

# DECK OF MANY HORRORS

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Terrify your players with over 50  
events, encounters, and NPCs



# DECK OF MANY HORRORS

## CREDITS

### ARTISTS

**Omercan Cirit** (Aerial, Ciar Kaub, Joash Biro, spellbook)

**Dean Spencer** (dungeon door, bat, head in jar, rapier)

**Darrin Scott** (Layout, flambeau of immolation)

**Wizards of the Coast** (hands, drowned, invasion, soul collector)

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**Written and formatted by Darrin Scott.**

**Edited by Christopher Walz**

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# DECK OF MANY HORRORS

**T**arokka is an interpretive card-reading activity that is part of the Ravenloft setting, used by the Vistani, and analogous to real-world tarot cards. A tarokka deck consists of 54 cards, each of which contains an illustration. The cards can be laid out in a specific arrangement in order to read fortunes. The names and illustrations of each card have a symbolic link to a certain theme. For example, the Hangman card represents endings.

In the Ravenloft setting, tarokka decks are magical items that are passed on among Vistani females, only some of whom can truly utilize the deck as a divination device. The most famous card reader is Madam Eva, the half-sister of Strahd von Zarovich. Each card is a work of art and the deck as a whole is worth no small amount of coin.

In the real world, the company Wizkids sells tarokka decks to use as an aid for your Ravenloft games (and as a game that can be played separately). The deck is composed as tarokka decks are described in Ravenloft lore. You can use *Deck of Many Horrors* to generate random events from your tarokka deck. However, you don't need a tarokka deck to use *Deck of Many Horrors*, nor do you need to know how to tell fortunes. The tarokka deck can be substituted for a deck of regular playing cards. Alternatively, if you own the Curse of Strahd book, you can print out the tarokka cards in the back.

## NON-RAVENLOFT SETTINGS

*Deck of Many Horrors* works best for use within the context of a Ravenloft setting. Some of the events reference things such as a darklord, the mists, and the Domains of Dread. In short, the Domains of Dread are demiplanes within the Shadowfell created by mysterious, godlike, and evil forces known as the "Dark Powers" in order to imprison individuals who commit acts of irredeemable evil. That individual typically holds great power within their realm, and thereby earn the title of darklord.

However, that realm is sanctioned off from the Material Plane and thus becomes the prison of the darklords, their Domain of Dread. The mists are a foglike substance that surrounds the borders of the domain, and can act as the will of the Dark Powers. The mists have been known to swallow an area and transport those within to different locations, often on another plane of existence. In some cases, the mists have been known to erase people's memories or even slow time. In others cases, being swallowed by the mist has been known to be fatal. The one consistent thing about how the mists operate is that they seem to have a sentience of their own and act in ways that alter the trajectory of the future.

However, the use of *Deck of Many Horrors* isn't limited to Ravenloft alone, and is suitable to most horror adventures. This can be accomplished by adapting an event to fit the setting. For example, if an event references a darklord, you could replace the darklord with any powerful, evil figure that the people of the land fear. Alternatively, you can simply skip the card in question, as most don't make specific references to Ravenloft.

## USING THE DECK

In order to use *Deck of Many Horrors*, you will need a tarokka deck or set of playing cards. When you want to generate a random event, simply draw a card from the deck, assuming it has already been shuffled. The card that you draw will correspond to at least one event. If the card you draw references more than one event, choose the one that you believe best suits the situation.

Many of the events are intentionally lacking in specifics. This is done so that the event can be more useful across different adventures and points in time. Consequently, you may be required to improvise certain events. However, a major benefit of the events is that you won't have to generate new ideas, merely think about how to



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best make the ones presented here fit into your adventure. The events are listed by the cards' suit and their corresponding number.

## WHEN TO USE

There are no rules or exact science for when to draw a card. However, due to the nature of the events, certain times are more opportune than others. Some suggested times to draw a card include when the characters are:

- Moving from one area to another
- Finishing a long rest
- About to face a major antagonist.
- In a situation where the story has slowed down and needs a pick-me-up

There are also no strict rules for how frequently you should draw from the deck. Some of the events are minor in scope, others have the potential to change the course of the entire adventure. As such, you should take into consideration whether or not the characters are still contending with a situation that arose as a result of a previous card. Additionally, drawing cards too frequently can bring about multiple elements which can be difficult for you or your players to track. If you are still looking for a general idea of how often you should draw a card, the recommendation is no more than once per level. However, this suggestion can be disregarded if the previous card drawn became a non-issue too quickly.

## WHEN NOT TO USE

You may find that a card you draw does not fit the situation. In this situation, **don't force an event into your adventure if it seems contrived.** Simply draw another card. There are plenty to go around.

## USING NPCs

*Deck of Many Horrors* introduces multiple NPCs with extensive backgrounds, unique abilities, and distinct personalities. These NPCs have the

potential to become long-term allies for the party, possibly filling in the role of missing player characters. There are also less refined NPCs that use generic stat blocks, some of which are taken from [Versatile NPCs II](#), which offers over 60 reusable NPC stat blocks,

Something to keep in mind is that it is important to not allow the NPCs to steal the glory from the adventurers. For this reason, most have been designed with support abilities rather than be optimized for loose cannon ass-kicking. Use these abilities to empower the characters. It is also recommended that you refrain from having more than one powerful NPC adventure with the party at a time. However, it is still acceptable to use an NPC to slay an enemy of the party. If you find the players feel overshadowed, consider allowing the players to take turns playing the NPC in combat. Above all else, consider how these NPCs can enhance the story of your adventuring, adding depth to it without stealing the show.





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## HIGH CARDS

### THE EXECUTIONER

*Although the Executioner card can certainly carry the obvious connotation of sudden death, it can also simply mean an ending. Alternatively, it can represent judgement, accusations, or finality. The card shows a grim man in a hood with his eyelids sewn shut. In the background is a noose.*

One of the NPCs close to the characters is marked for death. They encounter a sudden, horrifying, and, most importantly, fatal tragedy with a very slim chance the characters can prevent it. Examples include: falling into an unseen lethal trap, being poisoned, being murdered in their sleep, suicide, or a dagger in the back from a skilled adversary. If the NPC manages to survive, or if there are no NPCs close to the party, a supernatural foe that will likely kill at least one of the characters if they fight to the death (but not if they flee) is summoned to collect a debt of death. Examples of such a monster include a **wraith** for characters of levels 1-3, or a **bodak** for levels 4-5. At higher levels, consider using a **soul collector** (see appendix)

**When to use.** When the characters are well-acquainted an NPC.

### THE BEAST

*Drawing the Beast card suggests the involvement of monstrosities, savages, lycanthropy, or sometimes sheer passion. The card face shows a nightmarish monster scaling an iron fence.*

During the night, the characters hear the howling of a massive wolf in the distance. This howl foreshadows the arrival of Jaroslaw Cernea, a CN human **werewolf** with 84 (13d8 + 26) hit points. Jaroslaw can make an additional attack with his claws when he takes the Multiattack action in

hybrid form. Later that same night, Jaroslaw goes on a rampage, killing nearby people and animals.

While in his human form, Jaroslaw is a local trapper, a gruff but not malicious man in his late twenties with shagged hair, a muscled body, and hastily mended clothing. He lives in regret after killing his wife in one of his uncontrolled lycanthropic rampages, and has taken it upon himself to move outside of town. Yet his bloodthirsty, transformed self always seems to find its way to a settlement. Jaroslaw has little memory of what occurs during his rampages, and if given the chance, will plead for the characters to help him get rid of his curse.

**When to use.** When the characters are in the wilderness near animals or in a small to medium-sized settlement.

### THE ARTIFACT

*The artifact card speaks of an object of importance playing a role in the future. The artwork is of a decorated skull floating in a jar.*

**Option 1.** The characters receive a vision of an artifact that they seek or is nearest to them. The vision could come in a dream, in which case, they see it as if through a *scrying* spell. Or one or more of the characters might suffer a hallucination wherein they follow an image of themselves to another room set up like the area where the artifact is being held, to find the artifact dripping with blood (the experience not being reality, though).

**When to use.** Any time the characters are out of combat.

**Option 2.** The characters find a *Page of Vile Darkness* (see appendix), placed as a prized possession of a hoarder of dark knowledge (who can be living or deceased), or seemingly happenstatially (though truly a manifestation of the page's tendency to spread its evil to as many minds as possible).



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**When to use.** When the characters are in a place an artifact could be found.

**Option 3.** The characters find a *Page of Exalted Deeds* (see appendix), placed somewhere an evil-doer attempted to sequester it, or in the possession of a holy person (either of whom can be alive or dead). Alternatively, the page may be found at a time when hope seems to be at its least.

**When to use.** When the characters are in a place an artifact could be found.

## THE HORSEMAN

*The Horseman foretells an accident, disaster, or death. The card's face reveals a skeletal figure in a dress, wielding a bloody scimitar, atop a skinless horse.*

The characters encounter Hanatos, a **death knight**, in the distance, atop his **nightmare** steed (whose mane and hooves do not burst into flame until it enters into combat). Read the following text:

In the distance, you spot the silhouetted figure of a rider in a black cloak, a hood obscuring its features, atop a black steed with an ashen mane. It looks at you, and for a moment, you see what you believe to be the glint of fiery red eyes, but the moment passes and the rider turns away, trotting out of sight.

Hanatos is a planar traveler. Sometimes he brings war, disease, famine, and death to places himself, but more often he is a herald of such incidents. When the characters spot him, one of these instances takes place in the area they are travelling to, if they aren't already. For instance, if the characters are travelling to a small village, the burgomaster may be found mourning their recently departed spouse or child. Alternatively, a town may be under attack from monsters or hostile humanoid factions, and the morale in the town has been impacted as a result.

**When to use.** When the characters are going to arrive at a settlement.

## THE BROKEN ONE

*Drawing the Broken One signals coming despair, failure, or even madness. The card face depicts the reflection of a man in agony upon a broken mirror.*

Time spent in the Domain of Dread takes a toll on the characters. The next time the characters complete a long rest, they must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or be overcome with Shadowfell despair, as described in chapter 2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

**When to use.** Any time.

## THE INNOCENT

*This card is somewhat self-explanatory, as innocence is mainly what it represents, but it can also mean vulnerability, a person or place of importance, naivety, or victimhood. The artwork showcases a doe-eyed female in undamaged attire.*

Dark threats loom over vulnerable characters. The next time the characters sleep indoors, they dream of wholesome, relaxing things and 1d4 + 1 **specters** (poltergeist variant) move through the walls to attack the sleeping characters.

**When to use.** Any time the characters sleep indoors.

## THE DARKLORD

*This card tells of power, rulership of the domain, and tyranny. The card's art shows a fiendish figure sitting upon a throne.*

The characters are visited by the darklord.

**When to use.** Any time, but certain dungeons may be less suited to the occasion.



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## THE MARIONETTE

*The marionette tells of a greater, unseen power pulling the strings, manipulating events. It can mean obedience, agenda, and deception. The card shows an intricate puppet with its hand extended over a goblet.*

The characters are approached by a mysterious woman who offers convenient aid. She calls herself Uta, and appears as a middle-aged woman wearing a simple, brown dress. In actuality, she is a manifestation of the Dark Powers (use the **mysterious wanderer** (see appendix) statistics, but changing her creature type to undead). She offers assistance in bringing the characters a step closer toward their current goal. You should decide before the characters meet her what form her assistance will take. Here are some suggestions:

- Bringing them an item they were looking for (provided is not an artifact)
- Making a room full of enemies “go away” (with no trace of how they were dispatched)
- Persuading another NPC to help the characters. If this occurs, the NPC does not know that they have been magically persuaded.
- Bringing them a consumable uncommon or rare magic item that is helpful in their present situation, such as a *potion of resistance*, *potion of superior healing*, or level 2 *spell scroll*.

Uta is evasive about how she has the means to bring about her assistance. If asked why, she responds that her aims align with the characters, if the characters intend on bringing down the reigning darklord. She then does as she promised and disappears as soon as she is out of sight the first character to agree and commit to her assistance must make a DC 16 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, the character must roll on the long-term madness chart in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

**When to use.** Any time the players are out of combat and feeling like they are low on options.

## THE DONJON

*This card symbolizes isolation, confinement, being kidnapped, or close-mindedness. The illustration on the card is of a dark dungeon with holding cells.*

The characters come across Cyruli Yakovlev, a CE **cult fanatic** (with no weapons or armor and an AC of 12). If the characters are exploring the wilderness, he is found chained to a tree or rock. If the characters are exploring somewhere indoors, he is found in a secluded room. Either way, he has not eaten for days and has gone mad from his ordeal. Physically, he looks disheveled, emaciated, with long hair and a beard. He is stripped from the waist up and smells. Cyruli will ask for the characters' help, but has an aloof disposition and trouble vocalizing coherent thoughts. When he thinks nobody is watching, he will gnaw on himself. The characters may come across him having eaten off an entire part of his body.

Cyruli was once the member of a noble family. One day, he stumbled upon a dark family secret and because of it, he was accused of strangling someone to death in their sleep, given a proxy trial and sentenced to death by exile. Having been driven mad in isolation, Cyruli has made the accusations part of himself, and seeks only to strangle powerful people in their sleep.

**When to use.** When the players are exploring somewhere that a human could be kept in isolation.





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## THE MISTS

*The Mists, a staple of the Ravenloft setting, foretell of mystery, unexpected outcomes, and being led to somewhere other than your intended destination. The card shows a graveyard with a low fog swirling about the tombstones.*

The mists of the Domain of Dread engulf the area that the characters occupy. When they emerge from the mists, they are in a completely different location of your choice. If you are running *Curse of Strahd*, the location can be randomly determined by drawing from the low deck, as outlined in the Fortune of Ravenloft section in chapter 1 of *Curse of Strahd*. If the destination is indoors, the mists lead the characters to a small wooden shack with a single run-down door with no windows. No matter which direction the characters go, they eventually find the shack. Inside, there is a trap door that leads to an underground hallway with a door at the far end. That door leads to a door nearest to the indoor destination you previously determined. Once all the characters are inside, if they try to open the door again, it leads to where that door normally leads on the map.

**When to use.** Whenever the characters are outdoors.

## THE SEER

*The Seer card symbolizes the power of the mind, intellect, and foresight. The card itself depicts a bald man with large eyeballs growing out of his scalp.*

One of the characters has a dream about the future. They have a vision about a person, place, or event they are likely to encounter soon. How this manifests in their dream may also have an aesthetic that is more horrifying than the real thing. For example, a character journeying to the Abbey of Saint Markovia in Barovia may see a vision of an angel whose wings are bleeding and whose eyes are pits of blackness.

**When to use.** Any time a character sleeps.

## THE RAVEN

*The Raven symbolizes hidden information and messages being passed between people. The card shows a raven set before a full moon.*

**Option 1.** The Keepers of the Feather (or other allied secret society of that Domain of Dread) leave a note detailing the nearest safe location for the characters to stay, preferably one where they can link up with members of the organization. The message is delivered covertly by means such as a hidden note or a raven dropping a note.

**When to use.** Any time.

**Option 2.** The characters come across a hidden cache for wayward travellers. The cache contains 1d6 + 1 days of rations, a hooded lantern, 2 flasks of oil, 10 torches, a healer's kit, and a flask of holy water. The cache could originate from one of the local secret societies or which ever entity you deem most likely to have placed it there, given the situation.

**When to use.** Any time.

## THE GHOST

*The Ghost card signifies a return of the past, often in the form of a warning. It can also mean the presence of undead. The art on the card shows a ghastly, spectral figure holding a lantern.*

The characters become hunted by the friends or family of one of the recent people they have killed. The hunters leave ominous signs like pieces of their dead compatriot or a note reading "for every drop of his blood, we shall take ten of yours" set next to a pool of blood. The threats grow more severe over time, such as a murder of someone the characters knew. The hunters will eventually try to kill the characters when they are most ill prepared.

**When to use.** Any time.



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## THE TEMPTER

*Drawing the Tempter card can indicate a future temptation, and not necessarily of a sexual nature (though lustful temptations are certainly a possibility). In general, the card represents seduction and being lead astray from one's goals. On the fact of the card, there is a comely woman in a noble's carb with a bloody fan hiding part of her face.*

An enemy faction sends an agent to offer a chest of 4d8 x 20 ep plus 150 gp in art objects (or 4d8 x 10 ep plus 75 gp in art objects if the average party level is 4 or lower), if the characters turn a blind eye to a malicious act the faction has committed or intends to commit in the near future. The chest is made of fine, dark wood and the treasure inside shines brightly. There are no curses or consequences to taking the chest, but you may wish to make the chest appear as suspicious as possible to characters who agree to the offer, potentially going so far as to tell the players about a dream their characters have of basking in treasure that oozes blood. Additionally, the enemy faction may use the opportunity to hamper the characters' progress. For example, if you are running *Curse of Strahd*, Vistani loyal to Strahd may steal the *holy symbol of ravenkind* that the characters seek.

**When to use.** When the characters are known to an enemy faction planning to commit misdeeds.



## LOW CARDS: BLACK SUITS

### SWORDS

## MASTER: WARRIOR

*The Warrior is the card of battle. It signifies strength and the use of force. On the card is a man with an axe in full plate mail armor, riding atop a horse.*

A subtle, magical aura permeates within the mists of the domain, giving the place a barely perceptible reddish tint. Creatures within the aura become more aggressive, resulting in every creature in the area to score a critical hit on a roll of a 19 or a 20 on the d20 of their attack rolls.

**When to use.** Any time.

## THE AVENGER

*The Avenger tells of a coming vengeance, justice, and the righting of wrongs. The card itself depicts a woman in a steel cuirass holding a longsword.*

The characters find a holy symbol with divine healing powers. The holy symbol is of the Morning Lord or whichever good-aligned deity is worshipped in the region. It should be found in such a place that doesn't lead the players to believe it is a trap. Examples include: on the remains of a faithful, good-aligned person, between the pages of a holy text, or stored in a box of personal effects belonging to a devout individual. When found, the symbol appears unmarred and gives off an aura of comfort. When a non-evil character is reduced to 0 hit points while within 30 feet of the holy symbol, it glows brightly and the character regains hit points equal to 5 x its level and hears the message "It is in the darkest



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night that a single candle shines brightest.” After the holy symbol’s power has been used, it loses its luminous appearance and becomes a nonmagical bol.

**When to use.** Any time

## THE PALADIN

*This is the card of the holy warrior, symbolizing law, the pursuit of justice, and sometimes recklessness in the face of such endeavors. Upon the card’s face is a man in elegant plate mail armor.*

The characters come across **Constanze** (see appendix). When they do, she is confined in a cell, still not having escaped from the captivity mentioned in her story. Who holds her captive depends on your campaign. If you are running *Curse of Strahd*, examples of characters you can use are Fiona Wacter, the Abbot, Baba Lysaga, or Strahd himself. If no existing character in your campaign fits the situation, you can use Jana Vlahovich, a NE human **dark priest**; a woman with dark hair, greyish, dusky skin, and a raspy voice. She is fiercely loyal to the darklord because she believes the darklord is the best means of furthering the agenda of her evil god.

When discovered, Constanze still wears her plate mail armor and her weapons are nearby. She will inquire as to what the characters are doing, and assist them if it gives her the opportunity to enact vengeance upon the forces of darkness. Over time, Constanze may come to realize that the characters may ultimately lead her to face increasing threats, in which case is willing to offer herself as a long-term ally.

**When to use.** When the characters are exploring somewhere a prisoner of an evil individual working for the darklord could be held.

## THE SOLDIER

*The Soldier card indicates struggle and discipline.*

*The card itself depicts a woman with short hair and a scarred face, wearing a military uniform.*

The characters encounter a caravan of travelling merchants. Many, who were foolhardy enough not to take proper precaution while travelling, have been wounded during attacks by wolves (one was already killed). Despite these setbacks, the merchants maintain a good stock and are willing to trade and fully intend on making it to their next destination. If the characters help them, they will reward them.

**When to use.** When the characters are travelling in the wilderness.

## THE MERCENARY

*This card is calls to the opportunist, those without a moral compass, and those who are willing to get their hands dirty for profit. Upon the card, there is art of a warrior with a large sword wearing a sallet helm and breastplate.*

After the next combat that lasts longer than 2 rounds, after one side is defeated, a group of 1d4 **veteran** mercenaries will attempt to defeat the winded victors. The mercenaries have no intent to kill the characters. If they manage to reduce a character to 0 hit points, they prefer to knock out rather than kill. If the mercenaries are victorious, they loot all valuables from the scene (ignoring weapons and armor that appear nonmagical and made of mundane materials) before leaving. If the mercenaries took crucial plot items, the mercenaries are encountered later at a place of the your choosing, alive or possibly having been killed by hostiles in the area. If, on the other hand, the mercenaries are bested by the characters, they will offer their services for a fee of 5 gp per mercenary per day of dealing with low to moderate threats (such as killing wolves or low CR **bandits**) or 35 gp



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per day for dangerous quests (such as hunting **vampire spawn**).

**When to use.** After the characters have a combat encounter

## THE MYRMIDON

*The Myrmidon card indicates coming chaos, warfare, scarring of the lands, or clever plans. The card shows a man with a sword, shield, and helmet, but wearing only tattoos and piercings on his torso.*

More adversaries emerge to fight the characters. For the next 24 hours, whenever the characters encounter a group of three or more enemies, there is an additional enemy of the same type as the creature with the lowest CR in the group. If the characters encounter two or fewer enemies, each enemy adds an additional number of hit dice to their current and maximum hit points equal to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the highest level player character, rounded up.

**When to use.** Any time.

## THE BERSERKER

*The Berserker card calls to mind brutality, uncivilized acts, and unforeseen consequences of rash actions. The illustration on the card shows an axe embedded on a bloody, wooden block beside two severed heads.*

A high-ranking antagonist of your choice attains the services of **Krunosav Dramich** (see appendix) to hunt down the characters. Some of the methods he can employ against the characters include the following:

- Waiting until a character is isolated so he can pick them off before vanishing again, only to repeat the process if possible.
- Setting hunting traps (see chapter 5 of the Player's Handbook), which he can also use to cover a retreat.
- Staying hidden for a surprise attack.
- Using innocents or captured characters as bait

- Making sure a character is dead after he or she is reduced to 0 hit points.
- Retreating if he cannot kill any more characters in that particular fight and is able to safely escape. However, he merely uses this as an opportunity to heal and try again.

Two stat blocks have been provided for Krunosav. "Krunosav Dramich (Tier 1)" is to be used if the average party level is 4 or lower, while "Krunosav Dramich (Tier 2)" is to be used if the average party level is 5 or higher.

**When to use.** Any time the characters are in location where they can be tracked.

## THE HOODED ONE

*The Hooded One is symbolic of mystery, nefarious intentions, and new elements being introduced to a situation. Upon the card's face is a man in a hood with both his hands resting atop a sword's pommel.*

At some point in the next 24 hours, while the characters are indoors, the lights all go out and they are attacked by 1d6 + 1 **shadows**.

**When to use.** Whenever the characters are indoors and there is an artificial light source.

## THE DICTATOR

*This card represents oppression, draconian law, and the suppression of expression. The card's face shows a man being burned at the stake within a circle of swords.*

Word has spread that recently a person was brutally executed for speaking out against the darklord in the privacy of their own home, and their body was put on public display. This may or may not be true, but the people believe it at any rate. For the next 72 hours, citizen NPCs of the realm whose challenge rating is 2 or lower will not even speak of the darklord unless they believe that it is worth the risk of death.

**When to use.** Any time.



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## THE TORTURER

*Drawing this unfortunate card suggests sadism, cruelty, and suffering. Upon the card's face is a man turning the wheel of a torture device.*

Veselin Andreev is an unmarried, human nobleman who dwells in the nearest town or city. He is slightly plump, well-dressed, and has slick black hair with streaks of grey and a goatee. He conducts himself with both dignity and humility, and shows compassion for those in difficult situations. Around town, he is admired by the common folk for his philanthropy. However, all of this is merely a facade he puts on for others. In truth, he is a sadistic NE **pain master** (see appendix). He has favor with the local ruler, whom Veselin siphons information from and makes subtle suggestions to shape the decisions made on behalf of the town. Veselin, if he learns of the characters, will actively try to thwart them, but in discrete ways and with great secrecy so as not to reveal his identity. He does this because he is in the service to the darklord. Even though the darklord may not agree with his methods, the darklord tolerates Veselin because he is a valuable spy and influencer in the area.

Veselin targets certain individuals and brings them to his basement underneath his manor, where he tortures them to death. Sometimes he has a secondary goal of extracting information, but usually it for his for his own sick pleasure. If you are running *Curse of Strahd*, you can use the general layout of the Burgomaster's Mansion (chapter 5, area N3) to map out Veselin's manor. The entrance to his basement can be found in area N3h, where there is a secret trap door, which can be detected with a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check. Inside, his basement is a 20-foot square room of bare stone. Two torture racks and multiple torture implements can be found here. Although Veselin cleans up after himself, the

floor is permanently darkened in some places by blood stains.

Veselin's victims are typically innocent commoners who present themselves as easy targets and whose disappearance doesn't draw much attention. However, capturing an NPC known to the characters can be used as an interesting plot twist.

**When to use.** When the characters are in or approaching a settlement.

## COINS

### MASTER: THE ROGUE

*The Rogue card is the card of scoundrels, and harkens to thieves, slacking, and subterfuge. The artwork of the card is of a man in a hood with a smirk on his face.*

The characters encounter **Aerial** (see appendix). Ways she may be encountered include: Aerial pickpocketing them in such a way that they will notice as she flees, giving rise to a chase (see chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide*), and toying with a pair of drunk (poisoned condition) CE **bandits**. If the characters visit a carnival or other show, she may approach them after the performance. Aerial will request to accompany the characters if they indicate they are going somewhere (preferably settled by humans) that she thinks may lead to more information on her parents, but doesn't reveal this information immediately, instead saying that she merely wants a "change in scenery." If these conditions are not met, she will also accompany the characters and lend them her skills for 8 gp per day, or 20 gp if they go somewhere particularly dangerous that day, such as a dungeon.

**When to use.** Any time the characters are not confined to a secluded location, such as a dungeon.



# DECK OF MANY HORRORS

## THE SWASHBUCKLER

*The Swashbuckler represents adventure, fortune, and the chaos associated with life that never settles down. The card's face shows a woman in a cape with a fencing rapier.*

The characters uncover a *rapier of steadfastness* (see appendix). The weapon may be found as a trophy hanging on someone's wall, next to an ancient skeleton in a forgotten place, in a treasure horde, or anywhere else the characters might come upon a lavish rapier.

**When to use.** Any time.

## THE PHILANTHROPIST

*This card speaks of generosity, charity, and sometimes bribery. The card itself shows a woman in expensive clothes holding out a coin in each of her hands.*

The characters find better loot. The next collection of treasure with a total value of 100 gp or more that the characters find contains an additional 50% value, manifested in gold, gemstones, art objects, magic items, or nonmagical armor with a value of 50 gp or more.

**When to use.** Any time

## THE TRADER

*The Trader card tells of profit, exchange, and sometimes hidden costs. The art upon the card shows a man standing among cattle, bearing papers in his hand.*

The characters come across Vadik Bogdanov, a human CE **scout** and travelling merchant. He offers a small selection of goods, which he carries in saddlebags strapped to his **draft horse**. The goods consist mostly of things people need when travelling, as well as a few weapons. One of the

weapons he sells is *Cutpurse* (see appendix). Vadik is willing to part with the weapon for a low price because, according to him, everyone in the area either doesn't want it or is too poor to afford anything over 10 gp in value.

**When to use.** When the characters are travelling.

## THE MERCHANT

*Drawing a Merchant card can warn of deceit in economic matters. However, it more often symbolizes material goods or rare finds. The card shows an aging woman counting out coins, set against the backdrop of a rug shop.*

Merchants in the region experience a momentary influx of available goods. For the next 2 days, goods sold by merchants and traders are 25% cheaper, and such businesses may have a greater availability of different items. For example, a shop whose highest quality armor was scale mail may now also sell splint mail.

**When to use.** Any time.

## THE GUILDSMAN

*The Guildsman calls to mind a sense of common purpose, profits, and sharing. Upon the card is a smith at an anvil, flipping a coin in the air.*

An envoy of a faction that is not hostile to the characters finds and approaches the party in confidence. The envoy explains, in good faith, that their faction is willing to form an alliance with the characters, allowing for the characters and the faction to coordinate their goals. The precise nature of the goals depends on the faction and the adventure you are running. The envoy also warns that their alliance may draw the attention of some of the faction's enemy's, but they reassure that the characters may be able to call upon the allied faction in times of need. For example, if you are running *Curse of Strahd*, Urwin Martikov may



# DECK OF MANY HORRORS

approach the characters and offer them safe haven, if the characters agree to help them with their winery, but druids of Yester Hill may have it out for the party thereafter.

**When to use.** When the characters are in an area accessible to a nearby, non-hostile faction.

## THE BEGGAR

*This card marks a sudden change in economic status, which may mean a poor man becoming rich or visa versa. Alternatively, it can represent charity or hardship. The illustration on the card is of an old man in poor health holding out his hand.*

The characters are met by Andelko, a NE **mysterious wanderer** (see appendix) whose creature type is undead, though he appears as a disheveled man with long, dark hair and beard, and kind eyes. Andelko meekly asks for some donations so that he can feed himself. If the characters refuse, one of the characters is inflicted with a curse: eating food no longer nourishes them (see chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook*). This effect can be alleviated with a *remove curse* spell or similar magic.

**When to use.** When the characters are in a settlement or travelling along a road.

## THE THIEF

*This card represents acquisition, loss, or narcissism. On the card's face is a woman in a hood stealing a pouch of coins from someone's pocket.*

One of the characters realizes that a relatively small item that is worth more than 1 gp and is not essential to the character has gone missing. Examples of such an item include a utility dagger, a set of manacles, or a day's worth of rations. There is no sign of who took it. 1d4 days later, the character finds the lost item exactly where they thought they had left it. The item is now however, marked with an "X."

**When to use.** Any time.

## THE TAX COLLECTOR

*Drawing the Tax Collector card can suggest a future of dealing with the rule of law, and possibly corruption. The artwork on the card shows a man in expensive clothes reaching for a pouch of coins.*

The characters are accused of a crime (better one they actually committed) that carries the sentence of death or imprisonment. This could arise from either a case of mistaken identity or because of a woman named Violetta Zahradník, a politician, watchmaster, or judge (whichever fits best). Zahradník sees the characters as a threat to her master's plans. Her master is whichever antagonist holds a position of power nearby. If none exist, it is Strahd or the current darklord of the land.

**When to use.** When the characters are near a settlement

## THE MISER

*The Miser is a card that signifies greed and misery, but can also be taken to mean attainment. The card depicts an aging man carrying away a small chest.*

People in the region become less willing to part with their personal possessions. Items bought by the characters are 50% more expensive.

**When to use.** Any time.





# DECK OF MANY HORRORS

## LOW CARDS: RED SUITS

### STARS

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#### MASTER: WIZARD

The Wizard card is first and foremost about magic, but also about mastery over the natural world, knowledge, riddles, and the supernatural. The card's face shows an old man in a robe with a staff, shooting liquid at a mass of writhing tentacles.

The characters come across **Aleks Dusek** (see appendix). Aleks can be found researching matters related to undeath, the soul, and negative energy. The characters might find Aleks speaking to a priest, librarian, or other individual who may know where to find the information he is looking for. In this situation, Aleks will offer his assistance on whatever quest the characters are currently on, if they convince the person Aleks is beseeching to disclose the nature and location of the knowledge, and take Aleks to that location. The knowledge may be kept in a church's catacombs, an abandoned wizard's tower, a library, a nearby ruin, or a forgotten temple. It is recommended that, no matter which location you choose, it not be too far out of the way, potentially being part of the party's ongoing quest.

An alternative situation might be that Aleks may be found studying an undead creature that is either destroyed or contained in an arcane cage of Aleks' making. However, in this situation, Aleks needs more samples. If the characters can lead Aleks to where they can capture a similar undead creature or harvest a sample from a recently destroyed undead, then he will agree to assist them.

Aleks is willing to follow the adventurers with their permission even if they don't help him with a current endeavour if he thinks they are going somewhere he might find a lead.

If the characters prove themselves trustworthy, Aleks will offer himself as a long-term ally.

When to use. When the characters are near a storehouse of knowledge or somewhere Aleks could be running an experiment on undead.

#### THE TRANSMUTER

*Drawing this card implies a coming change, success, unseen consequences, or obsession. The card's face depicts a woman in a robe with long sleeves. She has four arms and four breasts. In her two upper arms, she carries a torch; her lower two arms are outstretched.*

**Option 1.** The characters experience a sudden temporal shift. The next time the characters emerge from indoors to outdoors when it should be daytime, they emerge into nighttime instead. The opposite situation may also be used in situations where a sense of relief may be marred by the uncanniness of the situation, but sudden night is more likely to elicit dramatic tension.

**Option 2.** A statue animates before the characters. The statue gains your choice of statistics among the following stat blocks: **animated armor** (with an AC of 16 and resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks, and its False Appearance trait is applied to statues instead of normal armor. These changes bring the construct's challenge rating to 2), **gargoyle**, or **stone golem**.

When to use. When the characters are indoors.

**Option 3.** One of the characters begins to grow one or more deformities on their bodies. Choose which deformity or deformities among the following: horns, body hair similar to a goat,



# DECK OF MANY HORRORS

sudden baldness, claws, sharp teeth, rotting skin, or entirely black eyes. These changes set in over the course of  $1d4 + 1$  days and can be cured with a *remove curse* spell or similar magic.

**When to use.** Any time.

## THE DIVINER

*This card foretells of helpful information, compassion, or honesty. Upon the card, there is an illustration of a woman performing a card reading.*

The characters find a tarokka deck that allows them a measure of control over their destiny. When the characters investigate the deck, draw three cards from the deck and allow the characters to choose one. That is the card that comes into play. If you are using a deck of regular playing cards instead of a tarokka deck, then you should let the players know the name of the tarokka cards that each card drawn represents.

**When to use.** Any time.

## THE ENCHANTER

*The Enchanter card symbolizes clouded judgement, misleading information, but also sometimes hope. The card itself shows a woman in exotic garb, appearing to cause egg-like objects to float around her.*

The corruption of the domain of dread begins to cloud the mind of a randomly determined character, causing them to experience a false version of reality. Whenever that character finishes a long rest, have them make two Wisdom saving throws (with a secret DC of 14) and record the results. For each failure, you have one betrayal for the rest of the day, where the character's senses deceive them, or body betrays them, in such a way that works against them and or to frighten them. The severity of the betrayal should be determined by the character's level.

- At 1st, 2nd, and 3rd levels, the maximum severity of the deception should be equivalent to a 1st-level spell, or 11 (2d10) damage. Examples include: mistaking an ally for an enemy in combat (thus changing the target of the character's attack) or seeing a particular creature as more monstrous and terrifying than it is, thus imparting the frightened condition.
- At 4th, 5th, and 6th levels, the maximum spell level increases to 2, and the damage to 16 (3d10). Examples include: the character says something hideous or profane to someone they are trying to endear, causing an automatic failure on a Wisdom (Perception) check to spot a moderately deadly trap, or becoming catatonic (incapacitated, speed reduced to 0) until they can succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw at the end of each of their turns.
- At 7th level and higher, the maximum spell level increases to 3, and the damage to 27 (5d10). Examples include: the character becoming mute for an hour, or waking up from a long rest to find they have caused some misdeed.

If a character fails both saving throws upon finishing a long rest, at your discretion, you can combine both deceptions to use a single deception of one category greater. The diviner effect can be removed with a *remove curse* spell or similar magic.

**When to use.** Any time.

## THE ABJURER

*This card implies protection and sometimes frustration. The card itself shows a woman in robes, arms held up in a warding gesture.*

One pathway that can be blocked (such as a doorway) of your choosing that the characters encounter within the next 24 hours is affected by an arcane lock spell.



# DECK OF MANY HORRORS

**When to use.** Any time the characters are near doors.



## THE ELEMENTALIST

*The Elementalist card symbolizes nature's raw power, but also luck or destruction. The art on the card depicts a woman whose eyes have gone white. Smoke drifts from all ten of her upheld fingers.*

A storm engulfs the area. For the next 5d10 minutes, the area within a 500-foot-radius is affected in the following ways:

- Ranged attack rolls have disadvantage
- Wisdom (Perception) checks made inside the area have disadvantage
- Each creature exposed to the elements must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 4 (2d4) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one, as they are pelted with debris. The damage type becomes cold if the storm is a blizzard.
- A flying creature must land at the end of its turn or fall.

**When to use.** When the characters are outside.

## THE EVOKER

*This card represents raw energy and confrontation. The card itself shows a woman with arms outstretched over a steaming cauldron.*

The next NPC to take fire damage within sight of the characters spontaneously erupts into flames, instantly killing them as their flesh melts off their bones. After they die, the burning husk becomes a **fire elemental**. The elemental is hostile to everything around it. If the average party level is 4 or lower, the creature that emerges is a **magmin** with the following changes:

- Its size is Medium
- It has 16 (3d8 + 3) hit points
- Its Touch action and Death Burst trait deal 10 (3d6) fire damage on the initial effect, rather than 7 (2d6) damage.
- It has a challenge rating of 1 (200 XP)

**When to use.** When the characters are in a combat that involves NPCs.

## THE ILLUSIONIST

*The Illusionist represents deceit, hidden things, and conspiracies. On the card's face, there is art depicting a mirror. On one side of the mirror is half of a normal man's face. On the other side is half of a fiendish face.*

The characters encounter a ghost town that is not marked on any map. It is completely devoid of any people and animals, as if all the inhabitants had suddenly walked out an hour ago. The town is eerie, with the wind sounding almost like whispers; the characters might see silhouettes of people in distant buildings, but there are no threats present. If the characters return to the location at a later time, the town is no longer there.



# DECK OF MANY HORRORS

**When to use.** When the characters are travelling.

## THE NECROMANCER

*This ominous card bespeaks of undeath, unnatural obsession, and lust for power. The image on the card's face is of two zombies controlled by a shadowy man in the background.*

An NPC thought dead by the characters, who died at least 1 day before, mysteriously returns from the dead with no scars from the event nor any memory of how they were resurrected. The NPC also feels no hunger, thirst, or need to sleep. After 1d4 + 1 days, they tell the characters, "And you, too, shall be like me," before suddenly and inexplicably disintegrating into ash.

**When to use.** Any time the characters became acquainted with an NPC who died.

## THE CONJURER

*This card speaks of forbidden knowledge, planar workings, and the introduction of new elements to the situation. The art on this card depicts a woman creating an arcane glyph of several interlocking pentacles.*

The characters come across a book that details the ritual for summoning Jalvenil, a barbed devil with the following trait:

**Innate Spellcasting.** Jalvenil's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

3/day each: *alter self*, *identify*, *lesser restoration*, *locate object*, *sending*

2/day each: *dispel magic*, *dimension door*, *remove curse*

1/day each: *animate dead*, *divination*, *locate creature*, *modify memory*

The book states his name and the steps necessary to perform the ritual, including notes on how to use specific components. Namely, there is a powdery mixture made from the bones of a martyr and other ingredients which allows any creature that can cast 3rd-level spells to complete the ritual in 10 minutes. The mixture can be found within the vicinity, but there is only enough for one such ritual.

Jalvenil is a cunning and deceptively reasonable creature. When summoned, he is polite and will make a seemingly generous offer. He offers services in battle, information, magic items (including *spell scrolls*), and bringing back someone from the dead (with his *animate dead* spell). The limits of what he can achieve depend on the circumstances, but he has contacts in other planes and magic to assist him in fulfilling these bargains. In return, he wants items or information that may help him escape the Domain of Dread (Jalvenil is smart enough that such a thing is no simple task), souls (including those not belonging to the characters), services such as slaying specific targets, information on his enemies, or the talents of one of the characters.

Jalvenil writes up an official contract which, once signed, magically binds the signatories not to break their end of the deal. Any signatory that does so forfeits their soul in one year's time or are banished to their home plane for 10 years if they are an extraplanar creature.

Jalvenil does everything in his power to sneakily make sure the outcome of the deal is as harmful to the characters as possible, honoring the letter of the deal, but not the spirit. One way he does this by leaving out crucial information that will likely cause the characters to come to harm. For example, he may find a cure for an ailment a character has, but the cure also inflicts another condition.

**When to use.** Any time the characters are somewhere they might find a ritual book.



# DECK OF MANY HORRORS

## GLYPHS

### MASTER: PRIEST

*The Priest card suggests values, belief, faith, and greater purpose. The card's art shows a man in priestly attire holding up his hand before a halo-like backdrop.*

The characters come across **Joash Biro** (see appendix). When the characters first lay eyes on him, he is engaged in one of two activities: preaching to a crowd, trying to spur them to redeem before judgement comes to them, or in battle burning “the unholy.” In the second situation, he could also show up when the characters are fighting dark creatures or humanoids.

Father Joash is interested in joining the characters, if they can lead him places where he can spread his ideology or where they can all purge foul creatures together. Father Joash is willing to overlook the “lesser sins” of the characters if they prove a net boon to his cause.

**When to use.** When the characters are in a populated area or near monsters.

### THE MONK

*Drawing the Monk card portends an inner strength, self-mastery, tranquility, but also arrogance. The illustration on the card is of a portly man in a robe stumbling about while carrying a small barrel under one arm, and a tankard in the other hand.*

The characters encounter **Ciar Kaube** (see appendix). Kaube spends much of his time searching for information related to his condition, so he can often be found wherever such information may be kept, such as a library. However, Ciar is also known to help people in need, so the characters may encounter him during a battle. Ciar likes to stick to the shadows, where

he is in his element, so he can hypothetically appear out of any corner dark enough.

If the characters prove themselves trustworthy, Ciar will offer himself as a long-term ally.

**When to use.** When the characters are in a situation where they may be able to help Ciar gather the information he is looking for, or if they are in need of help themselves. He is especially likely to appear in places that are dark or with deep shadows.

### THE MISSIONARY

*The Missionary tells of the spread of knowledge or ignorance, especially of ideologies or beliefs. The card depicts a stern man holding a book.*

The characters pick up on a rumor. Choose one of the following:

- A high-ranking religious leader will arrive in the nearest settlement the following day to heal the sick and injured.
- The darklord walks in disguise among the citizens of the area.
- The ruler of the nearest settlement has an illegitimate child.
- Whether or not the rumor is true is up to you.

**When to use.** Whenever the characters are around other people. They are most likely to hear a rumor in a settlement, but may come across a traveler bearing such news.

### THE HEALER

*This card indicates new hope, healing magic, and life itself. The illustration on the face shows a woman in a robe with her hand outstretched over an infirm woman. Candles burn in the background.*

The characters encounter a dying aasimar named Aphaeleon, whose long, dark hair is strewn over his once handsome, now bloody, face. His eyes of pure light grow dim as he approaches death. His



# DECK OF MANY HORRORS

ancestral wings lay broken behind him. The mortal wounds were dealt by necrotic energies (either from a magic weapon or through an undead creature's innate abilities). Thus, his wounds cannot be healed. As he is about to pass, he tells the characters that he will bestow his remaining celestial energies upon the characters to bolster them in battle on the condition that they slay the NPC or monster responsible for his demise (the nature of this foe is up to you). If they accept, Aphaeleon breathes a stream of light from his mouth, which finds its way to each of the characters. For the next 24 hours, each character who received the blessing casts healing spells as though they were cast one level higher.

If the characters somehow manage to restore Aphaeleon to life, he uses the **paladin** statistics (see appendix) with the following changes:

- His alignment is lawful good
- He wears chain mail instead of plate mail (giving him an AC of 18, with the addition of his shield).
- He has resistance to necrotic damage.
- He has darkvision out to a range of 60 feet.
- He knows the light cantrip.
- He can read, write, and speak Celestial.
- As an action, he can unleash his ancestral wings for one minute, giving him a flying speed of 30 feet. Additionally, while in this state, once on each of his turns, he can deal 6 extra radiant damage to one target when he deals damage to it with an attack or spell. Once he uses this feature, he can't use it again until he finishes a long rest.

**When to use.** When the characters are in an unpopulated area.

## THE SHEPHERD

*Drawing the Shepherd card suggests the emergence of a leader — as well as followers — and sometimes of cults. The illustration on the card is of a woman standing among a flock of sheep.*

Having caught wind of the characters' exploits, a mob of 4d6 **commoners** of various non-evil alignments gather in hopes that the characters will lead them in their struggles. Being weary from the darkness that surrounds them, they seek to lead a charge against the greatest perceived source of troubles that is nearby enough to take action against. For example, if this mob were from the Village of Barovia, they would seek the characters to lead them in a march on Castle Ravenloft.

Andelko Kotic, a LN male **commoner** in his late sixties with shabby grey hair is the spokesman of the mob. Andelko is a working class man whose son died as a result of the darkness of the area. His wife, having already passed beforehand, Andelko has little left to lose and seeks vengeance.

**When to use.** When the characters are near a populated area.

## THE DRUID

*In its simplest form, this card represents nature, though it can also imply divine magic or opposition to civilization and industry. The card shows an old man with a long beard in ceremonial raiment, standing before a dead tree.*

1d4 trees near the characters reveal themselves as **awakened trees**, created by a druid or the ambient dark magic of the Domain of Dread. These trees are angered at the intrusion of intelligent life and attack any creatures that aren't beasts.

**When to use.** When the characters are in an area with a lot of trees. This encounter works best in wilderness, and can add an extra element of confusion when the characters are already in the midst of a battle.

## THE ANARCHIST

*Drawing the Anarchist card foretells of coming chaos, entropy, and the downfall of the powerful. The art on*



# DECK OF MANY HORRORS

*the card's face illustrates a chained man laughing as a town burns in the background.*

An angry mob amasses and attempts to down the center of government, or residence of their settlement's local ruler. If the ruler is evil and makes the lives of the townsfolk worse, the mob is comprised of 5d10 **commoners** of various alignments. If the ruler is good or neutral-aligned and doesn't make the lives of the townsfolk worse, the mob is comprised of 3d6 **cultists** and led by a **cult fanatic**.

**When to use.** When the characters are in a settlement with a ruler.

## THE CHARLATAN

*The Charlatan warns of spies, tricksters, or someone not being whom they appear. The card's face shows a man holding a mask.*

A young man Salvik, goes by the name "Brother Aloz." He is a CN **commoner** that can cast the *prestidigitation* cantrip, but presents himself as a humble religious figure, wearing modest white robes. If there are other priests in the area, they are under the impression that Salvik's cover story is true; on his path to priesthood, he has travelled to places where the infirmed require healing.

Salvik is known as a miraculous healer. Long queues of people gather to receive his 'blessing.' Salvik ostensibly gives all the money to the church, but secretly siphons much of it for himself (or all of it if there is no religious institution in the area). The source of his 'healing' is the remaining page of a book of dark magic that he found. Through several days of study, Salvik learned to utilize a combination of minor enchantment and illusion magic to mislead those who seek his services. As an action, he can touch a creature, which must then make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the creature looks and feels as though a *cure wounds* or *lesser restoration* spell had been cast on it. The effect fades away after 1d4 + 1

days. He can use this ability 3 times before needing to finish a short or long rest.

Salvik keeps the remains of the dark magic book hidden in a secret compartment or other hiding place wherever he sleeps.

**When to use.** While the characters are in or approaching a settlement.

## THE BISHOP

*This card signifies hierarchy, especially religious hierarchy. It can also tell of plots, schemes, religious power, or devotion. The card itself depicts a man in ecclesiastical vestments, waving about a censer.*

The highest-ranking member within 50 miles, belonging to the largest religious sect in the area, issues a proclamation. Choose a proclamation below that you feel best fits their personality and goals:

- None shall be out after nightfall, for dark spirits roam the land.
- All must gather for prayer at a specific time of the day.
- All must affirm their adherence to the sect's god.
- Followers of other gods are not to be trusted by any of the faithful.
- All must observe a particular rite.
- The characters are declared *personae non gratae* — they are not welcome in the region due to either true or false claims, at your discretion.
- All of the faithful should join in on a crusade against their enemies.

Failure to properly acknowledge the decree may lead to suspicion at best, if not outright punishment from the sect. In some instances, it may be necessary to speak to the leader themselves.

**When to use.** Any time.



# DECK OF MANY HORRORS

## THE TRAITOR

*The Traitor is a card that foretells of betrayal from someone close, or sometimes an enemy changing allegiance. The artwork on the card's face is of a man in a crown pointing an accusing finger at a man with a dagger behind his back.*

An allied NPC close to the characters commits an act for treachery. A common example would be the NPC luring the characters into a trap for the darklord. Other times, the NPC may have been passing on secret information, obfuscating information, poisoning their food and making it look like it was someone else, or attempting to murder a vulnerable player character.

**When to use.** Not all allied NPCs are well-suited to this task. Many would rather die than help the darklord in any way. In such cases, this event shouldn't be assigned to them, or if it is, that NPC should have been under some compulsion or pressure to act in a way that is contrary to their nature.





# DECK OF MANY HORRORS

## APPENDIX

### MONSTERS AND NPCs

#### AERIAL

*“The only thing funnier than when drunken buffoons try to throw insults is when they try to throw punches, as if they think they’ll hit me. Did they not just watch me dodge flying knives only minutes ago?”*

#### AERIAL

Medium humanoid (half-elf), chaotic neutral

**Armor Class** 15 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 40 (9d8)

**Speed** 35 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 12 (+1) | 18 (+4) | 10 (+0) | 11 (+0) | 14 (+2) | 16 (+3) |

**Saving Throws** Dex +6

**Skills** Acrobatics +8, Athletics +3, Deception +5, Performance +7, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +6

**Senses** Darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Elvish

**Challenge** 4 (1100 XP)

**Cunning Action.** On each of her turns, Aerial can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

**Evasion.** If Aerial is subjected to an effect that allows her to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, Aerial instead takes no damage if she succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if she fails.

**Sneak Attack (1/turn).** Aerial deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Aerial that isn’t incapacitated and Aerial doesn’t have disadvantage on the attack roll.

**Innate Spellcasting.** Aerial’s innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Aerial can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *alter self*

**Spellcasting.** Aerial is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Aerial’s spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit

with spell attacks). Aerial has the following warlock spells prepared:

Cantrip (at will): *eldritch blast*, *minor illusion*

2nd level (2 slots): *blur*, *charm person*, *hex*, *misty step*

#### Actions

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage.

**Dart.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage

#### Reactions

**Uncanny Dodge.** When hit by a weapon attack, Aerial reduce the damage b half. To do so, she must be able to see the attacker.





# DECK OF MANY HORRORS

Arjola Kos, or “Aerial” as she calls herself, is a traveling half dusk elf, half Vistani performer. She is known for her incredible feats of agility, including aerial performances, knife-catching, and other stunts. Along with her reputation as a performer comes a sly and playful personality. Aerial has a sharp sense of humor and enjoys making light of situations and especially people whom she dislikes, using her wit to create subtle jabs. Nonetheless, she has a fondness for many types of people, especially children and rejects.

**No place to call home.** As a young girl, Aerial was outcast from her mother’s Vistani tribe, her elven heritage having been deemed unfit for the culture’s mystical traditions in which all Vistani partake. Aerial found companionship among a troupe of performers consisting of unusual individuals and other Vistani outcasts, allowing them to travel between Domains of Dread. There, she honed her skills, making use of the natural agility of her ancestry.

**A lost people.** Along her travels, Aerial hopes to find her father. While she doesn’t expect to form a lifelong bond with the elf who left her without a family, she does want answers about her history. In truth, Aerial’s father doesn’t even know he sired a child; Aerial’s mother had merely been passing through the area when she met the elf, and he never saw her again.

**Dark bargains.** As the years wore on, Aerial became increasingly dismayed from coming up empty handed regarding her father. Furthermore, her troupe had fallen on hard times. One night, in a vivid dream, she heard a disembodied voice that promised her the power to find her parents and save her troupe. In exchange, Aerial would target individuals whom the voice said were corrupt, stealing from them or engaging in character assassination. She agreed and soon found herself with powers that befuddled crowds and brought in larger audiences. However, she keeps her pact an absolute secret. The only people to whom she has admitted to having magical talent are a few in her

troupe. The rest of the time, she doesn’t use flashy magic, instead opting for spells that can be passed off as natural extensions of her talents.

**Ideal.** “Mastery is its own reward.”

**Bond.** “I have a debt to repay to my patron.”

**Flaw.** “I’m not a planner.”

## ALEKS DUSEK

*“I study that which others dare not think about... Because I must.”*

## ALEKS DUSEK

*Medium humanoid (human), neutral*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 55 (10d8 + 10)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 10 (+0) | 14 (+2) | 13 (+1) | 17 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 12 (+1) |

**Saving Throws** Int +6, Cha +4

**Skills** Arcana +6, History +6, Medicine +4, Religion +6

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Infernal

**Challenge** 5 (1100 XP)

**Spellcasting.** Aleks is a 6th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Aleks has the following spells prepared:

Cantrip (at will): *chill touch, light, mage hand, spare the dying*  
1st level (4 slots): *magic missile, protection from evil and good, shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *gentle repose, misty step*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead, dispel magic, spirit guardians, vampiric touch*

**Shapechanger.** Aleks can use his action to polymorph into a Medium undead spirit. He undergoes the following changes:

- His equipment merges into his new form.
- He doesn't require air, sleep, food, or water.
- His Strength score becomes 1 (-5)
- He gains immunity to poison damage and resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons
- He is immune to being knocked prone

After assuming this form, Aleks can attempt to revert to his human form at the end of each of his turns by succeeding on a DC 12 Charisma saving throw.



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When Aleks takes damage in his human form that would reduce him to below half of his maximum hit points, he must also make a DC 12 Charisma saving throw or be forced to use this ability.

**Incorporeal Movement (Spirit Form Only).** Aleks can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. He takes 5 (1d10) force damage if he ends his turn inside an object.

## Actions

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

**Withering Touch (Spirit Form Only).** *Melee Spell Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (3d8) necrotic damage.

Aleks Dusek is a wizard and parapsychologist — a field that is taken very seriously in the Domains of Dread. He uses his understanding of magic and science in an attempt to learn more about what happens to the soul after death. A horrific accident during one of his experiments left Aleks in a struggle to maintain his physical form and not become an undead spirit.

**All things can be studied.** Aleks believes that everything can and should be examined empirically, rather than attaching any sense of mysticism or romanticism, including the magic he controls. When others discouraged him from studying death from a scientific perspective, citing their own moral taboos around the subject, Aleks became determined to focus all of his studies on that. He believed that a better understanding of death could lessen the superstitions surrounding the afterlife.

**Unforeseen consequences.** Working almost every day, and often even though the night, Aleks was relentless in his research. He examined and tested theories on humans dying from exterior causes and experimented on recently deceased humanoids and living mice. His magic was his most important research tool, allowing him to study the effects of negative and positive energy. During one of his experiments, he inadvertently tore a rift into the Negative Plane. Just as his life

essence was being ripped out of him, Aleks was able to close the portal.

**Ticking clock.** Despite surviving the incident, Aleks had been exposed to massive amounts of negative energy that had permanently damaged his soul. Some of that energy lingers within him and threatens to destroy his physical form. When he is physically infirm or stressed, he will sometimes sink into his shadowy, ethereal form. Although he is more powerful in this form, every time he assumes it, it becomes a harder struggle to return to his physical form. For this reason, his research became even more pressing and desperate.

**Ideal.** “Nothing is meant to be unknowable.”

**Bond.** “I must discover a way to cure my affliction or I will die and be damned.”

**Flaw.** “I can be obsessive when I think I am on the verge of a breakthrough.”

## CIAR KAUB

*“One of the greatest tragedies of this land is that it robs people of the ability to know what is true, for without truth, there is only darkness.”*

## CIAR KAUBE

*Medium humanoid (human), neutral good*

**Armor Class** 16 (unarmored defense)

**Hit Points** 44 (8d8 + 8)

**Speed** 40 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| 12 (+1) | 17 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 12 (+1) | 16 (+3) | 9 (–1) |

**Saving Throws** Int +3, Wis +5

**Skills** Insight +5, Perception +5, Stealth +5

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 15

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 4 (1100 XP)

**Shadow Stealth.** While in dim light or darkness, Ciar can take the Hide action as a bonus action.



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**Innate Spellcasting.** Ciar's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Ciar can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *minor illusion*

3/day: *darkness*, *pass without trace*, *silence*

## Actions

**Multiattack.** Ciar makes three attacks, two with his quarterstaff, and one unarmed strike.

**Quarterstaff.** Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage, or 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

**Unarmed Strike.** Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

**Shadow Step.** Ciar magically teleports up to 30 feet to an area of dim light or darkness that he can see. He can make one unarmed strike before or after using this ability.

## Reactions

**Deflect Missiles.** In response to being hit by a ranged weapon, Ciar deflects the missile. The damage he takes from the attack is reduced by 8. If the damage is reduced to 0, Ciar catches the missile if its small enough to hold in one hand and Ciar has a free hand.

Ciar Kaube is a monk that wanders from shadow to shadow in the Domain of Dread, searching for answers. Locals have reported him mysteriously appearing in places all across the land. Equally mysterious to these locals is who Ciar is or what he wants. It is known that he has never harmed an innocent. In fact, he has helped some, but folk are still wary of his unsettling guise — a face with a blindfold covering eyes that bleed darkness itself. After all, if this man is blind, how is he aware of everything around him? In truth, Ciar is a thoughtful man who was exposed to wild shadow magic when he was younger. This left him blinded and plagued by psychic pain and dark whispers.

**Struggle in isolation.** When his community thought him cursed, Ciar was banished, left to wander the lands while contending with his tortuous intrusions. Both fending for himself and keeping his own sanity became an impossible task.



Ciar made his way to an isolated cave upon a mountain where he could die without hurting anyone.

**Shadowy guidance.** Nearing death, Ciar was approached by a figure taking a wispy, vaguely humanoid form composed of pure shadow. The figure, whom Ciar calls “The Teacher,” instructed Ciar how to block out the intrusions by using his ki. From there, Ciar learned how to control the darkness within him and to survive in the harsh lands. Additionally, The Teacher taught Ciar effective fighting techniques, as well as methods for utilizing his ki in manipulating the shadows. While still suspicious of this figure, Ciar acknowledges that it has never threatened him or encouraged him to harm others. Still, he has trouble believing that there is no ulterior motive.

**Quest for knowledge.** Not welcome in most settlements for his affliction, Ciar is left to travel the realm in search of answers. He wonders



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of the origins of his affliction (he doesn't yet know of wild magic), and wants to know about what his condition entails for his future, and if there is anything that can be done about it.

**Ideal.** "Truth cannot be seen with the naked eye."

**Bond.** "I must discover the nature of my affliction"

**Flaw.** "I can never be sure of what is real, so I am suspicious of others, even when they don't deserve it."

## CONSTANZE

"My purpose is not to entertain you. My purpose is to bring justice. Stand with me or stand aside."



## CONSTANZE

*Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral*

**Armor Class** 20 (plate, shield)

**Hit Points** 52 (8d8 + 16)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 17 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 11 (+0) | 11 (+0) | 14 (+2) |

**Saving Throws** Wis +2, Cha +4

**Skills** Religion +2

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** Abyssal, Celestial, Common

**Challenge** 4 (1100 XP)

**Lay on Hands.** As an action, Constanze can touch a creature and draw from her pool of 30 hit points to restore a number of hit points to that creature, up to the maximum remaining in its pool.

Alternatively, Constanze can expend 5 hit points from her pool of healing to cure the target of one disease or neutralize one poison affecting it. She can cure multiple diseases and neutralize multiple poisons with a single use of Lay on Hands, expending hit points separately for each effect cured.

This feature has no effect on undead or constructs.

**Vengeful Devotion.** Constanze has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

**Spellcasting.** The Constanze is a 6th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). The sister Constanze has the following paladin spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *bless*, *command*, *protection from evil and good*

2nd level (2 slots): *aid*, *magic weapon*

## Actions

**Multiattack.** Constanze makes two melee or two ranged attacks.

**Warhammer.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

**Javelin.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Sister Constanze, as she is known among her order, is a paladin of the Triad from Cormyr, in the



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world of Toril. She and several acolytes were brought there by a Vistani caravan that promised to bring her to a land where lives and souls needed saving. Constanze had spent little time exploring the Domain of Dread when she was ambushed by the servants of the darklord. Her companions were slain and she was captured.

**Unbroken.** The darklord assigned an evil spellcaster to oversee the captivity of Constanze (see the Paladin card for more details on who this caster could be). The aim was to turn Constanze into an oathbreaker, and later, a death knight, in service to the darklord. Constanze doesn't remember how long she spent in captivity, but during that process, she was subjected to intense psychic and spiritual attacks. These wore away at her psyche, at it was during this time that she took up an oath of vengeance. By the end of her captivity, her warm personality, sense of humor, and her sense of self were lost to her. All she knows is her oath and a burning desire to eradicate creatures of the night.

**Buried, but not lost.** The oath Constanze took saved her from damnation and served as a barrier against further corruption. Her sense of self had to be hidden deep to avoid destruction. It is so far removed that Constanze cannot consciously engage with it. Although attempts to harm Constanze cannot breach her shell, acts of kinship and tenderness can temporarily expose the soul that remains. If she witnesses or experiences such an act in a meaningful way, her expression softens uncharacteristically, followed by a small amount of psychic pain on her part. If the characters want to heal Constanze's damage, they must use magic since her trauma is supernatural. This can be accomplished by casting a greater restoration spell or similar magic on her, though Constanze will deny that she needs any such assistance. Should the characters manage to cast the spell on her, her full range of emotions, thoughts, and sense of self are restored. Additionally, her Charisma score becomes 16 and she gains the ability to grant a

bonus of 2 to the saving throws of friendly creatures within 15 feet while she is conscious. Finally, she emits a soft, radiant glow in combat or when showing or experiencing compassion to another.

**Vengeance awaits.** Constanze's oath of vengeance is as outlined in the paladin class description in the *Player's Handbook*. It revolves around the punishment of those who commit evil, even at the expense of the paladin's own purity. The tenants are:

- Fight the Greater Evil. Faced with a choice of fighting my sworn foes or combating a lesser evil, I choose the greater evil.
- No Mercy for the Wicked. Ordinary foes might win my mercy, but my sworn enemies do not.
- By Any Means Necessary. My qualms can't get in the way of exterminating my foes.
- Restitution. If my foes wreck ruin on the world, it is because I failed to stop them. I must help those harmed by their misdeeds.

Armed with these beliefs, Constanze sets out on a quest to exterminate every evil that plagues the Domain of Dread, with the goal being to find a way to slay the darklord.

**Ideal.** "I must uphold my oath of vengeance."

**Bond.** "My task is yet incomplete; I must purge the darkness from this land."

**Flaw.** "I lack a sense of my own humanity."

## DARK PRIEST

The term "dark priest" evokes images of infernal cult leaders and monstrous clerics of evil gods. Those certainly fall within the purview of the label, however, there are clerics with similar abilities that are of different dispositions. For example, a "gray" priestess may worship a neutral-aligned god, but be apostates from the church itself, allowing them to utilize unconventional powers. Dark priests can be potent spellcasters



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with the ability to call forth a mighty font of divine flame, or even raise the dead.

## DARK PRIEST

Medium humanoid, any alignment

**Armor Class** 15 (breastplate)

**Hit Points** 84 (12d9 + 24)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 16 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 13 (+1) | 16 (+3) | 14 (+2) |

**Saving Throws** Wis +6

**Skills** Religion +4

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Any three languages

**Challenge** 6 (2300 XP)

**Spellcasting.** The priest is a 10th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The priest has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrip (at will): *guidance, thaumaturgy, toll the dead*  
 1st level (4 slots): *command, inflict wounds, cure wounds*  
 2nd level (3 slots): *augury, silence, spiritual weapon*  
 3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse, speak with dead, spirit guardians*  
 4th level (3 slots): *divination, guardian of faith, locate creature*  
 5th level (2 slots): *flame strike, raise dead*

## Actions

**Multiattack.** The priest makes two melee attacks.

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

**Mace.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

## JOASH BIRO

*“An outlander once told me that every soul deserves a second chance, that everyone can be redeemed. Let it be a lesson that he was slain not a week later by the horrors of this land, which we continue to empower with our own sin. Those of us who dwell here know the truth: the only salvation for the fiend, the witch, and the wicked is through FIRE!”*



## JOASH BIRO

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

**Armor Class** 17 (scale mail, shield)

**Hit Points** 45 (7d8 + 14)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 15 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 10 (+0) | 16 (+3) | 12 (+1) |

**Saving Throws** Wis +5, Cha +3

**Skills** Intimidation +3, Religion +2

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)



# DECK OF MANY HORRORS

**Spellcasting.** Joash is a 5th-level spellcaster. Joash's spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Joash has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrip (at will): *guidance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *bless, cure wounds, guiding bolt, healing word*

2nd level (3 slots): *aid, heat metal, lesser restoration*

3rd level (2 slots): *dispel magic, mass healing word, revivify*

## Actions

**Flambeau of Immolation.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage, plus 3 (1d6) fire damage.

Additionally, three times per day, the flambeau can be used to create a gout of flame, forming a line 30 feet long and 5 feet wide blasts out from the *flambeau of immolation*. Each creature in the line must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 3d8 fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

The fire ignites flammable objects in the area that aren't being worn or carried.

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

## Reactions

**Warding Flame (Recharges After a Short or Long Rest).**

When a creature within 30 feet of Joash makes a melee attack against him or another creature within 30 feet, Joash imposes disadvantage on the attack roll, causing the flame to flare before the attacker hits or misses. An attacker that is immune to fire damage is immune to this feature.

Reverend Joash Biro, who goes by Father Joash, is a bombastic priest who lives to bring punishment to the wicked and an appeal for redemption to everyone else. Known for his pitiless rhetoric toward sin and sinners, he has a humorless attitude, but his message resonates with the desperate peoples of the Domain of Dread.

**Viciousness with a purpose.** Father Joash is a cruel man who feels little compassion for suffering innocents, and none whatsoever for the suffering of conspicuous sinners. However, there are enough truly wicked things in the Domain of Dread for Father Joash to focus instead on targeting those things rather than going after lesser sinners. He is more interested in converting

the general populace to his way of thinking than making an example of them.

**Sins of the past.** As a young man, Father Joash was a drunkard and an arsonist. He frequently got into fights and was one day caught attempting to set fire to a chapel and subjected to the punishment of the puritanical clergy. His daily penance was severe and often came in the form of self-flagellation until he defined himself by his worship of his god (which is Ezra, if your adventure takes place in Barovia), or his unforgiving interpretation of the god, anyway.

**Spread the word.** Convinced that everyone else must be as depraved as he, Father Joash has set out on mission to offer one last chance at redemption for the sinners of the realm. He also believes that he has heard the word of his god, a word that tells of certain doom should the evil of the land not be eradicated with great urgency.

**Ideal.** "Purge the unholy."

**Bond.** "Without my religious code, I would be as wicked as the people I condemn."

**Flaw.** "My religious zeal is my excuse for channelling my destructive desires; at my core, I am just as bad as the people I condemn."

## KURNOSAV DRAMICH

A wild man and merciless killer, Kurnosav Dramich is a zealot for the the savage, old gods of the land, and offers his own blood as tribute before he undertakes his sacred hunts. A resourceful tracker and fearsome opponent, Kurnosav will use any means at his disposal to kill his quarry, including underhanded tactics, and will not stop until either he or they are dead.



# DECK OF MANY HORRORS

## KURNOSAV DRAMICH (TIER 1)

*Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (unarmored defense)

**Hit Points** 90 (12d8 + 36)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| 18 (+4) | 14 (+2) | 17 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 8 (–1) |

**Saving Throws** Str +6, Con +5

**Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +4, Survival +4

**Senses** passive Perception 14

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 4 (1100 XP)

**Dark Devotion.** Krunosav has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

**Lurker.** At the start of his turn, Krunosav can reduce his speed to 0. Until he spends any movement, he has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

**Relentless (Recharges after a Long Rest).** When Krunosav is reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, he drops to 1 hit point instead.

**Rush.** If Krunosav moves at least 10 feet in a line toward a creature, he can attempt to shove the creature prone as a bonus action.

**Unarmored Defense.** While Krunosav is not wearing armor, his AC includes his Constitution modifier (included in the description).

### Actions

**Multiattack.** Krunosav makes two greataxe attacks or one handaxe attack.

**Greataxe.** Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) slashing damage.

**Handaxe.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage.

## KURNOSAV DRAMICH (TIER 2)

*Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 16 (unarmored defense)

**Hit Points** 187 (22d8 + 88)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| 18 (+4) | 14 (+2) | 18 (+4) | 12 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 8 (–1) |

**Saving Throws** Str +7, Con +7

**Skills** Perception +5, Stealth +5, Survival +5

**Senses** passive Perception 15

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 8 (3900 XP)

**Brute.** A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when Krunosav hits with it.

**Dark Devotion.** Krunosav has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

**Lurker.** At the start of its turn, Krunosav can reduce his speed to 0. Until he spends any movement, he has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

**Relentless (Recharges after a Long Rest).** When Krunosav is reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, he drops to 1 hit point instead.

**Rush.** If Krunosav moves at least 10 feet in a line toward a creature, it can attempt to shove the creature prone as a bonus action.

**Unarmored Defense.** While Krunosav is not wearing armor, his AC includes his Constitution modifier (included in the description).

### Actions

**Multiattack.** Krunosav makes three melee attacks; two with his battleaxe and one with his handaxe, or two ranged attacks.

**Battleaxe.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage, or 15 (2d10 + 4) slashing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

**Handaxe.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage in melee, or 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage at range.



# DECK OF MANY HORRORS

## MYSTERIOUS WANDERER

Who is this enigmatic stranger? What do they want? Where do they get their power? These questions are often asked of certain wanderers, but are rarely they answered. Wanderers usually present themselves as plain commoners, but wield great power. The source of this power differs on from wanderer to wanderer. Some wanderers have given their souls to bring forth the terror of the Nine Hells, while others may be instruments for good-aligned gods.

## MYSTERIOUS WANDERER

*Medium humanoid, any alignment*

**Armor Class** 15

**Hit Points** 180 (24d8 + 72)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 14 (+2) | 20 (+5) | 16 (+3) | 14 (+2) | 20 (+5) | 16 (+3) |

**Saving Throws** Cha +7, Dex +9, Wis +9

**Skills** Deception +7, Perception +9, Stealth +11, Survival +9

**Senses** passive Perception 19

**Languages** Any three languages

**Challenge** 9 (5000 XP)

**Dreadful Strike (1/Turn).** When the wanderer hits a creature with a melee attack, the wanderer can use a bonus action force the target to make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the creature is frightened for 1 minute. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to its Dreadful Strike for the next 24 hours.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The mysterious wanderer's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect thoughts*, *disguise self*, *nondetection* (self only), *toll the dead*

4/day: *hold person*, *phantasmal killer*, *silence*, *suggestion*

3/day: *confusion*, *disintegrate*, *speak with dead*, *true seeing*

1/day each: *geas*, *plane shift*, *raise dead*

## Actions

**Quarterstaff.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage, or 9 (1d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

## PAIN MASTER

Pain masters are sadists and masochists who use magic and traditional means to exact the greatest amount of pain possible from an individual. Pain masters are often torturers for an evil ruler, or worshippers of a cruel, otherworldly power like Loviatar. Other times, they have no agenda and are merely twisted individuals. Pain masters not only know how to deal pain but have become so resilient against it that injuries that would slow others are of little bother to them.

## PAIN MASTER

*Medium humanoid, any alignment*

**Armor Class** 15 (studded leather)

**Hit Points** 70 (10d7 + 30)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 10 (+0) | 16 (+3) | 17 (+3) | 16 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 16 (+3) |

**Saving Throws** Con +6, Wis +4, Cha +6

**Skills** Deception +6, Insight +4, Intimidation +9, Religion +6

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** Any two languages

**Challenge** 5 (1800 XP)

**Spellcasting.** The pain master is a 7th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The pain master has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *message*, *minor illusion*, *shocking grasp*  
1st level (4 slots): *ray of sickness*, *Tasha's hideous laughter*, *unseen servant*

2nd level (3 slots): *blur*, *detect thoughts*, *mind spike*

3rd level (3 slots): *fear*, *lightning bolt*, *vampiric touch*

4th level (1 slot): *phantasmal killer*, *polymorph*

## Actions

**Multitattack.** The pain master makes two melee attacks.



# DECK OF MANY HORRORS

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage in melee, or 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage at range.

**Whip.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

## PALADIN

Paladins are holy warriors who crusade for righteous causes. There are different oaths paladins follow that emphasize certain virtues, but all are united by their quest to defend the world against evil. To many, a paladin appears as a knight in shining armor, but often, they take on the image of a more humble fighter who appears when others are in need.

## PALADIN

*Medium humanoid, any alignment*

**Armor Class** 20 (plate, shield)

**Hit Points** 71 (11d8 + 22)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 16 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 11 (+0) | 12 (+1) | 16 (+3) |

**Skills** Animal Handling +4, Religion +3

**Condition Immunities** diseased, frightened

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** Any one language (usually Common)

**Challenge** 5 (1800 XP)

**Divine Sense (4/Day).** Until the end of its next turn, the paladin knows the location of any celestial, fiend or undead within 60 feet that is not behind total cover.

**Holy Weapon.** The paladin's longsword attacks deal an additional 9 (2d8) radiant damage (included in the attack) and are considered magical.

**Lay on Hands.** As an action, the paladin can touch a creature and draw from its pool of 25 hit points to restore a number of hit points to that creature, up to the maximum remaining in its pool.

Alternatively, the paladin can expend 5 hit points from its pool of healing to cure the target of one disease or neutralize one poison affecting it. It can cure multiple diseases and neutralize multiple poisons with a single use of Lay on Hands, expending hit points separately for each effect cured.

This feature has no effect on undead or constructs.

**Sacred Weapon (1/Day).** For 1 minute, the paladin adds 3 to attack rolls made with its longsword. The longsword also emits bright light in a 20-foot radius, and dim light 20 feet beyond that.

**Spellcasting.** The paladin is a 6th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The paladin has the following paladin spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *compelled duel*, *protection from evil and good*, *shield of faith*

2nd level (2 slots): *lesser restoration*, *zone of truth*

## Actions

**Multiattack.** The paladin makes two melee attacks.

**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) radiant damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands, plus 9 (2d8) radiant damage.

## SOUL COLLECTOR

Death comes to every mortal being. The purpose of soul collectors is to ensure those that try to cheat death are torn from their mortal bodies, their souls snatched by the collector. These souls may eventually end up in whatever plane of existence their spirits would normally go upon death. However, soul collectors are malevolent beings that consume any soul possible, provided the gods would not seek retribution for its destruction.

When roving the Material Plane, soul collectors take on a form similar to a wraith: a cloud of inky darkness in the vague shape of a humanoid. Soul collectors have an even less corporeal appearance, however, and merely gazing upon it can spell doom.



# DECK OF MANY HORRORS

## SOUL COLLECTOR

*Medium undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 14

**Hit Points** 150 (20d8 + 60)

**Speed** 0 ft, fly 60 ft, (hover)

| STR    | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 6 (−2) | 18 (+4) | 16 (+3) | 10 (+0) | 18 (+4) | 14 (+2) |

**Saving Throws** Con +7, Wis +8, Cha +6

**Skills** Perception +8

**Damage Resistances** acid; cold; fire; thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** poison, necrotic

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 10 (5900 XP)

**Baleful Visage.** When a creature that can see the collector starts its turn within 30 feet of the collector, the collector can force it to make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw if the collector isn't incapacitated. If the creature fails by 5 or more, the creature is reduced to 0 hit points. Otherwise, a creature is incapacitated and has its movement reduced to 0 until the end of its next turn on a failed save.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it has disadvantage on attack rolls against the collector until the start of its next turn. If the creature looks at the collector in the meantime, it must immediately make the saving throw.

**Incorporeal Movement.** The soul collector can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the soul collector has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

## Actions

**Multiattack.** The collector makes two touch attacks, or one touch attack and uses its Soul Snatch if available.

**Touch.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d6 + 4) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest.

**Soul Snatch (Recharge 5-6).** The collector draws forth the life energy from creatures within a 20-foot cone. Each of those creatures must make a DC 18 Charisma saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. The collector can choose to steal the soul of one creature reduced to 0 hit points by this effect, killing the creature. The creature cannot be revived by any means short of a *wish* spell.





# DECK OF MANY HORRORS

## ITEMS

### CUTPURSE

*Weapon (any sword), very rare (requires attunement)*

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. In addition, when you slay a creature of CR ½ or higher, 1d6 gold pieces gush from the killing wound. The number of gold pieces increases 1d6 at certain CR thresholds: CR 5, CR 11, and CR 17.

Sentience. Cutpurse is a sentient chaotic evil weapon with an Intelligence of 12, a Wisdom of 15, and a Charisma of 15. It has hearing and darkvision out to a range of 120 feet. Cutpurse desires to see others deprived of wealth, but prefers to be around it, though Cutpurse prefers not to be too direct about its intentions.



### FLAMBEAU OF IMMOLATION

*Weapon (mace), very rare (requires attunement)*

This metal torch burns with an inner fire hot enough to incinerate most creatures. As a bonus action, you can ignite or extinguish the torch's flames, which shed bright light in a 30-foot radius and dim light for an additional 30 feet.

The weapon has 3 charges and regains 1d2 + 1 charges daily at dawn. As an action, you can expend one of the weapon's charges to burn a gout of flame which forms a line 30 feet long and 5 feet wide. Each creature in the line must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 3d8 fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

The fire ignites flammable objects in the area that aren't being worn or carried.

Additionally, the weapon can be used like a regular mace, but deals an additional 1d6 fire damage on a hit.



### PAGE OF EXALTED DEEDS

*Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement by a creature of good alignment)*

Contained within this thin, bright cold-colored case is a page from the Book of Exalted Deeds (see chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). As soon as the page is read, it reappears within the book. Attempts to copy the page fail to capture its magical nature or translate the benefits it offers to those pure of heart.



# DECK OF MANY HORRORS

The case has a clasp shaped like an angelic sword which keeps the page secure. Only a creature of good alignment that is attuned to the page can release the clasp. Once opened, the attuned creature must spend 1 hour reading and studying the page to digest its contents and gain its benefits. Other creatures that peruse the page can read the text but glean no deeper meaning and reap no benefits. An evil creature that tries to read the page takes 8d6 radiant damage. This damage ignores resistance and immunity, and can't be reduced or avoided by any means. A creature reduced to 0 hit points by this damage disappears in a blinding flash and is destroyed, leaving its possessions behind.

Benefits granted by this magic item last only as long as you strive to do good. If you fail to perform at least one act of kindness or generosity within the span of 10 days, or you willingly perform an evil act, you lose all the benefits granted by the page.

## Extra Spells

After you spend the requisite amount of time reading the page, you learn to innately cast the following spells: aura of life, lesser restoration, and protection from evil and good. Each of these spells can be cast once, and you regain the ability to do so when you finish a long rest.

## Fearless in the Face of Evil

Once you've read and studied the page, you are immune to being frightened by evil-aligned creatures.

## Summon Deva

You summon a **deva**, which appears in an unoccupied space within 90 feet. The deva disappears when it is reduced to 0 hit points or 1 minute has elapsed.

The deva is friendly to you and your companions for the duration. Roll initiative for the deva, which has its own turns. It obeys any verbal commands that you issue to it (no action required by you), as long as they don't violate its alignment.

If you don't issue any commands to the deva, it defends itself from hostile creatures, but otherwise takes no actions.

A deva will not agree to be summoned or enter within 120 feet of a darklord, as other angels have become corrupted and fallen from such acts.

Once you use this property, you lose the knowledge gained from the page and can no longer use any of its benefits.

## PAGE OF VILE DARKNESS

*Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement by a creature of evil alignment)*

Contained within this inky black case is a page from the Book of Vile Darkness (see chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). As soon as the page is read, it reappears within the book. Attempts to copy the page fail to capture its magical nature or translate the benefits it offers to those dark of heart.

Any living creature within 30 feet of the page can feel an aura of malice about the page. Additionally, the presence of the page is unsettling to animals and wildlife. Over time, plant life also withers near the page. Whenever a non-evil creature attunes to the page, that creature must make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the creature's alignment changes to neutral evil.

A creature attuned to the page must spend 1 hour reading and studying it to digest its contents and reap its benefits (and drawback). Upon doing so, the creature must succeed on a DC 16 Charisma saving throw or gain a randomly determined form of indefinite madness, as described in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

The *page of vile darkness* remains with you only as long as you strive to work evil in the world. If you fail to perform at least one evil act within the span of 10 days, or if you willingly perform a good act, the page disappears. If you die while



# DECK OF MANY HORRORS

attuned to the page, an entity of great evil claims your soul. You can't be restored to life by any means while your soul remains imprisoned.

## **Infernal Sight**

Once you've read and studied the page, you can see normally in darkness, both magical and nonmagical, to a distance of 120 feet.

## **Extra Spells**

After you spend the requisite amount of time reading the page, you learn to innately cast the following spells: *blindness/deafness*, *dissonant whispers*, and *fear*. Each one of these spells can be cast once, and you regain the ability to do so again when you finish a long rest. You can also cast *wrack* (see appendix), but doing so causes you to lose the knowledge gained from the page and can no longer use any of its benefits.

## **RAPIER OF STEADFASTNESS**

*Weapon (rapier), rare.*

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. Additionally, while wielding this weapon, you have advantage on saving throws against being frightened.



# DECK OF MANY HORRORS

## SPELLS

### WRACK

8th-level Necromancy

**Components** V S

**Casting Time** 1 action

**Range** 30 feet

**Duration** concentration up to 1 hour

You reach out with your hand as if closing it upon a human heart and target one creature within range. The creature must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target is overcome with pain as its extremities blister and drip with fluid, its teeth begin to rot, and its eyes bleed. The creature is considered blind and incapacitated for the duration, and its speed is halved.

After the spell ends, the creature is physically and psychologically shaken. For the next 10 minutes, the creature has disadvantage on attack rolls and skill checks.

Tip: if your characters acquire this item and have not used the wrack spell by the time they reach the darklord, you may wish to save one of their legendary resistances, save a spell slot for counterspell, or send in minions to break the caster's concentration.





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