

Dying Stylishly Games

# ⌘ The Anatomist ⌘

A class of mad scientists for old school games

## The Quest For Knowledge

Medicine is as much an art as a science. Different theories - vitalism, the four humours, germ theory and more - are all considered valid by different schools of thought, and have their own application. A given doctor might rely on leeches, herbal remedies, surgical intervention, strategically-applied acupuncture needles or trepanning, depending on their training and the situation. All in all, treatment is haphazard and poorly understood.

There are, however, inquiring minds who wish to change that. These men and women of science conduct dissections on fresh corpses and experiment on living subjects, to better understand how the body functions. Sometimes, these visionaries may do terrible things in their pursuit of knowledge, but they remain resolute in the belief that, ultimately, any price is worth paying to advance their understanding.

Often, these surgeons and vivisectionists find themselves outcasts from mainstream society, as their experimentation draws unwanted attention from legal and moral authorities. Many join up with a band of itinerant adventurers, who tend to be less judgemental of their practices. Here, they get to see the human body suffer various severe and unusual injuries, and to test new theories when healing those injuries. Similarly, an adventuring band will often encounter strange and exotic beings, which often prove useful to the anatomist as experimental subjects or spare parts. The adventurers, for their part, tend to appreciate being accompanied by a skilled healer, and overlook the more off-putting quirks of their profession.

A new anatomist character is probably fresh from their education, having perhaps completed an apprenticeship as a barber-surgeon, studied under master physicians at a centre of learning, spent a stint as an embalmer and gravedigger before being led astray, or taught themselves the fundamentals of medicine from private study. Regardless of how they came about their career, even this fresh-faced newcomer to the field is a capable medic and can perform dangerous wonders of science. At high levels, an anatomist can take a single corpse apart for materials and produce incredible results with them. Of course, society's reaction to such meddling in God's domain might be less than friendly - little wonder that so many end up sequestered away in crumbling laboratories, surrounded only by sycophantic assistants and the abominations their science has created...

Unlike a magic-user or cleric, there is no limitation to how often an anatomist can perform medicine., and they are not restricted to certain spells known or granted to them. So long as they have materials to hand, an Anatomist can always attempt to perform an act of science. However, until they have gained enough experience, there is always a chance for the experiment to go wrong - perhaps disastrously so - and so the wisest anatomists exercise some modicum of restraint in their research.

## Statistics

| Level | Experience Cost | Hit Dice | Saves     |        |        |        |       | Safe Procedures           |
|-------|-----------------|----------|-----------|--------|--------|--------|-------|---------------------------|
|       |                 |          | Paralysis | Poison | Breath | Device | Magic |                           |
| 1     | 0               | 1d4      | 13        | 13     | 16     | 13     | 14    | Cure Light Wounds, Embalm |
| 2     | 2,250           | +d4      | 13        | 13     | 16     | 13     | 14    | Graft                     |
| 3     | 4,500           | +d4      | 13        | 13     | 16     | 13     | 14    | Change Self               |
| 4     | 9,000           | +d4      | 13        | 13     | 16     | 13     | 14    | Delay Poison              |
| 5     | 18,000          | +d4      | 13        | 13     | 16     | 13     | 14    | Cure Disease              |
| 6     | 36,000          | +d4      | 11        | 11     | 14     | 11     | 12    | Speak With Dead           |
| 7     | 72,000          | +d4      | 11        | 11     | 14     | 11     | 12    | Cure Serious Wounds       |
| 8     | 144,000         | +d4      | 11        | 11     | 14     | 11     | 12    | Neutralize Poison         |
| 9     | 288,000         | +d4      | 11        | 11     | 14     | 11     | 12    | Razor Claws               |
| 10    | 432,000         | +2       | 11        | 11     | 14     | 11     | 12    | Animate Dead              |
| 11    | 576,000         | +2       | 9         | 9      | 12     | 9      | 8     | Cure Critical Wounds      |
| 12    | 720,000         | +2       | 9         | 9      | 12     | 9      | 8     | Mind Switch               |
| 13    | 864,000         | +2       | 9         | 9      | 12     | 9      | 8     | Animate Dead Monsters     |
| 14    | 1,008,000       | +2       | 9         | 9      | 12     | 9      | 8     | Heal                      |
| 15    | 1,152,000       | +2       | 9         | 9      | 12     | 9      | 8     | Simulacrum                |
| 16    | 1,296,000       | +2       | 6         | 7      | 8      | 5      | 6     | Unnatural Transplant      |
| 17    | 1,440,000       | +2       | 6         | 7      | 8      | 5      | 6     | Clone                     |
| 18    | 1,584,000       | +2       | 6         | 7      | 8      | 5      | 6     | Trap the Soul             |

## Trivial Medicine

An Anatomist can perform simple medicinal practices fairly easily. After spending a turn attending to a patient's wounds - cleaning, stitching, bandaging and so forth - the Anatomist rolls a d6. On a roll of 1 to 5, then the Anatomist heals successfully. The number of hit-points healed is the number rolled on the dice, plus the Anatomist's level. On a roll of 6, the Anatomist's attentions prove more harmful than helpful, and an additional d6 points of damage is done. Since there is always the risk of making the injury worse - and the process isn't particularly fast, either - an Anatomist can keep on treating injuries for as long as they have time.

As well as healing injuries, an anatomist has the same 5-in-6 chance of success at other 'trivial' tasks, such as diagnosing a mundane illness, stopping bleeding and so forth. For acts that treat a condition (rather than just diagnosing it), then d6 points of damage are dealt on a failure, as above.

## Scientific Procedures

An Anatomist can replicate some of the effects produced by a cleric or magic user. This, effectively, allows them to cast spells through the application of scientific knowledge. These effects are referred to as *procedures*.

Performing a procedure requires the Anatomist to use *at the very least* a set of Surgeon's Tools (costing and weighing the same as specialists/thieves tools), and to have a safe and secure place to work. On top of this, most procedures will require specific organs or materials, which are used up regardless of whether or not the procedure is successful. A procedure takes one hour's work to complete for each rank of the spell being mimicked. The subject or subjects must be present throughout, either as willing participants, or else restrained to prevent them struggling.

To use a procedure, if the Anatomist is not working in a private, well stocked laboratory (worth at least 100 silver per spell level being mimicked), then they must pass a Medicine roll (5-in-6 chance) to pull the procedure off. No saves can be made to resist a procedure, even if the spell mimicked would normally allow one.

Regardless of the spell's duration when cast by a cleric or magic user, the any changes made by a procedure last indefinitely. They do not count as supernatural, and so are unaffected by anything that detects, dispels or enhances magic.

However, many procedures make obvious physical changes to the patient's anatomy, which can be easy to spot for those who know what they're looking for.

At first level, a Anatomist knows how to safely perform two procedures - Cure Light Wounds and Embalm. For every level they subsequently gain, they learn to safely perform an additional procedure, which is set by the level they just gained.

However, an Anatomist is not limited to only performing the procedures they have already safely learned. If they can justify in suitable techno-babble how they intend to go about the procedure, then (at the GM's discretion) they can give it a shot. They could perform a procedure they haven't learned to perform safely *yet*, mimic a spell that isn't on the list that can be safely performed, or even try an experiment with no existing counterpart in the rules.

When performing an unsafe procedure, as well as the possible medicine skill roll (if the Anatomist isn't working in a good enough laboratory), a Save vs Magic must be made. If the Save fails, then - regardless of whether or not the actual procedure was a success - *Something Has Gone Horribly Wrong*. It is up to the GM to decide what exactly this is. It could range from an angry mob of torch-wielding peasants, to an outbreak of a horrible new plague, to the patient becoming Horribly Wrong themselves - whatever the GM thinks would best drive home the Anatomist's hubris.

## Acquiring Spare Parts

An Anatomist usually requires various body parts - livers, brains, flesh and fat - for use in their procedures. These can be taken from a fresh corpse without any issues, given a turn to extract them.

From a living donor, things are more delicate. Extracting body parts deals d6 damage automatically as the donor is opened up and rummaged around with. For most organs, such as brains, hearts, and livers, removal will result in death, either immediately or in a matter of hours. If the patient has two of an organ (such as lungs or kidneys), then they lose half of their levels when the first organ is removed. Round this up, so that removing a lung is lethal for level 1 characters. When the second of the pair is removed, this will result in death. Merely removing significant amounts of flesh or bone only results in one level lost.

Once extracted, an organ needs to be preserved with *Embalm*, unless it is to be used immediately.



## Procedures Learned, and Their Requirements

At First level. **Cure Light Wounds** and **Embalm** are known. Cure Light Wounds requires a sample of flesh taken from another being. Embalm is a custom spell for this class, and requires a glass vessel filled with neat alcohol; unlike other procedures it only takes a turn to perform.

At second level. **Graft** is learned. **Graft** is a custom spell for this class, which requires a living example of the body-part to be replaced.

At third level. **Change Self** is learned. This spell can be cast on any subject, not just the Anatomist's self, and requires several square inches of living skin, and possibly samples of fat, muscle, hair and so forth depending on the changes to be made.

At fourth level. **Delay Poison** is learned. It requires the use of a liver, and some blood vessels to connect the liver to the patient for the duration of the procedure.

At fifth level. **Cure Disease** is learned. It requires enough blood for a full transfusion.

At sixth level. **Speak with Dead** is learned. It requires the dead subject's preserved brain, rather than their head, and a set of vocal chords.

At seventh level. **Cure Serious Wounds** is learned. It requires a sample of flesh taken from another being.

At eighth level. **Neutralise Poison** is learned. It requires a liver, and some blood vessels to connect it to the patient for the duration of the procedure. In addition, it requires a sample of lymph.

At ninth level. **Razor Claws** is learned. **Razor Claws** is a new spell, unique to the anatomist, which requires ten small claws

that are grafted onto the tips of the patient's fingers.

At tenth level. **Animate Dead** is learned. It requires only the corpses to be re-animated, a lightning rod and a thunderstorm.

At eleventh level. **Cure Critical Wounds** is learned. It requires a sample of flesh taken from another being.

At twelfth level. **Mind Switch** is learned. It requires only the two beings that will have their minds switched, and swaps their brains.

At thirteenth level. **Animate Dead Monsters** is learned. Like Animate Dead, it requires the corpses to be re-animated, a lightning rod, and a thunderstorm.

At fourteenth level. **Heal** is learned. It requires a few pounds of living flesh and a sample of bone marrow.

At fifteenth level. **Simulacrum** is learned. It requires enough living flesh to build the new body (rather than snow), a lightning rod, and a thunderstorm.

At sixteenth level. **Unnatural Transplant** is learned – a new spell unique to this class. It requires only the body part responsible for the power to be replicated.

At seventeenth level. **Clone** is learned. It has the same requirements as when cast normally.

At eighteenth level. **Trap the Soul** is learned. It requires a large glass containment vat, which costs the same as and replaces the gem required when cast normally.

After eighteenth level. no more procedures are learned.



Although they are not learned automatically at any point, the following spells are mimicked often enough that the material requirements are well known:

**Resist Cold** requires several pounds of fat that form an insulating layer under the patient's skin.

**Resist Fire** requires enough scaly skin (such as from a lizard) to cover the patient's entire skin.

**Enlarge** requires enough flesh, sinew and bone to make up the mass gained by the patient when they are enlarged. If cast in reverse, it only requires that flesh, sinew and bone be removed from the patient. It can only be cast on a living being.

**Sleep** requires a metal spike, that is driven into the victim's brain to keep them comatose.

**Spider Climb** requires suction cups from a cephalopod, the toe-pads of a gecko or similar, that are grafted to the subjects palms, fingers, soles and toes.

**Forget** only requires that the victim's brain be accessed and poked around with.

**Magic Mouth** requires a functioning set of vocal cords, lips and tongue that are grafted onto the subject.

**Web** requires the spinnerets and silk glands from either a giant spider or scores of normal-sized ones.

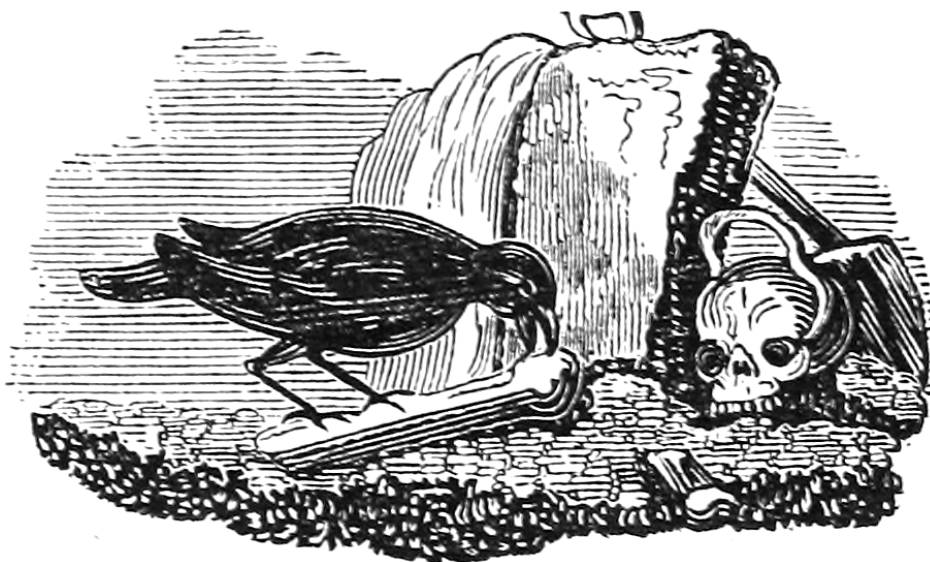
**Fly** requires a pair of wings large enough to physically lift the patient.

**Water Breathing** requires a set of gills, that are grafted into the patient's throat.

**Feeblemind** requires the brain-stem matter from a base animal such as a toad or sheep, which is grafted into the victim's own brain.

**Stone to Flesh** requires a full sample of each of the four humours - blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile - enough skin to cover the entire subject to be returned to flesh, and as much living flesh as the subject will weigh when returned to flesh. It cannot be cast in reverse.

**Mind Blank** requires a separate, backup brain - which must be inhuman in nature - that is grafted into the subject.



## New Spells

### Embalm

Spell Level: 1

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 month per level

This spell causes a body or body part to be preserved perfectly so long as it is left reasonably undisturbed. If it was fresh when the spell was cast, then the body parts will count as 'alive' for anything that needs living flesh.

### Graft

Spell Level: 1

Range: Touch

Duration: Instantaneous

This spell replaces a ruined or removed body-part. Although it doesn't heal damage to flesh, it automatically fixes an injury such as a lost limb, eye or similar.

### Razor Claws

Spell Level: 4

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 turn per level

This spell replaces the subject's fingernails with small, but wickedly sharp, claws. When fighting unarmed, the subject deals d6 damage, plus their strength modifier as normal. In addition, they may make two attacks - one per hand - either both against the same target or against two different targets.

### Unnatural Transplant

Spell Level: 7

Range: Touch

Duration: Permanent

This spell allows the target to gain an ability from a defeated monster by grafting the organs responsible onto them. This could be something fairly mundane, such as gills to let the recipient breath water or venom glands to make their bite poisonous. Alternately, it could be entirely supernatural and bizarre, such as medusa's face stitched over the recipient's own to let them turn enemies to stone, or pyroclastic glands that let the recipient breath fire. The organs to be grafted in must be fresh, and must actually fit onto the recipient somewhere.

## Something has Gone Horribly Wrong

But what?

Ultimately, the nature of the Horrible Mistake is up to the GM to decide. The GM should not be outright punitive in this; for example, simply killing the patient is no fun and denies the procedure's potential to succeed. But neither should they be too forgiving. After all, one of the key balancing factors of the class is the potential for disaster. Instead, the GM should create consequences that are *interesting*. Additional complications, problems and ethical dilemmas should be the result of Things Going Horribly Wrong - it is an opportunity to motivate and torment players.

By and large, the more ambitious the science attempted, the more dangerous it should be when something Goes Horribly Wrong. On top of this, more sadistic plans, and those with more tenuous reasoning behind their plans, should probably result in worst consequences.

An experiment to mimic a first-level spell might only result in the patient being injured or falling sick, spare parts being found by the common people and raising unfortunate questions, or the patient acquiring some disturbing (but not too debilitating) quirk.

At higher levels, the complications can become debilitating, with the patient losing some important faculty, hungering for

flesh, having their lifespan dramatically reduced, or becoming reliant on the Anatomist's care to survive. Leftover parts might cling to a primitive form of life, escaping to become wriggling, half-formed organisms that may become a future menace. The work may require transgressing some moral boundary that will surely shock and appal any sane mortal, and simply fail if more reasonable methods are tried. The law may become involved, with bounty-hunters or law enforcement attempting to put a stop to the anatomist's work.

Meanwhile, the highest level spells could result in the sort of Wrongness that shapes the direction of the campaign. Virulent plagues are unleashed on the world. The creatures created - or the side-products of their creation - become unnatural and dangerous, rampaging across the countryside. The common people, on discovering the horrors the Anatomist has wrought, arm themselves with torches and pitchforks and seek to stamp out the wrongness themselves. Those in power have their attention drawn to the anatomist, with rulers sending assassins, witch hunters or orders of paladins to bring them to justice.

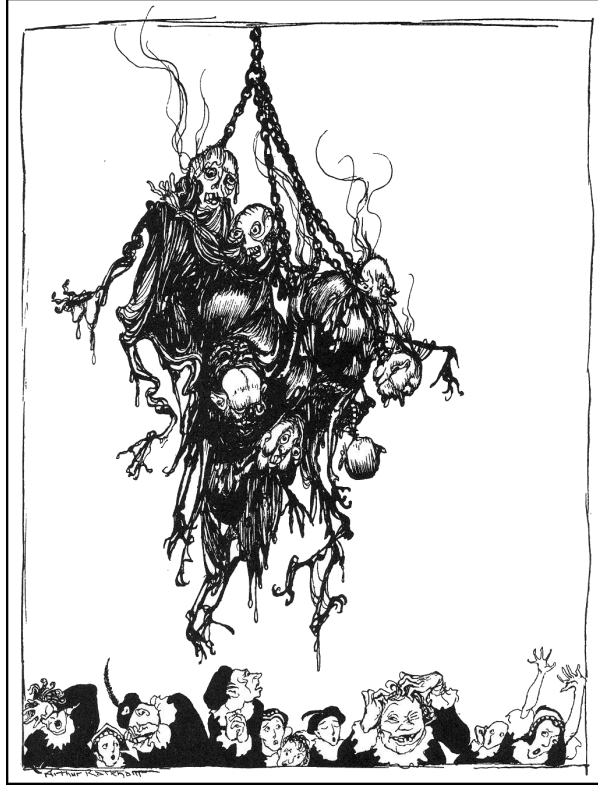
In the worst cases of hubris, then the Anatomist will almost certainly provide their own undoing eventually - the only question is whether that will be by their own hands, from the savage attention of their horrific creations, or tied to a stake atop a burning pyre.



## The Laboratory

If your game uses the rules for setting up a stronghold, then at 9th level an Anatomist achieves the title of Professor. Assuming they have access to a suitable building, they can set up a laboratory in it. Typically, this will be a castle, tower or mansion in the wilderness, or perhaps they take over an abandoned university or morgue.

The Professor will attract a small group of followers. There will be 2d6 level 0 human servants and flunkies, and d6 1st level Anatomists. Of these followers, at least 1 will be a hunchback named Igor. These followers can oversee experiments in the Professor's absence.



## Adaptation

This class is written with the game *Lamentations of the Flame Princess* in mind, but can be fitted into other OSR games relatively easily.

Depending on the specific game you're playing, you'll need to do a little work to make the class fit. Saves, experience costs, and hit-dice are as the Magic User. Likewise, the Anatomist's attack bonus, THACO or similar advances at the same rate as a Magic User. For any odd statistics unique to a particular game, treat them as Magic Users.

If your system of choice restricts weapons and armour, then the Anatomist can use any edged close-quarters weapon, bows, and crossbows - essentially all those weapons that a Cleric is prevented from using. They may wear leather armour and use a shield, but no more than that. The anatomist is a sensible combatant, but not a particularly well trained one. They tend to reject blunt weapons because they damage the corpse too much for future use.

If your system uses them, the Anatomist's Prime Requisite is Intelligence. They get +5% bonus to their XP earned if they

have 13+ in Intelligence to play, and earn +10% bonus XP if they have an Intelligence score of 16+. - more intelligent Anatomists tend to learn faster. If your system requires minimum scores to play a class, then an anatomist requires a 9+ in Dexterity - without a certain amount of hand-to-eye coordination the Anatomist can't perform the delicate procedures required for the practice of medicine in the field.

In a system where classes are restricted by Alignment, the Anatomist should probably not be allowed to be neutral. Whether for good or ill, the Anatomist's art sets them well outside the social norm. They could pursue their studies out of a genuine desire to help others, to further civilisation, to bend flesh and brains to their cruel will, or to defy the limitations God has placed on mortals - but they certainly aren't normal anymore.

If your system of choice doesn't have any of the spells listed, then swap in the closest equivalent, transport the spell in from another game, or just make something up.