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TALES FROM THE SMOKING WYRM

No. 1

2012

Greetings morsels! Welcome to the Smoking Wyrms! Inside you will find your greatest delights and most excellent treasures! We cater to the most rarified of tastes! Most compelling of all are the stories people share while they drink deeply of our fine ales and wines. Who is here now, you ask?

To the left, a rather muculent entourage yearning to share with you all extant (and some extinct!) knowledge of their fine patron who dwells deep in the sea's abyssal depths!

Over there, witness young rascallions questing to be the finest of warriors for their deity—oh, the stories they can tell of their tests of faith would shake a commoner to their very core!

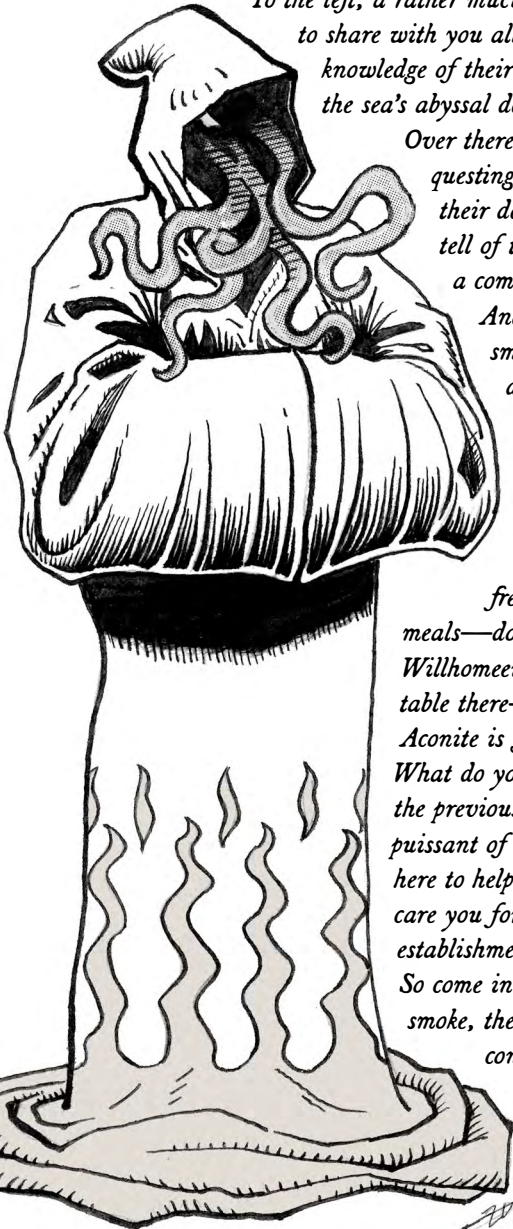
And in that alcove there, a small convocation of conjurers, diabolists, and enchanters delving into all manner of esoterica with regards to ritual magic.

What?

Of course we provide the freshest seasonings with our meals—do you not see the herbalist Willhomeena Cullpepper sitting at that table there—she always tells us when our Aconite is getting dull!

What do you mean you want to speak to the previous owner? I, N'gilken Niarb, puissant of the velvet robed tentacle, am here to help you in every way now—what care you for the cretin who last owned this establishment?

So come in, come in! Don't mind the smoke, the Wyrms only fires up when the conversation is exemplary!



2019

TALES FROM THE SMOKING WYRM

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Second Printing
A product of Blind Visionary Publications
Original printing by Risolve Studio, made accessible by Drive Thru RPG



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SIQUIS AUTEM ILLUM INDE ABSTULERIT,
PERPETUAE MALEDICTIONI SUBIACEAT.

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Abbreviations follow the DCC RPG Master Zine Index abbreviation list.

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THE PALADIN

"It is the duty and power of a paladin to show the truth of good and evil—to make clear—and that is what our light is for. It is a tool. Sometimes we use it to prove our call, but it must never be used for the paladin's own convenience or pride."

—Amberion, *Divided Allegiance* by Elizabeth Moon

Paladins have a longstanding position in the Old School Revival (OSR). From their origins in *Supplement I—Greyhawk* (1975) as a subclass of Fighting Man to their firm position in every edition since *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons First Edition*, the paladin is a mainstay of the genre. Historically, the term paladin originates from the French *Chanson de geste* (song of heroic deeds) cycle as names for the twelve foremost knights of Charlemagne's court. Appendix N includes Poul Anderson's *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, which is itself inspired by the *Chanson de geste*. The paladin continues to



inspire literature, most notably in Elizabeth Moon's *The Deed of Paksenarrion* and *Legend of Paksenarrion* novels, which are themselves allegedly a reaction to the roleplaying of paladins at the gaming table.

Initially devised as a knight that followed the Christian values of chivalry, the roleplaying paladin concept has morphed into an individual that follows the prescribed values of a specific faith, ranging across the various alignments your particular system cares to adopt. D&D paladins soon morphed to fit any alignment—the anti-paladin (*The Dragon* magazine, v.39, p.8-9, 50-53) or the various alignment paladins in the famous *A Plethora of Paladins* article (*Dragon* magazine, v.106, p.45-56) being the prime examples of this radiation. Paladins in D&D Fifth Edition now take “Oaths” that define these faith systems. Oaths themselves originated in Pathfinder's *Ultimate Magic*, under the monk's vows (p.50-51) and paladin oaths (p.60-63). Along the way, the paladin adherence to an alignment has prompted plenty of additional discussion—see *Good isn't stupid: Paladins & Rangers**. More recently for DCC, Jose Lira reworked the D&D Third Edition paladin concept in *Crawl!* magazine issue 6 (p.14-18); while Keith Nelson also presented another D&D Third Edition variant in *The Gongfarmers Almanac 2017* (v.6, p. 19-26) with the *Paladin of Gambrinus*.

In this article we present a concept of the paladin that does not require a new class. Instead, any class can devote themselves to the tenants of their faith, under the guidance of a cleric of that god. This begins with the new third level cleric spell *investiture*, wherein the would-be paladins carry out a quest for their god, overseen by the cleric. Success in the quest awards the paladin with laying on ahnds and turn unholy powers from the cleric class, but always at a lessor ability than an equal level cleric and with an increased *disapproval* range. Additionally, paladins gain access to another new spell, *invoke deity*, which allows the paladin to channel the power of their deity into improving die rolls and protecting themselves from harm. In this way, any class can be a paladin for their deity.

We see this as a beginning for paladins in DCC—a concept that can grow and change with the game and its players. Because it's when you develop deities of your own—perhaps using the *DCC Annual* for inspiration or adding paladin orders that involve oaths of service—that paladins will become a central vocation in the *DCC* universe.

* The article is so important that it's been printed twice—first in *The Dragon* magazine 38 p. 22-23, and then in *Best of Dragon* magazine volume II, and is a good primer for developing your paladin concepts.







Investiture

“A Paladin is sworn to valour. His heart knows only virtue. His blade defends the helpless. His might upholds the weak. His word speaks only truth. His wrath undoes the wicked.”

—Dragonheart, “The Old Code”



Level 3	Range: Touch	Duration: Lifetime	Casting time: 1 Hour	Save: None
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GENERAL

Spell recipients are inducted into the holy service of their deity.

MANIFESTATION

Prior to the casting of the spell, the Candidate must complete a trial dictated by the deity within 7 days. The nature of the quest must have some tangible benefit to their church and deity while testing the capabilities and faithfulness of the Candidate. The Trial can be played out by the GM and PC or the trial can be determined by rolling on the Investiture Trials table. If time is pressing, the success or failure of the trial can be determined at random rolling 1d5 on the following chart:

ROLL TRIAL OUTCOME

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Candidate fails his trial. The Candidate must spend 6 months in study, prayer, and contemplation before he may attempt to undergo <i>investiture</i> . |
| 2 | Candidate succeeds on his trial. However, severe complications for the Candidate and/or the Church occurred (Complications and consequences to be determined by the GM). Gain a -2 on the <i>investiture</i> spell check. |
| 3 | Candidate succeeds on his trial. However, major complications for the Candidate and/or their church occurred (Complications and consequences to be determined by the GM). Gain a -1 on the <i>investiture</i> spell check. |
| 4 | Candidate succeeds on his trial. However, minor complications for the Candidate and/or their church occurred (Complications and consequences to be determined by the GM). Gain a +1 on the <i>investiture</i> spell check. |
| 5 | Candidate's trial is a resounding success bringing glory to the Candidate and their church. Gain a +2 on the <i>investiture</i> spell check. |

ROLL RESULT

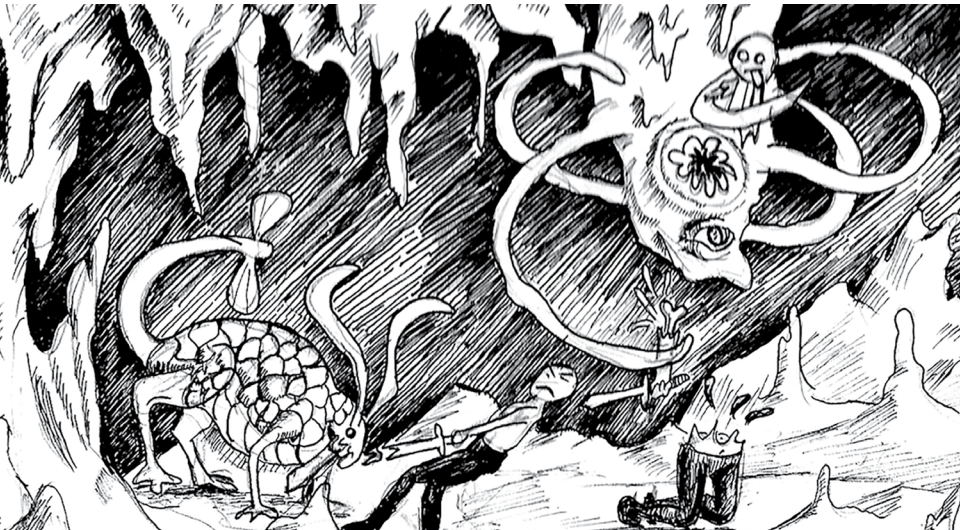
1 The *investiture* fails and the caster suffers 1d4 disapproval. The caster must spend a year in study, prayer and contemplation before he may cast the spell again. The Target of the *investiture* has been found wanting by his deity and may never be the target of the spell again.

2-13 The *investiture* fails and the target does not gain any connection or abilities from his deity. Both the caster and target of the spell must spend 6 months in study, prayer, and contemplation before the spell may be cast again.

14-15 The *investiture* creates a nominal connection to the deity you worship. You gain the ability to lay on hands, invoke deity, and turn unholy (as per cleric). However, due to the strength of this connection, failure with these abilities results in 3 points of disapproval. For determining the effect of your ability, roll $1d8 + \text{class level} + \text{Personality modifier}$. The paladin may gain disapproval as per cleric for failed rolls.

16-19 The *investiture* creates a strong connection to the deity you worship. As above, but due to your stronger connection, roll a $d10 + \text{class level} + \text{Personality modifier}$.

20-21 The *investiture* creates a powerful connection to the deity you worship. As above, but due to your powerful connection, roll a $d12 + \text{class level} + \text{Personality modifier}$.



ROLL RESULT

22-25 The *investiture* creates a greater connection to the deity you worship. As above, but ability failure results in 2 points of disapproval. Roll 1d14 + class level + Personality modifier.

26-29 The *investiture* creates a mighty connection to the deity you worship. As above, but due to your mighty connection, roll 1d16 + class level + Personality modifier.

30+ The *investiture* creates a greater connection to the deity you worship. As above, but ability failure results in 1 point of disapproval. Roll 1d20 + Class Level + Personality modifier.

INVESTITURE TRIALS

ROLL RESULT

1 A cleric nearby the Candidate enters a fugue state and begins to speak with the voice of their deity. The deity exhorts the Candidate to seek out and defeat 7 enemies of their church within 7 days.

2 While meditating in their temple, the Candidate sees a vision of a holy item of their church in the temple of another deity. The Candidate has 7 days to retrieve the item and return it to their church.





ROLL RESULT

3 While travelling around town, the Candidate is approached by a stranger who delivers a scroll before promptly disappearing back into the crowd. The scroll is a request from a nearby temple in need of assistance. The Candidate has 7 days to travel to the temple, resolve the request for aid and return to their temple.

4 During morning meditation and prayer, the Candidate enters a fugue state and begins to draw the faces of 7 individuals. When they exit the fugue state, they know that each one is a member of their church who have lost their faith. The Candidate must seek out each and restore their faith within 7 days.

5 While performing church functions around town, the Candidate recognizes a lost holy item on the person of a stranger. The Candidate has 7 days to seek out the stranger and return the item to their church.

6 A nearby town is being threatened by a hostile group and seeks their church's assistance in aiding the town. The Candidate must travel to the town to lead the faithful and resolve the conflict in 7 days.

7 While meditating and praying, the Candidate receives a vision of an artifact dangerous to their deity and how to destroy it. The Candidate has 7 days to find and destroy the artifact.

8 A dispute between rival groups in town has been brought forward to the candidate's church. The Candidate is chosen to resolve the conflict between the groups within 7 days.

9 During their prayers and meditations, the Candidate sees a vision of an important artifact believed to be lost to the church. The Candidate has 7 days to find and return the artifact to their church.

10 The Candidate is sent forth to make a circuit of the outlying communities to preach the word of their church. The Candidate must recruit at least 7 new followers over the 7 days of their circuit.


Invoke Deity

"My eyes saw what I wished to see. I am the one who brought into the world the One who knows the plan for life on earth and in the empire of the dead."

—Anubis, *The Book of the Dead*

"Fear prophets, Adso, and those prepared to die for the truth, for as a rule they make many others die with them, often before them, at times instead of them."

—William of Baskerville, *The Name of the Rose*



Level 1	Range:	Duration:	Casting time:	Save: None
	Self	Varies	1 round	



GENERAL

The paladin beseeches their deity to grant a great boon to the success of their endeavors. The invocation is cast on the paladin themselves, but can affect any followers of the deity and/or the paladin's allies, if within their Holy Aura. If successful, the paladin becomes a rallying point for the faithful, a weapon of righteousness, and a bane to the unholy. At higher levels, the paladin becomes the living embodiment of their deity's divine influence causing physical and mental anguish, loss of ability scores, and other debilitating results. The definition of "evil" is based on the paladin: generally, it encompasses creatures of opposed alignment, those unholy to the paladin's deity, and those with clear harmful intent. Paladins face the same alignment problems that clerics do when influencing those around them. Treat allies who are of adjacent alignment as one spell check result category lower than the actual category rolled, and those allies of opposed alignment are lower still, being two result categories lower.

MANIFESTATION

The paladin is limned in a brilliant aura. Roll 1d3 to determine the source of the aura: (1) the paladin themselves; (2) a radiant angelic crown upon the paladin's head; (3) an otherworldly glowing halo above the paladin's head.

EFFECTS ON:

ROLL	SELF	FOLLOWER	ALLY
1	Attempt fails and caster gains 1d6 disapproval. The paladin may not attempt <i>Invoke Deity</i> for 1 month.	N/A	N/A
2-11	Attempt fails and caster gains d3 disapproval.	N/A	N/A
12-13	The paladin receives +1 bonus to all attack rolls for 1 turn. Holy aura is 5 ft radius, lasting 1 round.	Faithful followers receive +1 attack roll bonus for 1 round.	N/A
14-17	The paladin receives +1 to attack rolls, damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and spell checks (hereafter the roll bonus). The paladin's holy aura is a 10' radius lasting for 1 turn.	Faithful followers receive +1 attack roll bonus for 1 turn.	As Follower 12-13.
18-19	As above, but the roll bonus is +2.	As paladin 14-17, but no holy aura.	As Follower 14-17
20-23	As above, but the roll bonus is 1d3+CL. All attempts by evil creatures to attack the paladin are at -1 to hit, -1 to damage. Holy aura radiates 20' and lasts for 1 turn.	As above, but bonus +2.	As Follower 18-19.
24-27	As above, but evil creatures are at -2 to hit, -2 to damage. Paladin's holy aura radiates 20' and lasts for 1 hour.	As above, but bonus +3. Evil creatures are at -1/-1 to hit/to damage faithful. These effects last for 1 turn.	As Follower 20-23.
28-29	As above, but the roll bonus is 1d3+CL and holy aura lasts for 1d3 + CL hours.	As above, but at -1 to hit, -2 to damage. These effects last for 1 hour.	As Follower 24-27.
30-31	The roll bonus is 1d6+CL. In addition, attempts by evil creatures to attack the paladin are at -3 to hit, -3 to damage. Lastly, the paladin may unleash CL bolts of pure deific energy, aimed at targets within the 100'. Each bolt does 1d10 of damage and requires a successful Fort save or be stunned for 1d6 rounds. The paladin's holy aura radiates out in a 30' radius and lasts for 1d6 + CL hours.	As above, but bonus +4. Evil creatures are at -2 to hit, -2 to damage. The effect lasts for 1d3 + CL hour.	As Follower 28-29.
32+	As above, but bolts do 1d20 points of damage and requires the victim to make a successful Fort save or die. The paladin's holy aura lasts for 1d8 + CL hours.	As above, but effect lasts for 1d6 + CL hours.	As Follower 30-31.

CTHULHU



***Iä! Iä! Cthulhu fhtagn! Ph'nglui mglw'nafh
Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah-nağl fhtagn.***

The Dreamer in the Deep, The Sleeper of R'lyeh, High Priest of the Great Old Ones—Cthulhu is known by many names. Mad scholars say that he is the mightiest of the Old Ones, that his overwhelming power is locked away beneath the waves of a distant magic-starved world, far from the flows of the Phlogiston—victim of an ancient war with the Elder Things. And though he slumbers away the eons in a state neither quite dead nor living, his reverie still influences creative and sensitive minds. It is in the forbidden tomes and relics which these sensitive souls carve in blood and insanity that one can learn how power may be drawn from him. But Dead Cthulhu cares little for the knowledge-seekers and cults devoted to him. He existed in the Void between realities before us, and will exist after the stars have burned out to cold dust; nonetheless, for those who petition for his influence, he demands that his cult be spread so that he might reclaim his rightful place as ruler of all reality.

Cthulhu: Invoke Patron Results

ROLL RESULT

12-13 Cthulhu ignores the caster and sleeps on. This glimpse into Cthulhu's dreams inflicts 1d3 Personality damage, stuns the caster for 1 round, but adds +4 to their next spell check.

14-17 Cthulhu ignores the caster and sleeps on. The caster's body rebels against this fleeting contact, and vomits forth a throbbing, bilious, black mass. The next round, the pulsing glop expands into a shoggoth—treat as a primeval slime (*DCC* 423) with 1d4 HD, MV 20', immune to cold, and 1d2 special properties. The shoggoth acts on the caster's turn, randomly attacking any but the caster. If the caster spends a move action and succeeds at a Will save, they may direct the shoggoth's attack. The shoggoth dissolves into a putrid puddle at 0 hp, or after 1d4+CL rounds.

18-19 Cthulhu briefly stirs, his madness seeping into the world and inciting frenzy. A sickly green pallor dims the land, and everyone within 30' of the caster must make a DC 15 Will save. If successful, they increase their action die by +1d and act with abandon for CL rounds (-3 AC). If failed, they reduce their action die by -1d, and become confused for CL rounds. Roll 1d4 for each victim: 1-2) drools and babbles incoherently, 3) attacks nearby creature at random, or 4) flees from caster at top speed. The caster can choose one individual within range to automatically succeed *or* fail at the Will save for each additional point of spellburn spent in the casting of *invoke patron*.



ROLL RESULT

20-23 A pale emerald mote forms at a point in sight of the caster's choosing, illuminating a radius of 20'. All sound within the glimmer ceases, and no speech is possible. This mote lasts for one turn, and can be dismissed by the caster at will. During the mote's duration, quaggy tentacles phase in and out of the space surrounding the mote. The tentacles lash out at the caster's foes caught in the mote (+4 melee; 1d6+2 damage) and distract them if struck (-2 to all rolls for one round).

24-27 As 20-23, but any foe struck by a tentacle is also infected by Cthulhu's corruption. On a failed DC 19 Fort save, pale tentacle-like worms erupt from their wounds, causing 1d4 points of damage each round until the glimmer dissipates, or the worms are removed (for example, application of fire, chopping off the infected limb, etc. ...).

28-29 As 24-27, but the glimmer expands to a 30' radius, and each creature (friend or foe) in the area must make a DC 23 Will save. Failure inflicts 1d6 Personality damage as they cower for 2d5 rounds, dumbstruck and drooling, after glimpsing the true nature of the entity residing beyond the mote. Success inflicts 1d3 Personality damage and they cower for 1 round. Adherents of Cthulhu gain +4 to this save, while those *patron bonded* to Cthulhu gain a +8 bonus.

30-31 As 28-29, but the caster chooses one target within the glimmer to be offered as a sacrifice to Great Cthulhu. If the target fails a DC 25 Reflex save, they are grabbed by several particularly large tentacles and dragged silently screaming into the mote, never to be heard from again. Upon a successful sacrifice, the caster gains a +1 bonus to subsequent spell checks (+10 max) for each victim HD. Any bonus must be spent within 1d5+2 rounds; each time bonus is spent, the caster rolls *patron taint*. If the target avoids the tentacles, Cthulhu is displeased that his hunger is not sated, and the next *invoke patron* check by the caster suffers a -2d penalty.

32+ As 30-31, but the caster may choose one sacrifice for each additional point of spellburn spent in the casting of *invoke patron*. The maximum spell check bonus is increased to +30 max (but no more than +10 per spell check) and the caster must roll once on the patron taint table for each 10 points (or portion thereof) of bonus used.

Patron Taint: Cthulhu

When patron taint is indicated for Cthulhu, roll 1d5 on this table. When a caster has acquired all taints at all levels of effect, there is no need to continue rolling any more.

ROLL RESULT

1

The caster begins to physically resemble Great Cthulhu.

First time: Your skin splotches with a sickly bruised or jaundiced tinge, edged with piscine scaliness.

Second time: Over the next 1d7 days, you become bloated and corpulent, as if filling up with charnel gasses; this swelling stiffens your joints, reducing your speed by five feet.

Third time: Your skin becomes gelatinous and rubbery, granting a +2 bonus to AC.

2

The caster emits the atmosphere of sunken R'lyeh.

First time: When you cast a spell, you exude a miasma redolent of briny seaweed, low-tide mudflats, and decaying fish for 1d4 rounds. It is off-putting, but no more so than a seaport's harbor.

Second time: The aura of stench becomes permanent, with all creatures within 20' noticing. Social interactions become difficult (-1d where appropriate), and animals (other than water-dwelling creatures) avoid you.

Third time: The reek becomes such that others actively shun you. People close businesses early if you enter, mounts refuse you, dogs bare their teeth and growl, or single you out for attack if cornered, etc. Creatures attempting to track you by scent have no difficulties, and need not make any checks if you have passed within the hour.





ROLL RESULT

3

The caster begins to move like Great Cthulhu.

First time: Your posture becomes hunched, as two large growths jut from your back.

Second time: Nothing immediately happens. Sometime after, when under physical stress (judge's discretion), the growths on your back wetly burst through your skin (causing 2d8 hp damage) and unfold into two leathery hand-sized wings.

Third time: Your wings stretch in size enough to cover your back, and while they are not large or strong enough to grant you true flight, you can use them to assist in making long leaps of up to your full movement speed in a single bound. Though they can be disguised, the wings must be uncovered to make these jumps.

4

The thoughts of those who currently beseech Cthulhu in dreams are made audible around the caster.

First time: When you cast a spell, unintelligible susurrations echoes your chants, and can be heard by anyone within 20' of you.

Second time: You begin to hear maddening whispers every waking moment (others still hear them only when you cast a spell). Other beings' features sporadically distort, and you sometimes see writhing shapes at the corners of your vision. The paranoia and uncertainty generated by these phantasms distracts you enough to impose a -2 penalty to your initiative checks. You daily learn of the vague location of one enemy of Cthulhu.

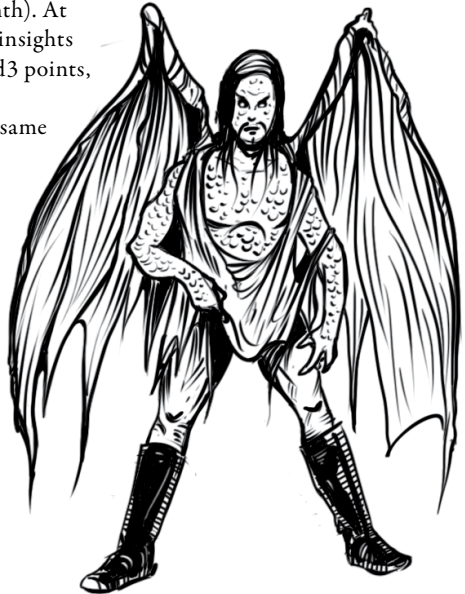
Third time: Murmuring invades your dreams. When you wake, make a DC 15 Will save or be at -1d to all rolls for the day due to fitful tossing and turning in the night. If you roll a natural 20 on the Will save, you gain deranged insights, add +1d to one spell check any time before you next sleep. You daily gain knowledge of the specific location of one enemy of Cthulhu.

*Your dreams mingle with those of Great Cthulhu, and bestow visions of an esoteric tome or mystical heirloom that could be used to advance the Old Ones' cause.**

- 5 **First time:** You feel compelled to quest in search of one of these items, located within 1d4 days travel, and likely guarded by a foe no more than 2 levels (or Hit Dice) less than you. You have a clear vision of the item, but only a rough sense of its location and wards.
- Second time:** The item is well warded and some 1d4 weeks distant, and secured by a foe at least equal to you in levels (or Hit Dice).
- Third time:** The item is protected by ancient wards and traps, requiring 1d4 months of dangerous travel, and defended by a foe at least 1d4 levels (or Hit Dice) greater than you (if not more).

*Only one of these quests may be active at a time; if this result is rolled a second time and a previously compelled quest has not been completed, then re-roll the patron taint. Once you have completed 3 quests (one at each level of taint), and presuming you maintain possession of these items (for many forces seek to restrict or destroy knowledge that pertains to the Old Ones), you can begin study of their design, provenance, and relation to one another.

Study takes 1d5 months, minus 1 month for each point of your Intelligence bonus (minimum 1 month). At the end of this inquiry, these arcane insights increase your Intelligence score by 1d3 points, but at the expense of sanity, as your Personality score is decreased by the same amount. While Great Cthulhu may henceforth continue to intrude on your dreams and require additional quests, you can never again gain this bonus to Intelligence (or this loss of Personality).



Spellburn: Cthulhu

Cthulhu and the Great Old Ones care little for mankind—humanity’s insignificance pales in comparison to the cosmic circles in which these beings tread. Yet because of their imprisonment, the Old Ones require the assistance of outside forces to make any headway into our realms. And so, they grant their assistance to drive a wedge into the cracks of reality through which they can intrude. When a caster utilizes spellburn, roll 1d5 and consult the table below or build off the suggestions to create an event specific to your own campaign.

ROLL RESULT

- 1 The caster’s body takes on the trans-dimensional nature of Great Cthulhu, discorporating into a cloying greenish mist. Upon completion of the spell, their essence coalesces back into physicality, and the stress involved in the reintegration results in 1d3 Stamina loss.

- 2 Cthulhu’s power waxes and wanes with the movement of stars both seen and unseen. Roll 1d7: 1) Great Cthulhu lies in a deeper torpor than usual. The caster does not benefit from 1 point of spellburn, but still suffers the stat loss, 2–5) the caster is granted spellburn as normal, 6) The stars are right! The caster gains 1 additional point of spellburn at no cost to his body, 7) the caster gains a double spellburn bonus as the stars align perfectly!

- 3 In a rare moment of interest, Great Cthulhu gives the caster a choice: be wracked by unseen spirits and gain only +1 to their spell check for every 2 points of physical ability loss; or succumb to madness by burning points of Intelligence or Wisdom, and thereby gaining a +2 to the spell check for each point of ability loss.

4 The caster's mind is opened to the true nature of the void beyond time and space. The caster must make a DC 15 Will save; if successful, they are weakened by the experience, resulting in stat loss. If failed, they are overwhelmed by their irrelevance in the grand design of the cosmos, and their stat loss is instead drawn from their Personality. If this reduces their Personality score to 0, the remainder of the stat loss comes from physical attributes. Further, the spell fails, and they are stricken unconscious for 1d6 rounds.

5 The caster is completely beneath Great Cthulhu's notice; the attempt at spellburn fails (stat loss still occurs, but no bonus is gained).



Patron Spells: Cthulhu

The Great Cthulhu grants two unique spells, and one unique ritual, as follows:

Level 1 spell: *Summons of the Deep*

Level 2 spell: *Breath of the Deep*

Level 2 ritual: *Form of the Deep*



Appendix N Suggestions

Working with Cthulhu can be hard, because while H.P. Lovecraft's work is compelling and evocative, it is also mysterious, leaving out the details that are necessary for good Roleplaying from a player's perspective. We suggest these works to add to your Appendix N reading list to help you come to terms on how to present the dread horror to your judge and players:

The Disciples of Cthulhu. 1976. Edited by Edward P. Berglund. DAW books. Especially *The Fairground Horror*, by Brian Lumley, and *The Terror From the Depths*, By Fritz Leiber, therein.

The Book of Iod: The Eater of Soul and Other Tales. 1995. Henry Kuttner with Robert Bloch, Lin Carter, and Robert M. Price. Edited by Robert M. Price. Chaosium, Inc.

An Ecstasy of Fear. 2019. W.H. Pugmire. Centipede Press.

Dear C,

I trust to you this idol I recovered from the Turkdean Barrow, near South Bend village, in the Lakelands district at the base of the Cradainic Mountains. As you know, I have been investigating the diaries of Justin Witham, commander of the 3rd Levi Archer Regiment during the Shandalam wars. Witham was ceded land in the Lakelands after the war, and went on to found South Bend itself, where he established his business, the Witham Airship Foundry.

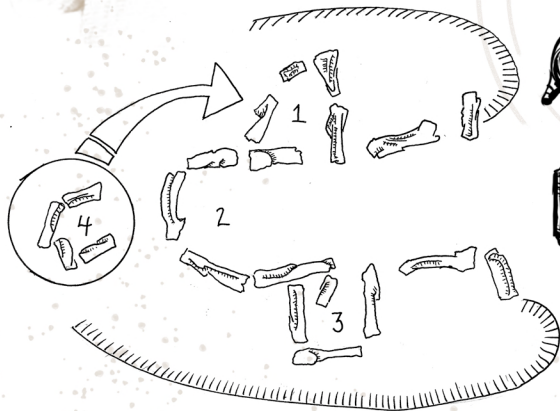
Witham was an adventurer, taking his airships as far east as the Great Wall of Nearn, west as far as the Citadel of Kel-Tur, and spinward to the great nation of Ponteverde. Witham's diaries note that it was in his own Cradainic Mountains that he uncovered this idol, and interred it at Turkdean Barrow, sometime during the reign of Cavanaugh the Small. Coins I recovered from the barrow give further evidence of the time period of construction and use, so this seems correct.

Cists 1-3 had been previously robbed of their grave goods, but the 4th cist was undisturbed, and it is from here that I recovered the idol. The first three cists all bore markings of the god Donn, as befitting Briton burials, but the 4th cist was wholly different. Here, the markings to Donn were struck out with long, wavy vertical lines.

Witham's diaries indicate that he found the idol along with several other artifacts, but these were hidden in some other location, for which I now search. In the past week I have become increasingly aware that some agency seeks to disrupt my work, and that the idol is not safe with me. If you need assistance, seek out Caterina Vect, of the Explorer's Society and show her the idol and this note. She will help.

Your humble servant,

S.



Summons of the Deep

“And yet I saw them in a limitless stream—flopping, hopping, croaking, bleating—surging inhumanly through the spectral moonlight in a grotesque, malignant saraband of fantastic nightmare.”

—H. P. Lovecraft, “The Shadow over Innsmouth”

Level 1 Range: 20' Duration: Casting time: Save: None
(Cthulhu) Varies 1 round

GENERAL

A number of Cthulhu's servants are conjured forth from the abyss. You must have some material remnant of a salt-water creature (e.g., scales, tooth, claw, and which cannot be from a summoned creature of any kind) to expend in the casting of the spell and be within 10 miles of a salt-water ocean or sea. If no requisite body of water is nearby, you must sacrifice at least 1 point of spellburn, spilling your blood to make a supernatural connection to those waters; this spellburn does not modify the spell check result. At the end of the summoned duration, or when individual creatures are slain, their bodies dissolve into a briny greenish mist.

Deep One: See *DCC* 400.

Deep One Acolyte: Init -1; Atk spear +3 melee (1d8+4); AC 15; HD 2d8+2; MV 20' or swim 40'; Act 1d20; SP spells (+3 spell check modifier; *charm person, chill touch*); SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +4; AL C.

Deep One Priest: Init -1; Atk spear +5 melee (1d8+4); AC 16; HD 4d8+4; MV 20' or swim 50'; Act 1d20; SP lay on hands 3/day (+5 check), rebuke 3/day (DC 15 Will save or opponents held at bay, cannot approach within 20' of priest), spells (+5 spell check; *charm person, chill touch*); SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +5; AL C.

MANIFESTATION

Roll 1d3: (1) with the sound of waves lapping against a distant shore, a deep fog coalesces and creatures step out of the mists; (2) fetid black water begins welling up from the ground, forming a small stagnant pond from which the creatures clamber forth; (3) a howling storm springs up from out of nowhere, and the called creatures appear in a flash of lightning and thunder

ROLL RESULT

1 Lost, failure, and patron taint.

2-11 Lost. Failure.

12-13 The caster summons 1 deep one, which serves for up to 1 hour before departing. Due to the nature of the summoning, the caster cannot directly harm a creature they summon.

14-17 The caster summons 3 deep ones, which serve for up to 1 hour before departing. Due to the nature of the summoning, the caster cannot directly harm creatures they summon.

18-19 The caster summons 6 deep ones, which serve for up to 2 hours before departing. Due to the nature of the summoning, the caster cannot directly harm creatures they summon.

20-23 The caster summons 10 deep ones, and 1 deep one acolyte, which serve for up to 2 hours before departing. Due to the nature of the summoning, the caster cannot directly harm creatures they summon.

24-27 The caster summons 15 deep ones, and 1 deep one acolyte, which serve for up to 4 hours before departing. Due to the nature of the summoning, the caster cannot directly harm creatures they summon.

28-29 The caster summons 21 deep ones, and 2 deep one acolytes, which serve for up to 4 hours before departing. Due to the nature of the summoning, the caster cannot directly harm creatures they summon.

30-31 The caster summons 28 deep ones, and 2 deep one acolytes, which serve for up to 12 hours before departing. Due to the nature of the summoning, the caster cannot directly harm creatures they summon.

32+ The caster summons 36 deep ones, 3 deep one acolytes, and 1 deep one priest, which serve for up to 1 day before departing. Due to the nature of the summoning, the caster cannot directly harm creatures they summon.



Breath of the Deep

"Vast and lonely is the ocean, and even as all things came from it, so shall they return thereto."

—H. P. Lovecraft & R. H. Barlow, "The Night Ocean"

Level 2 Range: Duration: Casting time: Save: Fort vs.
(Cthulhu) Varies Varies 1 action spell check

GENERAL

You inundate your foes with the depths of the seas, drowning them with the essence of Cthulhu's watery tomb. You can instead attempt to conjure a beneficial effect, in which case the spell functions identically to *water breathing*, with the following modifications: Regardless of the spell check result, the caster automatically suffers patron taint, and allies roll 1d6 modified by their Luck: (3 or less) corruption (as if they themselves were the caster).

MANIFESTATION

Roll 1d4: (1) A viscous glob of seaweed and slime forms around the caster's hand, which is then hurled at the target; (2) rancid seawater sprays from the caster's fingertips; (3) skeletal fish burst from the caster's mouth and swarm the target; (4) a wave forms at the caster's feet and crashes towards the target. Regardless of the manifestation, the effect drenches the target in seawater, and flows into what passes for the target's mouth.

ROLL RESULT

1 Lost, failure, and patron taint.

2-11 Lost. Failure.

12-13 Failure, but spell is not lost.

14-15 A single target within 30' must save or be incapacitated by seawater filling its lungs, losing their action(s) in the next round. Whether or not the save is made, the target suffers a -1 penalty to all rolls for 1d3 rounds thereafter due to shortness of breath. Creatures that can breathe water are unaffected.

ROLL RESULT

16-19 As above, but up to 1d4 targets are affected.

20-21 As above, but up to 1d4+CL targets within 60' are affected, and the penalty to all rolls increases to -2 for 1d4 rounds.

22-25 As above, but up to 2d4+CL targets are incapacitated for the next 1d3 rounds, and the penalty to all rolls lasts for 1d6 rounds. **Focused:** Alternately, the caster may single out one target within 60' to suffer the full force of the spell. If the single target fails its save, it is incapacitated, and begins drowning. Each round thereafter, the target must save, or remain incapacitated and take 1d6 temporary Stamina damage. If Stamina is reduced to 0, the target dies. If the target succeeds on a save, it is no longer drowning, but suffers a -1d penalty to all rolls for 1d6 rounds. Creatures that can breathe water are unaffected.

26-29 As above, but up to 2d6+CL targets are affected, and the penalty to all rolls becomes -1d for 2d4 rounds. **Focused:** As "focused" above, but up to 1d3 targets can be affected, and they suffer 1d6 hp damage each round while drowning.

30-31 As above, but up to 3d6+CL targets are affected, and take 1d3 hp damage each round while incapacitated. The penalty to all rolls lasts for 2d6 rounds. **Focused:** As "focused" above, but up to 1d6 targets can be affected, and the penalty to all rolls lasts for 2d4 rounds.

32-33 As above, but all hostile targets within 60' are affected. **Focused:** As "focused" above, but the targets instead take 2d6 hp damage each round while drowning, and the penalty to all rolls lasts for 2d6 rounds.

34+ As above, but all affected targets take 1d6 hp damage each round while incapacitated. Alternately, the depths of the sea flood the bodies of up to 2d6 targets within 60'. Each target must save or be killed immediately. Those that survive take 6d6+CL hp damage, are stunned for 1d4 rounds, and suffer a -2d penalty to all rolls for 2d6 rounds thereafter, as torrents of conjured seawater explode from every orifice and pore of the target's body. Creatures that can breathe water are not immune to this result.

Form of the Deep

“The Thing cannot be described—there is no language for such abysses of shrieking and immemorial lunacy, such eldritch contradictions of all matter, force, and cosmic order. A mountain walked or stumbled.”

—H. P. Lovecraft, “The Call of Cthulhu”

Level 1 (Cthulhu)	Base Die: 1d7	Range: Self	Duration: Varies	Casting time: 1 hour	Save: None
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GENERAL

The caster taps deeply into Cthulhu’s dreams, calling forth various inherent abilities of the great old one, rare insights into obtuse magicks, and knowledge of enemies.

CONDITIONS

Circle of followers: 6/+1

Automatic corruption: major/+1d/caster only; or greater/+3d/all participants

Extra duration: 1 hour

Rare ingredient: Elder Thing eyestalk/+1d; up to 4 may be used

Sacrifice: Enemy of Cthulhu killed/+1d; no limit

MANIFESTATION

Roll 1d3: (1) A pulsing green light fills the space causing all effected by the ritual to glow momentarily; (2) those affected by the ritual hunch over for a moment, clawing at their heads and sprouting physical mutations if they occur, as the susurrations of Cthulhu’s dreams reverberate through the space like the rumbling of an earthquake. Those unaffected must make a Will save or suffer 1d3 personality damage (3) the waves that encase R’lyeh flood the space for a microsecond, leaving everyone wet, and a few fish flopping in the corners.

CORRUPTION

Roll on major corruption for all participants.

ROLL RESULT

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Failure and worse! Roll 1d4 modified by Luck: 0 or less) corruption + patron taint, 1-2) corruption, 3-4) patron taint. Affects all participants. |
|---|---|

ROLL RESULT

2-11 Failure. Roll misfire, only affects caster.

12-13 Participants gain vague sense of an enemy of Cthulhu within 100 miles of caster's location. The caster gains knowledge of a random first level spell for 24 hours.

14-17 As above, but enemy knowledge is within 25 miles of caster's location. Caster gains knowledge of two random first level spells for 24 hours.

18-19 As above, but enemy knowledge is within 10 mile of caster's location. Caster gains knowledge of two requested first level spells for 24 hours, and one random mutation for 24 hours: 1) heightened strength, 2) wings, 3) telepathy, 4) cognitive immortality, 5) time stop, or 6) time sense (*MCC* pp. 51, 64, 80, 85, 86, and 111 respectively)

20-23 As above, but enemy knowledge is within 1 mile of caster's location. Caster gains knowledge of one random second level spell for 24 hours.

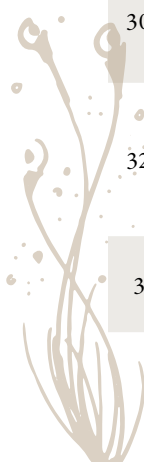
24-27 As above, but enemy is illuminated in a green silhouette for 48 hours. Caster gains knowledge of two requested second level spells and two random mutations for 24 hours.

28-29 As above, but nearest two enemies are illuminated in a green silhouette for 48 hours. Followers gain one random mutation for 24 hours: 1-2) heightened strength, 3) wings, 4) telepathy

30-31 As above, but nearest 2d6 enemies are illuminated in a green silhouette for 48 hours. Caster gains knowledge of one random third level spell and three random mutations for 24 hours

32-33 As above, but all enemies are illuminated in a green silhouette for 96 hours. Caster gains knowledge of a requested first level spell permanently, and one requested third level spell for 24 hours. All mutations gained are permanent.

34+ As above, but caster gains knowledge of a requested first and second level spell permanently at no slot cost.



CULPEPPER'S HERBAL

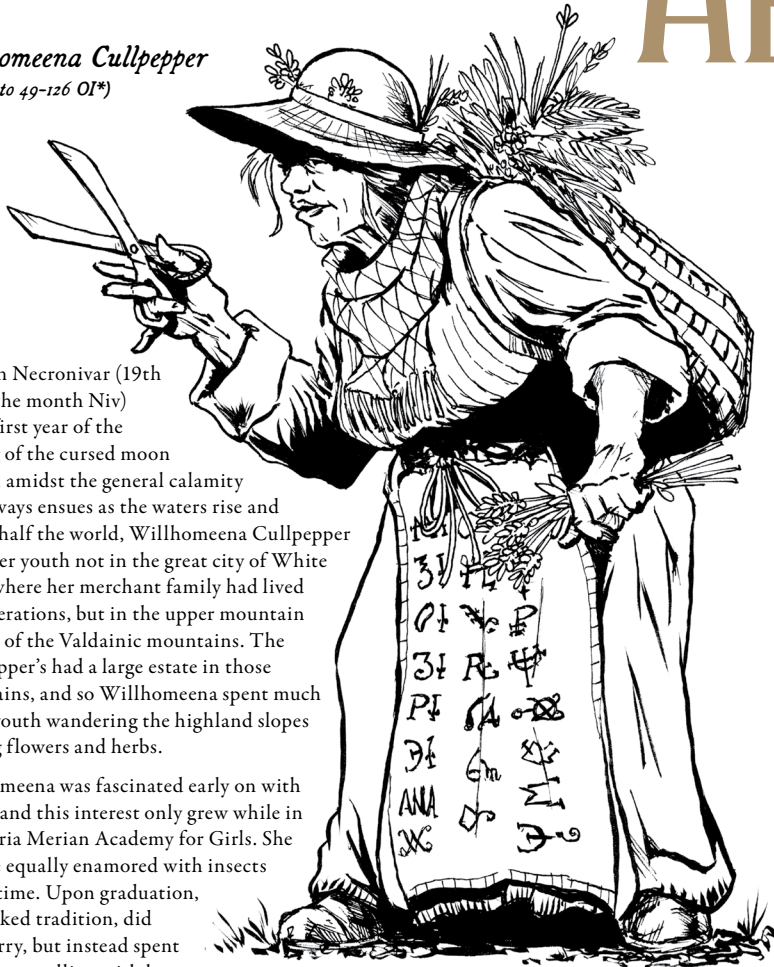


Willhomeena Cullpepper (48-799 to 49-126 OI*)

Born on Necronivar (19th day of the month Niv) in the first year of the passing of the cursed moon Uffern, amidst the general calamity that always ensues as the waters rise and drown half the world, Willhomeena Cullpepper spent her youth not in the great city of White Gates where her merchant family had lived for generations, but in the upper mountain reaches of the Valdainic mountains. The Cullpepper's had a large estate in those mountains, and so Willhomeena spent much of her youth wandering the highland slopes picking flowers and herbs.

Willhomeena was fascinated early on with plants, and this interest only grew while in the Maria Merian Academy for Girls. She became equally enamored with insects at this time. Upon graduation, she bucked tradition, did not marry, but instead spent her time travelling with her father, Chorondon Cullpepper, amongst the Whispering Sea and the Ocean of Souls, identifying new plants and spices that would be good to trade back to the homelands. Her father died in 49-042 OI, and Willhomeena found herself alone. After that she sold her portion of the family business, bought an airship, and travelled further abroad, seeking ever newer plants and insects to study. Eventually the rigors of constant travel overtook her, and she settled into the family Valdainic estate, where she continued to grow and master herbology until her death. The Cullpepper Highland Herbal Laboratory was named after her in 49-178 OI.

*Old Imperial calendar



HERBAL

Adder's False Tongue

Serpentes lingua

Description: Only standing four to six inches tall with a single stalk, Adder's False Tongue has a single leaf of a deep green with a protruding central frond. The frond is always an alternating red and green pattern, of lighter shades than the leaf. Once fully mature, Adder's False Tongue blushes with alternating vermilion patches in between major veins.

Where to find: Adder's False Tongue is found in high mountain meadows, often amongst the slopes of decaying scree fields or ruined castles. The plant seems to find the best purchase amongst rocky outcroppings sparsely populated by other plants.

Flowering time: Late spring to summer, always wilting before the festival of Melkor during harvest's full moon.

Astrology: Dominated by the moon Tammuz, it is said that Adder's False Tongue once grew four to five

feet tall, but was diminished when the demon Tammuz was imprisoned inside the moon bearing her name at the end of the great war. Ever after, the plant has been diminutive in form.

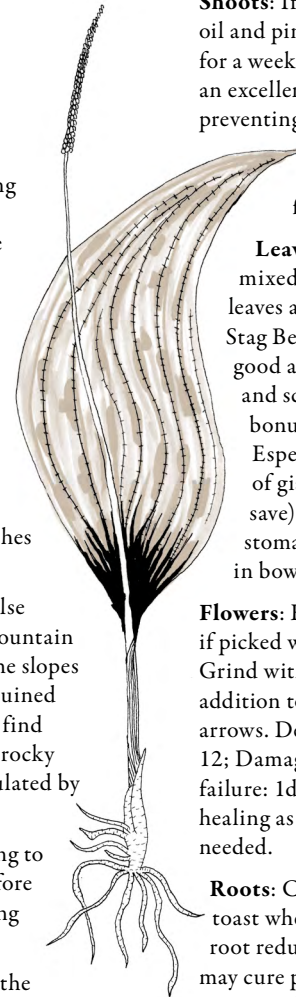
BODILY VIRTUES

Shoots: If sufficiently boiled in rapeseed oil and pine pitch, then set in the sun for a week to ripen, the shoots make an excellent balsam for fresh wounds; preventing infection if applied daily. Kept in a cool place away from light, the balsam will keep for up to a year.

Leaves: The juice of the leaves, mixed with the juice of horsetail leaves and the dung of the Red Tassled Stag Beetle in equal measure, makes a good anti-venom for manticore stings and scorpion stings (+4 and +6 bonus to the respective Fort save). Especially strong against the stings of giant wasps (+9 bonus to Fort save). Chewing the leaves calms the stomach after rancid food and aids in bowel regularity.

Flowers: Extremely poisonous, especially if picked when Tammuz is at her fullness. Grind with pitch to make a potent addition to bladed melee weapons and arrows. Delivery: wound; Fort save: DC 12; Damage on success: 2d3 hit points, failure: 1d4 Wisdom; Recovery: normal healing as the minutest quantities are needed.

Roots: Cleaned of skin and rubbed into toast when freshly made (still hot), the root reduces joint inflammation and may cure paralysis (odds: 1 on a d30) if not set-in longer than two days time. You will need to help the paralytic sop chew their toast.



Aconite or Yellow Wolf's Bane

Aconitum lupus flavo

Description: One to two feet in height, with only the top six inches protruding from the water. Stem is box-like in structure, with minute hairs. Only the protruding portion has leaves. The leaves resemble the flames licking the feet of witches at inquisitorial burnings. The yellow, almost orange hooded flowers are found at the apex of the plant, on the long central spear. The base of the flowers are furry like the nape of a wolf. The tuberous root resembles an arched cat, and Aconite is said to yowl like a cat when plucked from the swamps they dwell in.

Where to find: In bogs where tall grasses and pussy willows meet the water. Never in deep water.

Flowering time: Spring to late fall when evenings are around freezing. Does not flower in winter months after the Fates moon (when Albeteron passes Tammuz), until Donn's spring festival.

Astrology: Governed by the moon Albeteron, yellowed wolf's bane is indistinguishable from its cousin, blue wolf's bane, when not flowering.

BODILY VIRTUES

Shoots: designated as from tuber to first leaf, these are said to guard against stamina-based poisons, if



folded into a wad and chewed between teeth and cheek.

Known to turn cheek black if

chewed to the raw fibers and sucked for another few hours—this will be when the protection is at its best. Gain 1d5 bonus to Fort Saves if chewed within 1 day prior to poisoning; gain 1d8 bonus if chewed within 1 turn prior to poisoning.

Leaves: Said to confuse the werewolf and prevent them from attacking if leaves are muddled and placed between the soles of your feet and the bottom of your shoes. Lose potency in 1d3 days after being placed in shoes. Can be dried by smoking with the hair of a virgin, then stored for up to six months for full potency.

If attacked by a werewolf, before action die is rolled, werewolf must make Luck check—failure means it diverts to another creature randomly. If all present are using leaves properly, then on failed Luck roll, the werewolf retreats in confusion for 1d6 turns.

Flowers: Poisonous if eaten. Rubbing fresh flowers into the skin causes rash

and hives similar to early leprosy, lasting 1d3 hours. Repeated dosings within a day result in hives festering, popping, and weeping with a white pus strung with blood. If eaten fresh (delivery ingestion) death is possible even from a single flower (Fort save DC 12, success: 1d3 hit points, failure: 2d6 hit points; normal healing on success). Halflings are known to be especially vulnerable to Aconite flowers (double damage; if they live, lose Good Luck Charm abilities for 1d2 days).

Roots: If dried, ground to powder, and mixed with boiled linseed oil in the right proportions, makes an excellent insect repellent. Not usable in defense of the blue iridescent vulture flies of the Lower Cradainic Mountains, which seem even more attracted to this salve, killing my manservant so vigorous was their attack on one occasion. Poor Shawn, he is missed.



C. Vance

THE SILVER BALL

“The horror! I remember the feeling as it passed over me—infinite cold, my appendages splayed out in all directions—then nothing! The next thing I knew I was standing outside the brothel my party had chosen to take up residence in—three weeks later!”

—Antonius the Scribe

Many an adventurer has run afoul of the mysterious Silver Ball, often when they least expect it. Appearing out of darkened shadows, or even mid-air, the Silver Ball does not speak, or make any sound at all. Rather it glides in silently, absorbing the adventurer into its inner volume, and then just as rapidly disappearing.

Many adventurers have spent copious amounts of time trying to prevent the Silver Ball’s appearance, but to no avail. Snorri Kigilsson, known by his guild as “The Sleeper”, has a prodigious attraction to the Silver Ball. A fact that his body was almost always left behind as a “Mark” (see below for details), happened so often during the delve into the Vaults of the Mad Mage Knepefaris, his party ultimately chose to reduce his share of the treasure! Snorri’s affinity for the Silver Ball did have advantages—allowing the party to smuggle the Brass Doors of Utkora past the Potentate of Zariim without detection by placing the doors in Snorri’s bag of holding, then waiting for the inevitable Silver Ball absorption before leaving the city of Zariim.

What the ball does with its victims, no one knows. Usually they return—but this is not always the case. When they do, they may have only vague fever-dream memories of the time passed and the places they have been. In addition, they are often changed in subtle ways or return with new abilities or items.

GENERAL

Init +10 (surprise); Atk +10 melee (absorption); AC 10; HD 10d12; MV 100; Act 1d30; SP surprise 75% of time; Absorption; Invulnerable; Reinforcement; SV Fort +10, Ref +10, Will +10; AL N.

ABSORPTION

When the silver ball attacks, it moves over the victim, seemingly phasing with that individual. At this time, the victim’s face projects to the outer surface of the sphere in multiple images of distraught horror and fear, while their body is absorbed into the ball, and their appendages cartwheel around the surface in wild and surprising ways. A similar event (but in reverse) occurs when the victim is ejected from the ball. Upon ejection by the Silver Ball, roll once on the Random Happenings Table for each game session the player was gone. Effects are cumulative.

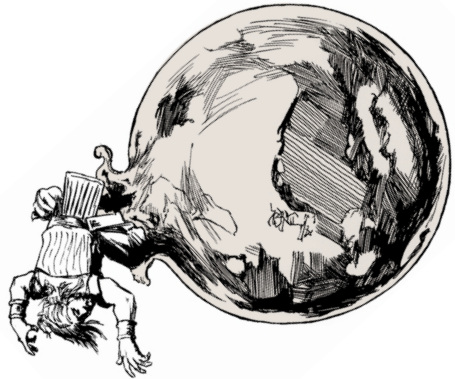
The Silver Ball normally (95% of the time) fully absorbs the physical and mental presence of the PC—they completely disappear. In a rare event, only the mental presence is absorbed, leaving a mindless, unsleeping, standing automaton with blank all-white eyes. While in this mindless state, the PC does not seem to need air, food, or water. If the Silver Ball reappears, the conscious mind of the PC returns and mind and body meld once more. The PC often has recollections of being “on a date” as the sole cognition of the event. While mindless, the automaton will move when commanded as long as they are called “Mark.” They will not attack or do anything other than stand passively. No one knows why this is so.

EJECTION

Upon ejection from the Silver Ball, roll on table SB-1 and consult the relevant event table(s).

TABLE SB-1: EJECTION EVENTS

% ROLL	EVENT
01-30	Memories
31-55	Physical Changes
56-80	Surprising Items
81-90	Roll again twice*
91-96	Roll again three times*
97-99	Roll again four times*
00	Nothing happens



* On subsequent rolls, reroll any “Roll again” result

INVULNERABLE

Normal, natural, and magical attacks do no damage to the Silver Ball. Those who attack, if they hit, can see flashes of horror and pain on the faces of those absorbed into the ball. This does no actual damage to those contained within, and they hold no conscious memories of these moments when they eventually emerge.

REINFORCEMENT

Magical damage done to the Silver Ball does not harm it. Rather, it seems to grow the ball diameter by a number of feet equal to damage divided by 10.

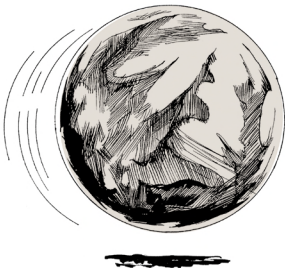


TABLE SB-2: MEMORY

D30 MEMORY

- 1 Returns drunk, smelling of elderberries and partaking in an epic quest for a Holy Hand Grenade—whatever that is?
- 2 Raves about the man with “hourglass eyes” for a full 1d4 days
- 3 Remembers walking the halls of a castle called...GrayEagle? Or something like that.
- 4 Talks about their time eating a fine dinner with “Master D’Harts”.
- 5 Falls out of the Silver Ball, wakes with a start, yelling, “Wait! I am not dead! Don’t loot my body—I need my kidneys!” Does not know why.
- 6 Knows that they are now wanted for murder in the town of _____; fairly certain they are innocent, but not entirely sure.
- 7 Knows what the next room they will walk into is purposed for, and if it is trapped.
- 8 Remembers being sealed in a coffin and buried; becomes claustrophobic.
- 9 Remembers giving a braided chain of the finest silver to a barmaid named “Brandy”.
- 10 Returns raving about a dwarf that left him hanging from a rope on the side of a cliff.
- 11 Remembers sailing the high seas with the renowned pirate Baldman Jones.
- 12 Remembers being tortured by a being with one lidless eye wreathed in flame, and having only four fingers on a blackened hand.
- 13 Recalls joining a drinking club at a port called Deepwater.
- 14 Has an irrational fear of turnips and complains about a blue dwarf who walks around collecting rocks.
- 15 Speaks constantly about travelling with a group of teenage adventurers and their friend “Dungeon Master”. Fears something called Tiamat is hunting them.
- 16 Returns rimed with frost; any liquids in possession remain frozen for 2d6 turns.
- 17 Believes he must seek atonement to return to the good graces of _____ (a deity chosen at random).
- 18 Talks about “this one time at Bard Camp” a lot.



D30 MEMORY

- 19 Remembers living a full life into old age. Roll on *DCC* Table 1–3; character can now perform skills associated with that occupation (in addition to those already known).
- 20 Believes they have ridden “Shai-Hulud” in the great deserts. Carries with them a small tin of spice.
- 21 Recalls months patrolling the borderlands while serving in the militia of _____. “THE MINOTAURS! OH GODS, THE MINOTAURS!!!”
- 22 Remembers a blade swinging towards their neck, their opponent shouting “There can be only one!!!”
- 23 Feels a strong sense of loss from an unrequited love.
- 24 Remembers being assigned to “cleanup duty” (or was it “to clean up doody”?). Smells like a gongfarmer for 2d7 days.
- 25 Remembers fleeing town with their fellow carnies, the townsfolk chasing them with torches and pitchforks.
- 26 Recalls researching among stacks of books and parchments in an old dusty library. Gain +2d to your next check to *know* something.
- 27 Ejected with tears streaming down their face. Recalls hearing the most moving piece of music in the whole of existence.
- 28 Remembers sailing to the edge of Áereth. Returns soaking wet, wearing only a loincloth. 1d12 rounds later, the Silver Ball returns and ejects the character’s belongings in a heap.
- 29 Blood... SO. MUCH. BLOOD.
- 30 Character has no memories of what occurred, but will experience a strong sensation of déjà vu at some point in the future (at Judge’s discretion).

TABLE SB-3: PHYSICAL CHANGES

D30 PHYSICAL CHANGE

- 1 If male, discovers their scrotum has been tattooed red. If other gender, roll again with 2d14.
- 2 Has a new tattoo on an obvious body part: (1) face; (2) hands; (3) neck.
- 3 Skin develops a different tint (see *DCC* Table 9-1: “Humanoid Skin Color” for suggestions)
- 4 Hair has changed color.

D30 PHYSICAL CHANGE

- 5 Emaciated, as if starved and overworked for weeks. Returns with no more than half their normal hit points (can be healed normally).
- 6 Gains an extra digit on an appendage: (1) left hand; (2) right hand; (3) left foot; (4) right foot.
- 7 Missing one hand with visible teeth marks on the stump. Strangely, they look like teeth impressions from a dwarf.
- 8 One hand is now different, somehow...sinister?
- 9 Hands switch places (left hand is now on right arm, and vice versa). This imposes a -1 penalty to Agility for 1d4 weeks while the character retrains how to manipulate objects.
- 10 Character's age changes by 1d12-6 years.
- 11 Character's height changes by 1d12-6 inches. There is no change in weight.
- 12 Finds a large amount of red dust in their hair, and various orifices. The dust exudes from their pores for 1d3 days.
- 13 Has a nasty rash in their nether regions. The local alchemist might be able to help you with that...
- 14 Has vague gill slits on the neck. If already has gills, develops inflatable air sacks under arms.
- 15 Speaks 1d3 new languages.
- 16 Now slurs their "s" sounds oddly.
- 17 Whenever the character speaks, the sounds occur 1 second later than they should. This doesn't hinder spellcasting; it's just weird.
- 18 Now possesses a map, tattooed onto the back of the character.
- 19 Eyes now have: (1) slitted pupils; (2) no pupils; (3) normal pupils, determine color randomly.
- 20 One eye has been replaced with a glass eye, but the character can see as if it is a normal eye. If taken out, ceases to function when taken more than 3' from the character's body.
- 21 Gains a third eye: (1) middle of forehead; (2) palm of hand; (3) chest; (4) back of head. There is a 10% chance this eye has infravision 30'.
- 22 Small horns grow on the character's head. They resemble those of a: (1) bull; (2) ram; (3) goat; (4) demon; (5) only one horn instead of two, of the previous styles.
- 23 Develops a tail: (1) monkey; (2) scaly snake; (3) forked demon; (4) rat; (5) stubby dog; (6) bushy cat; (7) horse.
- 24 Teeth, especially canines, are sharper. Character prefers red meat ver other choices (the rarer, the better!).

D30 PHYSICAL CHANGE

- 25 Chest aches. Discovers recent scars bisecting torso both vertically and horizontally (as if from an autopsy)
- 26 Pale from what appears to be blood loss. Returns with half the hit points they had before absorption by the Silver Ball, and 1d5 Con damage (both can be healed normally).
- 27 Walks with a hunch for 1d5 days.
- 28 Head increases/decreases in size by 25%. Previously worn headgear no longer fits.
- 29 Gain a minor corruption (*DCC* Table 5–3). Luck may be used to avoid (as a wizard).
- 30 Gain a random mutation from *DCC RPG Annual Volume 1*, “Random Mutations” table (page 165). If not available, reroll.

TABLE SB-4: SURPRISING ITEMS

Items from this table will typically be found in the character’s pockets, a pouch, or a backpack, and may not be immediately obvious (unless otherwise specified), or in hand if particularly large (such as a weapon).

D30 ITEM

- 1 A golden orb with a ruby-encrusted cross on top.
- 2 Plans and recipes from an inn called the 12 Monkey Balls.
- 3 A small vial of red liquid.
- 4 A new ring on their finger. It speaks to them when their eyes are closed and they focus on trying to sleep.
- 5 A pouch containing 1d6 glowing purple mushrooms.
- 6 A pair of silver scissors.
- 7 An ivory scrollcase. The nearly crumbling papyrus inside describes a distant mountain land called “Leng” and the debased men and creatures that live there.
- 8 A small idol of a bipedal tentacle-faced thing with wings.
- 9 A new silvered one-handed weapon (determine type randomly). If the character was not previously proficient with this weapon type, they are now.
- 10 A large, red abdomen tarantula in their pocket. The tarantula speaks and begs for protection—it is just a child. On a failed DC 15 Will save, the character feels they are the tarantula’s parent.

D30 ITEM

- 11 A golden key that has wings and flies.
- 12 A flask of rotgut whiskey. Within is the preserved body of a pixie.
- 13 A large pitchfork made of an odd colored metal.
- 14 A heart, wrapped in waxed paper, in their backpack. Roll a d5; on a “1”, the heart still beats, and will continue to do so until destroyed.
- 15 A short-handled hoe that can effortlessly dig through any ground or stone to form perfect rows for planting.
- 16 Walks oddly, complaining of something in boot. When they look, it is a gem*.
- 17 Gains a body piercing of the Shandaloo, the dreaded dark halflings that worship the Unwyrm.
- 18 A map, tattooed on the hide of an unknown beast1.
- 19 A rusty key in their mouth that they know opens a tower of elephant god worshippers.
- 20 A loaded, primed flintlock pistol in their hand; they know it belongs to a space hippo who wants it back desperately.
- 21 A telepathic rat. Treat as a guardian familiar, *DCC* p.316, or see article, this volume.
- 22 A folded sheet of stiff vellum in their hand; it is decorated with simple drawings, and inscribed with the words “WORLD’S GREATEST MOM/DAD!”
- 23 A small pouch hanging on a cord around their neck. Inside is a vial labelled “DRINK ME”, and a cookie with icing that reads “EAT ME”.
- 24 A small hand-wound music box that plays all but the last stanza of “Pop Goes the Weasel”, and in a minor key.
- 25 A ragdoll with numerous stab wounds. The blood seeping from the wounds appears to match the blood on the dagger in the character’s other hand.
- 26 Clenched in their fist, a “WANTED” poster depicting their face. Text describing their crimes is missing, as is the entity offering the reward, but the amount is a princely sum (commensurate with the character’s level)
- 27 Their hand stuck in a wasp nest, wasps included (treat as an insect warm, *DCC* 419)
- 28 Wearing rusty manacles (locked).
- 29 A book, clutched tightly to their chest*.
- 30 A half-empty flask of rotgut whiskey.

* This entry pairs well with *The Dungeon Alphabet*, by Goodman Games

TELEPATHIC RAT



Mutant Crawl Classics introduced a stalwart companion of many an adventurer: the telepathic rat. In typical Dark Master fashion, Jim Wampler left the telepathic rat up to the devices of players and judges around the world to develop further. We have found that telepathic rats now show up everywhere in our games, whether they are *MCC*, or *DCC*, in nature. So wonderful are the antics of these plucky sidekicks, and useful at the gaming table, that we have even taken to using these wonderful Plague Rat puppets sold at Shakespeare's Globe theatre (<https://www.shakespearesglobe.com>) to personify them in game. Herein we detail how we have developed the telepathic rat for use at the table.

TELEPATHIC RAT

Init +4; Atk bite +1 (1d3); AC 14; HD 1d3; MV 40' or climb 20'; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; AL same as "master"

DESCRIPTION

Looks like a typical rat in appearance (8-12 inches long weighing up to 1 pound); colouring varies between 1) brown, 2) grey, 3) black, and 4) albino white with red eyes. 10% of telepathic rats have an abnormally sized brain pan, that often protrudes as a large, hairless, tumor-like growth on the top of the skull. These rats are less lovable, but roll twice for special ability, and the player chooses which effect occurs. There is also a 5% chance that the rat is *not* a rat, but is, in fact, a miniature giant space hamster instead. Giant space hamsters are the lovable scourges of the phlogiston, and will be detailed at another time.

Initial contact with the rat is disconcerting. It is as if something is softly gnawing at your mind—at first, barely noticeable, then increasingly insistent—until you acknowledge the prying by letting it into your thoughts. Make a Will Save at DC10 to ignore a rat's thoughts. Telepathic rats prefer to sit on a

shoulder or ride in a pocket and will follow simple commands. Your rat is a loyal companion that brings various new abilities and possible liabilities. Roll on the following table.

ROLL	ABILITY
1	Ailurophobia—You develop a distinct and irrational fear of cats
2	Prey sense—You develop an acute sense of hearing and sight. You are aware of creatures that may be laying in ambush of you. +1d for detecting ambush.
3	Pack rat—You find that you now have become a collector of small shiny objects. You ‘collect’ these items even if they aren’t yours to take. DC 5 to resist palming objects from shops. DC 10 to resist snagging items found on group adventures.
4	Contortionist—You can squeeze your body into tight places and twist to escape from confining bonds. Gain +1d on any check to escape confinement/grappled.
5	Mingle—You begin to dress in a way that allows you to adapt to your surroundings. Gain +1d to all hide checks.
6	Nocturnal—You feel the urge to move about at night and sleep during the day. DC 5 to resist.
7	Swim—You are a natural swimmer. No rolls required except in exceptional circumstances and those are made at +1d.
8	Scamper up walls—You can now climb walls and sheer surfaces with ease and grace. Roll as a 5th-level Thief of your alignment. Thieves higher than level 5 use their level and add +1d.
9	Squeaky—Can emit high frequency vocalizations outside of human hearing range that can be detected by other vermin and small mammals. 50% chance you can communicate with said creatures.
10	Prim—Feel the urge to groom other party members. If not shunned for grooming the party, party members heal one more hit point a night due to the general lack of arthropod vermin that otherwise infest everyone.
11	Burrower—You LOVE to dig holes and will actively do so if given the chance. And if you can dig one large enough you will like to climb on in and den for the night. You dig twice as fast as the normal person.
12	Chisel-like teeth—Your front teeth extend, strengthen, and wear down with use, keeping a sharp point. You gain a bite attack for 1d3 damage, or increase an existing bite attack by +1d.
13	Eusocial—You find that you crave the company of others and would prefer to huddle together when sleeping and do not like to be isolated.
14	Night sight—You can see better in the dark, gaining limited infravision or 20 feet. If already have infravision, extend another 20 feet.
15	Bonded—You can see through rat’s eyes, hear through its ears. You gain bonus hit points equal to the rat’s when it is within 100’. Suffer its hit points in temporary stamina loss if rat is killed.
16	Roll twice on the table using a d14.

RITES & PART I RITUALS

The *DCC* rules present spells in resplendent detail. Just prior to the spell section, there is a small passage on Ritualized magic. Here, The Dark Master clearly states that while spells presented therein can be extended in various ways (see *DCC*, pp.124-126), that the august tome the spells reside in do not include the “great rites and rituals of the era.” This article sketches out how rites and rituals differ from normal spells, and outlines how to present them. Further, four examples are included to get you moving forward in the creation of your own rites and rituals.

Rites and rituals (hereafter just referred to as Rituals) differ from spells in the following manner: 1) they do not use the action die of the caster, but the action die of the ritual to cast, 2) the ritual action die is alterable by a clearly defined set of modifiers imposed in the ritual exegesis, 3) rituals tap into “recondite energies of the universe beyond the ken of man or elf.” As such, there may be many recorded forms that all lead to a set of ritual outcomes, and each form may have different base ritual die, or set of modifiers, based on how clearly the archivist has recorded their ritual.

RITUAL ACTION DIE

The Ritual action die is the die rolled to see if the ritual is successful. It starts very low, for translating the perplexing inscriptions of the original amanuensis can be tedious at best, catastrophic at worst. First level rituals begin with an action die of 1d8, and reduce from there, so that a second level ritual has a base die of 1d7, and so on. The more powerful the ritual, the more precise it must be enacted, the harder it is to reflect that precision in writing.

RITUAL MODIFICATION

Each ritual has a set of modifications which can improve or harm the chances of success. A partial list of modifiers is presented here, for your consideration.



ACTION	MODIFIER
Circle of Casters	Lists the minimum number of magic casters in a cohort and the die bump you gain from that cohort: e.g.—4/+1d
Circle of followers	Lists the minimum number of followers in a cohort and the bonus you gain from that cohort: e.g.—6/+1
Sacrifice	Lists the type of sacrifice, and the bonus gained (may be a die bump or bonus)
Location of power	As per <i>DCC</i> p.126
Rare ingredients	Lists the type of ingredient, special conditions, and the bonus gained (may be a die bump or bonus). These must be met for the ritual to work.
Automatic corruption	Lists the die bump gained for taking on automatic corruption (specifies minor, major, or greater), and who takes on the corruption: e.g.—greater/+1d/caster only
Chosen corruption	As per Corruption <i>DCC</i> p.126
Extra duration	As per <i>DCC</i> rules, pp.126; but may be hours, days, weeks, or longer per +1 bonus
XP cost	Lists XPs sacrificed by the caster, circle of casters, or followers, and the bonus gained: e.g., 3 caster; 6 follower/+1; or 2 caster and 4 follower/+2
Spellburn	As per <i>DCC</i> p.107-109
Precise order	A precise order of events is necessary to enact the ritual. Otherwise, while the components of the ritual need to be brought together, the ritual is not timed with a precision. Enumerated as either none, hourly, minute, or second in precision. Each level of organization past none adds a +1d.
Extra spells	Lists additional spells which may be cast to gain additional effects, and the chance of invoking a phlogiston disturbance (<i>DCC</i> p.103)

RITUALS MAY HAVE MULTIPLE FORMS

Rituals can have various elucidations, which represent clarifications and obfuscations of the core portions of the rituals themselves. Often, these are found in differing texts, although some texts might confer multiple expositions of the same ritual. For example, the ritual for summoning a Shoggoth found in the *Necronomicon* might have a very different set of modifiers than that found in the *Ebon Book of Shandaloo*. A ritual might also be gifted by a patron or deity, in which case it is of the most lenient of all modifiers possible, for this is the ritual in its cleanest form.

Rites of Schlag-Ruthe

Level 1	Base Die: 1d8	Range: Varies	Duration: Varies (See Spell Check)	Casting time: 1 Hour	Save: None
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GENERAL

This ritual creates a Schlag-Ruthe, or dowsing device, used to find unseen magical sources of power. The rod or wand device created can take on the appearance of many different mechanical devices that can include a compass, sextant, or abacus. Once the caster locates the magical source, the device fuses into a useless hunk of junk as the magical energies overload it. Should the source not be found, the device turns to dust when the magic of the ritual ends.



*As described by Necromancer Xergal in
the In Libro Mors Nigrum*



CONDITIONS

Automatic corruption: caster/minor/+2d

Extra duration: 1 hr/+2d

Rare ingredient: The blood of the necromancer soaked into the bones of a murdered husband (these become the dowsing device)

Sacrifice: The tears of a widow confronted with the ghost of her husband/+2d

MANIFESTATION

The Schlag-Ruthe crackles with electricity when it draws near to a source of magical power, striking the source directly with a great deal of intensity and pyrotechnic display. Uniquely, this electricity turns a phosphorescent green when the source of power will augment necromantic spells and practice.

CORRUPTION

Roll on *DCC* Table 5-4: Major Corruption

MISFIRE

Roll 1d3: (1) the wielder catches on fire from severe electrical display, taking 1d5 damage per round; roll luck each round or continue taking damage until 2 consecutive luck rolls are passed, (2) the caster's skin thickens and becomes bark-like for 1d3 days, (3) the hair of the caster grows 1d30 inches in under a second—all of it, head, body, pubic, eyelashes, all of it. The caster falls into a coma for 1d3 hours and is famished thereafter.



*As described by the Kuldonic Sorcerer
Velkerri in The Grand Tome of Magic*



CONDITIONS

Circle of Casters: 3/+2d

Circle of Followers: 2/+1

Extra duration: 1 hr/+1

Sacrifice: 1 hp blood/+1d

Rare ingredient: Specially prepared wooden branched tree limb hand-picked by the caster from the tree.

MANIFESTATION

The Schlag-Ruthe vibrates with increasing intensity as it draws closer to the target. The type of wood selected influences the type of magical sources the ritual detects.

CORRUPTION

Roll on *DCC* Table 5-3: Minor Corruption

MISFIRE

Roll 1d3: (1) blood pours from every casters' orifices, (2) two followers are struck dead with a flash and a boom, (3) all casters grow a third limb from their back.



*As described in the Zolgi Harrison's
Guide to Dowsing the Thraziun Plains*



CONDITIONS

Circle of Casters: 1/+1d

Circle of Followers: 3/+1

Extra duration: 1 hr/+1

Rare ingredient: Specially prepared wooden rod or wand of at least 10 gp value

MANIFESTATION

The Schlag-Ruthe is bathed in magical light that pulses with increasing intensity as it draws closer to the target.

CORRUPTION

Roll on *DCC* Table 5-3: minor corruption

MISFIRE

Roll 1d3: 1) Casters hands turn to wood for 24 hours, 2) a nearby tree catches on fire as if struck by lightning, 3) a flock of small birds arrives and hounds the caster for 24 hours.

ROLL RESULT

1 Failure. Gain a corruption as indicated by variant.

2-13 Failure.

14-17 Caster detects the strongest magical source within a ½ mile radius. The caster cannot identify the overall strength or type of magic. The magic of the Schlag-Ruthe fades after 1 day.

18-21 As above, but the radius is 1 mile.

22-23 As above, but the radius is 10 miles. The caster is able to determine the general strength of the magical source (revealed as the approximate level of a spell), but not the type of magic. The magic of the Schlag-Ruthe fades after 1 week.

24-27 As above, but the caster detects the strongest 1d3 magical sources within a 25-mile radius.

28-31 As above, but the caster detects 1d4 magical sources within a 50-mile radius and is able to determine the type of magic (arcane or divine).

32+ As above, but the caster detects 1d6 magical sources within a 100-mile radius and is able to determine the nature of the magical source (ley line, place, object, or creature).



Dark Phylactery

Level 2	Base Die:	Range:	Duration:	Casting Time:	Save:
	1d7	Self	Varies	1 Week	None

GENERAL

The caster prepares a set of vessels for containing soul fragments to ward against the death of their body. The caster may never have more storage vessels than they have levels. If the caster is slain, or their body destroyed, their essence remains safely in the vessels.

Fracturing your soul is inherently a corrupting event. If less than 50 XPs are fractured off, the caster gains a minor corruption; 51-100 fractured XPs results in a major corruption; and if more than 100 XPs are fractured off, the caster gains a greater corruption. No die bump is gained for any of these automatic corruptions.

If an intelligent creature encounters one of these vessels, they must make a Will save versus the ritual's check result or become possessed by the soul contained in the vessel. Failure indicates the possession is permanent, and the host soul is destroyed. Success indicates the possession is not permanent and the host soul is trapped inside the phylactery until the essence of the caster is exorcised from the body of the host. Regardless, the caster can only utilize the XPs contained within the vessel encountered once in possession of a body. If not encountered, the vessel remains intact, with the essence of the caster, indefinitely. Further, the caster's soul cannot migrate to a Far Shore to find peace after death if any portion of their essence remains in a vessel.



As described in the Necronomicon



CONDITIONS

Circle of followers: 3/+1

Automatic corruption: Major/+2d/all participants

Extra duration: +1d/week

Rare ingredient: The heart of your mother's enemy, dried, ground to a powder, then used as the base for a bone broth stew (at least 3 gallons in volume), simmered for the length of the ritual, topped off with spring water daily to remain the same volume.

Extra Spell: *Geas*—if cast with *dark phylactery*, any successful Will saves to prevent possession also geas the victim to find any and all other phylacteries of the caster. As the victim encounters these phylacteries, they must make a new Will save against possession, with a -1d bump for every phylactery in their possession.

MANIFESTATION

A red mist forms off the surface of the caster, migrates to the vessels, and is absorbed into them.

CORRUPTION

Roll twice on *DCC* Table 5-4: Major Corruption

MISFIRE

Roll 1d3: (1) Caster contacts a spirit that inhabits the body of the caster for 1d4 hours, doing what they will during that time, (2) the ritual works, but the phylactery(ies) disappear to unknown location(s), (3) a demon is captured in the phylactery instead. It will attempt to possess you (50%) or curse you (50%).



*As described in the Cultis Ghoulis
Vandirium*



CONDITIONS

Circle of followers: 5/+1d

Automatic corruption: Greater/+1d/caster only

Extra duration: +1/day

Sacrifice: All followers engaged in ritual are slain

MANIFESTATION

The bodies of the followers shrivel and emaciate as they die.

CORRUPTION

Roll twice on *DCC* Table 5-5: Greater Corruption

MISFIRE

Roll 1d4: (1) Ritual works, but the phylactery(ies) disappear to a known location(s), (2) you rip out a portion of your soul. Roll 2d20 and subtract those XPs from your character permanently. You lose level benefits if you lose a level. All phylacteries involved are destroyed in the process, (3) your entire soul moves to the phylactery; your body collapses, catatonic, for 1d4 days, (4) the soul of the nearest non-casting intelligent creature is shredded and destroyed.

ROLL RESULT

1 Failure and worse! Roll 1d4 modified by Luck: 0 or less) corruption + misfire + patron taint, (1-2) corruption, (3-4) misfire. Effects all participants.

2-11 Failure. Roll misfire, only effects caster.

12-13 Fractures off 1d30 XP into 1 object. Item must stay within 100 miles of caster or caster loses access to those XPs. Item AC=14, HP=20.

14-17 Fractures off 2d20 XP into 1 object. Item must stay within 100 miles of caster or caster loses access to those XPs. Item AC=16, HP=22.

18-19 Fractures off 2d30 XP into up to 2 objects (caster choice). Item must stay within 1000 miles of caster or caster loses access to those XPs. Item AC=18, HP=24.

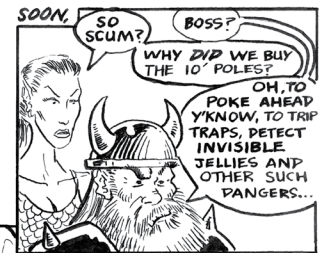
20-23 Fractures off 3d24 XP into up to 2 objects (caster choice). Item must stay on the same continent as caster or caster loses access to those XPs. Item AC=20, HP=26.

24-27 Fractures off 3d30 XP into up to 3 objects (caster choice). Item must stay on the same continent as caster or caster loses access to those XPs. Item AC=22, HP=28.

28-29 Fractures off 4d24 XP into up to 4 objects (caster choice). Item must stay on the same planet as caster or caster loses access to those XPs. Item AC=24, HP=30.

30-31 Fractures off 4d30 XP into up to 5 objects (caster choice). Item must stay in same crystal sphere as caster or caster loses access to those XPs. Item AC=24, HP=36.

32+ Fractures off 5d30 XP into up to 6 objects. Item must stay within the same dimension as the caster or caster loses access to those XPs. Item AC=24, HP=40.



WHAT IS THE SMOKING WYRM?

"Nanos gigantum humeris insidentes."


—Attributed to Bernard of Chartres by John of Salisbury, *Metalogicon*, 1159

"We are dwarfs, but dwarfs who stand on the shoulders of those giants, and small though we are, we sometimes manage to see farther on the horizon than they."

—William of Baskerville, *The Name of the Rose*

"In a world where I feel so small, I can't stop thinking big."

—Neil Peart, *Caravan on Clockwork Angels*



In 1974 Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson co-wrote, and Gygax published, *Dungeons and Dragons (D&D)*; fantasy roleplaying was born. The game was, by today's comparison, stripped down. The boxed set contained the bare essence of what was needed to play. From the three 36-40 page rulebooks that resided in the original game set there quickly spawned a wonderful homebrew world of unofficial fan-based magazines, fanzines for short, that supported the fledgling product line with different ideas from different gaming clubs. Within a short time period dozens of fanzines supported the game.

Fanzines such as *Alarums and Excursions*, published by Lee Gold in 1975, *Dungeoneer* published by Jennell Jaquays in 1976, *Troll Crusher* published by Brian Ansell in 1977, *Underworld Oracle* published by Phil Alexander in 1977, and *The Oracle* published by Christopher Bigelow in 1982, all added new content, ideas, and pushed new ways to play the game beyond what Gygax and Arneson presented. These fanzines presented an open, consumer-controlled, forum for discussing roleplaying games. In the early days of our common interest, they represented the easiest way for enthusiasts to reach out to one another, and present their own ideas. The fanzine is the way for dwarves to literally stand on the shoulders of giants—to push the medium, to present ideas in public at a time when the cost of doing so was high.

D&D was revised and split into two games with the Holmes edition of *D&D* coming out in 1977 and *The Players Handbook for Advanced Dungeons & Dragons (AD&D)* releasing in 1978, followed in 1979 by *The Dungeon Master's Guide (DMG)*. Notably, Gygax included the famous Appendix N in the *DMG*, and this list of twenty-eight authors would reveal that even our founding giant rested upon the shoulders of authors such as Poul Anderson, Fritz Lieber, H.P. Lovecraft, Edgar Rice Burroughs, August Derleth, Lord Dunsany, J.R.R. Tolkien, Jack Vance, and R.E. Howard, to name a few. Here, Gygax was pointing out the shoulders he stood on. Can giants stand on the

shoulders of giants? Or, do we all just grow smaller each passing cohort, and thus we are all always dwarves, even if our ancestors envision us as giants?

Other publishers emerged.

David Hargrave published *The Arduin Grimore* in 1977 and ultimately eight more books followed, with *End War* being published posthumously in 2002. Erol Otus, one of the more famous TSR artists of early *D&D* fame (see the feature article on him in Centipede Press' *Weird Fiction Review* #8), got his start with Hargrave, drawing art for the Arduin series and drawing and writing (with others) such classics as *Booty and the Beasts* (1979) and the *Necromican* (1979) before moving to TSR and joining the other early artists who visually defined the medium: Diesel, Sutherland, Trampier, and others. These artists provided a vital function to roleplaying games, but we will have to come back to them in another editorial in a later issue. For now, we focus on the writers.

Simultaneously, other game systems came about: Greg Stafford founded Chaosium and released *Runequest* in 1978, which then spun out *Call of Cthulhu* by Sandy Petersen in 1981. Publishing houses such as Judge's Guild published modules, and professional magazines to rival Gygax's own *The Dragon* (published in 1976). *White Dwarf* got its start here, with John Peake, Ian Livingstone, and Steve Jackson gaining traction in the United Kingdom supporting *D&D* in 1977 under their company Games Workshop. *White Dwarf* was so popular it formed the basis for the *Fiend Folio* monster volume (TSR, 1981) as an outgrowth of the Fiend Factory portion of *White Dwarf*. Iron Crown Enterprise would bring *RoleMaster* and its brother *SpaceMaster* into the world starting in 1980, offering a unified system that merged fantasy and science fiction—unheard of at the time.

Science Fiction had actually arrived very early with James Ward's *Metamorphosis Alpha* (TSR, 1976), which then spawned the post-apocalyptic *Gamma World* (TSR, 1978). Marc Miller published the quintessential science fiction game *Traveller* in 1977. Science fiction and the apocalypse merged in *Rifts* (Palladium, 1990). Superheroes emerged on the field, in the form of such hits as *Champions* (Hero Games, 1981), *Marvel Super Heroes* (TSR, 1984), and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (Palladium, 1985). Spies became popular, with Merle Rasmussen's *Top Secret* (TSR, 1980) followed by Gerard Christopher Klug's *James Bond 007* (Victory Games, 1983). More horror populated the landscape with *Chill* (1984).

And then the roleplaying industry went into overdrive.

AD&D launched a second edition, and dove headlong into the worldbuilding phase of the game, adding in quick succession settings such as *Dragonlance* (1984), *The Forgotten Realms* (1987), *Spelljammer* (1989), *Planescape* (1994), and many more to the long-established *World of Greyhawk* (published in Folio form in 1980). Horror made a large resurgence and literally overwhelmed the industry with Mark Rein-Hagen's powerhouse *Vampire: The Masquerade*

(*V:tM*, White Wolf, 1991), which was quickly codified into the World of Darkness, spawning more than five total games, each looking at a different horror aspect.

V:tM returned to the Appendix N concept, listing out novels, movies, roleplaying games, and even philosophical writings as the giants upon which the setting stood. Here, for perhaps the first time, *D&D* became an acknowledged inspiration, along with a host of new literary authors—there is no overlap between Gary's Appendix N and Rein-Hagen's Last Words lists, since, surprisingly, Gygas did not list Bram Stoker's *Dracula* as an inspiration. Here was an entirely new cast of giants upon which to stand.

AD&D died, and *D&D* lived as Wizards of the Coast (WOTC) purchased the ailing TSR and infused life into the game with the monumental third edition. *D&D* third edition marked a massive turning point, with the Open Gaming License (OGL) and d20 licenses allowing, for the first time, direct connections to a now-venerable rule system reborn with modern twists. For his part in moving the OGL forward, Ryan Dancey should be sainted, because it freed the *D&D* ruleset as we know it to be eternally tinkered with in a mutually beneficial manner. In a deeply philosophical way, the OGL promotes the dwarves standing on the backs of giants, leaning into the problem of seeing further than before—of finding the perfect roleplaying game. With the OGL, *D&D* embraced the idea that we should build off one another in a mutually beneficial way. Giants and dwarves, standing on each other's shoulders.

Commenting on the concept of building truth by building on previous discoveries, the Jewish tosaphist Isaiah di Trani wrote in the 12th or 13th century:

We admit that our predecessors were wiser than we. At the same time we criticize their comments, often rejecting them and claiming that the truth rests with us. "How is this possible?" The wise philosopher responded: "Who sees further a dwarf or a giant? Surely a giant for his eyes are situated at a higher level than those of the dwarf. But if the dwarf is placed on the shoulders of the giant who sees further?"... So too we are dwarfs astride the shoulders of giants. We master their wisdom and move beyond it. Due to their wisdom we grow wise and are able to say all that we say, but not because we are greater than they.

And so the phrase "Standing on the shoulders of giants..." or *nanos gigantum humeris insidentes*, was born. In the OGL something magical happens—giants give permission to dwarves to spawn something new, to create—to build off what they have created. The OGL is the Nash Equilibrium Theory in operation—and we have seen in real life that everyone can win—that dwarves can stand on the shoulders of giants to see just that bit further. Because seeing further together is better than just one viewpoint seeing further than the other. Just as the OGL created *Dungeon Crawl Classics*, Goodman Games has likewise allowed third party publishers to flourish by creating his own *DCC* license which augments the OGL.

All these games that came before us have inspired us to produce *Tales from the Smoking Wyrms*. Our fanzine is like some predecessors, *Crawl!* and *Crawling Under a Broken Moon*, but also hopefully different. Our goal is to create the content we have always wanted to see, and also explore the past of fanzines, going back to the beginning to see what might still be relevant today. In this issue we present the Cthulhu patron—a patron long missing from the game, but also the beginning of a large amount of mythos inspired work that we have in mind. We also present a useful Judge tool in the Silver Ball—a device that can be used to quickly and quirkily bring in and exit players when the need arises. We provide our take on the classic Paladin class—a mainstay of fantasy gaming, but here hopefully integrated a bit more tightly to the cleric and associated faiths. For some fun we cross over into *MCC* and introduce advanced Telepathic Rat rules, to help flesh out these plucky little sidekicks. Cullpepper's Herbal is the first in a hopefully long-running series that explore the usefulness of herbs in *DCC* or *MCC*, or any fantasy game for that matter. With the inclusion of the *Onward Retainer* comic strip, I have finally accomplished a major goal with my lifelong friend Joel Phillips—getting some fantasy comic action out there! Joel is the person who introduced me to *D&D* around 1989, and we have been friends ever since. Finally, we lay the groundwork for much more work in coming issues with the Ritual rules. The Dark Master hints at these being different in *DCC*, and we present one way this might be so. The ritual article is the first part of a three-part article, covering lots of ritual examples.

As we worked on these articles for this first issue of *Tales from the Smoking Wyrms*, we stood on the shoulders of giants. Maybe we have been able to see a little further together, but it is hard to tell from this vantage point.

Trevor Stamper

Cincinnati, Ohio 2019



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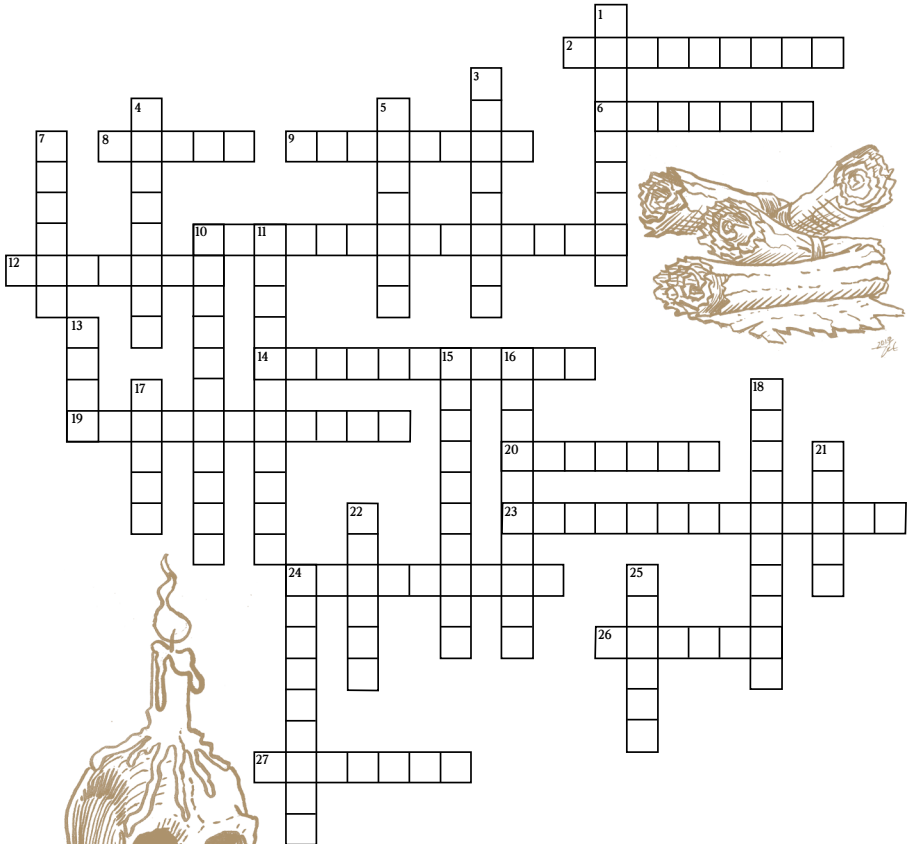
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WYRM WORDS



ACROSS

2. The ability to produce many new ideas.
6. A stone pillar, typically having a square or rectangular cross section and a pyramidal top, set up as a monument or landmark.
8. Smelling extremely unpleasant.
9. Extremely hungry.
10. Light emitted after exposure to radiation, or produced by something that doesn't produce flame or heat.
12. Ask (someone) urgently and fervently to do something; implore; entreat.
14. Whispering, murmuring, or rustling.
19. Explanation that makes something clear; clarification.
20. A technique for searching for underground water, minerals, or anything invisible
23. the process or state of emitting flashes of light.
24. Come together to form one mass or whole.
26. An unhealthy pale appearance
27. Relating to the open sea, inhabiting the upper layers of the open sea.
5. Spiteful; bad-tempered, affected by or associated with nausea or vomiting.
7. Suffuse or highlight (something) with a bright color or light.
10. A substance supposed by 18th-century chemists to exist in all combustible bodies, and to be released in combustion.
11. The action of making something obscure, unclear, or unintelligible.
13. A tiny piece of a substance.
15. A literary or artistic assistant, in particular one who takes dictation or copies manuscripts.
16. Showing luminous colors that seem to change when seen from different angles.
17. Loss of awareness of one's identity associated with certain forms of hysteria and epilepsy.
18. A small leather box containing Hebrew texts on vellum, worn by Jewish men at morning prayer as a reminder to keep the law.
21. Salty water or the sea; salty
22. An oppressive or unpleasant atmosphere which surrounds or emanates from something.

DOWN

1. Little known; abstruse.
3. Critical explanation or interpretation of a text, especially of scripture.
4. Strongly reminiscent or suggestive, strongly smelling, sweet or fragrant.
24. Fat, pudgy, rotund.
25. Yielding easily to pressure or weight; not firm: mushy, pappy, pulpy, squishy, squashy.

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