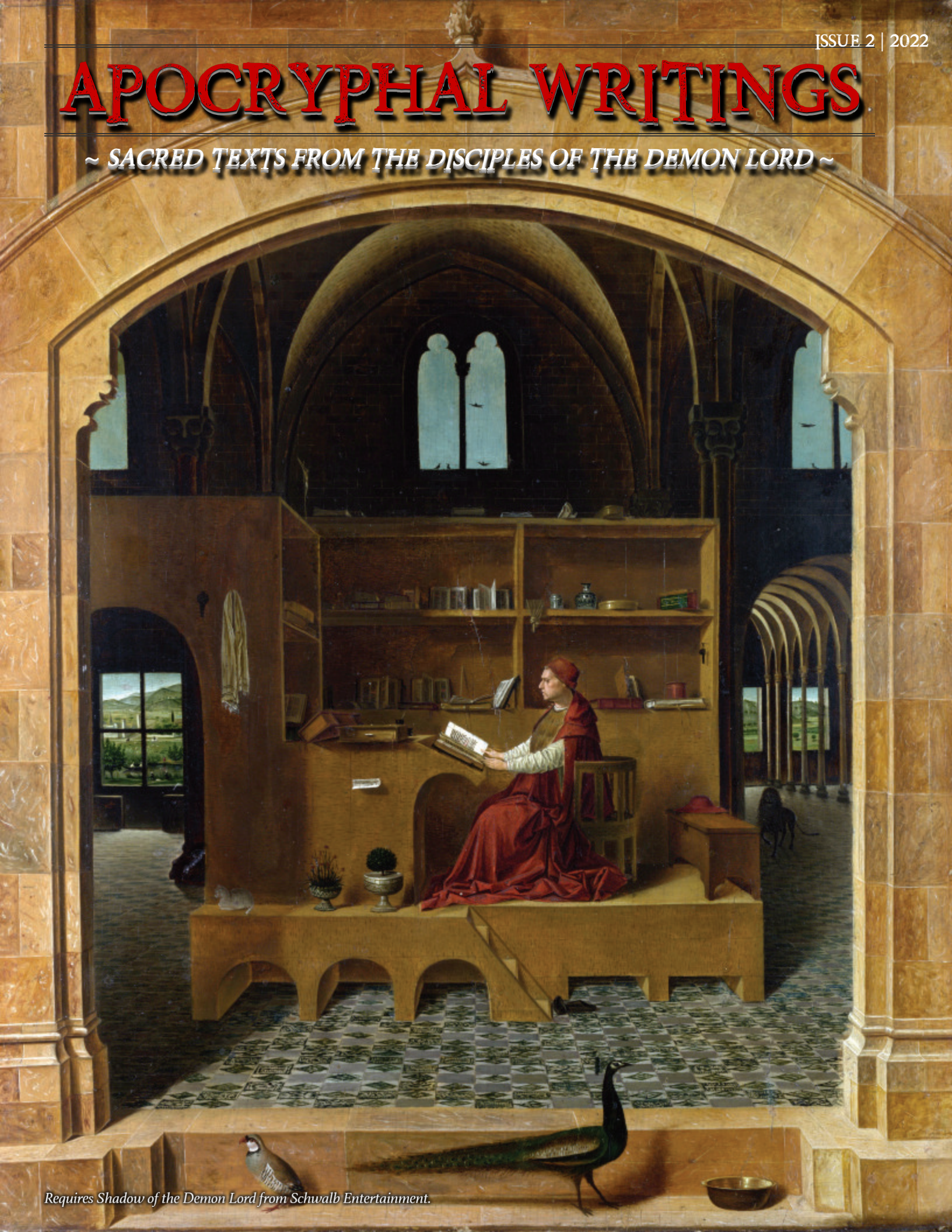


# APOCRYPHAL WRITINGS

~ SACRED TEXTS FROM THE DISCIPLES OF THE DEMON LORD ~



# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Welcome to the second issue of Apocryphal Writings, a fanzine for Shadows of the Demon Lord! The first issue was a resounding success and has shown that homebrewed content is very much in demand. If you haven't already, I highly recommend checking out the [first Issue of Apocryphal Writings on itch.io](#).

Editing, finding art, layout, and assembling the content for each issue requires a lot of time and work, so we would love to have more people helping! Right now it's only me with some help from our Discord community, but it could be useful to have some more dedicated people working on future zines. If you feel the calling, use the email address below or join our Discord through the link below and we'll find something for you to do.

Another way to help support future issues is to join the [Ra Press Patreon](#). Even the lowest tier helps me dedicate more time to work on the zine.

The zine is made by the community and if you have something you want to submit for the next issue you can join our [Discord](#), or just send a plain text file with **AW submission: <SUBMISSION NAME>** as the subject to [aw@ra-press.com](mailto:aw@ra-press.com). Remember to include how you want to be credited. You can also include any links to a logo, website, blog, Patreon, YouTube, or what-have-you if desired.

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# characters

## EXPERT PATHS

**W**e have a great variety of expert paths for this issue with the steamy Scalders, the draining Siphoners, and the abominable Wackjack. The community has come through with expert paths for this issue.

## SCALDER

*Written by StephenFauster*

**A**s long as there have been pyromancers there have been those cautious (or cowardly) souls who sought to find a way to diminish their collateral damage. As long as there have been hydromancers, there have been those questing for greater destructive power. Scalders are a union of these two disciplines. Sometimes called Steam Mages or Siege Magicians, they wield the powers of fire and water in union to reach new heights of discipline and power, commanding primordial forces in such opposition with ease.



## SCALDER STORY DEVELOPMENT

### d3 Story Development

- 1 You were a living siege weapon stationed at the battlements of a castle, developing ways to cast down invaders without bringing harm to what you're meant to protect.
- 2 You're a far-rover, studying under the Salamanders of the Firepeaks and the Undine of the Auroral Ocean to learn of the elements in all their forms.
- 3 While delving deep you found a volcanic vent, hot spring, or fumarole. The Steam Genie there imparted its secrets in exchange for tribute or possibly its life.

### LEVEL 3 SCALDER

**Attributes** Choose two and increase each by 1.

**Characteristics** Health +2, Power +1

**Languages and Professions** You can speak another language or add another profession to your list of professions.

**Magic** You learn the Fire or Water tradition or learn one Fire or Water spell.

**Douse** When you cast an attack spell from the Fire tradition, you can use a triggered action to douse the area with a splash of water, extinguishing any flames.

**Scalding Magic** When you cast a Fire or Water spell that targets one or more creatures or an area, you can use a triggered action to make one creature affected by the spell impaired for 1 round. If the creature is already impaired, it becomes dazed instead.

### LEVEL 6 SCALDER

**Characteristics** Health +2

**Magic** You learn one spell.

**Thermal Flow** You can cast Fire spells underwater.

**Billowing Steam** When you cast a Fire or Water spell, you can choose to create a cloud of steam centered on the target of the spell that spreads out to a 1-yard radius and lasts until the end of the round. Any creatures inside the cloud become blinded for the duration.

### LEVEL 9 SCALDER

**Characteristics** Health +2, Power +1

**Magic** You learn one spell.

**Scalding Steam** At the end of the round, creatures inside a steam cloud made with **Billowing Steam** that is not you, must make a Strength challenge roll or become fatigued for 1 hour. A creature that is already fatigued takes 1d6 damage instead.

## SIPHONER

Written by Ronny Anderssen (*Ra Press*)



The Siphoner specializes in draining others of their strength to boost themselves and their allies. Utilizing the Wrangling tradition (see page XX) and their talents to great effect, a Siphoner can reduce even the strongest creature to a husk of their former self.

### SIPHONER STORY DEVELOPMENT

#### d3 Story Development

1 You have come to rely on the strength of others and have found a way to draw strength from your enemies.

2 An obscure stranger drained you of all your strength and powers and left you for dead. When you came to yourself, you have found that you too have the power to draw strength from others.

3 The last few weeks your nightmares have been of strange creatures living in complete blackness, feeding on you. In your last nightmare, you were feeding on them! When you awoke, you found that you are able to feed on the strength and power of others.

### LEVEL 3 SIPHONER

**Attributes** Increase two by 1

**Characteristics** Health +3, Power +1

**Magic** You discover the Wrangling tradition or learn a spell.

**Professions and Languages** Add a profession to your list of professions or learn to speak a language.

**Siphon Skill** You can use an action and spend a casting of a Wrangling spell to make an Intellect challenge roll against the Strength of a target within short range. On a success, you impose a number of banes on all their attack and challenge rolls equal to the Rank of the spell expended for 1 round. While they have these banes, you gain the same amount of boons on your attack and challenge rolls.

**Sacrifice Magic** You can use a triggered action on your turn and spend a casting of a spell you know. A target within short range of your choosing gains a casting of a spell they know of the same Rank or lower.

### LEVEL 6 SIPHONER

**Characteristics** Health +3

**Magic** You learn a spell.

**Siphon Magic** You can use an action and make an Intellect attack roll against the Will of a target within medium range. On a success, the target loses a casting of a random spell they know that still has castings left. You gain a casting of a Wrangling spell that you know of the same or lower rank.

**Siphon Flow of Time** You can use a triggered action on your turn and make an Intellect attack roll against the Will of a target within short range. On a success, the target is slowed for 1 round. While the target is slowed this way, your Speed is doubled.

### LEVEL 9 MASTER SIPHONER

**Characteristics** Health +3, Power +1

**Magic** You learn a spell.

**Empower Allies** You can use an action to impose up to 3 banes to attack and challenge rolls on yourself for a number of rounds equal to 1 + the number of banes you impose on yourself. Every creature within short range of your choosing gains 1 boon on their attack and challenge rolls for the duration.



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 **Discord**

# WACKJACK

Written by *Isavro, DoughnutLord, and MediocreClient*



he Wackjack, AKA The Path of Many Things, a joke of an Expert path, an abomination created through blasphemous banter on the official Shadow of the Demon Lords Discord.

Heroes and villains alike are no strangers to Lady Luck. Every adventurer has, at one point or another, been at the mercy of pure chance. For most people, this is a situation to be avoided at all costs, but for a select few the rattle of the cosmic dice is an intoxicating melody. These are the Wackjacks, magical gamblers with unstable arcane power boiling through their blood and the self-preservation instincts of a lemming.

Some are born chaotic, some achieve chaos, and some have chaos thrust upon them. Anybody can become a Wackjack, from a child born with powers they cannot control to a soldier that stumbles into matters beyond mortal ken. Regardless of the way they find their power, once a Wackjack embraces the uncertainty there is no going back. Few organized guilds of magic will tolerate Wackjacks among their ranks, and those that do ensure they have separate living quarters in case of unexpected explosions.

Wackjacks tend to be adrenaline junkies, either by nature before they develop their powers or by the repeated experience of conjuring magic without knowing what form it will take. They burn quickly and brightly, shaving years off of their life for the sake of beating progressively worse odds. Anybody desperate enough to ally themselves with a Wackjack does so with the knowledge that they may be on the receiving end of a “friendly” spell at a moment’s notice, and as a result Wackjacks often find other Wackjacks or join groups living on the sharp edge of life with no other options.

## WACKJACK STORY DEVELOPMENT

### d6 Story Development

1 Your birth was a thing to behold, probably. It’s hard to say for sure when there were no survivors. The magic may have lain dormant within you as you grew older, or it may have come out at inopportune moments throughout your life. Its origin is not important; you’ve decided to grab hold of it and make it work for you.

2 You won a game of chance against a powerful Fey by a stroke of luck too sensational to ever be repeated. The loser’s idea of a prize, however, leaves something to be desired.

3 You were a witness to a power struggle between two eldritch forces and caught an unlucky blast of magic in the process. Since then, luck has been the only thing you can rely on.

4 You don’t know how you got your powers, and you don’t care. Using them is a rush like no other. In a life like yours, you cast spells first and ask questions later.

5 You caused a grave insult to something beyond mortal comprehension, and it cursed you with uncontrollable magic as a result. You’ll have the last laugh, though, when you use these powers to get even with whatever did this to you.

6 Your powers are the result of a tragic accident in a magical laboratory, but you’ve resolved to see them as a blessing instead of a curse. There is no power that cannot be turned into good with enough willpower and honest work.

## LEVEL 3 WACKJACK

**Attributes** Increase Intellect and one random attribute by 1 (roll 1d3 to determine).

**Characteristics** Health +1d3, Power +1

**Magic** Roll a d6. On an even result, you learn a random spell from a tradition you have discovered. Otherwise, or if you haven’t discovered any traditions yet, you discover a random tradition.

**Ramblin’ Gamblin’ Wizard** You can use an action to make an Intellect challenge roll. On a success, roll on the following table and cast the spell as described. On a failure, gain 1d3 Insanity and lose this talent until you complete a rest. You can use this talent a number of times equal to your Power score + 1, and regain all uses when you complete a rest.

## SPELLS

d20	Spell
1	Project Voice (Song Utility 0)
2	Celerity (Battle Utility 0)
3	Force Field (Protection Utility 1)
4	Frighten (Curse Attack 1)
5	Command (Enchantment Attack 1)
6	Capricious Devastation (Chaos Attack 1)
7	Vitality Burst (Life Utility 2)
8	Glyphic Prison (Rune Attack 2)
9	Thunderclap (Air Attack 2)
10	Shortcut (Teleportation Utility 2)
11	Flamethrower (Technology Utility 2)
12	Black Bolts of the Underworld (Shadow Attack 3)
13	Immolate (Fire Attack 3)
14	Starfall (Celestial Attack 3)
15	Cannibalize Magic (Necromancy Attack 3)
16	Call of the Wild (Primal Utility 4)
17	Harness Magic (Arcana Utility 4)
18	Cold Snap (Water Utility 4)
19	Form of the Oak Guardian (Nature Utility 5)
20	Fire From Heaven (Theurgy Utility 5)

**Know When to Walk Away** You can use an action or a triggered action on your turn to teleport 50\*1d6 yards. This distance increases to 100\*1d6 yards at level 6 and 250\*1d6 yards at level 9. The GM determines the direction of travel, randomly or what best serves the story. If they're feeling uncharitable they may include straight up or down as options. You arrive at your destination asleep and remain that way for 1 minute or until the condition is removed naturally. If your travel would place you partially or completely inside a solid object the spell fails and you remain at your current location, taking damage equal to your healing rate.

### LEVEL 6 WACKJACK

**Characteristics** Health +1d3

**Magic** Roll a d6. On an even result, you learn a random spell from a tradition you have discovered. Otherwise, you discover a random tradition.

**Make the Best of it** If you use Ramblin' Gamblin' Wizard and the result harms an ally or helps an enemy, you regain one use of the talent and may reroll the d20 once the next time you use it. What qualifies as harm or help is at the discretion of your GM.

**Here for a Good Time, Not a Long Time** You may permanently reduce your Health by 1 to grant yourself Fortune. Health lost this way cannot be regained by mortal magic. Once you use this talent you cannot use it again until you complete a rest.

### LEVEL 9 MASTER WACKJACK

**Characteristics** Health +1d3, Power +1

**Magic** Roll a d6. On an even result, you learn a random spell from a tradition you have discovered. Otherwise, you discover a random tradition.

**All In** You may use an action to cast a spell rolled at random from the list below. At the end of the round, you must roll a d6. On an odd number, you gain Insanity equal to your Will and immediately go mad.

### SPELLS

2d6	Spell
2	Fold Space (Chaos Utility 1)
3	Call Lightning (Storm Attack 2)
4-5	Conjure Wall (Conjuration Utility 3)
6	Soul Exchange (Forbidden Attack 4)
7	Enervation (Shadow Attack 5)
8	Sunbeam (Celestial Attack 5)
9-10	Strike Like Lightning (Battle Attack 5)
11-12	Disintegrate (Destruction Attack 5)

**All Out** You may choose to reroll the spell from **All In**. If you do, roll a d6 after casting the spell. On a 1, your head explodes in a cloud of blood and skull fragments. This kills you instantly. On a 2-5, your Damage total becomes equal to your Health score and you become incapacitated. On a 6, you take damage equal to your Healing Rate.



## MASTER PATHS

This issue introduces some new traditions in the Magic chapter, including the Culinary tradition. To go with that tradition, Thaumaturge also made a new Master path, the Epicurean, specially tailored for that tradition.



### EPICUREAN

Written by Thaumaturge

**E**picureans are master Culinarists, being able to turn simple meals into feasts at a moment's notice and turn even the blandest of foods into delectable treats using their magic. They can often be found working for royalty or nobility, being paid more per feast than an average farmer earns in a lifetime.

### LEVEL 7 EPICUREAN

**Attributes** Increase three by 1

**Characteristics** Health +2, Power +1

**Magic** You discover the Culinary tradition or learn one Culinary spell.

**Seconds** When you cast a Culinary spell that enhances or creates food, you also create a number of morsels equal to 1 + spell's rank. These morsels act as if they were created by the Morsel spell.

**Hell's Kitchen** When you cast a Culinary spell that harms or otherwise hampers targets, they make their challenge rolls with 2 additional banes. Targets that become fatigued by such spells take 1d6 damage.

### LEVEL 10 EPICUREAN

**Characteristics** Health +2

**Magic** You learn one spell.

**Master Chef** Culinary spells that have a healing effect now heal upon consumption rather than at the end of the round. Creatures can also gain these benefits even if they eat more than a day worth of enchanted food that can spoil.



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# GET IT ON NOW!



## RULES

**S**hadow of the Demon Lord has a simple but great magic system. But some of us feel it could be more! So here we collect homebrewed rules for using magic to make it more enjoyable, simpler, or even more complex.

## CULINARY TRADITION TALENTS

Written by *Thaumaturge*

**Culinary Focus (Cantrip)** Learn one rank of spell from the Culinary tradition and gain the Tasting the Cooking talent.

**Tasting the Cooking** When you cast a Culinary spell, you heal damage equal to 1 + rank of the spell cast.

**Enhanced Spices (Sense Magic)** While casting a Culinary spell that enhances food, you can infuse the food with a potion effect. You either need to have a vial of said potion or special ingredients worth the cost of the potion. You expend an additional casting of the spell and the potion or special ingredients, granting the food the potion effect in addition to the other effects of the food. The maximum cost of a potion you can use is equal to 1 + twice the rank of the spell ss.

**Take-Out (Spell Recovery)** Whenever you complete a rest you can create a number of morsels equal to 1 + your Power. The morsels work as in the Morsel spell. You can use Enhanced Spices on each morsel individually.

**Spice Counter (Counterspell)** If you have a chef's kit, you can use a triggered action on your turn to expend a casting of a Culinary spell to throw spices at a creature within short range. The creature makes its next attack roll or challenge roll with banes equal to the rank of the spell (minimum of 1).

**Improved Take-Out (Improved Spell Recovery)** If you have the Take-Out talent, morsels created by the talent now heal damage equal to the healing rate of the creature that consumed it.



## MAGICAL DEPRIVATION

Written by Jarred Caldwell (*Ra Press*)

**W**hen you run out of castings, you can still cast your spells. The additional casting comes at a cost - you become magically exhausted and gain **Magical Deprivation**.

When you gain magical deprivation, you become fatigued. While you are fatigued in this way and you become fatigued or gain deprivation through any means, you instead take 1d6 damage. This damage cannot be healed by normal means.

To heal this damage, you must deprive yourself of magic. When you take a rest and have not been exposed to magic since your last rest, you heal 1 damage caused by magical deprivation. If you have no magical deprivation damage, you can remove the fatigued affliction after a rest and the magical deprivation ends.

The following counts as exposure to magic:

- Casting a spell
- Being affected by a spell cast by another
- Using an enchanted item
- Consuming a potion

The GM may use the following options to provide additional methods for gaining Magical Deprivation:

- 1. Magical Overcharge** When you cast a spell, you can make a Power challenge roll to add two boons, two banes, 2d6 extra damage, or extend the duration by 50%.
- 2. Magical Deflection** When you are targeted by a spell, you can make a Power challenge roll to add two boons, two banes, block 2d6 damage, or reduce the duration by 50%.
- 3. Magic Overwhelming** You consume three or more potions within ten minutes.
- 4. Magical Bleeding** If you use *Battle Scars*, and you gain an injury due to damage from a magical effect, you gain 1 **Magical Deprivation** on a roll of 12-16. This replaces the normal result.
- 5. Catastrophic Magic** If you use *Catastrophic Magic* and you roll a magical miscast, you gain magical deprivation on the following rolls: *Minor* 4-7 Burn Out, *Major* 6-7 Magical Fatigue. This replaces the normal result. If you roll a magical catastrophe, you must make a Will challenge roll or gain **Magical Deprivation** in addition to the catastrophic roll.
- 6. Magical Traps** The GM can set up a magical trap where a failed roll results in gaining **Magical Deprivation**.

# SPELLS & TRADITIONS

There are no less than three new magic traditions in this issue. And a curse spell that goes with the magic rules for *Magical Deprivation* presented above. Enjoy!

## NEW CURSE SPELL

Written by Jarred Caldwell (*Ra Press*)

### MAGICAL DEPRIVATION

CURSE ATTACK 2

**Target** One creature you can see within short range

Make an Intellect attack roll against the target's Will. On a success, the creature gains magical deprivation, becoming fatigued until they abstain from magic for a day.

**Attack Roll 20+** The creature is affected by magical deprivation a second time, taking 1d6 damage according to the magical deprivation rules.

**Sacrifice** You can use an action and expend a casting of this spell to cast the hex spell (*Shadow*, page 122).

## CULINARY TRADITION

Written by *Thaumaturge*

The Culinary tradition is steeped in a deep history of wizard and alchemist gourmets. Exploring new ways to enhance cooking, they started using magic to improve what they cooked, leading to the creation of the Culinary Tradition, and spells that went beyond even just cooking. Culinarists tend to carry almost a portable kitchen, collecting an ever-growing collection of recipes, and always having spices and seasoning at hand. Master Culinarists can be easily distinguished by their epicurean physiques and a large collection of spice bags, pots and pans, and cooking utensils, and an eagerness to cook for those who are in need... and whom they like.

If a creature eats more than one day worth of enchanted food that heals they do not get any benefits from the food.

### CHEF'S KIT - 1 SS - COMMON

This kit is used in cooking. It contains the necessary instruments to prepare meals whether in a kitchen or on the go, so long there is a source of heat, be it fire or magic.

### APPETITE

CULINARY ATTACK 0

**Duration** 1 minute

**Target** One creature within short range

You attempt to entice the target creature with beautiful scents of food. The target creature must make a Strength challenge roll or become fatigued for the duration. If the target is already fatigued, it instead takes 1d3 damage. The target creature can end this spell by using an action to consume a small bit of food.

### BLESSED SNACK

CULINARY UTILITY 0

**Duration** 1 hour or until expended; see the effect

**Requirement** You must have a Chef's Kit

**Target** Up to five snacks that you can reach. A snack is a fifth of a day worth of food.

You prepare the targets into a wonderful salty treat, imbuing each with magic for the duration or until a creature eats it. Upon casting this spell, you must concentrate for 1 minute, during which time you prepare the treat. When a creature holding a blessed snack makes an attack or challenge roll, they can use a triggered action to eat the snack, granting two boons on the triggering roll.

### GREASE

CULINARY ATTACK 0

**Duration** 1 minute

**Area** A 2-yard radius circle originating from a point within short range

You enchant and toss cooking oil at the target area. The target area becomes slick with cooking oil, and creatures standing or moving through this area must succeed on an Agility challenge roll or fall prone. The area will be slick under any condition, and the oil is not flammable.

### MORSEL

CULINARY UTILITY 0

**Duration** Until you rest or expended

**Requirement** You must have a Chef's Kit

**Target** Half of a day's worth of food within your reach

You prepare a quaint piquant morsel out of the target food. Upon casting this spell, you must concentrate for 1 minute, during which you season the food. The target food becomes enchanted with power. Eating this piece of enchanted food is enough to feed a creature for a day, and at the end of the round, a creature heals damage equal to half their healing rate. At the end of the duration, the food quickly rots away.

### EMPTY THE STOMACH

CULINARY ATTACK 1

**Target** One creature within short range

You throw a strange spice at the target which forces them to violently expel the contents of their stomach. Make an Intellect attack roll against their Strength. On a success, the target vomits, becoming impaired for 1 round and taking 2d6 damage.

**Attack Roll 20+** The target is impaired for 1 minute, and a 2-yard radius around the target becomes difficult terrain.

### ENFRESHEN

CULINARY UTILITY 1

**Duration** 1 day

**Target** Size 1/4 or smaller pile of rotten food within reach

You enchant and sprinkle salt on the food. The targeted food becomes unspoiled as if it was freshly grown or made. At the end of the duration, the food quickly rots away.

### SPOIL

CULINARY UTILITY 1

**Target** Size 1/4 or smaller pile of food within reach

You soil the food with raw earth. The target food spoils to the point of being visibly rotten and becomes inedible. A creature who consumes this food does not benefit from it and must make a Strength challenge roll or become diseased until they complete a rest.

## CROCKPOT

CULINARY UTILITY 2

**Duration** Until you rest or expended  
**Requirement** You must have a Chef's Kit  
**Target** A day's worth of food within your reach

You toss a mixture of food and spices into a cooking pot. Upon casting this spell, you must concentrate for 1 hour, during which you cook the food into a delicious stew. The target food becomes enchanted with power. The food can feed twice as many creatures, and at the end of the round, any creature that ate the food will heal damage equal to their healing rate. At the end of the duration, the food quickly rots away.

## HOT OIL

CULINARY ATTACK 2

**Target** One creature within medium range

You lob a ladle of hot oil at a creature, making an Intellect attack roll against their Agility. On a success, the target takes 2d6 damage. At the end of the round, the target takes an additional 2d6 damage unless it uses an action to remove the oil.

**Attack Roll 20+** The target takes 2d6 damage at the end of the round for 1 minute.

## HUNGER

CULINARY ATTACK 2

**Duration** 1 minute  
**Target** One creature within short range

You cause the target's metabolism to skip. The target creature must make a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane or become impaired and fatigued for the duration. If the target is already fatigued it takes 1d6 damage. The target can use an action to consume a day's worth of food to repeat this Strength challenge roll, ending the spell on a success.

## CANNIBAL'S TREAT

CULINARY UTILITY 3

**Duration** 2 hours or until expended  
**Requirement** You must have at least 2 corruption, a Chef's Kit, and grave salt worth 2 ss  
**Target** Corpse of a humanoid creature that died within 8 hours

You enchant the flesh of a small or medium humanoid corpse. If a ghoul consumes the corpse, they heal damage equal to twice their healing rate, and they lose Accursed Compulsion until they complete a rest. If someone other than a ghoul consumes the corpse, they heal damage equal to their healing rate. The corpse can feed one ghoul or five creatures.

**Aftereffect** If someone other than a ghoul consumes flesh from this spell, they must succeed on a Strength challenge roll with two banes or become impaired until they take a rest. While impaired in this way, if the creature consumes the flesh of someone of their own ancestry, they become a ghoul.

## FLOUR BOMB

CULINARY ATTACK 3

**Target** A point in space within long range

You enchant and throw a bag of flour at your target. When it hits, flour explodes within the area, covering everything within a five-yard radius. The area is totally obscured until the end of the round.

**End of the Round** The flour bomb explodes, dealing 5d6 damage to everything in the area. Creatures can make an Agility challenge roll to take half damage.

## PEMMICAN

CULINARY UTILITY 3

**Duration** 1 month or until expended  
**Requirement** You must have a Chef's Kit and special ingredients. You can buy these at vendors that sell Rare or better items for 1 ss.  
**Target** A day's worth of food within your reach

You enchant the food causing the food to become resistant to spoiling even in the worst of conditions. Upon casting this spell, you must concentrate for 1 hour, during which time you mix the spices, salt, and various ingredients into a mixture that you then magically dry. The food cannot spoil for the duration of the spell and can feed three times as many creatures. At the end of the round, creatures that ate the food heal damage equal to their healing rate. At the end of the duration, the food quickly rots away.

## ICEBOX

CULINARY ATTACK 4

**Duration** Special; see description  
**Target** A size 1 or smaller pile of food or a creature within short range

You summon forth magical cold that freezes everything it reaches. When cast on a pile of food, the food becomes encased in magical ice, becoming preserved for up to 1 year. When cast on a creature, you must make an Intellect attack roll against the target's Strength. On a success, the target takes 3d6 damage and has to make a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane, becoming immobilized on a failure for 1 minute, making a Strength challenge roll at the end of the round, ending the spell on a success.

**Attack Roll 20+** The target takes an additional 2d6 damage and makes the Strength challenge rolls with 3 additional banes.

## STARVATION

CULINARY ATTACK 4

**Duration** 1 minute  
**Target** One creature within short range

You cause the target's metabolism to begin wasting the creature. The target creature becomes impaired and fatigued and must succeed on a Strength challenge roll with 4 banes or take 1d6 damage, and must make a Strength challenge roll at the end of each round for the duration of the spell or take 1d3 additional damage. If the target is already fatigued it takes 3d6 damage. The target can use an action to consume a day's worth of food to repeat this Strength challenge roll, ending the spell on a success.



## AMBROSIA

CULINARY UTILITY 5

**Requirement** You must have a Chef's Kit and blessed ingredients. You prepare these by working for 1 hour with your Chef's Kit, holy water, or a priest, and expending special ingredients worth 5 gc.

**Target** A day's worth of food within your reach

You season the food in a special magical ritual, causing it to become perfect. Upon casting this spell, you must concentrate for 4 hours, during which you perform a magical ritual of careful seasoning and preparation of the food. The food cannot spoil and can feed five times as many creatures. Creatures that eat this food gain the benefits of the Cure spell as well as healing damage equal to their healing rate at the end of the round.

## CORNUCOPIA

CULINARY UTILITY 5

**Duration** 1 day

**Area** A cube of space, 1 yard on a side, resting on a solid surface and originating from a point you can reach

**Requirement** You must have a Chef's Kit

You create a mystical horn of bounty. Upon casting this spell, you must concentrate for 1 hour, during which time you call upon the epicurean forces of magic to manifest this horn. For the duration of the spell, a large horn appears in the space, brimming with food, and creating more if any is removed. The horn goes up in flames when the spell ends.

## TACTICIAN TRADITION

*Written by Jarred Caldwell (Ra Press)*

**B**professional soldiers and combatants often require a good tactician to coordinate combat. Through formations, strategic troop placement, and clever planning, wars are won. Many generals have spent their life studying war and strategy.

Recently, a new tradition of magic has emerged, combining war strategy and tactics with magic. The tactician tradition requires the caster to loudly and clearly declare the name of the spell so that their outfit may hear and obey.

The tactician tradition combines appropriate spells found throughout the shadow of the demon lord books, as well as modifications of those spells and several brand new spells.

## REPOSITION

TACTICIAN ATTACK 0

**Target** One creature that can see you within long range

Make an Intellect attack roll against the target's Intellect. On a success, the target is moved up to its Speed.

**Attack Roll 20+** The target gets a bane on the challenge roll to avoid moving into danger.

## SCOUT FORMATION

TACTICIAN UTILITY 0

**Target** You and up to five creatures within short range

**Duration** 1 minute

None of the targets can be surprised for the duration.

**Triggered** If you would be surprised, you can use a triggered action to cast this spell, but the spell affects only you.

## CREATE RAMPARTS

TACTICIAN UTILITY 1

**Area** A line, 4 yards long, 1 yard high, and 1 yard thick, originating from a point you can reach

**Duration** 1 minute; see the effect

You cause a wall of earth to rise from the ground to fill the area. The wall has Defense 5 and Health 20. The earth fills its space completely and remains for the duration or until destroyed. If the wall is destroyed, it crumbles to fill the ground in its space with difficult terrain that remains until the spell ends

## LEAD THE CHARGE

TACTICIAN ATTACK 1

**Target** One creature within short range that can hear you

The target can use a triggered action to move up to half its Speed and make an attack with a weapon. You grant the target 1 boon to its attack roll, and the attack deals 1d6 extra damage.

## FORWARD OBSERVER

TACTICIAN UTILITY 1

**Target** One creature you can reach

**Duration** 1 hour

For the duration, the target can use a triggered action on their turn and whisper a message. You can hear this message as if they were standing next to you, regardless of the distance.

## WAR CHANT

TACTICIAN UTILITY 2

**Duration** 1 minute

For the duration, you begin chanting a war chant and project an aura that extends to short range. Creatures within aura who are friendly to you can use a minor action to join or leave the chant. You and any creature who joins the chant gains 1 boon on melee attack rolls and deals 1d6 extra damage on melee attacks it makes. A chanting creature cannot use spells or talents which require speaking.

## RALLY

TACTICIAN UTILITY 2

**Target** Up to five creatures you choose within medium range that can hear you

You shout orders and rally the troops. A target that has 1 or more Insanity or the charmed, compelled, or frightened affliction makes a Will challenge roll with 1 boon. On a success, the target removes 1 Insanity or removes one of the specified afflictions from itself.

## PREPARE AMBUSH

TACTICIAN UTILITY 3

**Duration** 10 min

**Target** Any number of creatures within short range

For the duration, the targets are hidden. The hidden condition ends when the target attacks.

## HAMMER AND ANVIL

TACTICIAN ATTACK 3

**Target** Two creatures within medium range.

Both targets may immediately move up to their Speed and make an attack with 1 boon. This movement does not provoke free attacks. If they attack the same target, they each deal 1d6 extra damage.

## DEFENSE FORMATION

TACTICIAN UTILITY 4

**Target** Any number of creatures you choose within short range

**Duration** 1 minute

Affected creatures are aware of themselves and everything around them. Each target gains darksight, truesight, cannot be surprised, and others cannot be hidden from them. Creatures attacking an affected target gain 1 bane to their attack rolls.

**Sacrifice** You can expend a casting of this spell to remove the frightened condition from all creatures within short range of you.

## ATTACK FORMATION

TACTICIAN ATTACK 5

**Target** Any number of creatures you choose within short range

**Duration** 1 minute

For the duration, whenever a target makes an attack with a weapon, they can make the attack roll twice and use the better result. As well, their weapon attacks deal 1d6 extra damage for the duration.



## WRANGLING

Written by Ronny Anderssen (*Ra Press*)

Hidden in obscure tomes and among even more obscure magic-users is a magical tradition that manipulates the power, strength, and skill of others to the caster's gain.

The Wrangling tradition introduces spells that take the strength, power, or skill from others and transfer them to yourself or from yourself to others. Creatures who have experienced the power of this tradition firsthand tell stories about such casters only in whispers.

### DIVEST SKILL

WRANGLING UTILITY 0

**Triggered** When a creature attacks you and has one or more boons on their attack roll, you can use a triggered action to reduce their number of boons by 1. You make your next attack roll within 1 round with 1 boon.

### RANSACK HEALTH

WRANGLING ATTACK 0

**Target** One living creature within short range

**Duration** 1d3+1 rounds

Make an Intellect attack roll against the target's Strength. On a success, the target takes 1 damage at the end of each round and you heal an equal amount for the duration.

**Attack Roll 20+** The target takes 1 extra damage each round.

### DELAYED SACRIFICE

WRANGLING UTILITY 1

**Duration** 1d3+1 rounds

All creatures of your choosing within short range heals damage equal to your Power. For the duration, you take 1d3 damage at the end of each round.

### HAGGLE HEALTH

WRANGLING UTILITY 1

**Triggered** You can use a triggered action on your turn to take damage equal to your Healing Rate and a creature you choose within medium range heals damage equal to their Healing Rate.

### TRADE STRENGTH

WRANGLING UTILITY 1

**Triggered** When you take damage, you can use a triggered action to cast this spell and reduce the result of each damage die by your Power. You add your Power to each damage die rolled on the first attack you make during the next minute.

### CORPOREAL CONNECTION

WRANGLING ATTACK 2

**Triggered** When you take damage, you can use a triggered action to cast this spell and make an Intellect attack roll against the attacking creature's Will. On a success, the creature takes the damage instead of you.

### DISTILL LIFE

WRANGLING ATTACK 2

**Target** One living creature within short range

**Duration** 1d6+1 rounds

Make an Intellect attack roll against the target's Strength. On a success, the target takes 1d3+3 damage at the end of each round and you heal an equal amount for the duration.

**Attack Roll 20+** The target takes 1d6 extra damage.

## RANSACK STRENGTH

WRANGLING UTILITY 2

**Triggered** When a creature within reach rolls damage, you can use a triggered action to reduce the damage rolled by up to 2d6. This cannot reduce the roll below 1d6 damage. You deal the reduced damage as extra damage on your next attack within 1 round.

## PLUNDER HEALTH

WRANGLING ATTACK 3

**Target** A living creature within medium range

Make an Intellect attack roll against a target's Strength. On a success, the target takes damage equal to their Healing Rate, and a creature you can reach heals damage equal to twice their Healing Rate.

## SACRIFICE STRENGTH

WRANGLING UTILITY 3

**Triggered** When you take damage, you can use a triggered action to cast this spell and take 1d6 extra damage. You can choose any number of creatures within short range that may add your Power to each damage die rolled on their next attack.

## CORPOREAL SABOTAGE

WRANGLING ATTACK 4

**Target** One living creature within medium range

**Duration** 1 minute

Make an Intellect attack roll against the target's Will. On a success, the target loses one of the following: up to two immunities, their Spell Defense trait, or any trait that can be used to reduce a type of damage. You gain the same trait for the duration.

## GRAND THEFT AUTONOMY

WRANGLING ATTACK 4

**Area** A sphere with a 4-yard radius centered on a point within medium range

**Duration** 1 minute

Each creature in the area must make a Will challenge roll or become slowed for the duration. For each creature that fails the roll, you can choose a creature within short range that immediately can take a fast turn.

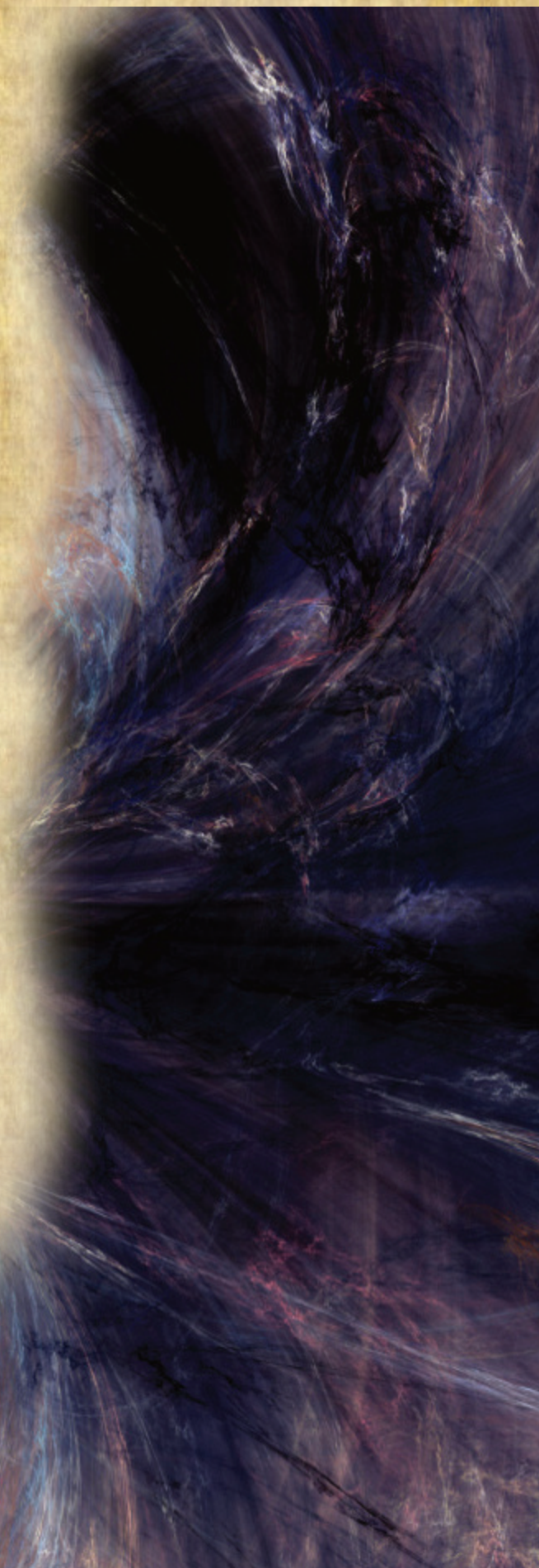
## SIPHON LIFE

WRANGLING ATTACK 5

**Target** One living creature within medium range

**Duration** 1 minute or concentration

Make an Intellect attack roll against the target's Strength. On a success, you start to siphon the life from the creature. At the end of each round as long as you concentrate, the target takes its Healing Rate in damage, and you heal the same amount. If you heal more than your Health, it becomes a bonus to your Health that lasts until you complete a rest. If the target is incapacitated from this damage, it immediately dies.



## BUILDING ENCOUNTERS

Written by Stephen Fauster

A friend of mine reached out to me the other day. He's run a couple of other tabletop RPGs before and he's played SotDL but he hadn't given a go running this game yet. Dude asked me for advice on how to build encounters because most games' encounter balance systems can be a little unreliable and arcane, and I whipped this guide together for my thought processes when it comes to crunching out an adventure.

As for the way Difficulty works, I find it helpful to think of things as though it's more like a points budget for a wargame. Let's say you're planning on running a level 2 adventure. There's a "difficulty per day" chart in *Shadow* page 183, which should be roughly your budget for encounters for that day depending on how much you want to challenge your players. At level 2 we're smack dab in the middle of Novice, with 100 as a suggested budget of creature difficulty. I'd threaten to push that up to 125 if I really wanted to give my players a bad time, or maybe 150 if I'm planning on having some infighting among my creatures.

Treat that as a pool of points to use to build out your army. Say you wanted to put us up against a bunch of stuff involving wandering around a graveyard. The setup is that we're here to investigate a bunch of ancient coinage being tossed around in town, and we need to see if someone's been defiling grave goods. The Undertaker wasn't at his shack. We waited around for a while but it's nearing midnight and he hasn't come back from his first patrols, so people are getting uneasy and our team decides to go out and see if we can just catch up with him out in the yard.

What's going on is that there's a team of graverobbers who have been poaching bodies for a necromancer or maybe a harvester, and stealing grave goods while they're at it as a side hustle. You want to have a decent team for all the involved elements. Unearthing graves and slingin' corpses are at least a two-man job, and three is preferable since they can work in shifts so while two guys work one can keep watch. No more than that, though. For breaking and entering too many people gets conspicuous.

*Shadow* page 190 has a guide for partitioning out points for your "units" in the encounter. I want these dudes to be

a pretty balanced fight so I'm gonna go for no more than 30 points between them. **Hired Killers** are difficulty 10 a pop, so that's perfect. These guys are rogues accustomed to creating and disposing of warm bodies. Cracking open a cold one is easy money for them.

That's only 30 out of my 100 for the day, and there's still a plot thread that can keep them out here. The undertaker is still missing, so I'm gonna say that there's no sign of him where the graverobbers were working. If the players left them alive and bring them back to the shack to question them when they come to (the rules for incapacitation in *Shadow* page 40, say that when you incapacitate an NPC you have the option of saying they survive and are rendered unconscious for 1d3 hours) they can be questioned, and they have seen him but successfully avoided him, circling around to parts of the yard he's already canvassed, probably by way of bragging about outfoxing the old doofus.

70 points could be partitioned in a couple of different ways, but I think to keep things simple I'm gonna aim for one Challenging encounter (31-50 pts) and either two Easy ones (10 pts or less) or another Medium one that's a little easier than the three graverobbers. I want the undertaker to have been killed by a **Ghoul** that keeps stealing fresh bodies to feed upon. Ghouls are only Difficulty 25, but this one is specifically clever enough to skulk around and wait for those committing their dearly departed to bring food to it, so maybe it's an exceptionally Roguish ghoul. I give it the **Novice Rogue** template to increase its difficulty by 1 step to 50.

The Graverobbers and the Ghoul are probably both going to be pretty tactics-heavy fights with lots of ambushes from shadows and mist in the dead of night, so I'm thinking of using those last 20 points on something a little more mindless, as well as a chance for the party to get some loot, so maybe the Ghoul has stowed the uneaten body of the undertaker in its den.

I'm gonna use them on some animal swarms infesting the den and some scavengers that have been drawn by all the exhumed bodies that snuck into the Ghoul's den. Let's say two swarms (difficulty 5x2) of enormous thumb-sized maggots and a medium animal (difficulty 10) in the form of a boar ("Them pigs will eat anything"). There's also going to be a lot of stuff the Ghoul has stashed from a variety of taken offerings for the dead.


No sign of the old coins the players are supposed to be chasing, because the Ghoul doesn't care about long-dead remains, but there might be some trade goods like liquor and jewelry or practical stuff like consumable drugs and incantations. People might use the pretext of leaving stuff for the dead to put out creature comforts for the homeless.

To sprinkle some plot threads around, maybe the party finds some disturbed graves with partially reburied bodies that look like they've been chewed up by something. If the party has anybody with a wilderness profession, they'd know animals wouldn't hide a food source back where they found it. Maybe when questioned or overheard from stealth the graverobbers complain about how someone's been defiling bodies separate from them and making them unusable.

At the same time, if they meet the Ghoul first it might fight to try to silence witnesses or to scare the party away from its territory, accusing them of stealing its prey and making it desperate and hungry. That should let them know that even if it's here doing its thing, a Ghoul isn't going to have any interest in the old coins and it confirms there's someone else taking bodies as well. If they came to the den first then they do find the missing undertaker, but they won't know who killed him and there's no connecting point for the old coins.


This is a good point for your players to stop for the day, and either you could end the adventure here or have the party pick up the next day tracking down whoever was paying the graverobbers for the bodies!

## BOSS FIGHT

learing out the graveyard also makes a good stopping point for players to rest, so that handily wraps up our encounters for the day. Still, the players haven't figured out why the graverobbers were here or what they're doing with the bodies. I think that since some of the players might be disappointed by the lack of undead in the graveyard, I should probably make the destination for the corpses turn out to be a necromancer working on an impressive masterpiece. Since this is going to be the boss fight for the end of my adventure, I'm okay with playing some hardball, and I'm going to blow my whole budget on the one encounter in the necromancer's lab. Building a **Chainbound** justifies needing that many bodies, and still works in the max difficulty per creature of 100, and I think I'll combine the two ideas I had by making the necromancer a **Harvester** as well, taking the stat block for an **Organ Filch** and applying the **Expert Magician** template to bring it up from Difficulty 10 to Difficulty 50.

This is a lot to throw at your players in one encounter. Exactly twice the maximum rating for a Challenging encounter to be precise. I'm going to be balancing that with the fact that my players should be well-rested when they come into this fight, with plenty of time to prepare and strategize and full spells and recovery abilities as well as having some additional resources from whatever they got yesterday.

## LOOT

ow, I touched on this briefly earlier, but now we really ought to think about loot. While encounters are balanced per day, your rewards are meant to be per-adventure instead. It's actually to my benefit to wait until now to consider what my players really get out of participating in all these fights. The Treasure Limits chart in *Shadow* page 206 suggests giving about 5 gc worth of rewards for an adventure. This is only a suggestion, but it's not a bad guideline to try to follow.

I'm gonna try to keep things roughly balanced between the two acts, but a necromancer's lab is probably going to have a lot more going for it than a Ghoul's hollow and whatever a bunch of graverobbers was carrying with them, so let's split things with 2 gc for the first adventure and 3 gc for the second half. Now, how much you include in this budget is going to depend on your group's attitude. If your players try to strip every corpse and sell their stinking, blood-stained armor to every merchant, go ahead and factor that into the price. If you're gonna adjust the value, be sure to factor that in as well for the sake of fairness.

In this case, I usually don't, so I'm just going to focus on what can be salvaged with a minimum of rooting around in filth. In the Undertaker's shack, there's a spare spotlight lantern, and he probably had a flask of holy water and a healing potion for emergencies (5 ss + 3 ss + 2 ss = 1 gc). In the Ghoul's den, there's an incantation of Censure on the undertaker's body, expecting that if he was preyed upon by undead then he could have used it to drive them away while he escapes. He also carried a spear with a silvered tip (5 ss + 3 ss = 8 ss) and the Ghoul has also reserved a bottle of fine spirits (1 ss) and an incantation of Hide from Undead (1 ss) among the bones, hunks of rotting meat, moldering fabric, dead bouquets, and ghoulish shit.

In the necromancer's lab, there are torturer's tools, a writing kit, an alchemist's kit (2 ss + 1 ss + 5 ss = 8 ss). Among the products of these ventures there's a healing potion, two poisons, and a potion of invisibility (2 ss + 5 ss x2 + 1 gc = 2 gc, 2 ss). That brings us to our total amounts of treasure, but all this feels a little light.



The core book also suggests that characters should have about as many enchanted objects as they have paths, so by level 3 everybody should have one. I'd suggest awarding two Enchanted Objects in this adventure, one carried around by the Ghoul and one in the necromancer's lab. Rolling on the charts in *Shadow* page 208, I ended up with a pocket watch that grants you 1 boon to Will challenge rolls to avoid gaining Insanity, and a clay tablet that prevents others from reading your thoughts or communicating with you against your will.

This is a pretty basic write-up as an example of what you could do with just the core book. Your toolbox for building encounters could be further expanded by including some of the books found in the Monstrous Pages series or the Disciples of the Demon Lord publications. But this particular piece was meant to give a little direction to any aspiring GM looking to crack open the later chapters of the core book. For me, it can be a pain to figure out where to look to find what you really need to get started with a game. Hope this helps!



## PATRON OF THE TALES

*Written by Russel Torres and Jarred Caldwell*

**T**ales of the Demon Lord is the most popular full campaign for *Shadow of the Demon Lord*. However, it has a reputation: the chapters tend to be a bit disconnected from the main storyline.

Part of the reason for this is that the campaign was designed to be a "tour of the demon lord game." The chapters provide lots of different ways to interact with the game rules, and lots of different environments to run the game. While this can make the campaign feel a little disconnected, it comes with the benefit of easily swapping out chapters for other modules or your own adventures, or even taking individual chapters and using them in other campaigns.

But if you want to play Tales as written and still want to avoid the feeling of disconnect, then you have to put in a little leg work. Such a suggestion is mentioned on page 3 of Tales: "You might also give the group a patron—perhaps Inquisitor Randolfus, Master Dreen, Commander Rena, or mayor Katrin Edgerton."

This suggestion is the missing key to tying everything together and making all the transitions from the adventures feel natural for the players and the story. Using this, you can still swap out any chapter you like, but no matter what you do, it will still feel like a natural part of the story, because now you have a patron to direct the characters. Here, I present this alternative. It is thematic, beneficial to the party, and introduces excellent roleplay opportunities. It is how our group handled the disconnect problem.

After chapter 1, the characters become introduced to the city council members and other important people within the city. Defeating the monster of the Moore House provided a great boon to the city. Several important individuals step forward to speak with the PCs and offer to become their patron. This is briefly suggested on page 3; however, here we will flesh out the details of what that means. The patron will provide several benefits to the group, as well as be their primary lead for many of the adventures. Why do the characters need to visit the hog farm in chapter 2? Because their patron requested it of them (Mayor Edgerton might be concerned for her citizens beyond the city walls, while Commander Rena may believe it's her duty to help - so they send the characters as representatives to solve the problem).

Almost all of the adventures can easily be tied back to the patron, providing an excellent story reason for the characters to go on the mission. Even if you swap out adventures, you can still use the patron system. If any characters die, the patron is a perfect lead for introducing a new PC.

The players must choose as a group a single patron.

**Katrin Edgerton** The mayor of Crossings has been trying to make things better for the less fortunate. Accepting Katrin Edgerton as your patron gives you a boon in any social interactions with the poor of Crossings. She will also pay for your living expenses, automatically providing you with a lifestyle of Getting By between adventures without any expenditure of coin.

**Commander Rena** Rena hails from Neverfall, one of the citadels of the Crusader States bordering the Desolation. She has a post on the city council to ensure that Crossings keeps the crusaders supplied in foodstuffs, arms, and clothing.

In addition to her council seat, Rena also commands the militia. Accepting Commander Rena as your patron gives you a boon in any social interactions with military or law enforcement individuals. She also provides a discount on weapons and armor, allowing you to purchase them for half price.

**Master Dreen** Representing the merchants of Crossings on the council, Dreen is one of the mayor's closest advisors, for he offers good counsel and rises above the petty bickering that often afflicts his colleagues. Accepting Dreen as your patron grants you a boon in any social interactions with working-class people in Crossings, including merchants and shopkeepers. He also can provide you each with a healing potion at the start of each adventure free of charge.

**Inquisitor Randolfus** Randolfus came to Crossings five years ago, dispatched by the Cult of the New God to ferret out subversive elements in the north. He is zealous in his efforts to root out suspected cult activity in Crossings. Accepting Randolfus as your patron grants you a boon in any social interactions with religious figures or devout worshippers of the New God. He can also provide you with a single incantation of any Rank 0 or 1 spell from the Celestial, Life, or Theurgy traditions at the start of each adventure free of charge.

**Ezekia** Ezekia is the youngest and newest member of the council. Her political sway may be weaker than the other council members, but she has strong allies. Publically, Ezekia advocates for the poorest of citizens. Privately, she's a witch and can provide access to a coven. Accepting Ezekia as your patron grants you a boon in any social interactions with religious figures or devout worshippers of the Old Gods. She can also provide you with a single incantation of any Rank 0 or 1 spell from the Curse, Enchantment, or Life traditions at the start of each adventure free of charge.

**Jon Crowley** Crowley is the commander of the Brown Cloaks, the Crossings city guard. While he's not a member of the council itself, he is still influential and can provide some excellent benefits to those who choose him as their patron. Accepting Crowley provides a boon in social situations with military or law enforcement individuals. He also provides access to the city barracks, automatically providing you with a lifestyle of Getting By between adventures without any expenditure of coin.

**Grunden the Ironmonger** Grunden is a dwarf who made his fortune in mining. He represents the business and industry on the counsel. Accepting Grunden as your patron provides a boon in social situations with business owners and the working class. He also provides a discount on tools, allowing you to purchase them for half price.

# ADVENTURES

## THE MIDWIFE

*Written by David Walling*

### ARRIVAL

The party arrives in the town of Berth just after a devastating raid the night before. A large band of Beastmen emerged from the forest in the night and breached the wooden wall. Though the Captain of the militia fought valiantly over a dozen townsfolk were abducted by the raiders, along with a dozen young children no more than 7 years old each. The beleaguered settlement baron requests assistance from the party in recovering several important town figures and the children from the raid. Among the more important members are the militia captain, the town alchemist, and a crusader that was stationed here with the church. The baron will offer a suitable monetary reward for the extermination of the tribe and return of these important townsfolk.

## BERTH

The town of Berth contains several points of interest. The Baron and his wife rule safely from his manor not far from the center of the town. Here the party can find a high concentration of guards and any information they may need about Berth itself.

The Alchemist's shop is currently broken into, the man carted away by hungry Fomori that left his stock behind. Digging through the ruined storefront with a successful Perception challenge roll with 1 bane locates two small vials of concentrated poison intended for vermin control, as well as two intact healing potions. Investigation of the till reveals 2d6 silver shillings still stored inside.

### THE POISON

If ingested, the creature needs to make a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes or take 4d6 damage and become poisoned for 1d3+1 days. It is ineffective if applied to the skin directly.



The militia barracks are still picking up the pieces after losing their captain. An inexperienced logger is currently doing his best to take count of lost equipment and casualties from the raid. The militia barracks has a small stock of martial weapons available for the town's defense. It is up to the GM if these weapons may be borrowed, rented, or commandeered by the party for the purposes of rescuing the missing captain.

The local militia describes a minotaur that was used to break the wooden gates of the town during the attack.

The "Wheat and Chaff" inn provides lodging and a place of rest for the party if needed at a modest fee of 3 cp a room per night. The accommodations are modest but clean. Talking to the local hunters and farmers here reveals information about the area that can provide boons to any tracking checks in the local vicinity.

There is a church of the New God in town that serves as a gathering place for gossip as well as worship. The party can inquire here for healing from the priests if needed. They provide small blessings for free, but larger blessings require a donation at the GM's discretion.

## THE BEASTMAN ENCAMPMENT

**T**he beastmen that raided the town has established a camp only a few miles into the forest away from Berth. The tribe consists of 10 to 15 mutated human **Cultists**, 24 **Fomori**, 4 **Wargs**, 1 herd shaman (as **Fomor Cultist**), and 1 **Minotaur**. The wargs patrol the area at the command of the shaman, each warg commands a group of 6 Fomori and 3 or 4 mutated human cultists. These cultists appear to be wild, animalistic, and mutated madmen and women. Apply horns, claws, tentacles, boils, or any combination of creative mutations to show the corrupted nature of these humans who have been accepted into the tribe, with an only barely-above-slave status. They are used as fodder by the tribe in combat. It is made quickly apparent that attacking the entire herd at once is a dangerous proposition. There are a number of interesting parts to the camp that provide opportunities to thin the herd before a final assault, such as by ambushing one of the patrols that guard the woods around the camp.

**A pile of corpses**, meat, and viscera gathered by the raiding party and hunters serve as the camp food supply. It is currently well-stocked and feasted on by all members. These remains include a good portion of the captured villagers. The pile could be poisoned by the vials from the alchemist's shop to kill some of the fomori and poison others for several days if applied properly to the meat.

**Several wooden cages** are lashed together to contain the remaining villagers, set at the edge of a dirt ring for sport fighting and entertainment. The captain and alchemist can be found here. If approached quietly, they can provide hints on patrol routes of the beastmen or instructions for poisoning the flesh pile. If equipped with weapons, the survivors will happily follow the captain (if he's alive) in fighting for their freedom.

**A pen** is set up to contain the children. About 8 children still survive and are tended to by the midwife of Berth who attempts to keep them quiet and secure. The midwife is never killed or maimed by the tribe, unlike the other possible survivors of this adventure. The children appear to be in a state of shock after the events of their capture.

**A large effigy** constructed of wood and corpses has been erected in the center of the camp. Raucous and bloody rituals are held to disembowel and feast on unfortunate victims. The great bonfire roaring here could reasonably be used to spread chaos throughout the simple tents and shoddy dwellings the beastmen are sleeping in. The effigy itself bears markings of fertility, blood, and feasting. The herd shaman leads both these rituals and the tribe and retains a semblance of control over the minotaur. If killed, the tribe is thrown into chaos and the minotaur into an uncontrollable rage. Once the shaman, minotaur, and the wargs are killed the tribe is broken. The fomori and remaining cultists turn tail and flee. The midwife insists on staying with the children, but thanks the party for their bravery and helps to escort them back to their parents. The captain and the alchemist show gratitude for their safety and will follow the party back to town.

## REWARDS

**T**he surviving important individuals are happy to offer their own rewards at the GM's discretion. The baron is happy that the threat has been destroyed, and even provides an extra few shillings for the return of the midwife. His wife is pregnant and expecting to give birth soon, and the presence of the experienced midwife puts him at ease. The party receives free stay at the inn for as long as they are in town and are invited to celebrate the safe return of the survivors. The militia captain may offer a fine weapon, the crusader the services of the local priests, and the alchemist a significant discount in his shop. If the party pillaged the shop already, he considers it payment enough and does not offer more.

## TROUBLE RETURNS

**A** few days after the party returns the survivors to Berth, the corpse of the local tanner is found within the walls. The body is horribly mutilated and shredded. A healer's profession reveals that this is the result of a number of small, animal-like attackers that killed these men with tooth and claw, then fed and gnawed on the remains. Another night reveals two more corpses.

The frightened townsfolk turn to the local heroes again for assistance believing that they were either lied to about the death of the tribe or perhaps that the remnants are seeking revenge for the tribe's fall. A little tracking and study provide a prowling area for these attackers, and the party may bear witness to one of these attacks during a stakeout at night.

A small, hunched group of humanoids chase and attempt to devour a townsfolk. The figures could be mistaken for goblins in the dark due to their diminutive stature and the presence of twisted mutations similar to the cultists encountered in the camp. Giving chase or tracking down the creatures soon leads the party back to the nest of sorts, quickly abandoned by the creatures in all the noise.

## THE MIDWIFE

**F**urther investigation soon reveals a connection between the first deaths as more bodies are found. The parents of each child saved from the tribe are found dead and partially devoured. As the party digs deeper or talks to townsfolk, it is revealed that all of these children were born to parents who experienced difficulties with conception and that each of these children is younger than 7 years old. All of them were delivered by the midwife found in the tribe's camp. The townsfolk have great respect for her and her treatments, having arrived in Berth 6 years ago and beginning practices to assist couples in conceiving and delivering children. The treatments were met with great success and celebration. Since then she has been a staple of this community. The creatures are able to be tracked back to the midwife's home, a new nest established in the basement of her house. The surviving children, now cultists of the Demon Lord, may be encountered with the midwife. Her basement, now nest, is decorated with effigies and totems of the Demon Lord and matching symbols of fertility as those found in the Beastman camp. It is clear that they have been here for a long time, rather than a recent addition since the attack.

When confronted, the Midwife uses magic of the Forbidden tradition to violently warp the children for the confrontation, twisting their forms and completing the corrupting changes they had begun already (see the **High Cultist** for the Midwife, and the **Small/Medium Demon** for the children as the GM sees fit.). The use of the "Pack Fighting" trait is encouraged for the mutated children.

Once killed, the threat is finally ended. Digging through the diary and materials of the Midwife's basement reveals that she has been performing this process for many years, village to village. She assists desperate couples in conceiving their desired children and then warps them. When enough children are of age, the tribe comes to feast on the locals and collect the children for warping. Correspondence between the mad humans of the tribe (former child victims) and the midwife reveals these plans to the party and confirm her crimes. The reaction of the village may vary, depending on the GM. They may be thankful for the ending of the threat, and the baron may offer their thanks while seeking a way to ensure his own wife's offspring is not corrupted. Alternatively, the town may be overcome with grief and unwilling to accept the deaths of the children. The townspeople may seek to drive the players out. If this path is followed, the Crusader NPC may be a good way to reward the players in spite of the poor reception from the town, as they understand the necessity of the party's actions.

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# STORIES



## BRØHKI'S TALE

*Written by Rat Bastard*

**B**hey came out of the winter's night. A horrible, frozen winter's night; the winds howled and a blizzard drove the snow nearly horizontal to the earth. Rumors of prowling giants and ogres and trolls had been rampant about the clan hearth for many a midwinter's nights, but troll magic could not be ruled out. As the clan ate, drank, and kept warm by the central hearth, I sat with the clan Gothi, Hjems by name. I knew that I would someday assume his responsibilities within the clan and I helped the old man in all tasks, both spiritual and mundane. Hjems counseled caution, as always, in that every blood snow winter brings danger. "The trolls are not an industrious lot Brøhki," he would say. "If they did not bring In enough game or fish or other flesh this year they would begin to hunger afore midwinter passes." He emphasized caution to Jarl Rurik Bonebreaker, the Chieftain and lord of our dwarf clan hold.

Hjems said that "we must be vigilant, and if necessary, temper our hospitality." But Jarl Rurik was a brave and confident man. When the knock came, he paid the old Gothi no mind, opened the steading gate, and admitted a bent and elderly traveler to our hearth fire. The Gothi Hjems was silent at first. He knew well enough that the Jarl was a man that must see for himself good or ill tidings. As the figure entered the circle at the hearth, the Gothi stiffened. Quietly, he told me to move the women and children to the hearth in the inner chambers, citing the late hour and the chill that somehow crept into the main hall. Before I could turn away, he whispered to return with his walking stick, and his buckler...and to arm myself and put on my clan armor. Alert now for danger, I did as I was told.

When I returned to the Jarl's Hall, the old, withered figure, still cowed and cloaked against the winter cold, was taking in some beet broth, a bit of hard cheese and rye tack. A horn of mead was passed and the traveler took it with thanks. When he held out his gnarled hand to grasp the horn, his fingers and nails seemed much too large, and long, for such a hunched figure. It was then the Clan Gothi spoke. "Jarl Rurik, our guest is not whom he seems. No regular traveler would survive in this storm, not one of his age and infirmity; not one dressed as he. He wears no boots, no mittens, no cap beneath his cloak, and few furs. His hands Jarl; his hands are not that of a man."

I still remember that laugh, as cold and heartless as the driven snow. His voice was gravelly and harsh as he fought to speak the dwarf tongue. "Jarl Rurik, I've come to your steading for food and shelter. Yet your Priest accuses me of not being what I seem. Is this a common hospitality practice among the dwarf clans?" He laughed again. A rough, grating sound. Jarl Rurik stood and was about to castigate the Gothi for his ill manners when the creature started to transform. It was a strange, horrible unfolding. As it stood and straightened, it seemed to expand to the Hall's peak. His meager furs and cloak fell away and before us stood perhaps the most ancient of trolls. "You see" he growled "your Gothi is correct. For the food and shelter I seek is the meat off dwarf bones, and the fine Hall you have built." The monster drew a glowing rune in the air. Suddenly, a dark portal opened and the blizzard entered the Hall, followed immediately by the howls of trolls and troll kin and ogres. Our men, and the Jarl's Húskarls, grabbed their axes and shields, but it was too late.

The trolls tore them limb from limb. Even Jarl Rurik, though he brought down an ogre with one blow, fell in mere moments. The Gothi tossed me his staff and told me to take the women and children to the tunnels. "Take the women and children to Jarl Börg! Toss me that axe boy! Now GO!" ...and I did. Many of the women and a few of the elderly men helped me round the children up, stuff their furs and packs with food and clan heirlooms, and then placed the children in my charge. But none of the elders and women would accompany me as the Gothi said. They all took up axe and shield and rushed to the massacre in the Great Hall. Some mere boys, not a wisp of beard, also tried to return to the Jarl's Hall, along with a few of the girls training to be shield maidens, but I forbade it. I took the younglings deep into the mines, into the narrowest defiles where the trolls could not follow...

I led the children to other, secure clan holds, and turned over much of our clan treasure to ensure the children would be well taken care of. They would keep their status as the foundlings of a lost Clan Hold. It was only Oaths, and precious clan heirlooms, that ensured the children would be treated honorably. The children would not become thralls, slaves, or sacrifices to appease the fickle Gods.

Shame? Perhaps it is the fate of Brøhki Trollbane, now Gothi, to bear the shame of a clan defeated by the treachery of trolls. I will carry this burden until a day comes when The Clan Winter's Turn, the Wolf-bane, Fenris Foe, shall one day reclaim its ancestral Hall.

## THE CHANGELING

Written by Jarred Caldwell



hit," the boy said. "Shit shit shit shit shit."  
"What?" asked a second boy. Like the first, the second boy looked to be in his early teenage years. Though such a thing was far from the truth, as elves could live for centuries. Millenia, even.

"It followed us," said the first.

"What do you mean, 'it followed us'?" asked the second.

"I mean, it followed it," said the first.

The second looked back, and sure enough, the young human child, perhaps no older than four, was behind them, trailing a couple of dozen yards. "Shit."

"I told you we shouldn't have played with it!" said the first.

"I knooow," whined the second.

"The marquis is going to have our hides for this!" said the first.

"I knooow," the second reiterated.

"Don't mess with the humans!" he told us," said the first, his voice deepened in imitation of their feudal master. "You can have your fun wherever you like, just don't cross the veil and whatever you do, do not mess with the humans. That's what he told us!"

"I knooooooow," said the second.

"What are we going to do?" asked the first.

"I don't know," said the second.



They stood there, watching the human child as it wandered through the forest, looking for the sparkling magic the two elven lads had used to trick it. They just wanted to have a bit of fun, showering the child with sparks of light and fluttering butterflies of magical energy. It was all well and good until the little shit *followed* them. It was not supposed to do that.

"Can't we just put it back?" asked the second.

"No," answered the first. "Once it crosses the veil, it can't go back. It's a one-way trip."

"Can't we just ignore it?" asked the second.

"No," answered the first. "If its mum realizes it's missing, they'll start a hunt. And the hunt will tell the marquis that something happened, and he'll immediately blame us whether it's our fault or not."

"But it is our fault!" said the second.

They stood there, just watching the child.

"So what are we going to do?" asked the second.

"I've got it!" exclaimed the first.

"What?" asked the second, a hint of excitement in his voice.

"We make a copy and leave it in the bed!" said the first.

"What?" asked the second, the question blanketed in confusion.

"We make a copy and leave it in the bed," said the first.

"Yeah? And how ya gonna do that?" asked the second.

"Well," said the first, his mind going into overdrive, "first we get a bunch of rocks and sticks, and then we lay it under the covers so the mum thinks it's asleep in the bed. Then we sprinkle a bit of magic to make it look somewhat human. By the time anyone notices, we'll be long gone and no trace of us will exist!"

"No," said the second, flatly. "It'll never work!"

"Sure it will!"

"Oh yeah?" asked the second, incredulously. "How ya gonna make it stick all together? Once the mum moves the sheets, it'll all fall apart!"

"Just put some mud with it," said the first.

"Just.. put.. some... mud.. with.. it," repeated the second.

"Yeah, just put some mud with it."

"You're mad. You know that? You're absolutely barking mad."

"Look, I'm telling you, it'll work!" proclaimed the first.

"Ok, fine. We put some rocks and sticks and mud together. Shape it all into a kid shape. Throw a bit of magic on it to make it look like a real kid. And then... just hope the mum doesn't find out?"

"Yup," said the first, proudly, "that about sums it up!"

"Barking mad." said the second.

"Look, I'm telling you, it'll work! The magic will make it look human enough for a few days, and then when the magic fades it'll just crumble up into a pile of debris. The mum will think it's some curse or some such, cry a bit, and move on to make more babies. But - and here's the key - they won't be hunting us."

"Ok. Ok, fine. Fine. It'll work. So what do we do with the kid?"

"Fuck if I know."

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# The homebrew vault



ou might not know this but there exists a Google drive where we try to collect all the homebrew works for Shadow of the Demon Lord. You can find it by following this link:

[SotDL Homebrew Vault](#).

We will use this category to highlight some of the homebrew works that we find on the vault, with the creator's permission of course. *The underlined text has links directly to the vault.*

## REFERENCE GUIDES

The homebrew vault has several reference guides listing all of SotDL's monsters, equipment, spells, ancestries, paths, and more.

**Ancestries and Paths** Jarred Caldwell has done a terrific job collecting all the ancestries and paths in an easy to browse reference guide. Not only that, but it includes an overview of all the ways a dead character can come back to life, all the ways you can gain a pet, all the ways you can gain corruption, an analysis of the game's poisons, and there's more coming!

**Bestiary** The bestiary, by Nezzeraaj and Ronny Anderssen, lists all the monsters found in SotDL publications. From both official and third-party books. It includes difficulties, type, and where to find them.

- **Creature Modification** Sort of an add-on to the above Bestiary, this one collects all the different creature modifications with the type of creature they can be applied to, and where to find them.

**Diseases** There are not many diseases available for SotDL, yet. But this reference guide keeps up to date with which ones *are*.

**Equipment** This reference guide by Ronny Anderssen aims to list all the equipment found in published SotDL content. Including third-party publications. The reference lists all gear, including weapons, armor, potions, poisons, relics, and even the enchanted object tables. Everything is listed with the book and page where you can find it all.

**Compendium of the Occult** A magical compendium, by Nezzeraaj and Ronny Anderssen, lists all spells with the tradition they belong to, type, and where to find them. This also includes spells from third-party publications. Now also with a random spell generator!

**Books of the Demon Lord** Ronny Anderssen has compiled all published books for Shadow of the Demon Lord and tries to update it as soon as new ones are released.

## ITEMS, RELICS, AND TRINKETS

There are also a few documents on the vault that details more relics and trinkets.

**Enchanted Items** by MadCake details the Amulet of Poison Warning, the Dagger of Compel Undead [A favorite of mine! - Ed.], Dead Man's Deck, and the Har of Farewell.

**Relics & Enchanted Objects** by A.C. Ryder have made a number of Ravenloft artifacts for SotDL: The Tome of Strahd, the Sun blade which is most likely inspired by the Sunsword, the Holy Symbol of the Summer Queen (Ravenkind), Saint Markovia's Thighbone, the Icon of Ravenloft, Gulthias Staff, and the Blood Spear.

**Random Equipment Tables** by Ronny Anderssen has compiled all the equipment from the official releases into easy to use tables for generating a random piece of equipment. It has some variations on the tables based on the group's level tier so it follows the recommended reward structure detailed in *Shadow*.



# IN CLOSING

**A**pocryphal Writings is brought to you by the Shadow of the Demon Lord community and Ra Press.

In addition to collecting and editing this fanzine, Ra Press writes and publishes sourcebooks for Shadow of the Demon Lord, MÖRK BORG, Dnd 5e, and other roleplaying games. If you want to join our community, you can check out our Discord. Or if you want to support us more directly, we're also on Patreon.

## THANK YOU!

**O**ur most sincere thanks go out to all of you who contributed to make this Shadow of the Demon Lord fanzine a recurring thing!

- **Jarred Caldwell** The *Tactician* tradition, *Magical Deprivation* rules, *Patron of the Tales* article, and *The Changeling* story.
- **David Walling** *The Midwife* adventure.
- **Rat Bastard** The *Brøhki's Tale* story.
- **Russel Torres** *Patron of the Tales* article.
- **Thaumaturge** The *Epicurean* master path and the *Culinary* tradition with tradition talents.
- **StephenFauster** The *Scalder* expert path and the article *Building Encounters*.
- **Isavro, DoughnutLord, & MediocreClient** The absurd joke of an expert path, *Wackjack*.
- **Ronny Anderssen** The *Siphoner* expert path, the *Wrangling* tradition, and Editor in Chief.



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