



# ENCOUNTERS WITH THE DARK POWERS

## Ravenloft

By CHRISTIAN ZEUCH



MAKE DEATH MEANINGFUL AND REMARKABLE  
WITH THESE 20 ROLEPLAY ENCOUNTERS!

# Ravenloft



DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, Wizards of the Coast, and all other Wizards of the Coast product names, and their respective logos are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast in the USA and other countries.

This work contains material that is copyright Wizards of the Coast and/or other authors. Such material is used with permission under the Community Content Agreement for Dungeon Masters Guild.

All other original material in this work is copyright 2020 by Christian Zeuch and published under the Community Content Agreement for Dungeon Masters Guild.

# CONTENTS

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| INTRODUCTION.....        | 4 |
| OVERVIEW .....           | 4 |
| BACKGROUND .....         | 4 |
| RUNNING ENCOUNTERS ..... | 4 |
| DARK GIFTS .....         | 5 |

## THE ENCOUNTERS.....6

|                              |    |
|------------------------------|----|
| THE RETURN.....              | 6  |
| 1. THE HAUNTED ONE .....     | 6  |
| 2. THE UNDEAD ONE.....       | 8  |
| 3. THE ETHEREAL ONE.....     | 8  |
| 4. THE SCALED ONE .....      | 8  |
| 5. THE LUPINE ONE .....      | 9  |
| 6. THE MISTY ONE .....       | 11 |
| 7. THE TORMENTED ONE .....   | 11 |
| 8. THE DARK ONE.....         | 12 |
| 9. THE SWARMING ONE .....    | 12 |
| 10. THE SHADOWLESS ONE ..... | 12 |
| 11. THE SILENT ONE .....     | 13 |
| 12. THE WEAK ONE.....        | 13 |
| 13. THE BLIND ONE .....      | 13 |
| 14. THE FROZEN ONE.....      | 15 |
| 15. THE ANGERED ONE .....    | 15 |
| 16. THE PUTRID ONE.....      | 16 |
| 17. THE THIRSTING ONE .....  | 16 |
| 18. THE SKELETAL ONE .....   | 18 |
| 19. THE WINGED ONE .....     | 18 |
| 20. THE EVIL ONE .....       | 18 |

# CREDITS

**Author:** Christian Zeuch   
**Art Direction:** Christian Zeuch  
**Layout:** Christian Zeuch (based on the Affinity Publisher template by Nathanaël Roux)  
**Editor:** Matthew Wulf   
**Ravenloft Consultant:** Chris Massey  
**Sensitivity Reader:** Jasmine Eisinger   
**Cover Art:** KELLEPICS (CC0 from Pixabay) & fotokitas  
**Adobe Stock Interior Art:** Dean Spencer , and Adobe Stock Art from fotokitas, Digital Storm, Nada Sertic, hainat, mikesilent  
**Playtesters:** Bob Carnicom, Chad M. Lensch, Cita A F, Dave D. Grandmaison, Isaac Mandagie, Jillian Zaski, Kathleen Harrington, Luke Russell, Ricardo Andrade, Sanae Rosen

"TWITTER, TWEET, RETWEET and the Twitter logo are trademarks of Twitter, Inc. or its affiliates."



# INTRODUCTION

Filled with bleak Domains of Dread and inhabitants oppressed by their terrifying Darklords, Ravenloft is a demiplane controlled by an unknowable evil known as the Dark Powers. For those unfortunate enough to pique their interest, death is rarely a simple affair.

## OVERVIEW

*Encounters with the Dark Powers* is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS supplement offering enhanced roleplaying opportunities to characters that die while exploring the Domains of Dread. These enhancements, perfect for a *Curse of Strahd* adventure, offer characters a moral dilemma: they can live again, but at what cost?

## BACKGROUND

When a person with a soul dies within a Domain of Dread (e.g., Barovia), their soul remains trapped in Ravenloft, turning into a restless spirit or eventually forgetting who they were before being drawn to the Shadowfell. When this happens, the soul reincarnates into a newborn's body. The process of forgetting and reincarnating can take months, years, or even decades to complete.

## RUNNING ENCOUNTERS

This supplement provides mechanics similar to the ones presented in the *Expanded Dark Gifts* Adventurers League module. When a character up to 5th level dies, roll a d20 and consult the Dark Gifts table to determine which scene you will run where the Dark Powers offer them a second chance. Alternatively, select the Dark Gift and associated scene that feels more thematic for the character. When running a scene, the character shouldn't know it is the Dark Powers at work. The Dark Powers do not offer these gifts twice; if the character dies again, they must rely on the usual methods of returning to life.

If the character accepts the offer during this Scene, which will be called "Encounters" moving forward, they return to life with 1 hit point. They also receive the full effects from the associated entry on the Dark Gift table. In addition, the character's soul is tainted by the Dark Powers. See the "Dread Mark" sidebar for details.

### DREAD MARK

The character feels something dark deep within them, as if their very existence was covered in a thick layer of filth. They are considered undead for all spells and class features except Turn Undead. If the character dies again and is returned to life by a spell, like *revivify* or *raise dead*, they gain one permanent level of Exhaustion until they succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw. This saving throw occurs after a long rest for as long as the effect remains active. The *greater restoration* or *wish* spells are needed to remove this effect.

For dramatic effect, you can run the Encounter with the player away from the rest of the group, either in a separate room or through a messaging app (e.g. Whatsapp, Telegram, Discord, etc), if the situation allows. If the character died right at the beginning of the session, use the real-time situation and run the encounter right away.

### CONTENT WARNING

Some content may be triggering, including: insects, auditory hallucinations, death, gore, oppressive situations, snakes, claustrophobia, lack of player's agency, torture. These gifts are mysterious, magical effects bestowed upon characters in exchange for a second chance in life. The effects represented in this product are in no way meant to represent real world experiences. If a gift or encounter depicted in this supplement crosses the boundaries you and your players established for your table, select a new gift/encounter or modify what's presented to fit your table.

# DARK GIFTS

The table below lists the various boons and curses characters can receive upon accepting help from the Dark Powers. You can roll on the table or select the gift and encounter that fit the situation best. It's completely up to you!

| D20 | Dark Gift                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | <b>The Haunted One.</b> The character hears the tormented souls of Ravenloft pleading for help, making all Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing with disadvantage. As an action, the haunted character can call upon the souls of Ravenloft to provide information available to the public, like the Barovian lore available in chapter 2 of <i>Curse of Strahd</i> . They can also inquire about the land and geography of the Domain of Dread in question.                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 2   | <b>The Undead One.</b> The character's decaying skin and putrid odor give them an uncanny resemblance to the undead. The character has disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks, but has advantage on Charisma (Deception) checks to pretend to be an undead on first encountering a person or group of people. After prolonged time together, such as the party or any accompanying NPCs, both the disadvantage and advantage as described are negated. Casting <i>gentle repose</i> on the character removes these effects for the spell's duration. An illusion spell, such as <i>disguise self</i> or <i>seeming</i> can also negate the advantage and disadvantage for the spell's duration. |
| 3   | <b>The Ethereal One.</b> The character's being is constantly pulled toward the Ethereal Plane, losing some of their grip on the physical world. The character has disadvantage on Strength (Athletics) check to climb, but they can use their reaction to travel to the Border Ethereal, as if they had cast the <i>etherealness</i> spell, until the end of their next turn. When they return from the Border Ethereal, the character gains one level of Exhaustion.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 4   | <b>The Scaled One.</b> Patches of the character's skin are replaced by snake scales, and they become cold-blooded, only being able to retain heat from the sun or fires. The character gains advantage on saving throws against poison. When rolling a natural 5 or lower on Charisma checks, the character spits poison on the person they are attempting to influence. The person must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for a minute.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 5   | <b>The Lupine One.</b> The character grows a canine tail, and they're covered head to toe with thick wolf fur. As a bonus action, the character can howl to the moon and summon a fiendish <b>wolf</b> spirit, which obeys the character's commands. It vanishes after a minute and acts immediately after the character. The character cannot use this feature again until they finish a long rest.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 6   | <b>The Misty One.</b> The character becomes one with the mists of Ravenloft. As an action, the character can become a cloud of mist as if they had cast the <i>gaseous form</i> spell on themselves. On their next turn, the character can use a bonus action to return to their original form. For each round spent in the mist form, the character gains a level of Exhaustion.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 7   | <b>The Tormented One.</b> The character's memories of their brief contact with the Dark Powers intrude on their present, causing a momentary lapse of focus during combat followed by an inward rally and pushing through the memory. The character can decide to make an attack with disadvantage or have a target of their spells make saving throws with advantage for the turn. This effect cannot be cancelled by gaining advantage from another source (e.g., flanking). If the character hits with an attack or spell that deals damage on their next turn, they roll one additional damage die.                                                                                               |
| 8   | <b>The Dark One.</b> The character's eyes become as dark as the night. They gain darkvision up to 120 ft. and advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) check while in dim light or darkness. They also gain vulnerability to radiant damage and the Sunlight Sensitivity feature: the character has disadvantage on attack rolls and Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight when they, the target of the attack, or whatever they are trying to perceive is in direct sunlight. Since Barovia and most Domains of Dread are bleak places, you decide when this feature affects the character.                                                                                                          |
| 9   | <b>The Swarming One.</b> The character attracts all insects within a 30-foot radius, which either crawl or fly around them. The character has disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight. As a bonus action, the character can command a <b>swarm of insects</b> to attack an enemy. The insects scatter after a minute and act immediately after the character. The character cannot use this feature again until they finish a long rest.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 10  | <b>The Shadowless One.</b> The character's shadow has been stolen by the Dark Powers. Believed by many to be some sort of monster, the character has disadvantage on all Charisma (Persuasion) checks. As an action, the character can control a target's <b>shadow</b> , forcing it to attack its creator. The shadow returns to normal after a minute, and the character cannot use this feature again until they finish a long rest.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 11  | <b>The Silent One.</b> The character loses the ability to speak or to emit any noise with their mouth. When they attempt to speak, their words are communicated to a single target telepathically, and serve as Verbal components for spellcasters. In addition, the character can cast <i>detect thoughts</i> without expending a spell slot or components, using Charisma as their spellcasting ability. They cannot use this feature again until they complete a long rest.                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 12  | <b>The Weak One.</b> The character feels the heavy burden of the Dark Power's influence. The character has disadvantage on all Strength checks. As an action, the character can emit a burst of unhallow shadows and mist. All creatures within a 5-foot radius of the character must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or take 2d8 necrotic damage. The DC is equal to 8 + the character's proficiency + their Constitution modifier. They cannot use this feature again until they finish a long rest.                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 13  | <b>The Blind One.</b> The character's eyes are covered by skin. The character has disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight, and they gain blindsight and tremorsense up to 30 feet.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 14  | <b>The Frozen One.</b> The character's body is covered in thick frost. Their speed is reduced by 5 feet, and they gain the ability to cast <i>armor of agathys</i> as a 2nd-level spell. They cannot use this feature again until they finish a long rest.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 15  | <b>The Angered One.</b> The character harbors a simmering anger they can't quite shake. The character gains the Reckless Attack feature from the barbarian class and gains disadvantage on Charisma (Deception, Persuasion) ability checks.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 16  | <b>The Putrid One.</b> The character reeks of filth. The character gains the Stench ability from the ghast but are affected by it too. This ability activates at the start of the first turn in combat.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 17  | <b>The Thirsting One.</b> The character's canines grow into sharp fangs, and they must now drink blood instead of water. The character can make an unarmed strike to bite a restrained, incapacitated, paralyzed, or unconscious creature. On a hit, the target takes piercing damage equal to 1d4 + their Strength modifier and 2d6 necrotic damage. The character gains temporary hit points equal to the necrotic damage dealt.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 18  | <b>The Skeletal One.</b> The character's hands transform into sharp skeletal claws. The character has disadvantage on Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks. The character's claws are natural weapons, which they can use to make unarmed strikes. If they hit with them, they deal slashing damage equal to 1d6 + their Strength modifier, instead of the bludgeoning damage normal for an unarmed strike.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 19  | <b>The Winged One.</b> The character's face is concealed by shadows, providing disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks but advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks. As a bonus action, the character can summon shadowy wings, which allow them to gain a fly speed equal to their movement speed. The wings vanish at the start of their next turn. They cannot use this feature again until they finish a short rest.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 20  | <b>The Evil One.</b> Despite their intentions, the character instills fear and distrust in their peers. They have disadvantage on Charisma checks to convince or convey any sort of philanthropy or good intentions, and they can cast <i>command</i> and <i>fear</i> without expending a spell slot or material components. Charisma is the spellcasting ability. They cannot cast those spells again until they complete a long rest.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

# THE ENCOUNTERS

The following encounters narrate a character's dream-like interaction with the Dark Powers and the unwittingly Faustian bargain made for a second chance at life. You can pick any encounter you prefer or roll in the Dark

Gift table and run the associated encounter. These scenes are supposed to make the situation clear: the character has died and is experiencing a nightmare-like event where they are given a final choice. The choice is as incomprehensible and ominous as the Dark Powers themselves but always ends in life or death. In every encounter, the characters are without their equipment, weapons, or spells.

## PLAYER AGENCY

The character is dead. Instead of asking the player to create a new one, they are given a chance to keep the current one through dark, malicious, and often grotesque encounters with the Dark Powers. Characters will certainly feel powerless in face of such evil forces but the final choice must always be theirs to make.

## THE RETURN

If a character accepts the Dark Gift, read the following aloud before they are returned to life and then reintroduce them to the scene unfolding in the waking world.

Your world fades to black. A malevolent presence swirls around you and slowly fills your body while a chorus of voices speak to you in some ancient language. Suddenly, your eyes snap open and you begin looking over your companions and the current situation. You are alive.

## 1. THE HAUNTED ONE

You awaken from a terrible nightmare in the middle of a dark, snowy forest of leafless trees. The undead surround you on all sides as far as the eye can see, but they do not seem to acknowledge your presence. A vision of your companions calling out to you cuts through the ink-black sky above.

If the character moves to stand up, read the following aloud:

As you rise, the closest group of undead turn to face you. With arms outstretched, they shamble toward you and scream, "Help me," "Get me out of here," and "I can't stand this anymore!"

Running or standing still yields the same result. Read:

The closest undead grabs you by the arms and shoulders. You feel a tugging at your feet and legs and pale arms burst from the ground beneath you. They continue begging you to put them out of their misery. Thousands of voices pierce your skull like invisible daggers. You feel your bones breaking under the weight of all these wretched creatures. It's deafening. You can't hear, you can't see...

Provide a pause for the character to assess the situation, then read:

A bright blue light strikes the ground nearby, pushing the undead away and freeing you from their grasp. A skeletal figure riding an undead wyvern lands on the fallen corpses, crushing them. It silently extends a hand towards you as the ground is enveloped in an endless sea of shadow emanating from the rider and its wyvern. In the sky above, the image of your companions begins to fade.

The rider doesn't speak. If the character questions the rider, it silently motions for the character to hop onto the wyvern's back. If the character joins the rider, they ascend toward the image in the sky. During the ascent, read:

As you fly toward your companions, the wails of the undead fade away, but never deafen completely. They're calling for you, begging you to save them.

The character awakens, alive and well, with 1 hit point. If the character refuses the rider's aid, the character is swallowed by the shadows and is truly dead.



## 2. THE UNDEAD ONE

You awaken from a terrible nightmare inside a closed stone sarcophagus. The interior of its lid is mirrored, and the light of a candle near your feet allows you to see your reflection.

Ask what the character wants to do. The sarcophagus lid is too heavy to lift from the inside. After they realize that there is no escaping this tomb, read:

You feel your eyes sink into the back of your head and your stomach bloat painlessly. Your flesh pales and peels from your body in long strands. You're dying in here. Or perhaps you're already dead.

Allow the character to interact with the scene. After the first interaction, read:

You smell a strong, familiar odor: the stench of death. The sarcophagus lid suddenly opens, revealing a decayed woman wearing a gown made of thin bones and an amulet with a small, dried heart. The woman extends a rotten, blood-dripping hand to you.

If the character takes her hand, they awaken, alive and well, with 1 hit point.

If the character hesitates for too long, the woman begins closing the lid again. The character has an additional chance to hold the lid and accept the offer. If the lid is fully closed, the candle inside the sarcophagus is snuffed out and the character is truly dead.

## 3. THE ETHEREAL ONE

You awaken from a terrible nightmare in the last place you remember. For reasons unknown, everything around you appears in various shades of gray. Your companions lean over you, their words muffled and impossible to determine.

The character is dead and now in the Border Ethereal. Let them act and at some point, read:

You notice a tall, hunched figure resembling an old woman with fiendish features walking among your companions. She signals you with her hand to approach.

If the character gets closer, read:

The crone gives you a wide smile—revealing her few remaining crooked teeth—and extends both arms in your direction. She closes her eyes purses her lips as if expecting a kiss. The shades of gray surrounding you darken, threatening to blanket you and your companions in an endless sea of nothingness.

If the character embraces and kisses her, read:

During the kiss, the crone pukes a small sphere of light into your mouth. As your vision fades, the crone cackles while she caresses your cheek.

The character awakens, alive and well, with 1 hit point.

If the character denies the kiss, it does not take long for the world to go dark. The character is truly dead, lost to the Ethereal forever.

## 4. THE SCALED ONE

You awaken from a terrible nightmare at the bottom of a pit lit by torches and surrounded by hundreds of serpents. At the lip of the pit, your companions desperately call for you to join them. The serpents produce unnerving sounds and slowly writhe on top of each other.

Allow the character to interact with the scene. After the first interaction, read:

The snakes hiss as they dart towards you from all directions. You feel their sharp fangs pierce your flesh as they anchor themselves to your body.

The walls are made of smooth stone covered with moss. Check what the character wants to do and read:

The serpents begin to climb your body, using their teeth like venomous pitons. The barrage of bites to your feet and legs sends you tumbling onto your back. One snake constricts around your neck and bites your face. The agony is almost unbearable.

The character can attempt to remove the snake from their neck. Independent of the result, read:

Suddenly, a rope of flame descends from the lip of the pit. The snakes recoil from the light and heat, and a fiery demon motions for you to grab on.

The pain is intense, and you feel welts start to rise on your skin, burning into your hands, arms and legs.

If the character grabs the rope, all the snakes in the pit ignite, and the ones on the character's body harmlessly fall off while they burn. At the lip of the pit, the demon grabs the character by the hand and pulls them up toward their companions. The character awakens, alive and well, with 1 hit point.

If they refuse to grab the rope, explain that the character seems to be losing their vital strength. If they still don't grab the rope, their vision grows dark and the character is truly dead



## 5. THE LUPINE ONE

You awaken from a terrible nightmare in the middle of a verdant forest illuminated by a full moon. Along an earthen road in the distance, you see your companions desperately beckoning you to join them. In the woods, you hear the distinct howling of wolves.

Allow the character to act. After the first interaction, read:

The distant howling becomes a deep growl from somewhere in the nearby bushes. Soon, you begin to see many pairs of hungry red eyes staring at you.

Let the character decide what they want to do. After the first interaction, read:

As dozens of wolves emerge from the undergrowth, you immediately note their massive frames and the spiky bones protruding from their backs. They encircle you, cutting you off from all escape routes, before pouncing. Their fangs rip into your flesh, racking your whole body with immeasurable pain. Just before you sink into unconsciousness, the wolves suddenly stop, bowing with their front paws to a man in tattered black robes with the hood pulled up. Shadows conceal his face, but two long horns poke through holes cut in the hood. The man extends a cadaveric hand to help you stand.

If the character takes his hand, he walks the character safely towards their companions. The character awakens, alive and well, with 1 hit point.

If the character refuses his help, the man disappears, the wolves finish their meal, and the character is truly dead.



## 6. THE MISTY ONE

You awaken from a terrible nightmare surrounded by thick mist completely obscuring your vision. In the distance, you hear your companions calling for you.

Allow the character to interact with the scene. After the first interaction, read:

A cacophony of screams pierce the air, and hand-shaped wisps of mist lunge at you from all directions. As they grip your limbs and throat, your strength begins to fade. These incorporeal hands are stealing your life and your soul.

Allow the character to interact with the scene once more. Try as they might, they cannot break free from the misty arms. Then read:

Suddenly, a humanoid shape forms in the mist in front of you. As the faceless being caresses your cheek, you feel a chill run down your spine. The mist slowly releases you as the creature extends a hand, clearly expecting you to take it.

If the character accepts the offer, the misty shape walks them in the direction of their companions' voices. The character awakens, alive and well, with 1 hit point.

If the character refuses the shape's hand, the mists latch on once more, and the character is truly dead.

## 7. THE TORMENTED ONE

You awaken from a terrible nightmare bound by rope to a wooden table and tiny spikes perforating your back. A metal full-face helmet rests on your exposed stomach, similarly bound to you by a thick coil of rope. On the opposite side of this bleak room, you spot a closed wooden door.

Allow the character to interact with the scene. The ropes around their arms and legs are impossibly tight. After the first interaction, read:

The door bursts open and a muscular, four-armed fiend bearing a lit torch enters the room. Holding the torch to the helmet, you hear the panicked squeaks of a rat from within its makeshift metal prison.

Allow the character to interact with the scene once more. All attempts to reason with the fiend are useless. Then read:

As the air inside the helmet begins to swelter, the rat begins escaping the only way it knows how: through you. The pain is immeasurable, and soon your world fades to black. Some time later, you wake up on the table again with the helmet and rat noticeably missing. Your stomach shows no sign of injury.

The fiend returns, this time with the rat, helmet, and torch. Explain that the situation repeats itself many times, more than the character can count. Read:

Your torture is briefly interrupted by the door opening once more. An eyeless, lipless, red-scaled humanoid with sharp spikes protruding from its face enters the room. It holds a huge cleaver in one hand. Moving the fiend out of the way, it raises the blade high above its head and slams it down, cutting the ropes binding you to the table. It then extends its free hand to you.

If the character accepts the humanoid's hand, the

creature leads them away from the fiend and out of the room. The character awakens, alive and well, with 1 hit point.

If the character declines the offer or takes too long to decide, the humanoid attacks the character with its cleaver, and the character is truly dead.

## 8. THE DARK ONE

Your stomach lurches as you awaken in a free fall surrounded by absolute darkness.

Allow the character to interact with the scene. After the first interaction, read:

During your fall, you feel a heavy presence below you. Among the void, you see a faint red-glowing hand made of pure darkness far away from you.

If the character dives to grab the hand, they awaken, alive and well, with 1 hit point. If the character refuses, they hit the bottom of the abyss and are truly dead.

## 9. THE SWARMING ONE

You awaken from a terrible nightmare flanked by slick and smooth natural stone walls. An earthy path winds endlessly both ahead of and behind you. On the path ahead, you hear the snarling of fiends as a nefarious red glow approaches.

If the character stands still or approaches the glow,

inform them the light is emanating from a horde of demons. If the character still does not flee, the demons tear the character apart, and they are truly dead.

If the character runs away, read:

You sprint in the opposite direction as fast as you can, the demons' red light growing brighter and brighter behind you. The path ends abruptly at another stone wall. To your left, you hear the scurrying and buzzing of countless insects.

The bugs are coming from an opening large enough to fit the character. If the character enters the passage, read:

The insects in the passage silently cling to the surrounding walls, clearing the path. Up ahead, you see the pale light of a full moon and hear your companions desperately calling you to join them. Behind you, the nefarious red glow of the demons is quickly catching up.

If the character follows the path to their companions, they awaken, alive and well, with 1 hit point. If they hesitate or head toward the demons, they are torn apart and considered truly dead.

## 10. THE SHADOWLESS ONE

You awaken from a terrible nightmare in a stone corridor lit by torches. As you move through the corridor, you notice the shadows created by the torch light always bend towards you. When these shadows touch you, your chest burns and your worst memories race to the forefront of your mind. Your own shadow pulls away from you and beckons you to follow as it darts ahead.

If the character stands still, the shadows continue to plague the character with their worst memories. If they stay too long, they are consumed by the shadows and are truly dead.

If the character follows their shadow, they spot it entering a doorless room. If the character continues, read:

The doorless room is square and lit by a single torch. As you enter the room, the light of the torch burns as if you were wreathed in flame. You notice your shadow begin to bubble and twist, mutating into an unrecognizably monstrous form. Your shadow desperately points towards the torch, and you see an image of your companions in the heart of the flame.

If the character reaches into the flame towards their companions, they awaken, alive and well, with 1 hit point. If the character lingers too long, their shadow completely transforms and truly kills them.

## 11. THE SILENT ONE

You awaken from a terrible nightmare bound by heavy chains to a stone chair. A ghoulish creature, half of its face torn to the bone, finishes sewing your lips together. The surrounding room is filled with a plethora of torture devices still slick with the blood of previous victims. At the back of the room, your companions are huddled together with their backs to you.

Allow the character to interact with the scene. Then, read:

The creature looks to your companions, then back to you and flashes a toothy grin. Sewing needle in hand, it silently begins to make its way toward them.

Once again, allow the player to interact and read:

A fiendish creature covered in gore emerges from an iron maiden, approaching you. It looks to you, then to your friends, and then back to you.

With a deep, quiet voice, it asks, *"Do you wish to save them?"*

If the character agrees, the fiend kills the ghoulish creature immediately. The character awakens, alive and well, with 1 hit point. If the character refuses, the fiend vanishes, and the character watches as the ghoulish creature tortures their companions before dying once more.

## 12. THE WEAK ONE

You awaken from a terrible nightmare in a dark abyss. Seemingly alone, you sense a palpable evil circling you like a hunter stalks its prey. The voices of your companions, desperately calling you to join them, echoes through the darkness.

Allow the character to interact with the scene. Then, read:

The evil surrounding you pounces, filling your eyes, nose, and ears with its filth. As it swims inside your head, you're assaulted by images of absolute horror: villagers torn apart by werewolves, vampires feasting on humanoids, and demons razing entire cities. You can feel your strength leaving your body as the parade of horrors continue.

Allow the player to react once more, then read:

The images in your head stop. As your vision returns and you feel the evil slip away from you, a hooded figure carrying a large scythe approaches. You see a pair of red, glowing eyes inside the hood. The creature extends the handle of its scythe to help you get back to your feet.

If the character grabs the scythe, they awaken, alive and well, with 1 hit point. If the character refuses or lingers for too long, the figure disappears and the evil consumes them once more, killing them once and for all.

## 13. THE BLIND ONE

You awaken from a terrible nightmare hanging upside down and unable to open your eyes. You hear your companions calling for you in the distance, inhumanoid moaning and cries, and the sound of flesh being cut. As blood begins pooling in your skull, it becomes difficult to concentrate.

Allow the character to interact with the scene. They can tell they are being suspended in air by sturdy metal chains. Then, read:

A caustic liquid splashes against your leg and trails down your body. Your thighs, chest, and, finally, your face all begin to burn and sizzle. Suddenly, you feel a cold, wanted hand wipe the acid from your eyes.

Inside your head, you hear, *"Take my hand, and it will all be over."*

If the character refuses, acid continues to drip down their body until they die once more. If the character accepts the offer, read:

The hand pulls you down and you hear the chains around your legs shatter in a scream of metal. The stranger, eager to keep moving, tugs you in the direction of your companions' voices.

The character awakens, alive and well, with 1 hit point.





## 14. THE FROZEN ONE

You awaken from a terrible nightmare in the middle of the night at the top of a snowy mountain. The frozen winds cut through your bones, and there appears to be no path down the mountain. The night sky is empty save for a sinister red crescent moon.

Allow the character to interact with the scene. Without the proper equipment, climbing down the mountain is impossible, and the winds are too strong to fly. After the first interaction, read:

As your body begins to go numb, you hear your companions' voices in the wind desperately calling for you. You then notice a skeleton, its bones covered in ice, slowly climbing the peak. When it gets within arm's reach, the skeleton extends an icy hand, inviting you to grab it.

If the character takes the hand, the skeleton pulls them into an icy embrace and they awaken, alive and well, with 1 hit point. If the character refuses to take the hand, the skeleton vanishes and the character freezes to death.

## 15. THE ANGERED ONE

You awaken from a terrible nightmare in a parlor, translucent and floating above the ground. In the room,

you see a corporeal version of yourself, standing in front of a fireplace while your companions are asleep. Suddenly, your corporeal double pulls out a dagger, kneels before one of your sleeping companions, and cuts open their throat while wearing a sinister grin.

Allow the character to interact with the scene. As they are incorporeal, the character cannot protect their allies, and they cannot leave the room. After the first interaction, read:

As your double moves to slay another of your companions, another translucent being, this one resembling a female elf with messy hair and an unsettlingly-large mouth, joins you. From her robes, the elf produces a hefty club and extends it to you.

Allow the character to interact, then continue:

Silently, she looks to you, then the club, and then to your double.

If the character attacks their double, they awaken, alive and well, with 1 hit point. If they refuse the club, the evil double kills the remaining companions one by one. The elf then drops the club and extends its hand instead. If the character still refuses, the creature opens its mouth and issues an otherworldly scream, killing the character once and for all.



## 16. THE PUTRID ONE

You awaken from a terrible nightmare in the middle of a sewer system and covered in fetid water. From your location, the sewers branch off into eight identical tunnels. Apparently long abandoned, cobwebs hang from every discernible nook and cranny.

Allow the character to interact with the scene.  
After the first interaction, read:

While searching for a way out, you notice shadows skittering around you and quickly discover you are surrounded by a dozen large spiders, their abdomen speckled with pus-filled blisters. The stench from the spiders mixed with the sewer filth makes you nauseous.

Wait for the character's reaction, then read:

From the cluster, a massive, two-headed spider with countless red eyes approaches you. Facing its abdomen toward you, the spider crouches low to the ground; you get the impression it wants you to climb upon its back. The other spiders click at you hungrily, eager for their next meal.

If the character climbs upon the spider's back, the character awakens, alive and well, with 1 hit point. If they refuse, the other spiders descend upon the character and kill them once and for all.

## 17. THE THIRSTING ONE

You awaken from a terrible nightmare in a dusty room, filled with lavish couches and pillows. Several vampires casually lounge about the room while they feast on the blood and screams of recently-captured victims.

Allow the character to interact with the scene.

After the first interaction, read:

The vampires, sensing your presence, discard their victims and set their sights on you. Grinning from ear to ear, they slowly begin their approach.

There are two doors in the room, both locked from the other side. Allow the character to act again.  
Then, read:

Surrounding you on all sides, the vampires swipe the air in front of you while laughing. They clearly enjoy playing with their food. One of the vampire's claws strikes true, and the streak of fresh blood sends them into a frenzy. Before they strike, a more dignified looking vampire, one you did not notice before, approaches with a blood-filled chalice. The elder extends the chalice to you while the others appear to barely restrain themselves.

If the character drinks from the chalice, they sate a newfound craving and awaken, alive and well, with 1 hit point. If the character refuses, the other vampires lunge forward and kill the character once and for all.





## 18. THE SKELETAL ONE

You awaken from a terrible nightmare on a thin natural stone bridge connecting the peaks of two mountains. With powerful gusts threatening to pull you off the bridge, you stare down and see only a thick bed of clouds. Behind you, agonized moans cut through the howling wind.

If the character moves in the direction of the moans, they arrive at a natural pit filled with snarling undead. If the character descends into the pit, the undead immediately seize them. Read:

While the hungry undead tear at your flesh, a cloaked figure approaches the pit. Its face is obscured by shadows, all except its piercing amber eyes. The figure approaches the edge of the pit and extends a skeletal hand toward you. The other undead, overcome with terror, quickly scatter.

If the character takes the figure's hand, shadows extend from the figure's hand to their own, eating away at the character's flesh until only bone remains. The character awakens, alive and well, with 1 hit point. If the character refuses, the figure departs, and the other undead resume their feast until the character is truly dead.

If the character approaches the other mountain top, read:

Despite the wind, you manage to carefully cross the bridge. As you approach the mountain top, a cloaked figure descends to meet you. Its face is obscured by shadows, all except its piercing amber eyes. The figure extends an open hand, inviting you to grab it.

If the character takes the figure's hand, the shadows extend from the figure's hand to their own, eating away at the character's flesh until only bone remains. The character awakens, alive and well, with 1 hit point. If the character refuses, read:

As you begin retreating from the ominous creature, a powerful gust throws you off the bridge. Through reflex and desperation, you reach out and manage to grab the ledge of the bridge. You know you cannot hold on for long. The figure once again approaches, crouches down, and extends a skeletal hand to you.

If the character takes it, they are brought back to life. If they refuse once more or take too long to decide, they fall from the bridge and are now truly dead.

## 19. THE WINGED ONE

You awaken from a terrible nightmare on top of a colossal stone tower, its walls surrounded by horrific gargoyles. At the base of the tower, you see your companions desperately motioning for you to join them. Sensing movement, the gargoyles begin to break away from their perches.

The tower is over 300 feet tall and the character cannot safely climb down the tower walls with the gargoyles nearby. Allow the character to act. Then, read:

The animated statues take flight, surrounding you and striking out with their claws when your back is turned. During the attack, you see one of the statue's shadows free itself from its host, taking the form of a faceless man. The shadow hovers near the tower's edge and, after a long pause, extends an open hand, beckoning you to take it.

If the character jumps toward the shadow and grabs its hand, it slowly floats the character toward their companions. The character awakens, alive and well, with 1 hit point. If they don't grab the shadow's hand, the gargoyles continue their assault until the character dies for good.

## 20. THE EVIL ONE

You awaken in the middle of the night. You find yourself in a wide clearing beside a river. Toward the opposite edge of the clearing, you hear screams coming from a small hamlet. Among the houses, creatures made of roiling mist and horrid amalgams of arms and twisted faces with sinister red eyes wail in a baleful chorus. Residents of the hamlet dart into the river to escape them, and a shoal of carnivorous fish begin tearing at their flesh while they scream in panic and pain.

Allow the character to act. If they look up, read:

You see several headless goat-men standing next to a series of stone steps that allow the river to be crossed. They motion towards the other side of the river, where you see your companions desperately call for you to join them.

If the character stays near the hamlet, read:

As the fish feast and the river runs red, the remaining residents of the hamlet are beset by the wailing creatures of mist. Residents too close to the creatures cry out in agony, and then go silent as their heads explode.

If the character enters the river or attempts to fight the amalgam creatures, they are killed once and for all.

If they cross the river via the stones and head towards their companions, the character awakens, alive and well, with 1 hit point.



Embrace



The Dark

Grab Encounters in Barovia for more opportunities to present the Dark Powers to your players!

