The character may become blind, deaf, insensitive to pain or even have convulsions with no apparent physical cause. The DM, depending upon the situation causing the distress, should determine the actual effect and its degree. A mystic or anyone with Healing may determine that the effect is purely emotional with a Healing check (DC 10 + the victim’s Charisma modifier).

### *Additional Failures*

When a character fails additional Madness saves, the ability score decreases are cumulative as noted in the **Ravenloft Player’s Handbook**, however, in the 1890s someone in a catatonic state is more likely to be considered in a “fugue” than labeled as a “lost one” as they are described in **Ravenloft**.

### *Madness and Alignment*

As there are no classes tied directly to alignment on Gothic Earth, alignment change does not

cause a loss of abilities, although mystics may find their powers coming from a different source if the change is radical enough and a chaotic neutral sheriff might soon find himself out of a job or even in jail.

### *Recovering From Madness... or Not*

While the mind of man has not changed radically from the Middle Ages to the 1890s, the treatment of madness has gone through and extreme metamorphosis. In the medieval era, people thought insanity was caused by an invasion of evil spirits or a curse from God. Later, intellectuals of the Renaissance thought the imbalance of the “humors” might lead someone to madness. Later, specialized hospitals arose in large cities, but these were no more than prisons for the insane, keeping patients chained in cells where they generally stayed until their deaths.

During the 1890s the study of the mind advanced dramatically due to the theories of Sigmund Freud and his system of psychoanalysis. In the previous two decades, a few tenets of belief had become standards in the treatment of insanity. First and most radical was the belief that madness was curable. Following Freud’s psychoanalytical ideal, psychologists worked with patients to “talk out” their problems using free association to find solutions through psychotherapy.

The second tenet maintained that the best curative for madness involved placing the victim in a peaceful place, isolated from society. While this often led to putting “crazy Aunt Ophelia” in the attic, it also led to a social reform of sanitariums. With the New York State Care Act of 1890, the state of New York took over all but the most wealthy and private sanitariums, changing the term used for these institutions from “lunatic asylum” to “state hospital.” Other parts of the United States soon followed suit, creating and homogenizing care in everything from small private clinics and “spas,” to large state-funded scientific institutes and abysmally horrific asylums for the irretrievably insane and violent.

The techniques for recovering from madness described in the **Ravenloft Player’s Handbook** also apply to Gothic Earth, with the following considerations:

- **Peace and Quiet:** Having a chance to rest and recover in peace can make a great deal of difference to someone driven to madness. The possibility always exists, however, that the charac-



ter might be locked away in a place where “peace” comes from opium or absinthe, while “quiet” comes from an isolated room with well-padded walls and occasional experimental “treatments.”

- **Magic:** If a character uses magical healing, there is always a chance that the Red Death takes a hand in the cure and causing an insidious new insanity to replace the old or perhaps transferring the madness to the hapless mystic attempting the spell.

- **Hypnosis:** During the 1890s scientists discovered that hypnotists could implant false memories. If a character recovers due to the machinations of an evil hypnotist, she may never realize what truly happened, or discover how she has been manipulated by minions of the Red Death until it is too late.

- **Sanitariums:** Sanitariums on Gothic Earth are more advanced than similar institutions in the world of **Ravenloft**. Psychologists work with the latest theories and treatments in an attempt to cure even the most violent and uncontrollable victims. That being said, as a new and still experimental science, damaging therapies, drugs and even surger-

ies might be used by mistake, or even deliberately. For example, Gottlieb Burkhardt, a physician and supervisor of an insane asylum in Switzerland, performed the first frontal lobotomies in 1892. Patients may make one recovery check per month, as per the **Ravenloft Player's Handbook** but the DM may add a +1 morale bonus cumulatively per month for particularly good sanitariums, or increase the DC on the recovery check for less therapeutic treatment. If a mystic or someone with Psychology (see above) working within the sanitarium is honestly trying to cure the insane person, lower the DC by one for each week spent in his care, with one point ability increase for each successful check made — no more than one check per week.

### *Omens, Curses and Superstition in the World of Gothic Earth*

In **Ravenloft** no one has any doubt about the true power of words — whether spoken in a curse or screamed from the mouth of a writhing prophet.



Actions such as placing garlic around a door to ward off vampires or keeping a constant guard on a newly dead corpse make sense in a world where even the youngest child knows the undead walk. Yet in the 1890s on Gothic Earth, such words and actions would be called superstition and are ridiculed by those who believe only in what they see in the physical world. However, no matter how the Victorians might scoff in public, they also believed in prophecy, curses and superstition, following traditions meant to deflect bad luck, appease spirits and learn secrets of the supernatural world.

### *Superstition*

While some rationalists in a scientific world might call superstitions nothing but foolishness, on Gothic Earth, belief can be a powerful tool for good or evil. All aspects of life in the 1890s had their rules. Birth, growth, dating, marriage and death all followed traditions established to make certain no baby would die, no marriage falter and no dead walk.

Those who truly believe in these traditions are at an advantage in the world of **Masque of the Red Death**, for they have a weapon against the fear and uncertainty darkness brings. Sometimes it is enough to help them survive because their traditional rites might actually keep a corpse from rising or keep a werewolf from the door. At other times, such beliefs might be just enough to give someone the confidence to shoot straight or cast that badly needed spell when he might normally hesitate.

In game terms, a character may choose to have a good luck charm he invokes or a ritual he follows in times of stress. This item or action provides a +1 morale bonus on an attack roll or skill check once per day for every two levels. Conversely, if the character normally needs to perform the action or invoke his special item before he takes an action, he receives a +2 penalty to his DC to perform this action if the item is gone or he is unable to follow his usual habit. For example, Doc Samuel always does his healing with a lock of his dead wife's hair in his pocket. For him, she is still present to support him and help him save lives. He receives a +1 to his Healing check to set a broken leg correctly. If he loses or forgets lock of hair and attempts a similar procedure, his mind would be distracted and his hands shaking, making his job much harder. In this instance, if he never found the lock of hair, he would either have to find another memento from

her to replace it, or (with a DC 15 Will save) learn to work without it. See Chapter Eight for further information on actual Victorian traditions and superstitions as they relate to Gothic Earth.

### *Omens*

The usual definition of omen is a foreshadowing of future events by something seemingly unrelated. Many DMs use the discovery of a written prophecy in a dusty tomb or the appearance of a gypsy prophet, screaming unintelligible verses, to create an atmosphere of foreboding for his players. Yet for the superstitious in the 1890s, anything can be an omen, beneficial or baneful, of things to come. A shaman character might see three ravens on the same branch and interpret the sight as a sign of rain or as an indication that a skinwalker (evil sorcerer) is coming before the next moon rises. Another character might dream of his father's ghost calling him. This might be just a nightmare or a message from his father's spirit sending him an omen of his own impending death. For those of Gothic Earth, omens often speak the truth as either spirits attempt to communicate or the minions of the Red Death work to confuse and frighten. Even rain on a wedding day can be an omen of tears to come — and in the world of the Red Death, those tears might come from terror or madness.

Characters may attempt to decipher omens by using Forbidden Lore. Even if the attempt fails, the DM should provide the character with some sort of false interpretation, depending upon the extent of their failure.

### *Curses*

In a world of Gothic horror, curses hold great power, providing punishment for the wicked in accordance with the strange and twisted ways of fate. **Ravenloft** is a land of curses — cursed people, cursed domains, cursed families are the lifeblood of the stories there. For those of Gothic Earth, however, curses hold less power. Fewer people profess to believe in such things as curses, and far fewer have the ability to harness magical energies. For those with the will and the motivation, a curse is still very powerful — if often undetected — and very hard to break.

Still, just as the Red Death taints magic in the world, any curse powerful enough to affect someone truly requires a powers check as if it were a spell



— and with the same multipliers for evil intent. Often the curse will manifest not only on the victim, but also on the caster herself. This makes Vistani curses all the more deadly, for just as they are immune to the Red Death when casting spells, they may also place a curse on someone with impunity. See Chapter Three of the **Ravenloft Player's Handbook** for more information on curses, how to invoke them and how to lift them.

## *Wanderers in Search of Darkness:*

### *Gypsies and the Vistani*

On Gothic Earth, tribes of wandering people known by most as gypsies or Rom wander the world. Few understand them. Strange visitors, they travel constantly from place to place, returning again and again along the same routes depending upon the season. Occasionally, mysteriously, they vanish for good. Many are welcomed. They come in their colorful wagons as crafters, smiths and peddlers of exotic ointments, elixirs, pots, pans and elaborate silver jewelry. They come as storytellers, dancers and animal trainers who live to entertain in return for a few coins.

Others are not so welcome. Some people see gypsies as thieves, their women temptresses who tempt decent men with their wanton dances, then lure them into their wagons where they knock them out with drugged wine and steal them blind. Some gypsies have a reputation for taking horses or invading homes to steal chickens or even children.

Gypsies, while fine craftsmen, do not believe in the idea of private property. If a child has run away or if a gypsy family needs a fat pullet for their pot, they will take it — obviously the child is neglected so he is not needed or wanted, and the farmer has so many fine chickens he will not miss just one. They are also, in general, extremely generous and are as likely to give impulsive gifts or trade their beautiful work for anything that catches an eye.

### *The Vistani*

The Vistani, known to the folk of **Ravenloft**, also have a presence on Gothic Earth. Dressed in exotic and — to the eyes of most Victorians — scandalous clothing, the Vistani hide amid their gypsy cousins and follow *Rom* traditions so like

their own. Treated with suspicion and often-puerile curiosity, surrounded and hidden by myth and superstition, they live insular unknown lives. Mystery adds to the attraction, drawing the curious to gather around their fires at night and their wagons full of medicinal substances by day. Yet there are secrets within secrets in the history of the *Rom*, and most who dance or read their ancient painted cards do not know the true story of the Vistani tribe.

### *In Ancient Days*

Traditionally, gypsies are believed to have originated many thousands of years ago in Lower Egypt. In fact, the name “Gypsy” is a shortened form of “Egyptian.” An alternate theory states that the gypsies came from northern India, since their language, *Romani*, reveals East Indian roots. Gypsy speech is a polyglot mixture of many tongues using worlds picked up from many tongues in lands where gypsies have wandered.

What few but the most ancient and knowledgeable of gypsy lorekeepers know is that there is one tribe that came from nowhere on Gothic Earth. This tribe is called the Vistani.

In ancient days, when the pharaohs of Egypt sought power, one called forth a great evil upon the world — the Red Death. This being broke free from a hellish place of punishment to bring darkness and destruction to Gothic Earth. Its conscious malice spread the seeds of a curse upon this world and set forth a shadowy evil whose tentacles spread throughout the centuries. Yet, just as Pandora's box contained one small grain of hope to counter the myriad ills set free upon its opening, the opening of this world to the Red Death also called forth those who might fight its poison and ameliorate some of the agonies of the world to come.

### *The Vistani in the 1890s*

The Vistani gradually wandered from their fabled beginning place in Egypt, associating themselves with the *Rom*, people who sought freedom from the caste system of India by becoming homeless travelers. For all but a few, they are known only as another tribe of gypsies — albeit a most powerful and mysterious one. Moving in extended clans of 50 or more people, usually in combination with some of the *Rom*, they appear most often in areas of the Middle East, Europe and the Americas. As keepers of prophecy, however, they are often found anywhere their particular talents are needed.



### *Forbidden Love: As Shadows in a Crystal Sphere*

In a time long forgotten, in a world unknown to all but the Vistani themselves, a young woman of the Zarovan tribe named Neferi gazed into her crystal ball and saw a shaft of light break through the Mists, opening a way to a rich and fertile realm far different from anything she and her people knew. Calling her people, for she was raunie of her tribe, she showed them the place she had seen in her vision and commanded that they take her there, for she had foreboding of a great change and challenge to come.

What she did not know is that her actions set loose their fate, dooming them to wander in a new world without Mists — yet also without hope of freedom. As her caravan traveled through the borders of the realm, they saw a bright golden beam, which sundered the Mists. Through the clear gateway, they saw a land of lush green trees, a wide blue river and great pointed temples reaching to the sky. As was fated, Neferi's tribe traveled through the opening in the Mists into a highly magical world of unsullied sunlight and joy. Not long afterward, the Red Death found a path to that same world.

The Red Death, caught in a private hell, had found a way to seduce someone from beyond, convincing a foolish, power-hungry sorcerer to do his bidding in exchange for a chance to know the secrets of life and death. As the first Vistani caravan found its way through the lush fig trees along the banks of the Nile, they felt a bitter, chilling wind whip through the leaves and saw a shadow pass across the golden sun above. Such was the coming of the wanderers to Gothic Earth to weave threads of hope in a world not their own and manipulate the shadows as one of Fate's own hands.

Few Vistani in the 1890s remember this story. Passed down through generations of Neferi's people, it is but one tale among many speculations to all but the raunie and her successors — and even they are not certain whether it is tale or truth. The Red Death lives on in the lives of the average Vistani only as a forbidding and shadowy evil heart beating a grim rhythm in their songs and stories. All laugh and deny its nameless presence, no matter the chill in their hearts.

### *Vistani and the Arcane Arts*

Each clan is steeped in magic — far more than the average gypsy tribe, with at least one or two mystics and a couple of adepts in each caravan, as well as a number of others with such talents as Prognostication, Psychometry, Sixth Sense and Hypnosis. Mysteriously the Vistani are not influenced by the Red Death and are immune to its negative affects. They make no powers checks when using magic and are not required to make proficiency checks to cast spells. They are often adepts or mystics, a reminder of their ancient Zarovan heritage. Their great assortment of powers gives them a keen and accurate ability to sense the future, feel vibrations from the past and gather information that few others could glean. This information is rarely available to non-Vistani and given only to those who have gained favor with the Vistani or their allies in their struggle against the Red Death.

### *Vistani Fortune-telling*

Since their first appearance on Gothic Earth, the Vistani have continued to use their ancient methods of prognostication. When characters seek the services of a Vistani fortune-teller, they must approach discretely and with great respect, for the Vistani are not lightly persuaded to use their powers in the service of others. Wealth, “crossing one's palm with silver,” while a great beginning, will not lead any true Vistani to use her abilities — unless she has reasons of her own for delving into the shadowy future or forgotten past. Although most traditional Vistani use the *tarokka* as their principle method of studying the mists of time, others have adopted Rom rituals such as reading tea leaves or studying a palm. Others are proficient in reading crystal balls — a skill practiced by both peoples. See Chapter Four of the **Ravenloft Dungeon Master's Guide** for more information on using the *tarokka deck*, the Vistani's traditional fortune-telling tool.

Some gypsies from other tribes pass themselves off as Vistani in order to squeeze money from the *georgio*, or non-Gypsy. As one might guess, this gains the Vistani's incredible wrath and is seldom done twice by the same individual.

### *Potions and Oils*

The Vistani, like most gypsies of the 1890s, often attract the attention of their customers with





### *Half-Vistani on Gothic Earth*

Rare is the *giomorgo*, or half-Vistani, child who is not treasured by the Vistani people of Gothic Earth. As a small and singular clan, the Vistani here cannot afford to disdain anyone born of their people. Few half-Vistani, therefore, feel as outcast as do those in the realm of **Ravenloft**. Many children born to the Vistani these days are half-Rom (although the *giomorgo* are still very few).

Far more rarely is a child born of a Vistani and a *giorgio*, or non-Gypsy. Some of the more traditional Vistani decry this blending of bloodlines, pointing to the loss of their abilities and the clouding of their Sight. Still the half-Vistani may be just as proficient as their full-blooded brethren with such skills as Psychometry or Sixth Sense, as well as being talented readers of the *tarokka*. Moon Madness, as described in the **Ravenloft Player's Handbook**, has led some *giomorgo* to be killed as madmen and others collected by those interested in the new science of psychoanalysis, to be used as test subjects. Although the *giomorgo* may be drawn toward the adept class, some are also often proficient mediums. Caught, as they are, between the world of Gothic Earth and another world, they make excellent conduits for spirits seeking to make contact with the other side. Unfortunately, half-Vistani are not immune to the machinations of the Red Death and their spells are just as likely to cause harm or lead to corruption as any *giorgio's*.

DM's should decide whether or not they wish to allow half-Vistani player characters and, if so, should use the guidelines in the **Ravenloft Player's Handbook** to create the character.

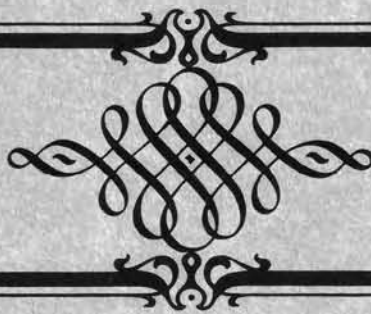
various miracle cures, patent medicines, ointments and elixirs. For the most part these medicines are nothing more than herbs and alcohol, which may make people *think* they are brave or in love, but have no real power. Those people lucky enough to gain the favor of the Vistani gain the benefits of that tribe's ability to brew minor potions.

Some of these potions may speed healing or neutralize poisonous stings. Rarely will a more

powerful elixir be created, although none are potent enough to bring back the dead or make someone love another permanently. In one way these Vistani-made potions are more powerful than any produced by another mystic or adept, for as Vistani-brewed magic, the imbiber had no need to make a powers check. These magical elixirs, therefore, do not attract the attention of the Red Death.



# Chapter Eight: A Practical Guide to the 19th Century



*HERE AT MY FEET WHAT WONDERS PASS,*

*WHAT ENDLESS ACTIVE LIFE IS HERE!*

*—MATTHEW ARNOLD, "LINES WRITTEN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS"*





## *Polite Society*

The Victorian world is a study in contrasts. Corseted, bound by social convention, near-blinded by the sight of a woman's ankle or a gentleman's bare chest, the people of the 1890s find a freedom of intellect and social activism that will change the world forever. Inventors, scientists, philosophers and psychologists mingle and explore with great enthusiasm and a sense that nothing is impossible.

Ladies must be escorted on the street, yet they work for social reform, support the suffrage movement and strike out as businesswomen, reporters, doctors and politicians. Debates rage hotly on topics as diverse as the superiority of one race over another and how man might eventually find his way safely to the bottom of the sea. Yet no matter the enthusiasm of the combatants, no matter how busy the businessman or society dame, the first and most important thing is how one departs oneself — in other words, manners.

From the commonest laborer on the street, to the most influential land baron, politeness and an understanding of the correct etiquette hold 1890s society together. Doing things “properly” is as important as business success, and people avidly read books on etiquette. Women are now the focus and primary readers of special “women's magazines” such as *Good Housekeeping* and *Ladies Home Journal*. Many popular books are written to assist the young, up-and-coming housewife or businessman. *The Home Manual*, published in 1889, provides a comprehensive guide for the Victorian housewife, while etiquette guides for travelers to foreign cities supply essential social behavior for the cosmopolitan traveler.

Meals are a dance of rules and proper behaviors. Soup must be sipped from the side of the spoon. No table should have an odd number of guests (and thirteen is terribly unlucky), and guests should be divided equally among the sexes if at all possible. Neither smoking nor drinking strong liquor is done at a respectable table. Gentlemen should find interesting conversation to engage the ladies, and should avoid any discussions of politics or business unless the lady broaches the subject first. From birth to marriage to death, every interaction is a dance. All must know the steps to take or be considered rude and uncouth. In some instances, those who misbehave are shunned by society — a fate worse than death for anyone of

high social class. For those hunting minions of the Red Death, that misstep in the dance of etiquette may signal the need to keep watch for other aberrations in behavior. Or, it could just be another rude American.

## *Social Classes*

Although many in the 1890s speak of egalitarianism, the Victorian era is truly a time when class snobbery rules. In Europe, although the middle class is gaining in power and influence, lords and ladies set the fashions, rule the political landscape and retain much of the wealth.

In the United States, a strong middle class has formed. Literacy is on the rise, and many of the middle class are gaining privileges once available only to the most influential families. Travel, better living conditions and decent salaries in burgeoning industries make middle class families as well off as the wealthy used to be.

Of course the wealthy are obscenely rich, building castles, bringing ancient ruins over from Europe, and traveling almost constantly. Philanthropy is also a hobby of the rich, with many giving money for scholarships, building wings in hospitals and libraries or funding scientific endeavors.

Still, there are depressions and panics throughout the 1890s, with banks failing and stocks falling. A wealthy financier one day might find himself a beggar on the streets the next. For the poor, little changes, although social reform — a burgeoning fad among the upper classes — provides a chance at education, some health care and better working conditions in factories, mines and other hazardous places. Many people endeavor to rise above their “station” and pour into cities looking for a chance at a better life. Immigrants also travel to the United States in vast numbers, only to be reviled and given the worst and most dangerous jobs — jobs that no middle class person would touch.

Many minions of the Red Death begin as resentful members of the lower classes. Drawn to the offer of power in a world where they seem to have little, they gain their opportunities through the tainted workings of great evil.

Foes of the Red Death come from every social class and level of wealth. For them, money and bloodlines do not matter so much as a courageous heart and the ability to withstand the supernatural evil that works so hard to defeat them.



### *An Understanding of the Perceived Differences in Race in the 1890s*

One of the most overwhelming vices of Victorians in the 1890s is the belief in their own superiority. White men of Anglo-Saxon ancestry, generally Protestant and, if at all possible, wealthy, feel no need to deny that they occupy the apex of mankind's development. Such thinking colors all aspects of society, from the studies done by scientists to measure the supposed inferior brains of non-Caucasians, to the empire-building advances of Europe and the United States, set to divide and conquer the "inferior" people in East India, Africa and South America, among others. It is the European and American man's duty to conquer and civilize the natives, with many of them gathered like zoo animals as curiosities. The 1893 Chicago World's Fair had exhibitions of Algerians and Africans, for example. Though they tried their best to acquire pygmies, the hunters never returned. Other groups are decimated to provide land for the superior white man, as in the Sioux massacre at Wounded Knee.

Immigrants to America are also targets of bigotry, as over five million arrive from across the ocean between 1891 and 1900. These exiles seek the Land of Opportunity and often find starvation and backbreaking factory work in the cities. Stereotypes abound, perpetuated in vaudeville and minstrel shows where performers from all over the world bring laughter and collect paychecks with their exaggerated accents, outlandish costumes and slapstick comedy.

Although such attitudes are hurtful to those considered inferior, for the most part they are accepted as a normal part of life. Some improvements occur as blacks build successful businesses and find education in separate colleges. Races rarely mingle, either socially or in business, except for the serving class, and never on the same level.

However, those who fight the minions of the Red Death understand that the truly inferior are those who would embrace the taint caused by supernatural evil in the world. Race is not an issue among most adventurers. They are more interested in their fellow adventurer's moral code and the steadiness of his shooting iron than the color of his skin. Race, creed and color are all insignificant when fighting a monstrous enemy, and some enlightened qabals have a mixture of supernatural talent from black voodoo masters, to American

Indian shaman, Catholic ministers, rabbis and Islamic scholars of the arcane.

### *Women in Victorian Times — Onward Come the Pantaloon*

Few can deny the image of a "proper" Victorian lady — high neckline, long sleeves, long skirt, hair full and smoothly held in a knot at the crown of her head, eyes demurely down. Yet women of the 1890s are some of the first female doctors. These women own businesses, work in factories and travel around the world in search of great adventures — all the while fighting for suffrage, raising their children and keeping their homes clean. Still women of this period have some clear restrictions to their behavior. No respectable single woman travels alone. Any legal business must include a man, for only his signature is binding. Some men even protest women's enthusiasm for bicycling — a sport hailed by feminists as providing freedom from family restrictions and a chance for adventure — saying that it provides a sexual stimulation unhealthy unmarried women and cautioning that this could ruin a girl's marriage prospects. Pants are improper, yet some women wear them proudly. Some women, in fact, dress entirely as men, including the addition of a stogie cigar and bowler hat; thus, they enjoy a freedom of movement that no respectable woman could have, dressed in her many layers, gloves and long skirts.

Suffrage, although a growing and active movement, has yet to gain certain rights for women, with the first Congressional vote on women's suffrage defeated in 1887. Nevertheless, the image of the "New Woman" has appeared by the late 1890s, with women setting forth the shocking theory that they do not have to marry to find worthwhile lives, building their own places in the world as educators, businesswomen, entertainers or artists.

Adventuring women fighting against the minions of the Red Death take more liberties than most. Often professional women, either unmarried or independent of their husbands, these adventurers scoff at taking a constant traveling companion (except when they must rely on safety in numbers), and often carry more than a lady's tiny one-shot pistol. For those that brave the monsters of the Red Death, etiquette often gets in the way of saving lives, and no true heroine of Gothic Earth will allow that. From the Annie Oakleys of the world to



the Nelly Blys, they live to adventure and to foil the plans of darkness.

### *Clothing Styles of Gothic Earth*

During the Victorian Age the expression “clothing makes the man” rang truer than any time before or since. Whether gentleman, soldier, wealthy matriarch or Gibson girl, hats, hairstyles, jewelry and hem length expressed a person’s place in society. Often his profession or her political leanings might be ascertained by the angle of a hat or a deeply engraved ring while a state of mourning or marriage might be deduced from the hue of a blouse or a draping veil. In the world of **Masque of the Red Death**, these signs are extremely significant. Those people sensitive to the shadows might discover others with similar leanings. Members, of a secret society might recognize a brother or an adventurer may catch a glimpse of a sinister medalion or half-hidden tattoo belonging to someone tainted by the darkness of the Red Death.

### *Fashions Through the 1890s*

Clothing style has a very important influence on the social lives of the well-to-do in both Europe and America during this decade. In addition, fashion becomes more than a passing fancy for most of the burgeoning middle class. Ladies pore over fashion magazines such as *Harper’s Bazaar* and *Vogue* seeking the latest styles. Fads abound. Some shock the older generation with clothing based on their fascination with exotic lands. Some women dare to wear pants (or bloomers) based on Turkish trousers. Using the latest techniques in the new art of photography, wealthy young socialites pose for “portraits” sporting a harem-girl chic that consists of filmy scarves, elaborate bracelets, necklaces and little else. Others choose to follow the suffrage movement, showing their independence with more relaxed clothing, dressing in masculine Eton jackets and ankle-length skirts and wearing a straw boater hat tipped confidently over one eye.

Men find themselves relegated to wearing more boring clothes, except of course for the occasional elaborate uniform. No man, other than an occasional dandy or Southern gentleman in the United States, would be caught dead dressed in white in the evening. All suits are black, brown, blue or gray, enlivened only by patterns in plaid and checks (and sometimes both together) and an occasional brightly colored, embroidered waist-

coat, though these are found mainly on gamblers and other ne’er do wells. Still, an elegant top hat or the proud addition of a handlebar moustache might prove the ultimate in style for a well-dressed man in Europe.

A cowboy in the American West, on the other hand, might cut a fine figure arrayed in his ten-gallon Stetson hat, pearl-buttoned shirt, denim pants and spurred, decorative high-heeled boots—a sight sure to cause comment along the streets of Paris.

In the world of the Red Death, symbols are quite often used in dress to connect those who fight the darkness. A gentleman might wear a ruby stickpin with his evening cravat carved with a rune for protection or a mark of his power. A lady’s elegant chapeau, crowned in white roses, might communicate to her companions that she wishes to meet later privately for discussion of a terror beneath the local recluse’s manor. A cross, a Star of David, or an ankh, worn openly might be a sign of piety for a true believer, a fashion statement, or the brave defiance of a true cleric struggling against the stain encroaching on his miracles. Those who fight the Red Death’s minions would do well to observe clothing details of the people around them. Such seemingly trivial observations often provide clues that might well save a life or prevent a villainous creature from completing an evil scheme.

### *A Gentlewoman’s Apparel from the Inside Out*

Getting dressed in the 1890s is an elaborate and involved affair, especially for a proper lady. While women explorers might occasionally bend the rules of fashion and remove a corset before climbing the Great Pyramid in Giza, a proper lady is required to wear several layers of clothing, a proper hat and gloves to be seen on the street. Woe betide the lady whose clothing does not follow the latest fashion!

Below is a list of standard apparel for a lady of means. Consider that a farm wife would normally not dress in such elaborate layers unless she were entertaining, shopping in town or going to a worship service, but the new flocks of stenographers, factory workers and other business women are expected to dress “properly” if they wished to keep their jobs, no matter how physical the labor.

- **Stockings:** These lovely items are made of silk, cotton or wool depending upon the season. They are held above the knee by elastic suspenders



(or the occasional silk ribbon) attached to the lady's corset hem.

- **Drawers:** Generally wide legged and extending below the knee, these staples of underclothing were often trimmed with lace and made of wool flannel for winter and silk or linen for summer. Some of the more "sporty" ladies may have them with gathered leg openings, making them similar to a man's knickers—a useful place for women to hide small items where they could be sure no one would search. In the late 1890s, the "combination" garment was created, combining drawers and chemise. These are lacy and often more comfortable, similar to the masculine "union suit."

- **Chemises:** This garment, similar to a nightgown, is made of cotton or linen. The hem comes to mid calf. The chemise is worn next to the skin to protect the lady from the stiff wire and bone of her corset, as well as to keep the corset clean. Often elaborately embroidered and covered with lacework along the yokes and hems, they are made in a wide range of lovely colors. Monogramming is also becoming popular at this time.

- **Corsets:** The fashion of corseting was a topic of much discussion during the 1890s, with some radicals decrying it as a barbaric practice leading to illnesses such as tuberculosis or to a "wandering uterus," which was known to cause bouts of hysteria or even infertility. Despite this opposition, toward the end of the decade a gracefully delicate, long look became fashionable, requiring a longer, more slender waistline and tighter lacing. Corsets laced in the back, although there a front opening with hooks allows the wearer to remove the garment without assistance. Usually made of silk or cotton, it often has contrasting lace, ribbons and embroidery. During the 1890s it became proper for even respectable women to dress in brightly colored and fancifully trimmed underwear. Less respectable women —particularly actresses, dancers and the ladies who work the red light district — had been wearing such things for years.

- **Petticoats:** After the widely belled skirts of the 1880s, the 1890s fashion involves a slimmer silhouette, with petticoats worn beneath the tightly laced corset at the top and flaring out to starched ruffles decorating the hem. Often the brightly colored petticoats are made of silk taffeta, which makes a gentle rustling noise as a lady moves.





- **Dresses:** The dresses of the 1890s emphasize a small waist by the addition of wide and elaborate sleeves, running the gamut during the decade from a slight puff and gathers at the shoulder in 1890 to huge padded “leg-o-mutton” sleeves in 1896. Skirts have stiffened hems and are generally unadorned but gathered or pleated at the back and fan or bell shaped. Workingwomen often wear a more practical white or pastel “shirt waist” blouse with a skirt, generally in black, to hide the coating of coal dust and filth from their walks along city streets. Collars are high and sleeves long during the day. Evening dresses are often much more revealing, with plunging necklines and elaborate puffed sleeves ending just below the shoulder, leaving room for long silky evening gloves. Fabrics run the gamut from damask drapery cloth and brocade — almost as heavy as upholstery fabrics — to the much lighter weight cottons, such as batiste and gingham. Trims include ruffles, fringe, braids, tassels and beads.

- **Shoes:** High laced or buttoned boots are common daytime footwear, while high heels and buckled straps on dainty pumps are worn in the evening. For ladies who like dancing, flat slippers are often dyed or decorated to match a ball gown — perfect for formal occasions.

- **Accessories:** One of the most innovative fashion inventions of the 1890s is the screw-back earring. This allows women to wear long, heavy elaborate earrings without damaging their lobes with a piercing. Bracelets are popular, often worn over gloves during the evening, while brooches, especially cameos, pinned to high lacy necklines have come into vogue. In the evening a lady might wear a wide beaded choker called a dog collar. During the day no efficient businesswoman would be caught without her lady’s watch, worn on a long chain, either around her neck or clipped at her waist. Belts are common, as well as small purses made of anything from crochet work to beads. Gloves are important day and night, since no proper woman leaves her house with her hands uncovered. Many ladies carry parasols, useful in the **Masque of the Red Death** setting as both a sunshade and a possible weapon with a pointed tip.

- **Hats and Hair:** Many different hats are worn during the 1890s, from the demure bonnet, worn by frontier women, to the saucy unisex “boater” hat perched on the head of a Gibson Girl. Veils are proper for a bride or a woman in mourning. Tiaras are popular as well, worn in the midst of elaborate hairstyles on formal occasions. Sometimes hats are

important for more than mere fashion as women use curling irons heated on the stove to tame their bangs into proper fluff and often destroy hanks of hair in the process. Hairpieces fastened with combs add volume or hide damaged locks. Other combs are decorated with feathers and beads for mature ladies and flowers for the young.

### *A Gentleman's Apparel from the Inside Out*

A gentleman of the 1890s has far fewer clothing options but is not quite so burdened with layers. In general, variety for a man comes from his various working clothes and his stylish neckwear and waistcoats. Different occupations have their own unique uniforms, with everything from a butcher’s whites and long apron to the fine epaulets and braids on a doorman’s coat. Professional people, men (and the occasional woman) wear good business clothing in grays and browns. Such accessories as a leather doctor’s bag or a ring denoting a law fraternity more easily note their occupations. Although fashion is not as strict for men, nor as regularly changing, they too must follow stringent guidelines of propriety, making certain to wear the proper coat for the proper occasion, and ensuring that their ties follow the latest fad if they wish to be considered smart and up-to-the-minute. Below is a list of standard clothing for a middle-class gentleman. Remember that a poor factory worker would probably scoff at some of the fashion restrictions of the gentry, and many of the lower classes must find their clothing in the leavings or charity of others, wearing unfashionable clothing until it wears out.

- **Underwear:** A gentleman on Gothic Earth often wears woolen union suits in the winter, and stretch cotton ones in spring and summer. Drawers of cotton or soft wool have a buttoned waistband and can be of any length from mid-calf to ankle. Socks are often long, over the calf and held up with elastic garters.

- **Shirts:** Men of the 1890s consider the shirt to be an undergarment, always worn with a vest or waistcoat except in the most casual of situations. Made of cotton or linen, or sometimes of wool or silk, it has simple lines and is usually a pullover with a buttoned front placket going only halfway down to the hem. Most have a banded collar and slim banded cuffs with buttonholes allowing the addition of heavily starched, more elaborate versions of each in styles to fit every occasion. Formal shirts might button up the back with an embroidered or finely pleated front, while collars stand upright to



frame the face. Professional shirts are invariably white, while work or leisure shirts can be made of colored fabric, in solids, stripes, plaids, or small prints on a light ground, with or without attached collars.

- **Trousers:** Waistbands in the 1890s actually come to the waist and are held up with suspenders attached to buttons on the waistband. They have a front button fly and straight or slightly tapered legs with a center crease and cuffs first made fashionable by Prince Edward of England during this period. Fabrics are usually solid or striped and made of cotton or wool. Miners and other working men wear durable “waist overalls” that later will come to be known as jeans, at this time only available in indigo blue.

- **Vests:** Vests are the armor of a respectable gentleman. No proper fellow will be seen in the presence of a lady without his waistcoat, since without it he would be showing part of his undergarments — namely his shirt. Professional men often have vests made of fabric matching their trousers and coat, while more flashy gentlemen might try a contrasting color or print. Plaids are popular and most vests have at least two pockets, if not a small inner third pocket as well. Casual wear and professional vests generally have a high neck and sometimes lapels as well. Evening models have a lower scooped neckline and may be made of silk or a heavy cotton pique. Only riverboat gamblers and rakes continue to wear the elaborate embroidered and brightly colored waistcoats so fashionable a few years earlier.

- **Coats:** Just as a dress is the Victorian woman’s most varied piece of clothing, a man’s is his coat. One of the most popular and basic pieces of an 1890s wardrobe is the frock coat. This garment, single or double-breasted and cut with a straight, slightly flared hem is suitable for all but the most formal occasions and is often used for business as well. Sack coats, unstructured loose-fitting coats originally used by the military, are worn both casually and as street and business attire. Social occasions call for a black cutaway coat, made with a rounded shorter length in the front. More formal occasions called for a tailcoat with the long tails at the back, worn with a white waistcoat and high-collared shirt.

- **Shoes:** Standard shoes in the 1890s were black or brown leather boots, work boots, pull-on high boots for riding and others of all heights. Dandies and others on the cutting edge of fashion







later adopt shiny patent leather shoes with spats in many colors. Fancy slip-on pumps with buckles, bows and buttons are proper for eveningwear.

• **Accessories:** No dashing man of the 1890s would be seen without his walking stick. Not only are these handsome accessories, with elaborate heads formed of everything from silver to brass to ivory, but for a gentleman fighting minions of the Red Death, they might also have special modifications. Some “walking” canes have a pointed tip, a secret compartment to hold important information, a rapier hidden in the length of the shaft, or a small flask of brandy in the screw-off handle. Watches are also essential; if a man is too poor to own a watch — or has sold it for some reason — he usually continues to wear his watch chain and fob as a decoration across the front of his vest. Jewelry is limited to the occasional stickpin and club, school and wedding rings.

• **Neckties:** Although men do not wear much jewelry, they adorn themselves with colorful neckties. Made of silk or bright cotton, striped, dotted or solid, they include the bow tie (generally worn by the younger gentlemen), ascots, kerchiefs or the latest fashion, the “four-in-hand,” which is much like a wide version of the standard tie of the 20th century.

• **Hats and Hair:** Much can be learned about a man from his hat. Most gentlemen favor the top hat, although businessmen and the middle class consider the derby to be a hat for all occasions. Elegant silk top hats are usually a part of formal attire, while a “swell” might wear a straw boater. A pale, straw “planter’s hat” generally accompanies a southern gentleman’s white linen suit. Of course no cowboy would be caught dead without his Stetson, individually bent, marked and banded to make it his.

Men’s hair is short and usually slicked back. Though most men are clean-shaven, some favor an elaborately waxed and groomed mustache, especially popular during the later part of the decade.

### *Health and Fitness*

Sports and spas become popular during the 1890s, with the first football games being played and the rules codified, as well as the institution of the Stanley cup in 1892 for a hockey championship. Women find amusement in tennis and bicycling, while men continue their fascination with bowling and baseball, as well as the wealthy

man’s game — golf. Women are fascinated by the culture of the Middle East and discover the joys of belly dancing for their husbands behind closed doors. Fitness is important, a part of the philosophy of mental and bodily perfection that is such a part of the Victorian mindset.

Other folk find their way to health through spas and sanitariums, meant to provide rest and sometimes unusual therapies. The Kellogg brothers begin producing their health food (cereal) after discovering a way to create flakes from corn in 1892. Others create bizarre diets and exercise regimens for the guests at their spas. Some spas are more restful, with days spent in the sun and evenings filled with gourmet meals and good wine.

### *Patent Nostrums and Quackery: Health and Medicine on Gothic Earth*

The 1890s are certainly a time of experimentation — in the arts, in music and especially in the sciences. Nowhere is this more dangerous than in the study of medicine. Theories abound, some that prove beneficial, others that cripple or kill their experimental victims. During this time, some physicians believed the electric light could cure disease and would provide “light baths” to their patients, others worked on the infant chiropractic science and philosophy, aligning bones to cure diseases. While these practices are usually harmless or truly beneficial, others are actually deadly. Anyone can call himself a doctor at this time, creating quack cures for everything from cancer to alcoholism. If it comes in a needle, most people believe in it and many harmful and addictive drugs are used and even promoted by the famous as ways to clear the mind or strengthen the heart and lungs. Tuberculosis is a terrifying specter, making any stranger’s cough a potential death threat, while typhoid rules in a world where plumbing is still primitive in most places. Travelers bring home malaria and other exotic diseases, spreading them to those who have no immunity.

Carts travel the countryside carrying men in fine suits and flourishing bottles with glossy, gold-edged labels, each proclaiming its contents as a cure for anything from diaper rash to cancer. Such patent medicines usually contain high percentages of alcohol mixed with something to alter the taste — for good or ill. “Doctors” put ads in newspapers and magazines, showing photos of smiling faces and the first “before and after” shots with the blind



healed and the lame made to walk. Others build machines set to fix bad habits. Men can add to their height through magnetism or improve their strength with special India rubber bands. Buildings are so plastered with these advertisements that politicians create laws in many cities making them unlawful except in certain designated areas.

Italy and Spain are prime places for patients to visit for their health. The sunny weather and salty air of sea voyages is believed good for tubercular lungs, and sunny days on the beach can heal shattered nerves as well as broken bones. Other treatments for these and other conditions involve emetics and laxatives to purge poisons from the body or bleeding by cup or leech.

Scientists are working on cures, having made great advances in the field of microbiology and pathology. Now the public is aware of germs and the problems inherent with sharing drinking cups or lavatories. In fact, a series of patent devices are developed to clean and protect the public from drinking fountains and public restrooms. Midwives go out of favor as the cleaner and more “scientific” male obstetricians find their popularity growing.

Still, no matter what the scientific wonders and amazing medicines, death is just a moment away from many, with influenza, typhoid, as well as childbirth and death by misadventure likely to cut short the lives of many Victorians.

## *Burial Customs and Mourning on Gothic Earth*

Death and dying are a daily possibility — a lurking shadow behind the birth of every child, every sudden sneeze, every missed step. In the 1890s, those who survive infancy rarely live beyond their 42nd year, either lost to disease, polluted water, incompetent medical care or accidents. On Gothic Earth, some die from supernatural causes as well. Death is something of an obsession with Victorian society; traditions must be followed to the letter when someone passes away, both during the funeral and in the period of mourning after.

Some social rules involve superstition about the corpse itself. In some cultures, the dead person’s name should not be mentioned so that the spirit will not become confused and try to return. For most cultures, the corpse must be kept at home and watched for at least a day to be certain the person is truly dead and his soul at rest. Curtains are drawn,

clocks stopped, and black velvet covers all mirrors to make sure the victim’s soul will not become trapped in the reflective glass. Sentimental ladies cut locks of hair from the body to weave into elaborate hair jewelry, while others create molds in wax or plaster of their deceased relatives, with the eyes and mouth changed to make the image of the corpse’s face look alive. These “death masks” keep a loved one’s image fresh and are only supplanted by the later custom of a memento photograph taken at the casket.

Bodies are buried quickly in the summer. In northern climes, bodies are kept unburied for months in the winter if the ground is too frozen for digging a grave. Funerals are as elaborate as the family can afford, with grand hearses pulled by black horses fitted with black leather, silver and plumed headgear. Coffins are covered with gilding and carved with sentimental images. Depending upon the wealth of the deceased’s family, either a lavish feast is served after the funeral or everyone in the neighborhood and all the relatives bring food to the mourners’ home. Tombstones and mausoleums are fantastically carved with religious figures, symbols important to the deceased one’s life and romantic, religious or sentimental quotes. Some mausoleums might even be decorated with stained glass windows and elaborate statuary sculpted to resemble the dearly departed. Spouses and other family members are expected to dress entirely in black—including underclothes and handkerchiefs—for periods varying from three months to two years, depending upon the closeness of the relationship.

Grave robbing is extremely prevalent in the 1890s. Some families hire guards to watch over a newly laid grave until the ground has settled and the body grown unusable by scientists, students and doctors who pay grave robbers good money for fresh cadavers. No doctor’s office is complete without a human skeleton hung on wires, nor do most flinch at having organs or freakish two-headed animals in jars sitting on display along with the occasional odd head or hand. Minions of the Red Death also find many uses for these bodies, creating horrors with their experiments and their gruesome evil magics — making guards a grim necessity. For those who understand the monstrous stain upon the world, contaminated bodies must be prepared and secret ceremonies followed to keep a corpse from rising as a terrifying marionette under the control of followers of the Red Death.



## *Entertainment and the Darker*

### *Side of Life in the 1890s*

For the first time in history, perhaps, the progress made in technology, both in the home and in the workplace, has allowed the creation of true leisure time — and a plethora of things to occupy that time. Inventions and inventors explore new devices to make tasks and activities faster, easier and, sometimes better. Recreation and entertainment become not just part of life but, to some, life itself.

### *Inventions in the 1890s*

In a world shadowed by the Red Death, the arcane arts are hobbled by the taint of darkness. Every spell may lead to the caster or recipient's downfall or else to insanity. Arcane abilities, although quite powerful, are dangerous not only to the body, but to the mind and soul. On Gothic Earth, a substitute for these powers came from

inventive minds questing for ways to make the world a better place — or sometimes just to make a fortune. This substitute was the power of invention.

By the beginning of the 1890s everything from the matchbook to the machine gun had already been invented, and inquisitive, driven scientists and craftsmen had just gotten started. Brilliant electric lights replace hissing yellow gas jets and the telegraph provides instant communication over long distances. Photography, one of the most useful and appreciated inventions on Gothic Earth, is also a useful tool in the fight against the Red Death. The camera's eye is not fooled by invisible things or by illusions. Even spirits may show on certain films, if only as amorphous shadows.

As inventions improve people's lives, they also have their negative aspects. Speeding locomotives and motorcycles lead to terrifying crashes. Pursuing their studies of mind and body, many doctors experiment on their patients, sometimes changing them in terrible ways, in the name of progress. Alternating current not only lights homes but leads to the invention of the electric chair. Such inventions give many a sense of control,





*Table 8-1: Items of Technological Wonder*

This list details many important discoveries from the 1890s that influenced people's lives, for better or worse.

**1870**

Herman Hollerith uses punch cards to tabulate the U.S. census, a method saving months of work and calculation.  
Robert Gair invents the cardboard box.  
George W. Johnson records phonograph cylinders for the first time.

**1871**

James Naismith invents basketball.  
Thomas Edison patents the radio and gives the first demonstration of the kinoscope, the precursor of the motion picture projector.  
Jesse Reno invents the escalator, first using it as an amusement ride at Coney Island.

**1872**

Thomas Edison patents the two-way telegraph.

**1873**

Rudolf Diesel receives a patent for the first diesel engine.  
W.L. Judson invents the zipper.  
George W. Ferris invents the Ferris wheel for the 1873 Chicago World's Fair.

**1874**

Coca-Cola® is sold in bottles for the first time.  
The first battery-operated telephone switchboard is installed in the United States.  
W.K. Dickson receives a patent for motion-picture film.  
August and Louis Lumi invent the Cinematographe, a combination movie projector and camera.  
Kinoscope viewing parlors first open in major cities, each contain several machines.

**1875**

The first professional football game is played.  
The first U.S. patent for an automobile is granted to George B. Seldon.

**1876**

H.L. Smith takes the first X-ray photograph.

**1877**


The Boston subway opens, becoming the first underground U.S. metro line.  
John Philip Sousa's band makes the first phonographic recordings of early Ragtime music.

**1878**

Vlademar Poulsen invents the first telephone answering machine, the telegraphone.  
Edwin Prescott patents the roller coaster.

**1879**

J.S. Thurman patents the motor-driven vacuum cleaner.  
The United States Congress first approves voting machines to be used in federal elections.





while others travel down the path to dementia as they attempt to do with chemistry, electricity and wires what adepts had once done with magic. Scientists and inventors in the world of the Red Death may be influenced in ways they cannot or will not believe. Men and women of science assume, often to their downfall, that their intellect and “practicality” protect s them from such dangers. Yet the shadows surrounding this world can find their way into the most advanced and beneficial-seeming discoveries, and unscrupulous or greedy individuals may find ways to twist a great dream into a terrifying nightmare.

Dr. H. H. Holmes, thought by many to be a fine man and an upstanding doctor was also a serial killer who mutilated and tortured between 25 and 200 people —mostly young women. His “torture palace,” as he called it, was the World’s Fair Hotel, built just west of the grounds of the most magnificent and amazing event of 1893 — the Chicago World’s Fair. This event, created to exhibit the greatest and most advanced inventions of the world, was also the setting and hunting ground for this grotesque and horrifying killer, who used the latest techniques to torment, kill and eventually dispose of his victims. On Gothic Earth, his reasons are clear; he has been enclosed and enraptured by the sadistic threads of evil winding him ever closer to the Red Death and is now a minion, possibly even a demilord of his dark master.

### *From Fine Literature to Yellow Journalism*

Telephones and the telegraph allow almost instantaneous communication during the 1890s, but even as these inventions grow more pervasive, print media is still the preferred form of communication. Whether the daily newspaper, the weekly gossip rag, or a novel serialized in the most popular magazines each month, everyone from the boardroom to the dressing room has his or her favorite reading. For individuals who must challenge the supernatural, newspapers provide word of suspicious events, make connections possible between allies through advertisements and provide useful tools through colorful ads. Literate adventurers find useful information in their local public library through old records, out-of-date newspapers and old books full of helpful facts. Yellow journalism flourishes, bringing rumors of scandal, but also touching on the workings of the Red Death’s minions through stories of murder, strange experiments and accounts of the unexplainable. For

anyone struggling to discover news of the obscure or find out the latest information, the printed word is still the most useful source.

### *Literature in the 1890s*

Tracking and reporting the best-selling books, at least in America, officially begins in 1895. Publishing of all sorts experiences a boom in the 1890s for a variety of reasons, including cheaper paper, substantial improvements in the printing press, a higher literacy rate, better public education systems and an increase in book stores and public libraries. Popular taste also shifts from educational books and other nonfiction to works of fiction. An 1893 survey of public libraries showed that the most frequently borrowed books are novels, which are largely historical fiction with overtones of adventure, e.g. *The Last of the Mohicans*, *Lorna Doone* and *The House of the Seven Gables*. Popular nonfiction books include books on etiquette and adventure stories of far-off lands, as a fascination for Arabia and the Orient lead many to study ancient tales, tell-all autobiographies of travelers and other sensational stories.

### *Popular Reading*

The 1890s are a very fertile period for literature, with such amazing authors as Mark Twain, Arthur Conan Doyle, J.M. Barrie, Thomas Hardy, Jules Verne, Robert Louis Stevenson, Emile Zola, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Rudyard Kipling and Joseph Conrad providing fiction on everything from family tension to exploration into worlds so bizarre as to be nearly unimaginable. As Victorians explore the outer reaches of their world, these authors move beyond all that, ranging beneath the sea, deep underground and into realms of fantasy and fabled, exotic lands.

### *Magazines and the Press*

During the Victorian era, magazines and journals have much influence on daily life, fads and fashion. Illustrations of a new style or caricatures of a political leader in an embarrassing position offer constant cause for comment. Magazines serializing a new author’s work can make or break his popularity — and sometimes build their own circulation by providing chapters of the latest favorite. Many ladies pour over stories from magazines dedicated to their needs. These magazines provide recipes and lessons on etiquette and fashion that many



*Table 8-2: Popular Reading*

This list highlights some of the most significant novels and authors of each year in the 1890s. For those who wish to understand the minds of their characters, reading these novels will be a good start.

**1890**

*The Scapegoat* by Sr. Hall Caine — one of the highest-paid novelists and playwrights of his day.

*The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde — first published in *Lippincott's Magazine*.

**1891**

*Tess of the d'Urbervilles* by Thomas Hardy.

*The Little Minister* by J.M. Barrie (author of *Peter Pan*).

**1892**

*The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by Arthur Conan Doyle.

*Shadows Uplifted* by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper — the second novel by an African-American woman published in the United States.

**1893**

*Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* by *Stephen Crane*.

**1894**

*The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling

*The Prisoner of Zenda* by Anthony Hope

**1895**

*The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde — his last play, first performed at St. James' Theatre, London.

*Lilith* by George MacDonald.

*The Time Machine* by H.G. Wells.

**1896**

*The Island of Dr. Moreau* by H.G. Wells.

*Tom Sawyer, Detective* by Mark Twain.

*The Well at the World's End* by William Morris.

**1897**

*Cyrano de Bergerac* by Edmond Rostand.

*Dracula* by Bram Stoker.

*The Invisible Man* by H.G. Wells.

**1898**

*The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James.

*War of the Worlds* by H.G. Wells.

**1899**

*The Awakening* by Kate Chopin.

*Resurrection* by Leo Tolstoy.

ladies follow slavishly. Newspapers sway public opinion, destroy reputations or advertise the latest patent medicine with equal enthusiasm. New products become nationally known as illustrators create advertisements for the backs of magazines and for flyers in town newspapers.

*The Gibson Girl*

No figment of the imagination ever influenced a whole generation more than the Gibson Girl. The Gibson Girl was born on the pages of such popular magazines as *Life*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *Collier's Weekly* from the pen of illustrator Charles Dana Gibson. She, along with her partner, the Gibson Man, although never named, changed American society's ideas of dress and attitude. She was mischievous, independent, spirited and active. She was always seen boating, playing games, ready for adventure and showing the world her poise and effortless strength of character. With an hourglass figure, smooth masses of hair and casual elegance, this newly created archetype, whether fiction or not, changed the style and image of young American women for the world.

For more than three decades, beginning in the 1890s, young women strove to act like her, dress like her and enjoy life as pictured by her illustrator. For those playing female characters on Gothic Earth, the Gibson Girl is a good image for a strong and independent woman of the period.

*"Rags" and Scandal Sheets: a.k.a. Yellow Journalism*

During the early 1890s, William Randolph Hearst bought the *New York Journal*, beginning a newspaper circulation war with Joseph Pulitzer, who owned the *New York World*. Newspapers had always been political, often used by politicians who courted their support, but in the 1890s, the papers began to emphasize everyday happenings — real



news — becoming more neutral and able to criticize party leaders and report clearly about world situations. Newspapers began crusades to stop abuses of power and promote social reform, working for labor parties and the average man on the street, even if mostly in a bid to increase readership and profits.

When the circulation war between Hearst and Pulitzer began, the content of newspapers changed dramatically. Pulitzer had already introduced human-interest news to his paper and had begun to emphasize scandal and sensational stories. Now murders are described in lurid detail accompanied first by illustrations and later by photos depicting dripping blood and dismembered corpses. Society pages headline sex scandals of the famous, making and breaking reputations with the morning news.

Nelly Bly, one of the most famous reporters of the 1880s and 90s, began another form of journalism around this time — stunt journalism. Her career in the professional press began with one of her most famous stunts — feigning insanity to write an exposé on the horrifying conditions in asylums. She brought feelings and emotion into her stories. Bly reached out to the common man in situations such as the Pullman strike of 1893, raised money to build the pedestal for the Statue of Liberty and, earlier in her career, traveled around the world in 72 days in a contest to beat the noted fictional character Phineas Fogg.

Newspapers changed public opinion, slanting the news and reporting situations in such a fashion as to create their own crisis. In 1898 a minor revolt in Cuba quickly led to a hotbed of horrifying stories involving death camps, cannibalism, Amazon warriors and terrible inhumane torturers at work against the rebels. When reporters actually *went* to Cuba, they found the Spanish governor had everything under control. When the U.S.S. *Maine* blew up, however, the American press had what it needed to build public support against the Spanish. They created stories of a bomb attached to the underside of the ship and wrote hundreds of editorials demanding that the *Maine* be avenged. Soon the rallying cry, “Remember the *Maine*! To Hell with Spain,” was heard and the Spanish-American War began.

In a world where the Red Death holds sway, newspapers have many more lurid tales to tell, whether the reporter understands why the events happen or not. Scandal sheets include tales of wealthy gentlemen poisoning their families and

Lizzie Borden, a dainty middle-class woman, chopping up her parents with an axe. Some of the less respectable papers might even mention stories of vampires roaming the streets of Paris, or a blood-curdling exposé on a family of cannibals in Scotland. For the minions of the Red Death, journalism is both a blessing and a curse. It draws the curious into the Red Death’s web, but also exposes its evil actions to the world. Sadly, there are so many sensational and untrue stories that it is difficult for any investigator to separate the lies from truth. Still, a daily paper, often available in both a morning and evening edition, may often be the first place for a detective to check for the machinations of the horrors of Gothic Earth.

### *Music and the Stage in the 1890s*

The 1890s was an age of new music. Bawdy, sensational jazz and ragtime each provide their wild rhythms to the pulse of an active time. Happy times prevail early in the decade, with songs such as “A Bicycle Built For Two” bringing images of sunny days and young people frolicking on their amazing new machines. Later a martial pulse joins in with John Philip Sousa, creating spirited marching tunes and that American anthem, “Stars and Stripes Forever,” in 1896. New Orleans rings with horns, banjos and fiery rinky-tink piano music that can be heard in saloons and aboard paddle wheelers and steamships. In Europe, and especially Milan, crowds attend elegant velvet-draped opera halls to hear the premiers of such opera greats as Verdi and Puccini, while the lilting voice and lovely form of the “divine Sarah” (Sarah Bernhardt) hits the stage from London to New York.

Vaudeville, a series of unrelated shows and songs, comics and acrobats, develops and flourishes during the 1890s, with small troupes traveling across the U.S. and providing shows every night in Union Square Theatre in New York. Bawdy, yet elegant, exciting and romantic, vaudeville has something for everyone, drawing crowds from the hoi polloi and the wealthy upper crust with equal ease.

Minstrel shows are extremely popular, using bigotry and racism as a vehicle for laughter and sentiment. Many of the hit songs of the 1890s come from minstrel shows such as “Dixie’s Land,” “Camptown Races,” and “My Old Kentucky Home,” and are written by northerners with little or no knowledge of Southern life. Many of these songs, along with the jokes, shuffling dances and rolling



*Table 8-3: The 1890s Hit Parade: Popular  
Music of the Decade*

**1890**

"Scheherazade" by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov.  
"You'll Miss Lots of Fun When You're Married"  
by John Philip Sousa and Edward M. Taber.

**1891**

"Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay" by Henry J. Sayers.

**1892**

"Daisy Bell" a.k.a. "A Bicycle Built For Two" by  
Harry Dacre.

"I Pagliacci" (The Clowns), the opera by  
Ruggiero Leoncavallo premiered in Milan.

**1893**

"Falstaff" by Giuseppe Verdi premiered in  
Milan.

"Happy Birthday To You" by Mildred J. Hill and  
Patty Smith Hill.

**1894**

"I've Been Working on the Railroad," author  
unknown, becomes popular.

"The Sidewalks of New York" by Charles B.  
Lawler and James W. Blake

"The Cat Came Back" by Henry S. Miller

**1895**

"America the Beautiful" by Katherine Lee Bates  
and Samuel A. Ward

**1896**

The opera "La Boheme" by Giacomo Puccini  
premiered in Turin.

"A Hot Time in the Old Town" by Joseph Hayden.

"When the Saints Go Marching In" by Katherine  
E. Purvis.

"Stars and Stripes Forever" by John Philip  
Sousa.

**1897**

"Asleep in the Deep" by Arthur J. Lamb.

"The Sorcerer's Apprentice" by Paul Dukas .

**1898**

"I Guess I'll Have to Telegraph My Baby" by  
George M. Cohan.

"Romany Life" by Harry B. Smith

**1899**

"Maple Leaf Rag" by Scott Joplin.

"My Wild Irish Rose" by Chauncey Olcott.







eyes of the black-faced performers help perpetuate stereotypes, yet make the genre popular with both white and black audiences for more than thirty years.

Musical theatre is very popular, with farcical musical comedies standard fare. *A Trip to Chinatown*, by producer-playwright Charles Hoyt starts in 1891 and becomes one of the longest running shows on Broadway, continuing to tour for years. *The Belle of New York* opens in 1897 with a short, unpopular run on Broadway — only 9 weeks. The following year, the show becomes a major success in London, becoming the first American musical to find unqualified popularity in Europe, on a run that lasts over a year and leads to several revivals in West End during the next few decades.

Performers in such shows have unconventional lives. Often unknown without their greasepaint and cork, they tour the world, yet live secluded in their own little worlds. Many warriors in the fight against the Red Death find themselves drawn to such lives, while the minions of the darkness gain strength through the perpetuation of ignorance and bigotry projected in many songs and shows.

### *Seeing the World, Living the Adventure:*

#### *Travel and Exploration in the 1890s*

Fascination with travel and exploration color much of 1890s culture. Clubs overflow with eager audiences ready to hear the latest tales of adventure from explorers of darkest Africa, while even the most retiring English lady dreams of spending time in exotic Turkey or seeing the mummies of ancient Egypt in their original resting place. Archaeologists fight to see who will be awarded a prime spot to dig on the dunes near Giza, while others begin exploration of the Amazon jungles, studying the indigenous people and looking for golden idols. Some may be content to see photographs of jungle safaris or buy an elephant's foot umbrella stand for the front foyer, but more and more of the middle class are exploring the world first-hand.

Adventurers of Gothic Earth who understand the taint seeping into its core worry about this influx of inexperienced explorers. The minions of the Red Death are quick to take advantage of innocents who come looking for a chance to have their pictures made on a camel and leave as gibbering madmen, lost in their nightmares of a mummy's

embrace. Many demilords and monstrous creatures exist in desolate locations far from civilization. As intrepid but clueless folk find their way into these places of darkness, they become victims or allies of the Red Death as their minds snap or their souls are darkened by damnation.

Gothic Earth is a world full of adventure, and for the Victorians of the 1890s, travel is much easier and quicker than it has ever been and making the farthest reaches of exotic lands available to anyone with the time and courage to make the journey. The average person now finds a trip to Egypt, a voyage to Hong Kong or a quick train trip on the Trans-Siberian Railway as easy as traveling to the next city might once have been. Travel is more comfortable, with velvet draped Pullman salon cars providing full bars and gourmet meals. Ornate steamships with crystal chandeliers and ballrooms—at least for the first class passengers—make crossing the ocean a recreational delight. Many have a yearly trip to a new and exotic land or travel for their health to sunny climes. There are many ways to see the world, and the people of the 1890s make the most of them.

#### *Traveling By Land*

Although there are many new conveyances in the modern world of the 1890s, the first and most dependable modes of travel is still the horse. Single riders can travel where no train can, and a lady is far less likely to get her skirts caught and torn on a saddle than by a bicycle chain. Horses are cheap and easy to feed, although city streets are often covered in a thick layer of manure, and few steeds can stand the sight of a loud honking horseless carriage without shying. For short trips, especially in wilder places, nothing can beat the horse — or the camel or elephant, for that matter.

#### *Stagecoaches*

For longer trips across lands where rails have not been laid, stagecoaches are very useful. Mr. McAdam has macadamized the roads, smoothing them and laying down beds of gravel to make wheeled conveyances much safer and travel times shorter for both coaches and single riders. Six spirited horses draw well-sprung stagecoaches along journeys for hundreds of miles, with passengers getting rest and horses replaced at way stations along the paths. Drivers travel anywhere from 20 to 65 miles per day depending upon the terrain. Passengers number from 8 to 12 and pay an average of



10 cents per mile. Guards ride “shotgun” next to the driver, with any valuables carried in a locked strongbox, usually kept beneath the driver’s seat. Travel is dusty and not terribly comfortable, but faster than a single horse. Stagecoaches also provide the means to carry up to 40 lbs. of luggage per passenger. Those who fight the Red Death may sometime discover haunted coaches or evil bandits ready to rob and slay stagecoach passengers.

### *Railways*

Trains provide the fastest means of travel in the 1890s. Railways cross the United States and carry people in style across Europe from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Such travel is often dangerous. Trains travel along treacherous trestles and up mountainsides, around sharp curves and down long inclines to the detriment of engine brakes and the passengers’ nerves. Derailment happens often, although with the slow speed of most trains it is more an annoyance than a danger. When collisions do occur, the wooden train cars shatter and often impale or crush passengers, while wood heaters in each car may cause an inferno. On a normal day, coal dust fills every crease, dusting clothing, hair, teeth and food, while yellow steam jets from the smokestacks and the roar and vibration of the wheels on rails makes it hard to speak or sleep — at least for the second-class passengers. Cheap hotels and restaurants sit near each train station, allowing such passengers the chance to get a quick meal or rest until their connecting train arrives. For those who book first class tickets, the experience is much more pleasant. Mr. Pullman’s sleeping and “palace” cars provide the ultimate in luxury. Passengers may take a hot bubble bath, have a gourmet dinner for two or stretch out in their finely appointed velvet-draped beds. Servants are provided, as well as a wine selection and sometimes even iced drinks.

The most famous railway lines at this time include:

**The Orient Express:** This luxury express train of no more than four passenger cars travels from Paris through Strasbourg, Vienna, Budapest, Sofia and Bucharest, terminating at Constantinople. It is one of the most elegant and sought-after berths for the experienced European traveler of the 1890s. Tickets cost between \$75 and \$100 depending upon the level of luxury selected for the journey.

**The Trans-Siberian Railway:** This line takes passengers from the European Atlantic coast to the Pacific on the other side of Russia. Begun in 1883,

and developed in sections, it would not be completed until more than 30 years later—but passengers can still make their way across much of Russia during the 1890s.

**The Union Pacific Railroad:** One of America’s most shining hours occurred when the golden railway spike linked the East Coast with California. The Union Pacific and the Central Pacific joined their East Coast sisters, the New York Central and the Pennsylvania Railroad, among others in providing freight travel. With the later addition of the Pullman Palace Cars, the Union Pacific offers some of the most comfortable travel on rails, except during the Pullman strike of 1894, when railroad workers virtually shut down the railroad lines in the United States from May to July. Mr. Pullman certainly satisfied his customers, but he so angered his employees, that when he died in 1897, his heirs feared someone would steal his body and hold it for ransom. His corpse was placed in a box covered with tarpaper, buried in asphalt and enclosed in a large block of concrete, reinforced with railway ties.

Train travel where the Red Death dwells is not always easy. Many people are killed each year as trains overturn or collide with unfortunate passers-by or other vehicles caught trying to cross the tracks. In Chicago, for example, trains run on the same level as horses, cars and pedestrians. It is not unheard of for someone to find a decapitated body lying beside the tracks, or for a flying head to land on someone’s lap. Such horrors lead to a vast web of ghost trains, filled with mangled and burned passengers. Also, trains provide good escape for villains who might otherwise be arrested. These minions of the Red Death often carry their trophies and experiments with them. Such things may lead to terror on the tracks for those trapped aboard a speeding train (albeit one moving at around 20 to 40 mph).

### *Bicycles, Motorcycles and Horseless Carriages*

Bicycles have been in vogue for years by the 1890s, providing quick, safe and comfortable single or double transport, especially since the recent invention of the pneumatic tire. Although still very likely to break down (most bicycles come complete with a tool and tire patching kit), they are easy to use and don’t require stabling. Many people in the cities either walk or use bicycles; they are less useful along country roads. Motorcycles and horseless carriages are used by only the wealthy



or by those who love to tinker with machines, for they are very loud, hard to steer and often quit working at inopportune times. Still some experimenters love them and especially enjoy watching the reactions of people around them as they speed along, a trail of belching smoke following behind.

### *Traveling On the Waterways*

The fastest ships at sea in the 1890s are steamships, traveling across the Atlantic in about 20 days. Less cramped and more luxurious than the clipper ships that replace them, they provide much more comfortable berths and don't require dependence on the wind. Iron-sided and equipped with screw propellers, they are increasingly used for shipping, often carrying the mail from coast to coast through the Panama Canal. Immigrants to the United States are often crowded together in small dark lower cabins, while the wealthy have spacious suites with portholes facing the promenade decks where ladies and gentlemen might play games or watch the sea.

Along the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, paddle wheelers provide gambling, music and shows in "floating palaces." Many a professional gambler might make his fortune aboard one of these boats, while some theatre troupes and other entertainers, including prostitutes, amuse and distract those not interested in a "good game of cards." Paddle wheelers are also dangerous. They use steam to power the paddle wheel, and more than one engineer has been taunted into a race that led to disaster. Boilers explode if pressed for speed and more than one graceful ship has turned into a floating pile of flailing, burning passengers from a foolish wager. Adventurers know that ghost ships roam the waves, while the bodies of their passengers sometimes claw their way to the surface to drag the living down to their graves.

### *Investigation on Gothic Earth*

The 1890s is an age of great advances and great evil. In 1888, the world was shocked and horrified by the depredations of Jack the Ripper, a twisted monster that mutilated and killed several women and was never seen again. By 1892 the U.S. sang with puerile glee: "Lizzie Borden took an axe, gave her mother 40 whacks, when she saw what she had done, she gave her father 41!" Crime rates around the world soar as the population increases. Prisons are holding places that often teach more about crime than any criminal could learn on the streets.

Savagery and humanitarianism fight for supremacy, with the massacre of the Sioux at Wounded Knee in 1890 matched by the creation of the Red Cross and the signing of the Geneva Convention, asking for humane treatment of prisoners of war.

On the home front, police detectives are waging their own kind of war — the war against crime — and they are working on many new theories of detection and criminal identification. By 1893, a system developed by Alphonse Bertillon comes into vogue and is commonly used in both the United States and Europe. Called anthropometry, it is a method by which various features of the adult human body are measured as a means of personal identification. Police officers are expected to measure more than eleven different parts of the body. In other parts of the world, a more efficient system is being used. In 1891, Juan Vucetich, an Argentine Police Official, began the first fingerprint files. By 1892, he made the first criminal fingerprint identification, identifying a woman who had murdered her sons and cut her own throat in an attempt to shift the blame to another. A bloody print left on a doorpost proved her identity as the murderer. Most investigators in the U.S. and Europe would not use fingerprinting until about ten years later. Photography is also a weapon of crime fighters, with the first mug shots recorded regularly in the 1850s. Pictures are kept in files along with names, personal and criminal history, as well as the prisoner's anthropometric measurements. Wanted posters of the dastardliest criminals are plastered on walls and posted in public buildings. With increasing anarchist activity in the world, police departments begin working cooperatively to report hints of future violence, beginning a practice that later leads to the formation of Interpol.

On Gothic Earth adventurers follow the latest investigative techniques. Whether studying forensic evidence like Sherlock Holmes, or reading the details of previous arrests in the court listings of local newspapers, any clue may lead to the defeat of a minion of the Red Death.

### *Secret Societies and Private Clubs*

Perhaps some of the most unique and powerful social gatherings in the Victorian world involve private clubs and secret societies. Composed of some of the most powerful and ambitious men of the 1890s, these groups gather for such enthusiasms as politics (with liberal and conservative clubs constant rivals and spies), for automobile



fanciers, artists, authors and scientists as well as those who are experienced world travelers. Exclusive waiting lists for members are long, with some members adding their first-born sons at birth. No women are ever allowed — not even on the premises as servants in some cases. The “darker” races, if male, may come in, if only as waiters and stable keepers.

Clubs and secret societies have their own symbols, sometimes handshakes or special ceremonies for new members and require an exorbitant yearly fee. Such costs are sure to keep the lower classes from finding a way inside, if the usual rules of membership do not.

### *Private Clubs*

The 19th century is the age of clubs. Men of good means are expected to gather for civilized discussions and political debate, eat fine gourmet meals, smoke cigars and occasionally play billiards or a bracing round of golf. Intellectual discussions may include speculations on business matters, although making deals within a club is frowned upon; some clubs provide private rooms for such matters if necessary. Membership, when listed in university biographies or professional journals, adds to a man’s importance in the world, at least to those who care about social and educational backgrounds. Members usually wear some symbol of their affiliation — either a ring or sometimes a watch fob hanging discretely at their vests — providing those in the know with a chance to be impressed.

Clubs are elegant places, restful and quiet salons where men gather in a cloud of tobacco smoke and good whiskey to discuss the topics of the day. From the outside, there may be little more than a small brass plaque providing the address. Inside, most clubs include libraries dedicated to their special interests, dining areas and sometimes a games room for chess or bridge. Popular and erudite speakers come, usually once a month, to provide new topics for debate, while gossip and political in-fighting keep conversations discrete and confidential. Some of the clubs active in the 1890s include the Reform Club, a British club for political Liberals; the Athenaeum Club, a club interested in the Athenian ideals and host to artists, scholars and scientists; and the Traveler’s Club, dedicated to those who have traveled more than 500 miles from London. Women have their own clubs too. Book clubs and sewing circles are not uncommon, although many society women

work to help the poor through their social clubs, while others discuss suffrage and strive to improve conditions in the workplace for working women and children.

### *Secret Societies*

In a time when secrets are hidden behind good manners and people imagine grand schemes about everything from incredible inventions to the eventual takeover of the world, the halls of secret societies are places where many of these plots are developed. Unlike private clubs, secret societies’ members have a singular purpose to their development, an ideal, a secret plan for changing the world or a twisted and sometimes illegal reason for keeping their enthusiasm hidden. For secret societies, discretion is everything; arcane hand signals, carved signet rings and a whispered password are all vital ways of allowing members to interact and yet keep their identities and motives behind walls or masks.

One of the most infamous secret societies in history, some speculate, has its beginnings with three influential and wealthy men considered great philanthropists and business tycoons, as well as the cream of society. Cecil Rhodes, a great empire builder and one of the most important men of British South Africa, William T. Stead, a famous and influential journalist, and Lord Esher, adviser to Queen Victoria herself, begin this secret society in 1891. These men have one purpose in mind: to bring about the eventual control of the world under Britain and her English-speaking allies. To this end, they planned methods for manipulating political leaders, educational institutions and the media. Some say Cecil Rhodes provided the Rhodes scholarship to influence those who might later find themselves in powerful political and business positions, while Mr. Stead worked to bring others into their circle. Eventually their group built membership in the United States and began influencing public opinion through Mr. Stead’s connections and his control of powerful newspapers and journals.

Other secret societies provided places for “indecent” activities, such as studying pornography, or brought in ladies of the evening to provide an outlet for the sexual perversions so very hidden and improper to the Victorian mindset. Their purposes are many and diverse, but in the world of the Red Death the most powerful and often diverse of the secret societies are those known as qabals.



## *Qabals*

Secret societies in the world of the Red Death often involve the supernatural. Some are dedicated solely to the study of magic, but the most secretive are the ancient arcane groups, known as qabals. These groups of dedicated men (and sometimes women) spend their lives battling for or against the Red Death. Like most secret societies, qabals cannot exist without discretion and member loyalty, but those who work under the shadow of such terrors live in a state of paranoia and total secrecy. Whether a qabal is composed of minions of the Red Death or those who fight against it, all protect their members' identities through the use of passwords, pseudonyms and the building of individual cells of membership throughout the world. Each of these cells is separate and known only to a few outside the individual cell. Below are brief descriptions of some of the known qabals of Gothic Earth. The alignment information provided at the end of each description should be used as a guideline for DMs rather than as an obstacle to character association. These are not intended as an exclusive list of qabals. Rather, they should provide examples the DM and players can use to create their own qabals.

### **The Brotherhood of Alchemae**

Tracing their membership back to the ancient qabal known as the Stone, the Brotherhood dedicates itself to pure science. They believe that the force of reason can defeat the evil of the Red Death, that magic is another form of "science" that can be mastered, and that the laws of the universe can be known and made to work against evil. Members are usually scientists of some sort who have made some significant contribution to their field. Adepts, though generally not mystics, who see magic as a scientific path of study also gain acceptance after proving themselves. Most members eschew strong emotions such as compassion, mercy, love and hate, seeing them as distractions from the scientific mindset. Their symbol is the mortar and pestle; most members have some form of this icon with them, either on a ring or a piece of embroidery or as a brooch or some other small item. Members of the Brotherhood (which includes women as well as men) tend toward lawful neutral in alignment.

### **The Fellowship of the Crimson Dawn**

A young and dangerous organization, the Fellowship arose in 1887, founded by nine individuals who set out to prove through their own experimentation that magic was real. Their impetuousness and

lack of precautions drew the attention of the Red Death early on. Current members, and any of the nine who are living (or even un-living), are controlled by the Red Death and serve its purposes. The symbol of the Crimson Dawn is a 13-point starburst, either worn or carried as an amulet or ring. Members of this qabal tend strongly toward egotism, believing in their own superiority and skill and having little but contempt for others who show a "softer" or more spiritual side. They recruit new members in order to have servants and apprentices. Most members of this group are neutral evil in nature.

### **La Lumière**

Dedicated to creating enlightenment across the world and breaking the spread of fear and ignorance so often fostered by the Red Death, the members of La Lumière, known through most of the world as The Enlightened, seek to expand the frontiers of the human mind. Their dedication to social reform, the advancement of science and the arts show a sincere belief in the ability of mankind to grow and reach the dawn of a new age. All members of this group carry the symbol of their order, a white candle set in a silver candlestick, usually in the form of a ring or pendant, although a few make certain their dedication has a permanent mark, with the addition of a tattoo inked in a discrete location. Individual freedom of expression is their hallmark, as well as a distinct dislike of violence when other means are available. Most, if not all, of its members are chaotic good in alignment.

### **The Lost Kingdom**

Some believe this is the oldest of Qabals, arising almost simultaneously with the arrival of the Red Death and guided in the beginning by Sadett, a disciple of the priest who first allowed entry to that evil entity. Sadett saw the need to bring together those who would combat her master's evil act and left Egypt with a small band of followers, who founded a place of safety and study — a lost kingdom — in the depths of the African continent. Though primarily made up of African mystics and adepts, they occasionally allow worthy outsiders to join their ranks. Within their hidden city, members can practice magic without drawing the attentions of the Red Death. Otherwise, few members use spells outside their safe haven, preferring to rely on other skills when they venture into the world. No necromancers are allowed and the practice and study of necromancy is forbidden to members. Their symbol is an ank, worn always to signify their devotion to the old gods of Egypt. Most members are neutral good in alignment.



### **The Nation of Nine: A True Neutral Qabal**

A loose affiliation of nine smaller qabals, the Nation of Nine is dedicated to preserving the natural world and halting the rapid expansion of technology at the expense of nature. The majority of people in these qabals are of non-European descent, with the best known of the Nine, the Children of the Raven, composed almost entirely of Native Americans. Another, called The Pride, is formed of native Africans, while others fight their battles in the jungles of India and the Orient. Wise men, shamans and other mystics provide the leadership in this qabal, although adepts are not uncommon. Each of the Nine has its own symbol, but all are recognized by each: the Children of the Raven wear an eagle feather and the mark of a raven, either in their hair or on jewelry; members of the Pride wear a lion's tooth, and so on. Most members are neutral or have strong neutral alignment leanings.

### **Necessity's Children**

Not all members of secret organizations have lofty purposes or move in high circles of society. Necessity's Children brings together a group of criminals, petty thieves, prostitutes, beggars, unemployed former soldiers and charlatans into an organization bound to use their skills to help each other survive and to combat the minions of the Red Death. They recognize that most of the Red Death's servitors all too often use people of the lower class as fodder or sacrifices, and that the noble-minded heroes who fight the Red Death tend to ignore or discount people with little to no reputation. Their symbol is an insect of some sort — either a cockroach, a spider or some other hardy and resourceful bug. Members have their chosen insect tattooed or painted somewhere on their person or have it worked into a piece of jewelry or clothing. Members often hire out to other groups fighting the Red Death, bringing any payment back to the qabal and sharing within the qabal any information they glean about both the Red Death and those who fight it. Though some members have good tendencies, most of Necessity's Children are chaotic neutral in alignment.

### **The Six-Fingered Hand**

Perhaps one of the most dangerous qabals, the Six-Fingered Hand opposes the Red Death but sees the destruction of the world as the only way to destroy that terrible being. They, therefore, work night and day toward the destruction of Gothic Earth. The symbol of this group is an open hand with a thumb on each end and an extra joint on each finger. Members bear a diagonal slash across the palm of their left hand, holding the hand up when meeting other members as a sign of loyalty. They do not accept

those who find them and offer to join, preferring to initiate recruitment after observing potential candidates. Anyone who locates them and tries to volunteer is killed after prolonged torture and arduous interrogation. Anyone who refuses their invitation to join is likewise killed. Most members are thugs, assassins, criminals or, occasionally, mad wizards and evil mystics. Not a few are quite insane. Members tend toward chaotic evil in their alignment.

### **Die Wachtern**

This qabal's name translates in English into The Watchers, and its members dedicate themselves to keeping watch for any of the minions of the Red Death in order to destroy them. They only accept men and women of impeccable character (preferably with some martial background) into their ranks. Watchers are never without the symbol of their qabal, a silver-rimmed monocle suspended from a thin silver chain. They possess a wealth of information collected over the centuries about the movements and followers of the Red Death and have developed a first-rate communication network using the telegraph and other means of modern communication. Formed by a group of knights in the 12th century, the Watchers suffered almost complete destruction of their library of information and the near annihilation of their membership in the early 17th century. Since then, they have worked hard to rebuild their store of knowledge and their membership. Most members tend toward lawful good alignments.

### **The White Legion: A Lawful Evil Qabal**

Believing in the true superiority of European civilization, the White Legion believes all the problems of the modern world have come about through its "contamination" by lesser nations. Although official goals are isolationist ("*send them back to Africa!*"), the motivations of some of these extremists lead to violence and a decided leaning toward genocide. While they do not believe themselves to be minions of the Red Death, and they sometimes battle evil creatures, their methods make them little better than the monsters they destroy. Meetings of the White Legion occur in secret and all wear white robes, their faces painted to resemble skulls with a hangman's noose around their necks. Some wear a watch fob or ring carved with a skull within a noose, showing their dedication to this order. Membership in this order has increased dramatically during the 1890s, as immigrants arrive from distant lands. Lawful evil individuals are drawn to this qabal because of their love of order and hierarchy.



### *Magic*

Of course in the world of **Masque of the Red Death**, no adventurer scoffs at the idea of real magic in the world. For most people, however, at least in Europe and America, magic equates with ignorant superstition or possibly con artists out to fool the gullible. Many Christians believe anyone who claims to manipulate arcane energies to be pagan and particularly in need of redemption. In fact, some of those who fight against the Red Death believe that this belief is an unconscious, fearful reaction to the taint that lies within magical energy. Unfortunately, some people seem to have a fear-fascination syndrome. These dabblers in the arcane arts have no true understanding of them and are, thus, the first to be taken by minions of the dark.

Ouija boards, fortune-telling cards, and other supernatural tools can be very dangerous in the wrong hands, not to mention amateur secret societies dedicated to discovering arcane power for themselves. When adventurers meet the curious or the power-hungry, they have to make a choice. They either awaken these metaphysical explorers to the true danger they face or find a way to discourage them without further feeding their curiosity.

### *Discretion is the Better Part*

Codes and ciphers enjoy great popularity in the 1890s. The discoveries of ancient pyramids with their cryptic hieroglyphs and the fascination with Asian culture and its exquisitely delicate brush-painted language spur Victorian ladies and gentlemen to experiment with their own codes. Secret messages and the encoding of politically volatile information has been part of politics and espionage for some time, but codes and secret languages become the fad for conducting romances and flirtations (particularly illicit ones) as well.

### *The Language of Flowers*

Throughout history, bouquets of flowers have held special meaning. From the time of the Aztecs, when warriors carried flowers to appease their gods, to medieval Europe, when posies were carried to stave off the plague, to the Turkish practice of *Selam*, (or language of objects), flowers have served as symbols. In the 19th century, the use of flowers as messages gained the attention of the Victorians. The Victorians, in their typical overblown and enthusiastic fashion, took the symbolism and my-

thology of flowers and herbs and turned it into a grand and glorious fad. Before the end of the nineteenth century there were 227 editions of *The Language of Flowers*, a guide pored over by young ladies and gentlemen seduced by a secret code meant to convey secrets, fidelity, passion and love.

In the world of the **Masque of the Red Death**, this fad gains complexity as well as a more sinister shade. Secret groups create their own dictionaries of meaning, known only to those who hold the key. Sometimes a "tussie-mussie," as these message bouquets were called, might send threats or even be the conduit through which death might arrive. Villains would form romantic bouquets of poisoned thorns, strange exotic scents or insidious pollens meant to choke those who bend to smell the sweet perfume or study the an unusual bloom's intricate beauty. Others might wear a boutonniere with a subtle mix of flowers to lead another to a sweet assignation or send a group to a private meeting of like minds on the hunt for evil.

Below is a list of some of the most common meanings and symbolism of flowers and herbs used in the creation of tussie-mussies.

*A*

- Abandonment — Anemone
- Absence — Wormwood
- Accomplishment — Laurel
- Adieu — Rhubarb
- Antidote — Plumbago
- Assignation — Scarlet pimpernel
- Aversion — Pinks

*B*

- Beauty — Pink rosebud
- Beauty Unfading — Carnation
- Belief — Garden anemone
- Bravery — Thyme

*C*

- Candor — White violet
- Challenge — Coral bells
- Charm — Red rose
- Cleansing — Hyssop
- Counterfeit — Mock orange
- Courage — Garlic
- Creativity — Oregano
- Cruelty — Nettle
- Cure — Yarrow

*D*

- Danger — Rhododendron
- Dauntlessness — Statice





Danger is Near — Monkshood  
 Death Before Dishonor! — Withered white rose  
 Decision — Foxglove  
 Departure — White pinks  
 Desertion — Columbine  
 Discretion — Maidenhair fern  
 Distrust — Lavender  
 Duty Through Hardship — Purple leaf plum

*E*  
 Egotism — Narcissus  
 Eloquence — Iris  
 Embarrassment — Nigelia  
 Energy — Red salvia  
 Eternal Life — Sweet woodruff

*F*  
 Falsehood — Yellow lily  
 Festivity — Parsley  
 Flame — Fleur-de-lis  
 Flee Away — Pennyroyal  
 Force — Fennel  
 Foresight — Holly  
 Freedom — Willow

*G*  
 Good Luck — Clover  
 Grief — Thistle

*H*  
 Hatred — Basil  
 Healing — Lemon balm  
 Hope — Almond

*I*  
 I Love You — Red chrysanthemum  
 Imagination — Lupine  
 Immortality — Spruce  
 Innocence — Daisy

*J*  
 Jealousy — Potted marigold  
 Justice — Black-eyed susan

*K*  
 Keep My Secret — White rose  
 Keys — Maple

*L*  
 Love, Consuming — Tulip  
 Luck — White clover  
 Lust — Orchid

*M*  
 Majesty — Lily  
 Meeting, Appointed — Everlasting pea

Meet Me! — Sweet pea

*N*  
 Needing Protection — Gerber daisy  
 No! — Snapdragon

*O*  
 Oblivion — Poppy  
 Opposition — Slime fungus

*P*  
 Participation — Double dahlia  
 Peace — Olive  
 Pilgrimage — Plantain  
 Power — Oak  
 Precaution — Goldenrod  
 Protection — Saint-John's-wort  
 Purity — White gardenia

*R*  
 Rashness — Butterfly bush  
 Refusal — Striped carnation  
 Remedy For Madness — Lenten rose  
 Remembrance — Forget-me-not  
 Rendezvous — Chickweed

*S*  
 Sadness — Dead leaves  
 Silver Moonlight (Wercreatures) — Silver king artemisia  
 Spirit of Darkness — Black rose  
 Spiritual Energy — Pine  
 Stratagem — Walnut  
 Superstition — Passion flower  
 Suspicion — Mushroom

*T*  
 Temptation — Apple  
 Travel — Mugwort  
 Trustworthiness — Honesty

*U*  
 Unchanged For Eternity (Undead) — Clematis

*V*  
 Vengeance — Scots thistle  
 Vigilance — Spring starflower  
 Vision — Rue

*W*  
 War — Yarrow  
 Wards Off Evil — Lavender cotton  
 Wealth — Tiger lily  
 Wishes Granted — Vervain

*Z*  
 Zeal — Elderberry







# Appendix I: The Villains of Gothic Earth

*DARK ANGEL, WITH THINE ACHING LUST  
TO RID THE WORLD OF PENITENCE;  
MALICIOUS ANGEL, WHO STILL DOST  
MY SOUL SUCH SUBTILE VIOLENCE!  
BECAUSE OF THEE, NO THOUGHT, NO THING,  
ABIDES FOR ME UNDESECRATE:  
DARK ANGEL, EVER ON THE WING,  
WHO NEVER REACHEST ME TOO LATE!  
— LIONEL JOHNSON, "THE DARK ANGEL"*





Though characters may never confront it directly, the Red Death remains the ultimate source of evil on Gothic Earth. Whether or not an individual has come under the direct sway of the Red Death, people of evil intent or those who do evil even with the best of intentions serve the Red Death and add to its ever-growing power to corrupt and destroy.

### *The Red Death: Bane of Gothic Earth*

Even those who know of the Red Death by name (and they are few and far between) can say little with assurance as to the nature of that entity. Many entire qabals devote themselves to the study of the Red Death, trying to determine its nature, its motivations, its whereabouts and any weaknesses it might have.

So far, they have discovered too little to satisfy their need for knowledge. What they have uncovered are a few tidbits of information, but even that little is of incalculable help to those who daily risk their lives, sanity and souls to prevent Gothic Earth from falling wholly under the Red Death's Sway.

### *The Nature of the Red Death*

*After three days and nights of fasting and purification of the body, I dreamed a waking dream. In that dream, my spirit traveled far, through deep jungles and vast deserts, across frozen expanses and down into a vast cavern. There I encountered a glimpse of something so hideous, so terrible, that I felt my desire to live nearly extinguished by its mere presence. All despair, all horror, all madness, all evil massed together in that one unholy emanation — and I knew, without the shadow of a doubt, that I looked upon the form of the Red Death itself. I came to myself, sweating, my hair gone white, my body trembling as it trembles to this day. Some things are beyond man's capacity to absorb.*

— from the *Diary of Lothar Simons-St. Clair*, library of Die Wächtern

The Red Death is nothing neither more nor less than the embodiment of evil unadulterated by anything approaching moderation. Since its arrival on Gothic Earth, no evil deed takes place that does not, in some fashion, owe its existence to the Red Death or one of its minions. Though evil may have existed before the advent of the Red Death — and certainly there were those who put themselves before others, who seized what they wanted for themselves, who killed those who were an incon-

venience or a threat to them — the Red Death now acts as a conduit and a nexus for all the world's evils.

Unlike many evil persons who, nevertheless, manifest some goodness to their natures, either in their kindness to their families, the existence of a soft spot for orphaned children or lost animals, or a profound sympathy for the plight of the underprivileged, the Red Death possesses no “good” qualities. No compassion, no mercy, no love or honor abides with the Red Death. Only the antitheses of these qualities find a home in the Red Death's unholy essence.

### *The Whereabouts of the Red Death*

Because it is the embodiment of all evil on Gothic Earth, the Red Death can manifest anywhere that evil makes itself known. Some students of the movements of the Red Death speculate that, upon its entry to Gothic Earth, the Red Death was confined to only that area in which its servants dwelled. As it gathered to it more and more minions, so, too, did its ability to move about increase.

Today, there are few, if any, places on or within Gothic Earth where the Red Death cannot find a home or a refuge.

### *The Origins of the Red Death*

Just as no one knows for certain where the Red Death lurks, no one knows what foul realm gave birth to the entity known as the Red Death. Most scholars of that entity agree only on the strong supposition that it originated outside the realm of Gothic Earth, but the “experts” vary widely on their ideas of the nature of that realm.

Some believe that the Red Death comes from Hell itself. Others, particularly those who are fluent in the knowledge of Asian or East Indian history, point to the many hells and abyssal realms in those lands' religious teachings as possible places of origin for the Red Death. Most agree that the Red Death came from some dark and sinister place, but their explorations into that avenue of knowledge are, perforce, strongly limited.

The noted authority on the Red Death, Abraham Van Helsing, has put forth the theory that some greater force cast the Red Death out of its native realm. Van Helsing believes that the spell that supposedly brought it forth during Egypt's Third Dynasty would not normally have worked had the Red Death already not been in some sort of



suspension between the worlds. He maintains that the spell of summoning that resulted in the arrival of the Red Death merely collapsed the magical energies in one portion of the world long enough for the Red Death to travel across the barrier and enter the world of Gothic Earth.

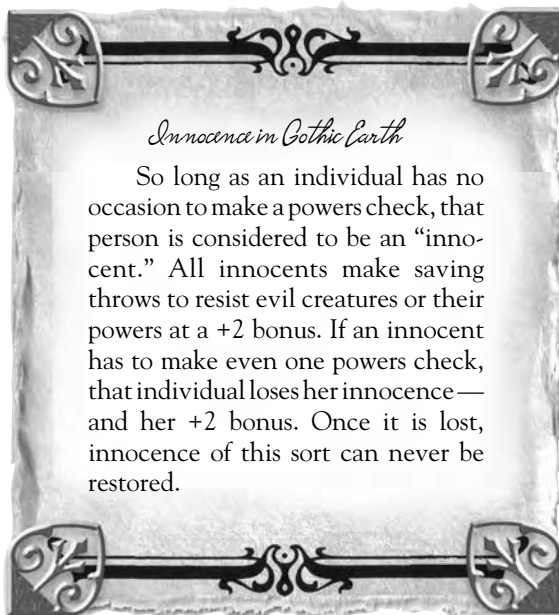
In fact, some sources claim that at least one qabal is even now searching for a way to re-create the original ritual or spell in the hopes of drawing to Gothic Earth another being powerful enough to drive out the Red Death forever.

#### *How the Red Death Acts upon the World*

Those who have made a study of evil and its effects on men and women have alleged that only those who have the potential to be corrupted can be corrupted. Those who have within them no spark of evil cannot fall prey to evil's depredations.

Thus, if an individual never has the occasion to make a powers check, that person has no chance of falling under the Red Death's sway. Only those who dabble in activities (such as magic or mysticism) that use the energies now tainted by the Red Death or who perform actions of dubious nature — thus qualifying them for a powers check — have a chance of becoming corrupted.

The Red Death seems to have no true physical form. It must act through its agents and minions or not at all. Fortunately for the Red Death, however, there seems to be no lack of eligible individuals to serve as arms, legs, eyes and minds for the embodiment of evil.



#### *Innocence in Gothic Earth*

So long as an individual has no occasion to make a powers check, that person is considered to be an "innocent." All innocents make saving throws to resist evil creatures or their powers at a +2 bonus. If an innocent has to make even one powers check, that individual loses her innocence — and her +2 bonus. Once it is lost, innocence of this sort can never be restored.

#### *Creating an Army of Evil*

Men and women do not serve the Red Death "accidentally." Minions choose to become corrupt and to give their lives and souls to the Red Death. Perhaps an individual begins as a petty criminal, but realizes that bigger stakes are his for the taking. Perhaps a woman desires revenge for some wrong done to her family or to her person and finds she will go to almost any length to gain satisfaction. Maybe a holy man wishes to define his version of religion as the only true faith and does not care by what means he consolidates his power.

All these people are easy prey for seduction by the Red Death. At sometime during a potential minion's career, he or she receives a mysterious visitor — or perhaps experiences an extremely vivid dream. The visitor or the dream indicates that success can be attained, and wealth or power besides, by agreeing to a simple bargain.

Once that happens, the Red Death fulfills its end of the agreement, giving the individual the means to achieve his goals — though those means are often strangely perverted and more trouble than they're worth. In return, the individual who has agreed to the bargain has bartered away her soul and has become a bound servant of the Red Death.

These servants, however, are not hapless people rooked into making a bad bargain. Most of them, after they have realized what they have gotten themselves into, make the most of it, using their privileges and the powers granted them by the Red Death to advance themselves in the world as well as in the service of their master.

#### *Agents of the Red Death: The Hierarchy of Minions*

The servants of the Red Death come in many sizes, shapes and species. From magical constructs and summoned animals to powerful ghosts and influential mystics, many creatures and individuals come to the Red Death and serve according to their station. Many are limited only by the extent of their ambition. Others have only their blind instincts to guide them and follow their basest impulses.

#### *Mites*

These are the rank and file that make up the faceless army of servants of the Red Death. Mites can include animals such as bats and wolves, which



answer the summons of a vampire or a horde of skeletal soldiers who served, in life, as footmen to an evil tyrant and were, themselves, less than good. These creatures usually appear in groups and are used as shock troops, minor guardians and, sometimes, grisly messengers. They obey orders and can slow down or delay an adventuring party, but in and of themselves they are generally only minor encounters. The death of their master usually disperses or, in some cases, destroys them.

### *Underlings*

Most of the creatures encountered by adventurers fall into this category. Underlings are perhaps the most widespread and varied of the Red Death's followers. They are often equal to, if not more powerful than, the player characters in level and skills. Most are intelligent, though some of the stronger monsters with only animal intelligence also belong in this category. They have their own ambitions and are highly individualized.

Dracula's wives, a rakshasa, zombie lord or master criminal are all potential underlings. That they come to the Red Death of their own free will is the determining factor and separates them from the lowly mites.

### *Demilords*

Demilords are some of the most powerful and most intelligent of the Red Death's servants. They lack the true extent of power and talent of lords of the Red Death, but they make up the majority of "name" villains party members encounter in their struggles against the forces of evil. Demilords command their own army of underlings and are answerable only to their lords, whose positions they may envy.

Often they can be found in the company of their lords; other times, they have their own lairs and are frequently mistaken for lords themselves. They are the hungry middle-class in the society headed by the Red Death.

### *Lords*

These individuals are, themselves, masterminds of considerable talent. Individuals such as Moriarty and Dracula are lords of the Red Death. Most of these individuals have powers granted to them by the Red Death that allow them considerable influence over others. Some can draw people to them through their charismatic personalities; others have the ability to intimidate people into following them or aiding them.

Most adventurers find a lord of the Red Death at the end of a long string of encounters. They are usually master villains with long-term plans.

### *Overlords*

The existence of beings that rank above the lords of the Red Death has long been under contention by those who have devoted their lives to the study of the evil at the heart of Gothic Earth. No evidence has been found of such creatures, but scholars of the Red Death have posited that, should such creatures exist, they would have powers such as no man or woman has ever seen. Like the Red Death itself, they would be nearly invulnerable to any sort of direct opposition.

If these overlords do exist, they are the ones to whom the lords of the Red Death are answerable.

Most likely, they do not stir far from their well-hidden and well-guarded lairs, and only the luckiest (or unluckiest) of adventurers would be able to puzzle out the mysterious clues that might lead to them.

Some claim that the fiends that once represented evil on Gothic Earth before the coming of the Red Death have been relegated to the status of overlord, simultaneously acknowledging the power they once wielded and placing them in a position subservient to and accountable to an evil even greater than their own.

### *Renegades*

Every now and then, a demilord wrests control away from his lord, either becoming a lord on his own (provided he either takes some underlings with him or develops his own underlings independently). If one of these demilords settles down as a lord, the Red Death soon incorporates the new lord into its grand scheme, and viciousness, betrayal and evil receive their reward.

If, however, the demilord decides to go his own way, he becomes a renegade, acting alone without consulting with or being answerable to anyone else (except, of course, the Red Death in a general sort of way).

Renegades can provide adventurers with some of their most challenging adversaries. These creatures have no master plan; their goal is usually to cause as much chaos, destruction and mayhem as possible without regard to consequences. The lack of a grand scheme makes them hard to predict and harder to track down.

In the end, of course, even renegades serve the intentions of the Red Death.



### *True Monsters*

A number of the characters featured here (like Imhotep, Delphine LaLaurie and Sarah Winchester), are all based on *real* people. Some of these people committed strange deeds. Some of them committed acts too horrible to describe. If you wish to know more about real villains, the library's section on true crime or an Internet search can provide a wealth of information on them. You may find out that the truth is indeed more horrifying than fiction.

You may also want to read up on Professor Moriarty and Frankenstein's monster in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* and Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein*. While not real, these individuals are much better described by the authors who created them. Anyone wishing to use them in a campaign would do best by going to the source.

Dracula belongs in his own special category. While the character of Dracula is entirely fictional, it is widely believed that the famous vampire is based upon Vlad Tepes, a tyrant from Romanian history. Consulting both historical sources and Bram Stoker's classic novel *Dracula* can supply many details to bring this villain to "life." After all, Dracula is possibly one of English literature's greatest villains.

### *Dracula*

#### *The Prince of Darkness: Vlad the Impaler*

**Male human ancient nosferatu Sol 13 /Occ 4 /Crim 3:** CR 20; Medium undead (augmented humanoid vampire) (5 ft. 10 in.); HD 20d12, 130 hp; Init +11; Spd 80 ft.; AC 30, touch 21, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +17, Grp +29; Atk Slam +26 melee (2d6+10/18–20); Full Attack 4 slams (*hasted*) +27/+27/+22/+17 melee (2d6+10/18–19 x2); SA Domination, blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, sneak attack +1d6; SQ Fearsome speed, gaseous form, spider climb, alternate form, damage reduction 10/silver and magic, fast healing 5, cold and electricity resistance 10, turn resistance +6, trapfinding, undead traits, vampire weaknesses; SR 31; AL CE; SV Fort +12, Ref +16, Will +13, (Fear +13, Hor +13 Mad +13); Str 26, Dex 21, Con —, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 25.

**Skills:** Balance +11, Bluff +17, Climb +11, Concentration +7, Disguise +12, Forgery +7, Hide +15, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (ancient languages) +10, Knowledge (European history) +10, Knowledge (forbidden lore [arcane magic]) +10, Knowledge (forbidden lore [general]) +10, Knowledge (local, Romania) +10, Listen +12, Hypnotism +14, Move Silently +15, Prognostication +9, Psychometry +9, Search +17, Sense Motive +12, Sixth Sense +9, Spot +19.

**Feats:** Alertness, Blind-Fight, Blind-Sight 5 ft., Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Critical (Slam), Improved Grapple, Im-





proved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Martial Weapons Proficiency, Mobility, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (Slam), Weapon Specialization (Slam), Whirlwind Attack

*Languages:* Romanian, English, French, Arabic, Latin, Greek, Ancient Turkish

*Typical spells prepared (4/5/4; save DC 13 + spell level):* 0 — ghost sound, light, mage hand, message; 1st — armor, burning hands, chill touch, disguise self, shield; 2nd — bull's strength, fog cloud, invisibility, web

*Signature Possessions:* *The Brooch of the Dragon\**

\*The brooch of the dragon bestows upon its wearer a +6 deflection bonus to Armor Class and +2 to all saving throws. Once per day, the possessor may reroll any failed Will save. However, should the wearer ever attempt to swim through running water with the brooch on, he sinks to the bottom immediately, no matter how much or how little he carries. Those who sink may walk out of the water if they are able.

*Before you stands a proud gentleman, with silver hair and a long, drooping mustache. An aquiline nose completes his royal countenance, yet his eyes burn with a savage light, hinting at the animal that lies coiled within. His gaze fixes upon your throat and his teeth glisten at the sight of your veins pulsing beneath your skin.*

### *Background*

The man who would become Dracula was as monstrous in life as he became in undeath.

Vlad Bessarab was born the son of a Wallachian prince, Vlad Dracul, whose name signifies "Dragon." As "Dracula," or "little dragon," Vlad the younger proved to be a powerful ruler of Wallachia when he ascended the throne. As ruler, Vlad Dracula showed an unnatural lust for violence and depravity, even more so than his fellow despots.

As history tells, Vlad Dracula had a peculiar obsession for impaling. In later conflicts, whole villages of men, women and children would be put to the stake. Stories were later told of "forests of the impaled" that littered the land with writhing bodies and the moans of the dying. As many as 100,000 people died at the stake due to the bestial whim of Wallachia's most cruel tyrant.

Dracula's reign of terror earned him the name Vlad Tepes, or "Vlad the Impaler." However, it also earned him numerous adversaries. In a final

conflict against allied forces, Vlad Tepes was cut down by a troupe of archers.

Throughout Prince Vlad's life, the Red Death, had been slowly crafting its most feared and renowned agent, moving behind the scenes to create the situations of tragedy and loss that shaped the temperament and led to the death of the Wallachian prince. After Vlad's death, the Red Death came to him and made him its most daunting lieutenant. Since that time, Dracula has wandered Gothic Earth, spreading sorrow and destruction in his wake.

In his own home of Transylvania, Dracula spent centuries prowling the countryside, creating an entire culture of paranoia and superstition. When the fearful populace became too troublesome to feed upon, Dracula made his first incursion into England. His entrance there resulted in the death of an entire crew of a ship and numerous female evening consorts.

When he next moved to San Francisco, he attempted to set up another base of operations, allying himself with a malevolent qabal. The resulting network of evil he constructed still plagues the west coast of the United States to this day. Fortunately, both times Dracula has tried to take up permanent residence in a foreign country, stalwart adventurers have stopped him. The depopulated and fear-filled land of Transylvania stands as a stark testament to what would happen to any country if Dracula were allowed to move in permanently.

### *Combat*

When someone speaks Dracula's name, nearby birds seek their roosts as if a storm were brewing; even sunlight dims at its mention. In all the world, none is more feared than the vampire Dracula, often called the Prince of Darkness.

A ruthless being, Dracula does not bother with manipulation or complex plans. If someone contests his will, he removes the offender and does not stop until all opponents, their friends and family are destroyed or made into his undead servants.

Despite his savagery, Dracula possesses a devilish cunning. He enjoys striking his opponents like a predator — attacking while his enemies are at their weakest or most unwary. One of his favorite tactics is to attack his opponents' loved ones, turning them into his minions. Then he sits back and watches as his hapless adversaries are forced to destroy their own friends or families.



**Special Attacks:** *Domination (Su)*: This attack is similar to a gaze attack, except that Dracula must use a standard action and those merely looking at him are not affected. It has a range of 30 feet. Anyone Dracula targets must make a DC 27 Will save or fall under his influence as if affected by *dominate person*. This save is Charisma based.

*Blood Drain (Su)*: Once Dracula has grappled and pinned a foe, he may drain his victim's blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution drain each round the pin is maintained. For each round he drains blood, he gains 5 temporary hit points.

Victims of Dracula's blood drain must make a DC 27 Will save or fall under his influence as if affected by *dominate person*. The save is Charisma based.

*Children of the Night (Su)*: Once per night, the Prince of Darkness can call forth 1d6+1 rat swarms, 1d4+1 bat swarms, or a pack of 3d6 wolves as a standard action. These creatures arrive in 2d6 rounds and serve their master for an hour.

*Create Spawn (Su)*: Anyone slain through Dracula's blood drain ability rises as a vampire spawn if he had 4 or less HD. If the victim had 5 or more HD, he rises as a full Nosferatu vampire. Dracula always has complete control over his spawn. As one of the Red Death's chief lieutenants, he may control up to 80 HD of vampire or vampire spawn. Any he creates over this limit are free-willed. He may relinquish control over one of his spawn at any time or regain control over them at will, so long as he does not exceed his HD limit.

**Special Qualities:** *Fearsome Speed (Su)*: Dracula has been gifted by the Red Death with frightening speed and grace. He is always under a *haste* effect, as per the spell. This effect also increases his jumping capabilities.

*Gaseous Form (Su)*: As a standard action, Dracula can assume *gaseous form* with a fly speed of 50 feet (due to his *haste* ability) and perfect maneuverability.

*Spider Climb (Su)*: As per the spell. It always functions for Dracula at will.

*Alternate Form (Su)*: Dracula can assume the form of a bat, dire bat, wolf, or dire wolf as a standard action. In all other ways, this ability resembles *polymorph self*, except that Dracula is limited to the forms listed here. The vampire does not regain hit points for shifting forms. Unlike most vampires, Dracula can remain in any of these forms indefinitely.

*Fast Healing (Su)*: Unlike most Nosferatu vampires, Dracula heals 5 hit points of damage each round, regardless of the moon's phase. If reduced to 0 hit points, Dracula reverts to *gaseous form* and attempts to escape. He then must reach his coffin within 2 hours or perish. (He can travel up to 5 miles in 1 hour.) Additional damage done to him while in *gaseous form* has no effect. Once at rest in his coffin, Dracula is helpless. He regains 1 hit point after 1 hour and then begins healing again at the rate of 5 hit points per round.

*Weaknesses*: Dracula shares the same weaknesses as all other standard vampires with the following exceptions:

Dracula may walk under the light of the sun without fear of destruction. However, he loses all his special attacks and qualities except for his fearsome speed, a special gift from the Red Death. All other supernatural abilities cease to function. Those dominated by Dracula are no longer under his command during the day, but at night, they fall under his sway once again.

Garlic, mirrors and holy symbols repulse Dracula as they do other vampires. However, holy wafers and holy water also similarly repulse Dracula. Should any of these objects be presented to him and touched to him or his spawn, the targeted vampire take 1d6 points of holy damage.

### *Lair*

Currently, the Son of Dracul resides in Bran Castle in his native Transylvania. Dracula finds it a historical irony that he roams the halls of Bran Castle, rather than Castle Agrish, his former home. Dracula makes it no great secret about where he dwells. Every villager in Transylvania knows where the Lord of the Night resides, and all give his manor a wide berth.

### *Dread Possibilities*

Dracula despises his existence in Transylvania. He feels that his home has become a backward country, isolated from the marvelous modern world that he has seen in his travels. Dracula is currently looking for a new base of operations. For those who would stand in his way, be warned. The Prince of Darkness has a long memory. Those that thwart him can look forward to being hunted by his minions for the rest of their lives.



## Imhotep

*The Unspeakable One; He Who Walks by the Setting and Rising of the Sun*

**Male human true immortal Mystic 17/Physician 3:** CR 20; Medium undead (augmented humanoid, immortal) (5 ft. 6 in.) HD 20d12, 130 hp; Init: -7, Spd 30 ft; AC 21, touch 16, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +14; Grp +15; Atk Slam +15 melee (1d6+1) or incorporeal touch +16 (1d6 Con); Full Attack 3 slams +15/+10/+5 melee (1d6+1) or incorporeal touch +16 (1d6 Con); SA Manifest presence, inhabit statue; SQ My name is my eye, watchword, undead traits; SR 23; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +19, (Fear +19, Hor +19 Mad +19); Str 12, Dex 13, Con —, Int 18, Wis 22, Cha 17.

**Skills:** Academician +15, Archeology +7, Bluff +10, Concentration +19, Diplomacy +8, Etiquette +8, Gather Information +5, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (forbidden lore [general]) +22, Knowledge (forbidden lore [mysticism]) +22, Knowledge (government) +7, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (life science) +9, Knowledge (religion) +9, Knowledge (science) +10, Hypnosis +13, Profession (architect) +20, Profession (physician) +9, Prognostication +20, Psychometry +25, Sense Motive +11, Sixth Sense +20, Spot +4.

**Feats:** Craft Staff, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Extra Turning, Forge Ring, Leadership, Silent Spell, Weapon Focus (incorporeal touch).

**Languages:** Imhotep can speak, read and write any language (living or dead) that has ever been known to man.

**Typical mystic spells prepared (6/6/6/6/5/5/4/3/2; save DC 16 + spell level):** 0 — cure light wounds, detect magic (x3), read magic, virtue; 1st — cure light wounds, divine favor, doom, faerie fire, obscuring might, protection from good; 2nd — death knell, desecration, false life, inflict moderate wounds, spiritual weapon (x2); 3rd — bestow curse, blindness, contagion, prayer, protection from energy, speak with dead; 4th — magic weapon (greater) (x2), giant vermin, solid fog, spike stones, unholy blight; 5th — break enchantment, flame strike, greater command, slay living, unhallow; 6th — bestow greater curse, blade barrier, chain lightning, cone of cold, harm; 7th — blasphemy (x2), power word (blind), creeping doom; 8th — create greater undead, symbol (insanity), earthquake; 9th — implosion, shapechange.

**Domains:** Major — Animal, Death, Destruction, Earth, Evil, Magic\*, Necromancy, War, Weather; Minor — All, Healing.



\*Major access to this granted by the Red Death

**Signature Possessions:** Bracers of Armor +5, Staff of Apep\*

\*The Staff of Apep is a unique artifact with the following powers: At will — dispel magic, true seeing; 3/day — animate dead, magic circle vs. good, sending; 2/day — insect swarm, create undead; 1/day — create greater undead, antilife shell; 1/week — storm of vengeance. These abilities function at an 18th level of ability.

A long shadow comes to life in the corner of the room. The air turns cold and crisp. Your breath turns white before your very eyes. As the shadow slides forth, you see that it now takes the shape of a cavernous old man. A man whose skin glistens like dark wax. His deep, glassy eyes shine with malice. You have the sensation of being in the presence of something filled with age and power. And now, its attention is resting upon you.

### Background

In life, Imhotep was an ancient version of a Renaissance man. Not only was he King Djoser's head priest, but he was also an architect, mathema-





tician, physician and statesman. His broad range of skills led him to the first successful construction of an Egyptian pyramid, an architectural landmark that was mimicked for over a thousand years.

Sadly, mere temporal achievements did not satisfy Imhotep. He sought eternal life. In those days, magic was plentiful, and Imhotep had already seen paltry necromantic attempts at immortality. Imhotep sought a "true immortality" in which both the body and the soul would be preserved after death.

After numerous hideous experiments, Imhotep discovered a way to compel all seven parts of the soul to linger in the world after the body had died. He proceeded to test out his new discovery upon King Djoser himself, claiming that he was sure of success and wanted only to gift his pharaoh with eternal life. The magical process tipped the balance of nature, instead, ripping a hole in the fabric of the universe. Thus, the force known as the Red Death was able to creep into the world.

Imhotep and King Djoser were instantly corrupted by the Red Death and made into its servants. It seemed that both men had received what they asked for — eternal life, but at the cost of their eternal freedom.

For the next millennia, Imhotep, King Djoser and their minions terrorized Egypt. One force only was able to stop their swath of ruin and death — that of the sun-worshipping King Ankenaten and Queen Nefertiti. This king and queen created a pair of amulets, the Amulets of the Sun and Moon. The Amulet of the Sun prevented Imhotep from walking about during the day, while the Amulet of the Moon kept him from roaming the night. Because of these items, Imhotep was able to be imprisoned, unable to stalk the lands.

Only now, after thousands of years of struggle, has Imhotep found a way out of his prison. He has discovered that he can manifest during the setting and rising of the sun, those periods of time during which the line between night and day are blurred.

### *Combat*

The scope and breadth of Imhotep's power is far beyond anyone's understanding on Gothic Earth. As an immortal, Imhotep has seen the birth and death of entire cultures, even languages. Those who oppose Imhotep are nothing more than insects to him, faces that will fade within a few decades, lost in the long corridors of time.

Imhotep approaches each conflict with resolute calm, patience and diligence. He weighs his actions in terms of how they will affect the world centuries into the future. He never makes rash decisions, nor is he ever distracted from his end goals.

Facing Imhotep is a daunting task. Heroes who have faced him in the past have often been shocked to find themselves his unwitting pawns, setting into motion a chain of events he had planned even before they were born.

The only way heroes on Gothic Earth have been able to strive against Imhotep is to plan long-term objectives and activities counter to his enduring ambitions. Thus, whole generations of qabalists have been born with no other goal than to carry out their ancestors' plans to oppose Imhotep and his end schemes.

**Special Attacks:** *Manifest Presence (Su):* Wherever Imhotep's name appears, he may use a standard action to project himself and all his equipment, appearing anywhere within 10 feet of the image or name. When Imhotep appears in this way, he is *incorporeal* (see DMG) and gains an incorporeal touch attack that delivers 1d6 Con damage. Should this form be destroyed, Imhotep can simply manifest from any other spot in which his name or image appears.

Destroying the name or image of Imhotep causes him to be stunned for 1 round, but does not destroy him. It does, however, prevent Imhotep from manifesting from that name or image again, unless someone restores the name or image.

Imhotep can only manifest himself in this way during sunrise and sunset. During the day and night, he is prevented from doing so by the Amulets of the Sun and Moon (see above).

*Inhabit Statue (Su):* Imhotep can inhabit any statue made in his likeness. Doing so causes the statue to animate, becoming a stone golem of equivalent size. The stone golem retains its normal physical stats, but adjusts its strength and damage according to size. The animate statue acquires all the mental stats of Imhotep. He retains the use of his spells and spell-like abilities while inhabiting a statue.

**Special Qualities:** *My Name is My Eye (Su):* The name or image of Imhotep functions as a scrying sensor, as described in the *scry* spell. Unlike the *scry* spell, however, the sensor cannot move but must remain stationary. Also, the name or image must be unobstructed for Imhotep to use it in this



fashion. Creatures viewed through the scrying sensor receive a DC 23 Will save. The save is Charisma based.

*Watchword (Su):* Any time a person speaks Imhotep's name, there is a 5% chance that he will take notice. The chance increases cumulatively by 1% each time within an hour it is spoken by the same person. Anyone noticed by Imhotep must make a DC 23 Will. The save is Charisma based. Failure means that Imhotep is free to scry upon the one who uttered the name for 1 hour.

*Weaknesses:* Imhotep can only exist so long as his image or written name appears on Gothic Earth. This means that Imhotep is virtually undefeatable since, as a famous figure in Egyptian history, his name appears in countless journals, books and ledgers. Thankfully, Imhotep is limited to manifesting himself on Gothic Earth during the times of sunset and sunrise. Legend has it that there exists a magical formula for the creation of two more amulets that Queen Nefertiti was never able to complete: the Amulets of the Sunrise and Sunset. If these two amulets were completed, then Imhotep would be truly imprisoned, without any means of escaping. Unless, of course, one or more of the amulets were destroyed.

### *Lair*

Forever accursed, Imhotep is confined a prison of his own making. He languishes within the famous Step Pyramid of King Djoser in Egypt, the first pyramid ever constructed. There he is doomed to remain, until he can find a way to break one of Queen Nefertiti's mystic seals.

### *Dread Possibilities*

Imhotep makes an excellent master villain for any campaign. As a true immortal, Imhotep can peer into just about any place where his name or image appears. Because he is a central figure in archaeology, this means that he can watch or appear in almost any place where Egyptian archaeology is mentioned. This gives him access to most of the major libraries in the world, allowing him to maintain a global network of spies and servants.

Heroes facing Imhotep find themselves up against numerous adversaries arrayed along an extensive and complex chain of command. Deadly threats may be vanquished, but only at the cost of discovering that the enemy now takes orders from someone else.

Imhotep has numerous agendas, all working in conjunction. However, his chief goals are to find the lost Amulet of the Sun and Moon in order to destroy them, allowing him to roam freely upon the earth once more.

## *Frankenstein's Monster*

### *The Monster*

**"Male" flesh golem Criminal 7:** CR 15; Large humanoid construct (7 ft.); HD 9d10+30 + 7d6, 108 hp; Init +8, Spd 30 ft.; AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +11, Grp +24; Atk Slam +17 melee (2d8+6); Full Attack 2 slams +17/+12 melee (2d8+6); SA sneak attack 3d6, SQ damage reduction 5/fire, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to magic, low-light vision, trap finding, evasion, construct traits; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +11, Will +6, (Fear +6, Hor +6, Mad +6); Str 23, Dex 18, Con —, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 9.

*Skills:* Balance +9, Climb +21, Disable Device +9, Hide +19, Intimidate +8, Listen +9, Move Silently +19, Search +9, Sense Motive +9, Spot +16, Survival +9, Tumble +11.

*Feats:* Combat Reflexes, Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Run, Stunning Attack.

*Languages:* English, French, German.

*A giant of a creature stands before you, his body a patchwork of many pieces of flesh, stitched together with surgical thread. Despite his ungainly appearance, he moves with grace and feral cunning. His face wears many expressions, not all of them human. His clothing hangs in rags and tatters from his muscular frame.*

### *Background*

As a boy, young Victor Frankenstein was obsessed with science. In Victor's mind, science was the ultimate discipline, the culmination of all man's endeavors. As an adult and a scientist, Victor sought to create life, for to do so would be the definitive scientific achievement.

His efforts worked, but only too well. With hideous diligence, Dr. Frankenstein stitched together a jigsaw body and imbued it with life. The body awoke with a hideous sound, not unlike the crying of a child. Horrified at his creation, Victor ran from his own lab. The monster itself fled screaming, for the first reactions it had encountered in the mortal world were fear and repulsion. For the next two years, Victor Frankenstein was lost and despondent, assuming that his creation had died, for how could such a creature survive on its own?



But Dr. Frankenstein underestimated his own creature. It survived in the wilderness, even learning to speak and read by observing a local peasant family. In time, it grew to understand its condition and even learned about its origins. The creature grew bitter and spiteful. Why had Frankenstein cursed it with such a hideous existence? Lashing out, the monster attacked many of Victor's friends and family members. It even strangled Dr. Frankenstein's wife upon their wedding night, in payment for Dr. Frankenstein's refusal to make it a mate.

The great irony of Frankenstein's creation is this — his creation need never have been a monster. Had Frankenstein perhaps accepted his creation, it might have developed a moral compass. But instead, the Monster was rejected at birth, and forced to live in the wild, where it learned the harsh law of the wilderness and came to know the world as a place of loneliness and despair.

#### *Combat*

As cunning and treacherous as a wounded animal, Frankenstein's monster is a force to be reckoned with. "The Monster," as he is often

called, is an amalgam of the bodies of numerous criminals, all of which have left a lingering stain upon his soul.

The creature's favorite tactic is to monitor its opponent for days, noting his prey's habits, associates and loved ones. He attempts to destroy everything his enemy holds dear before attacking physically. Thus, in the weeks before his final attack, the Monster's opponents will find their lives in complete disarray. A brilliant scientist will find his lab destroyed. A well-known physician will discover that his extra-marital affair is now published in the local paper and that his mistress has been murdered. A socially prominent lady will return home to find her house aflame, with her elderly father locked within.

Only after his target has been brought to total despair will the Monster make himself known, moving in for the final kill.

#### *Lair*

The Monster roams Gothic Earth freely. Because of his hideous appearance and the deep anguish of his own existence, however, he is doomed never to stay in any one place for more than a short time. He has no home, only places where he lingers for a while, ghostlike, before moving on.

#### *Dread Possibilities*

Whether Dr. Frankenstein truly created artificial life — or whether the monster was granted life by the Red Death — is a matter for the DM. In any event, there can be no doubt that the monster now serves the Red Death. The bitterness and hate within its heart have made it a creature of evil. The Monster might try to redeem itself, and may be successful for a little while, but in the end, all its attempts at understanding its own humanity are doomed to failure.

The Monster now wanders the world, in search of some dark method of creating a mate or children for itself. It has already forced several other scientists to create hideous beings that are an affront to nature. The Monster's "children" now also roam the world, often hunting and being hunted by their "father."

Dr. Frankenstein's creation continues to exhort various scientists into carrying on its dark experiments. It has even formed a small qabal dedicated to acquiring and allocating funds for this very purpose. PCs might be surprised when they



find that the power behind the evil scientist they face is none other than Frankenstein's monster.

### *Professor James Moriarty*

**Rakshasa Criminal 7:** CR 15; Medium outsider (native) (6 ft. 1 in.); HD 7d8+35 + 7d6+35, 129 hp; Init +8; Spd 40 ft.; AC 23, touch 14, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +12, Grp +13; Atk Pistol +16 (1d10/x3) or claw +13 melee (1d4+1); Full Atk Pistol +16 (1d10/x3) or 2 claws +13 melee (1d4+1) and bite +8 melee (1d6+1); SA detect thoughts, spells, sneak attack +3d6; SQ change shape, damage reduction 15/good and piercing, darkvision 60 ft., evasion, trapfinding; SR 34; ALLE; SV Fort +12, Ref +14, Will +11, (Fear +11, Hor +11, Mad +11); Str 12, Dex 19, Con 21, Int 22, Wis 18, Cha 14.

**Skills:** Bluff\* +27 (+31), Concentration +10, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +17 (21), Forgery +17, Gather Information +18, Hide +9, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (local history [England]) +12, Knowledge (local history [India]) +12, Knowledge (forbidden lore) +12, Knowledge (Forbidden Lore [shapeshifters]) +12, Knowledge (forbidden lore [arcane magic]) +10, Listen +19, Move Silently +14, Perform (cello) +13, Search +17, Sense Motive +24, Spot +26.

**Feats:** Alertness, Dodge, Silent Spell, Improved Initiative.

\*Indicates the skill level when successfully using his *detect thoughts* ability.

**Languages:** Chinese (Mandarin), English, French, German, Hindi, Italian, Sanskrit.

**Spells Typically Carried** (4/4/3/2/1; save DC 16 + spell level): 0 — *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue*; 1st — *charm person*, *mage armor*, *silent image*, *obscuring mist*; 2nd — *glitterdust*, *invisibility*, *web*; 3rd — *major image*, *suggestion*; 4th — *dimension door*.

*Tall and dark, the distinguished scholar stares at you with squinted eyes, as if assessing you. As he removes his hat, he gives you a quick, knowing smile. He strolls about, he surveys the room around him, almost reptilian in his movements.*

### *Background*

Moriarty's true name is unknown. Indeed, it is unpronounceable by the human tongue, for he is one of the rakshasa, a breed of powerful and malevolent spirits who dwell in untamed India. When the British first colonized India, Moriarty became fascinated with British culture and technology. He traveled amongst the British for a time, disguised as one of them. He even went so far as to visit Great Britain itself.



When Moriarty returned to his native India, other rakshasa turned against him, saying that Moriarty had betrayed them by leaving. Moriarty fled his homeland and went to the only other place he knew — England.

There, the bitter rakshasa forged a false identity for himself. He took on the unassuming role of a simple university professor. As Moriarty walked in various social circles, he became more and more intrigued with British society, including its rigid customs and etiquette. Eventually, he began pursuing the art of crime, indulging in criminal activities as a mere diversion, a test to see how long he could go before he was caught. Moriarty soon discovered that he had a flair for committing crime and this became his only source of enjoyment in his long exile from India.

Ultimately, Moriarty ran afoul the great detective, Sherlock Holmes. After a number of conflicts, Holmes pierced Moriarty's disguise, discovering the true nature of his opponent. For reasons of his own, he never revealed this information to his dear companion, Watson. Holmes and Moriarty fought fiercely and toppled from a great cliff during their battle. Both men survived the



conflict and remain in hiding from one another to this day.

### *Combat*

Dracula may arouse great feared; Imhotep may construct grandiose schemes; but in truth, no one on Gothic Earth is more dangerous than the evil genius, Professor Moriarty. His sheer intelligence makes him formidable enough. Along with his criminal brilliance, moreover, comes a daunting command over the power of illusions and magic, making him one of the Gothic Earth's most menacing opponents.

Cool and calculating, Moriarty represents the quintessential master villain. He prides himself on his ability to predict an opponent's every move. Only the canniest of Gothic Earth's heroes, such as the great detective himself, have been able to defeat his ploys. And even still, these plots can never be traced directly back to Moriarty.

Unlike many obsessed villains, Moriarty pursues crime as a hobby and pastime. For him, crime is an intellectual game, and mortals are his chess pieces. For this reason, the Professor delights in finding opponents who are capable of piercing his stratagems, often treating them with great respect.

**Special Attacks:** *Detect Thoughts (Su)*: The Professor can continually use *detect thoughts* as the spell (caster level 18th; DC 15 Will save negates). He may suppress or resume this ability as a free action.

*Change Shape (Su)*: Moriarty can assume any humanoid form or revert to his own form as a standard action. In humanoid form, he loses his claw and bite attacks. Moriarty remains in one form until he chooses another. A change in form cannot be dispelled, but he would revert to his true form if ever killed. *True seeing* reveals the Professor for what he is.

### *Lair*

Currently, Professor Moriarty makes his home in London, where he keeps an inconspicuous townhouse as his base of operations. While his home seems quite mundane from the outside, inside, the house is a nightmare concoction of illusions and magic.

No illusion spells or abilities (other than Moriarty's own) function within the house. Spatial magic makes the house look much bigger on this inside than it does on the outside. Many of the

doors and walls of the Professor's abode are phantasmal, so an adventurer who enters a room might find that the door he just walked through now leads to a room that wasn't there a moment ago.

### *Bread Possibilities*

Moriarty languishes in England, forever exiled from his ancestral home in India. His only source of inspiration is crime, an interest that has progressed from a hobby to an obsession.

The Professor is constantly looking for new opponents to match wits with him, in the same way Holmes constantly sought new mysteries to solve. As one of the most brilliant criminal minds on Gothic Earth, other criminals often seek him out for his aid, just as the police once sought after Sherlock Holmes.

If Moriarty were to find other opponents worthy of his stature, he would hound them night and day, consumed by the only thing that gives his empty life purpose.

### *"The Maestro," Xavier Von Tuerin*

#### *The Master of the Requiem, L'Artiste*

**Male human Dandy 4/Performer 8:** CR 13; medium humanoid (human) (5 ft. 10 in.); HD 4d4+12 + 8d6+24, 77 hp; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15; Base Atk +9; Grp +9; Atk Straight razor +16 melee (1d4+4 [19–20x3]) or army pistol +13 ranged (1d10/x3); Full Atk Straight razor +16/+11 melee (1d4+4 [19–20x3]) or army pistol +13/+8 ranged (1d10/x3); SA Fascinate, inspire courage; SQ Granted powers (see below), Influence\*, Intimidation bonus\*; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +14, Will +5, (Fear +5, Hor +5, Mad +5); Str 12, Dex 19, Con 16, Int 17, Wis 15, Cha 20.

**Skills:** Bluff +30, Craft (musical composition) +14, Diplomacy +17, Disguise +25, Escape Artist +14, Equestrian +14, First Aid +12, Forgery +10, Hide +11, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (etiquette) +12, Sense Motive +9, Listen +9, Move Silently +14, Perform (oratory) +18, Perform (act) +18, Perform (stringed instruments) +18, Search +10, Tumble +14.

**Feats:** Combat Expertise, Skill Focus (Bluff), Persuasive, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Finesse (Straight Razor).

**Languages:** German, French, Italian, English.

**Signature Possessions:** *Ring of protection* +3, "Prometheus," a +3 *keen razor*.

\*Xavier Von Tuerin may only use his Influence and Intimidation bonuses through one of his



many disguises. As the Maestro, he is an internationally known serial killer and cannot make use of these abilities through his own identity.

*This handsome man greets you with something rare in the cold, Victorian world — an honest smile. He strides forward with a dancer's grace, moving with the cadence of an orchestral conductor. His dress is impeccable, indeed it almost too perfect, almost too pristine to be quite real.*

### *Background*

At the young age of five, Xavier Von Tuerin was already a musical prodigy, having been taught by his father. But his tutelage did not last long. At age seven, he witnessed the death of his father beneath the wheels of a carriage.

After the funeral, Xavier's mother had a death mask made of her husband. Xavier insisted on keeping the mask of his father, garishly placing it above his bed. When Xavier was 16, his mother grew very ill. She withdrew from everyone, remaining isolated in her room. The only time she ever saw anyone was in the evenings, when Xavier would play his violin for her. Soon, Xavier was the only one she saw. Even the servants were forbidden to enter her chambers.

One day, a curious servant sneaked inside Madame Von Tuerin's bedchamber and made a dreadful discovery. Lying upon the bed were the remains of Xavier's mother. He had made amateur attempts to keep her in a state of preservation. Where her skin had rotted away, he had stitched in flesh-colored silk. Metal wires kept her bones together. And over her rotting face, there was a porcelain death mask, affixed in mockery of her once-loving face.

The incident was reported, and Xavier was forced to stay with relatives in France. While in France, Xavier became close to his cousin Liliana but she also grew ill. On the night of her death, her body went missing. Xavier and Liliana were found three days later in a cave. Xavier Von Tuerin was clutching his cousin's decaying body, desperately whispering to her that no one would ever take her away.

Xavier was then sent away to a music conservatory in Florence, Italy. Filippio Carnini, one of the conservatory's maestros, noted the boy's talent and took the young lad under his wing.

While at a social function, Xavier perchanced to hear Isabella, the daughter Maestro Carnini, playing at the violin.



"You play beautifully," he remarked to her quietly.

"If only it could last," she said with a coy smile. "But I fear nothing in this world can last forever."

Isabella disappeared the next day, along with young Xavier. For a long while, her family searched, hiring numerous individuals to try and track her down. Their search was ended when, one day, a package arrived for Filippio Carnini. A masterfully crafted violin lay within. Upon close examination of the instrument, Master Carnini discovered that the yoke of the instrument was made from a human femur. Human tendons formed the strings, and a long, slender wrist bone formed the bow. Included with the package was a note: "Isabella need never stop playing, now." It was signed with a single name: "The Maestro." Xavier Von Tuerin was now dead, for the Maestro had been born.

Since that time, the signature killer known as the Maestro has plagued all Europe. In many ways, the Maestro is everything Xavier was not. While Xavier was a quiet, disturbed young boy, the Maestro is a beguiling man full of wit and charm. His particular passion seems to be to attempt to preserve beautiful people or those who create beauty. In Portugal, he forced a painter to paint a canvas



using his own blood and innards, so that the artist would at last “be one with his work.” In Russia, he embalmed a ballerina and strung up her body to a complex puppetry device so that “she need never stop dancing.”

Each time the Maestro strikes, he makes a perverse attempt to preserve something that is beautiful in the world. Each time he resurfaces, he leaves behind his signature calling card — all bodies left behind have their faces covered with a porcelain death mask.

### *Combat*

Charming, pleasant and kind — few would guess from his appearance and demeanor the man now known as the Maestro is one of Gothic Earth’s most sinister signature killers. The Maestro never approaches his victims from the shadows. Instead, he greets them in the full light of day, as a benevolent friend.

With his natural talent for disguise and assuming different personas, the Maestro has acquired numerous identities, all designed around getting close to his victims and earning their confidence. Once he has earned the trust of his prey, he lures that individual to a place of isolation. Then, he springs his trap, immortalizing them as subjects of his grisly art.

Dealing with the Maestro is extremely perilous, for just talking to him carries a hidden danger. Many have found themselves placed beneath his spell after his apparent capture, all because of a simple conversation.

The Maestro’s most insidious method of working his “art” is through an intermediary. With his *mind seed* ability, the Maestro has created numerous doubles who carry out his work. Too often, heroes have defeated the Maestro, only to find their quarry is one of these “mental doubles.”

### **Granted Powers**

The Maestro has earned several abilities through failing successive powers checks. Currently, he has reached the fifth stage of corruption and is irredeemably evil.

*Deceptive (Su)*: The Red Death has made the Maestro exceptionally pleasant and charming. His appearance changes subtly according to the people that he meets, appearing as their ideal friend or mate. If a single woman prefers tall, dark men, then Xavier appears to be slightly taller than he normally is, with darker hair. He might remind an

older man of his lost son or an arrogant banker of himself. This illusory effect is as a glamor, making it difficult to recall exactly what the Maestro looks like. Anyone attempting a roll that involves recalling the Maestro’s exact appearance receives a –4 penalty. This ability also gives the Maestro a +5 profane bonus on all Bluff, Diplomacy and Disguise checks.

*Sonic Resonance (Ex)*: The Maestro can place a subliminal *suggestion* within any sonic pattern of his creation, such as his own speech or a musical composition. These subliminal messages have the effect of a *suggestion* spell (DC 19 Will save; the save is Charisma based). Anyone who hears the sonic effect is subject to this ability. The exact suggestion is never worded outright, but is instead hidden within the music or speech patterns of the Maestro.

All targets must listen to the sonic pattern for at least a full minute in order to be affected. The Maestro need not be present for the *suggestion* to take effect. Thus, a violinist playing a piece written by the Maestro or a phonograph recording of his music can create the *suggestion* effect. The Maestro’s favorite methods of delivery are music boxes created by him expressly for this purpose.

*Expert Gaslighting (Ex)*: The Maestro is a proclaimed expert on the art of “gaslighting,” or driving another person mad. See Chapter Three in **the Ravenloft Player’s Handbook** for the rules on gaslighting. So adept is the Maestro at gaslighting that he may choose the form of madness that infects a victim who fails the opposed skill check.

*Mind Seed (Su)*: Once the Maestro has successfully gaslighted a target, he may attempt to impress his entire psyche upon his victim. Performing this action requires at least an hour of constant conversation with the subject. The target must make a DC 24 Will save (the save is Charisma based). Success means the victim is safe, and the Maestro must begin the process all over again.

Failure means that over the following week, the victim unconsciously begins to take on the Maestro’s mannerisms, talking like him, gesturing like him, and taking a keen interest in art. Any time before the one-week deadline, the victim may be saved by a *greater restoration* spell.

When the integration is complete (after seven days), the victim actually *becomes* the Maestro, though only in the mind. The duplicate Maestro has eight fewer levels of experience. Victims of the mind seed do not possess any of the Maestro’s



physical attributes or equipment, but do possess the Maestro's Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma scores. The victim retains all the Maestro's special abilities, including *mind seed*. Thus, whole chains of *mind-seeded* Maestros can be created. No version of the Maestro can be lower than 1st level.

As soon as the victim becomes the Maestro's mental duplicate, the two personalities begin to diverge. All targets of this ability possess their own "soul" and physical body. Thus, the subject is not the Maestro's slave or servant, but is, instead, another character who shares the Maestro's personality and earlier memories. A *protection from evil* spell can protect someone from the Maestro's *mind seed* ability.

*Influence (Ex)*: When in disguise, the Maestro keeps friendly contact with a number of highly placed officials. Once a month, he can exploit this influence to acquire some favor or exert power in official matters. This translates into a +10 circumstance bonus on a single Diplomacy check.

*Intimidation Bonus (Ex)*: When Xavier intimidates someone, the DM substitutes hours for minutes to calculate how long the target remains friendly to him.

### *Lair*

The Maestro constantly roams, never staying in one place very long. He tries to confine himself to the Western world, however, as he finds that his "best audiences" reside in Europe and the United States.

### *Bread Possibilities*

The Maestro himself has said at one time that each of his "works of art" contains a hidden message. Indeed, investigators of his crimes have uncovered the secret locations of evil artifacts, sinkholes of evil, and the lairs of other agents of darkness, all through interpreting the grisly messages that the Maestro leaves. Sometimes his morbid art serves as a warning to dark times. More than one psychic has been able to prophesy through interpreting his work.

### *Madame Delphine LaLaurie*

**Female human Dandy 9**: CR 11; Medium humanoid (human) (5 ft. 3 in.), HD 9d4+25, 69 hp; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +6; Grp +6; Atk Whip +9 melee (1d3+1 Con) or carbine rifle +7 ranged (1d10/x3); Full Atk Whip +9/+4 melee (1d3+1 Con) or carbine rifle +7/+2 ranged

(1d10/x3); SA Baleful form, pain wrack, hideous compulsion; SQ Cruel beauty, damage reduction 5/—, immunities, influence, Intimidation bonus, Appraise bonus; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +6, (Fear +6, Hor +6, Mad +6); Str 10, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 17.

*Skills*: Appraise +14, Bluff +14, Gather Info +14, Intimidate +14, Sense Motive +14, Spot +14, Use Rope +12, Diplomacy +14, Disguise +14, Knowledge (etiquette) +14, Sleight of Hand +14, Perform (keyboard) +14.

*Feats*: Combat Expertise, Far Shot, Improved Disarm, Improved Trip, Point Blank Shot.

*Languages*: English, French, Creole, Spanish

*Signature Possessions*: Whip of wounding +3, amulet of natural armor +4.

*The woman before you is lovely. Her eyes are alight with intelligence, and her skin is flush with anticipation. The latest fashions garb her slender frame. Silky, raven hair cascades down her back and around her shoulders. And yet, there is something both dangerous and attractive about her smile.*

### *Background*

In 1831, the LaLaurie family moved into the famed French Quarter of New Orleans, quickly becoming the talk of the town. Their lavish dinner







parties and elegant home enchanted many during those slave-era days. But more entrancing than their extravagant house were the charms of Madame Delphine LaLaurie, who ran the affairs of the household with a regal authority.

Behind the façade of sophistication, however, a horrible truth lay concealed. In 1834, a fire broke out in the LaLaurie home, revealing their terrible secret. After the fire, as the firefighters inspected the house for damage, they uncovered a grisly scene in the attic, left mostly undamaged by the flames.

In the uppermost floor of the house, the LaLaurie family kept a secret chamber where they tortured and experimented upon their slaves. Many slaves were penned up in dog cages. Numerous male slaves were chained against the wall. Those who were fortunate had their eyes or tongues removed. The unfortunate ones were missing their bowels or other vital organs. A hole had been drilled into one victim's skull, and a stick had been inserted in order to stir his brains. Female slaves did not escape torture either. Most of them had their eyes or mouths sewn shut or their hands were sewn to various parts of their body. One had had her arms broken and ill mended so many times that her limbs curled backward, and she was forced to scuttle along the floor like a crab.

So horrendous were these deeds that in no time, a large mob formed outside the LaLaurie home, calling for justice. No sooner did this mob form, however, than a large carriage burst from the gates of the house. The covered carriage thundered down the street. The LaLaurie family had escaped.

### *Combat*

Like a true sadist or bully, Delphine LaLaurie flees if she thinks she has a chance of being defeated. Delphine is so paranoid that she often has several escape routes planned for any eventuality. If she believes that she can win — or if cornered — Delphine fights savagely, unleashing her hideous rage upon those who face her.

### **Granted Powers**

Madame LaLaurie has earned several abilities through failing successive powers checks. Currently, she has reached the fifth stage of corruption and is irredeemably evil.

*Baleful Form (Sp)*: Madame LaLaurie can twist another's form into a hideous Broken One (see **Denizens of Dread** for a description of this monster). This power resembles a *baleful polymorph* (Fort and Will save DC 20) except that the victim

is transformed into a Broken One instead of a small creature. The process takes a full minute to complete and can only be performed on a helpless individual.

*Pain Wrack (Sp)*: Once Madame LaLaurie has damaged a creature in melee, she may induce her pain wrack power as a free action. The victim must succeed on a DC 20 Will save or fall victim to intense pain. The pain deals a -4 penalty on the victim's attacks, skill and ability rolls. The pain remains in effect for an excruciating hour.

*Hideous Compulsion (Sp)*: So wicked, so spiteful is Madame LaLaurie's hate that she can magically compel others to do her bidding. Anyone subjected to her pain wrack ability on three separate occasions on three separate days must make a DC 20 Will save or come under the effects of *dominate person*. This effect lasts until a successful *break enchantment* is cast on the victim.

*Cruel Beauty (Su)*: The Red Death has given Delphine the gift of longevity. Though she is ninety-four in age, she still seems to be a comely woman in her thirties. She ages 10 times as slowly as a normal mortal.

*Immunities (Su)*: Madame LaLaurie is immune to all forms of pain. Her immunity to pain gives her damage reduction 5/- and makes her immune to nonlethal damage.

*Influence (Ex)*: Delphine constantly keeps a number of highly placed officials dominated through her *hideous compulsion*. Once a month, she can exploit her influence to acquire some favor or exert power in official matters. This translates into a +10 circumstance bonus on a single Diplomacy check.

*Intimidation Bonus (Ex)*: When Delphine intimidates someone, the DM substitutes hours for minutes to calculate how long the target remains friendly to her.

### *Lair*

The LaLauries currently live in Toledo, Spain, where Dr. Louis LaLaurie practices as a physician. While this is the fifth place the LaLauries have lived, none of the family will speak up against Delphine's wishes, having been long since *dominated* by her.

### *Dread Possibilities*

Currently, the LaLaurie family is still at large. And though she barely escaped the New Orleans debacle with her life, Delphine LaLaurie's taste for



sadism is far from quenched. The LaLaurie family never lives in any one place for very long. They constantly move around the globe, each time setting up shop in a prominent community where access to servants is readily available.

Those poor souls who find themselves within LaLaurie employ find themselves falling into a terrible pattern. Servants are treated well at first. But no servant, no matter how skilled, can please Delphine LaLaurie for long. She becomes irritated at first, slapping or scolding those that displease her. Slowly the abuse becomes more severe, eventually leading to outright torture. Delphine herself is addicted to the act of sadism. She is compelled by the Red Death itself to carry on her horrific pattern of brutality and carnage.

The family is made up of Dr. Louis Bernard, who poses as Dr. Louis LaLaurie (the real Dr. LaLaurie passed away long ago) and several daughters, all of whom have either been *dominated* or have willingly taken up their mother's vile tendencies.

### *Sarah Winchester*

#### *The Thirteenth Guest; The Widow*

**Female human Medium 13:** CR 15; Medium human, (5 ft. 4 in.); HD 13d6, 48 hp; Init -5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11; Base Atk +9; Grp +7; Atk Knife +7 melee (1d4-2); Full Atk Knife +7/+2 melee (1d4-2); SA Spells, drawing in, rebuke undead; SQ Abstracted, regeneration 7, speak with dead; AL CN; SV Fort +8, Ref +5 Will +11, (Fear +11, Hor +11, Mad +11); Str 7, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 16.

**Skills:** Concentration +10, Diplomacy +5, Knowledge (etiquette) +4, Knowledge (forbidden lore) +10, Hypnosis +13, Profession (accountant) +4, Prognostication +13, Psychometry +13, Sixth Sense +13.

**Feats:** Eschew Materials, Extend Spell, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Skill Focus (forbidden lore), Spell Focus (necromancy), Still Spell.

**Typical mystic spells prepared** (6/6/6/5/4/3/2/1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — *cure minor wounds, guidance, know direction, purify food and drink, resistance, virtue*; 1st — *comprehend languages, death watch, detect undead, hide from undead, protection from evil, sanctuary*; 2nd — *augury, cure moderate wounds, detect thoughts, gentle repose, silence, status*; 3rd — *glyph of warding, helping hand, magic circle against evil, speak with dead (x2)*; 4th — *death ward, divination, discern lies, sending*; 5th — *atonement, spirit place, scrying*; 6th — *forbiddance, undeath to death*, 7th — *repulsion*.



Domains: Major – All, Death, Divination, Guardian, Necromancy, Protection; Minor – Healing, Knowledge.

*A regal woman of middle age, dressed carefully and with precision, regards you from behind a widow's veil. Though you cannot see her features clearly, she seems to observe you with calculating consideration.*

#### *Background*

Sara Pardee believed she was lucky when she was wed to William Wirt Winchester. After all, he was the heir to the Winchester Repeating Arms Company. His family had made millions from the sale of the Winchester Repeating Rifle, the first weapon of its kind. As the Civil War broke out, the family grew even wealthier due to the Union's use of their superior firearm. As hundreds of thousands of men died on the battlefield, the Winchester empire prospered.

In 1866, Sara and William bore a child, Annie Pardee Winchester. However, the child soon contracted a strange disease, and the couple watched in helpless terror as her body wasted away to nothing.



More tragedy struck when, fifteen years later, William himself died from tuberculosis. With her entire family wiped out, poor Sara succumbed to the depths of madness. After her husband's death, she wore a widow's veil at all times, never allowing any of her servants to see her face. When one of her servants did manage to catch a glimpse of her without her veil, Sara immediately had the servant dismissed. Sara believed that she was accompanied at all times by twelve guests. She talked to the twelve guests constantly. She also spent exorbitant fees to hire mediums, obsessed with finding a means of contacting her husband or daughter.

During one of her spiritualist sessions, Sara encountered one of the mysterious Vistani, who told her that her family suffered from a terrible curse that resulted from the family's creation of a terrible weapon. The weapon had taken the lives of countless souls — and now each of their spirits sought vengeance.

The Vistani told her that there was no escape from her curse, but that she might postpone her dark fate if she “traveled into the land of the setting sun” and built a house there. “Once your house is complete,” explained the Vistani, “the curse will take hold. And you shall die.”

Sara thus traveled west to California. Determined to defeat her curse, she hired a fleet of carpenters, designers and architects. Their assignment: build a magnificent house and continue to build, no matter what.

As Sara moved into her new home, her madness spiraled to unknown depths. Without anyone to hold her in check, she gave her servants increasingly bizarre orders. Sara would spend extravagant sums to bring international psychics and mediums to her house and hold numerous séances at her estate. She held séances of her own, inviting guests from all over the globe. The demands she made of her builders grew increasingly erratic. In order to “fool” hostile spirits, she had numerous blind halls and doors built. She became obsessed with the number thirteen, ordering workers to put references to that number throughout the house.

On Gothic Earth, the Winchester House is under constant construction. Building goes on 24 hours a day. With her entire family fortune at her disposal, Sara Winchester can afford to have an entire crew of builders remain at her estate around the clock.

Many think that Sara's idea of building a house to trap hostile spirits is madness, but fright-

eningly, there is some truth behind the insanity. Her house is designed to confuse and confine malevolent spirits and it has worked all too well. It now functions as a nexus of negative energy, sucking in all manner of spirits and ethereal energy. Numerous ghosts now haunt the house, drawn in by the power of the spiritual battery that is the Winchester House.

### *Combat*

Despite her great power as a medium, Sarah Winchester is ill suited to face anyone in battle. She has simply never been in a direct conflict. If ever confronted face to face, she is more likely to cower than fight. She might, at best, cast protective spells upon herself. She is always accompanied, however, by her twelve “guests” — twelve 13 HD ghosts of varying classes and personalities who constantly surround her. Anyone who confronts her will have to contend with them. All Sarah's guests are immune to turning and will fight to the “death” to defend her.

*Regeneration (Su):* Sarah's house refuses to allow her to die. So long as Sara Winchester is on her estate, she gains the regeneration ability. No form of attack deals lethal damage to her. Even a coup de grace fails to deal lethal damage to her as it does to other regenerating creatures.

*Speak with Spirits (Su):* Thirteen times a day, Sara can attempt to contact a spirit. The spirit may respond in 1d2 rounds with a signal, such as causing an object of up to 5 lbs to move, blowing out candles or causing lights to flicker. Any spirit called by her lingers for up to 4 minutes. Spirits are not constrained to tell the truth and can resist her call.

In order to contact a spirit, Sara must make a d20 level check +5, (+3 Charisma, +2 Spell Focus – Necromancy). Rolling a natural 1 on the check contacts a random evil spirit. On a roll of natural 20, the spirit actually possesses Sara and can answer complex questions. The spirit is allowed a DC 23 Will save to resist the call.

Because the house functions as a spirit trap, any spirit Sarah contacts is trapped in the house forever. Sara knows this, but does not care. She is obsessed with finding her lost family.

### *Lair*

The Winchester Mansion, in California, is a modern marvel of the Victorian world. It has a



central heating system and gaslights that turn on with the touch of a button. The house itself has three working elevators, seven different stories and even a high tower that looks down upon the rest of the sprawling complex.

And yet, despite the marvelous construction of the house, it is a place created out of sheer madness and paranoia. The estate is under constant construction, because of what was told to Sara by the passing Vistani. Thus, rooms are continually being added and changed. While one part of the house is being torn down, a new part will be being erected.

The house itself has no internal consistency or logical layout. There are hallways that lead into blind ends. Doors open to reveal brick walls. Some passages are designed to grow smaller and smaller until they turn into mouse paths. Other passages cannot be accessed at all, such as one hall that is only 6 inches wide.

Visitors to the house may notice that the number thirteen appears in numerous places throughout the house. A window may have thirteen panes of glass. A chandelier might have thirteen places for candles. Tables always have places set for thirteen guests.

Guests staying at the house for any length of time may begin to share in Mrs. Winchester's madness. It begins with a constant movement out of the corner of their eyes. Then, faces appear in mirrors for a brief moment, while handprints appear on bed sheets.

Because of the spiritual power of the house, the Winchester Estate has manifested several powers:

**Sinkhole of Evil:** The entire mansion and 162-acre area comprising the estate is a Rank Five Sinkhole of Evil (See references to sinkholes in the **Ravenloft Player's Handbook** and the **Ravenloft Dungeon Master's Guide**.) The house is in great danger of becoming a phantasmagora, as described in Chapter Two of the **Ravenloft Dungeon Master's Guide**.

**Regeneration (Su):** The house itself can and will repair any large-scale damage done to itself. So long as Sara Winchester is on the estate or surrounding grounds, the house has the *regeneration* 10. No form of attack can deal lethal damage to it.

**Resistance (Su):** The house has resistance to fire 15, electricity 15, cold 15, acid 15 and sonic 15.

**Spirit Trap (Su):** The resonant psychic power generated by the house is enormous. Because of this, the entire estate functions as a spiritual prison.

Any ethereal undead creature within 50 miles of the house must make a DC 23 Will save, or be instantly drawn into the mansion. Once there, no spirit can escape the mystical design of the house. It is trapped within the house forever. A successful save means that the spirit remains free.

**Dual Existence (Su):** The house is as substantial in the Ethereal Plane as it is in the Material Plane. Thus, ethereal beings (such as ghosts) cannot travel through the mansion walls, doors or windows unless they are open. A ghost cannot open a door or window unless it is able to *manifest* itself, or *spontaneously manifest* as described below. There exists a 25% chance per encounter in any area that the area's ethereal resonance will become "real" and visible to anyone within. (See information about Ethereal Resonance in Chapter Two of the **Ravenloft Dungeon Master's Guide**. When ethereal resonance becomes real in this way, it may be freely interacted with.

Additionally, any ghosts or spirits in the house (and there are many) have a 25% chance during any encounter to *spontaneously manifest*. During such manifestation, ghosts coexist with mortals on the same plane. Numerous people have interacted with "guests" in the house, only to have the guests promptly disappear or to find out that the supposed visitor has long passed away.

**Encroaching Madness (Su):** Mortals are not safe from the house either. Every night that someone spends in the Winchester Mansion, that individual must make a Madness save. The DC starts at 15 and increases by +1 for each night stayed at the house. Failure means that the poor victim contracts a minor Madness effect. After a failed save, the Madness save DC drops back to 15 and begins to increase nightly again. Anyone who is already suffering from a minor Madness effect contracts a moderate Madness effect. Anyone who is suffering from a moderate Madness effect begins to suffer from a major Madness effect. No matter if the saves are made or not, all visitors constantly experience hauntings and hallucinations of all kinds. The longer someone stays within the Winchester house, the more and more they become haunted, until at last they are "drawn in" by the house itself (see below).

**Drawing In (Su):** Anyone who fails three successive madness checks while within the confines of Winchester House (see below), becomes part of the house. They forget their past lives entirely, instead "remembering" that they are servants in the Win-



chester Mansion. These unfortunate souls find sudden lucidity, for the house lifts all the madness from their minds in exchange for their service.

The false memories created by the house include false places of origins, false parents and friends and phantom past achievements. The house itself produces artifacts for its new residence. For instance, a photo book of a servant's lost relatives may appear on their bedside table. Old scars from phantom conflicts appear on the body. Any false memories of other servants of the house will change to accommodate the new arrival. Thus, a young woman might become the new "wife" of the head butler.

The house also produces a role for the new resident. If the new servant is a scullery maid, there will suddenly be numerous chamber pots to clean, even if there are no residents to produce them. Things will break precipitously, needing immediate repair. No limit exists on how much work the house can produce. Once removed from the estate and surrounding grounds, anyone under the influence of this effect begins to remember her old life after a week of separation.

#### *Bread Possibilities*

Sara would do anything to get in touch with her deceased husband or daughter. Anything. Whether it be a sacrificial ritual to open a channel

to the underworld or a promise to deliver the souls of those in her employ to some extraplanar entity, no task is too dark for her to delve into. For some reason, every attempt made by her or any other medium has failed to contact her husband or daughter. Where their spirits are is a matter for the DM.

With a massive fortune at her disposal, Sara Winchester could prove a powerful adversary for any who stood in the way of her goals. Viewed in this light, she might be viewed as an obsessed tyrant, desperately clutching at her goal.

Sara might also be used in a campaign as an unwitting dupe. For example, a sinister medium who understands the true power at Sara's fingertips might convince her that killing the medium's enemies is the only way of getting back in touch with her beloved.

Alternatively, it might be interesting for the PCs to be hired by Sara Winchester for some task. As the PCs continue to work for Sara, it forces them to ask themselves why they are working for her and wonder what her ultimate goals are.

Currently, Sara has begun to explore the idea of transporting the bodies of her husband and daughter to California and raising them from the dead. If she is successful, this vile act would be enough to transform her house well beyond a rank five sinkhole of evil and into a phantasmagora.



# Appendix II: Monsters in the World

*BELOW THE THUNDERS OF THE UPPER DEEP,  
FAR, FAR BENEATH IN THE ABYSMAL SEA,  
HIS ANCIENT, DREAMLESS, UNINVADED SLEEP  
THE KRAKEN SLEEPETH...*

— ALFRED LORD TENNYSON, "THE KRAKEN"





Monsters exist. In the 1890s, science and learning point increasingly toward logical explanations for the unknown, but there still exists a pervading belief that spirits, ghosts, ghouls and goblins are real creatures. Leading universities have whole departments devoted to the study of spiritualism and the occult. Thus, even in this age of enlightenment, there still clings a creeping suspicion that there are true evils out there, waiting to pounce upon the unwitting.

But this belief system is fading. As factories spring up and railroads carve their way through what was once wilderness, people are beginning to believe that the evils of the world are nothing more than superstition and folklore. The minions of the Red Death are more than happy to promote this myth, for it keeps humanity further from the truth.

### *The Many Masques of the Red Death*

Throughout the long corridor of time, humanity has learned to better itself. In parts of the world, societies and cultures can now grow what they need to eat and mass-produce items for use or recreation. Humankind has even learned the mystery of electricity.

But the creatures of darkness, too, have bettered themselves. In earlier days, vampires roamed freely in the streets and in the countryside. But when people believed that such creatures existed, hunting parties were formed to track them down and destroy them. Today, the dread agents of the Red Death have adapted. In this modern era, they no longer make themselves ready targets in the light of day, but instead work under the cover of darkness.

In the society of the 1800s, the belief in such things as ghosts and monsters is fading. So much the better for the monsters. For as long as the truth is hidden, the unsuspecting masses of humanity can be preyed upon. If the truth were to be revealed and the populace actually began to believe in such things as monsters again, then there might be open warfare against these creatures of the night.

To better dwell within the shadow of man, numerous denizens of the night have spawned new powers and abilities. These dread powers are known amongst the informed as *masques*.

### *What is a Masque?*

As many DMs are already aware, almost any “typical” d20 System creature can be used in a Gothic Earth setting with the right window dressing. A choker who slinks about an Irish moor at night and snags prey becomes the legendary “Old Choking Fergie.” A shadow mastiff that haunts an old manor might become the “Ghost Hound of Muller’s Hill.”

In the modernized world of the 1890s, however, it is sometimes difficult to use fantastic creatures convincingly. How can one incorporate a troll into the industrial world of London? How does a mohrg fit into the Old West?

Masques are a convenient way for you to incorporate “typical” monsters in your **Masque of the Red Death** game. Each masque allows a creature to disguise its presence in the world of humanity in different ways. Thus, your world can be filled with lurking goblins or stalking wights without veering off into high fantasy instead of gothic horror.

For example, imagine a coven of ghouls with the *masque of the form* ability. The ghouls might pose as honorable members of society who constantly lure “dinner guests” over during grand parties. Add the *masque of the mind* ability to a dread troll (see **Ravenloft Denizens of Dread**) and you have an instant “bogy man” who haunts little children. With the *masque of the shadows* ability, a horde of goblins can become legendary body-snatchers that steal people from their beds.

### *Using Masques*

A masque is a special attack or special quality that can be added to any creature. When adding these special abilities, there is a CR adjustment involved. In any case where there are fractions involved, always round down to find the final CR of a creature. It is possible for a creature to have more than one masque, but it is highly recommended that the DM limit all creatures to two masques.

### *Masque of the Form (Su)*

“So you decided to follow me here,” said Dr. Grange, shaking his head. “A terrible mistake.”

In the blink of an eye, the room and the doctor transformed. His desk was instantly flung aside. The chair where he once sat was reduced to splinters.



Where the doctor himself had been reclining now sat a strange beast composed of bubbling flesh. Wings and hooves sprouted from the squamous amalgam, and three heads rolled from within the quivering flesh: a goat's head, a lion's head and a serpent's head.

"Chimera," whispered Darson.

I could only nod in affirmation. Ancient myth, it seemed, had come to life.

The creature in question has the ability to assume human form. The change is an actual physical change, which may result in a gain or loss of mass. The creature retains its own ability scores. The creature's Hit Dice, hit points, alignment, base attack bonus, base saves, and type all remain the same. All supernatural, spell-like and extraordinary attacks and qualities are retained in the new human form, even those that require a body part that the new form does not have (such as paralyzing tentacles). In cases where a particular body part is needed for a special ability, that body part manifests itself so long as the special ability is in use. For example, the human arm of a hidden creature might temporarily transform into a tentacle when

it attacks. If the creature could cast spells before, it may continue to do so in human form.

If the creature has an Intelligence score of 6 or higher, it can engage in speech when in human form. If it could not speak before, it gains speech in one language. The creature must designate the specific physical qualities it assumes — such as weight, height, eye and hair color— when it first assumes human form. Thereafter, it may never change these qualities. Thus, a creature using masque of the form always appears the same when wearing its human shape. It may not assume the appearance of someone else. For the purposes of someone trying to penetrate the creature's deception, masque of the form gives the creature a +10 to all Disguise checks.

When transforming into human shape, any equipment the creature has does not transform with it and vice versa. Items can be carried during a shift in form, if the new form is capable of carrying the items. Otherwise, equipment falls at the creature's feet. Typically, when a creature shifts from human shape into its true form, it rips out of





its clothing or leaves them lying on the floor. If the creature in question is confined in a space that would prohibit its transformation to or from human form, (like trapped in a box) it may make a break check against the break DC of the material that surrounds it, with a +5 enlargement bonus on the check. If it fails the break check, the creature cannot transform. Otherwise, it breaks through its confinement.

A creature with masque of the form will reveal subtle hints of its true nature when truly aroused with emotion. Any time the creature feels strong emotion in human form, it must make a Will save (DC = 10 + Creature's HD) or reveal some subtle clue about its nature. For example, the creature's eyes may glow, or its flesh may change to an unnatural hue.

Discovering these telltale signs requires a Spot check opposed by the creature's Disguise check.

**CR Adjustment:** +1/2

#### *Masque of the Shadow (Su)*

"But they were here," hissed Darson, his voice quaking. His trembling figure pointed into the empty alley. "Look. I know what you're thinking. I'm not mad."

The two constables looked at each other and began muttering to one another. One of them approached Darson, holding up a hand. "Obviously, sir, you're very upset. Let us talk some place else, right?"

"You believe me, don't you?" said Darson stabbing a finger at me as I stood beside him on the street. "Tell them I'm not crazy!"

This masque allows a creature to become invisible at will. The creature appears with all its gear if it attacks. Turning invisible takes a full-action round for the creature. This ability also allows the creature to squeeze its body through small openings up to 1 inch in diameter. Squeezing its entire mass through a small opening requires a full round action for medium or smaller creatures and two full rounds for large or greater-sized creatures.

**CR Adjustment:** +1/2

#### *Masque of the Mind (Su)*

The child backed away, clutching his blanket to his face. "No, no!" he whimpered.

"Look," I said in a soothing tone. "There's nothing in here. See? The closet is empty."

The child shook his head vigorously. "You don't understand," he insisted. "Only certain people can see

him."

"Really," I said. "Well, then. What's he doing now?"

Tiny eyes peered over the blanket at me. They were wide and glistening. "He's talking to me right now. He's telling me that what he's going to do to my sister. He's going to make me watch."

The creature with this special quality has the ability to become invisible, inaudible, intangible and scentless to all living beings except its particular prey. A creature's prey is self-defined and can be inclusive or exclusive of any group. For example, a creature's prey might be beautiful men, elder women, or small children of Spanish royalty.

With the exception of its prey, the creature is considered *ethereal* (see Chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). Thus, beings that are not its prey cannot attack a creature with the masque of the mind ability unless it is through the use of a force effect from a spell or spell-like ability. Likewise, the creature in question cannot attack beings that are not its prey. The only exception to this occurs if any nonprey become ethereal as well.

The creature's prey, however, may interact with the creature normally, affecting it with physical attacks or spells. Any nonprey witnessing such a conflict can only see the prey doing battle with an invisible assailant.

**CR Adjustment:** +1

#### *Masque of the Memory (Sp)*

"You're sure you noticed nothing strange about your trip over here?" I asked in disbelief.

Lord Brighton shrugged and looked at me with honest eyes. "No, my good man. I did not. Why?"

"Lord Brighton. Mr. Carrington died in the carriage on your way over here. His blood is all over your face..."

This special ability allows a creature to *modify memory* twice per day, as per the spell. Instead of being limited to a single target, however, the creature may target all creatures within a 30 ft. radius. In addition, a creature with this ability can use *pass without trace* at will.

**CR Adjustment:** +1/2

### *Creatures of the Mind*

Some of the most frightening creatures are those that affect the mind. Often, such creatures are, themselves, invisible to the senses, possessing



an intangible existence that manifests as mental visions or psychic occurrences. Hard to fight, harder to make others believe in, the creatures of the mind can cause great disruptions in the fabric of reality.

## *The Foreigners*

### Medium Outsider

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	8d8+8 (44 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+2
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft. (6 squares)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	21 (+3 Dex, +8 deflection), touch 21, flat-footed 18
<b>Base Attack / Grapple:</b>	+8 / +7
<b>Attack:</b>	Sucker +11 melee (1d6 Wis) or bite +7 melee (1d6-1)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Sucker +11 melee (1d6 Wis) or bite +7 melee (1d6-1)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	5 ft./10 ft.
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Memory drain, psychic assault, Wisdom drain, spells
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Alien mind, manifest
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +9
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 9, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 20, Wis 17, Cha 15
<b>Skills:</b>	Concentration +12, Disguise +10, Forbidden Lore (arcane magic) +16, Forbidden Lore (general) +16, Forbidden Lore (outsiders) +16, Hide +11, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (the planes) +16, Medicine +10, Psychometry +14, Search +13, Sense Motive +8, Sixth Sense +14, Spot +13, Use Magical Device +13
<b>Feats:</b>	Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Weapon Finesse (Suckers)
<b>Environment:</b>	Any
<b>Organization:</b>	Gang (4-9), coven (10-24), parish (50-100)
<b>Challenge Rating:</b>	9
<b>Treasure:</b>	Standard
<b>Alignment:</b>	Usually chaotic neutral
<b>Advancement:</b>	9-15 HD (Medium)

"Look," insisted Darson. "Look! I tell you they are everywhere!"

I gazed down at the photographic paper as the chemicals slowly began the development process. First, the shape of the street could be made out. Then, the storefronts and gaslights sprang into view. I began to see the forms of people walking about the street, all engaged in everyday affairs.

"I really don't understand what I'm supposed to be seeing, Darson," I said shaking my head.

"Look carefully," hissed Darson. "That street was empty when I took the picture."

I peered at the photograph and with trembling hands lifted it out of the formula and toward my face. Indeed, the figures in the photograph wore human clothing, but they were anything but human. Their heads were elongated, their teeth were rasping sharp. Strangest of all, they had no eyes — no eyes at all, and yet they all seemed to walk with a sense of direction.

"What... what is this?" I dropped the photograph. I felt my mind tumbling, reeling. I held my head as if somehow my hands could hold onto my sanity.

"Don't you understand?" whimpered Darson. He looked about himself and then leaned in close. "They're around us. All the time. Watching us."





### *Description*

The Foreigners have lived side-by-side with humanity since the dawn of time. For a long while, the Foreigners watched over humans, feasting upon them when they were hungry and tending to them when their numbers grew low. Then, mortals discovered the gift of magic. Through mortal magic, the Foreigners were expelled from the world, sealed behind a mystical barrier called the Tapestry. One by one, entire communities of Foreigners were sealed off from the world. The first people to discover and use the Tapestry were the mound builders of North America.

When the fabric of magic was corrupted, the Tapestry slowly started unraveling. Today, small “pinholes” in the Tapestry allow the Foreigners to wander back into the world of Gothic Earth.

The Foreigners are mental creatures that feed on living memories. For thousands of years, their population has dwindled, for the imprisoned Foreigners could only drink the feeble memories of dreams. For this reason, most people cannot remember their dreams. Now, as the Tapestry continues to deteriorate, the Foreigners slip through and steal more palpable memories from individuals.

The Foreigners are alien in the extreme. Their goals and motives are peculiar and inscrutable. Clearly, they wish to penetrate the Tapestry fully and bring their race out of exile. At the same time, they seem to have a strange fondness for humanity. They mock human customs by wearing human clothing. They even engage in human ritual. For instance, a pair of Foreigners may sit down to “have tea” in a vain attempt to mimic human custom.

All Foreigners are extremely disturbing to gaze upon. They appear as tall, hairless humans with pasty skin. Their foreheads are slightly enlarged and their teeth are long, thin needles. They have no eyes, though they appear to see perfectly. Foreigners always wear clothing from the culture that they watch over, dressing impeccably in an attempt to copy human fashion.

### *Combat*

When the Foreigners move into an area, they start by first draining all the memories of a specific individual. They then manifest and remove the comatose human shell to the Border Ethereal. The Foreigners then carefully drain and modify everyone else’s memory, so that no one notices that

anyone is missing. Thus, husbands forget that they were ever married or they believe that their wives are long dead. The Foreigners are far from perfect in their selective erasure of people. Often records of the erased people are left, along with pictures and letters from past lives.

When facing conflict, Foreigners prefer to pick their opponents to pieces slowly, instead of fighting them face-to-face. An enemy of the Foreigners finds that each time he sleeps, he loses more and more of his memory. If he tries to keep awake, Foreigners manifest nearby and use their *psychic assault* power to take away all their enemy’s skills only to *teleport* away before anyone can engage them in combat. If seriously threatened, they gather in large numbers, using their *silence* and *invisibility* powers to get close enough to drain away their victim’s Wisdom, reducing the unfortunate individual to a comatose state.

**Alien Mind (Ex):** Foreigners are immune to any mind-affecting effects. Any attempt to contact the mind of a Foreigner (*detect thoughts*, *domination*, etc) is cause for a DC 19 Madness check. The save DC is Intelligence based.

**Manifest (Su):** The Foreigners are naturally ethereal, but can manifest themselves on the physical plane. A Foreigner can only manifest within one mile of a place where the Tapestry is weak (such as a sinkhole of evil). For each rank a sinkhole of evil possesses, a Foreigner can manifest itself on the physical plane for one hour.

Once a Foreigner has manifested physically, it can take objects or beings back across the Tapestry into the Border Ethereal. In order for it to do this to living beings, the quarry must willing or helpless.

**Memory Drain (Sp):** All Foreigners can drain memories from individuals. They must have a line of sight and be within 700 feet. Foreigners can erase up to 4 hours of memory or one spell slot per use of this power. An erased spell slot is not permanently gone, it is simply empty. Foreigners may be selective about which memories are removed from a person’s mind. For example, a Foreigner could erase all memory of a wedding or the contents of a letter. Anyone who is wary of the Foreigners or comprehends that something is trying to steal their memories is immune to this ability. The target in question must truly believe that something is trying to take her memory not simply be told the fact. A sleeping person is not wary and therefore not immune. A person who makes a DC 19 Will save is immune from that Foreigner’s memory drain for



24 hours. This ability can function on material creatures while a Foreigner is ethereal.

**Psychic Assault (Sp):** Sometimes, the Foreigners don't have time to drain the memories from an individual. In this case, they may aggressively yank memories from a victim's brain. They must have a line of sight and be within 700 feet. Victims must make a DC 19 Will save or randomly lose the use of a skill until a *restoration*, *lesser restoration*, or *heal* spell is cast upon them. Being wary of the Foreigners does not protect one from this form of attack. This ability can only be used on beings occupying the same plane as the Foreigner.

**Wisdom Drain (Su):** A Foreigner can attack an individual through use of its long, prehensile sucker. These suckers are long, tubelike appendages that project from their mouths. A Foreigner need only make a touch attack with its sucker to drain 1d6 temporary Wisdom from an opponent. This ability can only be used on beings occupying the same plane as the Foreigner.

**Spell-like abilities:** At will — *detect thoughts* (DC 17), *telekinesis* (DC 20), *modify memory* (DC 19); 2/day — *invisibility*, *silence* (DC 16); 1/day — *teleport* (DC 20). The saving throw for these abilities is Intelligence based.

**Weaknesses:** The Foreigners cannot affect those protected by a *protection from evil* or similar spell. They cannot enter any area that has been hallowed or consecrated, though they can still assault beings within these areas.

## Horla

### Medium Aberration

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	13d8+8 (66 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+6
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft. (6 squares)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	20(+2Dex, +8 deflection), touch 20, flat-footed 18
<b>Base Attack /Grapple:</b>	+9 /+12
<b>Attack:</b>	Slam +12 melee (1d6+3)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Slam +12/+7 melee (1d6+3)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	5 ft. / 5 ft.
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Psychic drain, domination, rapid gaslighting
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Natural invisibility
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +10
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 16, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 20
<b>Skills:</b>	Bluff +16, Concentration +10, Disable Device +11, Listen +7, Move Silently

+13, Open Lock +7, Search +11, Sense Motive +7, Spot +13

### Feats:

Combat Expertise, Expert Tactician, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip

### Environment:

Any

### Organization:

Solitary

### Challenge Rating:

12

### Treasure:

Standard

### Alignment:

Always neutral evil

### Advancement:

14–20 HD (Medium)

*But who is he, this invisible being that rules me, this unknowable being, this rover of a supernatural race?*

*Invisible beings exist, then! How is it, then, that since the beginning of the world they have never manifested themselves in such a manner as they do to me? I have never read anything that resembles what goes on in my house. Oh! If I could only leave it, if I could only go away and flee, and never return, I should be saved; but I cannot.*

— Guy de Maupassant, "The Horla"

### Description

The Horla are invisible, intangible creatures of unknown origin, thought by some to be the next step in the earth's evolution. One day, the Horla will replace humanity, just as humanity replaced the Neanderthal. These beings see humanity as nothing more than cattle to be herded, culled and manipulated. For thousands of years, the Horla have been biding their time. They have been waiting out the ages in the secret places of the world: the jungle, the desert or in ancient caves. Now, as the modern world encroaches upon the wilderness, these powerful entities are seizing the opportunity to take their rightful place as man's successor.

### Combat

Confronting a Horla is an experience that often leaves a person changed. These beings often warp and corrupt the minds of those they face, leaving mental scars upon the psyches of their victims. The Horla avoid direct confrontation if possible. They instead slowly attempt to drain a target's Wisdom and instill in them some form of debilitating madness. As their opponents' psyche crumbles, the Horla dominates them, becoming the masters of their intended targets.



**Natural Invisibility (Ex):** A horla is naturally invisible, even while attacking. This ability is inherent and not subject to the *invisibility purge* spell. When viewed through *see invisible*, a Horla looks like a vaguely humanoid-shaped cloud.

**Psychic Drain (Su):** Three times per day, a Horla may psychically drain a target. In order for this attack to succeed, there must have a line of sight, and the target must be within 40 feet of the Horla. The target must make a DC 21 Will save or lose 1d6 points of Wisdom. (The save DC is Charisma-based.)

**Domination (Su):** Any Horla may attempt to *dominate person at will* (DC 21), caster level 13th. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Rapid Gaslighting (Su):** The most dreaded ability of the Horla is their ability to instill madness in their victims. The Horla do this as a sort of hideous pastime, playing with mortal sanity as a cat would a mouse.

In order to accomplish this task, the Horla lingers about its victim for a week, subtly altering its target's surroundings, such as moving the subject's

belongings or eating his food. The Horla makes a Bluff check opposed by the victim's Sense Motive. The Horla need not directly interact with the victim in order to do this. Victims that lose the contest, gain an insanity from the insanity chart listed in Chapter Three of the **Ravenloft Player's Handbook**. The first time a victim loses such a contest, he suffer a minor madness effect. The second time a victim loses, he suffers a moderate madness effect. If the victim loses a third time, he suffers a major madness effect.

Victims that win the opposed roll are not driven mad. Furthermore, if a victim wins his opposed roll by 10 or more, he becomes aware of the horla's presence and is able pinpoint its location.

### *Creatures of the Wind*

Some monsters have an attunement to the elemental part of nature. Those are referred to as the fey. Others are so bizarre as to be impossible to classify, even by experts. Those are called aberrations. These "weird" creatures rely on masques to enable them to interact with the humans that are their prey — and formidable predators they are.



POZAS'04



## Lost Boys

### Small Fey (Fire)

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	2d6+4 (11 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+3
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft. (6 squares)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	16 (+3 Dex, +3 Natural), touch 13, flat-footed 13
<b>Base Attack /Grapple:</b>	+0 /+2
<b>Attack:</b>	Claw +2 melee (1d3+2 plus 1d6 Cha drain)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Claw +2 melee (1d3+2 plus 1d6 Cha drain)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	5 ft. /5 ft.
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Charisma drain, spell-like abilities
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Spell-like abilities
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +4
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 15, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 12
<b>Skills:</b>	Hide +8, Move Silently +8, Perform +6, Sleight of Hand +8, Spot +6
<b>Feats:</b>	Dodge, Mobility*
<b>Environment:</b>	Any
<b>Organization:</b>	Rabble (2–8) or gang (10–50)
<b>Challenge Rating:</b>	2
<b>Treasure:</b>	Standard
<b>Alignment:</b>	Always chaotic evil
<b>Advancement:</b>	3–7 HD (Small)

*A group of waifs approaches you, large eyes fixed upon you, their hands outstretched in supplication. The smell of soot surrounds them, clinging to their dirty, smudged faces and worn, tattered clothing.*

### Description

The lost boys are fey beings that have simply lived too long. These creatures, now in the twilight of their long life spans, are nearing the end of their time and seek to prolong their lives by stealing the youth of others. According to legend, lost boys are fey that were cast out of Tir Na N'Og, forever denied the gift of eternal youth and now seek that prize that is forever denied them.

Lost boys appear to other beings as young boys between the ages of six and twelve. They are usually covered in soot and smell of ashes, they hide these telltale signs by posing as street urchins or chimney sweeps.

In true form, lost boys appear to be human children marred by the weight of age. Their normally soft skin becomes ashen and gray. Their

cherubic faces become filled with dry wrinkles. Their joints become knotted and knobby.

### Combat

Lost boys often form small street urchin gangs so that they can “recruit” human orphans into their fold and thus feed upon them. When they have fed all they can from their playmate, the lost boys often kill and discard the body — which resembles that of a small child with liver spots and wrinkled skin. While lost boys prefer to feed upon the young, they will turn upon adults if the need is great.





When fighting in earnest, lost boys possess incredible powers, most of them dealing with fire. They often try to lead their adversaries into fire traps of their making, all the while hurling flaming spheres at their opponents. They delight in starting fires and using fire against their opponents, especially if their opponents are adults.

**Charisma Feeding (Su):** The attack of a lost boy deals 1d6 temporary Charisma damage. Lost boys must drain at least 1 point of Charisma per day in order to survive. Each time they go a day without draining at least 1 point of Charisma, they suffer 1 point of Constitution damage. When they reach 0 Constitution, they die. Lost boys often disguise their Charisma drain with human playmates as “roughhousing,” so as not to alert their prey as to their eventual fate.

**Masque of the Form (Su):** See details above. Lost boys always appear as young boys between the ages of six and twelve. They often take the form of common street urchins in order to be unobtrusive.

**Spell-like Abilities (Sp):** At will — *flaming sphere* (DC 13), *fire trap* (DC 13), *glyph of warding* (blast only) (DC 14); 2/day — *blink*, *passwall*. (Caster level 5th. The save DCs are Charisma based.)

As I looked about, I noticed something ever so strange about the masquerade ball. While the bombastic music was played at ear-splitting volumes, none of the dancers were speaking to one another. I looked this way and that, and soon I realized that while everyone in the room was gesturing to each other, no one was actually speaking.

I turned to head for the door, but I felt a slender hand wrap around my arm and hold me fast. I whirled about to see that the person restraining me was a woman whose face was hidden behind a harlequin mask. Then I noticed that her touch was much too firm and cold to be human....

## *Hollow*

### Medium Construct

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	5d10 (27 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+1
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft. (6 squares)
<b>AC:</b>	17 (+1 Dex, +6 Natural) touch 11, flat-footed 16
<b>Base Attack /Grapple:</b>	+3 /+7
<b>Attack:</b>	Slam +7 melee (1d6+4)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	2 slams +7 melee (1d6+4)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	5 ft./5 ft.
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Grafting, hypnotic performance, voice stealing
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Construct traits, natural silence
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +3
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 18, Dex 13, Con —, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 10
<b>Skills:</b>	Climb +9, Hide +6, Perform (act or dance) +4, Sleight of Hand +5, Spot +7
<b>Feats:</b>	Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes
<b>Environment:</b>	Any
<b>Organization:</b>	Troupe (5–10), crew (12–24), company (50–75)
<b>Challenge Rating:</b>	4
<b>Treasure:</b>	Standard
<b>Alignment:</b>	Always lawful neutral
<b>Advancement:</b>	By creature type



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### *Description*

For centuries they have wandered, always looking for those who might give them life. The hollow are a lifeless race of wood-crafted beings that are on a constant, eternally futile attempt to reclaim their humanity. These garish fiends spend their empty, immortal lives trying to imitate human interaction.

At first glance, each hollow appears to be a normal human, dressed impeccably in the latest fashions. However, a closer inspection reveals a more disturbing image. The hollow always cover their faces with large, tawdry ball masks. Their hands are always covered with white gloves. All this concealment serves to hide the fact that they are nothing more than living mannequins, walking about through some unknown power.

All hollow have a strange fascination with mortals. They are drawn to plays, music and dance. In order to feed their obsession, the hollow make it a habit to kidnap individuals who are performers or have a vibrant spirit so that they can be made to perform for the hollow.

No one knows the exact origins of the hollow, but several pieces of lore point to a minstrel in Germany, who made a gift to his mad king of two life-sized marionette dolls. The story varies from there. Some tales say the king had his toys animated through dark magic. Others claim that the minstrel put a curse upon the king just before his execution at the king's orders.

### *Combat*

The hollow prefer to swarm their opponents, pinning them to the ground with their great strength. They prefer to capture rather than kill. Those that are captured are made to serve the hollow (see below) or are added to their ranks via their *grafting* power.

**Grafting (Su):** Perhaps the most hideous power of the hollow is their ability to make more of their own kind. A hollow can transform a human being into one of its kind, by removing its mask and placing it upon the victim. The victim's body is then rapidly transformed into wood. The mask must remain on the victim's face for one full minute and the victim must be helpless during the process. After the minute is complete, the new hollow arises, assuming all the stats, ability scores, and skills of a standard hollow. Once transformed, a victim is forever condemned to walk the earth as

a soulless mannequin. There is no saving throw for this transformation. The metamorphosis may be reversed only through a *wish* or *miracle*. No other magic will return a victim to his former state.

**Hypnotic Performance (Su):** There must be two or more hollow present in order for them to use this ability. All hollow can entrance victims by performing silent plays or strange, awkward dances. Anyone watching one of these performances must make a DC 13 Will save or be under the effects of *hypnotism*. This save is Charisma based.

**Natural Silence (Su):** All hollow are naturally inaudible, unless they choose to make noise (such as through clapping or knocking objects around).

**Voice Stealing (Su):** Anyone struck by a hollow must make a DC 13 Will save or lose the ability to speak for 4 hours. If the struck victim makes her save, she is immune to that hollow's voice stealing power for 1 day. This save is Charisma based.

### *Hollow Society*

The hollow live in large communities beneath the cities of the earth. Here, in forgotten catacombs, they carry on continual festivals where plays and dances are performed. Those that the hollow capture are made to perform these wordless mime-plays and tuneless dances. The poor victims are made to act and dance until they drop from exhaustion. The moment someone falls to exhaustion (or the refuses to perform any longer) the hollow perform a grafting upon that person, and the new hollow joins the crowd of entranced on-lookers.

### *Creatures of the Hunt*

Many monsters prey on humans. Creatures of the hunt take pleasure in the act of hunting itself, for they are hunters at heart. Often larger, swifter and deadlier than most natural predators, these adversaries enjoy the chase as well as the kill.

### *Haunt Beast*

"Look at the size of this print, Darson. The beast must be, what, ten feet at the shoulder? What's that you say? What do you mean, it took our ammunition? The bloody thing's only an animal!"





### *Description*

Around the world, cultures tell stories of haunt beasts. Astonishing animals of enormous size are often depicted in these legends. These fantastic animals play many roles in the legends in which they appear. Sometimes, they are guardians of mystic sites, other times they are simply servants of evil waiting to hunt all those who would tread upon their territory. As civilization creeps further into the hidden places of the world, more and more haunt beasts are encountered.

A haunt beast appears as a massive animal of incredible ferocity, with a few distinctive changes in its appearance (besides its great size) that marks it as different from other animals in the world. For instance, a haunt wolf might have glowing red eyes, while a haunt gorilla might be ghostly silver in color. The truly unsettling part about a haunt beast is its aura. The very air stirs as these creatures approach and they radiate an almost overpoweringly palpable presence.

### *Sample Haunt Beast*

#### **Sirh-Yai (Haunt Tiger)**

##### **Large Magical Beast (Augmented Animal)**

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	16d10+96 (184 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+8
<b>Speed:</b>	50 ft. (10 squares)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	25 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +12 natural), touch 7, flat-footed 21
<b>Base Attack /Grapple:</b>	+16 / +30
<b>Attack:</b>	Claw +27 melee (2d4+10)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	2 Claws +27 melee (2d4+10) and bite +21 melee (2d6+5)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	10 ft. / 5 ft.
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Frightful presence, improved grab, pounce, rake (2d4+5), summon weather
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Mimic voice, low light vision, shadow jump, scent, SR 26, until the ends of the earth, immunities
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +16, Ref +14, Will +12
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 31, Dex 19, Con 23, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 14
<b>Skills:</b>	Hide +13*, Jump +16, Listen +11, Move Silently +17, Spot +12, Swim +12
<b>Feats:</b>	Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Improved Natural Attack (bite), Power Attack, Run, Stealthy, Weapon Focus (claw)

<b>Environment:</b>	The jungles of Northern Thailand
<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary
<b>Challenge Rating:</b>	11
<b>Treasure:</b>	Standard
<b>Alignment:</b>	Always chaotic evil
<b>Advancement:</b>	By creature type

*The creature before you is both magnificent and terrifying to behold. The giant tiger strides forth from the darkness, a full 14 feet in length. His powerful muscles ripple beneath his sleek fur. A lambent borealis, like St. Elmo's fire, curls around his potent body. His terrible eyes fix onto yours, hypnotic and filled with frightening intelligence.*

### *Description*

Sirh-Yai is a legendary tiger that has guarded the tropical forests of Northern Thailand for over a dozen centuries. He is considered to be lord of the jungle, fickle in his wants and needs. Sirh-Yai lives for one thing only: the eternal hunt. In recent years, Sirh-Yai has grown bored of picking off hapless villagers. He seeks new, more challenging prey. Unfortunately, that prey is becoming all too available. As great white hunters move into the area, Sirh-Yai's taste for the hunt has been renewed. Currently, he has formed an alliance with a local cult. The cult constantly lures new hunters into the area, with promises of "the catch of a lifetime." But these game hunters do not realize that it is they who are being set up for the hunt.

### *Combat*

Sirh-Yai is a hunter, preferring to use hunting tactics against his opponents, rather than confronting them directly. He uses his improved grab ability to drag victims away, escaping with his shadow jump ability. In this way, he slowly whittles down a group of opponents, picking off their numbers one by one.

Sirh-Yai is fairly intelligent and fully capable of making long term plans to defeat an opponent. He is not above going after opponent's families or friends, using his until the ends of the earth ability to attack loved ones that live in other lands. All too often, game hunters tangling with Sirh-Yai will receive a letter in the mail about the mysterious and brutal murder of someone close to them.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, Sirh-Yai must hit with its bite attack. It can then



attempt to grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If Sirh-Yai wins the grapple check, he establishes a hold and can rake.

**Pounce (Ex):** If Sirh-Yai charges, he can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

**Rake (Ex):** Attack bonus +25 melee, damage d4+5.

**Skills:** Sirh-Yai has a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently. In areas of heavy undergrowth, the Hide bonus improves to +8.

### *Creating a Haunt Beast*

“Haunt beast” is a specific template that can be added to any medium or larger dire animal (referred to hereafter as the base creature). A haunt beast uses all the base creature’s statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**Size and Type:** The creature’s type changes to magical beast. Size remains unchanged.

**Hit Dice:** Increase all current and future Hit Dice to d10s.

**Speed:** Increase all forms of movement by +10 feet.

**Armor Class:** The base creature’s natural armor bonus is increased by +6.

**Attack:** A haunt beast retains all the attacks of the base creature.

**Full Attack:** A haunt beast retains all the attacks of the base creature.

**Special Attacks:** A haunt beast retains all the special attacks of the base creature and also gains the following.

**Frightful Presence (Ex):** A haunt beast can unsettle its opponents with its mere presence. The ability takes effect automatically whenever the creature attacks or charges. Creatures within 10 feet x the haunt beast’s HD are subject to the effect if they have fewer HD than the haunt beast. A potentially affected creature that succeeds on a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 haunt beast’s HD + haunt beast’s Cha modifier) remains immune to that haunt beast’s presence for 24 hours.

On a failure, creatures with 4 or less HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds and those with 5 or more HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds. Haunt beasts ignore the frightful presence of other haunt beasts.

**Summon Weather (Su):** All haunt beasts can *summon weather* as the spell (caster level 17th).

**Special Qualities:** A haunt beast retains all the special qualities of the base creature and also gains the following.

**Mimic Voice (Ex):** A haunt beast can mimic the voice of any creature it has heard. It can mock any variety of animal or people. It typically uses this power to lure its prey toward it. Discerning this mockery requires an opposed Sense Motive check versus the haunt beast’s Bluff check.

**Dimension Door (Su):** A haunt beast can use a *dimension door* as the spell (caster level 17th, Will save (object) DC 14 + haunt beast’s Cha bonus). It cannot use this ability while being observed.



*Until the Ends of the Earth (Su)*: A haunt beast that is hunting a specific target can always tell in what direction its prey lies. If its prey flees, a haunt beast can pursue its prey indefinitely, always appearing one mile away from its target. The haunt beast must target specific individuals in order for this ability to function. For instance, it could target “the one who invaded the tomb last night.” It would be unable to target “a member of English royalty.” The haunt beast cannot appear in an environment not conducive toward its survival. For example, a haunt shark cannot appear on land, nor can a haunt lion appear beneath the ocean.

A haunt beast cannot use this ability while being observed. This is a *teleport* effect.

*Spell Resistance*: Haunt beasts gain Spell Resistance equal to 10 + HD.

*Immunities*: All haunt beasts are immune to all mind-affecting effects. A haunt beast no longer needs to eat, sleep, or breathe.

**Abilities**: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +4, Dex +4, Con +6, Int +8, Wis +2, Cha +4

**Skills**: Haunt beasts gain a +4 profane bonus on Hide, Move Silently, Listen and Spot. They have a +10 profane bonus on Intimidate and Bluff.

**Feats**: Haunt beasts gain Combat Reflexes, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative and Power Attack

**Environment**: As base creature.

**Organization**: Solitary.

**Challenge Rating**: Same as the base creature +3.

**Treasure**: Same as base creature.

**Alignment**: Usually chaotic evil.

**Advancement Range**: Same as base creature.

### *Shadow Hunter*

#### Medium Undead

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	12d12 (78 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+4
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft. (6 squares)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	23 (+4 Dex, +9 natural armor), touch 14, flat-footed 19
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+6/+6
<b>Attack:</b>	Incorporeal weapon +11 melee (2d6 plus Con drain) or Incorporeal longbow +10 ranged (2d6 plus Con drain)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Shadow weapon +9/+9/+4/+4 (2d6 plus Con drain) or Shadow longbow +8/+8/+3 (1d8 plus Con drain)

<b>Space/Reach:</b>	5ft. /5ft.
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Shadow weapons, Constitution drain, awaken shadows
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Shadow jump, hide in plain sight, control lighting
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +10
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 20, Dex 18, Con —, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 16
<b>Skills:</b>	Hide +19, Listen +17, Move Silently +19, Spot +17, Survival +12, Tumble +9
<b>Feats:</b>	Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Track
<b>Environment:</b>	Any
<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary
<b>Challenge Rating:</b>	10
<b>Treasure:</b>	None
<b>Alignment:</b>	Always neutral
<b>Advancement:</b>	13–18 HD (Medium)
<b>Level Adjustment:</b>	+9

*I looked aghast at Professor Greene. For a moment, I did not recognize him, his appearance was so disheveled.*

*“Professor?” I inquired, still assimilating the fact that this was indeed him.*

*“He’s coming,” breathed the Professor, pressing his back against the door. “It’s too late. I’m so sorry, my dear boy.”*

*“What are you talking ab—”*

*Alas, I could not even finish my words. The lights flickered, as if the gas was running out. Our shadows suddenly elongated, gaining some new life of their own. I watched in dreamlike stupor as my own shadow broke from my very heels. It went sliding away under the door.*

*“What is going on?” I demanded. But I was never to hear Professor Greene again. A dark blade made of pure night stabbed silently through the door, piercing the dear Professor like a pin darting through cloth....*

### *Description*

A shadow hunter is an undead being driven by a singular purpose — to track, find and destroy their accursed victims. Shadow hunters come from a variety of cultures. Some are guardians of ancestral lands, hunting down all those who trespass upon it. Others are compelled to hunt down victims who have opened ancient tombs. Still fiendish forces, seeking to capture those who have sold their souls to darkness, send others.

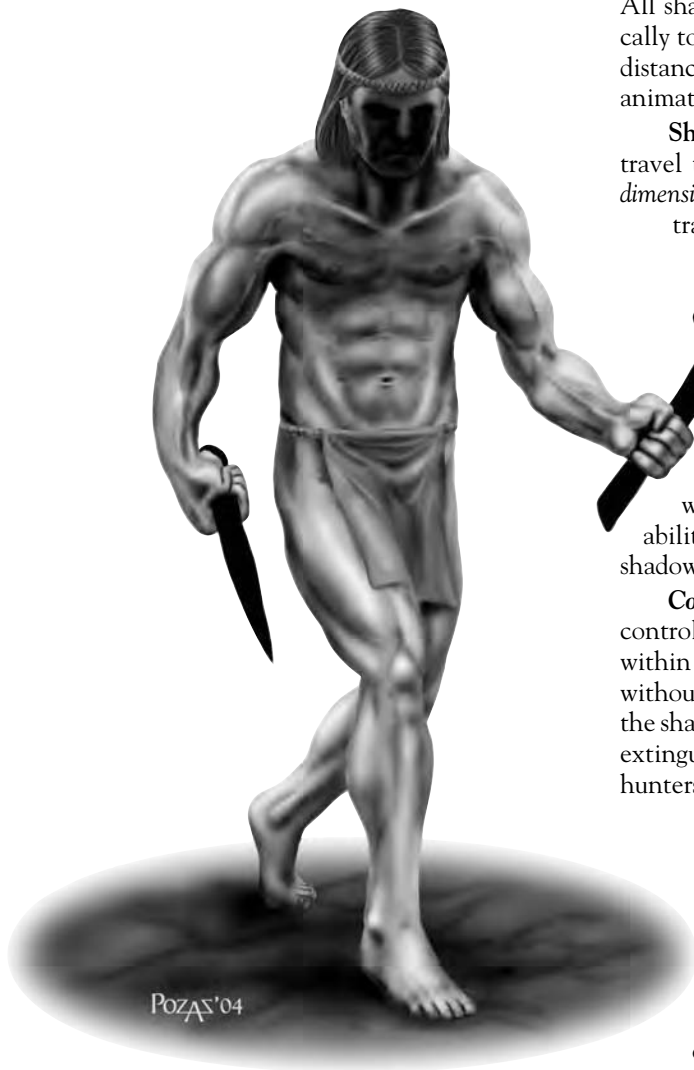
All shadow hunters appear as they did in life, except somewhat idealized — more muscular, a bit



taller and more imposing. Their faces are always covered completely in shadow, so that only a suggestion of their features can be discerned. Shadow hunters always carry weapons made from pure darkness.

### Combat

Shadow hunters enjoy the hunt, savoring the sweet fear of their prey. These cold, calculating beings always let their prey know that something is coming for them. They prefer to unnerve their opponents with their *control lighting* and *awaken shadow* powers. When engaging in combat, shadow hunters prefer to strike while hidden, moving off to strike again. One of their favorite tactics is to strike from behind a barrier, such as a wall, with their shadow weaponry.



**Shadow weapons (Su):** The weapons of a shadow hunter can pass through material objects. Thus, barriers and armor provide no protection against a shadow hunter's attacks. It need only make a touch attack — melee or ranged — to strike its targets. It should be noted that targets with cover would still benefit from their concealment from the shadow hunter.

**Constitution Drain (Su):** Any being struck by a shadow hunter takes 2d6 cold damage and must make a DC 19 Fort or take 1d6 points of Con drain. The save DC is Charisma based.

**Awaken Shadows (Sp):** A shadow hunter can animate the shadows of any living creature within 100 feet. Once a creature's shadow has been animated, it becomes an undead shadow (see *Monster Manual*) under the control of the shadow hunter. All shadow hunters can communicate telepathically to shadows under their control, regardless of distance. A living being whose shadow has been animated casts no shadow for 24 hours.

**Shadow Jump (Su):** A shadow hunter may travel through shadows as one might through a *dimension door* spell cast by a 12th level caster. Such travel must begin and end in an area with at least some shadow. A shadow hunter may perform this ability at will, traveling up to 880 feet when shadow jumping.

**Hide in Plain Sight (Su):** Masters of stealth, shadow hunters may hide even while being observed or without anything to hide behind. It must be within 10 feet of a shadow in order to use this ability. A shadow hunter cannot hide in its own shadow.

**Control Lighting (Sp):** Shadow hunters can control all forms of magical or nonmagical lighting within 100 feet. It may affect form of lighting even without a line of sight. When controlling lighting, the shadow hunter may choose to dim, brighten or extinguish any or all sources of light. Shadow hunters cannot use this ability on natural sunlight.

### Minion Creatures

The creatures in this category fill one of the lowest, yet most vital niches in the Red Death's master scheme. Minions are the cannon fodder for all the other, more intelligent followers of the Red



Death. These creatures, though formidable in their own right, are generally the first encountered along the path to confronting a prominent agent of the Red Death.

## *Brutes*

### **Large Monstrous Humanoid**

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	8d8+40 (76 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+2
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft. (6 squares)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	18 (+2 Dex, -1 Size, +7 natural) touch 12, flat-footed 17
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+8/+18
<b>Attack:</b>	Slam +14 melee (1d6+7)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	2 slams +14 (1d6+7)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	10 ft / 10 ft.
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	See text
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	See text
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +6
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 25, Dex 14, Con 20, Int 5, Wis 8, Cha 6
<b>Skills:</b>	See below
<b>Feats:</b>	See below
<b>Environment:</b>	Any
<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary or pack (1-4)
<b>Challenge Rating:</b>	6
<b>Treasure:</b>	Standard
<b>Alignment:</b>	Usually chaotic evil
<b>Advancement:</b>	By character class
<b>Level Advancement:</b>	+6

Lord Brighton knelt down and scraped at the stain upon the floor. "Here," he said, "Blood from where we shot the creature." Standing, he held up a tiny scrap of something in the light.

"And what is that?" I asked, straining to see in the darkness.

Lord Brighton actually gave it a taste before nodding to himself. "Hair," he said in his assured manner. "Human hair."

"But that's not possible," I exclaimed. "The thing we saw must have been at least eight feet tall."

The plaster wall beside us exploded. As I recoiled to draw my pistol, I saw a large hand reach through and engulf Lord Brighton's head. His screams were muffled as he was dragged through the opening.

Brutes are beings of huge mass and strength, most often created or bred into existence by demented scientists. Most brutes were once human, now forever altered to suit the needs of their masters. Brutes often function as bodyguards for

their masters or act as special servants when a victim needs assassination or retrieval.

Brutes can speak whatever languages they have been taught by their masters.

## *The Sudden Brute*

The sudden brute combines incredible speed with an equal level of ferocity. Sudden brutes appear to be extremely tall and lithe humanoids with patchy hair all over their bodies. Their arms are extremely long, scraping the ground as they walk.

**Bounding (Ex):** A sudden brute may leap and bound as it runs, allowing it to charge in a crooked line.

**Evasion (Ex):** In situations where a sudden brute can make a Reflex save to avoid damage (such as from a stick of dynamite), a sudden brute that makes its saving throw takes no damage at all.

**Improved Speed:** Add +10 feet to the brute's normal speed.

**Simian Jumping (Ex):** The sudden brute gains a +20 racial bonus on all Jump checks.

**Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex):** Sudden brutes are able to react to danger in extraordinary circumstances. They cannot be caught flat-footed, nor can an opponent flank them.

**Feats:** Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack.

**Skills:** Climb +11, Jump +37, Hide +6.

## *The Crushing Brute*

True monsters in their own right, the crushing brute represents pure hatred and anger. These massive creatures have oversized muscles that strain to burst from their thick, ruddy skin. Veins bulge all over their body. Their eyes burn with an unnatural light.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the crushing brute must hit with one of its slam attacks. It can then attempt to grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

**Rend (Ex):** A crushing brute that has hit an opponent with both slam attacks, or successfully grappled an opponent can rend its opponent, doing 2d6+10 crushing damage.

**Unstoppable (Su):** Crushing brutes gain a +20 to any break check. They also ignore the hardness of all barriers or objects when attempting to damage or sunder them.

**Hurl (Ex):** Crushing brutes can hurl any object smaller than themselves that they can also lift,



using the item as a thrown weapon. They are always considered proficient with the objects they hurl. Hurling objects have a range increment of 10. The objects do 1d6 points of damage, plus the crushing brute's Strength bonus.

**Feats:** Power Attack, Improved Bull Rush, Awesome Blow

**Skills:** Intimidate +6

### *Brutes as Characters*

Brutes make superb bodyguards, assassins and muscle for extortionists and other criminals. Their massive strength or sudden motion gives them considerable advantages in combat.

Brute characters possess the following traits.

- +15 Strength, +4 Dexterity, +10 Constitution, -5 Intelligence, -2 Wisdom, -4 Charisma

- Large size.

- Space /Reach: 10 feet /10 feet

- A sudden brute's base land speed is 40 feet; a crushing brute has a base land speed of 30 feet.

- Racial Hit Dice: A brute begins with eight level of monstrous humanoid, which provides 8d8 Hit Dice, a base attack bonus of +8 and base saving throws of Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +6.

- Racial Skills: A brute's monstrous humanoid levels give it skill points equal to 11 x (4 + Int modifier, minimum 1). Its class skills are either Climb, Jump, and Hide (sudden brute) or Intimidate (crushing brute).

- Racial Feats: A brute's monstrous humanoid levels give it three feats.

- +7 natural armor bonus.

- Natural weapons: Slam (1d6)

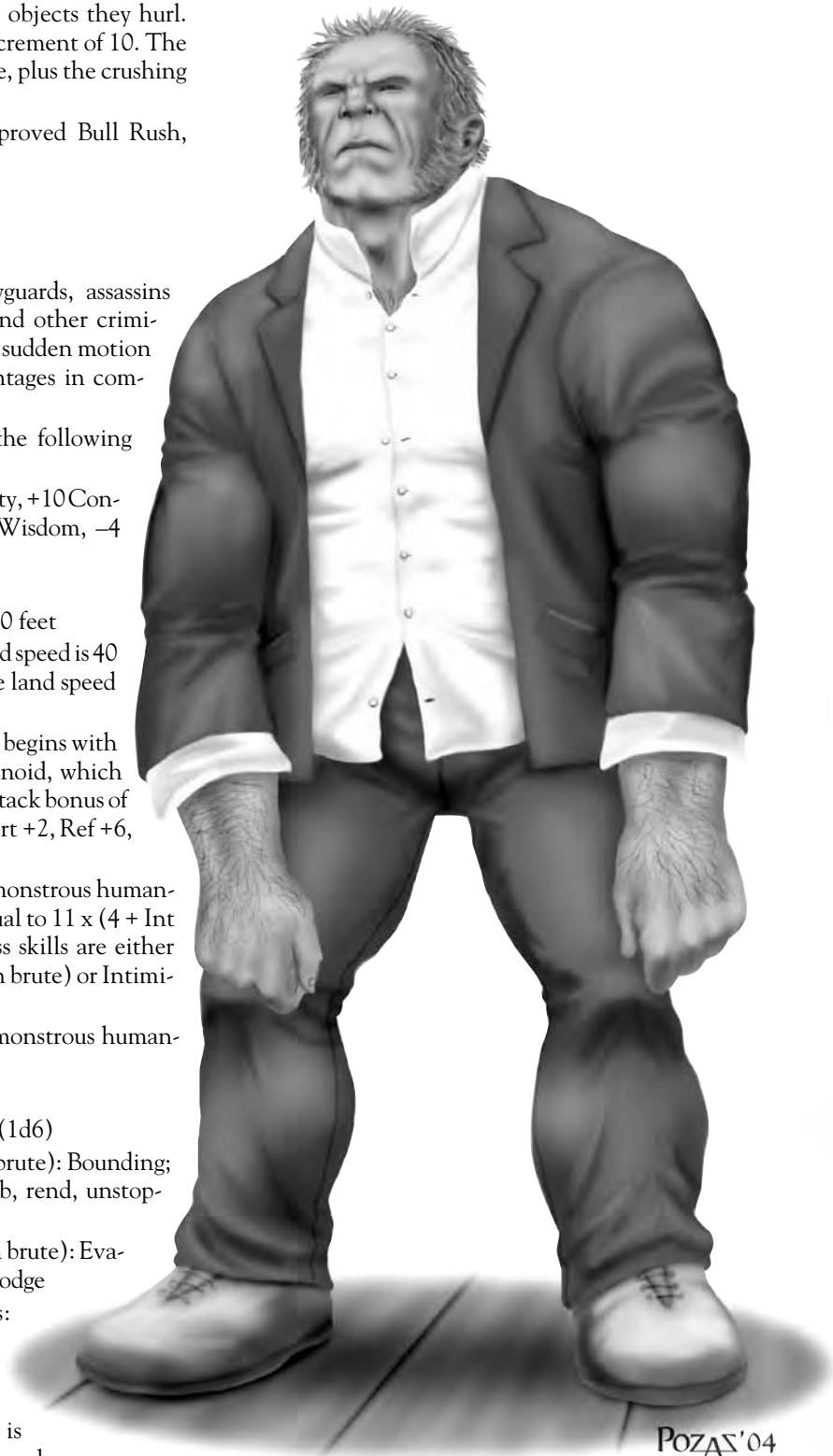
- Special attacks (sudden brute): Bounding; (crushing brute) improved grab, rend, unstoppable, hurl.

- Special qualities (sudden brute): Evasion, simian jumping, uncanny dodge

- Automatic languages:

Brutes automatically speak their native language.

**Favored Class:** The favored class of a sudden brute is athlete. The favored class of a crushing brute is soldier.



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### *The Skulker*

#### Medium Monstrous Humanoid

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	3d8+3 (16 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+2
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft. (6 squares)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	18 (+3 Dex, +5 natural) touch 13, flat-footed 15
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+3/+3
<b>Attack:</b>	Claw +3 melee (1d4)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	2 claws +3 melee (1d4), and 1 bite +1 melee (1d6)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	5 ft / 5 ft.
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	see below
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	see below
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +2
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8
<b>Skills:</b>	See below
<b>Feats:</b>	Multiattack,
<b>Environment:</b>	Any
<b>Organization:</b>	Hording skulkers: gang (4–9), band (10–24), horde (50–100), regiment (20–70 plus 3 brutes and one human leader); quiet skulkers: solitary, gang (4–9)
<b>Challenge Rating:</b>	3
<b>Treasure:</b>	Standard
<b>Alignment:</b>	Usually chaotic evil
<b>Advancement:</b>	By character class
<b>Level Adjustment:</b>	+2

*The window shatters and through the opening comes a mass of quivering figures. Their eyes flash with a sickly yellow light, and their bony fists are crammed into their gaping mouths. They all speak as one, chanting the same mantra, over and over, "Hungry... so hungry."*

Skulkers are base minions of evil, always taking their orders from some greater intelligence. Like brutes, these pitiable creatures are often the product of an insane process of experimentation or breeding. Skulkers always need a figure of power to lead them. Without a leader, they are without cause and purpose, sometimes even going mad when not controlled by an outside force.

Skulkers can speak whatever languages they have been taught by their masters. They come in two varieties.

### *The Hording Skulker*

Hording skulkers are minions created to be encountered en masse. They are often bred in large

colonies and kept in dank, cramped holding pens until they are released to do their master's bidding. When they do attack, they mob their enemies, using their large numbers to take down one opponent at a time.

Hording skulkers resemble hunched, emaciated humanoids with dark skin and no hair. Bloodshot eyes bulge from their sockets. Ribs can be clearly seen through their thin skin. Their teeth gnash and flash constantly with an insidious hunger.

**En Masse Attack (Ex):** For each hording skulker that is designated to an opponent, all other hording skulkers gain a +1 to hit and damage. Thus, if four hording skulkers were designated to a single target, all four of them would receive a +3 bonus on hit and damage. Hording skulkers can only designate targets that are adjacent to them.

**Improved Aid Another (Ex):** Hording skulkers give their allies a +3 to their attack or AC instead of +2 when using the aid another special attack.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the hording skulker must hit with one of its claw attacks. It can then attempt to grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

**Mind of Many (Su):** All hording skulkers who serve the same master can communicate with each other telepathically so long as they are within 100 feet of each other. Communicating in this way is a free action.

**Skills:** Search +6, Spot +5, Listen +5, Tumble +9

**Feats:** Dodge, Mobility, Multiattack

### *The Quiet Skulker*

Quiet skulkers are creatures crafted to work independently or in small groups. Quiet skulkers are able to solve problems on their own, but are still dependent on a higher intelligence to direct them. Quiet skulkers are often created in isolated cages where the last vestiges of their humanity is stripped from them through torture, science and magic.

Quiet skulkers attack from the shadow if they think they have a chance of beating their opponents. If they judge their opponents too strong, they typically use their *disguise self* ability to walk away from the situation in order to gather greater forces.

Quiet skulkers appear to be tall humanoids with long, greasy dark hair. Their limbs are extremely long and spindly. Extended spidery fingers protrude from their hands like the crooked branches of an ancient tree. Their eyes always burn with a resentful light — resentful for the humanity that was once theirs.



**Reach (Ex):** Quiet skulkers have a 10 foot reach.

**Sneak Attack (Ex):** Quiet skulkers add +2d6 to their melee damage when attacking an opponent that is either flanked or denied its Dex bonus. This damage is not multiplied in the case of critical hits. This ability does not function against creatures not normally subject to critical hits or that have concealment.

**Camouflage (Su):** A quiet skulker can hide even when there is no concealment or objects to hide behind. It cannot hide while being observed.

**Spider Climb (Ex):** As per the spell, except that it functions as an extraordinary ability.

**Disguise Self (Sp):** As per the spell, as if cast by a 5th level caster. A quiet skulker can perform this ability at will, though it must continually remanifest the illusion to maintain its disguise.

**Low-light Vision (Ex):** All quiet skulkers have low-light vision.

**Skills:** Disguise +5, Hide +11, Move Silently +11, Open Locks +9

**Feats:** Blind-fight, Multiattack, Stealthy

### *Skulkers as Characters*

Skulkers make handy criminals, since their stealth-related qualities give them an advantage in the business of illicit activities.

Skulker characters have the following traits:

- +7 Dexterity, +2 Constitution, -2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma

- Medium size.

- Space /Reach: 5 ft. /5 ft. (hording skulkers); 5 ft. /10 ft. (quiet skulkers)

- A skulker's base land speed is 30 feet.

- Quiet skulkers have low-light vision.

- Racial Hit Dice: A skulker begins with three levels of monstrous humanoid, which provide 3d8 Hit Dice, a base attack bonus of +3 and base saving throws of Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +3.

- Racial Skills: A skulker's monstrous humanoid levels give it skill points equal to 6 x (4 + Int modifier, minimum 1). Its class skills are either Search, Spot, Listen, Tumble (hording skulker) or Disguise, Hide, Move Silently, Open Locks (quiet skulker).

- Racial Feats: A skulker's humanoid levels give it two feats. All skulkers receive Multiattack as a bonus feat.

- +5 natural armor bonus.

- Natural Weapons: 2 claws (1d4) and bite (1d6)

- Special Attacks: (hording skulker) en masse attack, improved aid another, improved grab (quiet skulker) sneak attack +2d6

- Special Qualities: (hording skulker) mind of many (quiet skulker) camouflage, spider climb, disguise self

- Favored Class: Criminal

- Level adjustment: +2

### *Suggested Creatures for Masque of the Red Death*

The concept of "masques" (see above) enables a DM to use almost any creature in the *Monster Manual* and *Monster Manual II*, the *Fiend Folio* or *Denizens of Dread* by adding up to two masques to these creatures to adapt them to the world of Gothic Earth.

Instead of using lists of "acceptable" monsters, therefore, DMs are encouraged to make their own decisions as to which creatures fit best into their campaigns. Gothic Earth holds many surprises for the unwary, as monsters that no one thought could ever exist suddenly turn up in isolated places. Even the most fantastic creatures may exist as part of some mad scientist's attempt to re-create mythic creatures.

And of course, humans present some of the most horrific opponents that can offer a challenge to any party of adventurers. They offer a constant reminder that, except for a decision here, a turning of the path there, even the highest minded idealist could become a sadistic torturer or a psychopathic murderer.



POZAS'04





# Appendix III: Lairs of Evil

*HIGH THE VANES OF SHREWSBURY GLEAM  
ISLANDED IN SEVERN STREAM;  
THE BRIDGES FROM THE STEEPLD CREST  
CROSS THE WATER EAST AND WEST.  
THE FLAG OF MORN IN CONQUEROR'S STATE  
ENTERS AT THE ENGLISH GATE:  
THE VANQUISHED EVE, AS NIGHT PREVAILS,  
BLEEDS UPON THE ROAD TO WALES.*

— ALFRED EDWARD HOUSMAN, "THE WELSH MARCHES"





The door to the laboratory stood open as if in mocking invitation. There was no sign of the diabolical doctor anywhere. I hesitated but a moment and glanced at my companion. He nodded and we entered together.

The room was painted white, even the wooden floor. Not the white of cotton or brittle eggshells, but the pale drab white of bones, and the room felt as lifeless and malevolent as a leering skull. Something was not right here. I could not tell what, but the feeling gnawed at my soul.

Sterile glass beakers and cold metal instruments littered tabletop and counters, a stark mute witness to the horrors the doctor performed here. My eyes were drawn to the only spot of color in the room. Lying in a dustbin at the foot of an operating table were discarded bandages stained bright red with blood. My eyes strayed to the table and its worn leather straps for holding a patient still, and then for a moment they betrayed me. Before me on the once empty table stretched an odd caricature of a man, his flesh peeled back from a wound on his chest as a white-coated man leaned over him with a scalpel. The eyes of the injured man stared up at me with a look of such pain and pleading that I turned away. And then the vision was gone. "Did you see that?" I gasped.

## *The Nature of a Lair of Evil*

Though there are many monsters and creatures of evil that haunt the dark reaches of Gothic Earth, not all are direct servitors of the Red Death. The dens of common creatures that seek death and destruction are rank with the fetid odor of corruption, but they have not transcended their mortal bonds and are merely dens of iniquity. Only warrens of creatures tainted by the touch of the Red Death or its lieutenants are transformed into an unholy refuge that is a *lair of evil*.

Similar to a *sinkhole of evil*, a lair of evil is empowered with terrible talents that can distort and harm the perceptions of any sentient creature. However, while a sinkhole is an echo resonating with the taint of past evils and creating feelings of malaise and foreboding, a lair of evil is different. It vibrates with a living, palpable presence under the command of a master of evil. And like the lair of any cornered beast defending his own, this den provides not only shelter and a safe haven to hide the creature when it is most vulnerable, but it is also a source of strength for its denizen.

Though different from a sinkhole of evil, a lair of evil has many traits in common with sinkholes.

Rules for sinkholes of evil are listed in the **Ravenloft Dungeon Master's Guide**. This chapter details the differences, and then presents several examples of typical lairs of evil, as well as creative ways to use these rules in an unexpected manner.

While a sinkhole of evil is the resulting echo of a history of evil deeds performed at the site and attracting other creatures of similar ilk, a lair of evil is a dark refuge, the creation and living servant of a powerful master of evil. Often many unspeakable horrors have been performed in this warren at its master's bidding, and the site takes on the powers of a sinkhole of evil. But a lair's primary purpose is to serve and protect its creator, and so most lairs of evil acquire an unnatural life of their own. Such a place can intelligently seek to conceal its master, to weaken the master's foes and to provide a source of additional strength for its master when the creature is cornered.

Only creatures that have been changed by the touch of the Red Death or that have willingly sacrificed their will and a piece of their soul to become a lieutenant of one of the Red Death's notorious generals have the power to create a Lair of Evil. The site must first be consecrated by a generation of evil deeds. This may require years — nearly three decades per rank, or a master may find and take command of an existing sinkhole of evil or transplant a seed from the heart of darkness of another lair of evil and let it take root — a process requiring only 1d6 years per rank.

A lair of evil is assigned ranks of sentience or intelligence — from 1 to 5 — by which its other effects are determined. The rank of a lair of evil equals either the rank of the preexisting sinkhole of evil that was transformed by the master into her warren or one-quarter of the master's intelligence rounded up, as determined by the DM. Thus a vampire with an intelligence of 15 could build a rank 4 lair, while a lich with an intelligence of 18 could craft a rank 5 lair.

Each lair of evil possesses many different traits. Each trait is defined in more detail in the following sections.

## *Names and Epithets*

A lair of evil may have a name or several names, or its name may be lost in the tides of time. When the name is unknown or it is considered ill luck to call the place by its proper name, local folk will use an epithet or descriptor to name the place.



Peasants call Castle Dracula or Tepes Manor “the Black Castle” or “the Place of the Impaler.”

### *Rank and Its Effects*

A lair of evil possesses several special effects similar to those associated with a sinkhole of evil. When a creature of evil creates a lair, her very nature corrupts the site and fills it with a taint of negative emotions related to her misdeeds. When intruders trespass here, they are immersed in the fog of this taint and may suffer penalties to any actions influenced by the nature of the place’s taint. Further, the potency of the taint is even stronger on the Ethereal Plane. The image of the lair in that realm is distorted by overlying images symbolic of the lair’s taint.

A lair’s rank may also restrict other aspects of the warren. Lairs are constructed in layers with higher ranked lairs having more layers. Rank also defines what *degree of wakefulness* a site may achieve once it is roused and the CR of creatures or animations that the lair may use as agents. Lair rank also defines the maximum CR level of creatures that may be drawn to live in the lair and serve its master. The available creature’s CR equals two times a lair of evil’s rank. Finally, a site’s rank also determines the level of *corruption* intruders may suffer from once they leave the lair.

### *Will Saves*

When a Will save must be made for any intruder suffering an attack related to the taint, the DC is increased by the modifier shown on Table A3-1. If the being is on the Ethereal Plane, use the Ethereal modifier instead.

### *Action Attempts*

When an action requires a die roll to determine the chance of success and that action may be influenced by the site’s taint or the action is against the lair or its inhabitants, if the site is awake and not dormant (see below), the skill check suffers a penalty equal to the modifier shown on Table A3-1.

### *Turning and Rebuking Attempts*

Any attempts to turn or rebuke undead or evil creatures while within a lair suffer a penalty equal to the action modifier to the turning check. If the master of the lair is present and aware of the attempt he adds an additional -2 penalty to the die roll. Thus an attempt to turn undead in a Rank 3 lair would suffer a -2 penalty to the die roll, -4 if the master is present.

### *Fear, Horror and Madness Checks*

Any character called upon to make a Fear, Horror or Madness check while in a lair of evil will suffer a penalty equal to the action modifier to the die roll.

### *Powers Checks*

When an intruder must make a *powers* check while in a lair of evil, the corruption of the site increases the chance of failure by the percentage indicated on Table A3-1.

### *Size*

It might seem logical that a lair of evil’s size is related to the lair’s rank, but this is not always true.

*Table A3-1: The Effects of Sinkholes*

Sinkhole Rank	Ethereal Modifier	Material Modifier	Action Modifier	Powers Modifier
1	0	0	0	+0%
2	+1	0	-1	+2%
3	+2	+1	-2	+4%
4	+3	+2	-3	+6%
5	+4	+3	-4	doubles chance



Often the natural boundaries of a site restrict its size. A lair in a cave is limited to the size of the delving. The history of the key events that empowered the site may also restrict its size. A massacre in a town square may define the size of the site by the dimensions of the square.

While size may not be influenced by rank, a lair of evil is constructed in layers to create defenses for its master. The higher the rank the more layers present in a lair. Each lair that contains a higher layer contains all the lower rank layers as well.

A master of evil is not limited to the layers of her lair; she can spread her influence outward like sinister tendrils hiding beneath the surface to create smaller refuges that can draw on the powers of the lair of evil. This requires some objects linked to the original lair, such as other coffins, artifacts or earth from a tomb. Such remote tendrils of evil function as if one rank lower than the lair of evil.

### *Taints & Ethereal Resonance*

Every lair of evil is rife with some underlying emotion that empowers the site and creates a taint that it can cast its influence over. Related to each taint is an *ethereal resonance* in which echoes of objects and events from the past continue to exist and create a vision of the taint overlying the physical reality of the lair. The ethereal resonance's images, sounds, odors and textures reflect the nature of the taint in some way and add to the overwhelming influence that emotion has over all intruders. High-ranking lairs can hold more than mere ethereal essence; they may also trap spirits of

those who died or an embodiment of the emotion in a semi-corporeal form that is able to interact with and possibly harm ethereal travelers. In some cases, based on the waking status of a lair, elements of the ethereal resonance may overlie the physical world, creating additional confusion and challenges for the heroes.

Several taints and their suggested resonances are detailed in the **Ravenloft Dungeon Master's Guide**. These taints include: agony/pain, despair, fear/terror, hatred, lust and rage/anger. The DM can create a variety of other taints from the models provided. Some possible taints to consider are: jealousy, greed, gluttony, apathy, pride/hubris, betrayal, domination and trauma/catatonia. Madness offers a variety of other taints to consider from hysteria, sociopath, neuroses and megalomania to kleptomania, bi-polarity, multiple personalities and pyromania. The DM should prepare a list of images, sounds and other phenomenon that are symbolic of the taint.

### *Legends*

The DM may want to consider creating some legends surrounding a lair of evil for the heroes to discover during their adventures as a precursor to visiting the site. These legends may be true, distortions of the truth or veritable fancies that mask the truth with similes. By discovering legends ahead of time, the heroes may be better prepared to face the deadly challenges that await them or may find their expectations built to a frenzy before they even face the lair.

*Table A3-2: Layers of Defenses*

Rank	Layer
0	<b>Heart of Darkness</b> — the resting place of the master where he stores his most valuable possession or hides when vulnerable. This may consist of an item such as a chest or coffin.
1	<b>Crucible</b> — the hidden site of master's inner sanctum, such as a den or alcove.
2	<b>Cradle</b> — the site in which the crucible is hidden, such as a single, well-defended room.
3	<b>Nest</b> — the complex or tomb or wing in which the chamber lies.
4	<b>Home</b> — the building or structure in which the nest lies.
5	<b>Territory</b> — the environs that surround the home over which the master can exert his influence, such as a forest, swamp or wasteland.



### *Setting Description*

The physical setting of a lair can take on a wide variety of forms, but should be linked to the history of the lair's master. The setting should also fit with the nation or domain in which it is found to add to the feeling of verisimilitude of Gothic Earth. Certainly, the DM may place a lair in a setting that seems out of place with its environs, but the backstory of the lair should explain why this odd disparity exists. For instance, a Greek temple might be found in the frozen wastes of Greenland where a marine merchant was shipwrecked and built the shrine to honor the god he believed saved him.

### *History*

Each lair should include some notes on the history associated with the site. What atrocities were committed here? When was the lair created? Why did the master of evil choose this site for his refuge? Each story should not only provide clues to the nature of the master of the lair, but also look at what might happen to intruders, how they will be treated and what challenges they may face. It is recommended that every lair's history should include a clue as to how the master may be defeated. Often when evil gathers, there too will be found some item or event that is its bane or at least places the master at a disadvantage. This element, once found, may be used by the heroes against the master, as a respite from the evil, or at least as an opportunity for the heroes to escape with their lives. It is often helpful for DMs to create adventure hooks and trails that will provide an opportunity for future adventures involving the master and

influenced by the heroes' successes and failures during their encounters.

### *Master*

Each lair has one and only one master, or so it seems. There have been stories where twins or an entire community seemed to be master of a lair of evil, but always there proved to be a dominant mind or group mind that controlled the lair and its effects. The DM should present details for the master, exploring her personality, motivations and plots, game statistics, nature, powers, combat tactics, minions and servants, as well as plans for escape and how the master will react regarding heroes who have already defeated her once.

### *Agents*

While a lair's master and his minions are more than capable of defending themselves, a lair of evil may seek to aid its denizens and even defend itself when the master is absent. Since only high level lairs of evil are able to use limited animations, most lairs need others to act as its eyes, ears and hands. Low rank lairs use shadows, insects, winds and lights, while high rank lairs may command more powerful beasts or animate a portion of its form. Agent creatures and animations should be related to the nature of the taint of the place and limited to a single type. A lair of anger might animate fire or fire ants. A lair of pride might command suits of armor or statues. The DM should select an agent creature or animation and limit the creature's CR to the lair's rank. Table A3-3 provides a list of possible agents to consider:

*Table A3-3: Agents Of the Lair*

Rank	Agents
1	Shadows (nonmagical), swarm, insects, paintings, reflections, scarves, winds, faerie lights.
2	Bats, birds, toys, coins, imps, snakes, plants, flowers.
3	Will o' wisp, skeleton, lemurs/monkeys, wolves/dogs, cats, dolls, sand/snow, scarabs.
4	Zombie, hawk, weapons, water, apes, bear, vines, stained glass. Ghouls, vulture, rocks, automatons, statues, mummy beasts, furniture, stone shape.



### *Corruptions*

Unlike a sinkhole of evil, a lair of evil may leave a stench of corruption on visitors when they leave. This corruption continues to cause the character to suffer some of the effects of the place's taint for several days and plague the heroes with nightmares and a sense of déjà vu. The effects of this corruption are determined by the rank of the lair. If corruption occurs, the character affected will suffer all the effects listed for the lair's rank and all lower ranks as well. The common effect of corruption is that the character continues to suffer the action and Will save penalties for the determined duration.

The chance that this corruption will occur and its effects are listed on Table A3-4.

### *Life's Blood*

Though a lair of evil is not a living creature, it must still draw its energy from somewhere. Each lair of evil has an event related to its taint from which it may draw additional power. For instance, a lair with the taint of despair might grow stronger with each death; a lair with the taint of anger would gain strength whenever great pain or torture is inflicted. During an encounter where this type of event occurs, the lair may perform small animations and add a +1 bonus on the combat and skill scores of its agents. Once the encounter ends, the bonus ends.

### *Bane*

Creating a vulnerability for a lair can create balance in an adventure, providing clever and resourceful heroes the opportunity to gain an advantage over their foe. The DM is encouraged to create some item or event that was important in defeating a master or the lair as detailed in their history. For evil to exist there must be a light it displaces, an innocent harmed, or something defiled or desecrated. This element is the master and his lair's bane. When the item is used or the specified event occurs or a ghost of an innocent is summoned, the lair and its master suffer several penalties.

In the presence of its bane, a lair will lose one level of wakefulness and all the benefits gained. The DM will have to determine how the master is affected as related to the nature of the element and the master's back-story. Perhaps the master suffers a -2 penalty to her Armor Class; or perhaps she loses the use of a special ability; or perhaps the master loses initiative and always acts last during a turn. The effect should be dramatic, but limited in its duration. This insures that the heroes must work swiftly and cleverly to take advantage of this fleeting opportunity.

### *Heart of Darkness and Soul of Light*

Within a lair of evil lies its master's greatest refuge and often the source of her power — this is

*Table A3-4: Levels of Corruption*

Lair Rank	Chance of Corruption	Days of Duration	Corruption Effects
1	30%	1	Stench — Others tend to avoid the character; interactions with others suffer a -2 penalty.
2	25%	2	Tainted — Many choices related to the lair's taint will face the hero; there is a 5% chance per lair's rank, that the lair's agents will pursue the hero.
3	20%	3	Bruise — One skill or ability score related to the lair's taint is reduced by -2; if a Will save is failed, the duration doubles.
4	15%	4	Infection — All the penalties and effects the hero suffers are also suffered by all friends who are within 10 yards of the hero.
5	10%	5	Scar — The hero must perform a Con check with failure resulting in the permanent reduction of one skill or ability score related to the lair's taint by -1.



the *heart of darkness*. The master and her lair will go to great extremes to conceal and protect this element for if it should fall into the hands of the master's foes, it could mean his undoing. A heart of darkness may be as simple as the coffin where a vampire lies to regenerate his wounds and wait for day break. Or it may be an item that makes the creature vulnerable to normal weapons or blind or lame or weak and unable to fight. The DM should take care in creating the heart of darkness for each lair and should take pains to conceal this element through subterfuge, guile and deadly wards and traps. It is important to provide the players with clues about this heart of darkness during their adventures or through distorted legends associated with the master.

And where there is darkness, there too must be light, for without one the other cannot exist. In the creation of a lair of evil, light is pushed back, diminished, and imprisoned, for it is through the abuse of goodness and innocence that evil gains its strength. This shackled light is referred to as the *soul of light*. This story element provides the DM with the perfect tool to help the heroes succeed or at least survive their quest. The soul of light may provide the heroes with a sanctuary while in the maze of the lair of evil, a place where they may rest and lick their wounds. Or the soul of light could provide the heroes with a vision of the master's history or a clue to the master's vulnerability. Indeed, this bastion of good may be where the master's bane is located. The DM should weave clues about the lair's soul of light into the backstory and legends. The soul's location should not be obvious and should be cleverly hidden or disguised. When well thought out, the use of a heart of darkness and a soul of light adds to the drama of an adventure.

### *The Waking Nightmare*

When a lair's master is absent, a lair lies dormant, seeming to be nothing more than its physical form. Other creatures and challenges may still be present, but they do not threaten intruders in an organized fashion. The modifiers associated with taint-influenced Will saves and turning checks as well as a lair's ethereal resonance are active as if the lair was a mere sinkhole of evil. Once the lair's master is present or a specific triggering event occurs, the lair begins to awaken and turn its attention toward trespassers. With each level of wakefulness, a lair of evil gains additional powers to

interact with visitors and to defend itself and its master.

The limit to the level of wakefulness that a lair of evil can achieve equals its rank. When a lair is awakened by a triggering event, it begins at level 1. With each new encounter there is a 10% cumulative chance that the lair continues to the next level until it reaches a waking level equal to its rank at which point the lair is fully roused. If the lair's master is present or the triggering event occurs again, the lair will automatically rouse itself the next encounter to the next highest level of wakefulness possible.

### *Waking Triggers and Events*

The DM should select a trigger event that awakens a lair when it occurs. This event should be linked to the taint of the lair and should be the result of some action performed by the heroes. For instance, if the lair's taint is betrayal and a hero performs an act of betrayal of either friend or foe, then the lair will begin to wake.

When a lair of evil awakens, a warning event should occur that alerts the heroes that something has happened. The DM may select any dramatic omen, but if possible, it should be related to the lair's taint. Waking events may be visual, audio, emotional, tactile or an omen. Below is a list of the types of events that a DM may select:

**Visual:** The lights go out; a fire flares; a statue or painting moves; a phantom light; a visual omen — black cat; death's head; spooky shadow; dream vision; distorted reflection.

**Audio:** A scream; glass shatters; a boom or knocking; bells toll; ghastly moaning; a phantom choir; incessant whispering; sudden silence; something rips,

**Emotional:** Overwhelming crying, giddiness, terror, hopelessness; cold chill.

**Tactile:** Pushed back; knocked unconscious; total exhaustion; agonizing pain.

**Omen:** Lightning strike; something opens, falls, or slams shut; a violent wind howls; a character is temporarily possessed; a beast acts bizarrely; temporary animation of some object.

### *Levels of Wakefulness*

When a lair is awakened it begins at level 1 and continues to acquire one level of wakefulness at a time until it reaches the level that matches its rank. Effects are not cumulative. Only the affects of the



current waking level are in effect. When a lair awakens, all actions checks and ability saves that are influenced by the site's taint suffer the action penalty listed on Table A3-1.

**Level 1: Dreaming** — At this lowest waking level, the lair is fitful and dreaming. The heroes may encounter a phantom form from the lair's ethereal resonance appearing and then disappearing. This is distracting and causes intruder's initiative checks to suffer a -2 penalty to the die roll. The lair's agents begin to appear with odd frequency, but they act normally otherwise.

**Level 2: Musing** — This is a state of semi-consciousness. The lair begins to gain some control over its environment, but its actions seem random and occur in no discernible pattern. The lair can make phantom dreams and images appear, perform an action and then vanish. It can cause other brief illusions of audio, emotional and tactile sensations that should fill the intruder with a sense of wonder and trepidation. And the lair gains the power of *impetus* — the power to move items a short distance or to animate an item for one turn. The lair is filled with malaise, an uncomfortable feeling related to the lair's taint. Player characters will be required to make a DC 17 Will save every time they voice doubts in a course of action for their character. If the save is failed, the hero is not be willing to pursue the specific action. Agents appear in ever increasing numbers and seem to react to the illusions the lair conjures.

**Level 3: Watchful** — The presence is awake, watching and testing intruders but takes little direct action. Agents of the lair follow intruders, and trespassers sense there is something or someone present. Heroes may feel watched, hear breathing, catch fleeting glimpses of something passing, witness mysterious shadows, smell odd things, or discover that items have been moved. As the lair awakens, there is a sense that something is different and changed: perhaps there is a persistent sound or sensation, or some event seems to occur again and again. The lair gains the power of *suggestion* — using ghostly whispers, phantom emotions, and contrived events to tempt the character to embrace the lair's taint. And the lair can *manipulate* — affecting the timing and occurrence of minor events to test character responses. For instance, a door may refuse to open for one fellow, but opens easily for another. Reaction responses can be delayed for drama.

**Level 4: Alert** — When this level of wakefulness occurs, things change for the heroes, for the lair gains the ability of *misdirection*. The heroes find themselves trapped in the lair, their efforts to find an exit thwarted or they find their path leads them in a circle back into the lair. The lair of evil is interested, defensive and challenging, reacting to intruders' actions. Agents are active and may interact directly with the heroes — mocking, taunting and resisting their presence. Agents may evade combat, frustrating the heroes, unless the lair chooses confrontation. The lair gains the power of *mischievousness* — the ability to cause animations of small objects to cause embarrassment, misfortune and evade the heroes.

**Level 5: Alarmed** — This final level of wakefulness raises the alarm and the lair of evil becomes angry, animated and aggressive. In this stage, the lair may attack trespassers directly if the DM chooses. When the alarm is raised the environment is transformed in some way to hinder trespassers. A phantom fog may arise to cause confusion or sow fear, despair or panic. A persistent alarm may grow louder and more frequent. Agents begin a series of hit and run encounters. Doors may shut and *wizard lock*. New barriers, hazards, and obstacles materialize to channel heroes in one direction. In addition, there may be *phantom shifts* here and there that overlap the physical plane with elements from the ethereal resonance. These *seemings* manifest as something that is not what it seems: statues may come to life, food may be toxic, there are flames that don't burn, but drain or cause another sort of injury. Fair may seem foul and foul may be fair — dangers hiding blessings causing subtle challenges. And while agents become more aggressive, the lair may also perform simple animations of weapons, armor, statues, furnishings, art or the plants and the elements to defeat the interlopers. And all attacks against agents of the lair suffer the action penalty. Ultimately the lair seeks to destroy or drive out the trespassers.

### *Escaping*

The DM should design a last resort way for the heroes to escape any lair of evil and flee to safety. Such escape routes and events should be fraught with peril and require the heroes to pay a dear price they won't soon forget. Not every hero can be a victor, but if they can live to fight another day, the players will return for another and another adventure. Escapes may be discovered by the heroes





through blind chance or a nonplayer character may reveal his escape route just before he dies.

### *Sealing the Way or Slaying the Master*

Ultimately, destroying a lair may require razing the site to the ground and sanctifying the land or seizing the *heart of darkness* and using it to destroy the master. With the death and dissolution of the master, a lair of evil reverts to a sinkhole of evil unless the area has been thoroughly cleansed and blessed.

### *The Lair Reborn*

Though a lair or its master may be defeated, short of razing the site, ruins still remain, ruins that may one day regenerate and return the lair to its lost glory. A lair may become a tomb of evil to explore in hopes of discovering some of its secrets to fight the forces of evil. Or these ruins may be claimed and rebuilt by a new evil. The most diabolical tact a fallen lair may take is to become a womb to resurrect its fallen master or to transform a fallen evil into the form of the lair's master.

Following you will find several examples of lairs of evil.

### *The Mystic Order of Enlightenment (The*

*Hellfire Club), London, England*

**Rank:** 3

**Size:** The mansion's hidden basement chambers.

**Taint:** Hedonism and Torture.

**Life's Blood:** Tortured suffering of others.

**Heart of Darkness:** High priest's throne.

**Bane:** Condemnation of the church.

**Soul of Light:** The lamps of lost souls.

### *Legends*

Tales on the street tell of secret societies among the wealthy that have made pacts with the devil to insure their success and fortunes. Only the first born and those willing to donate thousands of pounds sterling are granted membership. It is these secret societies that rob and oppress the common man and are behind all warfare in the world.

### *Description*

A large brownstone on the corner of Carmichael and East River Streets dominates the entire block. Said to be a wealthy gentleman's club, outsiders may visit only the public outer rooms for tea, a game of cards, or a smoke. The three-story structure boasts all the accoutrements of the wealthy, from rich oriental carpets to brocade-trimmed drapery, marble floors, fireplaces, and polished brass fixtures everywhere. A staff of uniformed butlers, waiters, maids and hosts serve visitors' every need. The above ground rooms include residences for the single wealthy patrons, with women's and servants quarters in the rear half of the building. There is one major kitchen as well as nearly a dozen smaller private kitchens to cater to each suite. A water tower on the roof of the building creates sufficient pressure to provide the building with running water and fully functioning water closets. The basement quarters include a vast wine cellar, a coal room and a variety of storage rooms, including a meat locker. But hidden away in a second basement lie the secret meeting rooms of the Inner Circle.

### *Aetherial Resonance*

Sounds of mocking laughter and moans and screams of pain echo through the place. Everywhere there are signs of great extravagance. Disturbing images fill intruders with delight and pleasure. Occasionally drops and trickles of blood appear with the sounds of euphoric sighs and the odors of opium and roses. Disturbing visions of tortured victims with a look of maniacal glee on their faces may be encountered along with the hooded, leather clad forms of their grim torturers.

### *History*

Two centuries ago, Bernard Caruthers suffered personal betrayal by his family when his debts mounted so high that they landed him in Debtors Prison and his father refused to aid him. When a mysterious gentleman from Egypt paid his debts and bought his freedom, he was only too ready to repay him by following where he led. His rescuer led Bernard to Arabia, where they studied the dark arts and made a fortune in the slave trade. But not content to be his master's apprentice, Bernard soon discovered the secret of his master's phylactery and became determined to make it his own. He had a counterfeit copy made and when he successfully



replaced the original with the copy, he confronted and slew his master. Then he returned to England to murder his father, frame his older brother and steal his birthright.

Not content with his victory, Bernard felt compelled to offer the poor lesser children of society who had been doomed to poverty by the quirk of their birth rank the hope he had found. Thus, the Society of Enlightenment was born. Recruits must betray their family and claim the birthright for their own. In turn they are granted the support of other members and the political clout that comes with it. Those who display a great aptitude with magic or other arcane powers are invited to become members of the Inner Circle. But to retain their membership they must perform ritual debaucheries weekly and lure innocents to Inner Circle functions to be abused and tortured and eventually slain for the amusement of the members. The spirits of these victims become mindless dreamings caged forever in one of five *lamps of souls* from which Bernard gains his arcane might. One lamp provides a dim green light in each of the four torture chamber and cell complexes, while the fifth is always present in Bernard's private chamber. If *blessed* or present when an act of kindness is performed, the flame grows stronger and creates a shadowy circle with a 10 foot radius that acts as a *circle of concealment* and *protection from evil* for one encounter.

*Master*

**High Priest Bernard Jason Ethelridge Caruthers (Lich, Adept 13).** Bernard is the youngest son and only survivor of the Caruthers family of Westbridge. He murdered his father and then framed his elder brother for the crime. Then, one by one, through a series of accidents and poisonings he eliminated all the other members of his family. Bernard appears to be a broad shouldered, corpulent fellow with rich brown hair and a trim full beard. He loves ale and food, but instead of becoming inebriated, the victuals and potage seem to add to his already great strength and constitution, and put a keen edge to his intellect as well. In truth, Bernard gains little sustenance from his feasting, for he has long passed the bounds of mortal existence. A mighty warlock (adept), only his golden phylactery adorned with many gems at the heart of which is a blood red cabochon, a badge that marks his rank among the Inner Circle, sustains his life and makes him invulnerable to all



but magical attacks. In addition the medallion empowers him further. When presiding over a ritual celebration or torture by his minions, Bernard gains three levels as well as attendant skills and spells for the duration of 3 encounters before the power wanes.

### *Servings/Agents*

The house can possess the servants of the house and see and speak through them. A possessed agent's eyes gleam green, and the agent feels no pain. Thus, a possessed servant gains +2 to its Armor Class and continues to fight until it falls to -10 hit points. Possessed servants also have faster reflexes and add +2 to their Initiative.

### *Getting There*

Only a member can invite a stranger into the inner rooms. Despite the public image, first-born children may be encouraged to patronize the society's parties and bordellos, but they are never invited to become full members. This club welcomes only those denied the privileges of their inheritance by a cruel trick of birth. These are the people who are more likely to bring the society what it truly wants, access to wealth, power and politics by empowering their members to turn on their siblings and seize the inheritance for themselves. Well-dressed brutes armed with pistols and blackjacks guard the doors to the inner rooms. The way to the Inner Circle's warren is well hidden through a fireplace that blazes with an illusionary fire that radiates heat, but causes no damage.

### *Common Events*

The lair prefers to play on the heroes' sense of pleasure and presses its advantage whenever the hero is presented with an opportunity to drink, eat, gamble, flirt, party with, or inflict pain on another. In these situations, the hero suffers the action penalty whenever trying to avoid the deleterious effects. Nerves become frayed and, when confronted with frustration, the hero must make a DC 18 Will save or act rashly without any sense of guilt or shame. For instance, losing a card game may result in the hero accusing his opponent of cheating and attacking him; when drinking, a hero is likely to become inebriated more quickly and lose his self control, eventually passing out from too much alcohol.

### *Special Effects*

The mansion may command a number of special effects when it is wakened. It can fill a room with phantom sounds and music. Food and drink become at first tasteless and then sickening when a DC 18 Fortitude save is failed. The mansion can control its features, opening and closing doors, moving rugs, toppling furnishings and chandeliers and initiating any other simple animation the DM can imagine. Its greatest effect is to attempt to possess a visitor until the victim is rendered unconscious. The victim must succeed at a DC 18 Will save with twice the normal penalty applied to the DC score. Failure means the victim has fallen under the house's control, though it will conceal this fact until a dramatic moment. The possessed victim will smilingly attack any friend or seek to cause him some misfortune, laughing aloud at any wounds he suffers.

### *Corruptions*

Those who are corrupted by this place are drawn to wine, women, and revelry. They give in to excesses of drink, spend money too freely and extravagantly and seek out the company of unsavory party-goers. They also begin to take delight in the torment of others and will only intervene when they witness an act of unkindness and pain if they make a DC 20 Will save.

### *Dormant State*

Even in dormancy the brownstone on Carmichael Street is filled with an air of opulence and decadence. The public rooms are tasteful, but richly appointed with life-size portraits and busts of patrons whose eyes seem to follow the viewer. Beyond these entry rooms, the rooms are decorated with vaguely lewd statuary and paintings suggesting debauchery presented as art from an earlier era. Trespassers may feel uncomfortable and distracted in these rooms. In the lower chambers, where the real evil lies, interlopers may be faced with the need to make Fear or Horror checks when they encounter one of the many vices of the wealthy, the sins of the flesh, opium dens, drunken revelries and wicked torments of victims.

### *Waking Trigger*

While members of the inner circle are present, this lair of evil is always at level 1 of wakefulness. The lair will awaken further if a hero is lured into



participating in some debauched act of self-serving revelry or the torment of another.

### *Escaping*

If all else fails, the heroes may discover a long forgotten secret passage to the street. The passage has been ensorcelled so that it is a one way passage for escape only. Those who use it find their memory of its existence foggy and confused

### *Sealing the Way*

To destroy this lair of evil, the Inner Circle must be imprisoned in their lair and the place flooded, filled with poisonous fumes or burned to the ground.

### *Slaying the Master*

Bernard Caruthers may only be slain by first shattering the crimson stone in his phylactery and then beheading him. While he wears the phylactery, only magical weapons may harm him. If he is slain in any other fashion, his body shrivels to the form of a withered corpse, but repairing and restoring his phylactery may still resurrect him. Though

the current high priest is a mighty adept, other masters may possess different powers and banes.

### *Tendrils of Evil*

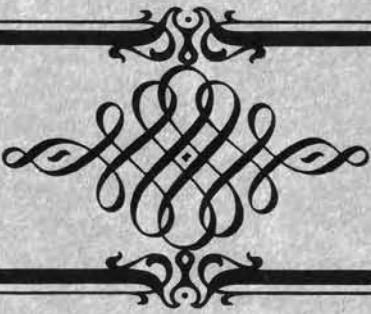
The Hellfire Club hosts gatherings at the homes of wealthy patrons in a hidden chamber where members can engage in ritual debaucheries and murder. Though these chambers are dressed to reflect the tastes of their host, all are filled with the corrupt smell of brandy and the disagreeable odor of a charnel house.

### *The Lair Reborn*

While the mansion may be burned to the ground and members of the inner circle captured and punished for their crimes, one or more of the underground chambers will survive the razing. There, the lair of evil will hide and dream dark dreams until a new master summons it forth. This dark qabal has secret members throughout Europe's high society who will survive and select a new high priest to eventually rebuild the building or at least its underground chambers to awaken the beast anew. It will seem oddly fortunate how quickly the rebuilding is completed.



Appendix IV:  
Adventures in Gothic  
Earth



*ACTION WILL FURNISH BELIEF. -BUT WILL THAT BELIEF BE THE TRUE ONE?  
THIS IS THE POINT, YOU KNOW. HOWEVER, IT DOESN'T MUCH MATTER.  
WHAT ONE WANTS, I SUPPOSE, IS TO PREDETERMINE THE ACTION,  
SO AS TO MAKE IT ENTAIL, NOT A CHANCE-BELIEF, BUT THE TRUE ONE...*

- ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH, "AMOURS DE VOYAGE"





Vampires and werewolves, ghosts and ghouls, monsters and madmen prowl their dreams — dark, stormy nights, haunted, musty mansions, things that go bump in the night, these are the nightmares that plague the champions of light on Gothic Earth. While other horror roleplaying games pay homage to stories of familiar fiends set in another time and place, *Masque of the Red Death* is set in the very age when these classic stories were born. This setting presents an opportunity for more challenging adventures than the traditional horror game's musings of madness and the macabre, for Gothic Earth tells tales of terror!

What is terror? Terror is a tale that creates a feeling of intense fear and loathing of the unexpected, the unexplainable and the unstoppable, sometimes undefeatable evil. It is fear of pain, of violence, of mortal danger and of things man was not meant to know. The loathing is a palpable repulsion to inhumane cruelty, incomprehensible deeds and unacceptable situations. It is a near phobic response to alien, unpalatable, monstrous horrors.

What is the difference between horror and terror? While horror attacks the senses, terror affronts one's sensibilities.

Horror is visceral, tangible, repugnant and sickening. It portrays putrescence and rot, torture and pain, gore, perversion, hideous crimes and cruel injustice, ravening hunger, debilitating fear and corporeal, relentless danger. Horror is cold and cruel.

Terror is more insidious and subtle than horror. Where horror appeals to raw sensations and physical trauma — terror insinuates itself in one's thoughts and imagination. Horror is graphic and all too real — dismembering a victim; terror is tenuous and surreal — hearing the shrieks of the tortured or feeling an alien presence in one's mind. For terror, it is not what is seen that matters, it is what is deduced or imagined.

Tales of terror turn heroes into victims, creating a sense of hopelessness. The players know that the heroes will eventually lose. They know that they are fighting against something far greater than their hero's meager skills and resources, often with ineffective weapons or no weapons, insufficient information or misinformation, and frequently in hostile environments or amidst inhospitable conditions. And yet, what makes these stories glorious and memorable is that despite all this, the heroes continue on, determined to give the best showing

they can before they at last must sacrifice their lives or lose their humanity.

Thus, adventures on Gothic Earth are different from those run in a traditional horror campaign. While other games feature mysteries and battles with horrific abominations in oddly out-of-place settings, a *Masque of the Red Death* adventure explores the nuances of fear and the essence of heroism set in the all too familiar locale of a comprehensible historical age. The role of the DM has never been more challenging and exacting as that required in the *Masque of the Red Death*, for he must set the stage, weave a web of deceit and misdirection, fill the saga with fearsome atmosphere, choreograph the tale into a *danse macabre* and create and portray intelligent and fallible characters and villains with individual motives and weaknesses.

### *What Makes an Adventure on Gothic Earth Different?*

The thing that sets stories on Gothic Earth apart from other roleplaying games is that these adventures should be mind games designed to challenge the players and their heroes on many levels. These tales are not just who-dun-its or mysteries to solve. Unlike other adventure games that focus on military strategies and lucky die rolls, *Masque of the Red Death* relies on deduction, clever ruses, a glib tongue, subterfuge and a great imagination that invokes thoughts of terror that toy with emotions, create a sense of hopelessness, and encourage excellence in play-acting.

The term "mind games" refers to stories that require the players to do more than solve unrelated puzzles, surmount terrain hazards and overcome combat challenges. They must unravel a tangled web of plot twists and the conflicting machinations of nonplayer characters, all the while discerning the private motivations of featured cast members. Like the Russian nested dolls, these tales are constructed in layers. Comprehending the first level of a story opens the way to a second layer of plotting and motives behind the first. And beneath that layer is another and another until the heroes reach the heart of the matter, that master plot that links the evil back to the Red Death and its minions.

This puts the onus of creating complex adventures and characters squarely on the shoulders of the DM. Not only must the DM consider the



complexities of creating mysteries of a mystic nature and interweaving several character plots to cause confusion and misdirection, but the elements of the adventure should impact the players on an emotional level. Consider such devices as pathos — a poor orphaned waif crying for help from a burning building; sympathy — a villain who performs evil for a noble cause such as to rescue the lost soul of a loved one; or empathy — understanding how it feels to be unjustly accused or misunderstood. Appeal to the players' sense of justice. Foreshadow dangers to build suspense. Surprise the players with unexpected revelations. Create a sense of desperation and impending doom if the heroes do not act expeditiously.

Plot twists and feints are what the game is about. Things should rarely be what they seem, and when they are, their purpose or motive may not bow to local conventionality. Fair seems foul and foul seems fair while the mighty have vulnerabilities and the weak have hidden strengths. To make the adventures grim and horrible, contrasts should be provided in a story — interruptions of quiet interludes and moments of peace, happiness and light help to make the shadows darker.

Another element that makes Gothic Earth adventures stand out is the emphasis on play-acting. The drama of the story is enhanced when players and the DM speak in stage voices, react as their character would and seek nonviolent, creative banter to bluff their way through a situation rather than drawing their weapons at the first provocation. Unlike many fantasy games, there are few to no “quick-heals,” and raising a character from the dead is usually not an option. Unless magical cures accelerate the healing process, a seriously wounded character may be out of action for a good part of the game. Both the DM and the players should think about conserving their characters' resources — including their hit points — until the final confrontation, when combat may, in fact, be unavoidable.

While other games emphasize combat and puzzle solving, Gothic Earth adventures should focus on talking one's way through a conflict or developing clever problem-solving techniques to master a challenge. The DM should be quick to listen to their players' musings and logic, then reward their plans by giving clever strategies an excellent chance of success. Indeed, the DM can allow ideas from players to inspire new directions for the story, only he should twist the answer in an unexpected direction so that it resembles, but is

not identical to, the player's thoughts. This provides spontaneous evolution for the adventure while rewarding players with a feeling that they are unraveling the mystery.

## *Sources of Inspiration for Adventures*

The DM need not approach adventure design with trepidation and uncertainty about how to begin. There are many valuable resources available that the DM may turn to for inspiration.

First, Masque of the Red Death adventures are set in an alternate reality based on a very real historical Earth. Volumes written on the history of the Victorian Era and events of the time fill the shelves of libraries and bookstores. Searching the Internet for “Victorian history” or “the 1890s” results in helpful websites as well. The DM may turn to records of the past to find ideas for events that may involve the heroes. Lending mystical interpretation to a factual historical event can also generate adventures. The heroes must prevail against the evil behind the scenes.

Or, consider transposing modern day crimes and horrors to Victorian times. Imagine the hand of evil behind cultural persecution, private wars, pollution, labor disputes, betrayal of public trust and societal scandals. Jules Verne used concerns of his age as the foundation for his fantastic stories.

The works of many authors can be adapted or used to inspire new tales. The stories of Edgar Allen Poe, Jules Verne, Mary Shelley, Bram Stoker, Lord Dunsany and Arthur Conan Doyle are filled with inspiration for new tales of terror. The DM might want to consider the books of more modern authors, such as the “Doc Savage” series by Kenneth Robeson and the stories of A.E. Merritt, Robert Bloch, and Manly Wade Wellman. A wealth of invaluable inspiration awaits the pilgrim to the local library.

## *From the Pages of Ravenloft*

In addition to literary sources, the DM can find guidance in the pages of the **Ravenloft Player's Handbook**, the **Ravenloft Dungeon Master's Guide**, and **Denizens of Dread** along with the *D&D Player's Handbook* and the *D&D Dungeon Master's Guide*. The following advice is offered for those creating Masque of the Red Death adventures.



### *A Window on the Past*

Lots of historical information can be found about the Victorian Era. Adventures can be built around actual events or as adjuncts to the mystic interpretation of an event. This historicity adds a degree of realism not present in other games. History also adds depth to a story playing out in a world with real political figures and current events. While adventures on Gothic Earth need not reflect the most monumental happenings of the day, key events can be used to define the world of Gothic Earth and can even serve as a distraction from the real evil. Heroes can be drawn into a tale with an actual event and then led away into another story that brings them into direct conflict with one of their enemies.

Thus, the world seems familiar — our earth and yet not. Events need only be similar, not identical to world history. Players knowing too

much history can be used by the DM to his advantage and should not be punished or avoided.

### *Agents of Evil*

An adventure is judged by the villain at its heart. The villain of a story need not necessarily be a creature or even an entity. It may be a phenomenon, such as a storm, or a time, like a “grand conjunction,” or a prize for a quest or a driving passion or lust. Still, villains in horror stories are most often diabolically clever foes with ties to evil. These foes are sinister, menacing and worthy of the hero’s attention. They possess their own motives and allies and are engaged in plots to further their own goals. They are intelligent, able to react to the hero and to plan clever strategies. Masque of the Red Death villains frequently make recurring appearances, dogging the hero’s footsteps and eventually taking notice of the hero as more than a minor annoyance. In fact, powerful villains may







eventually respect the heroes as worthy opponents. Villains survive and return to direct their attention away from their plots to a duel with the hero.

All the classic creatures from horror stories are found on Gothic Earth, but they are often portrayed differently. Each one, while derived from an archetype, is a unique creature with its own history, motives and special abilities. One vampire might drain blood, while another may feed on fear and a third may devour intellect. Their forms may vary as well, from a gothic gentleman to a serpent to an albino man-bear. Still, parallels can be drawn between each incarnation and the standard abilities of the beast. When a DM creates a master villain, he should start with a basic template for a man or standard monster and then allow his imagination to reshape the creature's powers and history.

At the heart of a true Gothic Earth villain is humanity or lack thereof. Somehow, these villains are all too human with two sides to their character. In each one there is internal conflict, sometimes between the intellect and the bestial nature, sometimes between a personal code of honor and a private lust. Often plagued by personal foibles and blind spots, while driven by overwhelming passions or dark, secret shames, a Gothic Earth villain is fascinatingly familiar. Players can empathize, if not sympathize with the villain's life.

### *Evil Has Many Guises*

On Gothic Earth, evil hides in many forms. The DM can use this to her advantage when creating an adventure. Evil may take the familiar form of an unliving, undying horror from the past or the more nefarious form of a doppelganger or of a spirit that possesses a human host. Darkness lurks in madness, nightmares, the occult and ancient curses. Wickedness disguises itself as power mad warmongers and the indolent rich. It may appear as monstrous creatures from the past or driven beasts with unnatural intelligence. There are hauntings, sinkholes of evil, echoes of malice and anniversaries of unnatural events. To some, the wanton destructive forces of nature — famine, flood, fire, and earthquakes, take on the preternatural face of nature striking back. And mankind is no stranger to creating other incarnations of evil: persecution, prejudice, perversion, crimes and anything that can be used to justify war and crusades. If base human wickedness is not enough, humans have turned their attention to science, medicine and

technology resulting in a loss of common sense and morality. This fascination with science leads to the evils of addiction, dehumanization, weapons of mass destruction and the release of powers beyond our ability to control. For at the heart of all evil are the deadly sins of jealousy, envy, hate, sloth, lust, greed, gluttony and the greatest of all sins — pride. The DM need not look far to find evil to fight.

### *Preserving the Mood*

The DM may turn to the **Ravenloft** rulebooks for tips on how to create adventures. Here are some important things to keep in mind. Avoid using game speak. Instead, disguise the game mechanics by presenting the results of dice rolls and the rules as a story event. "The creature's fetid breath scalds your skin and you barely evade the gnashing fangs!" Use basic story-telling techniques when presenting the players with adventure details and be as dramatic as each event warrants.

### *The Frontiers of Science*

The Victorian Era of Gothic Earth is an age of scientific and industrial renaissance. But it is a pursuit of knowledge without conscience, without thinking about the consequences, mechanization that dehumanizes, and often a sacrifice of nobility and justice in return for fame and power. Here are some ways the DM may use this age of science and industry to shape adventures for his players.

- **Secrets Man Was Not Meant to Know:** Some doctor or scientist has a scientific breakthrough, but does not consider the consequences or price of this discovery. As a result, havoc and chaos are visited on the inventor and the world. *Frankenstein*, *Amazing Story of Dr. Jekyll*, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* and *Food of the Gods* are but a few of examples of stories in which science leads to tragedy for mankind.

- **Science Gone Awry and We Don't Know Why:** A discovery may be beneficial, but then something unanticipated — human error, a mutation, or an accident create devastation in the world. This may be the discovery of teleportation that unfortunately creates monsters when two beings are merged, a technological evolution that results in mass oppression for mankind, or a cure for leprosy that turns patients into mummies. While the scientist acts with good intentions, he loses control of his experiments and their results and evil arises from his work.



• **In the Hands of Evil:** Imagine if you will, the result of the most wondrous invention or discovery of all time falling into the hands of an evil person who decides to use it corruptly, such as with *The Invisible Man* or *Master of the World*.

### *Remember the Technology*

The Victorian Era and the Industrial Revolution are often linked together in people's minds. During the late 19th century, the world was changed for all time by the invention of the telegraph, railroads, photography, new medicines, discoveries in chemistry and gaslights. Innovations in publishing helped the spread of literacy.

This is an age of pistols and mail order catalogs, of hot-air balloons and ironclad ships, and a period of evolution of the fine arts and philosophy. The trappings of civilization has made man more able to confront and tame the forces of nature, but also less prepared to deal with the irrational nature of the forces of the occult. And what happens when the lights go out and mankind, who has come to depend on these wonderful inventions, is returned to the status of a fearful peasant trembling in the dark?

### *Techniques of Terror*

When designing adventures, the DM should keep in mind that his purpose is not to destroy the heroes, but to challenge them. It remains obvious that a game where a player's hero always dies will not remain a popular source for fun and relaxation. The goal of the DM is to tantalize, challenge and provide the heroes with enough risk and drama to provide the players with a thrilling and rewarding game. The DM's role is to excite and entertain the players while testing their imaginations, problem-solving skills and personal resolve to overcome the odds.

The authors of the *Ravenloft Dungeon Master's Guide* offer a variety of techniques for creating terror during an adventure and DMs are directed to peruse those pages for some excellent advice. Following is a synopsis of the thirteen tips and tricks proposed to enhance the experience of tense and riveting revelations during a game.

**1. Set the mood:** Remove any distractions from the gaming area. Dim the lights to create interesting shadows; set out a variety of props and knick-knacks to support the topic of the adventure

for the night; and play mood music or perhaps music with background sounds of wind or rain to enhance the mood.

**2. Hide the mechanics:** Avoid using game terms when telling the story and describing the action. Instead present the results of actions and die rolls in story terms.

**3. Phantom dice rolls:** Though there may be nothing there, help the players worry by requiring skill tests or making hidden die rolls when paranoia has the heroes jumping at every bump or fluttering drape or sullenly silent chamber.

**4. Death is an illusion:** While the heroes may face unspeakable horrors and mortal danger, players should be given a fighting chance to overcome each challenge or at least flee to safety. Permit clever strategies a good chance to succeed, even if they are unforeseen. And when a player at last has his hero attempt an improbable act in desperation, provide an unexpected result to offer an advantage. If someone must die to emphasize the deadly intents of a foe, sacrifice a supporting character, or scar or maim a hero if necessary instead of visiting death upon him. In the end, if a hero must at last encounter the grim reaper, give her a chance to make a glorious show of it.

**5. The many faces of evil:** Surprise the players by concealing the true nature of their foes. Alter the appearance of a monster to look like something else or change its abilities to include something new and unexpected. Many of the greater monsters on Gothic Earth may be granted a uniqueness to generate uncertainty and doubts when players plan their strategies.

**6. Things are not what they seem:** Avoid the use of common nomenclature to identify a creature. Calling a creature a werewolf may arouse feelings of boredom in a group of jaded players, but describing a "ravening man-thing" creates a sense of uncertainty. Or use another creature's description to conceal the true nature of a beast.

**7. Make new friends, but keep the old:** Make things personal by attacking a hero's closest friends and allies, possessions and reputation. Build relationships between heroes and their foes. Then have the foes make return appearances and hold grudges from prior encounters and develop new challenges tailored to a hero's weaknesses.

**8. Countdown to doom:** Set time limits that raise the tension through an encounter or an entire adventure, such as a ticking time-bomb. When players gain the sense that they are facing an



impending doom if they do not act swiftly, whether in a single encounter or through a series of ever escalating adventures, they become frantic in their decisions.

**9. Weaponless and weakened:** Make a hero's strengths seem of little value in an encounter or disarm the heroes and plunge them into inky darkness or cloying clouds concealing the horror they seek to slay. True tales of terror heighten the sense of hopelessness. Often all that a hero can rely on for survival are her wits, bravado and fate.

**10. The monster is unbeatable, unless...:** Provide foes with a secret vulnerability, a hidden weakness that may be discovered, recovered and exploited. This mitigates the players' sense of desperation with hope and gives them a new sense of purpose as their heroes' quest for the creature's "kryptonite" before the monster acts against them.

**11. Use all the senses:** Describe events and settings in detail with smells and sounds, chills or pain. Play on common phobias, such as darkness, falling, spiders, snakes or undead to instill uneasiness in the players.

**12. Divided they fall:** Separate the heroes to face personal challenges that the absence of teamwork makes more difficult to overcome.

**13. Change of scenery:** Visiting foreign, strange and unknown lands adds an element of the exotic to the adventure and creates uneasiness and unfamiliar challenges for the players and their heroes.

campaign that only the DM knows. He uses this plot to create continuing conflicts. The players encounter only minor machinations and agents trying to advance fragments of this master plot, like the tip of an iceberg.

Once the purpose of the adventure is defined, the DM should create an overview of the action planned for the story, detailing how the tale unfolds. This provides a framework upon which to hang all elements of the adventure and helps keep the story on track.

### *Conflict and/or Featured Villain(s)*

Add to the foundation story the central conflict or villainous motivation to give life, purpose and motion to the adventure. Conflicts may have a positive and negative force acting against each other or striving for the same goal. Perhaps the hero must overcome a conflict or curse.

If a villain is at the center of the story, the DM needs to prepare a more detailed information profile. Each villain needs a biography, a physical description and a sketch of his or her personality and the factors at the core of the villain's motivation. These motives drive the villain's plots and actions. This profile also needs to present the creature's game scores and abilities as well as any favorite strategies he uses. No villain is complete without detailing what he is passionate about and any vulnerability or weaknesses he suffers from that the heroes may discover and exploit.

Villains rarely work alone, so the villain profile needs to discuss any minions, henchmen or creatures he may use as his agents. Why risk his own welfare when a lesser agent can face the challenge instead?

The DM may also include a foil for the story's conflict. This is some opposing force that may aid the hero or offer her a brief respite from the dangers of the adventure. This refuge of light should be described as well as how it can be found and used.

## *Developing Adventure Ideas*

Following is an overview of the different elements that comprise an adventure. Upon completion of each of these components, the DM will find that an adventure almost writes itself.

### *Synopsis*

Write a brief description of the challenge and goal of the adventure. Then develop a foundation or supporting history that leads up to this challenge. This history lends depth to the story by creating layers that reveal what is really happening in the background. There are at least three levels to all stories. First, there is what the heroes know at the beginning of an adventure. Then there is the information they discover as they explore the adventure. And at the center of every adventure is the secret story, the major plot at the heart of the

### *Setup*

Define several ways in which the heroes may be introduced to the scenario. These setups may contain clues that foreshadow the dangers the heroes will encounter.

### *Cast of Characters*

Define the supporting characters and creatures that may be encountered during the story and



what role each one plays. This roll call is a truncated version of that used for the villain, detailing key motives and actions the characters may undertake to help or hinder the heroes' adventure.

### *Opening Scene*

This defines how the adventure begins. The crafting of the first event or encounter for an adventure is crucial for it delineates the conflict and goal of the adventure. This scene must ignite the imagination of the players and spur them on to pursue the adventure that follows with excitement and enthusiasm. Thus, opening scenes are often a combination of clever guile, intriguing and unanswered questions and dramatic action.

### *Key Events... Building the Adventure*

This is the body of the adventure. These events form a framework to direct all the adventure's challenges toward the final encounter, from the opening scenes through various complications and digressions. If there is more than one path to reach the end, each route should be briefly described.

The DM should design key events to create layers of discovery for the heroes and to entertain and challenge them. Select several surprises to create twists and turns of the plot, traps and dilemmas to puzzle the players, special monsters and treasures with histories, and clues that reveal the elements of the adventure's plot. The DM should also decide on possible rewards and benefits that may be garnered by overcoming each challenge, such as treasures, clues, information, and alliances.

Once the key events are defined, the story will begin to write itself. Then it is time to plan the staging of the story. Design each chapter of the story and its challenges. Select their locations, its features and obstacles, the resources available and how to gain the clues and rewards from each conflict.

### *Side Tracks*

These are mini-adventures or peripherally related encounters and events to add a level of complexity to the story. They may offer an unrelated respite from the frantic pace of the main storyline or they may support the central adventure and create unpredictability by offering alternate paths to the story's conclusion or opportunities for the heroes to gain something to help them with the adventure's finale.

### *The Finale... Or So It Seems*

Define the final scene and what the heroes must do to emerge victorious. The finale should be planned in stages of increasing tension, with pauses and surprises and events choreographed to lead to a dramatic climax. The finale should reveal at least one of the faces of evil's plot and give the players a sense of accomplishment. The DM may also provide for the future by leaving clues and story hooks to possible future adventures that the heroes may discover.

An Epilogue provides a satisfying ending to a story and segues to a time of peace and recovery for the heroes and a time of quiet and reflection for the players.

### *Reprising Adventures*

Detail further related adventures that may plague the heroes following the conclusion of this story. These scenarios may be sequels in response to the outcome of the first adventure. Or an adventure may be revamped and changed to provide the DM and players with the opportunity to revisit a storyline if the heroes did not overcome all the challenges or the villain survives to return to fight another day. Continuing series spur the players' interest and encourage them to return to enjoy another adventure in the ongoing saga of their heroes' lives.

#### **Select Settings for Events**

Once the story outline is complete, the more time-consuming task of making or finding site maps must be undertaken. Selecting the proper location for an event is the frosting on the cake, for the locale can add much to an encounter's mood with description, sights and sounds, local denizens, inherent obstacles and natural hazards.

### *Adventure Hooks*

When creating an adventure, the DM should plan for the future. Each adventure should not only present an entertaining story, it also provides adventure hooks—unanswered questions, unresolved issues and unexplained mysteries that lead to the tangled weave of the Red Death's plots. By creating brief setups and trails to other adventures each sequel to an adventure builds on the conclusion of the previous one, so that like ripples in a pond one inevitably leads to another and another. Here are



several models that Gothic Earth adventures may follow to create a series of linked adventures.

### *Never-ending Quests*

A set of continuing adventures may be developed as a cycle of repetitive quests seeking the same goal—perhaps the recovery or destruction of some item. But each quest has a different framing story and plot twists used to conceal and defend the item that is sought. Perhaps the heroes seek to recover and return items stolen from a tomb to end a curse; or they may seek to destroy a qabal one member at a time; or they may pursue an elusive item or person, with each adventure testing their resolve and bringing them tantalizingly closer to their prize.

### *Reprises*

One way to create a series of adventures is to use a recurring story. At the conclusion of an adventure the villain either escapes, survives her apparent demise, or a new character steps in as the villain's successor. The new villain then flees to another locale to try to complete the original mission the heroes thwarted. This time the adventure takes on a new guise and different twists to disguise the fact that the same villainy is once again at work.

### *Actions Have Consequences*

Another way to create further adventures is for something that happened during the first adventure to create a need for a second adventure. A surviving villain may abandon his mission and turn his attention to eliminating the heroes before they can interfere again. The heroes might seek revenge against the villain for the death of a friend. Or as the result of the heroes' actions during the original adventure an innocent or someone powerful dies, or something important is lost or destroyed and the heroes must make amends, for after all, "actions, no matter how noble, have consequences."

### *Darkness' Design*

Encounters with the machinations of the Red Death are usually only the tip of the iceberg and a series of adventures may be related to a larger purpose the Red Death's minions are pursuing. The DM must first determine the master goal at the heart of the plot, and then should decide how subsequent adventures lead to this ultimate goal or

unravel a mystery where all the threads lead back to where it all started. Each adventure is just another layer concealing the Red Death's secret mission.

### *Caught in the Web*

The Red Death or its servants acknowledge that the heroes pose a real threat to their plot but choose to corrupt these interlopers rather than kill them. The heroes suffer an injury, curse or enlightenment intended to draw them deeper into the Red Death's control and must pursue an adventure of their own making to find a cure, atonement or knowledge. However, the cure may prove worse than the blight, for it actually advances the user one step closer to madness and the Red Death's grasp.

### *Changing the World*

As a result of actions taken or failure to thwart an evil plot, a part of the world is changed and the Red Death gains an advantage. The heroes must discern the nature of this change and must discover a way to reverse it and return the world to the way it was.

## *Adventures*

Following are outlines for several possible adventures on Gothic Earth presented in the order listed earlier. Each adventure lists the character level it is planned for and the nature of the adventure series it illustrates.

### *Artifacts of Egypt*

#### **Low-Level; Neverending Quests**

#### *Synopsis*

The curse of the mummy's tomb is a popular fable, but does it have a basis in reality? When Karnak, the fabled City of the Dead, is found, several workers die from poisonous gas. Then the head of the expedition is killed by a scorpion's sting. Still, tales of the curse just made museums and wealthy patrons all the more anxious to add an artifact to their collection. And money talks. In total, not counting the more than 2000 artifacts held in the British Museum archives, over 100 private collectors paid handsomely and sometimes unscrupulously for one of these relics. The undying



Djoser, chief among the Red Death's generals, is using these artifacts to spread his evil throughout society, visiting a different madness or dementia on each collector. The heroes must discover the true nature of the mummy's curse. Then they must track down and destroy each of Djoser's trinkets to thwart Djoser's plans. But how does one deal with the curse when it's different every time?

#### *Featured Villain or Conflict*

The danger posed by this adventure is not Djoser, but the madness an artifact generates. This madness may overtake the relic's owner or it may afflict another — a caretaker, a nephew, a rival, an innocent member of the public or even one of the heroes! Not only does this madness control its chosen victim, it has the power to create its own reality affecting others. Imagine a growing paranoia that spreads from character to character until the heroes can't tell if they have fallen under the curse's influence or if everyone, even their companions, *are* really out to get them.

**Special Abilities:** Though he is not present, the ancient mummy Djoser can communicate tele-

*pathically* with a cursed victim: seeing through his eyes and whispering evil advice in the victim's mind. Djoser may dispatch minions to serve and protect the master of the relic, so that the curse may spread to afflict as many as possible. His minions may be able to afflict others with a lesser form of the master's madness. Through each artifact, Djoser can lend a supernatural ability to its master, as if the artifact was a lair of evil. The mummy also can summon and control an agent creature to do his bidding — a serpent, scorpion, minion or any creature related to the madness — using the agent to slay the owner of the cursed item when he has outlived his usefulness.

**Minions of the Master:** Adepts of Anubis, lesser undead (skeletons, zombies, shadows and mummified animals), or a sorcerer (adept) of Set

#### *Set Ups*

There are many ways to draw the heroes into this adventure. The heroes' attention may be captured when an art collector dies from a scorpion's sting while examining a canopic jar stolen from the City of the Dead. Perhaps a close friend of one of



the characters becomes a raving lunatic. The collector is his friend's uncle and has the friend committed to an asylum. But, the heroes believe that their friend suffers from more than just mental exhaustion and decide to investigate. Or the heroes' latest prize from an adventure is an Egyptian scarab with the mystical power to read the last memories of the dearly departed. There certainly could be no link between it and their latest encounter with an ancient spirit who they must put to rest before their constant pleas, unheard by others, drives them mad.

### *Cast of Characters*

Jerrod Huntington is a handsome lad and the heroes' friend. He always had his feet planted firmly in reality, which makes his sudden dementia more puzzling. It is as if two different people dwell in his body: one trying to warn friends of some danger, the other filled with a blind fear of the dark and attacking anything in panic.

John Eldridge Carrington, Jerrod's uncle, is a blustery old fool who takes great pride in his collections and loves artifacts more than people. Though he suspects that his latest treasure is responsible for recent accidents around Carrington Manor and for his nephew's madness, he chooses to disregard the evidence. While he proudly shows off his collection, he is suspicious of strangers. He has a powerful fear of the dark.

Reginald Prufrock is John's aide and is a former champion pugilist. He will do whatever it takes to protect his master.

### *Opening Scene — Prologue: The Adventure Begins*

The meeting at the asylum with their old friend does not go well. He seems lucid at first, speaking in a conspiratorial whisper, "Something's not right at my uncle's house! I sensed a dark presence there, a cold spirit. But he wouldn't believe me. Here! Take this! It will protect you." In his hands is a miniature Egyptian ankh. Then his eyes grow round with fright as he stares at the floor. "Oh no, they're here! Don't let them touch you! Stay in the light! If they touch your flesh they burrow in deep, and it's cold, so cold!" Orderlies restrain the madman's efforts to tear at his skin. Bright lights calm him a bit, but he is obviously stark raving mad. Sad, really!

The character that possesses the artifact will experience visions when she touches other items

from the uncle's collection. She sees these items as if they were new – the toy of a child, an ancient priest's symbol of power, or the final sight of a dying man. But when she touches the cartouche of Set, she falls into a nightmare. A madman, his flesh withered like a mummy, but imbued with great strength, stands before her cowering friends. Around him shadows swirl and rush in to strangle them. She must do something; only she has the power to stop him!

### *Key Events... Building the Adventure*

If the heroes research the artifact, they may learn that it is an Ankh of Light, used as a ward against the powers of Set. It appears to be an original, not a copy. Their friend's uncle is obsessed with collecting artifacts from ancient Egypt. He has a reputation for being eccentric and ruthless. There are rumors that he has hired scoundrels to secure items he could not purchase. Strangers interested in their research follow the heroes and attempt to steal the relic during the night, but vanish when the lamps are lit. The heroes sense movement in the shadows in alleys and through the inky darkness of sewer grates and are convinced that some shadows are cast by nothing at all.

The uncle owns many antiquities and is very proud of his collection. His house is uncommonly bright with fireplaces blazing and many gas lamps glowing at all hours. He fears the dark, but says that it is only that his eyesight is failing. The uncle recently purchased several artifacts from the City of Karnak, but is missing an ankh that was stolen from his collection. He is desperate for its return. The heroes may learn that strange things have been happening in the house since the collections' arrival. A delivery boy fell down the stairs in the dark and broke his leg; a maid cracked her head open on the attic door; and a cook quit abruptly, swearing there was some wild beast hiding in the dark pantry. There has even been a theft from the pantry — food, linens and candles, but not the silver. Those who stay overnight quickly learn that there is something in the dark that wants them gone, and the uncle confirms that he fears for his life. Then word comes that his nephew has escaped! Two attendants were found dead, strangled! It seemed, though there was a black liquid oozing from their noses.



### *Side Tracks*

There is a local expert on ancient Egypt the heroes may seek out, Dr. Archibald Hankmeister, professor of archaeology at a nearby university. This man is oblivious to fear, fixated on viewing the marvel of actual relics. He is detached and dispassionate about death, dwelling more on the mythological struggle between light and dark.

Carl Puncton is a reputed collector of ancient art. When he heard that his rival had added new pieces to his collection, he hired three thieves to find a way to break into Carrington Manor and steal them for him. One or more of these thieves will cross the heroes' paths and may be responsible for some of the events that plague them.

A new wing of the town library is being built, but a labor dispute pits management against the builders' union and excavation of the basement halted very near to a main gas pipeline. Altercations between striking laborers and management bully boys may inconvenience the heroes. During the fateful final evening, sabotage by laborers results in an explosion that severs the pipeline and sets the library on fire.

### *Final*

Fearing for his life, the uncle hires the heroes to protect him till the morning. There is nothing to fear, he has the best gas lamps money can buy. But, as the night wanes, there comes an explosion from town and the lamps flicker and die. Something broke the gas main. There are only candle stubs, firewood, kerosene and flaming brandy to provide a failing, flickering light and the darkness closes in as one by one the servants flee or are found dead. Somewhere in the darkness a monster lurks. If the pharaoh's cartouche is broken, an inky substance will flee into the shadow and seek to possess a host. The choice of characters is left to the DM; will it claim the uncle, his mad nephew, a servant, Puncton's thief, the local sheriff or one of the heroes? It seeks to slay the uncle or the possessor of the ankh before fleeing into the night or inhabiting a new artifact of evil.

**Epilogue:** Among the old man's papers the heroes find a catalog from the Private Auction House of Sotheby's. It is a list of other items for sale from the fabled city of Karnak. The list is six months old. How many items were sold to other unsuspecting collectors? This madness must stop,

even if it takes a lifetime to track down and destroy each item!

### *Reprises*

One relic destroyed! But there must be dozens still in the hands of private collectors or museums. Who can tell what havoc they will wreak if they survive? The quest is just beginning. Before the heroes lie years of striving against Djoser's machinations, his touch of madness. And they are tales worth telling. There is the legend of a recluse, a hypochondriac and germophobe, but somehow those around him succumb to horrible ailments. Then there is the story of the scrying bowl; those who look into it see the instrument of their own demise, and are filled with a phobia of that element. One man who feared water drowned; another who feared heights fell to his death, and a third who feared machines was caught in a printing press and ground to death. And none will soon forget the stalker who is obsessed with one of the heroes. He seems to be everywhere, and there is nowhere to escape, nowhere to hide; even walls don't stop him!

### *Elixir Vitae*

#### Mid-Level; Consequences

### *Synopsis*

Members of high society have long reaped all the benefits of life and evaded many of life's burdens, save for the wages of old age. Now it appears that even that is no longer a burden, for a new tonic water that reverses the effects of aging is being sold to those who can best afford it. But with long life comes abandonment of morality, for what is there to fear if one lives forever? There is something unnatural at work here. The rich are becoming addicted to this new tonic and seem willing to do almost anything to continue their supply of the healing waters, no matter whom it hurts.

The heroes discover the existence of a rare elixir when one of their number suffers a painful injury. They manage to secure a bottle of the marvelous tonic and with its ministrations their friend seems to recover. But within a week, his new found health is lost and he is worse than before. Driven to acquire more elixir, their friend will do whatever it takes. The heroes must save their friend from himself and in the process discover the true nature of this *elixir vitae* and stop its manufac-





ture. But are they prepared for the consequences that will follow?

#### *Featured Villain or Conflict*

The real villain of this piece is the addiction to the elixir of life. Users will lie, cheat, steal and worse to acquire enough money to insure a constant supply of these special waters. Failure to consume a weekly draught of the magical waters results in a waning of their youthful body and a great deal of pain. Users become psychologically driven to consume raw meats and engage in violence.

There is only one trustworthy peddler who panders to the needs of the wealthy and only one supplier whose secret fountain of youth is hidden in the Florida Everglades. The phantom peddler has no name, for he is barely human, his hidden flesh covered with mucous and thin-flailing tendrils. He has the natural ability of short-range teleportation and can transport himself, another item or creature into any clear terrain. The effects of this teleportation leave an after image behind that lasts for 1d4 rounds. The peddler will only deal with those rich enough to afford his wares or desperate

enough to find a way to pay. The supplier goes by the name of the Shepherd. An ancient lich by nature, he retains the vibrant health of youth thanks to his elixir. Only those who track him to his lair in the Everglades will ever come face to face with him, but he may communicate through a scrying bowl filled with his magic waters. The Shepherd prefers to avoid combat and uses illusions and defensive spells to avoid injury while letting his minions fight his battles for him. The Shepherd has a disturbingly superior, yet detached attitude as if certain that none can harm him.

**Minions of the Master:** The Shepherd's minions are former customers who failed to meet his demands. They have advanced through various stages that have transformed their bodies into parodies of the undead. There are mind-numbered "zombies," emaciated "shkeletons," and the flesh-craving ghouls.

#### *Setups*

Following the cursed wounding or aging of one of their number, the heroes may learn of a rumored remedy, a rare tonic with magical healing powers available only to the rich. They must persuade



someone to sell them a bottle of this healing water. Or the heroes may claim a bottle as the prize potion from a recent adventure. Or the heroes may learn of the magical elixir when they expose a professional athlete who has been using the mystic tonic to enhance his own performance. When he accidentally overdoses, the athlete is transformed into a hulking, raving lunatic and injures several teammates.

### *Cast of Characters*

Elaine Pennyworth is a debutante and the distant beloved cousin of one of the heroes. She enjoys parties, is a bit of a flirt and loves excitement and has always had a taste for adventure, but she has her father's business sense and has found a little profit in it. Elaine has many suitors, but none so ardent as the debonair Richard Pottsmeister who has been courting her recently. Elaine is the heroes' conduit to high society.

Richard Allen Pottsmeister III is said to be descended from a long line of Pottsmeisters, but is in reality nearly 82 years old. Richard's wealth has long since been exhausted by his addiction to the elixir of life and he seeks to marry rich young ladies to rebuild his fortune. He is a charmer and will lie, cheat and embezzle. Recently he made a deal with the Peddler to receive a week's supply of the tonic for every new soul he introduces to it. It is his hope to one day be free of the elixir and rendered eternally young.

Sean Callahan O'Rourke is the bereaved father of a young man who lost his life to the evil waters. Using his life's savings to masquerade as one of the wealthy, O'Rourke seeks to track the waters back to their supplier and destroy the source.

Bruno Giacomo is a small time loan shark and crime boss. Angry at the loss of funds due to those who reneged on loans, he is learning about the elixir vitae and wants to gain control of its supply for his own business. Bruno does not care who his bully boys hurt, so long as it turns a profit and will use blackmail, extortion, and violence to get what he wants. Bruno's boys are trying to collect a bad debt from Pottsmeister and can be victims who die hideous deaths during the adventure.

### *Opening Scene — Prologue: The Adventure Begins*

The heroes learn of a disreputable dealer in purloined goods who is rumored to possess a supply of the healing waters. This clever rogue has troll

blood in his veins and is possessed of surprising strength as well as the ability to recover from most wounds. In return for the heroes completing a difficult and dangerous task the dealer will sell his flask of elixir vitae for a thousand dollars. If the heroes use threats and violence, he may be coerced to part with his supply, but it is pure elixir and will transform the imbiber into a berserking hulk overwhelmed by violent emotions, and a taste for blood until the elixir runs its course.

### *Key Events... Building the Adventure*

The storyline first reunites one of the heroes with his cousin, Elaine. She has heard rumors of this special tonic and believes that her most recent suitor, Richard Pottsmeister might be able to help them. The heroes are invited to attend a debutante's ball where they will meet the major players in this little drama. Richard seems eager to please Elaine, but in private confesses to having enemies that don't like strangers. He will try to get the heroes to pay his debts to Bruno and if that fails, he will play the heroes off against Bruno's thugs. Richard will even try to get the injured hero to become a customer of the Peddler in return for his weekly supply.

Following encounters proving there is no honor among thieves, the heroes visit Richard at his apartments where he claims he has been taken ill. Upon breaking in to confront him they find a much older Richard suffering from withdrawal trying desperately to negotiate with the mysterious Peddler. When Bruno's thugs burst in on the scene chaos erupts and in the mayhem the Peddler escapes but drops a page from his ledger of customers. With Richard's advice, they decide to follow the money trail until they again spy the Peddler. They can attempt to follow him surreptitiously through the maze of the Everglades to the elixir's source. The trek is harrowing and dangerous, fraught with quicksand, poisonous serpents, hallucinatory gas and other evils of the swamp.

### *Side Tricks*

High society's rumor mill is akin to modern day tabloids — filled with scandals, gossip and innuendoes. At the heart of these half-truths are the real stories of the decadence, crime and passion of the elite. The players just need to sort out the lies from reality.

Traveling Sam, the Medicine man trades in curatives, balms and tonics, all a sham based on one



of the most potent potato mash moonshine recipes in all of Georgia. He may seem a source for the tonic, but in reality knows nothing and is a ready victim for the story.

**Lost and Wandering.** In pursuit of the mysterious Peddler, the heroes become lost in the marsh of the Everglades and become the prey of a pair of giant alligators. Like a vengeful, intelligent foe, one gator drives the heroes toward the Shepherd's domain. When the first is slain, the second one takes up the pursuit.

### *Finale*

The heroes' pursuit of the Peddler eventually leads to the Shepherd's "fountain of youth" deep in the Everglades. Protected by "zhombies" and "shkeletons," the stone building, like an ancient Roman bath, that conceals the pool proves difficult to approach. In the final showdown, when it appears the Shepherd has the upper hand, he agrees to Elaine's offer to pay Richard's debt with the Heart of Darkness diamond, the greatest prize of her fortune. For such a fee, the Shepherd invites Richard to bathe in the magic waters. At first the pool effervesces, and Richard is surrounded by glowing sparkles that set the flesh tingling. As the cloud becomes tinged with pink and transforms to vibrant red, Richard discovers he has been slain by the pool's colony of minute jellyfish. The flesh-tainted water is the true elixir of life, and the Shepherd offers Elaine a life time supply in return. When the heroes attack, the Shepherd summons an endless stream of ghouls to attack them while he flees. The bodies of ghouls cause the pool to overflow the basin and fill the surrounding waters with giant jellyfish that will survive for a day and attempt to slay the fleeing heroes.

**Epilogue:** For several weeks following the adventure the addicted hero recovers in a private sanitarium. Thanks to Elaine's largess and an expensive *restore* spell the hero seems cured for a time. Then nightmares and night sweats begin again, and he turns to drink. Still it is said that time heals all wounds. It is probably just a matter of time before he is fully recovered. Oddly, he has taken to ordering his steak rare when he used to eat it well-done!

### *Reprise*

Their friend is still addicted to the elixir, but since it is no longer available, he will turn to alcohol to hide the need. Under the daze of drink,

he is moody, disagreeable and at times violent. These symptoms are the same throughout high society, as the heroes discover when they think a case dealing with the beating deaths of several women is the work of an alcoholic lecher. As time passes, their friend moves on to other pain-killers: absinthe, morphine, and perhaps opium. The heroes again and again encounter other elixir addicts who have found alternative addictions and other vices associated with such: cursed cocaine from Brazil sold by a mad chemist seeking a drug to enable mind control or the silver fire of heroin from a vampire. The real panacea for the pain is consuming flesh and blood. Eventually this leads the heroes to a society of pseudo-vampires or cannibals seeking to assuage their thirst for the elixir vitae.

### *Ideas to Inspire*

Each day is a new adventure on Gothic Earth. Here are a few ideas to inspire others.

### *Dreamcatchers*

Men of great wealth and power are dying mysteriously in their sleep, a look of terror carved into their faces. The heroes must travel to Australia to learn the secret of walking in the Dream Time with the help of a stubborn aborigine shaman. Ultimately, they must lay a trap for the sinister sandman and his furies that are dancing to the tune of the Red Death's mad piper.

### *Feaster of the Dead*

The ancient Aztec deities are neither dead, nor are they gods. But what else would a primitive people call monstrous beings with fantastic powers? What else could decimate an entire civilization? The ruins of Teotihuacan have been discovered and archaeological teams swarm southward to begin the process of stripping the veil of jungle away. But they are not prepared for the awakening of Xipe' (a flesh-eating ogre mage) or Xochipili, the Hairy Mother Goddess, (a gargantuan subterranean jellyfish whose upward thrusting tendrils are mistaken for jungle vines), or Camazotz, the angry vampire god of the moon.

### *Frozen Tears*

To be the first to cross the frozen Arctic Ocean from Europe to Greenland was to be a wondrous feat. But that was before the food ran low and Sir



Percival Ridgefast died of pneumonia. The expedition became separated and lost, wandering blindly in a whiteout. It's a miracle that their guide Hans Elkan found and led them to the safety of an old Spanish galleon frozen in the ice. Everyone thought Hans was delirious when he spoke of a blue-skinned damsel who had rescued him and showed him the shelter. But they stopped laughing when they saw the shard of ice, hard as steel, driven through his heart, though he lived. And none were prepared to meet the mistress of the icy castle they discovered following Hans intuition, nor to pay the price that the Ice Queen demanded.

#### *Ghosts of Salem*

An educational field trip to learn about the Salem witch trials has taken an unexpected and possibly deadly turn when the heroes on a lark perform a séance and Professor Smithers changes his mind, literally! He thinks he is Cotton Mather and is convinced that the souls of his ancient foes have escaped the bonds of the grave and taken up residence in the bodies of the local townsfolk. He may be right, but how can you accuse Parson

Brown, Mayor Perkins, Trudy Eisenhower the schoolteacher, and little Billy Wright of being witches, let alone hang them as the Professor has decreed must happen?

#### *Hell's Roost*

Death's harbingers, dark raptors have come to roost at an abandoned plantation in South Carolina. Bad luck for the hikers who sought shelter from the rain and a dry place to camp for the night. Only one man, Emery Bastion survived their arrival to tell of the ordeal. He relates how an eerie birdsong lulled them to sleep and then lured his best friend into the ruined depths. There some unseen master of darkness split his head open, and he came returned, shambling, his bloodied head ruined and barely clinging to his neck, to chop his companions to pieces with an axe. Only Mad Hester knows how to fight the undead creature that haunts the mansion with his slain companions and fiendish scavenger birds. But can the heroes sort the truth about her voodoo serpent master from her maddened ramblings, or will Old Father punish her and the others for her telling?



### *Night Stalker*

Someone is murdering young ladies of society in the windy city of Chicago. Not that this town is a stranger to violence, but this is different. Every thirteenth day of the month, the killer slays another victim with a thin blade across the throat and a bright lily tucked in her bosom. With all the blood there should be tracks, but the only prints discovered are those of a goat, and they seemed to climb right up the side of a twenty story building. The killer has slain ten so far, and it's only October. Will he try for an even twelve or go for a baker's dozen. And what does he do with their eyes?

### *Spirit Guide*

British Columbia is home to the haunting totems of the Umiyuk tribe. Carl Strueger, a carver of no small skill traveled there to study the wonders of the largest spirit pole on the West Coast. Now he is missing, and someone has defaced the spirit pole, replacing the mask of Raven the Trickster, with a face that resembles Carl's. He is not the only one missing, Crying Wind, the chieftain's daughter, is also gone, and the spirit lodge has been burned to

the ground. 'Winnie' paid the ultimate price for trespassing in the spirit lodge, where Ilmakuk, the man-eater, overwhelmed her, destroying the mask that had imprisoned him. Carl had fallen in love with Winny, and when she fled, he cried out in despair. Raven answered by possessing Carl in order to track down Ilmakuk and avenge Crying Wind's devoured soul. Raven leaps from body to body, leaving only vague memories for his host while the face of his new body replaces Carl's on the spirit pole. Ilmakuk seeks power, but this is not a woman's world, so he is frustrated in all his efforts. He must feed at least once a day, leaving the charred form of his victim behind.

### *Wishing Pool*

Legend tells of a wondrous pool that can grant one's heart's desire, if the petitioner pays a price. Hidden in the Amazon rainforest, the pool called Cai cah iko or "pool of lonely ones" is guarded by the Pai bau, a tribe of headhunters who hunt with long spears and poisoned darts. Though the pool seems to be water, it can change its nature and is not always in the same place. It often rests in a 30' wide stone basin guarded by the natives. The





pool is actually a manifestation of lost spirits. It can assume many shapes: golden leaves on a tree, a flock of luminous moths, a silvery blanket or an ebony mirror. This phenomenon can grant a wish by altering minor events in favor of the petitioner. But the pool demands a price — living blood. Depending on the amount offered, the pool's response is closer to the quester's request. This reply seems a mere coincidence of events and is never exactly what the petitioner requested. Each time a request is made, the quester loses 1 point of Constitution permanently and must make a Fortitude save or die. The pool can shift anyplace on the globe in the blink of an eye through the ethereal plane. It always returns to this jungle to rest and regain strength from the natives' blood sacrifices. Those who use the pool become more self-serving and eventually obsessed with wishes. When they die, their corrupted soul joins the pool.

#### *Stolen Moments*

Why have several state leaders become senile and weak with age before their time? What strange disease afflicts them? When Martin Mannheim, the philanthropist, discovers his son is dying, he will do anything to find a cure — including seek the heroes' help or making unholy alliances with Random, a rogue magician. Little does he know that the latter is to blame for his son's troubles by using a device called the Cloche di Teufel, built by the master watchmaker, Edvard Elsenberg von Kroenig. With the push of a button, this oversized pocket watch runs time backward for its holder permitting him to change what happened one minute earlier. The watch steals time from others who possess one of Random's magical fobs, a coin with a moon

rising on one side and a sun rising on the other. Each time the watch is used, the owners of fobs are aged 1d4 years, and lose one experience level for every 10 years they age. When a victim reaches 0-level, he disintegrate. Many rivals seek the clock for themselves. Those in the company of Random may find themselves the target of assassins, thugs, thieves and even other dark powers.

#### *Vanished*

The authorities report that a freak storm spawning dozens of tornados laid waste to Pretty Bit, Colorado, a small town of 250 souls. There were no survivors. In reality, though the town was destroyed, there was no storm. The county sheriff has no idea what happened to the inhabitants. Buildings have huge holes burst through their walls and down into the earth as if a meteor shower had struck. Fires ravaged many buildings. Nowhere are there bodies, though there are splatters of blood, puddles of slime, and an occasional severed arm or a foot in a shoe. The attack did not come from above, but from below. A pair of gigantic worms erupted from the earth. Like legendary purple worms, these creatures can burrow through solid rock as though it was pudding. They have razor-sharp teeth, paralytic saliva, several stomachs for storing prey and a venomous sting in their bristled tails. These creatures are in the midst of a hundred-year procreation cycle. The living, but paralyzed townsfolk are to be food for their hatchlings. The heroes must descend into the burrows fighting the dangers of a subterranean journey, including a race of burrowing beetles that have a symbiotic relation with the worms, and rescue any who still live from their waxy prisons. And then they must escape the worms!



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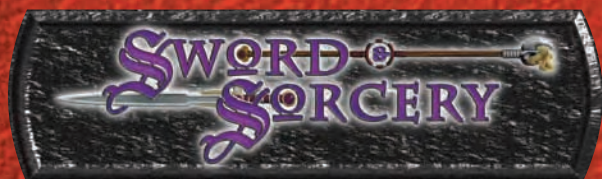
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